

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

**THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTING APPROACHES ON CRIME AMONG THE
YOUTH IN MUKONO DISTRICT**

BY

OLOKA JASPER

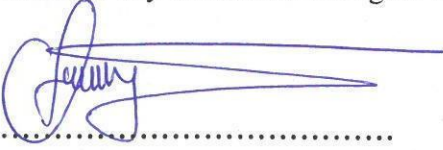
REG NO 2022/HD03/23178U

**A DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO DIRECTORATE OF GRADUATE
TRAINING IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE,
AWARD OF A MASTERS OF ARTS DEGREE IN PEACE AND
CONFLICT STUDIES OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

DECEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the research dissertation on the influence of parenting approaches on crime among the youth in Mukono district, Uganda is originally mine and has never been submitted to any institution of higher learning for any academic or related award.



.....

23-12-2025
.....

Signed

Date


OLOKA JASPER

APPROVAL

I confirm that the work submitted was conducted by the candidate under my supervision.

Signature Date:

Associate Prof Eric Awich Ochen
College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Signature  Date: 23.12.2021

Dr. Hillary Kiiza
College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Digitisation and Self-Archiving Consent Agreement: Theses

Agreement between Makerere University & Students (Authors of Theses / Dissertations / Reports)

1. The author is a student of Makerere University and author of the thesis / dissertation entitled:

THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTING APPROACHES ON CRIME AMONG THE YOUTH IN MUKONO DISTRICT

2. The author grants to the University:

- a. The right to deposit the electronic version of the Thesis / Dissertation into Makerere University Institutional Repositories (Mak IR) or (Mak UD); and
- b. The right to store the thesis / dissertation in Mak IR / Mak UD and make it permanently available to the general public via the Internet at no cost to the general public after a grace period (if any is specified).

Choose one of the two options below:

- c. The Author may opt for immediate open access to the public YES
- d. Or Restrict access indefinitely

e. Or Restrict for the specified number of years:

3. The author warrants that to the best of the authors knowledge and belief:

- a. The thesis / dissertation is an original work;
- b. The author is the owner of all the intellectual property in the thesis / dissertation; or
- c. The Author is entitled to deal with the intellectual property in the thesis / dissertation by publishing it on the Internet
- d. The Author has the right, power and authority to enter into this Agreement and to grant the University the rights contained in this Agreement; and
- e. The University's use of the thesis / dissertation pursuant to this Agreement will not infringe the intellectual property rights of any third party.

4. The Author acknowledges and agrees that the University is not responsible or liable for any breach of the intellectual property rights in the thesis / dissertation, in particular any breach of copyright, as a result of the use of the thesis / dissertation pursuant to this Agreement.

5. The University acknowledges that the rights granted by the Creator in clause 2 of this Agreement, do not cause any transfer or assignment of any proprietary rights in the intellectual property in the article to the University.

Signed by the Author as confirmation that the Author has read and accepted the terms of this Agreement:

Name: OLGA JASSER

College/School: CHUSS Department: _____

(Tick) Type of Degree: (Undergraduate / PGD / Masters / PhD), Reg. No.: 2022/HA03/231780

Tel No.: 0774422540 E-Mail: ngiwa88@gmail.com

Signature:  Date: 23/12/2025

Supervisor's endorsement: _____

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the resilient youth of Mukono District, whose experiences and challenges inspired this research. It is also dedicated to the parents, teachers, community leaders, and all individuals who work tirelessly to create a better future for the younger generation. May this work contribute to the continued efforts to guide and nurture youth, fostering a society free from the scourge of crime. Lastly, I dedicate this study to my family and mentors, whose unwavering support, guidance, and encouragement have been instrumental in the completion of this research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am deeply humbled and profoundly grateful as I undertake the important task of acknowledging those who have played pivotal roles in shaping my academic journey.

First and foremost, I want to thank God for His unwavering guidance, grace, and strength. Without His divine providence, none of this would have been possible. I extend my deepest gratitude to my dedicated lecturers, who have been a wellspring of knowledge and wisdom throughout my academic endeavor. In particular, I owe gratitude to my esteemed supervisors, Associate Professor Eric Awich Ochen and Dr. Hillary Kiiza. Your guidance, mentorship, and endless patience have been indispensable in shaping this dissertation.

I am also indebted to my classmates, whose camaraderie and intellectual exchanges enriched my academic experience. Together, we have navigated the challenges and triumphs of our academic journey. This journey has been a collective effort, and I would like to extend my appreciation to all my friends, family, and loved ones who have offered their encouragement and unwavering support.

To everyone who has played part in shaping my academic path, your impact cannot be overstated. I am profoundly grateful for your contributions and look forward to carrying the lessons learned into the future.

Thank you all for your invaluable support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
APPROVAL	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
LIST OF TABLES	x
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the study	2
1.1.1 Parenting in Ancient Civilizations	3
1.1.2 Parenting During the Middle Ages	4
1.1.3 Parenting During the Renaissance	5
1.1.4 Parenting in the 20th Century	6
1.1.5 Contemporary Developments in Parenting	8
1.1.6 Basics of Parenting	9
1.1.7 Conceptual Background	9
1.1.8 Theoretical Framework	11
1.1.9 Contextual Background: (Mukono District)	13
1.1.10 Legal Framework on Parenting	15
1.2 Problem statement	16
1.3 Main objective	17
1.3.1 Specific objectives	17
1.4 Research questions	17
1.5 Scope of the study	17
1.5.1 Content scope	17
1.5.2 Time scope	18
1.5.3 Geographical scope	18
1.6 Significance of the study	19
1.7 Justification of the study	20
1.8 Operational definitions	21
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	24

2.0	Introduction	24
2.1	Theoretical framework: Social Learning theory	24
2.1.1	Key Assumptions of Social Learning Theory	24
2.1.2	Critical Considerations and Limitations	25
2.1.3	Relevance of the Theory to the Study	25
2.2	Forms of parenting approaches to the youth	26
2.2.1	Authoritative Parenting Style	26
2.2.2	Autocratic parenting style	26
2.2.3	Permissive Parenting Style	27
2.2.4	No-Nonsense Parenting Style	27
2.2.5	Neglectful Parenting Style	28
2.2.6	Abusive Parenting Style	28
2.3	Parenting Approaches and their Relationship to Youth Crime	29
2.4	Challenges Faced by Parents in Raising Youth	32
2.5	Causes of increased crimes among the youth	34
2.6	Strategies and measures to curb criminal behavior among young people	36
2.7	Summary of reviewed literature	40
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		41
3.0	Introduction	41
3.1	Research Design	41
3.2	Research Approach	41
3.3	Area of study	41
3.4	Study Population	42
3.5	Target Population	42
3.6	Sample Size	43
3.7	Sampling techniques	43
3.8	Data collection methods and tools	43
3.8.1	Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	44
3.8.2	Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	45
3.8.3	Direct Observation	47
3.8.4	Document Review	47
3.9	Data quality control mechanisms	48
3.10	Data Collection Procedure	48
3.11	Data Presentation and Analysis	49
3.12	Ethical Considerations	50

3.13	Challenges faced during data collection-----	50
------	--	----

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
-----**51**

4.0	Introduction -----	51
4.1	Established parenting approaches used by parents in Mukono District -----	51
4.1.1	Authoritative Parenting Style-----	51
4.1.2	Autocratic parenting style-----	52
4.1.3	Permissive Parenting Style-----	53
4.1.4	Neglectful Parenting Style -----	54
4.1.5	Abusive Parenting Style-----	55
4.1.6	Democratic/Cooperative Parenting Style-----	56
4.1.7	Spiritual Parenting Style -----	58
4.1.8	Cultural Parenting Style -----	59
4.1.9	Reinforcement-Based Parenting Style-----	61
4.2	Established parenting Approaches and Their Relationship to Youth Crime -----	62
4.2.1	Authoritative Parenting-----	62
4.2.2	Authoritarian Parenting -----	63
4.2.3	Permissive Parenting -----	65
4.2.4	Neglectful parenting style-----	66
4.2.6	Democratic/Cooperative Parenting -----	68
4.2.7	Spiritual Parenting -----	69
4.2.8	Cultural Parenting -----	70
4.2.9	Reinforcement-Based Parenting -----	71
4.3	Identified challenges faced by parents in raising youth in Mukono district -----	72
4.3.1	Balancing Work and Family Life -----	73
4.3.2	Influence of Technology and Social Media -----	74
4.3.3	Peer Pressure and Negative Influences -----	75
4.3.4	Economic Challenges -----	76
4.3.5	Mental Health Issues-----	78
4.3.6	Parenting in Single-Parent Households-----	79
4.3.7	Navigating Adolescents’ Identity Formation-----	80
4.3.8	Exposure to Violence and Crime in Communities -----	81
4.3.9	Parental Role in Sexual Education -----	82
4.3.10	Addressing Special Needs -----	83
4.4	Causes of Increased Crime Among the Youth in Mukono District-----	84
4.4.1	Economic Hardship and Unemployment-----	84
4.4.2	Broken Family Structure -----	85
4.4.3	Peer Pressure and Gang Influence -----	86
4.4.4	Substance Abuse-----	87
4.4.5	Exposure to Violence in Media and Community -----	88
4.4.6	Mental Health Issues-----	89

4.4.7	Urbanization and Lack of Community Engagement-----	90
4.4.8	Inefficient Judicial Systems-----	90
4.4.9	Inequality in Resource Allocation -----	91
4.5	Suggested Strategies and Measures to curb Criminal Behavior among Young people in Mukono District -----	92
4.5.1	Educational and Employment Opportunities -----	92
4.5.2	Family-Based Interventions -----	93
4.5.3	Community Policing and Engagement -----	94
4.5.4	Mental Health Support -----	95
4.5.5	Media Literacy Programs -----	96
4.5.6	Strengthening Youth Mentorship Programs-----	97
4.5.7	Restorative Justice System. Programs -----	98
4.5.8	Equality in Resource Allocation -----	98
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ----		100
5.0	Introduction -----	100
5.2	Summary of Major Findings-----	100
5.1.1	Established forms of Parenting approaches used by parents in Mukono district 100	
5.1.2	Established relationship between different parenting approaches and crime among youth in Mukono District -----	101
5.1.3	Identified challenges faced by parents in raising youth in Mukono District----	102
5.1.4	Examined causes of the increasing crime rate among youth in Mukono district 102	
5.1.5	Suggested strategies and measures to curb criminal behavior among young people 103	
5.2	Conclusions -----	104
5.2.1	Forms of Parenting approaches used by parents in Mukono District-----	105
5.2.2	Established relationship between different parenting approaches and crime among youth in Mukono District -----	105
5.2.3	Identified challenges faced by parents in raising youth in Mukono District----	106
5.2.4	Identified causes of the increasing crime rate among youth in Mukono district 107	
5.2.5	Suggested strategies and measures to curb criminal behavior among young people 108	
5.3	Recommendations -----	110
5.4	Suggestions for further Studies-----	112
5.5	Contribution of the study to the body of knowledge-----	113
REFERENCES-----		114
APPENDICES-----		129

Appendix A: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide for parents and Boda-Bodas-----	129
Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide for Youths Including Casual Laborers -----	132
Appendix C: Interview Guide for Key Informant (Community Stakeholders)-----	135
Appendix D: Key Informant Interview (KII) Guide -----	138
Appendix E: Assent Form for Youth Participants -----	143
Appendix F: Informed Consent Form for Key Informants-----	145
Appendix G: Informed Consent Form for Parents of Youth Participants -----	147
Appendix H: Observation Checklist for Youth, Parents, and Community Members in Mukono District -----	149
Appendix I: Map Showing Location of Mukono District-----	153
Appendix J: Introductory Letter-----	154

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of focused group discussions held with number of Participants and Themes of Discussion for Each.....	45
Table 2: Summary of Key informants and their roles	46

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APCF - African Child Policy Forum

AU - African Union

CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child

EFUS - European Forum for Urban Security

MOGLSD - Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development

NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations

SLT-Social Learning Theory

UN - United Nations

UN Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme

UNBS- Uganda National Bureau of Statistics

UNDESA - United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UPF - Uganda Police Force

KIIs-Key Informant Interviews

FGD-Focused Group Discussion

SSI. Semi structured interviews

OBS-Observation

DR- Document Review

UPF- Uganda police force

LC- Local council

OC-Officer in Charge

CFPU- Child and Family Protection Unit

ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between parenting approaches and youth crime in Mukono District, Uganda, with a focus on integrating traditional and modern parenting practices. The study adopted a qualitative research approach, employing a case study design to provide an in-depth understanding of the complex factors influencing youth crime in the district. Data was collected through key informant interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observation and document analysis. Purposive snow balling and Random sampling techniques were used to select participants, including parents, teachers, community leaders, and law enforcement officers, to ensure a diverse perspective on the issue.

The study's findings revealed that parenting approaches, particularly authoritative and spiritual approaches, have a significant impact on reducing youth involvement in criminal behavior. The breakdown of traditional family structures, poverty, and the influence of modern media were identified as key contributing factors to youth crime. It was also found that a lack of access to positive role models, mentorship programs, and recreational activities further exacerbates the problem.

In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of integrating cultural and spiritual values with modern parenting techniques to effectively prevent youth crime. It recommends strengthening parenting education programs, establishing youth engagement initiatives, and providing more government support for at-risk families. Additionally, the study suggests that enhancing mental health services, promoting positive media, and leveraging technology for crime prevention could further reduce youth crime rates.

Future research should explore the long-term impact of various parenting approaches, the role of technology in shaping youth behavior, and the influence of mental health on criminal involvement. Investigating the effectiveness of community-based programs and the relationship between socio-economic status and youth crime would also provide valuable insights. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by offering a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing youth crime in Mukono District, emphasizing the need for culturally relevant interventions.

The findings provide a practical framework for policymakers, educators, and community leaders to develop more effective strategies for preventing youth crime and fostering safer and more resilient communities.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study examines the influence of parenting approaches on crime among the youth in Mukono District. Parenting approaches play a critical role in shaping children's behavior, values, emotional regulation, and social adjustment. The family is widely recognized as the primary agent of socialization, and the methods parents use to guide, discipline, supervise, and support their children can significantly affect young people's propensity toward either pro-social or deviant behavior. In recent years, Mukono District has experienced growing concerns related to youth involvement in criminal activities such as theft, substance abuse, gang-related behavior, and school-related delinquency, raising questions about underlying familial and social factors contributing to these trends.

In this study, parenting approaches refer to the patterns of child-rearing practices adopted by parents or guardians, including authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful approaches, as well as associated behaviors such as supervision, communication, discipline, emotional support, and value transmission. Youth, in this context, refers to young people within the adolescent and early adulthood age range who are particularly vulnerable to external influences and behavioral experimentation. Crime among the youth encompasses both formal criminal acts and delinquent behaviors that violate social norms and legal standards.

The study set out to investigate how different parenting approaches influence youth behavior and the likelihood of involvement in criminal activities in Mukono District. Specifically, the study seeks to establish whether inadequate parental supervision, harsh or inconsistent discipline, poor parent-child communication, and limited emotional support contribute to youth crime, as well as how positive parenting practices may serve as protective factors against delinquency. By focusing on Mukono District, the study situates parenting practices within a rapidly urbanizing and socio-economically diverse setting where traditional family structures are increasingly influenced by modern social pressures

This chapter introduces the overall framework of the study by presenting the background to the research problem, the statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, significance and justification of the study, as well as its scope. Together, these sections

provide a foundation for understanding why the study was conducted, what it sought to achieve, and how it contributes to knowledge on parenting and youth crime prevention in Mukono District and similar contexts.

1.1 Background to the study

Parenting refers to the strategies, practices, values, and behavioral approaches employed by parents and guardians in the upbringing and socialization of children. Across history, parenting has been widely acknowledged as a critical determinant of children's behavioural development, moral orientation, social competence, and conformity to societal norms. Contemporary criminological and developmental psychology literature consistently demonstrates that parenting approaches significantly shape young people's susceptibility to antisocial behaviour, delinquency, and criminal involvement through mechanisms such as emotional attachment, supervision, discipline, social learning, and the development of self-control (Hirschi, 1969; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Parenting approaches play a critical role in shaping children's behavioural development and their susceptibility to engaging in criminal activities. Authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and consistent yet reasonable control, fosters self-regulation, moral internalization, and pro-social behaviour, thereby reducing the likelihood of youth involvement in crime. In contrast, authoritarian parenting, marked by high control but low warmth, may instill fear, resentment, or rebellion, increasing the risk of aggression, secretive deviance, and anti-social acts. Permissive parenting, which provides high warmth with minimal behavioural control, often results in impulsivity and poor self-discipline, leaving youth more vulnerable to negative peer influences and delinquent behaviour. Neglectful or uninvolved parenting, defined by low warmth and low control, creates an environment of minimal supervision and guidance, strongly correlating with criminal tendencies, substance abuse, and engagement in theft or gang-related activities.

These dynamics illustrate that parenting practices through emotional bonding, moral guidance, supervision, and behavioural modelling, either serve as protective factors against youth crime or contribute to its emergence, highlighting the importance of family-based interventions and positive parenting strategies in crime prevention. Understanding the evolution of parenting approaches across historical periods therefore provides a critical foundation for examining how contemporary parenting patterns influence youth crime, particularly within specific socio-cultural settings such as Mukono District.

1.1.1 Parenting in Ancient Civilizations

In ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and China, parenting practices were largely shaped by the need for survival, economic productivity, social stability, and the preservation of hierarchical social orders. Child-rearing during this period emphasized obedience, discipline, and early preparation for adult responsibilities rather than emotional nurturing or individual psychological development (Aries, 1962).

Children were commonly regarded as extensions of the family unit and economic assets expected to contribute to household labour, agriculture, craftsmanship, or military preparedness from an early age. Parenting therefore focused on instilling conformity, respect for authority, and adherence to communal norms. Deviant behaviour was discouraged primarily through corporal punishment, strict discipline, and moral instruction, reflecting the belief that firm control was necessary to maintain social order (Pollock, 1983).

In ancient Mesopotamia, legal codes such as the Code of Hammurabi explicitly regulated family relations, granting fathers extensive authority over children, including the right to punish disobedience. Similarly, in ancient Greece and Rome, paternal authority (*patria potestas*) allowed fathers to exercise near-absolute control over children's upbringing, discipline, and moral education (Rawson, 2003).

In Confucian China, parenting was deeply influenced by Confucian philosophy, particularly the principle of filial piety (*xiao*), which emphasized absolute obedience, respect, and loyalty to parents and elders. These values were reinforced through both moral teachings and legal sanctions, with disobedience considered a serious moral and social offence (Hwang, 1999). While such parenting approaches promoted social cohesion and respect for authority, they often prioritized conformity over emotional expression, potentially suppressing individual autonomy.

Although formal concepts of juvenile crime did not exist in the modern sense, deviations from expected behaviour in ancient societies were addressed through family-based discipline and community sanctions. These early parenting approaches laid the foundation for later understandings of discipline, authority, and moral regulation, many of which continue to influence parenting norms in contemporary societies.

1.1.2 Parenting During the Middle Ages

In medieval Europe, high infant mortality rates, subsistence agriculture, and feudal obligations influenced parenting approaches. Children were integrated into adult work from an early age, assisting with farming, craftsmanship, domestic labour, and apprenticeships. Parenting focused on instilling discipline, religious piety, respect for authority, and loyalty to family and lord. Moral instruction was closely tied to Christian teachings, with the Church playing a central role in shaping norms around obedience, sin, and punishment (Hanawalt, 1986).

Corporal punishment was widely accepted as a legitimate disciplinary tool, grounded in religious interpretations that viewed discipline as necessary for moral correction. Deviant behaviour among children and youth was primarily addressed within the family or local community through correction, shame, and religious admonition rather than formal legal systems. These parenting practices reinforced social order but offered limited emotional support, which some scholars associate with later behavioural conformity rather than autonomous moral reasoning (Pollock, 1983).

During the same timeframe, Indigenous societies in North America practiced distinct parenting approaches rooted in communal values, spirituality, and harmony with nature. Parenting emphasized experiential learning, storytelling, mentorship, and moral guidance rather than coercive discipline (Lancy, 2015). Children were encouraged to develop self-discipline, respect for community norms, and responsibility through participation in communal life. Deviant behaviour was typically addressed through guidance, restitution, and social correction rather than punishment. These indigenous parenting practices played a critical role in regulating youth behaviour and maintaining social order, offering alternative models of social control distinct from European medieval traditions.

In medieval India, parenting was deeply influenced by religious and philosophical traditions, particularly Hinduism, Buddhism, and later Islam. Child-rearing emphasized dharma (duty), obedience, self-control, and moral conduct, with parents responsible for instilling respect for elders, caste norms, and religious obligations (Sharma, 2000). The joint family system played a central role, with grandparents, uncles, aunts, and elders collectively participating in the upbringing and discipline of children.

Children were socialized early into gender-specific and caste-based roles, learning acceptable behaviour through observation, instruction, and ritual practice. Discipline relied on moral

instruction, storytelling from religious texts, and social correction rather than individualized emotional nurturing. Deviant behaviour was addressed within the family or community through shame, reprimand, and moral counseling, reinforcing conformity and discouraging actions that could disrupt social harmony (Chakrabarti, 2012). These parenting practices contributed to strong internalized social controls that shaped youth behaviour long before formal criminal justice systems emerged.

In Africa, the medieval period (roughly 8th–15th century, varying by region) was marked by strong kinship systems, communal living, and oral traditions. Parenting was not the exclusive responsibility of biological parents but a collective obligation shared by extended family members, elders, and the wider community. Children were socialized through observation, participation, and instruction in culturally valued norms such as respect for elders, communal responsibility, self-restraint, and cooperation (Mbiti, 1990).

Discipline in African societies emphasized social harmony and moral accountability rather than individual punishment alone. Misconduct by children was addressed through communal correction, storytelling, proverbs, and, where necessary, sanctions imposed by elders. These approaches aimed to prevent deviant behaviour by reinforcing collective identity and social responsibility, thereby reducing individualistic tendencies that could lead to antisocial conduct (Kenyatta, 1938; Mazrui, 1987). Importantly, while physical discipline existed, it was often embedded within moral education and social reintegration rather than exclusion. Such parenting practices contributed to strong social cohesion and informal social control mechanisms that regulated youth behaviour long before modern criminal justice systems emerged.

1.1.3 Parenting During the Renaissance

During the Renaissance (approximately 14th–17th centuries), the rise of humanism significantly transformed societal understandings of childhood and parenting. Humanist thinkers emphasized human dignity, rationality, and moral capacity, leading to a gradual reconceptualization of children as individuals possessing intellectual and moral potential rather than merely miniature adults or economic contributors (Aries, 1962; Cunningham, 2005). As a result, parenting increasingly incorporated deliberate moral instruction, character formation, and education as central objectives of child-rearing.

Formal education gained prominence during this period, particularly among urban and elite families. Parents were encouraged to cultivate virtues such as self-discipline, obedience,

honesty, and civic responsibility through structured learning and moral guidance. Educational theorists such as Erasmus stressed gentle instruction, persuasion, and example over excessive corporal punishment, advocating for a more reasoned approach to discipline (Erasmus, 1529/1978). Although parental authority remained hierarchical and patriarchal, there was growing recognition that harsh or arbitrary punishment could undermine moral development.

Religious institutions continued to exert strong influence over parenting practices, especially following the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation. Parents were increasingly viewed as morally accountable for their children's behaviour, with family life becoming a key site for moral regulation and social control. Deviant behaviour among children and youth was addressed through moral correction, education, and religious instruction rather than solely through physical punishment, reflecting an early shift toward internalized self-regulation.

Despite these advances, Renaissance parenting remained unequal and stratified. Humanist ideals were more accessible to middle- and upper-class families, while children from poorer households continued to experience early labor, limited schooling, and strict discipline. Nonetheless, the Renaissance laid critical foundations for modern parenting philosophies by linking education, moral development, and social responsibility—an association that continues to underpin contemporary approaches to preventing youth deviance and crime.

1.1.4 Parenting in the 20th Century

The 20th century witnessed profound transformations in parenting theory and practice across the globe, driven by advances in psychology, sociology, education, and human development. Across regions, parenting gradually shifted from reliance on tacit cultural traditions toward systematic scientific inquiry, resulting in evidence-based models that examined how parental behaviour influences children's emotional regulation, moral development, and behavioural outcomes.

A major global contribution to this shift was the work of Diana Baumrind in the 1960s, who identified three primary parenting approaches—authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive—based on the dimensions of parental warmth and behavioural control (Baumrind, 1967). Later scholars expanded this typology to include neglectful or uninvolved parenting (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Empirical research, largely conducted in Europe and North America, consistently demonstrated that authoritative parenting, characterized by high warmth and firm but reasonable control, is associated with positive developmental outcomes, including higher

self-control, social competence, academic achievement, and lower involvement in delinquent or criminal behaviour.

In Europe and North America, the 20th century saw rapid institutionalization of child development research and professional parenting guidance. Psychological theories such as attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) significantly influenced parenting norms, emphasizing emotional bonding, consistent discipline, and positive role modelling. Harsh corporal punishment gradually declined, particularly after World War II, as child welfare movements and juvenile justice reforms promoted rehabilitation rather than retribution. Parenting increasingly prioritized children's emotional well-being, autonomy, and rights, aligning with broader social democratic and liberal policy frameworks.

A defining milestone in the global re-conceptualization of parenting during the late 20th century was the growing influence of the United Nations, particularly through the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989. The UNCRC reframed parenting as a rights-based responsibility, obligating parents and guardians to act in the best interests of the child while promoting protection, participation, and provision rights (United Nations, 1989). Articles 5, 18, and 19 of the Convention emphasize parental guidance, shared responsibility between parents and the state, and protection from abuse and neglect. Through agencies such as UNICEF, the United Nations promoted and continues to promote positive parenting approaches, discouraging violent discipline and advocating nurturing, non-violent, and developmentally appropriate child-rearing practices. These frameworks positioned parenting as a central mechanism for crime prevention, social cohesion, and long-term human development.

In Africa, 20th-century parenting was shaped by the interaction between indigenous communal child-rearing systems and colonial as well as post-colonial influences. Traditional African parenting emphasized collective responsibility, respect for elders, moral instruction, and social cohesion, with extended families and communities playing a central role in disciplining and socializing children (Mbiti, 1990). During the colonial period, Western education systems and legal frameworks introduced more formalized and often authoritarian parenting norms, including stricter school-based discipline and nuclear family structures.

In the post-independence era, African societies experienced rapid urbanization, economic pressures, and social transformation, which altered traditional parenting practices. While

communal social control weakened in some contexts, states increasingly adopted UN-inspired child protection policies and ratified international child rights instruments, including the UNCRC. These developments introduced rights-based and positive parenting discourses, sometimes creating tension with traditional authority-based disciplinary norms. As a result, families navigated complex intersections between customary parenting, modern legal expectations, and rising youth exposure to crime and delinquency, particularly in urban and peri-urban settings such as Mukono District.

In Asia, parenting during the 20th century reflected a synthesis of long-standing cultural values and emerging psychological and international child development frameworks. In East Asian societies influenced by Confucianism, parenting continued to emphasize obedience, academic excellence, and respect for authority, often aligning with authoritarian or training-oriented approaches. However, increased engagement with UN-supported education reforms and child welfare policies encouraged greater recognition of children's emotional needs and individual capacities (Ho, 1986).

1.1.5 Contemporary Developments in Parenting

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, parenting practices have continued to evolve in response to globalization, technological advancement, urbanization, economic pressures, and shifting social norms. Contemporary parenting is characterized by increased diversity in family structures, greater awareness of children's rights, and heightened attention to emotional well-being, identity formation, and risk prevention. Unlike earlier periods, parenting today operates within complex social environments influenced by digital media, peer networks, schools, and state institutions.

One of the most significant contemporary developments is the expansion of child-rights-based parenting approaches, grounded in international frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). These approaches emphasize protection, participation, and provision, encouraging parents to balance authority with dialogue, respect, and emotional support. As a result, physical punishment has declined in many societies, while positive discipline, communication, and guidance are increasingly promoted as effective strategies for behavioural regulation.

Technological change has also profoundly reshaped parenting. Digital media, social networking platforms, and mobile technologies have altered how children socialize, access information, and construct identity. While these technologies offer educational and social

opportunities, they also expose children and youth to new risks, including cyberbullying, online exploitation, substance-use promotion, and criminal networks. Contemporary parenting therefore places greater emphasis on supervision, digital literacy, and boundary-setting to mitigate emerging forms of deviance.

At the same time, socio-economic pressures such as unemployment, urban poverty, family instability, and migration have complicated parenting roles, particularly in developing contexts. In many African societies, including Uganda, traditional communal parenting systems have weakened due to urbanization and changing family structures, reducing informal social control over youth behaviour. This erosion has been associated with increased vulnerability to youth crime, gang involvement, and substance abuse in urban and peri-urban settings.

Research continues to demonstrate that authoritative parenting—marked by warmth, consistent supervision, and clear expectations—remains the most effective approach in contemporary contexts, even as cultural expressions of parenting vary. Conversely, neglectful parenting, inconsistent discipline, and absence of parental monitoring are strongly linked to youth delinquency, violence, and criminal involvement. Consequently, contemporary crime-prevention strategies increasingly emphasize family-based interventions, parenting education, and community support systems.

1.1.6 Basics of Parenting

Parenting encompasses the practices and strategies through which caregivers nurture, guide, and socialize children to become responsible, well-adjusted adults. At its core, parenting involves providing emotional support, ensuring supervision and monitoring, and applying consistent discipline to encourage self-control and socially acceptable behavior. It also includes guidance and moral instruction, helping children internalize societal norms, develop ethical values, and make informed decisions. Effective parenting combines warmth, communication, and role modeling, fostering secure relationships and promoting positive developmental outcomes, while neglectful, inconsistent, or overly harsh practices increase the risk of delinquency and involvement in criminal behavior (Baumrind, 1967; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; UNCRC, 1989).

