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**EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT
AND CRIME RATES. A CASE STUDY OF EPWORTH HIGH DENSITY
SUBURB, HARARE, JANUARY 2020 TO DECEMBER 2024.**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
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Dedication

I dedicate this research project to my family and everyone who took part in the successful completion of the project.

Abstract

The rapid increase in crime rates has garnered significant attention due to its potential consequences for social and economic development. This study explored the relationship between youth unemployment and crime rates in Epworth, a high-density suburb in Harare, Zimbabwe, covering the period from January 2020 to December 2024. The objectives of the study were to establish prevalence and factors causing youth unemployment, to determine the connection between youth unemployment and high crime rates and to devise strategies to address youth unemployment. Using an exploratory survey research design, data was collected from youths aged between 18 and 35 years residing in Epworth, law enforcement, and ward councilors through focus group discussions structured questionnaires and structured interviews. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the participants in the study. 100 questionnaires were distributed to the youths and 89 returned, 6 participants were selected from each ward to participate in four focus group discussions. Law enforcement and councilors were interviewed to provide valuable insights. Quantitative and qualitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including thematic analysis for qualitative responses. The study revealed that there is a strong correlation between youth unemployment and rising crime rates. Unemployment influences youth involvement in crime to a greater extent. Many unemployed youths turn to illegal activities such as theft, drug abuse and robbery as a means for survival. The study concludes that addressing youth unemployment through targeted economic empowerment programs can lead to a reduction in crime rates. Recommendations include policy interventions focusing on job creation, skills development programs, and community-based initiatives to rehabilitate and reintegrate affected youths into society. Community support systems should be strengthened to provide a safety net for unemployed youths.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introduction

The relationship between youth unemployment and crime rates has been widely examined across various regions due to its potential effects on social stability and economic progress (Howell, 2025). Youth unemployment is a global challenge that has attracted significant attention because of its complex nature, which varies across different countries and regions (Obonyo, 2021). When young individuals struggle to find employment, they often experience frustration, disillusionment, and a sense of detachment from society. How these issues are framed plays a crucial role in shaping the responses of governments and professionals. The connection between youth unemployment and crime is not confined to specific areas or cultures; rather, it underscores a worldwide concern that requires thorough research and well-planned policy interventions (UNDP, 2016). This study examines the impact of youth unemployment on crime rates in Epworth Suburb, Harare, Zimbabwe.

This chapter provides an overview of the study, including its introduction and background, problem statement, research objectives, and research questions. It also outlines the significance of the study, its scope, delimitations, and limitations, along with definitions of key terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

Youth unemployment continues to be a significant challenge for many countries across the globe. Obonyo (2021) emphasizes that youth unemployment poses a global security risk, which, if not addressed, could lead to social unrest, rising crime rates, and vulnerability to extremist groups. Youth unemployment has long been associated with rising crime rates, as economic hardship and social exclusion push young individuals toward illicit

activities. Knepper (2007) emphasized that unemployment among youth not only increases financial instability but also fosters conditions conducive to criminal behaviour. Knepper argues that crime often emerges as an alternative economic strategy when legitimate employment opportunities are scarce, reinforcing theories that link economic deprivation to criminal activity.

Unemployment gained widespread attention due to its complex nature, which varies across different regions and nations. Windschuttle (1980) observed that unemployed individuals were disproportionately represented in criminal court records. Studies conducted in Australia and other countries have established links between unemployment and various social issues, including mental and physical health problems, suicide, substance abuse, and crime (Eckersley, 1987). White (1989) suggested that an increasing number of young men may resort to criminal activities as a means of survival. Polk and Tait (1990) argued that youth unemployment has a direct influence on criminal behaviour, asserting that the growing number of marginalized young people may lead to increased involvement in illegal activities.

In many countries youth unemployment rates are usually higher than other demographic segments especially in developing countries. Youth unemployment is a persistent issue particularly regions like Africa where a large percentage of the population is below 25 years and Zimbabwe is not an exception. In Zimbabwe, the situation is exacerbated by economic instability and limited job opportunities (Maulani & Agwanda, 2020).

Unemployment has been acknowledged as a factor linked to various adverse effects such as unhappiness which affects both physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals (Bell and Blanchflower, 2010). According to Petersen and Mortimer (1994), youth unemployment can have long-term consequences on economic stability and social structures. The severe mental health impacts and rising drug abuse associated with unemployment can be profound, contributing to social problems that lead to self-destruction and long-lasting damage to communities.

A significant amount of research establishes a connection between youth unemployment and crime. Several international studies are adduced to support these claims. Some have suggested that if unemployment did not automatically switch young people onto criminality. Unemployment compels those already showing delinquent tendencies to move into crime (Farrington et al 1986). Interestingly, the cities in many developing economies with high rates of youth unemployment also struggles with high crime rates.

Crime imposes significant costs not only on individuals but also on society as a whole. Furthermore, its effects can have lasting implications for a person's future opportunities. Once someone becomes marginalized and involved in criminal activities, their expectations and life trajectory may shift accordingly. As a result, unemployment negatively impacts both young individuals and the broader community. However, it is important to note that the most severe consequences of youth unemployment are often linked to prolonged joblessness rather than unemployment itself. O'Higgins (2001) asserts that experiencing unemployment early in one's career can lead to long-term repercussions that persist into adulthood. Substance abuse and youth-related crimes are commonly regarded as the ultimate outcomes of prolonged youth unemployment.

The impact of unemployment is not merely temporary; instead, it disrupts society, triggering a ripple effect that begins at a small scale and gradually expands, affecting communities, nations, and ultimately the global landscape over time. Addressing the needs of young people is a key priority in Zimbabwe's revised National Youth Policy (2020-2025), which seeks to promote comprehensive youth development. This policy emphasizes education and skills training, employment and entrepreneurship, youth governance and participation, as well as health and overall well-being (Government of Zimbabwe, 2021).

The World Bank estimates that Zimbabwe has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in Africa, with approximately 60% of the youths aged 15-34 being unemployed. This situation is exacerbated in high density suburbs

like Epworth where poverty, lack of education and limited job opportunities are endemic. Research has shown that youth unemployment is closely linked to increased crime rates. However, there is need for more empirical research to explore this relationship in the Zimbabwean context.

The official youth unemployment rate in Zimbabwe, defined as the percentage of individuals aged 15-24 actively seeking work, stands at 12.37% (Statista, 2023). However, activists argue that this figure significantly underestimates the true number of young Zimbabweans in need of employment (Moyo, 2023). Despite the fact that over 60% of the country's population is under the age of 25, young people continue to encounter substantial barriers to achieving their economic and political potential (Pswarayi, 2023). For instance, a study conducted by Nyede and Mpako (2020) on youth unemployment and economic insecurity in Zimbabwe revealed that youth unemployment is a key driver of economic instability, with 90% of respondents reporting difficulties in meeting their basic financial needs.

On average, Zimbabwean youth have more education than their elders but youth are also more likely to be unemployed. At present Zimbabwe has a 20.5% (UNICEF, 2024) unemployment rate with 80% of the jobs being found in the informal sector (Robalino et al, 2021). The country has 12 universities and other tertiary institutions which annually produce approximately 30,000 graduates with various qualifications. To maintain current employment rates the country needs to create 185,000 jobs per year over the next 10 years and 165,000 per year after that to maintain the rate of employment. Industry (inclusive of the public service) cannot adequately absorb the university graduates, O and A level students (Robalino et al, 2021).

