



Delinquent behaviours influencing learners' academic achievement at secondary schools in Nemanwa community, Zimbabwe

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Abstract – This study explores the influence of juvenile delinquent behaviours on learners' academic achievement at secondary schools. This study employed a qualitative interpretive approach through a phenomenological research design. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews. Twenty-four participants were purposively sampled from three secondary schools in Nemanwa Community in Masvingo District, Zimbabwe. Participants involved three school heads, three senior teachers, six disciplinary committee members, and twelve secondary school learners. The thematic findings revealed that pathogenic family patterns, such as juvenile delinquent behaviours could negatively influence the learners' academic achievement. Pathogenic family patterns include broken homes, poverty, orphanhood, domestic violence, divorce, and child-headed families. The results further demonstrated that peer-related delinquent behaviours such as violence, substance abuse, bullying, prostitution, disobedience, absenteeism, and peer influence could influence learners' academic achievement negatively or positively. This study recommends that parents, teachers, law enforcement agents, policymakers, human rights organisations, and the community should work hand in hand to curb delinquent behaviours and promote academic achievement at secondary schools.

Keywords: Juvenile Delinquency, Academic Achievement, Delinquent behaviours, learners, Secondary School

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I. INTRODUCTION

JUVENILE delinquency is becoming a global and local phenomenon in contemporary society. Carson and Butcher (2013) asserted that delinquent behaviours are one of childhood and adolescence's most worrying and extensive problems. Delinquent behaviours could be explained by various unacceptable acts such as destruction and vandalizing community assets, violence against others, behaviours conflicting with the needs and violation of others' rights, and violating society's laws (Kenchadze, 2015). Carson and Butcher (2013) posited that personal pathology, pathogenic family patterns, unwelcome peer relationships, socio-cultural factors, and stress could be factors in juvenile delinquency. Dandapani (2020) found that the breakup of family ties, overcrowding, inadequate play facilities, low morale exhibited in electronic and print media, and criminalization of politics could also lead to delinquent behaviours among youths.

The Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics (2013) revealed that the average number of years for the first arrest had dropped significantly in the United States, and younger boys and girls are committing crimes. Between 60 and 80% of adolescents and pre-adolescents engaged in the juvenile offense. Statistics revealed that poverty could significantly influence Black and Latino teenagers to commit juvenile crimes (The Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics, 2013). Poverty and low socioeconomic status could predict low parental monitoring, harsh parenting, and association with deviant peer groups, all of which are associated with juvenile offending. Studies have been reported that African youth involved in crimes. Oakes (2012) asserted that Sudanese

and Somali-born Victorians are five times more likely to commit crimes than the wider community. Sudanese are the most common type, consisting of 29.5% and 24.3% of all offenses (Oakes, 2012). Sudanese are also involved in stealing money and iPhones and are violent (Oakes, 2012). In Nigeria today, prisons are filled with delinquents who have committed various crimes (Oakes, 2012).

Southern Africa is historically reputed as a region characterized by violence and conflict in pursuit of independence from external colonial or imperial rulers or internally between competing political or ideological factions (Gutteridge & Spence, 2013). Similarly, school children experienced violence in South Africa, Swaziland, and Mozambique (Gutteridge & Spence, 2013).

It is important to note that school violence could reflect its community patterns, for example, bullying, assault, sexual violence, and stealing. A violence survey in South African schools found that primary and high school learners reported high assaults (Gutteridge & Spence, 2013). In South Africa, juvenile offenders and victims are becoming younger, and the number of juveniles arrested for serious crimes such as housebreaking, robbery, rape, and assault is increasing (Gutteridge & Spence, 2013).

Over a decade, the Republic of Zimbabwe experienced a rise in juvenile delinquency cases. Matutu and Mususa (2019) revealed that roughly half of all youth arrested are made in Zimbabwe on theft, assault, drug abuse, and disorderly accounts. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2011a) statistics showed theft as the most significant cause of youth arrests. Drug abuse violations by juveniles accounted for 198.400 of the 1999 arrests and 203.900 of the 2000 arrests (The OJJDP, 2011a). Violent crime accounted for 103.900 of the 2000 arrests. However, the figures could be much higher because

some cases are not reported to the police by parents or school authorities (The OJJDP, 2011a).

Defense of Children International-Zimbabwe (2011) reported that 10 Murehwa High School Form 3 students were expelled after stealing a pig from the school sites and roasting it. The rate of juvenile delinquency has ballooned to dizzy heights, as evidenced by an article in the Sunday News of 6-12 November 2011 entitled "Female students 'baptise' others with urine. The female students from Evelyn Girls High School in Bulawayo allegedly flogged other students and forced them to drink urine from toilets. To raise money for fees, food, accommodation, and transport, some learners from low-income families and child-headed families in Nemanwa Community engage in delinquent behaviours such as theft and prostitution. Some female students fall pregnant and drop out of school, while some male students commit sex crimes and robbery, risking being jailed. Many male students were sent to prison, for example, Mutimurefu Prison and other prisons in Zimbabwe, for sex offenses.