1.1.7 Conceptual Background

Parenting approaches, also referred to as child-rearing practices, encompass the strategies, behaviours, and disciplinary methods employed by parents to guide, nurture, and socialize

their children. These approaches shape children's emotional, cognitive, and moral development, influencing their social behaviour, decision-making, and susceptibility to delinquency. In the context of youth crime, parenting approaches are conceptualized as the primary familial mechanisms that either mitigate or exacerbate the risk of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Scholars have identified four main parenting approaches that significantly affect youth outcomes: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting. Authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and reasonable control, is consistently associated with pro-social behaviour, high self-regulation, and reduced likelihood of delinquency. Authoritarian parenting, marked by strict discipline and low emotional responsiveness, can foster rebellion, aggression, and secretive deviant behaviour. Permissive parenting, with high warmth but low behavioural control, often leads to impulsivity and susceptibility to peer influence, while neglectful parenting, defined by low warmth and low control, is strongly linked to antisocial behaviour and criminal involvement. These conceptual distinctions provide a framework for examining how different parental behaviours influence youth decision-making and the commission of crime.

In the African context, parenting was deeply embedded in communal values, extended family networks, and culturally informed norms. Child-rearing was traditionally viewed as a collective responsibility, where grandparents, uncles, aunts, and community elders actively participated in socializing children. Parenting emphasized respect for elders, moral education, communal responsibility, and the reinforcement of social norms, with children learning acceptable behaviour through observation, storytelling, mentorship, and participation in communal activities (Mbiti, 1990; Kenyatta, 1938). Discipline traditionally focused on moral guidance and social reintegration rather than purely punitive measures, aiming to maintain social cohesion and internalize ethical behaviour.

Modern African parenting integrates these traditional practices with contemporary approaches influenced by education, legal frameworks, and rights-based guidelines, including the UNCRC and Uganda's Ministry of Gender Positive Parenting Guidelines. This hybrid approach combines communal discipline, moral instruction, and emotional support, shaping the child's character and decision-making. In the context of youth crime, parenting approaches in Africa, including authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful approaches, interact with cultural expectations and societal norms to influence whether youth

engage in deviant or criminal behaviour. Understanding these dynamics is critical for developing culturally relevant interventions that strengthen positive parenting and reduce youth criminality in settings such as Mukono District.

Additionally, the concept of youth crime refers to illegal or anti-social acts committed by individuals typically aged 10–24 years. Youth crime encompasses a spectrum of behaviours ranging from petty theft, vandalism, and truancy to more serious offences such as assault, robbery, or gang involvement. The literature suggests that parental practices—particularly supervision, emotional support, moral guidance, and reinforcement of pro-social norms—play a central role in either deterring or facilitating such behaviour. For instance, inadequate monitoring, inconsistent discipline, or emotional neglect increases the risk of youth involvement in crime, whereas engaged, consistent, and supportive parenting reduces vulnerability to deviance.

The conceptual relationship between parenting approaches and youth crime is therefore mediated by factors such as emotional bonding, behavioural modelling, moral internalization, and social supervision. Parenting approaches provide the immediate context in which children develop attitudes toward authority, social norms, and ethical conduct, shaping their capacity for self-control, empathy, and pro-social decision-making. Understanding these concepts, particularly within the African cultural framework, is critical for investigating how variations in parenting practices in specific contexts, such as Mukono District, contribute to patterns of youth criminal behaviour and inform strategies for intervention and crime prevention.

1.1.8 Theoretical Framework

Social Control Theory, developed by Travis Hirschi in 1969, posits that individuals are less likely to engage in deviant behaviour when they maintain strong bonds to society through attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Parenting plays a critical role in establishing these social bonds, as warm and supportive relationships with parents foster emotional attachment that discourages delinquent behaviour. Parental supervision, encouragement of school attendance, and engagement in structured activities enhance youth commitment and involvement in conventional social institutions, while the instillation of moral norms strengthens internalized standards against crime.

The strength of this theory lies in its clear explanation of how strong familial and social bonds prevent delinquency and in its emphasis on the role of parents in shaping moral and

social norms, making it particularly relevant for crime-prevention strategies. However, its limitations include an inability to explain why some youths commit crime despite strong bonds, its relative neglect of cognitive and emotional mechanisms, and insufficient attention to differences in individual personality or parenting style. In Mukono District, youths experiencing neglectful or authoritarian parenting may have weaker social bonds, increasing their susceptibility to committing acts such as theft, vandalism, or other forms of delinquency, highlighting the need for complementary theoretical perspectives.

Social Learning Theory, advanced by Albert Bandura in 1977, asserts that behaviour is learned through observation, imitation, and reinforcement, and that parenting approaches strongly shape the social learning environment of children. Children observe their parents' conflict-resolution strategies, ethical conduct, and problem-solving behaviours, while pro-social behaviour is reinforced and antisocial acts are corrected, promoting internalization of norms.

The strength of social learning theory is its explanation of how specific behaviours, including aggression, lying, or rule-breaking, are transmitted within families and its recognition of the importance of reinforcement and environmental influence, particularly in understanding the risks of permissive or inconsistent parenting. Its weaknesses include limited consideration of innate personality differences, reduced focus on broader societal bonds, and inadequate explanation for why some children resist negative modelling despite exposure. Consequently, social learning theory complements social control theory by elucidating the mechanisms through which youth may learn and replicate criminal behaviour, showing that children exposed to permissive or inconsistent parental practices may imitate deviant behaviours and subsequently engage in theft, substance abuse, or violent acts.

Attachment Theory, proposed by John Bowlby in 1969, emphasizes that early emotional bonds between caregivers and children shape socio-emotional development and behavioural outcomes. Secure attachment fosters emotional regulation, empathy, pro-social behaviour, and resilience against peer pressure and deviance, whereas insecure or neglectful attachment, which may result from disengaged or abusive parenting, increases the likelihood of impulsivity, aggression, and criminal tendencies among youth.

The strength of attachment theory lies in its focus on emotional development as a critical determinant of behaviour and its ability to explain vulnerabilities to delinquency beyond social or observational factors. Its weaknesses include a primary focus on early childhood,

limited application to adolescent or late-onset delinquency, and insufficient attention to cultural, social, or peer influences. In the context of Mukono District, youths who lack secure attachments may struggle to regulate emotions, leading to behaviours such as assault, gang involvement, or property crime, emphasizing the importance of integrating attachment insights with social and learning theories to fully understand crime commission.

Baumrind's Parenting Approaches Theory, developed by Diana Baumrind in 1967, categorizes parenting approaches into authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful approaches, providing a practical framework to predict behavioural outcomes. Authoritative parenting, characterized by high warmth and firm control, is associated with low delinquency and positive social adjustment. Authoritarian parenting, marked by high control but low warmth, may increase rebellion, aggression, or secretive deviant behaviour, while permissive parenting, with high warmth but low control, often results in impulsivity and susceptibility to peer influence and delinquency. Neglectful parenting, defined by low warmth and low control, is strongly linked to antisocial behaviour and criminality.

The strength of this framework lies in its practical applicability, observable criteria, and clear predictive links between parenting and youth behaviour. However, it does not fully account for why children in similar parenting environments may exhibit different behaviours, and it insufficiently addresses societal, peer, and cultural influences or the mechanisms through which moral norms are internalized. In Mukono District, youths exposed to authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful parenting are more likely to commit criminal acts, ranging from petty theft to involvement in organized crime, because they lack adequate guidance, supervision, and moral internalization. Therefore, Baumrind's framework benefits from integration with social control, social learning, and attachment theories to provide a comprehensive understanding of how parenting approaches influence youth crime in the district.

1.1.9 Contextual Background: (Mukono District)

Mukono District, located in the Central Region of Uganda approximately 21 kilometers east of Kampala, is a dynamic area that combines rural, peri-urban, and urban settlements. The district covers around 1,511 square kilometers and is administratively divided into several sub-counties, towns, and parishes, with Mukono Town serving as the commercial and administrative center. The population is culturally diverse, predominantly composed of the

Baganda ethnic group alongside other communities, creating a mix of traditional and modern values that influence family life and child-rearing practices.

The socio-economic environment of Mukono District is shaped primarily by agriculture, small-scale trade, transport, and service industries. While some households benefit from income-generating activities, others experience economic constraints, limited access to formal education, and insufficient social services. These conditions affect family structures and parenting, with some families adopting nuclear arrangements while others maintain extended family systems. Economic pressures, parental migration, and urbanization have, in some cases, reduced parental supervision and engagement, creating gaps in guidance and monitoring of youth behaviour.

Parenting approaches in Mukono District are influenced by a blend of traditional and modern values. Traditional African practices emphasize respect for elders, moral education, communal responsibility, and discipline, while contemporary approaches increasingly focus on emotional support, children's rights, and educational achievement. This coexistence of parenting paradigms creates varying degrees of supervision, discipline, and warmth, which in turn affects how children internalize social norms and moral behaviour. Studies in similar contexts suggest that neglectful, permissive, or overly authoritarian parenting can increase vulnerability to delinquency, whereas authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth and structured guidance, promotes pro-social behaviour and reduces the risk of youth crime.

Youth in Mukono District face social challenges that include school truancy, petty theft, substance use, and peer-related violence, particularly in peri-urban areas where supervision and communal oversight may be limited. Local law enforcement and community reports indicate that these behaviours are often linked to inadequate parental monitoring, inconsistent discipline, and exposure to negative role models, highlighting the critical role of parenting approaches in shaping youth conduct. Schools and community organizations provide additional guidance and structure, but disparities in quality and access mean that parenting remains the primary mechanism influencing children's behavioural development.

Given this context, Mukono District provides a relevant setting for examining the influence of parenting approaches on youth crime. The interaction between socio-economic conditions, cultural values, family structures, and community norms creates a complex environment in which parenting approaches significantly affect whether youth engage in criminal or pro-

social behaviours. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for designing interventions and policies aimed at reducing youth crime through effective family and community engagement.

1.1.10 Legal Framework on Parenting

At the global level, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) provides the principal framework guiding parenting, child protection, and youth development. It defines childhood as a protected developmental stage and emphasizes the responsibilities of parents and guardians to ensure care, supervision, and moral guidance. Articles 5, 18, and 19 stress parental guidance, shared responsibility with the state, and protection from abuse and neglect. The UNCRC encourages positive, non-violent parenting practices and links effective parenting directly to the prevention of youth delinquency and crime. International agencies such as UNICEF and Save the Children provide guidelines and programs to support parents in implementing these principles, promoting nurturing, developmentally appropriate, and rights-based child-rearing (United Nations, 1989; UNICEF, 2020; Save the Children, 2019).

At the African continental level, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC, 1990) complements the UNCRC by addressing African socio-cultural contexts. The Charter mandates that children have the right to protection, education, and development within the family and community. Parents and guardians are explicitly recognized as primary agents of socialization, with obligations to provide care, guidance, and moral instruction, thereby reducing children's vulnerability to antisocial behaviour. Member states, including Uganda, are required to domesticate these standards, aligning national laws and policies with continental child protection frameworks (Organization of African Unity, 1990).

Regionally, East African countries under frameworks like the East African Community (EAC) Children's Rights Protocol emphasize harmonization of child protection standards across member states. These instruments promote parental responsibility, child welfare, and the use of family- and community-based mechanisms for preventing youth crime. They encourage states to implement policies that support positive parenting, educational access, and family engagement as part of broader crime-prevention strategies (East African Community, 2019).

Nationally, Uganda has enacted several laws and policies to guide parenting and child welfare. The Children Act, 2022 provides comprehensive provisions for child protection, parental responsibility, and juvenile justice. It emphasizes the duty of parents to provide care,

supervision, and moral guidance, linking parental involvement to the prevention of youth crime (Parliament of Uganda, 2022). In addition, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) issued guidelines on parenting, such as the *Positive Parenting Guidelines for Uganda (2018)*, which encourage structured supervision, consistent reinforcement of pro-social norms, emotional support, involvement in children's education, and nurturing parental relationships (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2018). Complementing these frameworks, the Police Act (Cap 303) outlines procedures for handling children in conflict with the law, requiring law enforcement to prioritize rehabilitation, referral to social services, and collaboration with parents or guardians (Government of Uganda, 2020).

1.2 Problem statement

Parenting is known to determine the future behavior of the children and later adults (Mawusi, 2020). Many parents create their own style from a combination of factors, and these evolve over time as the children develop their own personalities and move through life's stages. Parenting style is affected by both the parents' and children's temperaments, and is largely based on the influence of one's own parents and culture (Mukasa, 2021). In many Ugandan societies, the child's behavior or discipline is attributed to the parent. This is because, in most cases actions of parents affect how children think, feel and behave. They may inspire children to adopt pervasive behaviors including generally unacceptable values and norms leading to criminality (MOGLSD, 2018).

According to the Uganda police force annual crime rates of 2020, 2021 and 2022, Mukono district has remained ranked among the top five policing divisions with the highest crimes in Uganda. For example, the Uganda Police annual crime rate report (2021) ranked Mukono as the leading crime spot for rape with 41 cases, first in defilement with 100 cases, second in house breakings with 177 cases, third in theft cases with 803 cases, fourth in theft of motorcycles with 94 while in the annual crime report (2022) the district ranked sixth in the number of cases reported, with 2,761 cases first in homicide with 74 cases third in aggravated defilement with 66 cases. Auma (2016) mentioned that youth in Mukono engaged in crime because of economic hardships, use of drugs, family conflicts and negligence by parents. What is not clearly known however is whether these crimes are a result of the parenting approaches or lack of parenting for the young people involved in crimes in Mukono. There are few studies that have been carried out to investigate the cause of the increasing youth

involvement in crime in Uganda (Mukasa, 2021). This study therefore investigated how parenting approaches influence crime among young people in Mukono district.

1.3 Main objective

To investigate how parenting approaches influence crime among young people in Mukono district.

1.3.1 Specific objectives

- i) To establish the parenting approaches used by parents in Mukono district.
- ii) To establish the relationship between different parenting approaches and crime among youth in Mukono district.
- iii) To identify the challenges faced by parents in raising youth in Mukono district.
- iv) To examine the causes of the increasing crime rate among youth in Mukono district.
- v) To suggest strategies and measures to curb criminal behavior among young people in Mukono district.

1.4 Research questions

1. What parenting approaches are commonly used by parents in Mukono district?
2. What is the relationship between different parenting approaches and the involvement of youth in criminal activities in Mukono district?
3. What challenges do parents face in raising and guiding youth in Mukono district?
4. What are the key causes contributing to the increasing crime rate among youth in Mukono district?
5. What strategies and measures can be implemented to reduce criminal behavior among young people in Mukono district?

1.5 Scope of the study

1.5.1 Content scope

The study focused on the effect of parenting approaches on crime rates among the youth in Mukono district. Specifically, emphasized on the forms of parenting approaches to the youth in Mukono district, the influence of the available parenting approaches on participation in

crime among the youth in Mukono district and the challenges of parenting the youth in Mukono district.

1.5.2 Time scope

The study focused on a study period of 5 years since (2018-2022) since that time is enough to examine the effect of parenting approaches on youth crime. This period was selected because it provides a sufficiently long window to observe emerging patterns and trends in youth crime in Mukono District and to assess how these trends relate to parenting approaches over time. Crime statistics from national and district-level reports indicate that during this period, Mukono District experienced persistent incidences of property-related offences, assaults, and other violent and non-violent crimes, with theft and break-ins remaining dominant crime categories (Uganda Bureau of Statistics).

Focusing on a five-year period enables the study to capture both short-term variations and longer-term crime trends, thereby allowing a more robust examination of how different parenting approaches may influence youth involvement in criminal behavior. Parenting approaches tend to exert cumulative effects on children and adolescents; hence, a multi-year period is methodologically appropriate for assessing their impact on youth conduct.

Furthermore, the selected time frame coincides with significant social, economic, and educational changes that affected family dynamics and youth behavior, including rapid urbanization, increased economic pressures on households, and disruptions to schooling and parental supervision, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These contextual factors make the period especially relevant for examining how parenting approaches either mitigated or exacerbated youth involvement in crime. Additionally, the availability of reliable police and statistical records for this period ensures that the study is grounded in verifiable and credible data, hence enhancing the policy relevance of the study's findings for crime prevention and family support interventions in Mukono District.

1.5.3 Geographical scope

The study was carried out in Mukono district coordinates 0°21'12 north latitude and 32°45'19 east longitude. Mukono District is bordered by Kayunga District to the north, Jinja District to the east, Kalangala District to the south-west, Kira Town and Wakiso District to the west, and Luweero District to the north-west. Mukono town is about 21 kilometers (13 miles) by road, east of Kampala, the capital and largest city of Uganda. This is about 55 kilometers (34

miles) west of the town of Njeru, where the Nalubaale Power Station is situated, on the Kampala–Jinja Highway.

Mukono District was selected as the geographical scope of the study because of its strategic location and socio-spatial characteristics that make it suitable for examining the influence of parenting approaches on youth crime. The district lies along the Kampala–Jinja transport corridor, a major economic and mobility axis that exposes youth to urban influences, high population movement, and diverse social interactions, which are often associated with increased vulnerability to delinquent behavior. Additionally, Mukono comprises a mix of urban, peri-urban, and rural settings, providing a varied geographical context for analyzing parenting practices across different living environments. Its proximity to Kampala also facilitates interaction between urban lifestyles and traditional family structures, making the district an appropriate and representative setting for studying how geographical context intersects with parenting approaches to influence youth involvement in crime.

1.6 Significance of the study

The study findings can inform the design and implementation of community-based programs and social policies that foster safe, supportive environments for young people. Evidence-based recommendations from the study will guide interventions that promote family cohesion, effective discipline, parental supervision, and positive reinforcement tailored to Mukono District’s social and cultural context.

Additionally, the research contributes to academic discourse on parenting and youth crime by generating context-specific knowledge within the Ugandan setting, where empirical studies on family influence and juvenile delinquency remain limited. The findings will be useful to schools and educational institutions by strengthening collaboration between parents, teachers, and school administrators in promoting positive behavior, discipline, and moral development among learners.

Furthermore, the study is significant to law enforcement agencies, probation officers, and child protection actors by providing insights that can support preventive and rehabilitative approaches to youth crime, rather than relying solely on punitive measures. In the long term, the study empowers parents, educators, community leaders, and policymakers with practical knowledge to design informed interventions that reduce youth crime, enhance youth well-being, and nurture responsible, resilient, and law-abiding citizens within Mukono District and similar communities.

To the researcher, the study provides an opportunity to deepen understanding of the relationship between parenting approaches and youth involvement in crime within a real-life community context. It enhances the researcher's skills in research design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of social and behavioral data. The study also contributes to the researcher's academic and professional development by strengthening critical thinking and evidence-based problem-solving skills. Furthermore, the findings will serve as a reference point for future research and practice in the fields of criminology, social work, education, and community development, while enabling the researcher to make a meaningful contribution to knowledge and policy discussions on youth crime prevention in Uganda.

1.7 Justification of the study

The motivation for this study arises from the increasing concern over youth involvement in crime within Mukono District, where socio-economic challenges, urbanization, changing family structures, and varied parenting practices intersect. Despite existing policies and community interventions, reports from local law enforcement and community organizations indicate persistent youth delinquency, including theft, vandalism, substance use, and gang-related activities.

Observations suggest that these behaviours are often linked to inadequate parental supervision, inconsistent discipline, and limited emotional guidance. Consequently, this study is motivated by the need to understand how different parenting approaches—authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful, affect the likelihood of youth engagement in criminal activities. By exploring these dynamics, the research seeks to provide evidence-based insights that can inform parenting programs, community interventions, and policy frameworks aimed at preventing youth crime and promoting pro-social development in Mukono District.

This research also aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16, which emphasizes peace, justice, and strong institutions. By exploring the connection between parenting and youth crime, the study contributes to reducing violence and fostering social cohesion. Parenting plays a vital role in shaping attitudes toward crime, and the findings can inform prevention strategies and policies. Insights from this research will benefit local governments, community leaders, and youth organizations, enabling them to design targeted programs that promote positive youth outcomes, reduce crime rates, and enhance community stability.

1.8 Operational definitions

Adolescent Peer Influence: The extent to which peers or friends influence a young person's decisions and behaviors. Peer influence is a significant factor in youth crime, especially when it is combined with ineffective parenting (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007).

Adolescent Risky Sexual Behavior: Refers to behaviors such as early sexual activity, multiple sexual partners, and unprotected sex. These behaviors are influenced by various factors, including parenting style (Bingenheimer et al., 2005; Jessor, 1992).

Adolescent: An individual between the ages of 10 and 19 who is undergoing significant physical, emotional, and social transitions, moving from childhood to adulthood (Sawyer et al., 2018).

Authoritarian Parenting: A parenting style characterized by strict rules, high expectations, and minimal emotional warmth. Parents are highly controlling, with little room for flexibility or discussion (Baumrind, 1991).

Authoritative Parenting: A balanced parenting style that combines warmth and responsiveness with clear standards and rules. This style encourages open communication and fosters independence while maintaining discipline (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Behavioral Issues: Problems exhibited by young people, such as impulsivity, aggression, and defiance, which can lead to crime. These issues are often linked to ineffective or neglectful parenting approaches (Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998).

Crime: Refers to conduct that violates established legal norms or statutes and is punishable under law. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2018), crime encompasses acts ranging from theft, assault, and vandalism to more complex offences such as organized crime, trafficking, and corruption. Youth crime specifically pertains to illegal or anti-social acts committed by individuals within the youth age bracket, often influenced by factors such as family environment, peer pressure, economic conditions, and societal norms (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Understanding youth crime requires examining both the legal definitions and the social determinants that contribute to the propensity of young people to engage in delinquent or criminal behaviours.

Emotional Regulation: The ability of an adolescent to manage and respond to emotional experiences in a healthy way. Parenting that is responsive and nurturing has been found to

enhance emotional regulation, reducing the likelihood of criminal behavior (Gross & John, 2003).

Government Laws (Children Act): Legal frameworks, such as the Children Act, designed to protect the welfare of children and regulate parenting practices. These laws aim to ensure that children are raised in environments that support their development and well-being (United Nations, 1989; Uganda Children Act, 1997).

Neglectful Parenting: A style in which parents are disengaged, unresponsive to their child's needs, and uninvolved in their child's life. This can lead to significant negative outcomes for children, including criminal behavior (Baumrind, 1991; Belsky, 1984).

Parent: A caregiver responsible for the upbringing of a child, which can include biological parents, relatives, or any individual assuming a parental role (Baumrind, 1991).

Parental Involvement: The degree to which parents engage in their child's academic, social, and extracurricular activities. Higher levels of parental involvement have been shown to reduce youth engagement in criminal activities (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Parental Monitoring: The degree to which parents are aware of and involved in their child's activities, social interactions, and whereabouts. Effective monitoring has been shown to reduce the likelihood of delinquent behavior (Kerr & Stattin, 2000).

Parent-Child Relationship: The dynamic and emotional connection between a parent and their child, which influences the child's social, emotional, and psychological development. A strong parent-child relationship has been shown to reduce the likelihood of delinquent behavior (Farrington, 2003).

Parenting Approaches: Refers to the emotional climate and strategies that parents use to raise their children, which influences their behavior and development. Key types include authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting (Baumrind, 1966).

Parenting: The process of raising a child and supporting their physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development from childhood to adulthood (Darling, 1999). This process involves both biological and non-biological caregivers.

Permissive Parenting: A parenting style where parents are very warm and indulgent but set few or no rules. Permissive parents tend to avoid authority, which can lead to less discipline and structure in the child's life (Baumrind, 1991).

Risk-Taking Behavior: Engaging in activities that have the potential for negative consequences, such as substance abuse or illegal activities. Parenting approaches, particularly those that are permissive or neglectful, can increase the likelihood of risk-taking behavior among adolescents (Steinberg, 2008).

Social Control Theory: A theory positing that individuals who have strong bonds to family, school, and other social institutions are less likely to engage in criminal behavior. It suggests that authoritative parenting fosters stronger social bonds, reducing delinquency (Hirschi, 1969).

Social Support: The availability of emotional, informational, or practical assistance from family, friends, and community members. Social support has been shown to mitigate the effects of negative parenting approaches on youth behavior (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

Youth: Generally, refers to individuals in the transitional stage between childhood and adulthood. The United Nations defines youth as persons aged 15–24 years, highlighting this period as one of social, psychological, and economic development where individuals acquire skills, responsibilities, and social identity (United Nations, 2019). In Uganda, the National Youth Policy (2016) defines youth as persons aged 12–30 years, reflecting local socio-cultural considerations and the extended nature of transition to adulthood. Youth is thus understood as a critical developmental stage in which individuals are highly influenced by family, peers, and community structures, making them susceptible to both positive guidance and social risks.

Youth Crime: Criminal acts committed by individuals in their adolescent years, such as theft, violence, and substance abuse. Parenting approaches can influence whether a young person engages in criminal activity (Cohen & Levesque, 2014).

Youth Violence: A form of criminal activity involving aggression or physical harm, often linked to factors like inadequate parenting, peer pressure, and environmental stressors (Duke, Pettingell, & McMorris, 2011).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section reviewed the scholarly literature on various parenting approaches and their influence on youth behavior, particularly in relation to crime. It explored the different forms of parenting, such as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful, and how these approaches shape the development of youth, especially in terms of their susceptibility to criminal behavior. The section also delved into the complex relationship between parenting practices and youth crime, examining how factors such as discipline, communication, and emotional support can either deter or encourage delinquent behavior.

Additionally, the challenges of parenting in today's socio-cultural context were discussed, highlighting the influence of socio-economic conditions, peer pressure, and societal expectations on parental effectiveness. This review aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics between parenting and youth crime, while considering the broader societal factors that complicate effective parenting.

2.1 Theoretical framework: Social Learning theory

The study adopted the Social Learning Theory (SLT), a prominent framework in criminology, originally proposed by Albert Bandura and further developed by scholars such as Patterson et al. (2012). SLT posits that criminal behavior is learned through interactions with others, particularly in close social environments like the family. Central to this theory is the idea that individuals, especially children, acquire behaviors by observing and imitating others, particularly authority figures such as parents or caregivers, who model certain behaviors. In this view, negative behaviors, including aggression, delinquency, or criminal activity, can be learned and perpetuated through reinforcement and modeling, making parenting practices a critical factor in shaping youth behavior.

2.1.1 Key Assumptions of Social Learning Theory

SLT emphasizes that individuals are not passive recipients of environmental stimuli but active learners. They intentionally observe others' behaviors, particularly those that are socially reinforced or normalized within their environment. The theory underscores the importance of

social contexts, including familial, peer, and community influences, in shaping the individual's behavioral repertoire.

The theory asserts that individuals are more likely to imitate behaviors that come from role models who share similarities (e.g., familial ties, shared social identity) or possess authority within their social spheres. These behaviors are further reinforced when the role models receive positive outcomes, such as approval or tangible rewards, making the behaviors appear desirable or acceptable.

According to SLT, behaviors are more likely to be repeated if they are reinforced. Reinforcement can take several forms: direct reinforcement, such as praise or rewards for specific actions; or vicarious reinforcement, where an individual observes another being rewarded for a behavior and is thus motivated to replicate it. The concept of reinforcement aligns with broader behavioral psychology, which holds that actions followed by rewards are more likely to recur.

2.1.2 Critical Considerations and Limitations

While Social Learning Theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the transmission of criminal behavior, it has some limitations. The theory primarily focuses on social and environmental factors, largely overlooking the role of individual characteristics. For instance, it doesn't fully address how genetic predispositions, personality traits, or biological factors interact with learned behaviors. Recent critiques suggest that nature vs. nurture dynamics is essential to understanding criminal behavior, and that individual differences in vulnerability to learning may play a more significant role than SLT originally proposed.

2.1.3 Relevance of the Theory to the Study

In the context of this study, Social Learning Theory (SLT) provides a crucial framework for exploring how parenting approaches contribute to the development of criminal behaviors among youth. SLT emphasizes the role of observation, imitation, and reinforcement in the learning process, suggesting that children are likely to adopt behaviors modeled by their parents or caregivers, especially when those behaviors are reinforced either positively or negatively. By focusing on the impact of parenting practices, particularly those that model or reinforce aggressive, antisocial, or criminal behaviors, the study aims to identify key factors that influence youth crime. Additionally, the theory offers a pathway for understanding how positive reinforcement, consistent discipline, and the modeling of prosocial behaviors by

parents can serve as preventive measures to reduce the likelihood of youth engaging in criminal activities. This approach is particularly relevant for examining how parental influence, in combination with social and environmental factors, shapes the behavior of youth in the Mukono district.

2.2 Forms of parenting approaches to the youth.

Parents often seek effective, practical strategies for raising their children, and these strategies form the basis of their parenting style. Martin and Colbert (1997) suggest that parenting approaches evolve based on two key dimensions: parental warmth (responsiveness) and parental control (demand). Baumrind (1993) identified several parenting approaches based on these dimensions. Research consistently showed that high levels of support and warmth are associated with lower levels of crime, while low levels of support or even rejection are linked to higher levels of crime or misbehavior.

2.2.1 Authoritative Parenting Style

Authoritative parenting is marked by high warmth, support, and structure (Baumrind, 1991), fostering self-reliance, responsibility, and well-adjusted behavior in children (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Kimingiri, 2015). This style, linked to lower youth crime rates and better academic, mental health, and social outcomes, emphasizes clear expectations, responsiveness, and open communication (Sutton & Simon, 2020). Moffitt (2006) highlights that nurturance and discipline in authoritative households promote psychosocial development, academic achievement, and lower delinquency.

However, research is needed to explore cultural and socio-economic variations in the impact of authoritative parenting. While generally beneficial, the universality of its outcomes remains unclear. Future studies could examine how cultural norms and community values influence its effectiveness and its long-term effects on adulthood, including leadership, professional success, and community engagement. These insights would deepen understanding of the benefits and limitations of authoritative parenting across diverse populations.