It was discovered that unemployment negatively impacted on financially motivated crime and a minor and statistically significant impact on violent crimes. Youth unemployment leads to persistent criminality, including drug trafficking, prostitution, money laundering, online fraud, robberies, and other social vices. These illegal activities are used by young people as a source of income. Theft, robbery, sexual offenses, drug-related crimes, and murder have

all increased among the Zimbabwean community in recent years. Such vices cause physical, psychological, and emotional harm to society. Furthermore, criminal activity can lead to family conflicts, monetary losses, private deterrence costs, mental health issues, and fatalities. The provision of social services is sacrificed at the government level in order to pay for criminal justice-related expenses.

According to ZRP Epworth Crime Register the station received an average of 1000 cases per month. It is therefore the purpose of this study to explore the relationship between youth unemployment and crime rates in Epworth, identifying contributing factors. By understanding the extent to which unemployment influences criminal behaviour, policymakers, community leaders and stakeholders can develop effective strategies to address both issues simultaneously that is creating employment opportunities while reducing crime.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Youth unemployment remains a major challenge with nearly half of the young people struggling to find employment. Despite various initiatives like entrepreneurship among the youth aimed at addressing youth unemployment, it remains a pressing socio-economic challenge. According to Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, the unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 35 years stands at 47.1%, while for those aged 15 to 24 years is even higher at 58.7%. As job opportunities remain scarce, many youths struggle to secure stable employment leading to financial insecurity and social frustration. This situation raises concerns about the potential link between youth unemployment and crime rates. High unemployment rates, particularly among urban youth can lead to increased crime rates. High crime rates can lead to social unrest, strain on law enforcement resources, creates fear and anxiety among citizens or increased vigilantism. Studies suggest that unemployment can contribute to increased criminality as individuals may resort to illegal means for survival. Youth unemployment and crime are two interrelated issues that have become major concerns in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the nation must fight a lot to reduce

youth unemployment through creating employment opportunities while reducing crime rates.

1.3 Research Aim

This study examined the link between youth unemployment and crime rates in Epworth Suburb, Harare, focusing on the underlying causes of youth unemployment and its negative effects. The research aimed to identify solutions to reduce unemployment, crime and deviant behaviour among young people.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- To establish the prevalence and factors causing youth unemployment in Epworth, Harare.
- To determine the connection between youth unemployment and high crimes rates in Epworth, Harare.
- To propose actionable strategies to address youth unemployment to reduce crime rates in Epworth, Harare.

1.5 Research Questions

The research was guided by the following questions:

- What is the prevalence and causes of youth unemployment in Epworth, Harare?
- What is the connection between youth unemployment and high crime rates in Epworth, Harare?
- What strategies can be employed to reduce youth unemployment and crime rates in Epworth, Harare?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The research is of importance to several stakeholders stated below:

To the researcher

This study is highly valuable to the researcher as it facilitates a deeper understanding of practical research concepts. It enhances knowledge of the connection between youth unemployment and crime rates while contributing to existing literature by offering new insights and perspectives on the subject. Additionally, the research fulfils an academic requirement for the completion of the Bachelor of Business Administration Honours Degree in Police and Security Studies.

To the University

The research can lead to publications in reputable academic journals, conferences and presentations disseminating the findings to wider audience thereby enhancing the University's reputation. The study findings may also inform future research directions, including the exploration of specific interventions aimed at addressing issues of youth unemployment and reduce crime rates.

To the community

By understanding the connection between youth unemployment and crime, communities can develop strategies to reduce crime rates. The research helped the community to addresses the needs of the young generation, consequently molding responsible citizens thereby improving community safety and reduce crime rates. It also promotes social cohesion, reduce social unrest and improve community relationships.

To policy makers

Understanding the correlation between youth unemployment and crime rates enables policy makers to make informed decisions. The research findings provided evidence-based insights for informed decisions about youth employment initiatives, crime prevention strategies and social programs that engage the youth. Policy makers can design targeted intervention strategies to address the root causes of crime and therefore make an effort to improve youth

engagement. Further the findings from the study can help policy makers to effectively allocate resources towards addressing complex issues surrounding youth unemployment with the intention of reducing crime rates.

1.7 Assumptions

- Authority to carry out the research was granted by relevant authorities
- Respondents and stakeholders cooperated and responded without bias.
- Data collected from respondents was true and reliable.
- The research was done within stipulated time.

1.8 Delimitations/Scope of the Study

The study focused on exploring the relationship between youth unemployment and crime rates within Epworth Suburb, Harare. The target population is the youths both male and female aged between 18-35 years who have been convicted of crime residing in Epworth suburb for period extending from January to December 2024. The study relied on focus group discussions, interviews and questionnaires as data collection methods.

1.9 Limitations

The following constraints were the main draw backs of the research project:

Time constraints -The researcher is on full time employment at the same time studying with BUSE as a block release student doing other courses concurrently with the research project. As a result, she faced time constraints of meeting work demands, University demands as well as social demands. Hence the time factor was a limit. To circumvent time limitation, the researcher worked on additional time during the nights, weekends and public holidays in order to meet the deadline for submission of the research project.

Financial constraints - the researcher faced financial constraints in that she used her own resources for stationery, internet access, printing and transport to

carry out the study. The researcher acquired a loan to cater for research project expenses.

1.10 Definition of Key Terms

Terms used in study were defined as follows:

Youth- refers to individuals between the age of 18 and 35 years (Zimbabwe National Youth Policy 2020-2050).

Unemployment- unemployment refers to the condition in which individuals above a certain age typically 18 are not engaged in paid employment or self-employment but are currently available for work (OECD).

Youth unemployment- refers to the portion of young people aged between 18-35 who are not in employment, education or training, and are actively seeking work (OECD).

Crime- crime is a behavior that is prohibited by law and is considered harmful or threatening to individuals, communities, or society as a whole. Crime can take many forms, including violent and property crimes, and can be committed by individuals, groups or organizations (American Society of Criminology, 2020).

1.11 Summary

Chapter One provided an overview of the problem and its context, covering key aspects such as the background of the study, problem statement, purpose, research objectives, scope, and definitions of essential terms. The next chapter presents a review of relevant literature.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

2.0. Introduction

The preceding chapter examined the problem and its context. This chapter focuses on reviewing relevant literature concerning the relationship between unemployment and crime rates. It includes the conceptual framework, theoretical framework, empirical evidence, gap analysis, and justification. Additionally, it explores the prevalence and causes of youth unemployment, the types of crimes committed by unemployed youth, and the link between youth unemployment and crime rates.

2.1. Definition of Literature Review

Literature review is a comprehensive and systematic analysis of existing research studies and scholarly articles on a specific topic or research in question (Fink, 2014). Zikmund et al (2010) defined literature review as an integral part of a research process and makes a valuable contribution to almost every operational step. In view of the above definitions, literature review provides an overview of current knowledge and trends regarding a particular research topic.