There has been a long-time notion that the key criterion to judge one's true potentialities and capabilities while at school is perhaps academic achievement (Kimaro & Machumu, 2015). Academic achievement is the ability of a student to study and remember facts and communicate his knowledge orally or in written form, even in an examination condition (Kpolovie, Joe, & Okoto, 2014). Academic achievement refers to observed and measured aspects of a student's mastery of skills and subject contents as measured with valid and reliable tests (Joe, Kpolovie, Osonwa, & Iderima, 2014). Therefore, Academic achievement is a yardstick for ascertaining a student's capabilities from which his overt, covert, inherent, or unrevealed abilities could be inferred. In this study, academic achievement is in the context of learning and being able to communicate what has been learned orally, in written form, or practically. High academic achievement has been shown to reduce the risk of involvement in delinquency (Hoffman, Bennett, & Mar, 2016; Murray & Farrington, 2010; van Lier et al., 2012).

Research on delinquency's influence on secondary school learners' academic achievement has been rare in Zimbabwe. Mambende, Nyandoro, and Saweti (2016) revealed that the family environment has a significant influence on the development of a child and subsequently on creating a delinquent predisposition, and Tshuma (2015) found that there was a relationship between child abuse and delinquency among adolescents, while Manguvo, Whitney, and Chareka (2011) revealed that most teachers perceived that the prevailing macro-economic environment had a significant impact on student misbehaviours. None of the research studies above was carried out in Nemanwa Community, especially regarding the influence of juvenile delinquency on academic achievement, hence the need to carry out this study. The study will add to the limited literature in Zimbabwe on the influence of delinquency on secondary school learners' academic achievement.

Pathogenic family patterns

A stable family is a critical element of effective transitioning from adolescence to adulthood (Vanassche, Sodermans, Matthijs, & Swicegood, 2014); therefore, the type of family a juvenile grows up in significantly impacts their likelihood of delinquent behaviours. Pathogenic family patterns are related to undesirable or harmful family attitudes, standards, and behaviours that lay the groundwork for mental and behaviour disorders (APA, 2022). For example, parental rejection, triangulation of the adolescent into the marital relationship between the parents, and excessively harsh, excessively lenient, or inconsistent discipline. Pathogenic family patterns are associated with a high frequency of problems such as:

- A disrupted family is characterised by incompleteness, whether due to death, divorce, separation, or other circumstances.
- A disturbed family is characterised by the non-satisfaction of one or both parents from relationships that may express frustration.
- Antisocial families are those families that espouse unacceptable values as a result of the influence of parents on their children.
- An inadequate family is characterised by the inability to cope with

the everyday problems of family living (Wattpad, 2022).

A 2007 study by Van Peer and Carrette on the effects of family types, family relationships, and parental role models on delinquency among adolescents showed that children of intact families were shown to be less likely to exhibit delinquent behaviours than children from broken families. The absence of a parent is highly associated with juvenile delinquency (Sogar, 2017). Single working parents may be so busy being the only parent in the home that they lack time to create a parent-child relationship (Singh & Kiran, 2014). Less monitoring creates more opportunities for children to engage in delinquency and supports the idea that family configuration is the critical variable in predicting a child's engagement in delinquency (Sogar, 2017). Similarly, Oyedele, Chikwature, and Manyange (2016) revealed that orphaned students' academic achievement is poor, resulting from challenges they face, such as a lack of resources to meet their basic needs of food, shelter, education, and health care and they experience stigma and bullying at school. Ganga and Chapeta (2013) showed that children from child-headed families do poorly in academic circles. The study also revealed that a lack of parental figures and resources exacerbates children's poor performance.

Researchers have documented that family conflict is associated with several outcomes, including aggression, antisocial behaviours, depression, and low self-esteem (Mowen & Boman, 2018). This can lead to delinquency and offending, as well as family conflict. Due to stress hormones, brain functioning can be altered when a child is exposed to stress over a long time in a family of conflict. Conflict in the home might lead to diminished thinking, lack of problem-solving and reasoning skills, and memory problems (Berk, 2013). Behaviours in children who experience marital strife include acting out, turning inward, and the ability to interact with others. Some children become progressively angry, lack coping skills, and exhibit violent behaviours, delinquency, and gang involvement (Berk, 2013). Several investigators have pointed to the high incidence of broken homes and missing parental figures in the delinquency background. Generally, delinquency seems to be much more common among youths from homes broken by parental separation or divorce than from homes broken by the death of a parent, suggesting that parental conflict may be a key element in causing delinquency (Carson & Butcher, 2013). Chauke and Abadire (2019) revealed that a lack of parental nurturing and supervision affects young people's academic achievement. The study found that lack of parental role, financial issues, family problems, lack of pastoral support, and lack of emotional support all contribute to poor academic achievement.

Alexander and Thomas (2010) revealed that parental rejection, hostility, poor communication, and ineffective supervision of children are significant risk factors for adolescent delinquent behaviours. In a study of 26 aggressive delinquent boys, Bandura and Walters in Carson and Butcher (2013) exposed a pattern in which rejection by the father was combined with inconsistent handling of the boy by both parents. To complete the pathogenic picture, the father stereotypically used physically punitive methods of discipline, thus modelling aggressive behaviours. Children from violent homes do not have their school needs met by their parents, have poor relations with peers, and are hardly in school; they resort to aggression, lying, stealing, and running away from home (Carson & Butcher, 2013). Children who experience numerous forms of violence are at risk of poor educational outcomes (UNICEF, 2012).