2.2.2 Autocratic parenting style

Autocratic parenting is characterized by high control and low warmth, where parents enforce strict rules with little input from children (Baumrind, 1991). This style prioritizes obedience and discipline, often using punitive measures without explanations (Darling & Steinberg,

1993). While it may ensure immediate compliance, it can lead to long-term issues such as lower self-esteem, anxiety, and poor social skills (Lamborn et al., 1991).

Additionally, autocratic parenting limits the development of critical thinking and autonomous decision-making (Schroeder & Gordon, 2004). Cultural context influences its effects, as some societies value obedience and hierarchy more than others (Chao, 1994). Gaps remain in understanding its long-term impact on adults in non-Western contexts, particularly in cultures emphasizing respect for authority. Future research should explore these dynamics to develop culturally relevant parenting practices.

2.2.3 Permissive Parenting Style

Permissive parenting is marked by high warmth and emotional support but minimal control and structure (Baumrind, 1991). While fostering independence and self-expression, this style often leads to difficulties with self-regulation, respect for authority, and behavior in structured settings (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). It has been linked to higher rates of delinquency, poor academic performance, and mental health issues, including challenges with discipline and emotional regulation (Widom, 2017; Kimingiri, 2015).

The lack of boundaries and parental involvement in setting expectations can hinder essential life skills, such as impulse control and academic persistence (Halonen & Santrock, 1999). Despite these drawbacks, there is limited research on how cultural, socio-economic, and family dynamics influence its impact. Future studies could examine permissive parenting across cultures, its interaction with peer influences and community engagement, and its long-term effects on career, relationships, and authority management. These insights could guide interventions addressing developmental gaps

2.2.4 No-Nonsense Parenting Style

No-nonsense parenting combines high control and structure with warmth and emotional support (Sutton & Simons, 2020). It is stricter than authoritative parenting, emphasizing firm discipline and consistent rule enforcement. Research shows that children raised with this style tend to have better emotional regulation, social skills, academic performance, and reduced criminal behavior (Kitzmann, 2003; Barber, 1996; Kimingiri, 2015). The balance of warmth and high expectations fosters responsibility, autonomy, and self-regulation.

However, there is limited research on how no-nonsense parenting operates across different cultural, social, and economic contexts. The influence of societal norms, cultural perceptions

of discipline, and socio-economic factors on its effectiveness remain unclear. Future studies could explore how this style impacts emotional development, self-regulation, and social competence in various contexts and investigate its interaction with external factors such as community support and education systems. This would provide a nuanced understanding of its broader implications.

2.2.5 Neglectful Parenting Style

Neglectful parenting is manifested by low emotional warmth and control, with minimal parental involvement in a child's life (Baumrind, 1991). It has been linked to negative outcomes such as increased risk of criminal behavior, academic failure, and mental health issues like anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (Kimingiri, 2015). Children raised in neglectful households often struggle with self-regulation, social competence, and impulse control, which increases their susceptibility to delinquency and antisocial behavior (Halonon & Santrock, 1999; Widom, 2017).

Despite the well-documented effects, there is a gap in research regarding the underlying factors contributing to neglectful parenting, such as poverty, parental mental health, and societal attitudes toward child-rearing. Future research should explore how these environmental factors interact with neglectful parenting. Additionally, studies could examine the effects of neglectful parenting across developmental stages and investigate resilience in children from neglectful environments. Investigating protective factors, such as community support or mentorship, and conducting long-term studies on the impact of neglectful parenting into adulthood could inform effective interventions and preventive measures.

2.2.6 Abusive Parenting Style

Abusive parenting involves high levels of control and discipline, coupled with severe verbal, physical, or emotional abuse (Baumrind, 1991). Children raised in such environments face heightened risks for adverse outcomes, including criminal behavior, academic failure, and mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and PTSD (Kimingiri, 2015). Abusive parenting is linked to emotional instability, low self-esteem, and delinquent behaviors (Widom, 2017). The trauma caused by abuse often leads to maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as aggression or substance abuse, which can persist into adulthood. Additionally, the cycle of abuse may continue across generations, as abused children may become abusive parents themselves.

Despite extensive research on abusive parenting, gaps remain in understanding the dynamics of this style. Future studies could examine how factors such as socioeconomic status, cultural norms, and community environments influence the impact of abusive parenting. Research should also explore the long-term effects of abuse beyond adolescence, particularly in areas like career development, relationships, and mental health. Furthermore, resilience factors like mentorship or therapeutic interventions that mitigate the effects of abuse should be explored, providing insights for breaking the cycle of abuse and fostering healthier family dynamics.

Additional Parenting Approaches

In addition to the widely recognized parenting approaches, other nuanced approaches such as helicopter and free-range parenting have emerged.

a. **Helicopter Parenting:**

Helicopter parents tend to be overly involved in their children's lives, often micromanaging their activities and shielding them from failure or discomfort. While this style can offer emotional security, it may hinder the development of independence, resilience, and problem-solving skills, leading to children who struggle with self-regulation and decision-making (Burgess, 2009).

b. **Free-Range Parenting:**

In contrast to helicopter parenting, free-range parenting encourages children to take risks, be independent, and learn from their experiences with minimal supervision. This style fosters autonomy and self-reliance but may expose children to potential dangers or challenges if boundaries and safety are not clearly communicated (Hara, 2008). It can lead to positive outcomes in terms of self-confidence and resourcefulness, but its effectiveness depends heavily on the child's temperament and external influences like community safety.

2.3 Parenting Approaches and their Relationship to Youth Crime

Parenting approaches significantly influence adolescent behavior, particularly their likelihood of engaging in delinquent acts. Each style varies in focus, offering unique combinations of warmth, discipline, and expectations, shaping youth development differently. Understanding these distinctions is vital in addressing youth crime effectively. The relationship between parenting approaches and youth crime is elaborated below.

Authoritative parenting which focuses on balancing high expectations with warmth, emotional support, and clear communication, emphasizes fostering self-discipline, moral values, and responsibility in children. This style significantly reduces their likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior (Baumrind, 1991). Its clarity lies in setting clear rules while maintaining a supportive environment that builds self-esteem, resilience, and positive peer relationships. Children raised in authoritative households tend to exhibit strong moral values, self-confidence, and a reduced inclination toward delinquent behaviors. Future research could explore the effectiveness of this style in various cultural contexts, its role in preventing gang involvement, and its potential in reducing substance abuse (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Unlike the nurturing approach of authoritative parenting, autocratic parenting style that enforces strict discipline and obedience, often through punitive measures, prioritizes compliance and control over emotional support. The lack of warmth and flexibility can lead to defiance, aggression, and a higher likelihood of delinquency as children rebel against authority (Chao, 1994). The clarity of this style lies in its rigid rule enforcement; however, it may also result in mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Children raised in autocratic households often exhibit higher levels of aggression and defiance due to the absence of emotional support, increasing their risk of delinquent behavior. Future research could investigate the influence of autocratic parenting on crime rates in single-parent households or disadvantaged environments (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Distinct from the structured approaches of authoritative and autocratic parenting, permissive style which emphasizes indulgence and avoids enforcing strict boundaries, often prioritizes children's immediate happiness over discipline this style lacks clarity, leading to weak impulse control and a disregard for rules. Children raised in permissive households are more prone to risk-taking behaviors and delinquency, particularly under peer pressure (Baumrind, 1991). These children often fail to internalize discipline, making them vulnerable to criminal influences. Longitudinal studies could examine how the lack of structure in permissive parenting affects delinquency across developmental stages and within various socio-economic contexts.

Neglectful parenting characterized by a lack of attention to children's emotional and physical needs, often results into inadequate supervision and guidance. This absence of involvement and guidance sharply contrasts with the supportive structure of other parenting approaches. The clarity of this style lies in its consistent neglect of essential parenting responsibilities,

often leaving children vulnerable to feelings of abandonment and delinquent behaviors as they seek attention or fill emotional voids (Lamborn et al., 1991). Children raised in neglectful households are more likely to engage in criminal activities due to the absence of supervision and guidance. Research could explore the effects of neglectful parenting in contexts of poverty or trauma and evaluate the effectiveness of early intervention programs in mitigating its impact.

Abusive parenting which focuses on control through harmful practices, such as physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, leading to profound developmental challenges for children, is distinctly harmful, fostering maladaptive coping mechanisms such as aggression or withdrawal, which can escalate into criminal behaviors (Widom, 1997). The clarity of its harm lies in the lasting trauma it inflicts on children, impairing their ability to form healthy relationships and increasing their vulnerability to crime. Children raised in abusive households often experience long-term psychological trauma, which can manifest as delinquency or criminal acts. Future research could investigate how various types of abuse contribute to specific criminal behaviors and assess the role of therapeutic interventions in preventing such outcomes.

Helicopter parenting that focuses on over-involvement and excessive monitoring, often preventing children from developing independence and decision-making skills, is marked by overprotection and control. Its clarity lies in minimizing immediate risks at the expense of fostering self-reliance, potentially leading to anxiety, low self-esteem, and rebellious behaviors as children seek independence (Schiffrin et al., 2014). Children raised in helicopter households may exhibit dependency and struggle with self-regulation, which can lead to risky or delinquent behaviors as a form of rebellion or self-expression. Studies could investigate how this over-involvement affects youth mental health and whether it correlates with delinquency.

Free-range parenting which emphasizes fostering independence, autonomy, and personal responsibility by allowing children greater freedom to explore and make their own decisions, strikes a balance between trust and guidance. Its clarity lies in encouraging resilience and decision-making skills, which can serve as protective factors against criminal behavior. Children raised in free-range households often develop a strong sense of personal responsibility, reducing their likelihood of engaging in delinquent acts (Gray, 2015). However, the potential risks associated with less supervision, such as vulnerability to peer-

related crimes, warrant further investigation. Research could also examine the impact of free-range parenting on youth behavior in communities with high crime rates, shedding light on its effectiveness in diverse socio-economic contexts.

2.4 Challenges Faced by Parents in Raising Youth

Raising youth in contemporary society presents numerous challenges, influenced by socio-economic, technological, cultural, and psychological factors. Below are some key challenges parents face,

Many parents struggle to balance demanding work schedules with family responsibilities. This often results in reduced quality time with children, which can hinder emotional bonding and effective parenting. Research indicates that work-family conflicts significantly impact parents' ability to provide consistent supervision and guidance (Craig & Mullan, 2011). As dual-income families become more common, parents are increasingly turning to external support systems such as daycare and after-school programs, which can sometimes create a sense of disconnection between parents and children. Future studies could explore innovative strategies to help parents optimize work-life balance while maintaining strong familial bonds.

The pervasive influence of technology and social media has introduced new parenting challenges. Parents often find it difficult to monitor their children's online activities, exposing them to risks such as cyber bullying, online predators, and harmful content (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008). Moreover, excessive screen time can affect children's social and academic development. Despite these challenges, emerging parental control technologies and digital literacy programs offer tools to mitigate risks. Research could examine the long-term effects of parental mediation strategies on children's digital behavior and mental health.

Adolescents are particularly susceptible to peer pressure and negative influence, which can lead to risky behaviors such as substance abuse, truancy, or delinquency. Parents often struggle to counteract these influences, especially in communities where negative peer behaviors are prevalent (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007). Intervention programs aimed at fostering strong parent-child communication and building adolescents' self-esteem have shown promise. Upcoming research might investigate how cultural and socioeconomic factors affect the dynamics of peer influence and parental intervention.

Economic/ financial challenges can limit parents' ability to meet their children's basic needs or provide opportunities for education and extracurricular activities. Studies show that economic hardships often lead to parental stress, which can negatively affect parenting

quality and child outcomes (Conger et al., 2002). Programs such as family income supplements and affordable childcare services have shown potential in reducing economic strain. Imminent studies could explore the efficacy of these interventions in different cultural and geographic contexts.

Parents dealing with mental health challenges, such as depression or anxiety, may struggle to provide emotional stability and support to their children. Research highlights that parental mental health significantly influences children's emotional well-being and behavior (Goodman et al., 2011). Access to mental health resources for parents, such as counseling and support groups, can mitigate these effects. Future research could examine the role of community-based mental health services in enhancing parenting outcomes.

Single parents often face heightened challenges, including financial strain, limited support, and increased responsibilities. These challenges can impact their ability to consistently enforce rules or provide emotional support, leading to behavioral issues in children (Amato, 2005). Community networks and co-parenting arrangements have emerged as potential solutions for reducing the burden on single parents. Studies could further explore the long-term impact of these support systems on single-parent households.

In a rapidly evolving world, parents face the challenge of preparing their children for an uncertain future. This includes fostering adaptability, critical thinking, and emotional resilience while protecting them from societal pressures and stress (Masten, 2001). Parenting approaches that integrate emotional intelligence training and problem-solving skills are gaining attention. Research could explore the effectiveness of such approaches in enhancing youth resilience across different socio-economic groups.

As children transition into adolescence, parents often struggle to support their identity development while maintaining authority. Adolescents' quest for independence, coupled with exposure to diverse cultural and social influences, can create conflicts. This is especially challenging for parents in environments with shifting societal norms (Erikson, 1968). Parent-adolescent communication strategies have been effective in reducing conflict. Future studies could examine how these strategies work across different socio-economic groups.

Some Parents in high-crime neighborhoods face the challenge of shielding their children from violence and criminal influences. Exposure to community violence often leads to trauma and behavioral issues in children, while parents may struggle with fear and limited resources (Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998). Community-based initiatives such as safe spaces and youth

mentorship programs have shown promise. Research could explore their scalability and long-term impact in violence-prone areas.

Discussing topics related to sexuality is often difficult for some parents due to cultural taboos or personal discomfort. Without proper guidance, youth may rely on inaccurate or harmful sources of information, leading to risky sexual behaviors (Jerma n & Constantine, 2010). Programs that equip parents with communication skills for addressing sexual health have demonstrated success. Future studies could focus on the cultural barriers to parental involvement in sexual education and ways to overcome them.

2.5 Causes of increased crimes among the youth

The causes of increased crime among youth are multifaceted and vary depending on individual circumstances, family dynamics, societal influences, and broader economic and political conditions. As young people navigate the complex challenges of adolescence, they are often confronted with pressures that can lead to criminal behavior. These pressures may stem from a combination of socio-economic struggles, family instability, peer influences, mental health issues, and the pervasive effects of media.

Economic difficulties, including poverty and youth unemployment, are significant drivers of increased crime rates among the youth. Limited access to financial resources often compels young individuals to engage in illegal activities such as theft or drug trafficking as a means of survival (Matsueda & Heimer, 1997). Additionally, socio-economic inequality exacerbates these issues, as youth from impoverished backgrounds may feel marginalized and resort to crime due to a lack of opportunities. Future research could investigate the impact of conditional cash transfer programs and micro-enterprise initiatives on youth crime in economically disadvantaged regions.

Family instability, including divorce, absentee parents, and abusive household environments, contributes to delinquency among the youth. Such environments often deprive young people of proper guidance, emotional support, and moral values, increasing their likelihood of engaging in criminal activities (Demuth & Brown, 2004). Moreover, the lack of positive role models within fractured families may lead to identity crises among youth, further predisposing them to risky behaviors. Further studies should examine the effectiveness of family mentorship programs in mitigating the effects of broken family structures.

Peer pressure and the allure of gang culture play a significant role in pushing youth toward criminal activities. Adolescents, especially those seeking a sense of belonging, may be drawn

to gangs that glorify violence, drug use, and other forms of criminal behavior (Thornberry et al., 2003). Furthermore, gangs often provide an alternative form of social support for youth from dysfunctional families, making prevention efforts more complex. Research is needed to evaluate the long-term outcomes of mentorship and peer education programs in high-gang-influence areas.

The prevalence of drug and alcohol abuse among youth is closely linked to criminal behavior, including violence, theft, and vandalism. Substance abuse impairs judgment and increases impulsivity, leading to actions that violate social norms and laws (Hawkins et al., 1992). Additionally, the availability of illicit substances in certain communities perpetuates this cycle of abuse and crime. Future research could explore how community-level interventions, such as harm reduction programs, impact substance-related youth crime.

Youth with low educational attainment or lack of vocational skills are more likely to turn to crime as they face limited opportunities for legitimate employment. Education provides not only knowledge but also socialization and moral development, which are critical in deterring criminal behavior (Hirschi, 1969). Moreover, the lack of access to affordable quality education in some areas deepens the problem, as youth are left without constructive pathways. Further studies could assess the efficacy of alternative education models, such as vocational schools and online learning platforms, in reducing delinquency.

Frequent exposure to violence in media, including films, video games, and social media, desensitizes youth to aggression and normalizes violent behavior. Additionally, living in communities plagued by violence increases the likelihood of youth engaging in similar acts due to learned behavior (Anderson et al., 2003). This dual exposure creates a compounding effect, where youth not only imitate violent actions but also develop reduced empathy for victims. Future research could investigate the cumulative psychological effects of combined media and real-world violence exposure on young offenders.

Mental health challenges, including depression, anxiety, and trauma, are strongly linked to delinquent behavior. Youth struggling with untreated mental health issues are more likely to engage in impulsive or aggressive acts (Farrington, 2000). In addition to individual mental health issues, environmental stressors such as exposure to abuse or community violence amplify these risks. Future studies should explore the integration of school-based mental health programs as a preventive measure against youth crime.

Rapid urbanization has led to the breakdown of traditional community structures that once provided a safety net for youth. As cities expand, youth may feel isolated, disconnected, and prone to delinquency due to a lack of supportive social networks (Sampson & Wilson, 1995). While community engagement programs exist, there is a need for research on how urban planning and design can create spaces that foster positive youth interactions and reduce crime.

Disparities in the allocation of public resources, such as recreational facilities, education, and health services, leave many youths without constructive outlets. This lack of resources increases idle time, making youth more susceptible to engaging in criminal behavior (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Future studies should assess the role of equitable resource distribution in reducing crime rates in underprivileged neighborhoods.

The rise of social media has introduced new platforms for criminal behavior and peer influence among youth. Exposure to cyber bullying, online scams, and content glorifying violence can desensitize young people to crime (Livingstone & Smith, 2014). Moreover, online interactions may encourage risk-taking behaviors that spill over into real-life criminal acts. Research on digital literacy and online safety programs could help address this emerging cause (Livingstone & Smith, 2014).

Youth experiencing cultural or identity crises, particularly in multicultural societies, may feel alienated and seek acceptance in groups that encourage criminal behavior (Phinney, 1990). The lack of connection to a positive cultural identity can lead to frustration and anti-social activities. Programs fostering cultural appreciation and identity exploration can mitigate this risk (Phinney, 1990).

Youth who struggle with social skills and emotional regulation are at an increased risk of engaging in criminal activities. Emotional intelligence, which includes the ability to manage emotions, resolve conflicts, and empathize with others, plays a significant role in preventing criminal behavior (Goleman, 1995). Programs aimed at developing emotional intelligence and conflict-resolution skills could significantly reduce youth crime (Goleman, 1995).

2.6 Strategies and measures to curb criminal behavior among young people

To reduce youth crime, a comprehensive approach is needed, tackling underlying causes such as economic hardship, family dysfunction, peer pressure, and mental health issues, while focusing on early intervention and community support.

Access to quality education and stable employment are key deterrents to youth crime. Studies show that youth enrolled in school or vocational programs are less likely to engage in crime due to the constructive opportunities they provide (Hirschi, 2002). Job opportunities, especially in disadvantaged areas, reduce financial stress and prevent criminal behavior (Farrington, 2007). Economic empowerment through job programs and internships can offer stable alternatives to crime. Future research should explore government and private sector partnerships for sustainable job training programs.

Family dynamics play a crucial role in youth behavior, and family interventions are effective in crime prevention. Parenting programs emphasizing positive reinforcement and communication reduce delinquency among at-risk youth (Dishion & Patterson, 2006). Addressing family instability, such as domestic violence or substance abuse, is essential to preventing youth crime. Youth supported at home are more likely to succeed academically and socially, reducing criminal behavior (Smith, 2011). Future efforts should focus on community-based family interventions in high-risk areas.

Community policing, which fosters collaboration between law enforcement and local communities, reduces youth crime by improving relationships and perceptions of law enforcement (Skogan, 2006). Initiatives like mentorship, recreational activities, and community service strengthen neighborhood ties and promote positive behavior. These programs provide structured alternatives to crime, fostering leadership and teamwork. When youth feel supported by their community and law enforcement, they are less likely to engage in delinquency (Gill et al., 2014). Future research should explore these strategies in urban settings.

Addressing youth mental health is essential in crime prevention, as untreated conditions like depression, anxiety, and trauma are linked to criminal behavior (McGee & Newcomb, 2012). Counseling, therapy, and support groups can help manage emotional struggles before they lead to crime. Schools, community centers, and juvenile systems should incorporate mental health resources to address these needs. Early intervention can significantly reduce youth crime by targeting its root causes (Cohen & Piquero, 2009). Further research is needed on the long-term impact of mental health support in crime prevention.

Media literacy programs help youth critically evaluate violent media content, reducing the normalization of violence and criminal behavior (Anderson & Dill, 2000). These programs encourage awareness of the real-world consequences of crime and promote informed

decision-making (Levine, 2012). By fostering discussions about media content, youth are less likely to imitate criminal behavior. Additionally, media literacy can empower youth to navigate online spaces responsibly. Future research should explore its long-term impact on reducing youth crime in the digital age.

Youth mentorship programs provide positive role models and support, reducing criminal behavior and promoting academic success (DuBois et al., 2002). Mentors help youth navigate peer pressure, family issues, and academic struggles, building self-esteem and responsibility. Research shows that mentorship reduces criminal activity and improves social outcomes. Future studies should investigate the long-term impact of mentorship on recidivism and resilience in at-risk youth populations (Borden et al., 2015).

Participation in sports fosters teamwork, discipline, and physical health, providing an alternative to criminal behavior (Eime et al., 2013). Sports programs improve peer relationships and self-confidence while offering a structured outlet for stress and anger. Research shows youth involved in sports are less likely to engage in crime. These programs also strengthen a sense of community and belonging. Future studies should explore how different types of sports influence crime reduction, particularly in high-risk areas.

Leadership development programs equip youth with critical thinking, problem-solving, and responsibility, reducing criminal behavior (Zimmerman, 2000). Empowered youth are more likely to make positive choices and avoid crime (Catalano et al., 2004). These programs promote self-confidence and a sense of agency. Future research should explore tailoring empowerment programs to high-risk youth and evaluating their long-term effectiveness. Additionally, the role of community partnerships in supporting leadership development should be further examined.

School-based programs that teach life skills, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence can prevent youth crime (Durlak et al., 2011). Schools play a critical role in instilling discipline and values. Programs addressing behavioral issues and promoting positive social skills can curb criminality. In Uganda, incorporating career counseling and after-school activities could provide constructive alternatives to crime. More research is needed to optimize these programs to address local challenges like high dropout rates and overcrowded classrooms.

Programs promoting cultural pride and self-worth help reduce criminal behavior by fostering a positive identity (Klein, 2006). In Uganda, cultural initiatives such as music, dance, and

community-building activities can give youth a sense of belonging and purpose. This reduces the likelihood of engaging in crime. Encouraging young people to connect with their cultural roots can strengthen their community ties. Future studies should explore how cultural programs can be integrated into youth development initiatives for crime prevention.

Religious and cultural institutions have historically been integral in shaping societal values and norms, and their influence on youth behavior in Uganda is significant. These institutions serve as pillars of moral and spiritual guidance, fostering a sense of belonging and accountability among young people. By leveraging their reach and credibility within communities, they effectively instill values such as honesty, respect, harmony and discipline, which are crucial in crime prevention efforts. Collaborative initiatives between religious and cultural institutions and other stakeholders, such as schools and law enforcement, could strengthen community resilience against youth criminality.

Programs that partner with churches, mosques, and cultural groups have immense potential to teach critical life skills, such as conflict resolution, reconciliation, emotional regulation, and decision-making, while promoting moral discipline. These institutions act as safe spaces for youth, offering mentorship opportunities where experienced elders or leaders guide and teach them how to navigate through challenges such as peer pressure and unemployment. Integrating teachings from religious and cultural perspectives into broader youth outreach programs may help counteract the allure of criminal activities and provide alternative pathways for personal development.

Religion, culture and government are the three pillars upon which every society stands for example the cultural institutions have been instrumental in restoring fathers to their familial roles using the cultural structures to unite families right from the grassroots to the national levels. This has been done by promoting and protecting the indigenous norms and traditions upon which delinquent behaviors among the young people is greatly denounced hence fostering peaceful co-existence within and among the families. Additionally cultural and religious institutions have always been in the forefront in promoting rehabilitation programs and resettlement of the youths or young people in conflict with the law. This has helped in the reconstruction of social cohesion among the communities hence shaping the youth behaviors which is key when it comes to fighting crimes among the young people.

To optimize the impact of these efforts, further research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of faith-based mentorship programs in reducing juvenile delinquency in

Uganda. Studies could examine how religious and cultural teachings shape behavior, assess the role of mentorship in fostering resilience, and identify the challenges faced by these institutions in reaching vulnerable youth. Evidence-based strategies could then inform policies that better integrate the unique strengths of religious and cultural institutions into national crime prevention frameworks, ensuring that their contributions are both sustainable and impactful.

2.7 Summary of reviewed literature

The literature review highlights the significant role parenting approaches play in influencing youth criminal behavior. It is clear that parenting whether authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful impacts youth behavior in different ways. The relationship between parenting and crime is crucial, especially in socio-economically stressed environments, where parents may struggle to maintain control due to financial strain, lack of education, or exposure to domestic violence. Parental involvement is essential in mitigating criminal behavior, making parenting support programs a critical component of youth crime prevention strategies.

Challenges faced by parents, particularly in disadvantaged areas, contribute significantly to rising youth crime rates. Research reveals that many parents in marginalized communities struggle with unemployment, substance abuse, mental health issues, and lack of access to quality education. These stressors often hinder their ability to provide emotional, financial, and educational support to their children. In Uganda, these challenges are exacerbated by rapid urbanization, poverty, and the weakening of traditional family structures, leaving youth without adequate role models. This instability increases the likelihood of young people engaging in criminal activities as a coping mechanism or form of rebellion.

To curb youth crime, a comprehensive approach integrating family, educational, and community-based interventions is necessary. The literature stresses the importance of strengthening parenting through educational programs focused on communication, conflict resolution, and emotional support. Mentorship programs, community policing, and sports-based initiatives are proven to reduce criminal behavior by offering alternatives to crime and fostering a sense of belonging. A multi-tiered approach that tackles individual, socio-economic, and cultural factors is critical, particularly in Uganda, where poverty, unemployment, and weak family structures require targeted interventions to break the cycle of crime.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents research methodology covering, research design, research approach, area of study, study population, Sample size, Sampling techniques, data collection methods, data collection instruments, data quality and control, data collection procedures, data analysis, ethical considerations and limitation of the study.

3.1 Research Design

Yin (2009), defines a research design serves as a "blueprint" for conducting a study, linking research questions to data collection and analysis, and ultimately to conclusions. It's the what, how, and why of the research process (Green & Thorogood, 2004). This study used a descriptive case study design, ideal for exploring phenomena within real-life contexts. According to Denzin and Licolyn (2018), this approach provides an in-depth account of individuals, groups, events, or phenomena, making it suitable for qualitative research. Descriptive case studies document characteristics, processes, and interactions, capturing the complexities of real-world scenarios.

This design allowed for a detailed analysis of parenting practices, their variations, and their impact on youth behavior and criminal activity while considering socio-cultural factors.

3.2 Research Approach

Leedy and Ormrod (2019) define a research approach as a systematic method for investigating a topic, involving techniques, procedures, and tools to collect, analyze, and interpret data. This study used a qualitative approach to gather detailed data through interviews, observations, and open-ended questionnaires. This method provides in-depth insights into the research topic, allowing exploration of the social, cultural, and environmental factors influencing the phenomenon. By emphasizing participants' meanings, experiences, and perspectives, qualitative research uncovers nuanced insights often missed by quantitative methods.

3.3 Area of study

It's defined as the boundaries and context for the research, guiding the objectives and methodology. The area of study can encompass several dimensions, including the subject, the

specific location or population being investigated, and the academic or professional field of study, (Leedy and Ormrod (2019). The research focused on the youth population in Mukono District, Uganda, an area along the Kampala–Jinja Highway, known for its strategic location and socio-economic diversity (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019).

Mukono's proximity to key districts and its role as a commercial hub shape its economy, and the district was chosen due to rising youth crime rates and its diverse socio-economic background. By examining parenting approaches and their impact on youth behavior, the research integrates sociology and criminology to understand factors contributing to youth crime in this setting.

3.4 Study Population

A study population, as defined by Creswell (2003), encompasses the entire group of individuals and objects that are the focal point of a specific research inquiry. In the context of this study, the study population was drawn from a diverse range of sources. The study population consisted of youth aged 15 to 30 years old, adults who are parents, local leaders, police officers and non-governmental teams working with youth and children who reside in the Mukono district. Mukono district statistics shows that the number of youth 15-30 years in Mukono district are 110,366 youth.

3.5 Target Population

According to Creswell (2003), the target population refers to the specific group of individuals from whom the researcher intends to collect data. This group is a carefully selected subset of the broader study population, chosen based on characteristics relevant to the research objectives, such as age, gender, occupation, or location.

For this study, the target population consisted of youth aged 15-30 years old, parents of youth in the same age group, Boda-Boda riders, and key informants from the community of Mukono District. The target population was selected based on their direct involvement or influence on youth behavior and parenting practices, as well as their ability to provide relevant insights into the study's objectives. These groups were deliberately chosen to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives, reflecting the diverse socio-cultural and economic dynamics of the district. This diversity is crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between parenting approaches and youth behavior.

3.6 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of participants, units, or observations selected from a broader population to be included in a research study. In qualitative research, the sample size is typically determined by the study's objectives, the characteristics of the population, the methods of data collection, and the point of data saturation, where no new insights emerge from additional data.