2.2. Purpose of literature review

The literature review serves to critically evaluate existing research on the relationship between youth unemployment and crime rates. By analysing previous studies, it ensures that new research builds upon established knowledge rather than duplicating past findings. As an essential component of the research process, the literature review synthesizes relevant studies, providing valuable insights into the topic. It helps identify gaps in knowledge,

establish a theoretical framework, and develop a foundation for the study. Additionally, it informs the formulation of research questions and methodologies by drawing from prior research (Cresswell, 2018).

2.3. Conceptual framework (Balkin & McDonald, 1981)

The relationship between unemployment and crime rate can be illustrated by the following diagram.

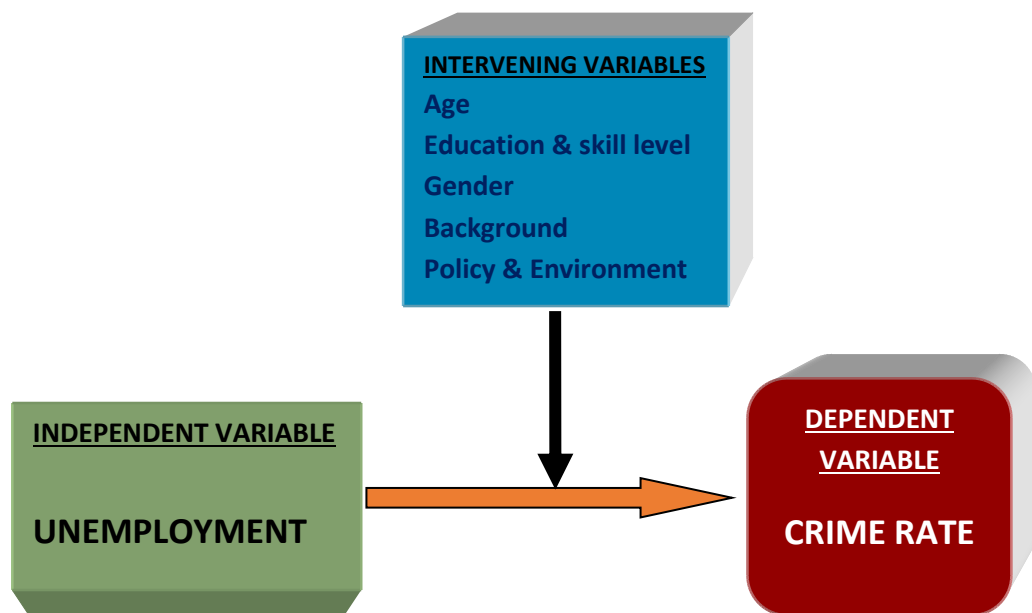


Figure 2.1 Relationship between Unemployment and Crime rate: Adopted from Balkin & McDonald, (1981)

Figure 2.1 above displayed the connection between unemployment and crime rate moderated by some intervening variables which are age, gender, background, education and skill level and policy and environment.

Unemployment is more likely to lead to crime among younger youths with limited work experience. Individuals with lower levels of education skills are more likely to commit crime. Family background and relationship problems such as domestic violence, child abuse and poverty can increase the likelihood of criminality.

Intervening variables can affect the probability of engaging in criminal behaviour. For instance, age plays a role, as younger individuals are more prone to impulsive and reckless criminal activities. Gender also influences both the likelihood of committing a crime and the nature and severity of the offense, with males being more inclined toward violent crimes, while females are more commonly associated with domestic offenses.

Government policies and economic conditions play a significant role in influencing crime rates. Initiatives such as job training programs and social welfare support can help reduce the link between youth unemployment and criminal activity. Additionally, economic factors, such as recessions, can worsen the impact of youth unemployment, further increasing the likelihood of crime.

2.3.1. Youth Unemployment (UNDP, 2012)

Youth unemployment is a multifaceted issue that impacts both individuals and society in various ways. It is a global concern due to its potential long-term effects on young people's career opportunities, mental and physical well-being. Additionally, it poses significant social and economic challenges, contributing to higher poverty levels, increased inequality, and slower economic growth.

Unemployment arises from various factors and manifests in different forms, including cyclical unemployment, frictional unemployment, structural unemployment and classical unemployment. Cyclical unemployment is caused by macroeconomic forces, such as economic recession or downtime. Frictional unemployment is voluntary where individuals are in the process of searching for employment or moving from one job to the next. Structural unemployment is caused by problems in the economy for example a discrepancy between supply and demand of employees with essential skills. Classical unemployment occurs when real wages are set above the market clearing level.

2.3.2. Crime

Laub (2016) defines crime as a behaviour that is prohibited by law and is considered harmful or threatening to individuals and the community at large. According to criminological theories, crime is a rational choice based on cost-benefit analysis. It is caused by biological, psychological, or sociological factors according to the positivist theory. The conflict theory advocated that crime is a result of social inequality and conflict.

However, according to Mohammad (2008) there are several other causes of crime apart from those stated by the theories. Economic deprivation and lack of access to resources can lead to crime. Dysfunctional family structures such as single parenting, abuse can increase the likelihood to commit a crime. Communities with high levels of disorganization, such as crime-ridden neighborhoods, can contribute to crime. These factors can be categorized as social, economic, psychological, biological and environmental. However, these factors can interact with each other in complex ways such that at any given time a combination of the factors can come into play to influence the likelihood of an individual youth to commit a crime.

2.4. Theoretical Literature

This study is grounded in several theories that link crime to unemployment; however, it specifically incorporates three key theories: Strain Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Social Disorganization Theory. The primary framework for this research is Merton's (1938) Strain Theory, which suggests that when there is a disconnect between individuals' aspirations and the means available to achieve them, criminal behaviour may emerge.

2.4.1. Strain Theory (Merton 1938)

Robert Merton developed Strain Theory in 1938 to explain how societal pressure to attain culturally valued goals can drive individuals toward deviant behaviour when legitimate opportunities are inaccessible. People are encouraged to strive for success, wealth, power, and status, but not everyone

has access to conventional pathways such as education, hard work, or entrepreneurship to achieve these goals. The theory outlines different ways individuals respond to strain, including conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. However, Strain Theory primarily emphasizes individual reactions to societal strain, overlooking factors such as personal agency and resilience.

This theory helps clarify why crime rates tend to be higher among lower socioeconomic groups, as they often encounter greater obstacles in achieving success through legitimate avenues (Jang & Agnew, 2015). Youth unemployment serves as a major source of strain, as young individuals struggle to secure stable employment and financial stability, increasing their risk of engaging in criminal activities. Kubrin and Wo (2021) argue that financial difficulties resulting from youth unemployment can drive individuals toward crime as an alternative means of survival. The theory offers a structured framework for understanding how economic challenges contribute to criminal behaviour.

2.4.2. Social Learning Theory (Bandura)

Social learning theory developed by Albert Bandura advocates that individuals learn behaviour, attitudes and emotional reactions through observations, imitation and modeling (Bandura, 1977). The theory suggests that individuals learn to commit crimes through interactions with others and through observing the behaviors of those around them. Therefore, crime is a learned behavior which can be shaped by social and environmental factors. Individuals from families with a criminal background are more likely to commit crimes especially when the behaviour are reinforced by rewards, or lack of punishment. However, for all this to happen it depends on the availability and readiness of that individual to engage into the act as facilitated by unemployment. When an individual is unemployed, they are idle and available for criminal activities through the facilitation of the other factors. Thus, social learning theory is applicable and relevant to this current research.