Poverty often reduces the ability of a parent to sufficiently provide the affection and support needed to create bonds with their children, which results in an increased risk of negative behaviours (Banovcinova, Levicka, & Veres, 2014). Shong et al. (2019) report that financial adversities may result in spiritual, emotional, and material deprivation, which can increase antisocial behaviours in children. Living in poverty upsets brain development and will result in behavioural problems in the classroom (Dike, 2017). A child that goes to school on an empty stomach will not focus on school resulting in poor academic achievement (Haque & Islam, 2018). Children who live in homes with little parental

interaction, fewer books to read, and fewer chances for cognitive stimulation lack confidence, leading to future academic failure (Cedeno, Martinez-Arias, & Bueno, 2016).

Peer Influence

It is essential to consider that families play a vital role in children's socialization, growth, and school achievement. Beardslee et al. (2018) pointed out friends modify learners' behaviours. Peer groups could influence learners' behaviours because they spend most of their time with peers rather than parents. In peer groups, learners could engage in substance abuse. Osman, Ydhag, and Månsson (2021) opined that drug use among adolescent learners under peer groups considerably negatively influences their academic performance. Drug use, like smoking, alcoholism, and other delinquent behaviours, expressed peers' non-conformity to adult values. Peer group influence on risk-taking behaviours such as substance abuse and sexual activities has been revealed to increase the likelihood of affecting academic achievement negatively (Santor et al. as cited in Olalekan, 2016). Olowo (2020) argued that peer influence could determine positive or negative adolescent behaviors. Its positive effects could lead to academic achievement, voluntary charity, and public work (Veronneau & Dishion, 2012; Kellie, 2013). Thus, its adverse effects could cause the student to skip classes, steal and cheats, and take drugs or alcohol as a cause of peer pressure. Olalekan (2016) emphasized that peer groups could influence students' interests in learning at school. For example, a brilliant student surrounded by dull friends would lose interest in learning. On the other hand, a peer group prone to study would positively affect a dull member toward understanding and stimulate their interest to learn (Olowo, 2020). Negative peer influence could be seen as one of the influencing forces why most students record poorly academically (Filade Bello, Uwaoma, Anwanane, & Nwangburuku, 2019).

Olalekan (2016) noted that through observation and imitation of the behaviours of others, learners could avoid many wasteful random behaviours and come close to reproducing the behaviours of which members are recognized. Zakaria et al. (2020) affirmed that most individuals become delinquent by associating themselves with delinquent peers who see the acts as a way of life. Recently, Yusuf et al. (2021) found that juveniles who felt more discriminated against, mistreated, and rejected by their parents or guardians found solace in peers who easily predisposed them to delinquency, negatively affecting their academic achievement.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study explored how delinquent behaviours influence learners' academic achievement at secondary schools in Nemanwa Community in Masvingo District in Zimbabwe. The research question underpinned this: how do delinquent behaviours influence learners' academic achievement at secondary schools in Nemanwa Community, Masvingo District, Zimbabwe?

III. METHODS

Research approach

This Based on the constructivist paradigm, the research employed a qualitative approach premised on naturalistic phenomenological philosophy that views reality as multi-layered, interactive, and a shared experience (Leavy, 2017). Qualitative research is a form of interpretative inquiry in which researchers interpret what they see, hear, and understand (Creswell, 2014). This implies that qualitative research methodology allowed the researcher to study the participants in their natural settings, at the site where they experience the problem under study (Yin, 2016). The qualitative methodological approach allowed the researcher to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to delinquent behaviours influencing learners' academic achievement at secondary schools (Creswell, 2014). In this research, the researcher and the participants constructed knowledge and meanings

on delinquent behaviours influencing learners' academic achievement at secondary schools. The current study adopted the phenomenological research study strategy of inquiry. Phenomenology is a qualitative research design in which the researcher attempts to understand how one or more individuals experience a particular phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The phenomenological research design enabled the researcher to seek solutions to the problem under study through interaction with the participants in their everyday lives, findings were not obvious and limited, but divergent views were gathered (Nieuwenhuis, 2015). Thus, considering the participants' lived experiences in their natural setting, the researcher interacted with the participants flexibly face-to-face through interviews and heard their views on delinquent behaviours influencing learners' academic achievement at secondary schools. Thus, within qualitative research, phenomenological studies emphasise interpretative analyses and are mostly devoted to capturing the uniqueness of events (Yin, 2016). The phenomenological research design was employed to give impetus to this study as it embraces qualitative data collection methods that call for inductive data analysis approaches, multiple methods, and subjective research findings (Creswell, 2014).

Participants and Settings

Non-probability sampling methods such as convenience sampling and purposive sampling were used. Purposive and convenience sampling was used to sample three secondary schools in Nemanwa Community, Masvingo District, Zimbabwe. Researchers choose the sample from those they can access (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Twenty-four participants were selected from three secondary schools in Nemanwa Community. Twelve learners were selected from three secondary schools who experienced the effects of juvenile delinquency. Six school disciplinary committee members, three school heads, and three senior teachers constituted of sample size in this study. They were purposively selected because they had enough knowledge and experience dealing with delinquent learners at schools.