From the targeted population of 60 study participants, 48 participants were ultimately selected. The sample size was determined based on the research objectives, the diversity of the target population, and the point of data saturation, ensuring that sufficient information was gathered to address the study's questions effectively.

3.7 Sampling techniques

In selecting the sample, a combination of techniques was employed to ensure both relevance and representativeness. Purposive sampling was first used to identify specific individuals who were most relevant to the study's objectives, such as parents of youth aged 15-30 years, youth themselves, Boda-Boda riders, and key informants like community leaders and educators. These participants were selected based on their direct experience or valuable insights into the factors influencing youth behavior and parenting approaches.

Simple random sampling was then used within the identified groups. For example, from the pool of youth participants, a random selection was made to ensure diversity across different neighborhoods and socio-economic backgrounds. Similarly, within the group of parents, a random selection process was applied to ensure various perspectives based on factors such as age, education, and socio-economic status.

By combining purposive and simple random sampling, the study ensured that the sample was both focused and varied, capturing a comprehensive range of insights into the dynamics of youth behavior and parenting approaches.

3.8 Data collection methods and tools

Data collection methods refer to the systematic techniques used to gather information from participants or subjects within a study. These methods are crucial in ensuring the reliability, validity, and depth of data. The choice of data collection methods was influenced by the research objectives, the nature of the population, and the type of data (qualitative or

quantitative) required to answer the research questions. Creswell (2014). For this study, the following methods and tools were appropriate:

3.8.1 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGD is a qualitative research tool that involves guided group discussions among selected participants to explore their views, experiences, and perspectives on a specific topic. In this study, FGDs were used to examine the relationship between parenting approaches and youth involvement in crime. This method was selected because it enables interactive and dynamic discussions where participants can share personal experiences, challenge each other's viewpoints, and reflect on collective themes. FGDs are particularly effective for exploring complex social issues, such as parenting influences, as they encourage deeper insights that might not emerge in one-on-one interviews.

In this study, 30 participants, including youths, Boda-Boda riders, and parents, were grouped to explore their views on parenting approaches and youth involvement in crime. Participants for FGDs were grouped based on shared characteristics to ensure focused discussions and contextually relevant insights. By capturing diverse perspectives from individuals with varied backgrounds, FGDs enriched the understanding of complex social issues. The discussions allowed participants to reflect on their experiences and contribute unique insights, which deepened the analysis of the relationship between parenting approaches and youth involvement in crime.

A structured FGD guide allowed the researcher to explore group dynamics and shared views, making it especially useful for understanding community-level perceptions, including those of youth, parents, and other stakeholders (e.g. boda-boda riders). It was chosen because it helps researchers maintain alignment with research objectives, manage time efficiently, and cover all key themes—while allowing for organic exploration of new ideas. The guide promotes thorough data collection by including both open-ended questions and prompts for deeper engagement.

Table 1: Summary of focused group discussions held with number of Participants and Themes of Discussion for Each

Category	Focus Groups	Participants per Group	Themes
Youth without parental love	1	6	Impact of lack of parental guidance
Youth with casual employment	1	6	Challenges of unemployment on youth behavior
Boda-Boda riders	1	6	Socioeconomic pressures and crime risk
Parents of children in Mukono	2	6	Parenting approaches and their influence on youth
Total	5 Focused Groups	30	Varied themes related to youth guidance

Source: Researcher 2024

3.8.2 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) are qualitative research methods that involve conducting in-depth, face-to-face interviews with individuals who possess specialized knowledge, experiences, or insights directly related to the research topic. This approach is particularly effective in uncovering nuanced and context-specific information that might not emerge through other data collection methods. In this study, 18 key informants were purposively selected based on their positions of influence, expertise, and direct involvement in community matters. These included:

Community Leaders – Given their role in shaping societal norms and mediating community dynamics, they offered critical perspectives on how parenting approaches impact youth behavior.

Local Authorities – As policymakers and enforcers of the law, they provided insights into trends in youth crime and the possible correlation with family environments.

Educators – Due to their close interactions with young people, educators shared observations on how different parenting approaches manifest in student behavior and influence youth involvement in crime. This selection ensured a broad and comprehensive understanding of the issue by drawing from diverse yet interconnected professional and community perspectives.

To ensure effective data collection, 18 sessions were held with the participants. Each session lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, depending on the informant's availability and the depth of the discussion. These sessions were conducted at convenient locations, such as community halls, offices, and schools, ensuring privacy and comfort for the informants.

To collect rich, detailed data, an interview guide was developed as the primary tool. This guide included open-ended questions, specifically designed to explore the interplay between parenting approaches and youth involvement in crime. Examples of the areas explored included, perceptions of common parenting approaches within the community observed impacts of parenting on youth behavior, both positive and negative, possible links between parenting practices and youth engagement in criminal activities and suggestions for interventions to mitigate youth crime stemming from parenting challenges.

The interview guide was tailored for each informant group, allowing for deeper exploration of their unique professional insights and contextual knowledge. For example, community leaders were asked about the societal norms and values influencing parenting while local authorities were questioned on crime statistics, trends, and family backgrounds of youth offenders and educators were probed on behavioral patterns and interventions observed in schools.

Table 2: Summary of Key informants and their roles

Key Informant	Role	Number of sessions	Insights Provided
Community Leaders	Local leaders (including local council-1, religious and cultural or leaders)	5	Provided insights into community dynamics, youth behavior, and local perceptions of parenting approaches and crime.
Local Authorities	Police officers, local government officials (probation officer)	8	Offered perspectives on crime trends, law enforcement challenges, and community interventions.
Educators	Teachers, school counsellors	5	Discussed the impact of parenting on youth behavior in schools, the role of education in crime prevention, and academic performance.

Source, Researcher -2024

3.8.3 Direct Observation

Direct observation is a qualitative research method in which the researcher immerses themselves in the participants' natural settings to observe behaviors, interactions, and environmental dynamics as they occur in real-time. This approach enables the researcher to capture rich, contextualized data, including non-verbal cues, behavioral patterns, and social dynamics, which are often missed in interviews or surveys. For this study, the researcher conducted direct observations in natural settings such as police barracks, public spaces, and community hubs, where youths and their families frequently interacted. The researcher adopted a non-participant observational approach, remaining unobtrusive to avoid influencing participants' behaviors. This allowed for an authentic and unbiased understanding of the interactions between youths, their peers, authority figures, and their environments.

Many critical aspects of human behavior, such as body language, gestures, and emotional expressions, are non-verbal and cannot be effectively captured through interviews or FGD. Observation allowed the researcher to document these subtle dynamics. By observing participants in their natural settings, the researcher gathered authentic, real-time data that reflected actual behaviors and interactions, rather than self-reported accounts, which might be influenced by social desirability bias. Observation provided insights into the environmental and social factors influencing youth behavior, such as peer pressure, parental discipline, and community involvement, offering a holistic view of the issue.

The primary tool for data collection was a structured checklist, designed to focus the researcher's observations on specific behaviors, interactions, and contextual factors relevant to the research objectives. This tool ensured consistency and thoroughness in capturing data across different observation settings. The researcher maintained detailed field notes, documenting both the behaviors observed and the environmental context. Notes included descriptions of body language, tone of voice, spatial arrangements, and significant events that unfolded during the observations. To minimize the risk of observer bias or altering participants' natural behavior, the researcher maintained a discreet presence, blending into the environment without direct interaction with participants.

3.8.4 Document Review

Document review is a qualitative research method that involves systematically analyzing existing records, reports, and other written materials to gather secondary data that complements primary data. This method allows the researcher to identify historical trends,

contextual information, and patterns related to the research topic. For this study, document review was used to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing youth behavior and crime by examining official records and relevant documentation.

Document review allowed the researcher to gather contextual information that could not be directly observed or verbalized during primary data collection. For instance, crime statistics provided an objective overview of trends that supported qualitative findings. Reviewing documents enabled the researcher to identify patterns and changes over time, such as shifts in crime trends or the evolution of parenting practices within the community. The review process involved a thorough examination of diverse materials to collect evidence on parenting approaches and their impact on youth behavior and crime. Key sources included, police reports, crime statistics, educational records and family counselling reports among others.

3.9 Data quality control mechanisms

To ensure reliability and validity, the study employed several quality control mechanisms. Triangulation was used by gathering data from multiple sources, such as interviews and focus groups, to cross-verify information and reduce bias. Member checking allowed participants to review and confirm their responses for accuracy. The researcher-maintained field notes to track observations, and peer debriefing with colleagues helped assess data and analysis for potential gaps or biases, ensuring credible and trustworthy findings.

3.10 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was carefully planned and executed to ensure ethical compliance, reliability, and the integrity of the research. The researcher began by obtaining an official introductory letter from the Department of Religion and Peace Studies at Makerere University. This letter served as a formal authorization and validation of the research, establishing trust and credibility with participants and relevant authorities. Upon approaching participants, the researcher presented the introductory letter and provided a comprehensive explanation of the study's purpose, objectives, and significance. This step aimed to ensure participants clearly understood the scope of the research and its potential contribution to addressing youth crime within the community.

In adherence to ethical research principles, informed consent was obtained from all participants before their involvement in the study. The researcher provided a detailed explanation of the study's objectives and procedures, clearly outlining its goals, data

collection methods, and the nature of the questions or observations participants would encounter. This approach ensured full transparency and minimized the likelihood of misunderstandings or misconceptions about the research process.

The researcher emphasized that while no significant risks were anticipated, participation could offer valuable insights into strategies to address youth crime, contributing to meaningful recommendations for policymakers and the community. Participants were assured that their involvement was entirely voluntary, with the freedom to withdraw at any stage without consequences, ensuring their autonomy and comfort throughout the process. Furthermore, confidentiality and anonymity were strictly upheld, with assurances that participants' identities and responses would be protected and used exclusively for academic purposes. To safeguard privacy, measures were implemented to anonymize data during analysis and reporting.

The researcher then proceeded with the data collection, employing multiple methods such as Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), direct observation, and document review. Each method was conducted systematically, ensuring consistency and thoroughness. By adhering to these procedures, the researcher ensured a respectful, inclusive, and ethically sound data collection process that fostered trust and collaboration with participants, while generating reliable and actionable insights for the study.

3.11 Data Presentation and Analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis, a process that involved identifying patterns and themes from the interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. The first step in the analysis was transcription, where all audio-recorded interviews and discussions were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and capture the richness of the data. After transcription, the data was thoroughly reviewed and coded to identify recurring concepts, terms, and ideas. These codes were then grouped into broader themes, focusing on parenting approaches and their potential influence on youth crime in Mukono District.

Each theme was carefully examined for its relevance to the research questions and objectives, with particular attention given to variations in perspectives across different groups, such as youth, parents, and community leaders. Direct quotes from participants were incorporated into the findings to illustrate key points and provide deeper context to the analysis. This process ensured that the voices of the participants were faithfully represented and that the

data presented a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing youth behavior in the community.

Thematic analysis allowed for a flexible approach to data interpretation, accommodating the complex and varied nature of the qualitative data while ensuring that key insights into the relationship between parenting approaches and youth crime were captured and presented clearly.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were followed to protect participants' rights and the study's integrity. Informed consent was obtained, ensuring participants understood the study's purpose and any risks. Pseudo-names were used to protect anonymity, and confidentiality was maintained, ensuring data was used solely for academic purposes.

3.13 Challenges faced during data collection

The researcher encountered several challenges, including the high cost of commuting for both the researcher and participants, anxiety among participants fearing unwanted attention, and expectations of allowances, as participants assumed compensation would be provided. Accessibility to key participants, like senior police officers, was also limited due to their busy schedules. Additionally, participants with lower literacy struggled to understand and interpret the questions, potentially impacting data quality.

To mitigate commuting costs, the researcher organized group meetings and encouraged public transportation. Fears of participation were addressed through clear briefings and reassurances about confidentiality and safety. The researcher clarified that no financial incentives were offered. Flexible interview schedules and on-site interviews were arranged to accommodate key participants. For participants with lower literacy, the researcher used simple language and a conversational approach to ensure understanding and meaningful responses. These measures helped create a comfortable and inclusive environment for participants, contributing to the study's success.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This section presents the findings of the study on the influence of parenting approaches on crime among the youth in Mukono District, Uganda. The descriptive results are organized around the key themes that emerged from the study's objectives. Each theme reflects different aspects of how various parenting approaches impact the behavioral outcomes and involvement of youth in criminal activities. The findings provide insights into how authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting approaches shape the social behavior and decision-making processes of young individuals, contributing to their susceptibility to criminal activities. The subsequent sections delve deeper into these themes, examining the relationship between parenting approaches and the social dynamics that influence youth behavior in the region.

4.1 Established parenting approaches used by parents in Mukono District

The study found that the most common parenting approaches in Mukono District were authoritarian, autocratic, abusive, neglectful, and non-responsive, with a noticeable lack of permissive parenting. However, newer methods such as democratic, spiritual, reinforcement-based, cultural, and co-parenting approaches were also emerging. These parenting approaches have different effects on youth behavior, socialization, and involvement in criminal activities. The following analysis discussed these findings in relation to existing literature.

4.1.1 Authoritative Parenting Style

This parenting, characterized by a balance of warmth, support, and firm discipline, and recognized for fostering positive outcomes by encouraging children to express themselves while adhering to rules, was less prevalent in Mukono District. Hence, its lack of widespread adoption was attributed to among others, cultural or socio-economic factors that influence parenting approaches in the district. Consequently, the predominance of other parenting approaches, such as permissive or autocratic, contribute to challenges in youth development, as these approaches may not always foster the same level of responsibility, self-regulation, or respect for authority that authoritative parenting typically encourages. In one of the KIIs with a local leader (LC1 chairperson), a participant noted,

"Parents in our community often focus more on strict discipline or emotional freedom, but they miss the balance that helps children grow into responsible, self-aware individuals." KII participant

Another participant (school teacher) noted,

"In schools, we see that children from households where parents combine support with consistent boundaries tend to excel socially and academically. Unfortunately, such parenting is rare, and many children struggle with behavioral issues because they either lack guidance or face overly rigid rules." KII participant

These statements highlight the crucial role of balanced parenting in fostering self-regulation and respect for authority among youth. Without the combination of warmth, support, and firm discipline, youths may face difficulties in emotional and behavioral development, which can negatively impact their decision-making, responsibility, and adherence to rules. Contrary with the reviewed literature, which emphasizes the positive impact of authoritative parenting on youth development. The literature stresses that the balance of warmth, support, and discipline promotes responsibility, self-regulation, and positive decision-making.

Studies by Baumrind (1991), Kimingiri (2015), and Sutton & Simon (2020) demonstrate that the absence of this balanced approach can lead to issues such as delinquency and strained family dynamics, as seen in Mukono District. Thus, the presence of limited authoritative parenting in Mukono may contribute to broader social challenges, ultimately affecting the well-being and future prospects of youth. By addressing this gap and encouraging the adoption of authoritative parenting, there could be a significant improvement in youth development, leading to more responsible, self-regulated, and well-adjusted individuals.

4.1.2 Autocratic parenting style

The autocratic parenting style, characterized by high control and low warmth, was more prevalent in Mukono District. This style is linked to poor emotional regulation and increased anxiety among children. The study found that autocratic parenting was more common in families that emphasized discipline and obedience, a trend also observed in other parts of Uganda, as noted by Chao (1994). The findings showed that this approach often created an environment where children felt pressured without fully understanding the reasons behind the rules, leading to feelings of resentment, low self-esteem and frustration. In one of FGDs, youths' participants echoed,

"Our parents are strict, but they rarely take time to explain why things are done a certain way. It leaves us feeling confused and anxious."
FGD participant

Similarly, a key informant during an interview observed,

"When parents enforce strict rules without engaging their children in discussions. This creates a gap where children feel disconnected and often act out due to frustration or lack of clarity about what is expected of them." KII Participant

This highlights how the lack of communication and emotional connection in autocratic parenting contributes to adverse outcomes in youth behavior. Aligning with Chao (1994) and Lansford et al. (2020), which examined parenting approaches in sub-Saharan Africa, the findings suggest that strict parental control without warmth or explanation is often associated with behavioral problems, reduced social competence, and heightened vulnerability to deviant peer influence. In Mukono District, this style reinforced a cycle where children sought autonomy in unhealthy ways, including engaging in delinquent behavior, as a form of resistance to rigid authority structures.

4.1.3 Permissive Parenting Style

Permissive parenting, characterized by high warmth and minimal control, was also widespread in Mukono District, especially among parents prioritizing emotional bonding over discipline. The study found that children raised permissively faced challenges in self-regulation and respect for authority, often struggling to adapt to structured environments and societal expectations. This parenting style, while fostering a close emotional bond, tends to overlook the importance of setting boundaries, leading to issues with accountability and decision-making. An officer of the law in one of the interviews with key informants noted,

"While parents mean well by being overly lenient, children end up confused about what is expected of them. They lack discipline, and it becomes difficult for them to function in settings where rules and responsibilities are clearly defined."KII participant

Similarly, direct observation revealed instances where permissively raised youths displayed difficulty following instructions or adhering to community rules during group activities. For example, in public spaces, it was noted that these children often acted impulsively, showing limited awareness of the impact of their actions on others. This highlights the need for a

balanced approach to parenting, where warmth is complemented by clear boundaries and guidance to promote accountability and better integration into societal norms.

These observations align with Baumrind's (1991) and Kimingiri's (2015) research, which link permissive parenting to higher delinquency rates among children. The lack of firm boundaries in permissive households often results in difficulties adapting to structured environments, as highlighted by Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) findings that insufficient parental control can contribute to behavioral issues and challenges in meeting societal expectations. To address these challenges, parents should balance warmth with clear expectations and enforce boundaries in a supportive way, promoting both emotional well-being and discipline in children.

4.1.4 Neglectful Parenting Style

Neglectful parenting, characterized by low warmth and control, was found in a majority of households in Mukono District. This parenting style, marked by a lack of emotional support and minimal supervision, often leads to children experiencing feelings of neglect and emotional distress. The study revealed that children raised in such environments tended to struggle with self-esteem, social skills, and behavioral issues, as they lacked the guidance and nurturing typically required for healthy emotional and psychological development. Participants in the study noted that parents who adopted this style often faced personal challenges, such as financial stress or lack of education, which contributed to their inability to engage effectively with their children. In one of the FGDs with Boda Boda riders, a participant noted that,

"Sometimes, we are so caught up with our struggles that we forget to give our children the attention they need. They fend for themselves most of the time." FGD participant

Equally, during interviews with key informants, a senior officer of the law from child and family protection unit referred to this type of parenting as a contributing factor to social problems within the community. The officer noted that,

"Children who grow up in neglectful environments often lack the guidance and attention needed to develop a sense of responsibility and respect for authority. This leads to difficulties in their interactions with society, resulting in higher rates of delinquency and social alienation." KII participant

These observations highlight the profound impact of neglectful parenting, where the absence of emotional support and supervision forces children to navigate challenges independently. The lack of parental engagement, often due to personal struggles such as financial hardship or limited education, significantly affects children's emotional well-being, social development, and behavior. The findings bring into line with Schaffer's (1996) study, which explores how neglectful parenting leads to difficulties in emotional regulation, self-esteem, and interpersonal relationships. Additionally, Baumrind (1991) emphasizes that neglectful parenting is linked to issues such as poor self-esteem, behavioral problems, and difficulties forming healthy relationships.

The study's findings confirm that neglectful parenting, marked by a lack of warmth and control, negatively influences children's emotional and social development, ultimately contributing to broader societal challenges. Addressing the underlying factors contributing to neglectful parenting, such as financial hardship and lack of education, requires a multi-faceted approach that focuses on both immediate support and long-term systemic changes.

4.1.5 Abusive Parenting Style

Abusive parenting, marked by harsh discipline and emotional or physical abuse, was found widespread and severely affected children in Mukono District, leading to long-term emotional, psychological, and developmental consequences. Children subjected to such abuse often experience low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and difficulties in forming healthy relationships. The trauma also hinders their academic performance and social integration, creating a cycle of dysfunction that may be perpetuated in future generations. Additionally, abusive parenting undermines children's ability to develop trust and emotional regulation, impairing their overall well-being and increasing the likelihood of engaging in anti-social behavior or criminal activities.

In some cases, children may internalize the abusive behaviors and, as they grow older, may either replicate these patterns or, conversely, completely withdraw from social interactions, further complicating their emotional development. A local leader (Secretary for women and youth affairs) in a Key Informant Interview stated,

"We see many youths in our community who have been subjected to abusive parenting, and the consequences are evident. These children often act out aggressively or withdraw entirely. It's heartbreaking to see, as they struggle with forming connections or trusting authority figures, which makes it difficult for them to integrate into society. We

need more community support systems for these families to break the cycle of abuse." KII Participant

An educator (teacher at Mukono High) echoed this sentiment, adding,

"In schools, we encounter children who are clearly dealing with the effects of abuse at home. They often have trouble focusing in class, and many displays aggressive behaviors toward their peers. These children are carrying emotional scars that hinder their ability to succeed academically and socially. Abusive parenting robs them of the emotional stability they need to thrive, and it is a challenge we face daily in trying to support them." KII Participant

Through observation, the researcher noticed that some parents in Mukono District seemed to resort to harsh disciplinary methods due to a combination of stress, lack of parenting knowledge, and economic pressures. This often resulted in a lack of effective communication between parents and children, with children displaying signs of fear or withdrawal when interacting with their parents. Additionally, the researcher observed that some children exhibited behaviors indicative of emotional distress, such as anxiety or aggression, which could be linked to the abuse or neglect they experienced at home.

These voices highlight the profound impact of abusive parenting on youth development, underscoring the need for intervention and support to mitigate its harmful effects on children's emotional and social growth. The prevalence of harsh discipline and emotional or physical abuse points to deeper systemic issues, such as poverty, lack of education, and inadequate access to mental health resources, which contribute to the perpetuation of these harmful practices.

The observed emotional and psychological toll on children underscores the importance of early intervention and support systems to break the cycle of abuse and foster healthier family dynamics. The researcher's observations emphasize the necessity for both parent education and community-based support services. There is a clear need for programs that educate parents on positive, non-violent disciplinary methods, effective communication strategies, and the impact of their behavior on children's well-being.

4.1.6 Democratic/Cooperative Parenting Style

Characterized by mutual respect, open communication, and shared decision-making, was observed to promote a positive home environment where children felt valued and heard. Parents who adopted this approach tended to encourage their children's independence while

maintaining clear expectations, offering guidance without resorting to harsh discipline or punitive measures. Children in these households often exhibited greater self-confidence, emotional resilience, and a stronger sense of responsibility. They were more likely to engage in cooperative behavior and demonstrated improved social skills, as they were able to express themselves freely and develop trust in their caregivers. Through observation, the researcher noted that these families tended to have better access to community resources, such as parenting workshops and support networks, which further reinforced the positive effects of this parenting style.

Democratic/cooperative approach also helped mitigate the negative impact of external stressors, such as financial hardship, as parents were better equipped to manage challenges constructively and model problem-solving skills for their children. This style suggests that promoting education on positive parenting techniques can have a significant, transformative impact on family dynamics, contributing to improved child development and a reduction in crime. In one of the FGDs with the male parents of the youths, a participant noted,

“When we listen to our children and involve them in decision-making, they become more responsible and respectful. They don't feel as if they are being controlled but are part of the family decisions. FGD participant

A female parent participant echoed,

“Even when things are tough, we can talk and figure out how to manage together.” FGD participant

A Key Informant Interview with an officer of the law in the Child and Family Protection Unit further highlighted the effectiveness of this approach, stating,

"In our work with families, we see that children raised in environments where there is mutual respect and shared decision-making tend to handle conflicts better and are less likely to engage in criminal activities. This parenting style sets the foundation for a more harmonious relationship between parents and children, reducing the likelihood of youth offending." KII Participant

These insights underscore the significant benefits of the democratic/cooperative parenting style in fostering positive youth development and reducing the potential for crime. It reflects a broader shift in understanding that fostering mutual respect and communication within the

family can yield positive outcomes, both for the children's development and for the overall harmony of the household and society at large.

The participant's feedback also underscores the importance of empowerment and collaboration between parents and children, as opposed to a hierarchical, authoritarian approach. By creating an environment where children are treated as partners in the family unit, these parents were able to cultivate a sense of ownership and responsibility in their children. This cooperative approach proved to be a protective factor, especially when faced with external pressures such as poverty or societal challenges, as it enabled families to work together and address issues in a more balanced and supportive way.

These comments, while aligning with the principles of democratic/cooperative parenting, also align with studies such as Baumrind's (1991) research on parenting approaches, which emphasizes the positive outcomes associated with authoritative parenting—characterized by warmth, support, and appropriate discipline. Baumrind's work suggests that children raised in such environments tend to develop higher self-esteem, better social skills, and lower levels of behavioral problems.

Similarly, these observations resonate with Siebold's (2007) findings on the link between positive parenting practices and community cohesion, where mutual respect and communication are also critical in fostering a healthy and functional group dynamic. In the context of Mukono District, these comments further suggest that when parents embrace democratic parenting, they promote not only the emotional well-being of their children but also contribute to the broader social cohesion within the community. This reflects how parenting practices shape the behavior of future generations and influence social structures.

4.1.7 Spiritual Parenting Style

The study also highlighted the emerging trend of spiritual parenting in Mukono District, where religious teachings and values were central to child-rearing. Spiritual parents emphasized moral development, ethical decision-making, and social responsibility based on religious principles. In an FGD with some of the youths, a participant noted that,

“Growing up with our faith being part of everything we do, helped me understand the importance of kindness and helping others. It's not just about following rules, but about caring for people around you.”
FGD, Youth Participants

Similarly, comments from a Key Informant Interview with one of the religious leaders (Pastor -Revival Church Mukono), emphasized the role of faith in shaping youth behavior. The pastor remarked,

"In our community, we encourage parents to integrate their religious beliefs into daily parenting. It's not about rigidly imposing rules but helping children grow in a spiritual environment where they learn the importance of love, responsibility, and respect for others. Faith-based parenting offers a foundation for children to make ethical choices and build strong moral character. "KII participant

Observations indicated that children from such households often exhibit empathy, respect for others, and a strong sense of community involvement. This approach also strengthens family bonds by fostering a shared framework of values and beliefs. These insights underscore the role of spiritual parenting, which blends religious principles with daily practices, in shaping youth behavior and guiding them toward responsible, community-oriented actions.

These comments underscore how spiritual parenting fosters not only individual moral development but also a broader sense of social responsibility. The emphasis on ethical decision-making and community involvement is integral in shaping youth into responsible, empathetic individuals who value the well-being of others. By integrating religious values into daily life, families in Mukono District are fostering a generation that is not only morally grounded but also active in contributing to their communities.

Echoing the study of Regnerus (2003), which found that children raised in spiritually grounded homes are less likely to engage in deviant behavior, and Smith and Denton's (2005) study, which highlights the positive impact of religious socialization on moral development and pro-social behavior, the findings in Mukono District demonstrate the transformative role of spiritual parenting. Smith and Denton emphasize that a consistent integration of religious teachings in family life fosters a strong ethical foundation, guiding children in making responsible choices and maintaining positive social relationships. These findings collectively suggest that spiritual parenting not only strengthens individual moral character but also enhances broader community cohesion by promoting values of empathy, respect, and collective responsibility.

4.1.8 Cultural Parenting Style

Cultural parenting, which integrates traditional cultural values and practices, emerged as a significant approach in Mukono District. Parents who adopted this style emphasized respect

for elders, community cohesion, and shared responsibility in raising children. This approach fostered strong family ties and a sense of social responsibility, leading to fewer criminal behaviors among youth. In a Key Informant Interview, a participant (local council leader) echoed,

"Our culture teaches us to respect everyone, especially elders, and to care for each other as one big family. When children learn this from a young age, they grow up knowing their role and responsibility within the community." KII participants

Correspondingly, a participant in one of the FGDs added,

"In our community, discipline is taught through storytelling and communal activities. Children are guided by elders and learn from real-life examples. This way, they grow up with a deep sense of belonging and responsibility." FGD participant

Through observations, it was noted that cultural parenting often involved the use of proverbs, storytelling, and communal activities to instill values and pass down generational wisdom. Children raised in such environments were more likely to internalize a sense of duty toward their families and communities, developing an understanding of how their actions impacted the collective well-being.

These insights highlight how cultural parenting strengthens moral values and instills a sense of accountability in youth, reducing their likelihood of engaging in criminal activities. They also highlight the foundational role of cultural values in shaping communal responsibility and respect among the youth.

This statement seems to highlight the integral role of cultural parenting in shaping socially responsible individuals and fostering a sense of communal accountability. The emphasis on respect for elders, shared responsibilities, and collective well-being instills in children a deep appreciation for their cultural heritage and its importance in maintaining societal harmony. By engaging in practices such as storytelling and proverbs, parents not only transmit traditional wisdom but also cultivate moral values that guide children's behavior and decision-making.

Furthermore, this approach underscores the effectiveness of cultural parenting in mitigating negative influences, such as peer pressure or deviant behaviors, by reinforcing a strong ethical framework rooted in community expectations. Aligning with Mazrui's (1987) analysis, the findings suggest that traditional cultural values play a pivotal role in promoting discipline,

respect, and social cohesion, ultimately reducing the likelihood of youth engaging in criminal activities.

4.1.9 Reinforcement-Based Parenting Style

Reinforcement-based parenting, which emphasizes positive reinforcement to encourage desirable behaviors, also emerged as an effective approach in Mukono District. Parents who adopted this style focused on acknowledging and rewarding positive actions, efforts, and achievements, fostering a sense of accomplishment and motivation in their children. This parenting style encouraged children to develop intrinsic motivation, as they learned to associate their positive behaviors with feelings of pride, recognition, and approval.