2.4.3. Social Disorganisation Theory (Park, Burgess, Shaw & McKay)

Social disorganization Theory explains crime and delinquency as a result of weakened social structures particularly in urban neighbourhoods. Crime rates are higher in communities with disrupted social institutions such as family, school and local organisations, norms, and relationships (Shaw and McKay, 1942). The theory suggests that poverty, inequality, residential instability and ethnic heterogeneity contribute to social disorganisation resulting to increased criminal behaviour. While social disorganisation theory has been influential, it does not account for individual agency or the role of formal institutions like the Police. The theory provides useful framework for understanding the relationship between youth unemployment and crime rates. Social disorganisation suggests that crime is more prevalent in communities experiencing economic instability, residential mobility and weakened social institutions. Youth unemployment worsens these conditions by limiting opportunities for economic stability, increasing frustration and reducing engagement with conventional social structures.

2.5. Empirical Studies

2.5.1. Studies on the Prevalence and Causes of Youth Unemployment in High Density Suburbs

The youth unemployment rate represents the proportion of individuals aged 18 to 35 who are jobless but actively searching for employment. As reported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), youth unemployment levels differ across nations, with some experiencing higher rates due to economic instability and labour market challenges. On a global scale, young people account for 43.7% of the total unemployed population (ILO, 2010). Mudonzvo (2015) highlighted that youth unemployment in Zimbabwe has become an increasingly severe social, economic, and political issue. Research conducted by Zaalouk (2013) found that in the Middle East and North Africa, youth unemployment reached 51% in these regions, significantly exceeding the global average of 25.3%.

There are several factors contribute to youth unemployment including economic turn downs, automation and structural changes, limited job opportunities, skills mismatch and political instability. According to Petersen & Mortimer (1994), when economies struggle, businesses reduce employment thereby making it harder for young people to get employed. Technological advancement also impacted employment opportunities. Ralph & Arora (2022) indicated that the rise of automation and shifts in industries reduce the availability of entry-level jobs. In Zimbabwe, continued economic crises have led to a decline of formal job market, forcing many young people into informal sector (Maulani & Agwanda, 2020).

2.5.2. Studies on the forms of Crime committed by Unemployed Youths

Some studies have been carried out on the specific types of crime associated with youth unemployment. Unemployed youths often face economic hardships and social pressures that called to involvement in various forms of crime such as property crimes, drug related crimes, violent crimes, fraud and cybercrime. For example, a study in France found a significant effect of youth unemployment on property crimes but no significant effect on overall crime rates. Akan et al 2022 posits that with the rise of digital technology unemployed youths may resort to online scams, identity theft or hacking to make money.

Another study conducted by Mazorodze (2020) focused on the relationship between unemployment and crime in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province. The study found that unemployment led to increased crime rates, particularly among young people. Many unemployed youths engage in drug trafficking or substance abuse due to financial struggles or peer influence. Adebayo and Okere (2018) analyzed the impact of unemployment on crime in Nigeria, the study found out that unemployment was a significant predictor of crime, with 1% increase in unemployment leading to a 0.7% increase in crime.

Kamau and Were (2017) investigated the impact of unemployment on crime in Kenya. The study found that unemployment was a significant predictor of crime with a 1% increase in unemployment leading to a 0.6% increase in crime. Some unemployed youths joined criminal organisations seeking financial stability and social belonging.

Studies conducted in Tanzania have also examined the impact of youth unemployment on crime in Iringa Municipality, revealing that jobless young individuals often resort to criminal activities (repository.udom.ac.tz). For example, research by Belli and Staffolani (2018) in Italy identified a positive correlation between youth unemployment and property crimes. Likewise, a study by Lehti et al. (2019) in Finland found that youth unemployment was a key factor in predicting violent offenses. These findings highlight the need to explore the relationship between youth unemployment and crime rates in the Banadir region of Mogadishu, Somalia.

Reingle Gonzalez et al. (2014) discovered that economically disadvantaged women were more vulnerable to substance abuse and involvement in crime. Together, these studies highlight the impact of unemployment-related stressors on the likelihood of engaging in illegal behaviour. Slocum (2010) established a positive link between unemployment and property crime rates in California, emphasizing how financial difficulties can drive individuals toward criminal activities. Similarly,

A study by Felson (2002) found that unemployed youths may engage in robbery, using violence or intimidation to take property from others. A study by Hinduja and Patchin (2012) found that unemployed youths may engage in online scams, including phishing, identity theft, and online harassment. Research by Yar (2013) suggests that unemployed youths may engage in hacking, either for personal gain or to disrupt online systems.

2.5.3. Studies on the Connection between Youth Unemployment and Crime rates

Research has consistently shown a strong link between youth unemployment and crime rates. However, some research suggest that the connection is not as straightforward as commonly assumed. A study in Mexico for instance found a strong correlation between youth unemployment and homicide rates, with murder rates tripling between 2008 and 2013. A study by Raphael and winter in 2001 found that while unemployment had a significant effect on property crime rates, the evidence for violent crimes was considerably weaker. Their findings suggest that economic factors alone do not fully explain crime trends, social and policy related variables play a crucial role. A study carried out in France discovered that youth unemployment significantly contributes to property crimes, although it didn't have a significant impact on overall crime rate.

A Danish social experiment by Anderson in 2021 tested whether intensified active labour market programs affected crime rates among young unemployed individuals. The study found that while active labour market programs reduced criminal convictions the effect was numerically small indicating that unemployment alone does not necessarily drive criminal behaviour. Studies in different countries supported the link between youth unemployment and crime rates.

In the Mathare slums in Nairobi, Kenya, Omboi (2020) conducted a study on the relationship between unemployment and crime in the area. The scholar was concerned in establishing the connection between the two factors, usually thought to be interdependent. The findings revealed that 76% of the respondents' unemployment was linked to a high crime rate in Mathare. The findings are in line with those of Humphry (2018), who noted that unemployment compels the youth to seek alternative means of survival, which in most cases is through petty offenses or armed crime. The researcher concluded that there is a positive relationship between unemployment and crime.

In Somalia, a study by Amal (2018) showed that there is a positive relationship between unemployment and crime rates in Bosaso city in north eastern Bari Province of Somalia. The researcher targeted the city with the aim of establishing the common causes of crime. During the study, secondary sources of information were used. The researcher targeted the employment records of the city, spanning five years (2013–2017). The unemployment reports showed a steady increase in unemployment, from 23% in 2013 to 38% in 2017. In addition to this, reports on criminal cases such as burglary, armed robbery, carjacking, and kidnapping were on the rise as the number of unemployment cases rose. The researcher established that unemployment, especially for the educated youths in the town, resulted in serious criminal activities due to their ability to plan and execute them undetected.