Table 1: Profile of participants

Categories	Sample sizes	Participant codes
Secondary schools	3	
School Heads	3	1 to 3
Senior Teachers	3	4 to 6
Disciplinary Committee Members	6	7 to 12
Secondary School Students	12	13 to 24
Total number of participants	24	

Instrument

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews in this study. A semi-structured interview is a two-way conversation, in which the interviewer probes the interviewee to collect data to learn about the participants' ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviours (Chisaka, 2014). Semi-structured interviews were deemed appropriate for this study because they enabled the researcher to enter the inner world of the participants and gather participants' views on delinquent behaviours that influence learners' academic achievement at secondary schools (Cohen et al., 2018). A semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions was administered. The questions related to delinquent behaviours that influence students' academic achievement at secondary schools.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using the six phases of thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2012). Interview transcripts were read repeatedly to familiarise them with the data. In the second step, raw data were coded. The third step involved examining coded and collated data extracts to identify themes of broader significance. In the fourth step, themes were reviewed to ensure that the thematic map accurately and adequately represents the entire body of data. In step 5, the themes were defined and named to provide brief and sufficiently descriptive. Step 6 is the final step which involves writing up the final analysis and description

of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

Before conducting the research, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Provincial Education Director, Masvingo Province, the District Education Officer, Masvingo District, and the School Heads of the selected three secondary schools in Nemamwa Community. Ethics approval was obtained from the relevant authorities after meeting the requirements for informed consent, privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, debriefing, non-maleficence, and beneficence. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants, who were also informed of their right to withdraw at any given time without consequences. The researcher reported the findings accurately and correctly without fabricating data to protect and promote the welfare of society. To ensure rigour and trustworthiness, the researcher employed the four quality assurance norms: dependability, credibility, transferability, and conformability.

IV. RESULTS

Pathogenic family patterns

Broken homes

A broken home is not structurally intact because of the separation of parents, the death of one parent, and illegitimacy (Adu-Okere et al., 2020; Omoruji, 2014). A broken home includes several unhealthy relationships within the family unit (Anderson, 2021). It is often associated with divorce but certainly can occur in an intact family where various members are in conflict or estranged. The family may be characterized by conflict, misbehavior, or abuse.

The results found that broken homes could be a pathogenic family that influences learners' delinquent behaviours and affects their academic achievement at secondary schools. One participant expressed sentiments as follows:

"Stressful home environments, poverty, parents modeling antisocial behaviours, and single parenting cause delinquency, negatively impacting academic achievement. Delinquent learners do not concentrate on school work and waste learning time on punishment. As a result, they perform poorly academically" (Participant 3).

Another participant added this:

"Though most learners from broken homes perform poorly academically, a few remain resilient and perform highly" (Participant 7).

Emerging from the above responses is the view that delinquent behaviours are caused by pathogenic family patterns such as stressful home environments, poverty, single parenting, and parents modelling antisocial behaviours. Most participants believed that while most delinquent learners from broken homes do not concentrate on school work which negatively affects their academic achievement, a few learners from broken homes remain resilient and perform highly academically.

Orphanhood

According to UNICEF (2015), an orphan is a child who has lost either one or both parents. A child is deprived by the death of one or usually both parents (Merriam-webster, 2022). Orphans are children with one or both deceased parents in need of care and protection (Researchgate, 2022)

The results showed that orphanhood could be a pathogenic family that influences learners' delinquent behaviours and affects their academic achievement at secondary schools. One of the informants remarked that:

"Lack of parental guidance, parental support, and lack of parental supervision influence the learners to engage in antisocial behaviours and absent themselves from school. Children from child-headed families lack parental guidance resulting in delinquent acts and poor academic achievement" (Participant 5).

Another participant interviewed added that:

"Lack of basic needs such as food, school uniforms, school fees, and stationery lead the learners to engage in delinquent acts. The orphans lack concentration on school work, absent themselves from school, and engage in child labour to

raise money for food and fees" (Participant 13).

The above quotes suggest that orphanhood results in a lack of parental guidance, parental support, parental supervision, and a lack of basic needs. This leads the learners to engage in delinquent acts such as stealing and high rates of school absenteeism which may result in poor academic achievement. Most participants believed that in certain instances, a few orphans absent themselves from school, engaging in child labour to raise money for basic needs, however, absenteeism results in poor academic achievement. This implies that orphanhood may lead to delinquent behaviours, negatively affecting academic achievement.

Domestic violence

Taibat and Oluwafemi (2017) define domestic violence as a pattern of abusive behaviours one partner uses to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner in any relationship, such as marriage, dating, family, and cohabitation. UNICEF (2014) opined that domestic violence is the victimization of a person with whom the abuser has or has had an intimate romantic, married relationship. It can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats that influence another person. This includes any behaviours that intimidate, isolate, manipulate, humiliate, frighten, terrorise, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone (Gacheri-Mugambi, 2016). UNICEF (2012) pointed out that children subjected to domestic violence will likely experience behavioral problems in school, leading to suspension and absenteeism.