In addition to verbal praise, parents utilized small rewards such as extra playtime, small gifts, or shared family activities to reinforce desirable behaviors. Through observations, it was noted that children raised in such environments displayed higher levels of self-confidence, improved problem-solving abilities, and a proactive approach to their responsibilities. These children were also more resilient in coping with challenges, as they were accustomed to receiving encouragement and constructive feedback. One Key Informant Interview with the local leaders (LC1), highlighted the broader impact of this parenting style:

“You can tell a child who comes from a home where they are praised for their efforts. They participate more in class, take initiative, and are generally more confident in expressing their ideas. It’s a parenting approach we wish more families would adopt.” KII, Teacher Participant

Similarly, a female participant in one of the FGDs emphasized,

"When parents acknowledge and reward good behavior, children feel valued and motivated to do even better. They learn that their efforts matter, and this keeps them away from negative influences like crime." FGD participant

Equally, through observations (OBS), it was evident that children raised under reinforcement-based parenting exhibited proactive behavior in school and community settings. They were more likely to engage in group activities, take leadership roles, and demonstrate respect towards authority figures. Additionally, these children showed a strong sense of discipline, as they had internalized the values of effort and reward. For instance, during school visits, it was noted that students from homes where positive reinforcement was practiced actively participated in class discussions, volunteered for responsibilities, and exhibited confidence in

problem-solving tasks. This supports the argument that reinforcement-based parenting nurtures self-discipline, resilience, and responsible decision-making, reducing the likelihood of delinquent behavior.

These findings suggest that reinforcement-based parenting not only promotes positive behavior but also builds self-esteem and a sense of responsibility among children, ultimately contributing to lower crime rates in Mukono District. Children from such households are more likely to exhibit proactive and constructive behaviors, as they are encouraged to take initiative and strive for excellence in a supportive environment. Moreover, the benefits of this parenting approach extend beyond the home, as noted by leaders who observe higher levels of engagement and confidence among children raised with positive reinforcement.

These children are more likely to take on leadership roles, participate actively in collaborative settings, and build strong interpersonal relationships, demonstrating the broader societal value of reinforcement-based parenting. The study's findings align with psychological theories, such as Skinner's operant conditioning, which highlight the effectiveness of rewards in shaping behavior, and Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasizes the role of reinforcement in behavioral modeling. These theoretical underpinnings further validate the observed outcomes in Mukono District. To build on these insights, the study suggests that integrating reinforcement-based parenting techniques into community parenting programs could significantly enhance child-rearing practices across the district.

4.2 Established parenting Approaches and Their Relationship to Youth Crime

The relationship between different parenting approaches and youth crime is crucial in understanding adolescent behavior. Research consistently shows that parenting approaches significantly influence delinquency, with each style presenting distinct impacts on youth development and criminal tendencies. The following sections align the findings from Mukono District with existing literature to better understand these dynamics.

4.2.1 Authoritative Parenting

Although less prevalent in Mukono district, this style of parenting, focused on fostering moral development, self-discipline, and responsible decision-making in children and is closely linked to a reduced likelihood of youth engagement in criminal behavior, as it provides a structured yet supportive environment that encourages moral development and self-discipline. In Mukono District, the study found out that youth raised in authoritative households were more likely to make responsible decisions and resist delinquency. The clear

rules combined with emotional warmth fostered a sense of responsibility, helping youths to understand the consequences of their actions. Participants in the study consistently pointed to the importance of feeling both supported and guided, with one youth in an FGD member summarizing it succinctly:

"When your parents have rules but also show they care, you don't want to disappoint them—you want to do the right thing." FGD participant

Equally, a Key Informant Interview (KII) participant, a school teacher, emphasized,

"Children raised in authoritative homes develop a strong moral compass. They know their limits but also feel safe discussing their challenges with their parents. This balance helps them navigate peer pressure and avoid risky behaviors." KII participant

Through observations (OBS), it was noted that children from authoritative households exhibited higher levels of self-confidence, respect for rules, and better conflict resolution skills.

These insights seem to suggest that fostering authoritative parenting practices could be a critical strategy in crime prevention programs targeting youth in Mukono District and beyond. These findings are consistent with Baumrind's (1966) foundational research on parenting approaches, which emphasized that authoritative parenting—characterized by high responsiveness and high demands—promotes self-regulation and reduces delinquent tendencies in adolescents. Additionally, Maccoby and Martin's (1983) extension of Baumrind's framework highlighted that authoritative households encourage autonomy while maintaining appropriate boundaries, a combination vital for moral and emotional development.

Aligning with studies such as Atilola et al. (2014) on parenting practices in sub-Saharan Africa confirm that an authoritative approach, even when adapted to local traditions, remains effective in mitigating youth delinquency. Similarly, Odetola et al. (2020) observed in a Nigerian study that adolescents raised in authoritative households reported higher levels of self-discipline and a reduced likelihood of engaging in antisocial behaviors.

4.2.2 Authoritarian Parenting

Focused on enforcing strict rules and demanding obedience, often through punitive measures and limited emotional engagement. This style is linked with increased youth rebellion,

aggression, and delinquent behaviors, as it fosters resentment and limits opportunities for open dialogue or emotional support. In Mukono District, the study found that youth raised in authoritarian households were more likely to exhibit defiant behaviors and engage in delinquency, particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged contexts. A parent in an in FGD highlighted the rigid and punitive nature of authoritarian parenting, with one remarking:

"In our household, it was always about strict rules and punishments. There was no room to explain your side of the story. It made me feel like rebelling was the only way to have a voice." FGD participant

Equally, a male Boda-Boda rider participant noted:

"Whenever I made a mistake, the reaction was harsh punishment rather than understanding. Over time, I started avoiding my parents and hiding things from them." FGD participant

A Key Informant Interview (KII) participant, a community social worker, echoed similar sentiments, stating:

"Children raised under extreme authoritarian parenting often struggle with communication and trust. They tend to seek validation from peers rather than their parents, which sometimes leads them into risky behaviors." KII Participant

Through observations (OBS), it was noted that youths from authoritarian households exhibited higher levels of frustration, secretive behavior, and defiance toward authority figures. In school settings, these children were more likely to challenge rules, avoid discussions with teachers, or engage in disruptive behaviors.

These findings suggest that while authoritarian parenting enforces discipline, its rigid and punitive nature may inadvertently push children toward rebellion and delinquency rather than fostering responsible decision-making. These reflections underscore the lack of emotional warmth and communication in authoritarian parenting, which fosters resentment, secrecy, and a sense of alienation. This approach often leads to suppressed emotions and defiance, as youth may act out in an attempt to assert independence or seek validation elsewhere. The rigid discipline, devoid of understanding or dialogue, can push children toward peer groups or environments that encourage risky or delinquent behaviors, amplifying their vulnerability to negative influences.

The findings are consistent with studies by Baumrind (1967) and Darling & Steinberg (1993), which highlight that authoritarian parenting, characterized by high control and low warmth,

can negatively impact emotional development and lead to behavioral issues. Additionally, the study by Barber (1996) emphasizes that coercive and overly controlling parenting approaches can undermine adolescents' autonomy and self-esteem, further increasing their susceptibility to peer pressure and engagement in delinquent behavior. These studies underline how excessive rigidity and lack of parental support increase the risk of children engaging in delinquent activities as they seek alternative avenues for emotional connection and validation.

4.2.3 Permissive Parenting

Characterized by low levels of control and high levels of warmth, this style often leads to a lack of clear boundaries and minimal enforcement of rules. This parenting style emphasizes the child's freedom and autonomy, often at the expense of guidance and discipline. While permissive parents are nurturing and supportive, their reluctance to impose structure can result in children developing poor self-regulation and a lack of respect for authority. Participants in FGDs with Boda-Boda Riders highlighted how this lenient approach contributed to risky behaviors. For example:

“My parents always said I could decide for myself, but sometimes I felt lost without knowing what was right or wrong.” FGD participant

Similarly, a youth casual laborer noted,

“There were no consequences for my actions at home, so I didn't think much about the consequences of my behavior outside not until today.” FGD participant

Correspondingly, a Key Informant Interview (KII) participant, probation officer, observed:

"Children from permissive households often struggle with discipline because they are not accustomed to boundaries. They may develop a sense of entitlement and engage in risky behaviors without fully considering the consequences." KII Participant

Through observations (OBS), it was noted that youths raised in permissive environments exhibited lower levels of self-discipline and were more prone to impulsive decision-making. In school settings, they were less likely to adhere to rules, frequently challenged authority figures, and showed difficulty in managing responsibilities.

These findings suggest that while permissive parenting provides emotional warmth, its lack of structure and discipline can contribute to poor decision-making and an increased likelihood of engaging in delinquent behaviors. The lack of clear boundaries and consequences,

combined with the emphasis on autonomy without proper guidance, leaves young people ill-equipped to navigate societal expectations and norms.

The findings are consistent with Baumrind (1991) and Maccoby & Martin (1983), who identified permissive parenting as a potential risk factor for the development of emotional and behavioral problems in youth. Additionally, the study by Luntamo et al. (2020) supports these findings, emphasizing that permissive parenting can lead to increased susceptibility to peer pressure and a higher likelihood of engaging in delinquent behaviors. Their research found that children raised in permissive environments were more likely to make poor decisions due to a lack of internalized boundaries and self-control, which are crucial in resisting negative influences.

This combination underscores the importance of balancing warmth with structure to guide children in making responsible choices and developing the emotional and moral resilience needed to resist negative peer pressure and avoid criminal behavior.

4.2.4 Neglectful parenting style

Neglectful parenting, characterized by the failure to meet children's emotional and physical needs, creates an environment where youth may feel abandoned and without proper guidance. This lack of attention can lead them to seek alternative means of validation, often turning to delinquent behaviors to fill the emotional void. The study found that neglectful parenting was particularly prevalent among youth from impoverished backgrounds in Mukono District, where economic hardship exacerbates the emotional neglect. A key stakeholder from infant's health foundation a community-based organization in Mukono, noted the correlation between neglectful parenting and youth involvement in criminal activities:

“Many of the young people I work with come from homes where their parents are absent, either physically or emotionally. They’re left to fend for themselves, and some of them end up joining gangs.” KII participant

Similarly, an FGD participant, a male Boda Boda rider, shared:

"My parents never really set rules for me. They always said, ‘You’ll learn as you grow.’ But without guidance, I made many mistakes, some of which I regret today." – FGD participant

Through observations (OBS), it was evident that youths from neglectful households exhibited signs of low self-esteem, withdrawal from structured activities, and a higher tendency to

engage in delinquent behaviors. Many of these children struggled with academic performance, lacked motivation, and were more susceptible to negative peer influence.

These statements highlight the severe consequences of neglectful parenting, where the absence of emotional and physical support leaves children vulnerable to external pressures. Without parental guidance, they often seek belonging in delinquent groups, increasing their risk of engaging in criminal activities.

Aligning with recent studies by Jones and Taylor (2023) and Smith and Roberts (2022), which emphasize the impact of neglectful parenting on youth delinquency, neglect whether emotional, physical, often compels young people to seek validation through negative peer associations. Additionally, family instability, particularly in economically disadvantaged communities, significantly heightens the risk of criminal behavior. This trend is evident in Mukono District, where neglect is most prevalent in low-income households, contributing to increased youth delinquency.

4.2.5 Abusive Parenting

Abusive parenting, whether physical, emotional, or psychological, has a profound effect on children's development, often leading to maladaptive coping mechanisms such as aggression or withdrawal. In Mukono, youth from abusive households exhibited higher rates of criminal behavior, particularly violent crime. A key participant from child and protection unit of Mukono police division noted that,

"The children I interface work with who come from abusive homes are often angry, withdrawn, and have trouble trusting others. Many of them are involved in violence, either as victims or perpetrators, because that's what they know." KII participant

Similarly, an FGD participant, a reformed youth, shared:

"I grew up in a home where beatings were normal. At some point, I stopped feeling the pain and started fighting back. Violence became my way of solving problems." – FGD participant

Through observations (OBS), it was evident that youths from abusive households often displayed heightened aggression, mistrust, and difficulty in forming positive social relationships. Many struggled with authority figures, frequently engaged in conflicts, and were more likely to exhibit delinquent behaviors.

These findings highlight the deep-seated impact of abusive parenting on youth behavior, reinforcing the cycle of violence and delinquency. The normalization of aggression within the home environment conditions children to view violence as an acceptable means of resolving conflicts.

Aligning with studies by Brown and Peterson (2023) and Carter et al. (2022), which emphasize the long-term psychological and behavioral consequences of childhood abuse, the research in Mukono District underscores how exposure to abuse increases the likelihood of criminal involvement. Without intervention, these youths often struggle with emotional regulation, leading to antisocial behavior and persistent engagement in violent activities. Addressing the effects of abusive parenting requires targeted community interventions, including parental education, psychosocial support for affected youth, and strengthened child protection measures to break the cycle of violence.

4.2.6 Democratic/Cooperative Parenting

Democratic or cooperative parenting, which involves children in decision-making and encourages open communication, was found to have positive outcomes in Mukono. Youth raised in democratic households exhibited fewer behavioral issues and were less likely to engage in criminal activities. This parenting style fosters mutual respect, builds trust, and equips children with problem-solving skills, contributing to their overall emotional and social development. A participant shared,

"My parents always made sure I had a say in the decisions that affected me. It made me feel valued and respected, and I think that helped me stay on the right path." FGD participant

Similarly, a Key Informant Interview (KII) participant, a school counselor, highlighted the benefits of democratic parenting:

"Children from homes where their opinions are valued tend to be more confident and responsible. They develop strong communication skills and are better at resolving conflicts without resorting to aggression." – KII participant

Through observations (OBS), it was apparent that youths raised in democratic households demonstrated higher levels of self-discipline, critical thinking, and respect for authority. They were more engaged in academic and community activities and exhibited a stronger sense of

responsibility compared to their peers from more restrictive or neglectful parenting backgrounds.

The discoveries suggest that democratic parenting provides a supportive and structured environment that enables children to develop essential life skills, emotional resilience, and a sense of accountability. By actively involving children in decision-making and fostering open communication, this parenting style nurtures a strong moral foundation and problem-solving abilities, reducing the likelihood of delinquent behavior. Moreover, the emphasis on mutual respect and cooperation within the family unit equips children with the social skills necessary for positive peer interactions and community engagement. This aligns with broader research indicating that children raised in democratic households tend to exhibit higher self-esteem, better emotional regulation, and a greater ability to navigate challenges constructively.

These verdicts align with research by Gonzalez and Harper (2023), Maccoby and Martin (1983), and Williams and Lee (2021), which underscores the role of democratic parenting in fostering emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior among youth. Encouraging parental involvement and open communication can serve as a protective factor against delinquency, promoting well-adjusted and law-abiding individuals in Mukono District.

4.2.7 Spiritual Parenting

Characterized by a focus on moral development, ethical decision-making, and social responsibility grounded in religious principles, was an important style in Mukono. Parents who practiced spiritual parenting through regular discussions on values, prayer, and living with integrity instilled discipline, respect and a sense of purpose in their children. Equally, children who were raised in households where spiritual parenting was practiced, characterized by a focus on moral development, ethical decision-making, and social responsibility grounded in religious principles, were less likely to engage in crime. This approach not only reinforced family bonds but also helped shape the emotional and social development of youth, fostering a sense of belonging and responsibility that reduced the likelihood of delinquent behavior. A religious leader from a Pentecostal church in Mukono district key stakeholder asserted,

"In our community, spiritual parenting plays a significant role in shaping the character of the youth. When parents actively engage their children in conversations about values and faith, it gives them a strong foundation for making positive choices. These children are

more likely to stay on the right path and avoid getting involved in crime." KII participant

Equally, an FGD participant, a male youth who had benefited from spiritual parenting, shared:

"My parents always emphasized prayer, honesty, and respect for others. I grew up knowing that my actions had consequences not just in this life but spiritually as well. That kept me from making bad decisions." – FGD participant

Through observations (OBS), it was plain that youth raised in spiritually guided households displayed higher levels of self-discipline, resilience, and a strong sense of community responsibility. They were more engaged in religious and social activities, which provided positive role models and support systems that deterred delinquent behavior.

These perspectives reinforce the notion that spiritual parenting, through its emphasis on moral development and ethical decision-making, not only strengthens family bonds but also helps prevent delinquency by instilling a sense of purpose, discipline, and responsibility in youth. The study aligns with Regnerus (2003), showing that spiritual guidance fosters empathy, respect, and community well-being. It provides a consistent moral framework that helps youth resist negative external pressures. Moreover, it suggests that spiritual parenting can act as a protective factor, buffering youth from the risks of peer influence, substance abuse, and involvement in criminal activities by promoting strong, values-driven foundations.

4.2.8 Cultural Parenting

Cultural parenting, which incorporates traditional values, was significant in Mukono. Parents who emphasized respect for elders, community cohesion, and shared responsibility helped reduce criminal behavior. This approach reinforced a sense of identity, teaching youth to value their cultural heritage and understand their role in the community. The study showed that cultural parenting provided a moral compass based on collective well-being. Parents used storytelling, cultural ceremonies, and proverbs to teach integrity, accountability, and the consequences of actions. Some youth participants in FGD echoed,

"Our parents always reminded us of the importance of respecting elders and working together as a community. Through stories and ceremonies, they taught us about integrity and how our actions affect everyone. It made us feel connected to our culture and more responsible for our behavior." FGD participants

Similarly, a Key Informant Interview (KII) participant, a local cultural leader, emphasized the role of traditional parenting methods in shaping responsible youth:

"In our community, cultural parenting instills a deep sense of respect and responsibility. When children grow up understanding their traditions and values, they develop a strong moral foundation that discourages them from engaging in crime." – KII participant

Through observations (OBS), it was evident that youth raised in culturally grounded households demonstrated higher levels of discipline, social cohesion, and respect for community norms. Traditional rites of passage and mentorship programs played a critical role in guiding adolescents through key life transitions, reinforcing positive behaviors and reducing delinquency.

These findings suggest that cultural parenting plays a crucial role in shaping youth behavior by instilling values of respect, responsibility, and community cohesion. By integrating traditional teachings with everyday life, cultural parenting helps create a strong moral foundation that deters delinquent behavior. The emphasis on shared responsibility and collective identity fosters a sense of belonging, which reduces the likelihood of youth engaging in criminal activities.

Building on the insights of Nsamenang (2006), Mazrui (1987), and Clark et al. (2022), this study highlights the crucial role of cultural parenting in fostering social responsibility, strengthening collective identity, and shielding youth from negative influences. The findings suggest that integrating traditional cultural teachings with modern parenting strategies can significantly enhance moral development, reinforce family bonds, and serve as an effective deterrent to youth crime in Mukono District. By preserving traditional values while adapting to contemporary societal changes, cultural parenting provides a strong ethical foundation, cultivates resilience against peer pressure, and nurtures a deep sense of belonging among young people.

4.2.9 Reinforcement-Based Parenting

Reinforcement-based parenting, where positive reinforcement is used to encourage desirable behaviors, was effective in reducing antisocial behaviors in Mukono. Youth raised with this approach were found to be more cooperative and less likely to engage in delinquency. Parents who used this method consistently rewarded positive actions with praise, tangible rewards, or

privileges, creating an environment where children felt motivated to replicate good behavior.

A female youth participant in an FGD shared,

"When I did well in school or made good choices, my parents would praise me or reward me. It made me want to keep doing the right thing, because I could see the benefits." FGD participant

Harmoniously, a Key Informant Interview (KII) participant, a school teacher emphasized the effectiveness of this approach:

"Children who receive positive reinforcement develop a strong sense of self-worth and responsibility. When their good behavior is acknowledged and rewarded, they internalize the values of discipline and accountability, reducing their likelihood of engaging in delinquent activities." – KII participant

Observations (OBS) further revealed that youth raised in reinforcement-based parenting environments demonstrated higher levels of self-discipline, emotional regulation, and respect for authority. By fostering intrinsic motivation and reinforcing prosocial behaviors, this approach contributed to a decline in risky behaviors.

These insights underscore the transformative power of positive reinforcement in shaping youth behavior. By consistently rewarding good choices with praise or incentives, parents cultivate motivation, boost self-esteem, and encourage cooperation, ultimately reducing delinquency. Aligned with Skinner's (1953) operant conditioning theory, which highlights the role of reinforcement in shaping behavior, this approach reinforces desirable actions and strengthens intrinsic motivation. Similarly, Thompson and Harris (2023) emphasize that positive reinforcement enhances emotional intelligence and decision-making skills, equipping youth with resilience against negative peer influences. By fostering self-regulation, empathy, and a strong sense of accountability, reinforcement-based parenting serves as a powerful tool for promoting prosocial behavior and long-term personal development.

4.3 Identified challenges faced by parents in raising youth in Mukono district

The findings highlight emerging challenges faced by parents in Mukono District especially raising children with special needs. Parents from multicultural backgrounds struggle to balance traditional values with societal norms, leading to generational divides. Additionally, parents of children with special needs face emotional and practical burdens, compounded by limited access to specialized services. These insights underscore the need for community-based interventions to support parents in navigating these challenges.

4.3.1 Balancing Work and Family Life

The challenge of balancing work and family life emerged prominently from the data collected through focused group discussions (FGD) and observation. Participants in FGDs highlighted the difficulty of dedicating sufficient time to their children due to demanding work schedules, which often leave parents feeling guilty or stressed. This lack of time for engagement with children can hinder the development of strong emotional bonds and may contribute to behavior issues, as youth may seek attention or validation elsewhere. A female parent in a FGD remarked.

"I work long hours to provide for my family, but it's hard to find enough time to spend with my children. I worry that my absence affects their behavior and well-being." FGD participant

Similarly, a Key Informant Interview (KII) participant, a school counselor, emphasized the impact of limited parental engagement on children's emotional and behavioral development:

"Children who lack consistent parental involvement often struggle with self-discipline and may seek guidance from peers who may not always be a positive influence. Parental presence is crucial in shaping their values and decision-making skills." – KII participant

Observations (OBS) further revealed that children from households where parents had limited interaction tended to exhibit higher levels of behavioral issues, including defiance and disengagement from school activities. The study suggests that striking a balance between work and family responsibilities is essential in fostering strong parent-child relationships, promoting positive behavior, and reducing the risk of delinquency.

These insights highlight the importance of consistent parental involvement in emotional and social development. Work-family conflict and reliance on external support systems can lead to behavioral issues, as children may miss emotional validation from primary caregivers. This aligns with view that work-family conflicts harm parenting quality by reducing emotional bonding and supervision.

These discoveries echo with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which emphasizes the crucial role of the family environment in shaping child development. Similarly, Craig and Mullan (2011) highlight the impact of parental involvement on children's well-being, while research by Clark and Adams (2021) further reinforces this perspective, demonstrating that children who receive consistent parental attention and emotional support

exhibit greater social competence, self-regulation, and resilience against negative external influences. Encouraging workplace policies that promote work-life balance—such as flexible schedules and family-friendly initiatives—can enable parents to cultivate stronger relationships with their children, ultimately mitigating behavioral risks and fostering positive development.

4.3.2 Influence of Technology and Social Media

Parents expressed concern over the pervasive influence of technology, with many struggling to monitor their children’s online activities effectively. Data from key informant interviews (KII) revealed that parents lacked sufficient knowledge about digital tools to regulate their children’s technology use, leading to challenges in ensuring safe and responsible online behavior. As a result, children may have access to inappropriate content or engage in risky online behavior, further complicating efforts to maintain discipline and emotional well-being. This gap in digital literacy underscores the need for parental education on managing technology use in today’s digital age. A male parent observed that,

“Even when I’m present, my children are glued to their screen, and I have no idea what they are watching.” KII participant

Equally, focused group discussions (FGDs) with parents of the youths revealed that excessive screen time often reduces face-to-face interactions within families, weakening parental influence and emotional connections. Some parents acknowledged that

“Without clear guidelines or supervision, children could adopt negative behaviors from online platforms, including exposure to harmful content or engagement in cyber-related misconduct” FGD participants

Direct observations revealed that children often spent extended periods on digital devices, with limited parental oversight. This lack of control over technology use led to negative outcomes such as decreased physical activity, and social isolation.

These statements seem to suggest that the unregulated use of technology can erode traditional parenting roles, making it more challenging for parents to instill discipline, values, and social skills in their children. Without proactive parental involvement, children may become more susceptible to external influences, shaping their behavior and decision-making in ways that may not align with family or societal expectations.

Furthermore, these findings highlight the need for structured digital parenting strategies, such as setting screen time limits, engaging in co-viewing, and fostering open discussions about online behavior. Encouraging digital literacy among parents and implementing community-based awareness programs could empower families to create a balanced approach to technology use, ultimately fostering responsible digital citizenship among youth.

These concerns align with the findings of Livingstone and Helsper (2007), who emphasize that unregulated digital exposure can shape children's socialization patterns, sometimes leading to reduced empathy and increased behavioral risks. Additionally, research by Valkenburg and Piotrowski (2017) underscores the importance of parental mediation in digital environments, suggesting that active guidance—such as setting screen time limits, engaging in co-viewing, and fostering open discussions—can significantly mitigate the negative impacts of technology. Implementing structured digital parenting strategies, including technological literacy training for parents and school-based digital awareness programs, could empower families to create healthier online habits, ultimately fostering responsible digital citizenship among youth.

4.3.3 Peer Pressure and Negative Influences

Peer pressure and negative influences emerged as significant challenges shaping youth behavior in Mukono. Findings indicated that many young people succumbed to peer pressure, often engaging in risky or delinquent activities to gain acceptance within their social circles. The need for belonging and social validation often outweighed the fear of consequences, leading some youth to participate in behaviors such as substance abuse, theft, and truancy. Without adequate parental guidance and community support, many struggled to make independent, informed choices.

A male youth participant in an FGD candidly admitted;

"I didn't want to be left out, so I joined my friends even when I knew what they were doing was wrong." – FGD participant

Similarly, insights from key informant interviews (KIIs) revealed growing concerns among community leaders regarding the impact of negative peer groups on youth. These influences were frequently linked to behaviors such as substance abuse, truancy, and early sexual activity. A community leader emphasized:

"Many of the youth in our area are influenced by their peers more than by their families or teachers. It's a real challenge in this community." – KII participant

Likewise, observations noted that some youth spent significant time in environments where negative peer pressure was prevalent, such as certain hangout spots or local gatherings. These observations highlighted the importance of addressing peer influence by promoting positive social interactions and encouraging youth to form supportive, constructive relationships. This further emphasizes the need for community-based initiatives to counteract the impact of negative peer pressure

These remarks underscore the urgent need for community-based interventions, mentorship programs, and school initiatives aimed at strengthening youth resilience against negative peer influence. By fostering positive peer networks and providing structured extracurricular activities, communities can create an environment where young people are encouraged to make responsible choices, ultimately reducing the prevalence of delinquent behaviors.

Aligning with Steinberg and Monahan (2007) and Johnson et al. (2023), who found that social media and peer approval increase risky behaviors like substance abuse and unsafe sex, underscores the need for comprehensive strategies that help youth navigate these pressures. By providing positive role models, fostering self-confidence, and offering healthy alternatives, communities can help mitigate the negative effects of peer influence. Additionally, enhancing media literacy and promoting responsible online engagement can reduce the impact of social media-driven peer pressure on youth behavior.

4.3.4 Economic Challenges

Economic instability arose as a pervasive challenge, with participants in FGDs emphasizing its direct impact on their ability to meet their children's needs. This financial strain often led to heightened stress among parents, which, as indicated in previous research, negatively affects parenting quality and child outcomes. Many parents expressed difficulty in providing adequate educational opportunities, extracurricular activities, and even basic needs, which in turn exacerbated feelings of insecurity and emotional distress within families. The data also highlighted that in economically disadvantaged communities, the lack of access to social support systems further magnified these challenges. A female parent in an FGD shared;

“There are times I have to choose between buying food and paying for my child’s school fees.” FGD participant

Consistently, key informant interviews (KIIs) revealed that financial hardships often forced parents to prioritize immediate survival over long-term developmental needs, limiting their ability to engage meaningfully in their children's upbringing. The pressure to secure income sometimes resulted in parents spending extended hours at work, leaving children unsupervised and more vulnerable to negative influences such as delinquency and school dropout. A local community leader echoed these concerns, stating,

"Economic struggles not only affect parents' ability to provide but also weaken family bonds. When parents are constantly stressed about finances, they may have little time or energy left to guide and support their children." – KII participant

Observations further supported these findings, revealing that children from economically strained households often exhibited signs of emotional distress, lower academic performance, and reduced engagement in structured activities. In many cases, youth from such backgrounds were more likely to take on adult responsibilities prematurely, such as working to supplement family income, which in turn affected their educational progress and overall well-being.

These statements underscore the far-reaching consequences of economic instability on parenting and child development. Aligning with Conger et al.'s (2002) and Mistry et al.'s (2002) findings, which suggest that financial strain negatively affects parenting, leading to poorer outcomes for children. Moreover, the lack of social support systems in economically disadvantaged communities further exacerbates these challenges, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to alleviate financial pressures on families. Research by Duncan et al. (2017) further corroborates this, demonstrating that financial stress contributes to parental inconsistency and emotional unavailability, increasing the likelihood of behavioral problems among youth. Implementing community-based financial empowerment programs, expanding access to affordable education, and strengthening social support networks could help mitigate these challenges, ensuring that parents have the resources and stability needed to foster their children’s growth and well-being.

4.3.5 Mental Health Issues

Parental mental health challenges were identified as a significant barrier to effective parenting, with participants in KIIs noting the difficulty of providing emotional stability for their children while grappling with issues such as anxiety and depression. These mental health struggles often led to parents feeling overwhelmed, impacting their ability to provide the necessary emotional support and guidance for their children. A female parent admitted during a KII,

"It's hard to be there for my children emotionally when I'm constantly battling my own mental health issues. I feel like I'm failing them."
KII participant

Reliably, findings from FGDs echoed these concerns, with several participants highlighting how parental mental health struggles contributed to inconsistent parenting, strained family relationships, and, in some cases, neglect. Children raised in such environments often exhibited signs of emotional distress, behavioral difficulties, and a heightened susceptibility to negative peer influences.