2.5.4. Studies on the Strategies for reducing Youth Unemployment and Crime rates

Youth unemployment a complex phenomenon which requires multifaceted solutions. One of the solutions is aligning education curricula with labour market demands to reduce skills mismatch. Another strategy is the use of vocational training to enhance skills and knowledge. Jubane (2021), contends that promoting vocational training and apprenticeship to equip young people with practical skills is vital to curb youth unemployment. Some research has been carried out on the strategies that can be employed to address the problem of youth unemployment and crime. Mhazo (2019) suggested reducing bureaucratic barriers to start or run businesses as well as encouraging entrepreneurship through financial support and mentorship programs for youth can useful to reduce youth unemployment challenges. A study by Moyo (2015) found that vocational training programs can be an effective strategy for reducing youth unemployment in Zimbabwe.

Nyede (2020) conducted a study on the effectiveness of job placement programs in addressing youth unemployment in South Africa, concluding that such initiatives can play a crucial role in reducing both unemployment and crime among young people. Expanding job creation efforts and investing in

labor-intensive sectors like agriculture and manufacturing can generate more employment opportunities for the youth. Similarly, Mhlanga (2018) examined job creation as a strategy to combat youth unemployment in Zimbabwe, finding that such programs can significantly help lower unemployment and crime rates. Petersen and Mortimer (1994) advocated for public-private partnerships as a means to create more job opportunities.

2.6. Gap analysis

The available literature reveals an interplay between and crime rates, however, specific studies focusing on the ages between 18 to 35 years are limited. Most studies discuss youth unemployment in other countries and in Zimbabwe broadly but there is lack of detailed analysis specific to Epworth high density suburb. The reviewed studies may have the same findings with the current study but given the fact that these studies were done in other countries, the current study has potential to reveal different findings. Also, there is limited empirical research directly linking youth unemployment to crime rates among convicted youths in Epworth. Thus, the study is not a duplicate of any other related previously done studies but to cover a gap in the body of knowledge.

2.7. Summary

This chapter has examined literature on the impact of unemployment on crime and the strategies that can be implemented to reduce unemployment while simultaneously addressing criminal activity. The focus of this research is to explore the connection between youth unemployment and crime rates. The following chapter presents the research methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

The previous chapter provided a review of relevant literature. This chapter outlines the methodology used in the study, detailing the research approach, design, target population, sampling techniques, research instruments, reliability measures, ethical considerations, as well as procedures for data collection, presentation, and analysis. According to Creswell (2014), research methodology refers to a structured process for planning and executing research, encompassing the techniques, procedures, and tools employed to gather, analyse, and interpret data.

Research methodology plays a crucial role in ensuring that a study is conducted with rigor and reliability. Its primary objective is to allow the research findings to be applicable to other contexts and populations. Additionally, it supports a thorough assessment of the results by helping to identify limitations and potential biases.

3.1. Research Design and Justification

Research design can be thought of as the logic or master plan of a research that throws light on how the study is to be conducted. According to the Cresswell (2013), research design is a systematic plan adopted for the purpose of collecting information which provides answers during research. Welman and Kruger (2001) define a research design as a plan to which one obtains research participants and collects information from them to investigate the research problem. It shows how all of the major parts of the research study, the samples

or groups, measures, treatments or programs, etc. work together in an attempt to address the research questions.

This study employed an exploratory survey research design to gather data using a semi-structured questionnaires and interviews as well as focus group discussions. According to Anderson and Lightfoot (2022), exploratory survey research is a flexible and adaptive mixed method approach to fulfill the study's objectives. According to Creswell (2014), a mixed-methods approach enables researchers to gather both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Exploratory design permits the identification of key variables and relationships that may not have been considered at the outset (Brink, 1998). It enhances the generalizability of findings to other contexts, thereby strengthening the study's validity. By providing a comprehensive analysis, the exploratory design offers deeper insights into the link between youth unemployment and crime rates. However, exploratory research design can be time-consuming, requiring extensive data collection and analysis. The design can be complex, requiring advanced statistical analysis and theoretical knowledge.

3.2. Target population

Target population is a specific group of people with particular characteristics that researchers aim to study and draw conclusions from. It is a subset of the general public that the program is designed to serve and for whom outcomes will be measured. Target population is identified and isolated based on certain characteristics such as age, gender, geographic, culture, status. The target population for this study comprises of Police Officers, Councilors and youths both males and females ranging between the ages of 18-35 years residing in Epworth who have been convicted of criminal offences for period extending from January 2020 to December 2024. Diverse selection was crucial for obtaining a comprehensive understanding on the relationship of youth unemployment and crime rates. Addresses and personal information of convicted youths was obtained from the ZRP Epworth Crime Register.

3.3. Sampling Procedures

Sampling is defined as the act, process, or technique for selecting a sample (Kindy et al., 2016). Purposive sampling was used in selecting the participants in the study. Purposive sampling is sampling that is aimed at gathering data from individuals who stand a better chance of providing accurate information as they are the ones who are likely to have proper knowledge of the subject under study. This was followed by stratification of the youths according to the eight wards then simple random sampling was carried out in each stratum. ZRP Epworth Crime Register was used to select convicted youths. Purposive sampling was used to include convicted youths, Police Officers, and Councilors.

3.4. Samples

A sample is a subset of a population selected to participate in the study. According to Shukla (2020), sample size refers to the number of participants chosen from the population to represent the entire population. Purposive sampling, was used in selecting all the research respondents. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where units are selected based on specific characteristics or experiences that align with research objectives (Nikolopoulou, 2023). Four odd number wards were surveyed using a questionnaire whereby 25 participants per ward were selected giving a total of 100 youths, four even number wards were surveyed through focus group discussions whereby each group per ward had a total of six participants ranging between the age group of 18- 35 years who have been convicted of crime. Five interviews with 1 police officer and 4 councilors were conducted. The reason for sampling is because it is cost-effective as well as time-efficient. Sampling can increase the accuracy of research findings by reducing the risk of errors and biases associated with studying a large population (Babbie, 2016).

3.5. Research Instruments

Research instruments are tools or methods used to collect data in a research study. According to Babbie (2016), research instruments are the devices or techniques used to measure or collect data such as questionnaires, interview schedules, and observation protocols. Research instruments can be surveys and questionnaires, interviews, observations or document analysis. This research relied on focus group discussions, questionnaires and interviews for data collection.

3.5.1. Semi-structured Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a primary research tool featuring a series of questions designed to collect useful information from respondents. According to Cohen (2013), a questionnaire is the instrument for collecting the primary data. Questionnaires have various uses most notably to discover what the masses are thinking. These include; feedback, evaluations, and social science research (O' Leary, 2014).

Questionnaires allow researchers to generate data specific to their own research, reach a large number of respondents, allow for comparisons as well as generate standardized, quantifiable, empirical data.

However as asserted by O' Leary (2014), questionnaires are time consuming, expensive and difficult to get right as they often do not go as planned. Some selected participants may be unwilling to be involved in the research process as they consider it to be a waste of their time. The researcher put a lot of effort to ensure the success of data collection using this instrument. The questionnaires were issued to the youths.