The results indicated that violent homes could be a pathogenic family pattern that influences learners' delinquent behaviours and affects their academic achievement at secondary schools. One of the participants postulated that:

"Learners from violent homes model violent acts after their violent parents, siblings, or guardians. They fight with peers, rebel against adult instructions and authority, verbally abuse others, are stubborn and unwilling to do school work" (Participant 10).

Another informant explained that:

"Children who experience domestic violence show signs of stress and timidity and do not concentrate on school work. In most cases, they do not complete their homework, are impatient, and inclined to violent behaviours" (Participant 18).

The above extracts suggest that learners from violent homes exhibit violent behaviours, are disobedient and stubborn, and do not concentrate on school work. Violent learners disrupt learning, and most do not feel safe at school, which may result in poor academic achievement. These revelations suggest that violence negatively affects academic achievement at secondary schools.

Divorce

Divorce is the legal breakup of a marriage (Oliver, 2013). Divorce is stressful and affects finances, living arrangements, household jobs, and schedules; if the family includes children, they are deeply affected. Divorce is a legal dissolution of a marriage bond (Akanbi, 2014). Once the couple decides to divorce, they are free to remarry again. It is a painful and traumatic experience for all involved and can disrupt family life (Giddens & Phillip, 2013). The quality and stability of family relationships directly influence a young person's behavior, social competence, and academic achievement. Therefore, parental divorce could reduce learners' academic achievement (Chauke & Abadire, 2019).

The results found that divorce could be a pathogenic family pattern that influences learners' delinquent behaviours and affects their academic achievement at secondary schools. One of the participants said in an interview:

"Divorcees suffer from emotional stress and lack parental guidance and finances to support the family. If the parent is working, they may not find time to supervise and control the children leading to children misbehaving and skipping classes" (Participant 2).

One of the informants expressed his views as follows:

"Divorce cause stress in children who become withdrawn, inactive at school,

and lack focus and concentration on school work. Children experience a lack of finances and may come to school without food and stationery, which negatively impacts their studies" (Participant 23).

The participants' interviews revealed that divorcees suffer from emotional stress and lack parental guidance and finances. This implies that due to divorce, parents lack parental guidance and finances to look after their children, which causes emotional stress in children leading to a lack of concentration in their studies. This implies that divorce negatively affects children's schooling leading to poor academic achievement.

Poverty

Poverty comes with its associated many difficulties for children and their families. Poverty-stricken families cannot provide basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, and sufficient light (Haque & Islam, 2018). The World Bank Organisation (2018) described poverty in this way: "Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to education and not knowing how to read". Poverty may make it difficult for parents to purchase toys and books to promote cognitive stimulation for their children, causing them to have lesser vocabulary and more directed speech (Johnson, Riis, & Noble, 2016). Children living in poverty have a higher level of absenteeism, struggle with focus and concentration, have significantly more difficulty in comprehension and memory, and work with motivation (Jensen, 2013).

The results highlighted that poverty could be a pathogenic family that influences learners' delinquent behaviours and affects their school academic achievement. One of the participants postulated that:

"Due to poverty, parents fail to buy textbooks, uniforms, stationery, and or pay for extra lessons and medication for their children. The parents see education as an extra financial burden and develop a negative attitude towards their children's education, resulting in poor academic achievement" (Participant 6).

In corroboration, another informant remarked:

"Learners from low-income families go to school on empty stomachs, which causes a lack of concentration on school work and stealing food. The learners walk long distances to school due lack of bus fare and dose during lessons because of tiredness. Due to frustration of not getting adequate provisions for their education, the learners engage in drug abuse and prostitution, which disturbs their learning" (Participant 14).

The above extracts revealed that children from low-income families lack basic needs such as food, stationery, reading materials, and school fees. Some poor parents have a negative attitude towards schooling, which they consider an extra cost. Data suggests that due to a lack of basic provisions, children from low-income families develop a negative attitude toward their learning and engage in drug abuse and prostitution, resulting in poor academic achievement for most learners.

Lack of parental involvement

In school and family contexts, parental involvement has been defined as representing different behaviours and practices presented by parents at home and School (Kimaro & Machumu, 2015). These practices and behaviours are the main factors determining educational success in many schools. Parental involvement includes parenting style, parental expectations and aspirations, home rules, and parental supervision, parental attitudes towards children's activities, helping with homework, visiting the school to talk to teachers, and beliefs regarding their children's education (Porumbu & Necson, 2013).

The results indicated that lack of parental involvement could be a pathogenic family that influences learners' delinquent behaviours and affects their school academic achievement. Participants mentioned that learners lack parental guidance, supervision, and modeling by parents. One of the informants said the following:

"Some parents do not pay school fees, do not supervise their children's academic work, do not help children with their homework, and do not monitor school attendance which may result in absenteeism resulting in poor academic achievement" (Participant 20).

Another participant opined that:

"Children whose parents do not attend parents' meetings, parents' days, and price-giving days at school perform poorly in school while children with parents who are supportive and active in school activities perform highly" (Participant 8).

The above extract implies that children whose parents do not participate in school activities perform poorly. In contrast, children whose parents take part in school activities perform highly. This study concludes that pathogenic family factors promote delinquent behaviours that negatively affect most learners' academic achievement.