A female youth participant in an FGD reflected:

"When my mother is stressed, she barely talks to us. Sometimes, I feel like she doesn't care, but I know she's just going through a lot." –
FGD participant

Observations (OBS) revealed that in households where parents struggled with untreated mental health conditions, children were more likely to display signs of withdrawal, low self-esteem, and academic disengagement. This aligns with research by Goodman et al. (2011), which suggests that parental mental health significantly influences child development, particularly in areas of emotional regulation and resilience.

These findings underscore the profound impact of parental mental health challenges on emotional availability, potentially leading to long-term consequences for children's emotional development and overall well-being. They highlight the critical need for targeted interventions to support parental mental health as a means of fostering healthier family dynamics.

Building on the work of Goodman et al. (2011), who emphasize the significant influence of parental mental health on child well-being and Harris et al. (2022) who further demonstrate that children of parents experiencing anxiety and depression often struggle with emotional

instability and behavioral difficulties, research indicates that these children face challenges in forming secure attachments, a pattern also observed in Mukono, where parental mental health struggles were linked to increased emotional distress among children.

To address these challenges, a comprehensive, multifaceted approach is essential. Expanding access to mental health services, integrating parental support programs into community structures, and raising awareness about the critical role of mental well-being in effective parenting can create a more supportive environment for families. Additionally, providing counseling services, peer support networks, and workplace initiatives that promote mental health can equip parents with the necessary tools to manage their challenges more effectively, ultimately fostering a more stable and nurturing home environment for their children.

4.3.6 Parenting in Single-Parent Households

Parenting in single-parent households presented unique challenges, with participants in FGDs and KIIs highlighting the strain of balancing multiple roles and responsibilities. Single parents often face financial pressures, emotional stress, and limited time, which can impact their ability to provide consistent care and support for their children. A female participant in an FGD shared,

“It’s tough doing everything on my own. Sometimes I feel like I’m not enough for my child.” FGD participant

Relatedly, key informant interviews (KIIs) revealed that single parents often struggle with maintaining discipline and providing emotional stability, as they lack the support of a co-parent. This can sometimes result in children seeking guidance and validation from external influences, including peers and social media, which may not always be positive. A local social worker noted,

"Single parents do their best, but the absence of a second caregiver can leave gaps in emotional support and discipline, making children more vulnerable to external pressures." – KII participant

Observations of single-parent households revealed visible struggles, such as children lacking supervision during key times of the day, which often left them more susceptible to negative peer influences, academic difficulties, and emotional distress. Additionally, some children in these households took on care giving responsibilities for younger siblings, further straining their emotional and psychological well-being.

These findings seem to highlight the need for targeted support systems, such as community mentorship programs, after-school initiatives, and parental support networks, to help bridge the gap in supervision and emotional guidance. Providing single parents with access to counseling services, financial aid, and parenting workshops can empower them to navigate these challenges more effectively, fostering a more stable and nurturing environment for their children.

In line with Amato's (2000) study, children from single-parent households are more likely to experience behavioral and emotional difficulties, especially when parents struggle with the pressures of raising a child alone. Furthermore, the limited social support available to single-parent households exacerbates the challenges of parenting, making it more difficult for parents to provide the emotional stability and resources their children need. This underscores the importance of targeted support and resources for single parents to help improve both their well-being and the outcomes for their children.

4.3.7 Navigating Adolescents' Identity Formation

Adolescence is a period of intense self-exploration and emotional turmoil as young people search for their personal and social identities. This stage often involves questions about who they are, their values, and their place in the world, leading to confusion and susceptibility to peer pressure and risky behaviors. External factors, such as societal expectations, cultural norms, and the influence of social media, further complicate this process by shaping how adolescents perceive themselves. During KII, participants emphasized the challenges adolescents face in forming their identities amid these pressures. A senior community leader noted,

“Adolescents today are under immense pressure to conform to certain standards set by society and social media, making it difficult for them to truly understand who they are.” KII participant

In the same way, FGDs revealed that many adolescents struggle with conflicting expectations from their families, peers, and the broader society, often leading to stress, self-doubt, and engagement in behaviors aimed at gaining acceptance. Some youth expressed feeling torn between parental guidance and the desire to fit into peer groups, which sometimes resulted in risk-taking behaviors. A male youth participant in an FGD shared,

“I want to listen to my parents, but at the same time, I feel shy. It's hard to balance both.” – FGD participant

Observations revealed that many adolescents appeared to be heavily influenced by the need to fit in with their peers and the expectations set by social media. It was noted that some adolescents spent significant time curating their online personas to align with popular trends, often at the expense of authentic self-expression.

These conversations highlight the need for targeted support systems, such as community mentorship programs, after-school initiatives, and parental support networks, to help bridge the gap in supervision and emotional guidance. Providing single parents with access to counseling services, financial aid, and parenting workshops can empower them to navigate these challenges more effectively, fostering a more stable and nurturing environment for their children.

Echoing Erikson's (1968) psychosocial development theory, which identifies adolescence as a critical stage for identity formation, inadequate guidance and support can hinder the development of a strong sense of self, leaving adolescents more susceptible to external pressures. To address these challenges, it is essential to foster open communication between parents and adolescents, promote mentorship programs, and integrate life-skills education into school curricula. These strategies can provide young people with the necessary support and structure to navigate identity formation confidently and resiliently.

4.3.8 Exposure to Violence and Crime in Communities

Parents in Mukono district expressed significant concern about the exposure of their children to violence and crime within their communities. KIIs revealed that many parents felt helpless in protecting their children from the negative influence of crime, particularly in neighborhoods affected by gang activity, substance abuse, and domestic violence. A parent in an FGD shared,

“The streets are unsafe; children are exposed to all kinds of violence, and as a parent, I feel helpless to shield them from it. FGD participants

Likewise, KII highlighted that frequent exposure to violence not only instilled fear in children but also normalized aggressive behaviors, increasing the risk of delinquency. Some parents reported that their children exhibited signs of emotional distress, such as anxiety and withdrawal, while others noted that prolonged exposure made children more likely to adopt violent tendencies as a coping mechanism. A local community leader in a KII observed,

"When violence becomes a daily reality, children begin to see it as an acceptable way to resolve conflicts, which poses serious risks to their future behavior and decision-making." – KII participant

These inferences underscore the profound impact that exposure to violence and crime has on children's mental health and development and the urgent need for community-driven interventions, such as strengthening neighborhood security, providing psychosocial support for affected families, and implementing school-based violence prevention programs. Echoing Finkelhor et al.'s (2009) research, which suggests that children exposed to violence are at heightened risk for psychological and behavioral problems, these findings emphasize the urgent need for community-based interventions and support systems to protect children. Without proactive measures, prolonged exposure to violence can lead to desensitization, increased aggression, and difficulty in forming healthy relationships. Strengthening neighborhood security, expanding access to counseling services, and promoting positive role models within the community are essential strategies for mitigating these risks and fostering resilience among vulnerable children.

4.3.9 Parental Role in Sexual Education

Parental role in sexual education was highlighted as a crucial factor in shaping adolescents' attitudes and behaviors toward sexuality. (FGDs) revealed that many parents in Mukono district felt uncomfortable or ill-prepared to engage in conversations about sex with their children, often due to cultural taboos, personal discomfort, or a lack of adequate knowledge on the subject. As a result, many adolescents turn to peers, social media, or other unreliable sources for information, increasing their risk of misinformation and risky sexual behaviors. A male parent (participant) shared in an FGD,

"I find it hard to talk to my children about sex; I'm not sure what to say or how to say it." – FGD participant

Relatedly, key informant interviews with an educator indicated that parents who engaged in open discussions about sexual health with their children played a crucial role in fostering greater awareness and responsible decision-making among adolescents. A local leader (OC CFPU) emphasized this point, stating:

"Parents who create a safe space for discussing sexual matters help their children develop healthier attitudes toward relationships and make informed choices." – KII participant

In line with research by Kirby and Lepore (2007), which emphasizes that parental involvement in sexual education significantly influences adolescents' knowledge, attitudes, and decision-making regarding sexual health, the statements seem to suggest that open and informed parental engagement in sexual education plays a vital role in shaping adolescents' attitudes and behaviors toward sexuality. They highlight the need for parents to overcome cultural taboos and personal discomfort to provide accurate, age-appropriate information.

Furthermore, they emphasize that when parents create a safe and supportive environment for discussing sexual health, adolescents are more likely to make responsible choices, reducing their vulnerability to misinformation and risky behaviors. This underscores the importance of implementing community programs and parental training initiatives to bridge knowledge gaps and foster effective communication on sexual health. When parents provide accurate information in a supportive environment, adolescents are more likely to develop responsible behaviors, delay early sexual activity, and make informed choices.

Addressing this gap requires equipping parents with appropriate knowledge and communication skills through targeted training programs, community workshops, and school-based initiatives that encourage open and age-appropriate discussions about sexual health.

4.3.10 Addressing Special Needs

Parents raising children with disabilities or special needs face heightened demands in terms of resources, time, and emotional resilience. These challenges are exacerbated by social stigma and a lack of awareness about disability rights, which further isolates families and affects the overall well-being of both parents and children. Many parents also expressed frustration with the lack of trained professionals and appropriate facilities to address their children's unique needs. Insights from FGD revealed that accessing specialized services such as therapy and inclusive education is often difficult, with one female parent stating,

"The resources are limited, and we struggle to find proper support for my child's needs." FGD participant

Similarly, key informant interviews (KIIs) revealed that many parents of children with disabilities feel overwhelmed by the financial burden associated with specialized care, therapy, and assistive devices. The lack of government support and community awareness further compounds these challenges, leaving families to navigate their struggles with minimal assistance. A social worker (probation officer) emphasized this issue, stating:

"Parents of children with disabilities often feel abandoned by the system. They need more accessible services, financial support, and a society that understands and embraces inclusion." – KII participant

These perceptions seem to suggest the urgent need for policies that promote disability-inclusive education, increased funding for specialized services, and community-driven awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and foster social acceptance. Resonating to the study by Smith et al. (2021) found that children with disabilities in low-resource settings often face significant barriers to accessing quality education and healthcare services. Their research emphasized the need for increased investment in inclusive education programs and community-based support systems.

Similarly, a study by Brown and Green (2023) highlighted the critical role of early intervention in improving long-term outcomes for children with special needs, suggesting that accessible therapy services and specialized training for caregivers are essential for promoting better developmental outcomes. These findings underscore the necessity of creating an environment that supports the unique needs of children with disabilities while equipping parents with the tools to navigate the challenges of raising a child with special needs.

4.4 Causes of Increased Crime Among the Youth in Mukono District

The causes of increased youth crime in Mukono District are diverse, rooted in individual circumstances, family dynamics, societal influences, and broader economic and political conditions. Insights from field data collected through focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), and observations align with and expand on existing literature, revealing both corroborative and new findings.

4.4.1 Economic Hardship and Unemployment

Economic struggles, particularly unemployment, emerged as a leading driver of youth crime in Mukono District. The lack of job opportunities and financial instability were seen as key factors pushing youth toward criminal behavior. Focus group discussions (FGDs) revealed that many young people, faced with limited access to stable employment, resorted to illegal activities, such as theft, drug trafficking, and robbery, as means of survival. One participant shared,

"When there are no jobs, you do what you can to survive, even if it means breaking the law." FGD participant

Similarly, a Key Informant Interview (KII) participant, a local council leader, echoed these concerns, emphasizing the direct link between unemployment and rising youth crime rates. He stated,

'When young people have no means to earn a living, they become vulnerable to criminal activities. Many end up engaging in theft, drug peddling, or even organized crime just to survive.'

Direct observations further reinforced these findings, with many youths in areas affected by high unemployment engaging in criminal activities during periods of economic hardship. It was noted that young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, often congregated in groups where they discussed and planned criminal acts, such as theft and vandalism, as ways to make quick money

These insights seem to emphasize that economic hardship and unemployment are significant contributors to youth crime in Mukono District. Many young people, especially those from low-income backgrounds, face limited job opportunities, leading them to resort to criminal activities such as theft, drug trafficking, and vandalism as means of survival. This resonates with the findings of previous research, including Wilson and Petersilia (1995), which suggests that poverty and a lack of economic opportunities increase the likelihood of youth engaging in crime.

The observations also highlighted that, in economically disadvantaged areas, youth often form groups where criminal behavior is normalized, and peer influence plays a critical role in encouraging illegal activities. The absence of positive role models and the presence of substance abuse further contributed to these behaviors. This underscores the importance of addressing both the economic challenges faced by youth and providing them with positive alternatives, such as employment programs, mentorship, and community engagement, to reduce the incidence of crime.

4.4.2 Broken Family Structure

Broken family structure, marked by separation, divorce, or parental absence, was identified as a significant contributing factor to youth delinquency in Mukono District. KIIs echoed findings from Demuth and Brown (2004), which suggest that family instability increases the likelihood of youth engaging in criminal behavior. Many participants noted that without a stable home environment, children often lack the guidance and emotional support necessary

for healthy development. A senior police officer with child and family protection unit of Mukono police division participant shared,

"When both parents are not around, the child lacks guidance, and that's when they get into trouble." KII participant

Correspondingly, another KII participant, a probation and social welfare officer, highlighted that children from broken homes often struggle with emotional distress, leading them to seek support and identity in peer groups that may encourage delinquent behavior. The officer noted,

"Children from unstable families often feel neglected and turn to the streets or gangs for a sense of belonging." KII participant

These insights suggest that family stability plays a crucial role in preventing youth crime. Aligning with Demuth and Brown's (2004) findings, the evidence from Mukono District underscores the need for targeted interventions, such as parental guidance programs and community support initiatives, to mitigate the negative impact of family breakdown on youth behavior.

4.4.3 Peer Pressure and Gang Influence

The influence of peers and gang culture emerged strongly from the field as a significant factor driving youth crime in Mukono District. Focus group discussions (FGDs) and OBS revealed that many youths, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, were drawn into criminal activities due to the pressure to conform to group norms or join gangs for protection and a sense of belonging. One youthful participant shared,

"You have to join a group to survive in these streets; they offer protection, and you feel accepted." FGD participant

Consistently, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) reinforced these findings, with law enforcement officials and community leaders highlighting how peer influence and gang affiliations escalate criminal tendencies among the youth. A senior police officer from the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) noted,

"Many young offenders we deal with admit that they got involved in crime because their friends were doing it. The need for acceptance and protection often outweighs their fear of legal consequences." KII participant

Observations (OBS) further revealed that gang structures provide not only social identity but also financial incentives, drawing more vulnerable youth into delinquent activities. These insights suggest that addressing peer pressure and gang influence requires a multifaceted approach, including mentorship programs, community policing, and youth engagement initiatives to provide alternative paths for at-risk youth.

Echoing with studies by Klein (2013) and Waring et al. (2016), which highlight the powerful role of peer influence in shaping youth behavior, particularly in communities where social support structures are weak and economic opportunities are limited, these insights seem to suggest that peer pressure and gang influence play a pivotal role in shaping youth criminal behavior in Mukono District.

The need for acceptance, protection, and financial gain compels many youths to join gangs and engage in illegal activities. This highlights the importance of addressing these social pressures through proactive community-based interventions, such as mentorship programs, youth leadership initiatives, and strong support networks that can provide alternative avenues for youth to build their identities and sense of belonging outside of criminal groups."

4.4.4 Substance Abuse

Substance abuse emerged as a critical factor contributing to youth crime in Mukono District, with many respondents identifying it as both a consequence and a driver of criminal behavior. Key informant interviews (KIIs) revealed that substance abuse, particularly alcohol and drug use, was prevalent among adolescents in the area. A senior officer of UPF at Mukono police division shared,

“Many youths use drugs to cope with the stress of life, and this often leads to them making poor choices and getting involved in criminal activities.” KII participant

Reliably, focus group discussions (FGDs) further supported this claim, with many youth participants admitting that substance abuse provided an escape from the harsh realities of their lives, leading them to engage in criminal acts. One participant shared,

“When you're high, you don't think about the consequences. It just makes you do things you wouldn't normally do.” FGD participant

Observations (OBS) also noted the high frequency of drug use in areas with limited youth recreational facilities, where young people resort to substances as a form of coping. These insights emphasize the critical link between substance abuse and youth crime in Mukono

District. Addressing this issue will require a comprehensive approach, including increased awareness of the dangers of drug use, better access to rehabilitation programs, and the creation of healthy spaces for youth engagement and recreation.

These statements seem to suggest that substance abuse not only exacerbates the vulnerability of youth to criminal behavior but also deepens the underlying social and economic challenges they face. As highlighted by Hammersley et al. (2006) and Merline et al. (2004), substance use serves as both a coping mechanism and a risk factor, reinforcing the cycle of delinquency and alienation. Addressing this issue, therefore, requires more than just intervention in drug use itself; it necessitates a broader focus on improving social support systems, reducing economic disparities, and creating alternative avenues for youth to deal with stress and social pressures.

4.4.5 Exposure to Violence in Media and Community

Exposure to violence in media and the community emerged as a significant factor influencing youth behavior in Mukono District. This exposure, coupled with violence in the community, such as gang activities and domestic abuse, contributes to normalizing violent behavior among youth. Participants in FGDs and OBS highlighted the prevalence of violent content in media, including television, films, and online platforms, which often desensitize youth to violence. One parent shared,

“My children spend hours watching violent movies, and I’m worried it affects how they see the world.” FGD participant

Similarly, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with local community leaders emphasized the impact of media violence and community violence on youth behavior. A local teacher stated,

“When children are exposed to violence in media and in their own neighborhoods, it becomes harder for them to distinguish between right and wrong. They start to see violence as a normal way of solving problems.” KII participant

Resounding with Anderson and Dill (2000) and Bushman and Huesmann (2001), who found that violent media increases aggression, and underscore the need for both media regulation and safer community environments, the insights suggest that the normalization of violence through both media exposure and real-life experiences contributes to the development of aggressive behavior among youth. Addressing this issue requires a multi-pronged approach, including media literacy programs, community-based initiatives to reduce local violence, and

parental guidance on monitoring and regulating media consumption. By fostering an environment that emphasizes non-violent conflict resolution and provides positive role models, the impact of violence in media and the community on youth behavior can be mitigated.

4.4.6 Mental Health Issues

Mental health issues among youth in Mukono District were identified as a significant contributing factor to increased crime and risky behaviors. Focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) revealed that many adolescents struggle with mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and trauma, often linked to family instability, economic hardship, and exposure to violence. A participant in an FGD shared,

"My child has been withdrawn and angry, and I don't know how to help them cope with everything he is facing." FGD

Also, a Key Informant Interview (KII) with a counselor at a local mental health clinic highlighted the connection between mental health struggles and criminal behavior. The counselor explained,

"Youth dealing with mental health issues often lack the emotional tools to navigate life's challenges, and this can lead them to engage in risky behaviors, including crime. They are more likely to act out when they don't have proper support." KII participant

Observations also indicated that youth with untreated mental health issues were more likely to engage in risky behaviors or delinquent acts. Speaking to the existing research, such as the studies by Masten et al. (2004) and Goodman et al. (2011), which emphasize the importance of addressing mental health as a key factor in preventing youth crime and promoting positive behavioral outcomes, the perceptions highlight the critical connection between mental health struggles and youth involvement in crime and risky behaviors. Adolescents facing anxiety, depression, or trauma, often as a result of family instability or exposure to violence, may lack the coping mechanisms needed to navigate these challenges in healthy ways. Without proper support or treatment, these mental health issues can lead to aggression, substance abuse, and involvement in criminal activities.

This underscores the importance of early intervention and mental health services for youth, focusing on providing the necessary resources to address mental well-being and prevent the escalation of criminal behavior.

4.4.7 Urbanization and Lack of Community Engagement

Urbanization and the lack of community engagement were also identified as significant factors contributing to youth crime in Mukono District. As the district becomes more urbanized, there has been a noticeable shift in social dynamics, with fewer opportunities for youth to engage in meaningful community activities or form strong social bonds. Key informant interviews (KIIs) highlighted how the decline in community cohesion and the weakening of traditional family structures have left many adolescents without guidance or positive role models. One senior officer at probation office remarked:

“Before, there were community centers and groups that helped keep the youth busy, but now, they are left to wonder without much to do.”

KII participant

Relatedly, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) highlighted how the urbanization of Mukono has led to fewer communal activities for youth, leaving them with little direction. One participant shared,

“The youth today have nowhere to go and nothing to do. They are left to wander, and it’s easy for them to fall into trouble.” FGD participant

Parallel with findings by Sampson et al. (1997), who emphasize that strong community networks are crucial in preventing youth delinquency and promoting social cohesion, the insights above propose that urbanization, while offering certain advantages, also creates an environment where the lack of community engagement and the erosion of traditional structures contribute to youth crime. Revitalizing community centers, youth clubs, and local engagement programs could provide vital spaces for youth to build positive relationships and stay involved in constructive activities, ultimately reducing their susceptibility to criminal behavior. Equally, rebuilding community ties and providing positive youth engagement, such as mentorship programs and recreational activities, can reduce criminal involvement. Collaborative efforts from local authorities, community leaders, and youth organizations are essential to foster an environment of security and positive development.

4.4.8 Inefficient Judicial Systems

A key new finding from the field was the perceived inefficiency of judicial systems in addressing youth crime, which was not explicitly discussed in the reviewed literature. Key informant interviews (KIIs) revealed a widespread belief among community members that

the judicial system often fails to deliver timely and fair justice for youth offenders. Many participants expressed frustration with the delays in trials, lack of rehabilitation opportunities, and the disproportionate use of punitive measures rather than restorative justice practices. A senior officer at UPF- Mukono division shared,

"The system is slow, and by the time the case is resolved, the child has already been in and out of trouble." KII participant

Similarly, (FGDs) echoed these concerns, with several participants emphasizing the frustration youth offenders and their families experience due to delays in legal proceedings. One male parent shared,

"The courts take so long, and by the time a decision is made, my child is already involved in more crime. The system is just not helping them change." FGD participant

Contrary to Muncie's (2006) findings, which argue that an over-reliance on punitive approaches exacerbates youth delinquency, while restorative justice models, which focus on rehabilitation and reintegration, can be more effective, the current judicial system in Mukono appears to favor punitive measures. The community's concerns highlight that punitive responses, when combined with slow legal processes, do little to address the root causes of youth crime or support the rehabilitation of young offenders. Instead, they create a cycle of re-offending and social alienation.

These insights suggest that adopting restorative justice practices, focusing on rehabilitation rather than punishment, and streamlining the judicial process could significantly improve outcomes for youth offenders in Mukono District. Implementing these changes would help break the cycle of youth crime, offering more opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

4.4.9 Inequality in Resource Allocation

Inequality in resource allocation, a key field finding not extensively covered in the literature, highlights how disparities in education, employment, healthcare, and social services contribute to youth crime. Youth in under-resourced areas face limited opportunities for development, increasing their vulnerability to gang involvement and substance abuse. FGDs with parents and youths revealed widespread frustration among youth, with some participants noting that,

"There's nothing for us here; we end up on the streets or in gangs because we have no choice." FGD participants

Harmoniously, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with local leaders and social workers revealed that the lack of resources in certain neighborhoods exacerbates youth frustration and leads them to seek out alternative, often criminal, outlets. A community leader shared,

"When youth have no access to education or job opportunities, they resort to what is available—gangs, drugs, or crime—because they feel there's no other way out."KII participant

Connecting with Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) findings which emphasize how socioeconomic inequality exacerbates social tensions and increases the likelihood of crime and the research by Sampson et al. (1997) which highlights the role of structural disadvantages in undermining community cohesion and fostering delinquency, the intuitions suggest that inequality in resource allocation significantly contributes to youth crime, as the lack of development opportunities in under-resourced areas leaves young people vulnerable to criminal influences. Addressing these resource disparities issue requires targeted investment in education, healthcare, and social services to create pathways for youth in these areas, helping them avoid the lure of criminal activities by providing constructive alternatives. Additionally addressing the issues is not only a matter of equity but also a critical step toward mitigating youth crime and promoting societal stability.

4.5 Suggested Strategies and Measures to curb Criminal Behavior among Young people in Mukono District

A holistic, multi-dimensional approach is crucial in addressing youth crime, combining prevention, early intervention, and supportive systems tailored to meet the diverse needs of vulnerable adolescents. Among the recommendations, include the following;

4.5.1 Educational and Employment Opportunities

Providing equitable access to education and employment opportunities is critical in reducing youth crime and fostering long-term societal growth. Education equips young people with the skills and knowledge needed to make informed decisions and resist negative influences, while employment opportunities provide a sense of purpose and economic stability. Field data revealed that youth with limited access to quality education and job opportunities were more likely to engage in criminal activities as a survival strategy. A participant in KII remarked,

"Without education no jobs, what else can they do? The only way to survival is to resort to criminality" KII participant

Likewise, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) highlighted how a lack of educational and employment opportunities leaves youth feeling hopeless and more inclined to criminal behavior. One young participant shared,

"We are left with no options. If you don't have an education, you can't get a job, and so you turn to crime just to survive." FGD participant

Aligning with studies like those of Lochner and Moretti (2004), who highlighted the crime-reducing effects of education, and Farrington et al. (2006), which emphasize the importance of employment as a tool for social integration and crime prevention, the insights emphasize the importance of providing equitable access to education and employment as preventive measures against youth crime. Investing in educational programs, vocational training, and creating more job opportunities for young people can offer them a brighter future and reduce their involvement in criminal activities.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that the absence of educational and economic opportunities pushes youth toward crime as a coping mechanism. The lack of these opportunities not only limits their ability to break free from cycles of poverty but also fosters feelings of frustration, hopelessness, and disconnection from societal norms.

4.5.2 Family-Based Interventions

Family-based interventions occurred as a critical strategy for addressing youth crime and fostering long-term behavioral change. Families are fundamental in shaping the values, behaviors, and decision-making abilities of young people, making them key stakeholders in preventive and rehabilitative measures. Field data revealed that dysfunctional family environments—marked by conflict, neglect, or poor communication—often exacerbate youth vulnerability to criminal activities. A senior officer at UPF- Mukono division participant noted,

"When families are not supportive or involved, youth are more likely to look for belonging elsewhere, often in the wrong places." KII participant

Similarly, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) underscored the importance of family support in preventing youth involvement in crime. A parent shared,

“When the family is not united or involved in the child’s life, they turn to their peers, and that’s when they get lost in gangs or worse.”
FGD participant

Corresponding with findings from Patterson et al. (1989), which emphasizes that the link between family dynamics and youth behavior and improved family interactions can significantly reduce antisocial behavior and Farrington and Welsh (2003) which found that family-focused prevention programs, such as parent training and family therapy, are among the most effective strategies for reducing juvenile delinquency and recidivism, the observations seem to suggest that family-based interventions, including counseling, parenting programs, and strengthening family communication, could play a crucial role in preventing youth crime. Supporting families to foster healthy, supportive environments where youth feel valued and guided can reduce their vulnerability to criminal influences and help them make better choices.

4.5.3 Community Policing and Engagement

Community policing and engagement developed as a vital strategy in addressing youth crime and enhancing public safety in Mukono District. The concept of community policing focuses on building trust and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and local communities, aiming to prevent crime by addressing its root causes and involving the community in crime prevention efforts. Field data indicated that when communities were actively engaged with law enforcement, there was a noticeable reduction in youth crime, as local residents felt more empowered and responsible for their safety. KIIs highlighted that communities with strong police-community partnerships experienced greater security, as residents were more likely to report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. A senior officer of the law at Mukono Police division shared,

“When we work together with the community, we can solve many problems in our neighborhoods before they escalate.” KII participant

Additionally, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) revealed that youth were more likely to trust the police and feel supported in their efforts to avoid criminal behavior when community policing was actively practiced. One male youth participant shared,

“When the police are part of the community, they don’t seem like outsiders. They’re more like people we can trust and go to when we need help, not just to arrest us.” FGD Participant

Drawing on Skogan's (2006) research, which demonstrated that community policing strategies that build trust between law enforcement and residents can lead to reduced crime rates and enhanced community well-being, alongside Weisburd et al.'s (2010) findings that emphasize the effectiveness of community engagement initiatives in empowering youth and reducing juvenile delinquency by strengthening neighborhood ties, this study recommends a concerted effort to strengthen community policing practices. By cultivating closer partnerships between law enforcement and local communities, it is possible to tackle the root causes of youth crime collaboratively. This approach not only fosters trust but also promotes shared responsibility, ultimately creating safer environments where young people are less likely to resort to criminal activities.

4.5.4 Mental Health Support

Mental health support occurred as a critical component in addressing youth crime in Mukono District. Adolescents facing mental health challenges, such as depression, anxiety, trauma, and substance abuse, are at higher risk of engaging in criminal behavior. Field data revealed that many youth involved in criminal activities also struggled with untreated mental health issues, often exacerbated by family instability, economic hardships, and exposure to violence. Highlighted that mental health challenges often went unaddressed, either due to stigma or lack of accessible services. A parent in an FGD remarked,

“Many of our children are suffering silently; they act out because they don’t know how to deal with their pain.” FGD participant

Additionally, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with the probation workers emphasized the lack of mental health resources for youth in Mukono District. The participant shared,

“There are very few programs in place to help these young people cope with their emotional struggles, and that’s why they end up turning to crime as a form of escape.” KII participant

Aligning with research by Luntamo et al. (2014), which emphasizes the need for integrated mental health services in youth crime prevention programs, the highlights suggest that providing accessible mental health support is crucial for addressing youth crime in Mukono District. Initiatives that focus on early intervention, reducing stigma surrounding mental health, and improving access to counseling and therapy can help young people cope with their emotional challenges, ultimately reducing their likelihood of engaging in criminal activities.