3.5.2. Focus group discussions

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a qualitative research tool in which a small group of participants typically 6 to 12 people engage in a guided discussion led by a moderator. The purpose is to explore participants' perspectives, experiences, attitudes and opinions on a specific topic in a social and interactive

setting (Krueger and Casey, 2015). Focus group discussions facilitate in depth exploration of complex issues that may be difficult to capture through surveys. They encourage interaction and exchange of ideas and they are cost effective approach to gathering diverse viewpoints in a relatively short time (Cohen et al, 2011).

3.5.3. Semi-structured Interview

For this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews with respondents who are members of the police and councilors. A structured interview is a systematic approach to interviewing where a researcher asks some predetermined questions to all respondents in the same order, to collect data on a topic. A structured interview is applicable to qualitative research with the use of open-ended questions. An interview guide was constructed and used in the research so as to stick to the objectives of the research. An interview guide is a simple tool that is used for the interviews.

Structured interviews are advantageous to the researcher because the interviewer can clarify unclear questions, give room for guidance by the interviewer and they make the respondent feel as part of the team and freely participate in the research. Interviews will be carried out with law enforcement officers, and councilors.

3.6. Validity and Reliability

Taherdoost (2016) defines reliability as the extent to which a research instrument consistently produces the same results when applied in identical conditions on multiple occasions. To ensure the validity of the research instruments, a pilot test was conducted before finalizing and implementing them for data collection. Triangulation of data with published literature ensured reliability of findings. Additionally, the variables used for data collection were based on internationally recognized research standards and established studies in the field. Pilot testing helps identify and resolve any ambiguities in the

instruments, allowing for the refinement and rewording of questions to enhance the effectiveness of data collection.

3.7. Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was carried out through both qualitative and quantitative methods to comprehensively address the research objectives. Four focus group discussion with 6 members per ward was held. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to those who have been once convicted. The questionnaires and cover letters explaining the study and confidentiality conditions were distributed by hand personally through the ZRP Officer in Charge. Five interviews were conducted with the police Officer in Charge and four councilors. The respondents were contacted ahead of time and informed about the intentions of the researcher.

3.8. Data Presentation and Analysis

Data is typically collected in its unprocessed form, making it challenging to interpret. Therefore, it must be summarized, processed, and analysed to extract meaningful insights. In this study, data from the case study was analysed using descriptive statistics for the quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Data was presented using both textual and graphical formats including coded themes and frequency tables, graphs and charts.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

All participants in the study provided informed consent before taking part. Research participants may unintentionally experience harm, which can be physical, emotional, psychological, or otherwise (Johnson & Christensen, 2016). Therefore, it is the responsibility of researchers to inform participants of any potential risks associated with their involvement in the study.

Approval was sought from the relevant authorities before commencing data collection. A number of considerations were made when carrying out the study, which includes seeking permission to carry out the study. The researcher sought for permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Bindura University to carry out the research and the guidance of the supervisor was followed. Further, permission to gain access to data was obtained from the Police Department authorities. All research participants gave informed consent with no coercion used to force them to answer any part of the questionnaires or interviews. Babbie (2016) said that participation by respondents should be voluntary without any undue influence. The researcher ensured that none of the respondents was harmed during the research process. A commitment was made to keep the responses private and confidential.

Additionally, all reporting in the study was conducted with strict adherence to maintaining respondent anonymity, unless adult participants had explicitly consented to their identities being disclosed. Safeguarding participant privacy, ensuring confidentiality, and preserving the anonymity of collected data were fundamental principles of the study. The researcher took measures to prevent the disclosure of names or any identifying details. Moreover, no benefits or compensation were provided to participants, and they were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Lastly, the researcher properly credited the work of others to uphold academic integrity and prevent plagiarism.

3.10. Summary

This chapter covered several key aspects, including the research design, details of the study population, sample size, and sampling procedures. It also addressed participant selection in relation to the target population. Various data collection methods, such as semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, were discussed. Additionally, the chapter examined the validity and reliability of the research instruments, along with the procedures for data collection and analysis. Ethical considerations guiding the study were also

outlined. The next chapter will focus on presenting, analysing, and interpreting the data collected through the research instruments.

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research methodology that was followed by the research in gathering data. This chapter presents the analysis of data collected through focus group discussions, semi-structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to explore the relationship between youth unemployment and crime rates in Epworth, Harare. The research specifically sought to establish the prevalence and factors contributing to youth unemployment to determine the connection between youth unemployment and high crimes rates and to recommend strategies to address youth unemployment and reduce crime rates in Epworth, Harare. The findings are organized thematically to address the research objectives of the study.

4.1. Response Rate

According to Creswell (2020), response rate refers to the percentage of participants who complete and return a survey or questionnaire. The questionnaire survey achieved 86% response rate for the youths as indicated in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Response rate.

Respondents	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Returned	Percentage Response
Youths	100	89	89%
Total	100	89	89%

Source: Primary data- questionnaires

A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to convicted individuals and 89 were returned thereby achieving 89% response rate which indicates a high level of engagement from the participants. Typically, response rates above 70% are considered excellent in survey research, especially when dealing with sensitive groups, such as individuals who were once convicted. This suggests that the participants were willing to share their experiences and opinions, which can contribute to a more reliable and insightful analysis.

4.2. Demographic data of Respondents

Table 4.2 Personal Data of Respondence

Variable		Frequency	Percentage %
Sex	Male	81	91%
	Female	8	9%
Education	Degree	2	2%
	Diploma	5	6%
	Certificate	7	8%
	O level	20	22%
	None	55	62%

Source: Primary data - questionnaires

4.2.1. Distribution by sex

Table 4.2 above shows that majority 91% of former convict youths were males and 9% were female youths. The high male representation aligns with global trends showing greater male involvement in criminal activities. The findings show that male youths are significantly more likely to be involved in criminal

activities compared to female youths. Generally criminal matters are mainly dominated by men.

4.2.2. Distribution by education

Table 4.2 shows that a large percentage of former convicts (62%) have no formal education beyond O-levels, which may contribute to limited employment prospects. Educational qualification was considered important for this study as it is a key factor to get employment. Majority had no skills and knowledge for them to be employed. When educational attainment is low, youths often struggle to access stable jobs resulting in them engaging in informal or illegal activities as a means of survival.

4.3. Prevalence and factors causing youth unemployment

62% of the questionnaire respondents have no formal education beyond O-levels, this majority representation suggests a lack of skills and knowledge which may contribute to limited employment prospects. Furthermore, a greater number of respondents cited Zimbabwe's economic crisis as a primary barrier to job creation and limited access to vocational training, therefore youth unemployment in Epworth is notably high as asserted by FDG 1 respondent R4

"Factories have closed, and even those with degrees struggle to find jobs."

Many unemployed youths in Epworth experience frustration and desperation due to financial insecurity and social pressures. The data reveal varying coping mechanisms to this including taking up odd jobs or resorting to crime in order to make ends meet. Some of the youths emphasized that they view being unemployed as a failure therefore they do whatever possible to get an income including criminal activities sometimes knowingly or unknowingly. Majority indicated that they survive on touting as a source of income which is also a crime. This aligns with the Strain Theory which suggests that young individuals, particularly those experiencing poverty, may resort to criminal activities when they are unable to achieve material success through legitimate means. This is supported by Polk & Tait (1990) who echoed that the growing number of marginalized youths has led some to engage in illegal activities for both economic survival and social reasons.