Peer-related delinquent behaviours influence learners' academic achievement

School violence

Violence in the School is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation in the school environment (WHO, 2002) as cited in Obilar and Ikechukwu (2021). Concerning school violence, there is a consensus to define it as any intentional conduct using which harm is caused to another person within the school or in any other activity organized by the school, which may be exercised or suffered by any member of the educational community (Guerra et al., 2011). One participant stated this.

"Some learners are violent and are regarded as heroes, while others see them as frightening. Through vicarious reinforcement, some learners imitated the violent nature of the perceived heroes. Victims of school violence do not feel safe at school resulting in absenteeism which causes poor academic achievement" (Participant 10).

In corroboration, another participant remarked:

"Violent learners beat up others, engage in fist fighting, and threaten teachers and learners with violence. They engage in physical, verbal, and sexual abuse of fellow learners. Teachers are demoralized and no longer concentrate on their work. Both perpetrators and victims of violence fail to concentrate on school work resulting in poor academic achievement" (Participant 1).

The above-stated excerpts show that a few learners regard a few violent learners as heroes, while most learners view them as frightening. Both perpetrators and victims of violence fail to concentrate on school work resulting in poor academic achievement. Most of the participants believed that due to the violent nature of some of the learners and the lack of authority by teachers to discipline them, most teachers are demoralised and no longer concentrate on their work. These extracts imply that school violence negatively affects academic achievements at secondary schools.

Substance abuse

A substance is said to be abused when its use is not pharmacological or physically necessary, and it can be used to describe a situation whereby the dosage of a given substance is exceeded by the user (Dankano & Garba, 2017). Ajayi and Ayodele (2002) define substance abuse as the inappropriate use or use of chemicals capable of changing cells' bodily functions. Educational institutions worldwide seem threatened by the global phenomenon of drug use, abuse, and abuse of other substances. Adolescent learners discourteously depend on one form of drug or the other for their various daily activities, such as social, educational, political, and moral; such drugs include alcohol, cocaine, morphine, heroin, Indian hemp, caffeine, glue and barbiturates (Akanbi et al., 2015)

The results reported that substance abuse could be delinquent behaviours that influence students' academic achievement. One of the participants expressed his sentiments as follows:

"Delinquent learners drink beer and smoke marijuana at the growth point during school hours. Some members from the community sell drugs such as marijuana and inhalants to the delinquent learners" (Participant 16).

Another informant postulated that:

"Some learners who abuse substances end up being violent and disrespectful. They do not write school work or do their homework, and they also steal to raise money to buy drugs and beer. The learners are suspended or arrested by the police losing valuable learning time" (Participant 11).

The above quotes revealed that some learners engage in drug and alcohol abuse. As a result, they exhibit delinquent behaviours such as stealing, skipping classes, and refusing to write schoolwork. In some cases, the delinquent learners are suspended or arrested, losing valuable learning time, leading to poor academic achievement.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as aggressive behaviour conducted intentionally by an individual or group of people frequently for some time against victims who cannot defend themselves (Menecine & Salvalli, 2017). School bullying is a form of violence that harms others and occurs at school or during various activities when a student or group uses their strength to hurt other individuals or groups (Al-Raqqa, 2017). Bullying may involve verbal and physical assaults, jokes, and criticising.

The results indicated that bullying could be a delinquent behaviours that influences students' academic achievement. During the interview, one participant said this:

Bullying is a serious problem perpetrated by senior students on junior learners and weak learners. Bullies also use electronic media to bully others through platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter, verbally insult others, eat their victim's food, or take their possessions by force (Participant 9).

In addition, another informant remarked:

"Bullying in secondary schools was prevalent, and victims of bullying no longer feel safe at school, fail to concentrate on schoolwork due to feelings of helplessness and depression" (Participant 24).

The above verbatim quotes suggest that bullying is prevalent in secondary schools, perpetrated by senior students on junior and weak students through social media platforms, verbal abuse, and physical violence. Data shows that most of the participants believed that bullying negatively affects academic achievement due to fear and lack of concentration on school work by the victims of bullying.

Engaging in prostitution

Prostitution is engaging in sexual intercourse for profit (Kamila, 2019). Prostitution is the practice of engaging in relatively indiscriminate sexual activity with someone, not a spouse, in exchange for immediate payment of money or other valuables (Law.cornell.edu, 2022).

The results demonstrated that engaging in prostitution could be a delinquent behaviours influencing learners' academic achievement at school. One of the participants said in an interview:

"The moral standards have gone to the dogs due to poverty, urbanization, and elders modelling antisocial behaviours as secondary school learners engage in prostitution in broad daylight at the nearby growth point. Learners use rented rooms as brothels and absent themselves from school drinking beer and engaging in prostitution" (Participant 7).

In corroboration, another informant postulated:

"Due to prostitution, some girls fall pregnant and drop out of school, others contract sexually transmitted diseases or even HIV, fall sick and spend schooling time seeking medication resulting in poor academic achievement" (Participant 16).

The participants' interviews revealed that they felt that some delinquent learners engage in prostitution due to poverty and moral decay due to urbanisation. Results suggest that some secondary school students contract sexually transmitted diseases while other female students fall pregnant and drop out of school. The implication from the above extracts is that prostitution negatively affects the academic achievement of secondary school learners.