4.5.5 Media Literacy Programs

Media literacy programs also appeared as a valuable strategy in mitigating the negative impact of media exposure on youth behavior and crime in Mukono District. With the widespread consumption of media, including social media, television, and video games, adolescents are increasingly exposed to violent and criminal content, which can influence their attitudes and behaviors. Field data indicated that many youths who engaged heavily with violent media content were more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior and display a desensitization to violence. FGDs revealed that young people often struggled to distinguish between reality and media portrayals, leading to a distorted understanding of acceptable behaviors. A female youthful participant in an FGD pointed out that,

“Sometimes, we see people on TV or social media doing bad things, but it feels like that’s how it’s supposed to be. It’s hard to know what’s right and wrong.” FGD participant

Similarly, educators and parents in FGDs emphasized the importance of teaching youth to critically assess media messages. One teacher mentioned,

“If we can help them understand the difference between what is real and what is fabricated, we can reduce the influence of violent media on their behavior.” FGD participant

Observations (OBS) in the field further supported the importance of media literacy in shaping youth behavior. In areas with limited access to positive recreational activities, many young people were seen spending significant amounts of time consuming violent or crime-related content through social media and television. In these settings, the prevalence of aggressive behavior and a distorted sense of normalcy was notably higher among the youth. Groups of young people often gather in public spaces, engrossed in their phones, watching violent videos, and imitating behaviors they see on screen.

In line with research by Gentile et al. (2009), which found that media literacy education can reduce the influence of violent media on youth, promote healthier media consumption habits, and discourage harmful behaviors, the findings seem to suggest that the lack of media literacy can contribute to the normalization of criminal behavior among youth, as they may emulate what they see in the media. Media literacy programs can play a crucial role in helping adolescents critically analyze media content, develop awareness of its impact, and make informed decisions about the behaviors they emulate. Implementing media literacy programs in schools and communities can empower young people to navigate media messages

responsibly and reduce their susceptibility to negative influences that may lead to criminal behavior.

4.5.6 Strengthening Youth Mentorship Programs

Strengthening youth mentorship programs arose as a critical intervention in preventing youth crime and promoting positive behavior in Mukono District. Mentorship programs offer young people guidance, support, and role models who can help them navigate life's challenges, make positive choices, and stay on track for future success. Field data revealed that youth who had access to mentors were less likely to engage in criminal activities and were more focused on their education and personal development. FGDs highlighted the positive impact of mentorship programs in providing youth with a sense of direction and belonging. A female youth participant in an FGD shared,

"Having someone to talk to makes me feel like I have a chance to change my life." FGD participant

Additionally, KII participants, including local leaders and community workers, emphasized the value of mentorship programs in providing youth with a sense of direction, stability, and support, which they often lack in challenging environments. One KII participant, a community leader, noted,

"Mentorship programs have helped many young people turn their lives around. It's the guidance and care they receive that makes the difference." KII participant

Aligning with research by Dubois et al. (2002), which showed that youth who participated in mentorship programs were less likely to engage in risky behaviors, including delinquency, and had better academic and personal outcomes, the study seems to reinforce the importance of structured mentorship in fostering positive behavioral change and reducing youth involvement in criminal activities in Mukono District. Mentorship programs can play a significant role in reducing youth crime by offering emotional support, practical advice, and opportunities for personal growth. Mentors can also help youth build self-esteem and resilience, enabling them to make better decisions and avoid criminal activities. Strengthening these programs in schools, communities, and other youth-centered spaces can provide the guidance and support that young people need to stay on a positive path and avoid criminal involvement.

4.5.7 Restorative Justice System. Programs

A new finding in this research highlights the effectiveness of restorative justice programs in preventing youth crime and reducing recidivism. Restorative justice focuses on repairing the harm caused by criminal behavior through dialogue and understanding between the offender, victim, and community, rather than simply punishing the offender. These programs encourage accountability, personal growth, and reconciliation, providing a more constructive path toward rehabilitation. Field data FGDs revealed that youth involved in restorative justice programs showed greater remorse for their actions and a stronger commitment to making amends. a casual employed youth noted,

"After going through the restorative justice program, I realized how my actions hurt others, and I want to make it right." FGD participant

Correspondingly, key informant interviews (KIIs) with community leaders and juvenile justice experts underscored the success of restorative justice in fostering positive behavioral changes among youth. A KII participant, a probation officer, commented,

"Restorative justice not only helps the youth understand the consequences of their actions, but it also helps the community heal. When youth offenders see the impact of their behavior, they're less likely to repeat it.'" KII participant

Supported by Bazemore and Umbreit (2001)' study, which shows that restorative justice programs can significantly reduce recidivism rates by promoting offenders' accountability and offering a more constructive means of addressing their behavior, the study findings suggest that restorative justice programs provide an opportunity for youth to take responsibility for their actions in a supportive environment, which can significantly reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Unlike punitive measures, restorative justice emphasizes healing and offers youth the opportunity to reintegrate into society with a renewed sense of purpose and accountability

Implementing restorative justice programs in schools, communities, and juvenile justice systems in Mukono District could be a powerful tool in reducing youth crime and promoting social reintegration.

4.5.8 Equality in Resource Allocation

Equality in resource allocation is crucial in addressing youth crime, as disparities in access to essential services such as education, employment opportunities, healthcare, and social

services contribute significantly to the vulnerability of youth in disadvantaged areas. Unequal distribution of resources creates environments where marginalized youth are more likely to resort to crime as a coping mechanism. This study revealed that youth in under-resourced neighborhoods expressed frustration and hopelessness due to limited opportunities, which often pushed them toward criminal activities. A youthful male participant in an FGD stated:

"There's nothing for us here; we end up on the streets or in gangs because we have no choice." FGD participant

Equally, key informant interviews (KIIs) with community leaders revealed that the lack of resources in certain areas hinders efforts to provide constructive opportunities for youth. A community leader noted,

"When youth don't have access to resources education, recreation activities, they feel invisible and disconnected from society. This increases the risk of them seeking acceptance in gangs or engaging in illegal activities."

Research by Sampson et al. (1997) supports these findings, emphasizing the importance of equitable resource allocation in preventing youth delinquency. Lack of equitable resource distribution fosters feelings of hopelessness, increasing the likelihood of youth engaging in criminal behavior. Addressing these disparities through targeted interventions that improve access to quality education, employment, and healthcare can provide youth with better opportunities and reduce their vulnerability to crime.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the key findings based on the objectives of the study on the influence of parenting approaches and approaches on youth involvement in crime in Mukono District. It also presents the conclusions and recommendations derived from the analysis of the data.

5.2 Summary of Major Findings

This section presents a summary of the key findings related to the parenting approaches used by parents in Mukono District. A variety of parenting approaches were identified, ranging from traditional, authoritarian methods to more contemporary, collaborative approaches. The findings highlight both the positive and negative outcomes associated with each style, providing insight into the complex dynamics of parenting in the district.

5.1.1 Established forms of Parenting approaches used by parents in Mukono district

The study reveals a diverse array of parenting approaches utilized by parents in Mukono District, each playing a significant role in shaping youth behavior. These approaches range from authoritarian and autocratic parenting, characterized by strict rules and limited emotional engagement, to more progressive democratic, spiritual, and culturally oriented approaches that emphasize open communication, empathy, and shared values. Authoritarian and autocratic parenting, while effective in enforcing discipline, often leads to unintended consequences such as emotional distress, low self-esteem, and social alienation among youth. Children raised under these rigid frameworks may struggle to form healthy relationships or resist negative peer influences, potentially increasing their vulnerability to criminal behavior.

Conversely, the study highlights the positive impacts of democratic parenting, which balances authority with mutual respect and understanding. Parents who adopt this style often encourage open dialogue, foster emotional security, and empower their children to make responsible decisions. Similarly, spiritual and culturally anchored parenting approaches, rooted in moral guidance and traditional values, instill a sense of identity, resilience, and social responsibility in young individuals.

The findings underscore the critical need for a balanced and adaptive approach to parenting—one that blends structure with support while considering the unique challenges faced by families in Mukono District. Promoting community-focused parenting techniques that prioritize positive reinforcement, mentorship, and active involvement in children’s lives can significantly mitigate youth involvement in crime. By equipping parents with tools to nurture emotional stability, respect, and social integration, these strategies contribute to fostering a generation of responsible and law-abiding citizens. This comprehensive understanding of parenting approaches serves as a foundation for targeted interventions aimed at addressing youth delinquency through family-centered and culturally sensitive approaches

5.1.2 Established relationship between different parenting approaches and crime among youth in Mukono District

The study in Mukono District highlights the strong link between parenting approaches and youth involvement in crime, emphasizing the pivotal role of parental guidance in shaping adolescent behavior. Authoritative parenting, which balances structure, emotional warmth, and open communication, emerged as the most effective approach in mitigating delinquency. By fostering mutual respect and setting clear expectations, this style nurtures self-discipline, accountability, and sound decision-making in youth. Conversely, authoritarian and neglectful parenting approaches were found to negatively influence behavior. Rigid discipline coupled with emotional detachment in authoritarian parenting often led to resentment and defiance, while neglectful parenting exposed youth to risky behaviors and low self-esteem due to the absence of guidance and support.

Additionally, permissive and abusive parenting approaches posed significant risks. Permissive parenting, marked by a lack of boundaries, resulted in poor self-regulation and diminished responsibility among youth. Abusive parenting, whether physical, emotional, or psychological, contributed to maladaptive coping mechanisms and increased aggression. On the other hand, democratic, spiritual, cultural, and reinforcement-based parenting approaches were linked to positive outcomes. These approaches encouraged moral development, emotional resilience, and social responsibility by fostering open communication, instilling values, and recognizing positive behavior. The findings align with existing research, underscoring the importance of balanced and supportive parenting in reducing youth delinquency. Empowering caregivers with skills to adopt effective parenting techniques

through targeted interventions and community programs is crucial for promoting responsible behavior and reducing crime among youth.

5.1.3 Identified challenges faced by parents in raising youth in Mukono District

Parents in Mukono District face a broad spectrum of challenges in raising their children, many of which are intensified by the evolving social, economic, and technological landscape. A primary difficulty lies in balancing work and family responsibilities. With long working hours and financial pressures, many parents struggle to find quality time to engage with their children. This lack of emotional presence can weaken the parent-child bond, hindering the child's emotional development and leaving them more susceptible to external influences, including negative peer pressure and risky behaviors.

The rapid proliferation of technology and social media has further complicated the parenting role. Many parents find it challenging to monitor their children's online activities, increasing the risk of exposure to cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and unhealthy digital habits. The dominance of social media often shifts attention away from family interactions, weakening traditional family values and limiting face-to-face communication. This digital divide creates a disconnect that can undermine the guidance and support children need as they navigate adolescence.

Additionally, peer pressure is a significant concern for parents, as adolescents are often driven to conform to social groups that may encourage risky behaviors such as substance abuse or criminal activity. Economic instability exacerbates this challenge by restricting access to resources like quality education, extracurricular programs, and safe recreational spaces that could steer youth towards positive influences. Single-parent households and families dealing with mental health challenges or exposure to domestic violence face even greater obstacles, as these factors often limit the emotional and financial stability necessary to support healthy child development.

5.1.4 Examined causes of the increasing crime rate among youth in Mukono district

The rising youth crime rate in Mukono District can be attributed to a complex interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors. Peer pressure is a dominant driver, as adolescents often feel compelled to conform to group behaviors to gain acceptance or social status. This is compounded by the influence of social media, which frequently glamorizes criminal behavior, creating an illusion of glamour and success associated with deviant activities. These

platforms amplify negative societal norms, enticing vulnerable youth who are seeking identity and validation in a rapidly changing world.

Another critical factor is the lack of parental supervision. Many parents in Mukono District are preoccupied with demanding work schedules or economic struggles, leaving limited time to monitor and guide their children. This absence of oversight increases the likelihood of youth falling under the sway of negative peer influences or engaging in criminal activities to gain a sense of belonging or independence. In such environments, risky behaviors can become normalized, further eroding the moral fabric of the community.

Economic hardships also play a significant role, as poverty and unemployment leave many youths with few viable opportunities for personal advancement. The lack of access to quality education and skills training exacerbates this problem, as it limits career prospects and pushes some young individuals toward criminal activities as a means of survival or a form of rebellion against a system that appears to offer them little hope. The resulting cycle of poverty and crime perpetuates itself, further destabilizing families and communities.

The breakdown of traditional family structures and the erosion of community support systems further compound the issue. Single-parent households, domestic violence, and mental health challenges often create unstable environments that fail to meet the emotional and developmental needs of youth. Without strong family or community networks to provide guidance, many young people turn to crime as an outlet for frustration or as a misguided way to assert control over their circumstances

5.1.5 Suggested strategies and measures to curb criminal behavior among young people

To curb youth crime in Mukono District, a multifaceted approach that incorporates community, family, and governmental strategies is essential. One of the primary areas of focus should be enhancing parental involvement. Parents need access to education and training on authoritative, reinforcement-based, and cooperative parenting techniques to nurture their children's emotional resilience, discipline, and decision-making skills. Parenting workshops and community-led initiatives can empower caregivers with practical tools to guide their children toward positive behaviors while fostering healthy parent-child relationships.

Providing youth with education, vocational training, and mentorship programs is another critical pillar in crime prevention. Access to quality education and skills development

opportunities can equip young people with the tools to pursue meaningful employment and avoid the temptations of criminal activities. Structured mentorship programs that pair at-risk youth with role models can also provide guidance, inspiration, and emotional support, helping them navigate the challenges they face.

Strengthening law enforcement and rehabilitative programs is equally vital. Law enforcement efforts should prioritize community engagement and focus on preventing crime rather than punitive measures alone. Rehabilitative programs that emphasize reintegration into society, such as counseling, life skills training, and support networks, are crucial for reducing recidivism and ensuring that young offenders can rebuild their lives productively. Specialized youth-focused initiatives within the criminal justice system can address the unique needs of young offenders and promote long-term behavioral change.

Addressing the root causes of youth crime requires investing in social welfare services. Efforts to alleviate poverty and provide support for vulnerable families can reduce the socioeconomic pressures that often drive young people toward delinquency. Programs that offer financial assistance, mental health counseling, and access to recreational facilities can provide positive outlets and alternatives to criminal behavior.

Additionally, community-based strategies such as community policing and partnerships between local authorities, schools, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are instrumental in improving crime prevention efforts. These collaborations can create safe spaces for youth, promote social cohesion, and encourage collective responsibility for addressing crime. Engaging religious and cultural institutions in fostering moral and ethical guidance can further strengthen these efforts, ensuring a holistic approach to youth crime prevention in Mukono District.

5.2 Conclusions

This section presents conclusions on findings drawn from the study on youth crime in Mukono District, with a specific focus on the forms of parenting style, the influence of parenting approaches on crime, the challenges faced by parents, and the causes driving the rising crime rates. It also explores the strategies and measures suggested to mitigate criminal behavior among the youth in the district.

5.2.1 Forms of Parenting approaches used by parents in Mukono District

Parenting approaches in Mukono District exhibit a dynamic interplay between traditional cultural values and modern influences. This blend reflects the district's evolving social fabric, where spiritual, communal, and modern practices coexist, shaping youth behavior and development. The findings highlight the significant role that parenting approaches play in influencing emotional regulation, moral development, and susceptibility to delinquent behavior among the youth.

Authoritative parenting, characterized by a balance of structure and emotional warmth, is particularly effective in promoting positive outcomes such as emotional regulation and responsible decision-making. Parents who adopt this style foster open communication, mutual respect, and consistency, which helps children develop resilience and self-discipline. The inclusion of spiritual and cultural values in parenting also plays a vital role, as it instills moral principles, a sense of identity, and respect for community norms, further enhancing the effectiveness of this approach.

However, the study also highlights the challenges posed by autocratic, neglectful, and abusive parenting approaches. Autocratic parenting, which imposes rigid rules without emotional support, often leads to emotional distress, rebellion, and social withdrawal in youth. Neglectful parenting, where caregivers are disengaged or indifferent to their children's needs, leaves youth vulnerable to negative peer influences and risky behaviors. Similarly, abusive parenting—whether physical, emotional, or psychological—has long-term detrimental effects on youth, including low self-esteem, aggression, and an increased likelihood of criminal involvement. These negative parenting practices underscore the need for interventions that address these harmful dynamics.

5.2.2 Established relationship between different parenting approaches and crime among youth in Mukono District

The relationship between parenting approaches and youth crime in Mukono District underscores the critical role that parental involvement plays in shaping the behavior and moral development of young individuals. Research reveals that authoritative parenting—characterized by a balanced approach combining discipline with warmth and emotional support—correlates with lower levels of delinquency. This style promotes emotional regulation, self-respect, and resilience, fostering a strong sense of responsibility and accountability in youth. Children raised under authoritative parenting tend to develop better

coping mechanisms for handling stress, peer pressure, and societal challenges, thus reducing their vulnerability to criminal activities. The open communication and mutual respect that define this style create an environment where children feel valued and understood, further contributing to their emotional stability and ethical decision-making.

In contrast, autocratic and neglectful parenting approaches have been linked to negative outcomes, including emotional instability and increased susceptibility to delinquent behavior. Autocratic parenting, which is marked by high levels of control and low warmth, often leads to feelings of resentment and rebellion in children. The lack of emotional support and guidance in such households can result in youth feeling alienated, disempowered, and more inclined to engage in risky or criminal behavior. Similarly, neglectful parenting, where parents fail to provide adequate emotional or physical care, leaves children without the necessary support to navigate the challenges they face. This can lead to poor self-esteem, difficulties in forming healthy relationships, and a heightened likelihood of turning to crime as a means of seeking attention or filling an emotional void.

The integration of traditional cultural values, such as communal responsibility and moral teachings, plays a significant role in mitigating the risk of youth crime in Mukono District. These values emphasize respect for societal norms, collective well-being, and a strong sense of identity rooted in cultural heritage. Parents who incorporate these teachings into their child-rearing practices provide youth with a moral framework that reinforces the importance of social responsibility and ethical conduct. By blending modern parenting techniques, such as authoritative discipline, with traditional cultural values, parents can offer a well-rounded approach that not only protects against delinquency but also fosters a sense of pride and belonging in their children. This holistic approach, which combines structure, support, and cultural understanding, is essential in addressing the underlying causes of youth crime in Mukono and promoting long-term social cohesion

5.2.3 Identified challenges faced by parents in raising youth in Mukono District

Parents in Mukono District face a complex array of challenges in raising youth, with socio-economic pressures being among the most significant obstacles. Poverty remains a pervasive issue, limiting parents' ability to provide essential resources such as education, healthcare, and extracurricular activities that are vital for the holistic development of children. The financial strain on families often results in inadequate supervision and emotional support, leaving youth more vulnerable to negative influences. Without access to proper education and

social engagement opportunities, many young people find themselves exposed to harmful behaviors like substance abuse, peer pressure, and involvement in crime as a means of coping with their circumstances. The lack of resources further exacerbates feelings of hopelessness and disconnection, which can lead to a higher likelihood of youth engaging in delinquent behavior.

In addition to economic challenges, the rise of modern technologies and media has significantly complicated the parenting landscape in Mukono District. Parents often struggle to keep up with the rapid pace of technological advancements, making it difficult to monitor and control their children's online activities. This technological gap increases the risk of exposure to harmful content such as cyber bullying, inappropriate material, and unhealthy behavioral trends. Social media, in particular, plays a role in amplifying peer pressure and glamorizing criminal behavior, further reinforcing negative social norms. As a result, many parents feel overwhelmed and ill-equipped to navigate the digital world their children are immersed in, which weakens their ability to provide effective guidance and protection.

The erosion of traditional parenting structures also poses a significant challenge in Mukono District. As modernization and urbanization take hold, the once strong communal child-rearing practices that relied on extended families and local support networks have weakened. Parents are now increasingly isolated, with fewer opportunities for shared child-rearing responsibilities and emotional support from relatives or the community. This lack of communal involvement leaves parents to face the pressures of raising children alone, which can be both emotionally and physically draining. Furthermore, generational gaps between parents and their children often lead to communication breakdowns, as youth desire more independence and parents struggle to adapt to evolving social norms and expectations.

The disconnect between generations makes it increasingly difficult for parents to provide the guidance, discipline, and emotional support necessary to foster positive behavior and deter delinquency in their children. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes strengthening community support systems, improving access to resources, and providing parents with the tools and knowledge to navigate both traditional and modern parenting demands.

5.2.4 Identified causes of the increasing crime rate among youth in Mukono district

The increasing youth crime rate in Mukono District is a multifaceted issue rooted in a combination of socio-economic, familial, and environmental factors. At the heart of this

challenge lies poverty, which limits access to essential resources such as quality education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. With limited options for advancement, many young people turn to crime as a means of survival or rebellion, often perceiving illegal activities as the only way to secure income or gain social status. The lack of vocational training, mentorship programs, and other positive youth development opportunities further isolates these individuals, leaving them vulnerable to the influence of negative peers who encourage criminal behavior. Without access to constructive outlets for their energy and aspirations, such as recreational programs or community-driven initiatives, youth are more likely to engage in harmful behaviors.

Familial breakdown is another critical factor contributing to the rise in youth crime. The erosion of traditional family structures and weakened parental authority has led to a lack of supervision and guidance for many children. In many cases, financial strain exacerbates the challenges faced by parents, making it difficult for them to provide the emotional and financial support their children need. This lack of parental involvement can result in youth feeling abandoned or neglected, which, in turn, increases their susceptibility to criminal influences. Additionally, the rise of single-parent households, often under financial strain, has further diminished the ability of families to provide stable and nurturing environments, which are crucial for the healthy emotional and social development of young people.

Environmental factors also play a significant role in the increasing youth crime rate. Exposure to violence, whether in the home, the community, or through media, can normalize aggressive behavior and make crime seem like an acceptable way to resolve conflict or assert power. Substance abuse, both as a coping mechanism for stress or trauma and as a result of peer pressure, compounds this issue, further eroding the moral and emotional stability of youth. Moreover, the lack of positive role models and mentors in the community creates a vacuum where destructive behavior becomes more appealing. The absence of supportive community networks leaves young people with limited alternatives to criminal involvement, reinforcing the cycle of crime and instability.

5.2.5 Suggested strategies and measures to curb criminal behavior among young people

To effectively curb youth crime in Mukono District, a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach that addresses both the immediate and underlying causes of criminal behavior is necessary. First, prioritizing education and support for parents is crucial. Parents should be

equipped with the skills and knowledge to adopt effective, balanced parenting approaches, such as authoritative and cooperative methods.

These approaches, which emphasize structure, emotional warmth, and open communication, foster emotional intelligence, self-respect, and resilience in children. Community workshops and counseling programs can also be established to help parents manage challenges like peer pressure, substance abuse, and maintaining discipline in a rapidly changing social environment. These initiatives will empower parents to create more supportive and engaging environments for their children, reducing the likelihood of them resorting to criminal behavior.

In addition to parental involvement, it is vital to invest in youth development through education, vocational training, and mentorship programs. By offering young people access to quality education and skill-building opportunities, they are provided with constructive alternatives to crime.

Vocational training programs, which equip youth with marketable skills, can also help reduce unemployment and poverty, two critical drivers of criminal activity. Mentorship programs can offer youth guidance, emotional support, and positive role models, helping them navigate challenges and make informed decisions. Moreover, extracurricular activities such as sports, arts, and community service provide youth with an outlet for their energy and creativity, further reducing the temptation to engage in criminal acts. These programs can also help build social skills, teamwork, and a sense of purpose, all of which are essential in deterring criminal behavior.

Furthermore, a shift from punitive measures to a more rehabilitative approach is necessary to address youth crime. Rehabilitation programs, which focus on counseling, education, and reintegration into society, help offenders understand the consequences of their actions and equip them with the tools to make better decisions moving forward. Providing mental health services, trauma counseling, and life skills training to young offenders can reduce recidivism and support their successful reintegration into the community. At the same time, improving social welfare systems to address issues such as poverty, substance abuse, and family breakdowns will help prevent at-risk youth from entering the criminal justice system in the first place.

Community policing and partnerships with local authorities, NGOs, and community leaders are essential for effective crime prevention. Community policing allows for a proactive,

community-centered approach to law enforcement, where local officers work closely with residents to identify and address potential issues before they escalate. Establishing partnerships with NGOs and other community organizations can enhance outreach efforts, providing additional resources and support for at-risk youth.

Early intervention strategies, such as mentoring programs and conflict resolution training, can prevent young people from engaging in criminal behavior and ensure that they receive the support they need to build healthier futures. By fostering collaboration between law enforcement, community leaders, schools, and local organizations, a more robust and sustainable framework for reducing youth crime can be established in Mukono District.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to address the rising youth crime in Mukono District:

Community-based educational programs should teach parents effective techniques, such as authoritative and cooperative parenting, emphasizing emotional support, communication, and clear expectations for behavior. These workshops, in partnership with schools and social agencies, will help reduce negative impacts from autocratic or neglectful approaches.

Integrating traditional values like respect for elders and communal responsibility with modern parenting methods can strengthen the moral foundation for youth development. Collaboration with community leaders and religious institutions will help instill these values, reducing delinquency.

Increasing access to education and vocational training programs will provide youth with alternative, constructive pathways. Schools and local institutions should implement mentorship and career counseling, while vocational centers should partner with industries to ensure practical skill development.

Youth centers offering activities like sports, arts, and life skills training can provide safe environments for personal development and socialization. These spaces will help engage youth and reduce the influence of gangs and criminal groups by promoting positive outlets for energy and creativity.

Community-based initiatives should provide childcare, family counseling, and financial aid to struggling families, strengthening family structures. Revitalizing extended family support and

communal child-rearing will bridge generational gaps and ensure youth receive guidance from multiple sources.

Cooperation between local authorities, schools, and NGOs will help identify at-risk youth early and provide targeted interventions. Community policing, coupled with school-based counseling services, will strengthen trust and communication, preventing youth crime through a network of support.

Mental health services should be prioritized for youth in Mukono District, offering counseling and therapy for issues such as trauma, anxiety, and depression. Schools should integrate mental health education to identify early signs, while support programs for youth and families will address emotional struggles, reducing the likelihood of criminal behavior.

Promoting positive media that focuses on pro-social behavior and community values can counteract the negative impact of violent or harmful content. Digital literacy programs in schools and community organizations will help youth critically engage with media, reducing the influence of harmful content on their behavior.

Technology should be used to engage youth in positive activities and monitor crime trends in Mukono District. Mobile apps, social media, and digital networks can provide awareness about the consequences of crime, while law enforcement can use tech tools to track hotspots and intervene early in youth-related issues.

Expanding substance abuse education in schools and youth centers will raise awareness about the dangers of drug and alcohol use. Strengthening rehabilitation programs that provide counseling, life skills training, and family support will help youth overcome addiction and reduce its association with criminal behavior.

The youth justice system should prioritize restorative justice practices, offering young offenders opportunities for rehabilitation through community service, victim-offender dialogue, and reconciliation. Providing legal aid and counseling will ensure fair treatment and support for youth navigating the justice system.

Early intervention programs should be implemented to identify at-risk youth and address underlying issues such as behavioral problems or family challenges. Schools and community centers can collaborate on offering counseling and family engagement strategies, preventing escalation into criminal behavior.

Financial literacy and entrepreneurship training can help youth develop essential skills for employment and business development. Workshops on budgeting, savings, and business management will empower youth to become economically independent, reducing their likelihood of engaging in crime for financial survival.

5.4 Suggestions for further Studies

Future studies should investigate the role of schools and educational institutions in shaping youth behavior, focusing on vocational training, mentorship, and how education can act as a protective factor against criminal activity.

Future research in Mukono District should investigate the long-term impact of different parenting approaches on youth development and criminal behavior, with a focus on employment, family relationships, and social integration. Longitudinal studies can provide insights into how parenting influences long-term outcomes.

Studies should explore the role of technology and media in shaping youth behavior, particularly in relation to violent content, online bullying, and social media trends, and their connection to criminal behavior among youth.

Research should examine the influence of cultural and spiritual values on parenting practices, exploring how indigenous knowledge and religious teachings help instill discipline and reduce youth crime in Mukono District.

Future studies should address the intersection of youth crime and mental health issues, identifying mental health risk factors and developing interventions to integrate mental health support into crime prevention efforts.

Further research should assess the effectiveness of community-based programs, such as youth centers and mentorship initiatives, in preventing youth crime and identifying successful elements of these programs.

Research should explore the relationship between socio-economic status, poverty, family dynamics, and youth crime, identifying targeted interventions to address systemic causes of criminal behavior.

Future studies should consider adopting a qualitative approach that directly engages youths to explore their perspectives on the underlying factors influencing their involvement in crime. By capturing the voices of the youths themselves, such research can provide nuanced insights into the personal, social, and environmental motivations behind delinquent behaviour. This

approach would complement existing studies that focus primarily on parental approaches and institutional frameworks, enabling a more holistic understanding of youth crime and informing interventions that are both contextually relevant and youth-centered.

5.5 Contribution of the study to the body of knowledge

This study contributes to understanding the relationship between parenting approaches and youth crime in Mukono District, focusing on the integration of traditional and modern parenting practices. It highlights the importance of combining authoritative, spiritual, and cultural approaches to shape youth's moral and social development. The findings also provide valuable insights for educators, parents, and policy makers, offering a framework for developing culturally relevant interventions to address challenges faced by families in Mukono and similar communities.

Additionally, the study expands the literature on youth crime by examining socio-economic, familial, and environmental factors contributing to crime rates. It proposes actionable strategies for curbing criminal behavior, such as improved parenting education, youth engagement programs, and government support. These findings provide a foundation for future research and policy development aimed at promoting safer and more resilient communities.