Additionally, an interview with Councilor X revealed the following perspective,

“Unemployment is one of the major causes of crime among the youth. Idleness result in them engaging in touting and formation of gangs within communities.”

4.4. Connection between youth unemployment and crime rates.

Table 4.2 link between unemployment and crime rate.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No link	5	5.6%
Lesser Extent	12	13.5%
Moderate extent	21	23.5%
Greater Extent	51	57.4%

Source: primary data- questionnaire

57,4% of respondents believed that unemployment have a greater extent influence on crime rates while 23,5% perceived a moderate link and 13,5% saw a lesser extent of connection. A minority of the respondents believed there was no link between youths’ unemployment and crime rates. This aligns with findings from focus group discussions and interviews which emphasized unemployment as a major crime driver in Epworth. FDG 3 RESPONDENT M2 revealed the following,

"When you are unemployed you will do anything for money even touting or stealing."

On the other hand, our police respondent supported the link between unemployment and crime from the following in an interview,

"Unemployment has turned brothers into criminals, same person who will give his last dollar can stab you for a cellphone tomorrow."

Clearly there is a disconnect between education and employment because even the few learned youths are also resorting to crime due to unemployment as said by FDG 2 respondent S6,

"I studied accounting for 4 years but ended up faking invoices for dealers to survive because I couldn't secure formal employment."

Data collected confirmed a strong correlation between youth unemployment and crime rates driven by economic hardships, lack of education and social disorganisation. According to respondents, lack of income pushes most youths into illegal survival strategies which aligns with the Strain theory which emphasises that economic deprivation pushes youths towards illegal income sources. Unemployment leads to gang formation and peer-influenced crime. According to interview respondents, idle youths form gangs starting with drugs then graduating to theft and muggings. One respondent alluded that when one has nothing to do as a result of unemployment, they will follow friends into crime just to belong. This is supported by the social disorganisation theory which asserts that weak community structures exacerbate criminal behaviour.

When the youths feel socially isolated, they regard themselves as a minority who have been marginalized against access to public resources. This makes them resort to crime so as to gain a fair share of the resources.

From the focus group discussions held with the youths on the contribution of unemployment to criminal behaviour, they indicated that unemployment greatly contributes to criminal behaviour among young people as explained by FDG 4 respondent Z1 who had this to say:

'The main reason of engaging in criminal behaviour is being idle and lack of engagement. When someone is employed, they go to work in the morning and knock off in the evening leaving no time to commit crime.'

Z6 from the same group offered the following sentiments:

'I agree with what has been said because as young people we get a lot of pressure from parents who wine us of especially after completing secondary education with poor results. They expect you to fend for yourself by getting employed but unfortunately there are no jobs and you still have to prove that you can hustle and get money even if it means through criminal activities.'

This view was in line with R3 from FG1 who explained on the types of crime that are likely to be committed by unemployed youths:

‘Most of the unemployed youths in the communities firstly engage in drug related crimes because of idleness however because of the need to finance the acquisition of the drugs, they engage in property theft dealing in items which they feel can be sold fast and that ends up a habit often leading to more serious crimes.’

However, despite a strong establishment of a link between unemployment and crime rate in Epworth, Harare, some respondents had contradicting views including Councilor Y who shared the following perspective in an interview,

‘What I can only say is that criminal offences amongst the youths are on a rise and though there is a strong relationship between unemployment and crime I cannot certainly conclude that the rise is due to unemployment.’

These responses indicate that unemployment has an influence on the youths’ criminal behaviour. Unemployed youths tend to have more free time to engage in criminal activities. They are susceptible to peer pressure as they collect in gangs which emerge as a result of the urge to pass time. According to the Strain Theory, the greater the stressors or strains an individual experiences in life, the higher their likelihood of becoming involved in criminal activities. The theory further explains that people may turn to crime as a means of escaping or alleviating strain, using it as a shortcut to overcome their challenges. In this context, unemployment acts as a significant stressor that can drive individuals toward criminal behaviour.

4.5. Strategies to address youth unemployment and crime rates in Epworth, Harare

The focus group discussions held with the youths on the influence of unemployment on crime rate included suggestions on what could be done to assist the youth and reduce crime rate. The following responses were obtained. S3 from FG2 said:

'If the government cannot create employment, then it should at least empower us through some income generating projects. They should provide the youths with some start-up capital for the projects.'

R2 from FG1 responded:

'The government should give us support through community based-projects as well as job placement and career development programs.'

M4 from FG3 responded:

'The government should provide training and development services as well as counselling as criminal behaviour can end up addictive. Proper rehabilitation is required in some cases.'

In line with intervention strategies towards the reduction of crime the law enforcers were asked whether they have strategies or initiatives implemented to address youth crime and unemployment in their jurisdictions. The law enforcers highlighted that they engage in crime awareness campaigns to concertize the youth on the dangers and effects of engaging in criminal activities. One of the officers responded:

'We can only go as far as making the youths aware of the dangers and effects of criminal activities through crime awareness campaigns at social gatherings, school and even through the social media. We also recruit police officers and we target the youth and that way they can get employed and earn a living.'

Another responded:

'We collaborate with the community through establishing the neighbourhood watch committees as a way of controlling the community and educating them about the benefits of being a law-abiding citizen'.

Councilor W highlighted the following,

"Most community youth support groups such as DREAMS in Epworth focus on female youths aged 16-24 therefore, there is need to establish support groups for male youths as well to reduce the high contribution of males who often commit more crimes than females"

4.6. Summary

The chapter has presented the results from the data collected on the influence of youth unemployment on crime rates. The results were presented using graphs and tables followed by an analysis of the results. The next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

The relationship between youth unemployment and crime rates has been a significant topic among researchers and the general public. Due to challenges of economic instability, social inequality, and rising crime rates, it is imperative to seek an understanding of the complex dynamics of the link between youth unemployment and crime among high density suburbs. This chapter seeks to present the summary, conclusions and recommendations emanating from the study on the relation of youth unemployment and crime rate.

5.1. Summary of Major Findings

- The study found a significant correlation between youth unemployment and crime rate in Epworth, Harare.
- The study found out that there are very high levels of youth unemployment in Epworth, Harare resulting from a variety of factors which range from individual factors to socio-economic factors related to the level of development of the nation.
- It was noted that a majority of convicted youths are also uneducated lacking in basic entry level skills and knowledge required for formal employment.
- The study also uncovered that youth unemployment influences decisions that are made by the youths such as engaging in criminal activities.

- Factors such as access to education, family structure, community support, and availability of alternative income sources play a crucial role in determining decisions taken by the youths and how youth respond to unemployment.
- It was discovered that some youths' programmes offered by DREAMS only focused on female youths while ignoring male youths.

5.2. Conclusions

The study established that lack of employment opportunities which makes the youths resort to crime. Unemployment causes social instability, lowers self-esteem, and leads to poverty. This research concludes that unemployment influences youth involvement in crime to a greater extent. The findings align with those of Koln (2016), who established that criminal gangs arise when there is unemployment. Several factors related to unemployment were identified to have an influence on the involvement of youths in crime. Poverty, lack of access to basic resources, and economic hardships were some of the factors mentioned by the youths in their responses.