Disobedience

Disobedience is not conforming to a society's order, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations (Adegoke & Orekelewa, 2020). Disobedience denotes a type of behavior in which the performers or the people's actions or deeds do not conform to the expectations of society or authority (Devi & Dhull, 2019). It can be seen as a juvenile desire to resist a command, usually because they do not want to obey an authority figure (Alleydog, 2022).

The results found that disobedience could be a delinquent behaviour

that influences learners' academic achievement at schools. One of the interviewees aired that:

"Due to disobedience, learners do not write notes and exercises given by teachers. Teachers no longer have the authority to discipline students and are afraid of violent students, especially boys. Learners disobey the teachers, claiming they have rights" (Participant 4).

In corroboration, another participant remarked:

"Circular P35 prohibits the use of corporal punishment by teachers so teachers no longer have authority to discipline disobedient learners. Teachers are arrested or threatened with lawsuits, so they leave disobedient learners to do as they like; as a result, they neglect their school work and perform poorly in school" (Participant 12).

The above quotes suggest that some delinquent secondary school students are disobedient and exhibit delinquent behaviours such as failure to write notes or exercises given by their teachers. In addition, the extracts above revealed that due to human rights laws and Circular P35, which prohibits corporal punishment in Zimbabwe, teachers no longer have the authority to discipline learners and risk being arrested and taken to court if they try to discipline them. This implies that teachers leave secondary school learners to do as they wish, exacerbating disobedience and negatively affecting academic achievement.

Peer pressure

Peer pressure means the influence of friends on each other and inducing changes in the mental and emotional behavior of people belonging to the same group with similar interests, age, background, and social status (Weinfied, 2010) as cited in Deepka and Prema (2017). Peer pressure is normally linked with adolescent risk-taking behaviours; such as crime, drug abuse, and sexual behaviours.

The results demonstrated that peer pressure could be a delinquent behaviour influencing students' academic achievement. Participants felt that peer pressure was the most influential in causing delinquent behaviours at secondary schools. They attributed the poor academic achievement to peer-related delinquent behaviours. One participant expressed his views:

"Due to peer pressures, learners engage in truancy, alcohol and drug abuse, prostitution, and bullying at the expense of learning. Delinquent learners are disobedient and lack interest in academic work. They leave the school premises to go to the nearby bushes to smoke marijuana and drink beer. Due to drunkenness, the delinquent learners do not pay attention during the teaching-learning episode. Delinquent learners find it difficult to master learned concepts and miss some of them, resulting in poor academic achievement" (Participant 17).

Another informant added:

"While some students are influenced by peers to misbehave, most students are encouraged to study hard and behave well by their peers. The model works hard in school and has good study habits after their peers, resulting in high academic achievement" (Participant 22).

The above quotes indicate that due to peer pressure, some secondary school learners engage in delinquent behaviours such as truancy, alcohol and drug abuse, prostitution, and bullying. Data suggest that most secondary school learners are influenced by their peers to study hard and behave well. This implies that peer pressure can positively and negatively influence academic achievement.

Absenteeism

Absenteeism is voluntary or involuntary absence from the physical environment of the classroom, class, or learning session and is determined by academic and extra-academic factors (Chilca, 2017). Learners who absent themselves miss critical stages of interaction and development with their peers and the likelihood of academic progress (Daka, Chipindi, & Mkandawire, 2020) and the absent learners' lack of academic success breeds low-self-esteem, social isolation, and dissatisfaction that can trigger absenteeism and eventually lead to the learner dropping out of school.

The results revealed that absenteeism could be school-related delinquent behaviours that influence learners' academic achievement at

the secondary school level. One of the participants remarked this:

"Some learners absent themselves from school, engaging in delinquent acts such as drug abuse and prostitution, lose valuable learning time and miss some concepts finding learning difficult and not interesting. Lack of interest in schooling leads to poor grades and dropping out of school. However, a few delinquent students still do well in school" (Participant 18).

One of the participants added that:

"Learners from poverty-stricken families and broken homes absent themselves fending for themselves trying to raise money for food, fees, clothing, and stationery. Due to HIV/AIDS, some learners are absent from school, looking after bedridden parents, while others are sent back home to find school fees. Absenteeism negatively affects learning, resulting in poor academic achievement" (Participant 2).

The above extracts imply that some delinquent secondary school learners frequently absent themselves from school, engaging in delinquent behaviours such as drug abuse and prostitution. Research findings show that most participants felt that some children from low-income families and broken homes were absent from school, trying to raise money for their daily needs. On the other hand, some learners stay at home looking after bedridden parents due to HIV/AIDS. These extracts imply that absenteeism, despite its causes, negatively affects academic achievement.