The research has yielded mixed results on the relationship between youth unemployment and crime rates. Not all types of crimes can be attributed to youth unemployment. The impact of youth unemployment can vary across different regions and across different forms of crime.

5.3. Recommendations

In light of the above conclusions, it is recommended that:

- Organizations offering humanitarian services and governments should find income-generating activities for the youth to engage in to minimize youth involvement in crime. Inclusivity should be considered to cater for both female and male youths.

- Government and non-governmental organizations, together with educational institutions should collaborate to develop and implement comprehensive academic and vocational programs that equip young individuals with relevant skills and training which enhances youth employability and reduces their susceptibility to criminal activities through engagement. Youths should be provided with opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, and skills development.

- Community support systems should be strengthened to provide a safety net for unemployed youth. Initiatives that foster mentorship, guidance, and psychological support should be put in place so as to help alleviate hopelessness and frustration associated with unemployment. Youths should be discouraged from negative peer influences so that they make informed decisions and desist from criminal behaviour.

- Entrepreneurship and pathways for self-employment should be encouraged amongst the youth as they can offer viable alternatives to traditional employment. Microfinance initiatives and business incubators can empower youth to generate income through legal means.

- Policymakers should prioritize policies that promote inclusive economic growth, address systemic inequalities, and create an enabling environment for job creation. This may involve incentivizing private sector investment, improve infrastructure, and streamline regulations.

- Collaboration among various stakeholders, including government bodies, civil society organizations, international partners, and local communities, is essential to effectively tackle the interlinked challenges of youth unemployment and crime rates. Multifaceted interventions should draw upon diverse expertise and resources.

- Donors should not have to exert excessive effort to reach those in need. Systems and policies must streamline access to ensure that aid swiftly and efficiently reaches the less privileged. Bureaucratic hurdles and unnecessary complexities should not stand in the way of generosity.

5.4. Recommendations for Further Research

This study recommends that further research be conducted on matters diversity and inclusivity on sponsored youth programmes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research instruments

Questionnaire for the Youths

My name is **Lizzie Nyandoro**, I am a student at the Bindura University of Science Education carrying out research entitled ‘**Exploring the relationship between youth unemployment and crime rates, a case study of Epworth Suburb, Harare**’. You are kindly asked to assist by responding to the questionnaire. You are assured that no information that may reveal your identity will be included in this study. You are further assured that your identity shall not be divulged to anyone in any way and all the information you provide shall be treated with confidentiality and be used purely for academic purposes. Should you feel you no longer want to participate in this research; you are free to withdraw at any point. Furthermore, you are advised that you shall not suffer any harm as a result of this study.

SECTION A DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Sex

Male	
Female	

2. Educational Qualifications

Degree	
Diploma	
Certificate	
Masters	
PHD	

SECTION B: Prevalence and factors causing youth unemployment

3. What can you say about the level of unemployment in the country?
.....
.....
.....
.....
4. What is the current rate of youth unemployment in Epworth, Harare, and how has it changed over the past decade?
.....
.....
.....
5. What do think are the possible causes of youth unemployment?
.....
.....
.....
6. Have you ever felt pressure to engage in illegal activities to make ends meet?
.....
.....
.....
7. Can you please share the types of offenses you have been convicted of in the past, and describe the circumstances?
.....
.....
.....

Section C: Connection between youth unemployment and crime

8. Do you believe there is a link between unemployment and crime? Why or why not?
.....
.....
.....

9. To what extent does youth unemployment influence crime rates?

None	
Lesser Extent	
Moderate extent	
Greater Extent	

Explain.....

Section D: Strategies to reduce youth unemployment and crime rates

10. What strategies that can be implemented to address youth unemployment and crime?

.....

11. How can community engagement and local governance initiatives help address the root causes of youth unemployment and crime in Epworth, and what role can youth play in these efforts?

.....

Thank you for your time!

Focus Group Discussion Questions for Youths

Introduction

Good morning/Afternoon everyone, I would like to thank you in participating in today's focus group discussion. My name is **Lizzie Nyandoro** I am a student at the Bindura University of Science Education carrying out research entitled '**Exploring the relationship between youth unemployment and crime rates, a case study of Epworth Suburb, Harare**'. I will be facilitating our discussion today. The purpose of this discussion is to gather your thoughts, opinions and experiences with regards to youth unemployment and crime rate. Your input will be very helpful in understanding the relationship between youth unemployment and crime rate.

Before we begin, I would want to assure you that this discussion will be conducted in a safe and respectful environment. All opinions and experiences shared will be kept confidential and anonymous. We shall be discussing several items related to youth unemployment and crime. Feel free to share your thoughts, ask questions, and discuss with each other. No contribution will be regarded as wrong.

Now, let's get started, our first Question is:

1. What does unemployment mean to you, and how do you think it affects young people in your community?
2. Have you experienced unemployment? How does it affect you?

Prevalence and causes of youth unemployment in Epworth, Harare

3. Have you ever felt desperate or frustrated due to unemployment? How did you cope with the situation?
4. What are the primary socio-economic and educational factors contributing to youth unemployment in Epworth?
5. How do structural issues such as access to job markets, infrastructure, and government support influence youth unemployment in Epworth?
6. Have you engaged in criminal activities as a result of unemployment?

Connection between youth unemployment and high crime rates

7. How does the level of youth unemployment in Epworth correlate with the incidence of criminal activities, such as theft, drug abuse, and violent crimes?
8. What role do economic deprivation and lack of job opportunities play in driving young people in Epworth towards criminal behavior?

Strategies to reduce youth unemployment and crime rates

9. What do you think can better support young people to prevent unemployment and crime?
10. What strategies or initiatives has your agency implemented to address youth crime and unemployment?
11. Is there anything that you'd like to add or discuss further regarding the topic of youth unemployment and crime rates?

Interview Guide for Law Enforcers and Councilors

My name is **Lizzie Nyandoro**, I am a student at the Bindura University of Science Education carrying out research entitled '**Exploring the relationship between youth unemployment and crime rates, a case study of Epworth Suburb, Harare**'. You are kindly asked to assist by responding to the Interview questions. You are assured that no information that may reveal your identity will be included in this study. You are further assured that your identity shall not be divulged to anyone in any way and all the information you provide shall be treated with confidentiality and be used purely for academic purposes. Should you feel you no longer want to participate in this research; you are free to withdraw at any point. Furthermore, you are advised that you shall not suffer any harm as a result of this study.

1. What percentage of the youth population in Epworth, Harare is currently unemployed, and how has this changed over the past five years?
2. What factors contributing to youth unemployment in Epworth?
3. How do structural issues such as access to job markets, infrastructure, and government support influence youth unemployment in Epworth?
4. How does the level of youth unemployment in Epworth correlate with the incidence of criminal activities, such as theft, drug abuse, and violent crimes?
5. What role do economic deprivation and lack of job opportunities play in driving young people in Epworth towards criminal behavior?
6. To what extent do local authorities and community programs address the link between youth unemployment and crime, and how effective have these interventions been?
7. How can community engagement and local governance initiatives help address the root causes of youth unemployment and crime in Epworth, and what role can youth play in these efforts?

8. What strategies that can be implemented to address youth unemployment and crime?

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