V. DISCUSSION

This study attributed pathogenic family patterns that influence delinquent behaviours and poor academic achievement among learners at secondary schools. These factors include broken homes, poverty, orphanhood, domestic violence, divorce, and child-headed families. The research findings on the effects of broken homes and child-headed families also follow previous studies by Chapeta and Ganga (2013), who posit that a lack of parental figures and resources exacerbates children's poor performance. The findings confirm findings from a 2005 Cardiff University South Wales Family Study, which revealed that children from negative family environments have a greater risk for poor academic performance than those from loving two-parent homes. The study showed that poverty was one of the most severe pathogenic patterns that militated against high academic achievement. Living in homes with little parental interaction, fewer books to read, and fewer chances for cognitive stimulation will decrease the children's confidence, leading to future academic failure (Cedeno et al., 2016). However, it also emerged from the study that some children from low-income families, child-headed families, and violent homes perform very well in school under those difficult conditions. Although the research by Chapeta and Ganga (2013) revealed that members of the child-headed family perform poorly in academic circles, it emerged in the same study that some children from child-headed families defy all odds due to resilience and perform extremely well in school. The study revealed that broken homes and orphanhoods negatively affect academic achievement due to a lack of parental involvement. The findings are consistent with a study by Chauke and Abadire (2019), which revealed that a lack of parental nurturing and supervision affects young people's academic achievement. Oyedele, Chikwature, and Manyange (2016) demonstrated that orphaned students' academic achievement is poor, resulting from challenges they face, such as a lack of resources to meet their basic needs of food, shelter, education, and health care, and they experience stigma and bullying at school. Children exposed to domestic violence are more likely than peers to experience difficulties in school and exhibit pro-violence attitudes (Taibalt & Oluwafeni, 2017).

This study revealed that peer-related delinquent behaviours influence learners' academic achievement, including violence, substance abuse, bullying, engaging in prostitution, disobedience, absenteeism, and peer pressure. Negative peer influence could be seen as one of the militating forces why most students record poorly in academic achievement (Filade et al., 2019); however, this study showed that a few delinquent students still perform well in school. The

revelations in the study that peer-related delinquent behaviours greatly negatively influenced academic achievement are consistent with a study by Haney and Gold as cited in Butcher et al. (2015), which revealed that two-thirds of delinquent acts were committed in association with one or other people. Research findings revealed that most participants felt that during adolescence peer pressure was most influential in causing adolescents to engage in delinquent acts, which significantly caused poor academic achievement. Such findings are consistent with Thornberry in Berk (2013), who posits that adolescents have easy access to deviant peers and drugs; all these are linked to violent and antisocial gangs whose members commit violent delinquent acts. Data are consistent with Tuwei (2014) in his study on the influence of substance abuse on academic achievement, who found that academic achievement is negatively influenced by alcohol and marijuana abuse as the drugs limit academic abilities. Research findings indicated that peer relationships influence high truancy rates, absenteeism, and drug and alcohol abuse; however, data also revealed that peers influence each other positively to concentrate on school work and to engage in pro-social behaviours. According to Veronneau, Veronneau, and Dishion (2012), peer influence is not always negative, and positive influence increases academic achievement and pro-social behaviours.

The study showed that school-related delinquent behaviours such as bullying, truancy, absenteeism, violence, and gangsters negatively influence academic achievement. Students affected by violence in school suffer lowered social and emotional competence, diminished academic achievement, and fear of more abuse (Burnharm, 2019). It emerged that misinterpretation of Human Rights Laws and Circular P.35; influenced delinquency, negatively affecting academic achievement. Research findings showed that teachers no longer have the authority to discipline learners due to Circular P.35 and Human Rights Laws due to fear of arrests and lawsuits, so they leave learners to do as they like.

The study showed that bullying and cyberbullying were prevalent and negatively affected academic performance. The study confirms that children who experience cyberbullying are more likely to feel unsafe at school and to miss school due to insecurity. Bullying in schools leads to anxiety, depression, loss of concentration, and substance use, especially among youths (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). The study further indicated that proximity to Nemanwa Growth Point influenced delinquent behaviours such as prostitution, stealing, violence, absenteeism, and drug and alcohol abuse, negatively affecting academic achievement. The findings are also consistent with a study by Oyeoku, Gever, Onigbo, and Ohia (2017) which revealed that the major impacts of prostitution tendencies include examination failure, irregular attendance to classes, poor concentration, and school dropout.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings concluded that pathogenic family patterns such as broken homes, poverty, violent homes, and child-headed families influence juvenile delinquency and cause poor academic achievement. It can further be concluded that antisocial behaviours exhibited by parents caused juvenile delinquency, which influenced the perpetrators' and victims' low academic achievement. From the findings of this study, it can also be concluded that while most students engaged in delinquent acts due to pathogenic family factors, findings further revealed that some few learners defy all odds due to resilience and perform extremely well in school. Regarding the influence of peer-related delinquent behaviours on academic achievement, this research study found that peer influence influenced learners to engage in delinquent acts, negatively affecting their academic achievement. It can also be inferred from the research findings that peer influence is not unidirectional as, in some cases, peers influence each other to concentrate on school work and exhibit pro-social behaviour resulting in high academic achievement. In light of research findings, the researcher makes the following recommendations: Parents and teachers should be role models of moral behaviours and work for hand in glove to reduce

juvenile delinquency and improve academic achievement. There is a need for the government to employ professional counsellors in secondary schools. The government should provide free education for children from low-income families, orphans, and vulnerable children. There is a need to conduct a research study on ways of curbing delinquency and improving academic achievement.

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