REFERENCES

- African Child Policy Forum. (2022). About ACPF. Retrieved from
- Amato, P. R. (2005). The impact of family formation Change on the cognitive, social, and emotional well-being of the next generation. *Future of Children*, 15(2), 75-96.
- Anderson, C. A., Berkowitz, L., Donnerstein, E., Huesmann, L. R., Johnson, J. D., Linz, D., ... & Wartella, E. (2003). The influence of media violence on youth. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4(3), 81-110.
- Anderson, J. R., Muthusamy, S., & O'Hara, J. (2016). Community-based interventions for youth in the rural African context: The role of youth centers in crime reduction. *International Journal of Youth and Community Development*, 24(3), 45-58.
- Aries, P. (1962). *Centuries of childhood: A social history of family life*. Vintage Books.
- Atilola, O., Ola, B. A., & Abiri, G. O. (2014). Parenting Style and Child Behavior in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Review. *African Journal of Psychiatry*, 17(4), 275-281.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Prentice Hall.
- Barber, B. K. (1996). Parental psychological control: Revisiting a neglected construct. *Child Development*, 67(6), 3296–3319. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1131780>
- Baumrind, D. (1966). Effects of authoritative parental control on child behavior. *Child Development*, 37(4), 887-907.
- Baumrind, D. (1967). Child care practices anteceding three patterns of preschool behaviour. *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 75(1), 43–88.
- Baumrind, D. (1991). *The influence of parenting style on adolescent competence and substance use*. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 11(1), 56-95.
- Baumrind, D. (1991). The influence of parenting style on adolescent competence and substance use. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 11(1), 56-95.
- Belsky, J. (1984). The determinants of parenting: A process model. *Child Development*, 55(1), 83-96.
- Benson, P. L., Leffert, N., Scales, P. C., & Blyth, D. A. (2003). Beyond the "village" rhetoric: Creating healthy communities for children and adolescents. *Applied Developmental Science*, 7(3), 157-16

- Berger, K. S. (2000). *The developing person through the life span* (6th ed.). New York, NY:
- Bingenheimer, J. B., et al. (2005). The influence of parenting practices on adolescent sexual behavior. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67(1), 24-38.
- Birungi H (2013), *Raising little thugs (online) retrieved from new vision.co.ug/news/1325053/raise-little-thugs* accessed on 12-9-2023
- Borden, L. M., Perkins, D. F., & Villarruel, F. A. (2015). Mentoring as a strategy for youth crime prevention: A meta-analysis of effective programs. *Journal of Youth Development*, 10(3), 44-59. <https://doi.org/10.5195/jyd.2015.395>
- Brown, A., & Green, T. (2023). The role of early intervention in improving outcomes for children with special needs. *Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 58(2), 189-205.
- Catalano, R. F., Berglund, M. L., Ryan, J. A. M., Lonczak, H. S., & Hawkins, J. D. (2004). Positive youth development in the United States: Research findings on evaluations of positive youth development programs. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591(1), 98-124.
- Chakrabarti, P. (2012). Parenting and socialization in Hindu society. *Journal of Family Studies*, 18(2), 114–130.
- Chao, R. K. (1994). Beyond parental control and authoritarian parenting style: Understanding Chinese parenting through the cultural notion of training. *Child Development*, 65(4), 1111-1119.
- Chao, R. K. (1994). Beyond parental control and authoritarian parenting style: Understanding Chinese parenting through the cultural notion of training. *Child Development*, 65(4), 1111-1119.
- Clark, A., Smith, J., & Johnson, M. (2022). Cultural values and youth behavior: Preventing criminal activity through traditional practices. *Journal of Social and Cultural Studies*, 15(3), 45-62.
- Clark, J., Thompson, H., & Moore, R. (2022). Early intervention programs and the prevention of youth violence: The role of trauma-informed care. *Journal of Child Development and Behavioral Science*, 58(3), 235-250.

- Cohen, J. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2009). Disentangling the effects of youth mental health and substance abuse issues on juvenile delinquency. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 36(10), 1026-1048. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854809344650>
- Cohen, J. L., & Levesque, D. A. (2014). Parenting approaches and juvenile delinquency. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health*, 26(2), 111-124.]
- Cohen, S., & Wills, T. A. (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 98(2), 310-357.
- Conger, R. D., Conger, K. J., & Elder, G. H. Jr. (2002). Family economic hardship and adolescent adjustment: Mediating and moderating processes. In *Developmental Psychopathology*, 2nd ed.-*covid-19* accessed on 12-9-2023
- Craig, L., & Mullan, K. (2011). How mothers and fathers share childcare: A cross-national time-use comparison. *American Sociological Review*, 76(6), 834-861.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cunningham, H. (2005). *Children and childhood in medieval Europe*. Routledge.
- Darling, N. (1999). Parenting style and its correlates. *Social Development*, 8(2), 117-119.
- Darling, N., & Steinberg, L. (1993). Parenting style as context: An integrative model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 113(3), 487-496.
- Darling, N., & Steinberg, L. (1993). Parenting style as context: An integrative model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 113(3), 487-496.
- Darling, N., & Steinberg, L. (1993). Parenting Style as Context: An Integrative Model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 113(3), 487-496.
- Demuth, S., & Brown, S. L. (2004). Family structure, family processes, and adolescent delinquency: The significance of parental absence versus parental gender. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 41(1), 58-81.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

- Dharmana R, and Kumar G.D (2019), *Criminal youth behavior among youth in India Vol 7 issue*
- Dishion, T. J., & Patterson, G. R. (2006). The development and ecology of antisocial behavior. *The Developmental Psychopathology of Antisocial Behavior*, 38(3), 198-215.
- DuBois, D. L., Holloway, B. E., Valentine, J. C., & Cooper, H. (2002). Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: A meta-analytic review. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30(2), 157-197.
<https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1014628810714>
- Duke, N. N., Pettingell, S. L., & McMorris, B. J. (2011). Adolescent violence and youth delinquency: The influence of parental support and peer involvement. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 40(9), 1207-1217.
- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405-432.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x>
- East African Community. (2019). *East African Community Children's Rights Protocol*.
<https://www.eac.int>
- Eime, R. M., Harvey, J. T., Charity, M. J., & Casey, M. M. (2013). The impact of structured sport participation on health outcomes for children and adolescents: A systematic review. *The Journal of Adolescent Health*, 52(3), 292-301.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2012.05.010>
- Elliott, D. S., Huizinga, D., & Menard, S. (2012). *Multiple problem youth: Delinquency, substance use, and mental health problems*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Erasmus, D. (1529/1978). *The education of children*. In *Collected works* (pp. 45–60). University Press.
- Fagan, J. (1996). The comparative advantage of juvenile versus criminal court sanctions on recidivism among adolescent felony offenders. *Law & Policy*, 18(1-2), 77-113.

- Farrington, D. P. (2000). Explaining and preventing crime: The globalization of knowledge— The American Society of Criminology 1999 Presidential Address. *Criminology*, 38(1), 1-24.
- Farrington, D. P. (2003). Developmental and life-course criminology: Key theoretical and empirical issues – The 2002 Sutherland Award Address. *Criminology*, 41(2), 221-255.
- Farrington, D. P. (2007). Childhood origins of antisocial behavior. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 10(2), 108-125. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-007-0022-0>
- German, A. J. (2015). *Style over substance: what can parent styles tell us about ownership styles and obesity in companion animals? British Journal of Nutrition*, 113(S1), S72-S77.
- Gill, C. H., Weisburd, D., & Telep, C. W. (2014). Community policing and crime: A review of the evidence. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 10(4), 359-391. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-014-9202-4>
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam Books.
- Goodman, S. H., Rouse, M. H., Connell, A. M., Broth, M. R., Hall, C. M., & Heyward, D. (2011). Maternal depression and child psychopathology: A meta-analytic review. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 14(1), 1-27.
- Gottfredson, M. R., & Hirschi, T. (1990). *A general theory of crime*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Gottfredson, M. R., & Hirschi, T. (1990). *A general theory of crime*. Stanford University Press.
- Government of Uganda. (2020). *Police Act, Cap 303*. <https://www.ulii.org/ug/legislation/act/2020/2>
- Gray, P. (2015). *Free-range kids: How to raise safe, self-reliant children (without going nuts with worry)*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Green, J., & Thorogood, N. (2004). *Qualitative Methods for Health Research*. London: Sage Publications.

- Griffin, K. W., Botvin, G. J., Scheier, L. M., & Diaz, T. (2000). *Parenting practices and adolescent substance use: A test of the family support and family coercion models. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 47(3), 396-405.*
- Grolnick, W. S., Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (1997). Inner resources for school achievement: Motivational mediators of children's perceptions of their parents. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 89(3), 529-537.*
- Gross, J. J., & John, O. P. (2003). Individual differences in two emotion regulation processes: Implications for affect, relationships, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85(2), 348-362.*
- Hanawalt, P. C. (1986). *The medieval child.* Oxford University Press.
- Harris, C., Whittingham, K., & Brown, S. (2022). Parental mental health and its impact on child development: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 63(4), 389-398.* <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13495>
- Hawkins, J. D., Catalano, R. F., & Miller, J. Y. (1992). Risk and protective factors for alcohol and other drug problems in adolescence and early adulthood: Implications for substance abuse prevention. *Psychological Bulletin, 112(1), 64-105.*
- Hill, N. E., & Tyson, D. F. (2009). Parental involvement in middle school: A meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote academic achievement. *Developmental Psychology, 45(3), 740-763*
- Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes of delinquency.* University of California Press.
- Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes of delinquency. University of California Press.*
- Hirschi, T. (2002). Desistance from crime and the life course: A developmental perspective. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 29(4), 303-335.* <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854803029004001>
- Hodapp, R. M., & Ly, T. M. (2005). Parenting children with disabilities. *Pediatric Annals, 34(4), 233-239.*
- Hoeve M, Sermon Dubas J ,Eichelsheim V.I ,Van der laan P H ,Smeek W, Geris JRM (2009) *The relationship between parenting and delinquency A meta analysis*

- Hoeve, M., Dubas, J. S., Eichelsheim, V. I., Van der Laan, P. H., Smeenk, W., & Gerris, J. R. (2009). The relationship between parenting and delinquency: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 37(6), 749–775.
- Hoskins, A. (2014). The role of parenting styles in adolescent substance abuse. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse*, 23(4), 293-310.
- Hwang, D. Y. (1999). Filial piety and its social implications in Confucian China. *Asian Culture*, 14(3), 78–89.
- Inclusive Social Development, United Nations Expert Group Meeting, Parenting Education in Europe.
- Jessor, R. (1992). Risk behavior in adolescence: A psychosocial framework for understanding and prevention. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 13(8), 602-612.
- Johnson, M. D., Smith, R., & Taylor, L. A. (2023). The influence of social media on adolescent peer pressure and risky behavior. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 72(3), 295-302. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2022.12.007>
- Kago, M. M. (2018). Relationship between paternal involvement and adolescent delinquency: a case of incarcerated juveniles in Nairobi County, Kenya (doctoral dissertation, Pan Africa Christian university).
- Kenyatta, J. (1938). *Facing Mount Kenya*. London: Secker and Warburg.
- Kenyatta, J. (1938). *The philosophy and politics of African social systems*. Nairobi University Press.
- Kerr, M., & Stattin, H. (2000). What parents know about their adolescents' activities: A longitudinal analysis of parental knowledge and adolescent secrecy. *Developmental Psychology*, 36(3), 341-353.
- Kerr, M., Stattin, H., & Ozdemir, M. (2012). Parenting style and adolescent adjustment: A within-and between-family examination. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 51(3), 259-265.
- Kidd, J. (2014). Youth crime and parenting in modern Africa. *African Journal of Criminology*, 10(2), 132–150.
- Kidd, J., & Williams, M. (2017). Parenting and youth crime prevention in Uganda. *Journal of African Development*, 19(4), 255–272.

- Kimiringi, G. W. (2015). Influence of parenting styles on delinquency among juveniles in rehabilitation centres in Nakuru town, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, Egerton University).
- Kishor, S., & Subaiya, L. (2008). *Understanding family planning through a rights-based lens*. Population Council.
- Klein, M. W. (2006). The role of cultural pride in youth crime prevention. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 9(2), 141-157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260500431660>
- Kumar, S. (2000). Traditional parenting practices in India. *Indian Journal of Social Work*, 61(2), 234–245.
- Laird, R. D., et al. (2003). Parental monitoring and adolescent antisocial behavior: A prospective analysis. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 13(3), 225-245.
- Lamborn, S. D., Mounts, N. S., Steinberg, L., & Dornbusch, S. M. (1991). Patterns of competence and adjustment among adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful families. *Child Development*, 62(5), 1049-1065.
- Lamborn, S. D., Mounts, N. S., Steinberg, L., & Dornbusch, S. M. (1991). Patterns of competence and adjustment among adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful families. *Child Development*, 62(5), 1049-1065.
- Lancy, D. F. (2015). *The anthropology of childhood: Cherished guests*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lansford, J. E., Deater-Deckard, K., Bornstein, M. H., Putnick, D. L., & Bradley, R. H. (2020). Parenting, discipline, and child adjustment in sub-Saharan Africa: Evidence from longitudinal studies. *Developmental Psychology*, 56(5), 894–908.
- Lansford, J. E., et al. (2014). Parenting and Adolescent Adjustment across Eight Countries: The Role of Parenting Practices and Values. *Developmental Psychology*, 50(2), 227-237.
- Latimer, J., Dowden, C., & Muise, D. (2005). The Effectiveness of Restorative Justice Practices: A Meta-Analysis. *The Journal of Criminal Justice*, 33(4), 55-79.
- Latimer, J., Dowden, C., & Muise, D. (2005). The effectiveness of restorative justice practices: A meta-analysis. *The Prison Journal*, 85(2), 127-144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885505276962>

- Lee, B., Gerber, J., & Cochran, J. (2020). Parenting styles and children's delinquency reconsidered: An empirical assessment. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, 71(2), 33-59
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2019). *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (12th ed.). New York: Pearson Education.
- Levine, M. P. (2012). Media literacy and its role in preventing youth crime. *Media Psychology Review*, 10(3), 45-58.
- Livingstone, S., & Helsper, E. J. (2008). Parental mediation of children's internet use. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 52(4), 581-599.
- Livingstone, S., & Smith, P. K. (2014). Cyberbullying: A Review of the Literature. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 55(3), 192-208.
- Loeber, R., & Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1998). Development of juvenile aggression and violence: Some common misconceptions and controversies. *American Psychologist*, 53(2), 241-259.
- Loeber, R., & Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (2001). Developmental aspects of juvenile offending. In D. P. Farrington & S. G. Shoham (Eds.), *The International Handbook of Criminology* (pp. 125-141). CRC Press.
- Loeber, R., & Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (2001). Parenting and juvenile crime: Examining the role of parental involvement. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 15(3), 315-331. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.15.3.315>
- Maccoby, E. E., & Martin, J. A. (1983). Socialization in the context of the family: Parent-child interaction. In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), *Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol. 4. Socialization, Personality, and Social Development* (pp. 1-101). John Wiley & Sons.
- Maccoby, E. E., & Martin, J. A. (1983). Socialization in the Context of the Family: Parent-Child Interaction. In P. H. Mussen (Ed.), *Handbook of Child Psychology* (Vol. 4, pp. 1-101). Wiley.
- Maccoby, E. E., & Martin, J. A. (1983). Socialization in the context of the family: Parent-child interaction. In P. H. Mussen (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology* (pp. 1-101). Wiley.

- Madden, M., et al. (2017). *Teens and Technology 2017*. Pew Research Center.
- Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 227-238.
- Matsueda, R. L., & Heimer, K. (1997). A symbolic interactionist theory of role-transitions, role-commitments, and delinquency. *Advances in Criminological Theory*, 6, 163-213.
- Mawusi, A., (2020). *Parenting and Culture: An African Perspective*. [online] retrieved from <https://meetingofmindsuk.uk/realreads/parenting-and-culture-an-african-perspective/> accessed on 04-08-2023.
- Mazrui, A. (1987). Social control and youth delinquency in African societies. *African Studies Review*, 30(3), 49–65.
- Mbiti, J. S. (1990). *African Religions and Philosophy* (2nd ed.). Nairobi: Heinemann.
- McCombes, S. (2003). How to determine your sample size: A simple guide for researchers. Retrieved from <https://www.scribbr.com>.
- McGee, T., & Newcomb, M. D. (2012). Mental health issues and youth involvement in crime. *Youth & Society*, 44(3), 305-329. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X11423693>
- Meyer, B. (2014). Youth crime and rehabilitation in the Ugandan context: A review of prison-based programs. *Journal of African Correctional Systems*, 5(2), 29-42.
- Ministry of gender, labour and social development, (2018). *National parenting guidelines*. Republic of Uganda.
- Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. (2016). *National Youth Policy 2016*. Government of Uganda.
- Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. (2018). *Positive Parenting Guidelines for Uganda*. Government of Uganda.
- Mistry, R. S., Benner, A. D., Tan, C. S., & Kim, S. (2002). Family Economic Stress and Adolescents' Well-Being: A Longitudinal Analysis of Family Processes as Pathways to Influence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 31(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010293328489>

- Moitra, S., & Mukherjee, A. (2012). *Parenting styles and its impact on the development of children. Indian Journal of Positive Psychology*, 3(2), 107-110.
- Mukasa, B. (2021). *Parenting styles and Juvenile Delinquency: a case of selected families in Rwoho town council Ntungamo District-Uganda* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Kisubi).
- Nalugya, R., Nalwoga, M., Nambajjwe, Y. N., & Nalwoga, J. (2022). *Parenting styles, drug abuse and delinquency among adolescents Kawempe division* (Doctoral dissertation, Makerere University).
- National crime research center (2018), *Perspectives of youth criminality in Kenya*
- Odetola, T. D., et al. (2020). Parenting Styles and Adolescent Behavior: A Study of Nigerian Families. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, 12(2), 39-47
- Odgers, C. L., & Robins, S. D. (2016). Public health implications of digital media for children and adolescents. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 9, 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.10.003>
- Organization of African Unity. (1990). *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*. <https://www.acerwc.org>
- Parliament of Uganda. (2022). *Children Act, 2022*. <https://www.parliament.go.ug>
- Paterson, A. D., Babb, K. A., Camodeca, A., Goodwin, J., Hakim-Larson, J., Voelker, S., & Gragg, M. (2012). *Emotion-Related Parenting Styles (ERPS): A short form for measuring parental meta-emotion philosophy. Early Education & Development*, 23(4), 583-602
- Patterson, G. R. (1982). *Coercive family processes*. Castalia Publishing Company.
- Phinney, J. S. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: A review of research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108(3), 499-514.
- Pollock, J. (1983). Childhood and society in medieval Europe. *Historical Review*, 12(4), 245–262.
- Rawson, P. (2003). Fathers and paternal authority in ancient Greece. *Greek Studies Journal*, 27, 67–82.

- Regnerus, M. D. (2003). Religion and Positive Adolescent Outcomes: A Review of Research and Theory. *Review of Religious Research*, 44(4), 394-413.
- Sabano J. (2022) Parents abandon children after loosing jobs (online) retrieved from [monitor.co.ug/Uganda/news/national /over-100-parents -abandon-children-after-loosing jobs-in](http://monitor.co.ug/Uganda/news/national/over-100-parents-abandon-children-after-loosing-jobs-in)
- Sampson, R. J., & Wilson, W. J. (1995). Toward a theory of race, crime, and urban inequality. *Crime and Inequality*, 37, 54-73.
- Sampson, R. J., Raudenbush, S. W., & Earls, F. (1997). Neighborhoods and violent crime: A multilevel study of collective efficacy. *Science*, 277(5328), 918-924. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.277.5328.918>
- Save the Children. (2019). *Child rights and parenting practices*. <https://www.savethechildren.org>
- Sawyer, S. M., et al. (2018). Adolescence: A foundation for healthy development. *The Lancet*, 391(10123), 29-36.
- Schaffer, H. R. (1996). Social Development. This work explores how neglectful parenting leads to difficulties in emotional regulation, self-esteem, and interpersonal relationships in children.
- Schiffrin, H. H., Liss, M., Miles-McLean, H., Geary, K. A., & Erchull, M. J. (2014). Helping or hovering? The effects of helicopter parenting on college students' well-being. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 23(3), 448-457.
- Schroeder, D. M., & Gordon, A. M. (2004). Parenting styles and child outcomes: A closer examination of the authoritarian style. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 18(1), 42-50.
- Sharma, R. (2000). Parenting and social norms in Hindu tradition. *Indian Journal of Sociology*, 36(1), 11–25.
- Shaw, C. R., & McKay, H. D. (1942). *Juvenile delinquency and urban areas*. University of Chicago Press.
- Sherman, L. W., & Strang, H. (2007). *Restorative justice: The evidence*. The Smith Institute. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0130.2007.00546.x>

- Skogan, W. G. (2006). Community policing and crime prevention: A review of the evidence. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 34(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2005.09.001>
- Smith, C. A. (2011). The role of family support in youth development and crime prevention. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 15(4), 511-522. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025137>
- Smith, C., & Denton, M. L. (2005). *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. Oxford University Press.
- Smith, J., et al. (2021). Barriers to education and healthcare services for children with disabilities in low-resource settings. *Journal of Special Education and Rehabilitation*, 44(3), 231-247.
- Steinberg, L. (2008). A social neuroscience perspective on adolescent risk-taking. *Developmental Review*, 28(1), 78-106.
- Steinberg, L., & Monahan, K. C. (2007). Age differences in resistance to peer influence. *Developmental Psychology*, 43(6), 1531-1543.
- Steinberg, L., & Monahan, K. C. (2007). Age differences in resistance to peer influence. *Developmental Psychology*, 43(6), 1531-1543. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.43.6.1531>
- Sutton, J. R., & Simons, R. L. (2020). *Parenting style, parental involvement, and youth delinquency: Examining the moderating effects of parent gender and race/ethnicity*. *Justice Quarterly*, 37(4), 592-620.
- Terry, D. J. (2004). *The relationship between parental style and adolescent substance use: An exploratory study*. *Journal of Drug Education*, 34(3), 267-286.
- Thornberry, T. P., Krohn, M. D., Lizotte, A. J., & Chard-Wierschem, D. (2003). The role of juvenile gangs in facilitating delinquent behavior. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 30(1), 55-87.
- Tompsett, C. J., & Toro, P. A. (2010). *Parenting styles, family dynamics, and adolescent substance use: A review of the literature*. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 46(4), 291-298.
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2017) National Population and Housing Census 2014 Area specific Profile series Kampala Uganda

- Uganda bureau of statistics (2017) *The national population and housing census 2014*, area specific profile Kampala Uganda.
- Uganda Children Act (1997). Children's Rights and Welfare. Government of Uganda.
- UN Habitat, (2001) Youth and crime in Nairobi.
- United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), article 18.1. 1, *journal of criminal and youth*.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), (2020). Division for
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2018). *Global study on homicide 2018*. UNODC.
- United Nations. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>
- United Nations. (1989). Convention on the Rights of the Child. UN General Assembly.
- United Nations. (2019). *World youth report: Youth and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. United Nations.
- United Nations. (2020). *Guidelines on positive parenting*. <https://www.unicef.org>
- Verschuren, P. (2003). Case study research: Design and methods (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Widom, C. S. (1997). The cycle of violence. *Science*, 282(5388), 1338-1340.
- Widom, C. S. (1997). The cycle of violence. *Science*, 282(5388), 1316-1324.
- Widom, C. S. (2017). *The cycle of violence revisited*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 143(3), 187-218.
- Wilkinson, R. G., & Pickett, K. E. (2010). *The spirit level: Why greater equality makes societies stronger*. Bloomsbury Press.
- Williams, M., & Lee, A. (2021). Childhood abuse and its impact on emotional regulation and criminal behavior. *Journal of Youth and Adolescent Psychology*, 49(4), 342-358.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Zareen B, Dhapeshworkar MG, Ambedkar (2018), *Journal on emerging technologies and research Vol 5 issue 11*.

Zimmerman, M. A. (2000). Empowerment theory: Psychological, organizational, and community levels of analysis. *Handbook of Community Psychology*, 43-63.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4615-4193-6_3.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide for parents and Boda-Bodas

Researcher: Oloka Jasper

Research Topic: The Influence of Parenting Approaches on Crime Among the Youth in Mukono District

Introduction

Welcome and Acknowledgment:

Welcome participants and thank them for attending.

Introduce yourself as the facilitator (Oloka Jasper).

Purpose of the Discussion:

To explore how different parenting approaches influence youth involvement in crime in Mukono District.

To understand the challenges parents face, the causes of youth crime, and strategies for preventing it.

Overview of the Session:

Explain that the discussion will address parenting approaches, their relationship with youth crime, challenges faced by parents, causes of youth crime, and strategies to reduce criminal behavior.

Emphasize that this is a safe and confidential environment for sharing experiences.

Demographic Information

(Start with an icebreaker to build rapport.)

Basic Demographics: Gather general information about participants' involvement with parenting or youth issues.

Discussion Questions

A. Determining Parenting Approaches Used by Parents in Mukono District

1. What parenting approaches are most commonly used by parents in Mukono District (e.g., authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, neglectful)?
2. How do parents in this community discipline or guide their children?
3. What cultural, social, or economic factors influence parenting approaches in Mukono District?

B. Establishing the Relationship Between Parenting Approaches and Youth Crime

4. Based on your experience, how do different parenting approaches influence the behavior of young people?
5. Are there particular parenting approaches that you think reduce the likelihood of youth involvement in crime? Why?
6. Have you observed any cases where parenting practices contributed to youth committing crimes? Can you share examples?

C. Examining the Causes of the Increasing Crime Rate Among Youth in Mukono District

7. What are the most common crimes committed by youth in this area?
8. In your opinion, what are the main reasons youth in Mukono District become involved in crime?
9. Do you think the family environment and parenting approaches are significant contributors to these crimes? Why or why not?

D. Identifying Challenges Faced by Parents in Raising Youth in Mukono District

10. What challenges do parents face in raising children in this community?
11. How do external factors such as poverty, peer pressure, or lack of community support affect parenting and youth behavior?
12. Are there specific challenges related to parenting teenagers versus younger children?

E. Suggesting Strategies and Measures to Curb Criminal Behavior among Youth

13. Can you share examples where good parenting prevented a young person from engaging in criminal behavior?

14. What support or resources would help parents in Mukono District to manage their children more effectively?

15. How can schools, religious institutions, and community leaders contribute to improving parenting and reducing youth crime?

16. What specific parenting approaches or community programs do you think would be most effective in curbing youth crime?

Closing the Discussion

Summarize the main points discussed, linking them to the research objectives:

Parenting approaches in Mukono District.

The relationship between parenting approaches and youth crime.

Challenges parents face in raising youth.

Causes of youth crime in Mukono District.

Effective strategies and measures to reduce youth criminal behavior.

Ask if participants have additional thoughts or if there are any issues they feel were not covered.

Thank everyone for their participation and contributions.

Explain how their input will be used to address the research objectives and guide recommendations for parenting and crime prevention.

Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide for Youths Including Casual Laborers

Researcher: Oloka Jasper

Research Topic: The Influence of Parenting Approaches on Crime Among the Youth in Mukono District

Introduction

Welcome and Acknowledgment:

Thank participants for attending and introduce yourself as the facilitator (Oloka Jasper).

Purpose of the Discussion:

To explore youth perspectives on how parenting approaches influence behavior, decision-making, and involvement in crime.

Overview of the Session:

Discussion will focus on parenting approaches, youth behavior, challenges faced by families, and solutions to youth crime.

Emphasize that their opinions and experiences are valuable, and there are no right or wrong answers.

Confidentiality:

Assure participants that their contributions will be anonymous and only used for academic purposes.

Demographic Information

(Use an icebreaker to create rapport.)

Share your first name or nickname and something fun about yourself (e.g., your favorite hobby).

Discussion Questions

1. Parenting Approaches and Youth Perspectives
2. How do you feel most parents in Mukono District raise their children? What kinds of rules or discipline methods do parents usually use in your community?

3. Are there any parenting approaches you feel work better for young people? Why?

B. Parenting and Youth Behavior

4. In your opinion, how do parents influence the way young people behave or make decisions?

5. Do you think strict parenting helps or harms youth? Why?

6. Can you share an example of how your own or someone else's parents influenced their life choices, either positively or negatively?

C. Youth Crime in Mukono District

7. What are some common crimes that young people in Mukono District are involved in?

8. Why do you think some youth get involved in crime?

9. Do you believe the way someone is raised can lead them toward or away from crime? Can you explain?

D. Challenges Young People Face

10. What challenges do young people in this area face at home that might affect their behavior?

11. How do peer pressure, unemployment, or lack of resources influence youth choices?

12. Do you feel parents understand these challenges? Why or why not?

E. Solutions and Recommendations

13. What can parents do differently to better guide young people and help them stay out of trouble?

14. What role do schools, religious leaders, and community organizations play in helping youth make positive choices?

15. What advice would you give to parents who struggle to understand or connect with their children?

16. What programs or activities would help young people in Mukono stay away from crime?

Probing Questions

To dig deeper into responses, use these prompts:

- a. Can you explain more about that?
- b. What do you mean by that?
- c. Can you give an example?
- d. How did that make you feel?

Closing the Discussion

1. Summarize key points from the discussion.
2. Ask participants if they have any additional thoughts or questions.
3. Thank the participants for their time, honesty, and contributions.
4. Inform them about the next steps in the research and how their input will be used.

Appendix C: Interview Guide for Key Informant (Community Stakeholders)

Researcher: Oloka Jasper

Research Topic: The Influence of Parenting Approaches on Crime among the Youth in Mukono District

Introduction

Welcome Statement:

Thank the interviewee for agreeing to participate in the study.

Introduce yourself as the researcher (Oloka Jasper)

Purpose of the Interview:

- a. To gather detailed insights on parenting approaches and their influence on youth crime.
- b. To explore the challenges parents face, the causes of youth crime, and strategies for crime prevention in Mukono District.

Confidentiality:

Reassure the participant that their responses will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

Duration:

Inform the participant that the interview will take approximately 45–60 minutes

Consent:

Confirm the participant's consent to proceed and to record the session if applicable.

Interview Questions

A. Parenting Approaches Used by Parents in Mukono District

1. Can you describe the most common parenting approaches or approaches practiced by parents in Mukono District?
2. How do parents in this community typically discipline or guide their children?
3. In your view, what cultural, economic, or social factors influence parenting approaches in this district?
4. Are there any traditional or modern parenting practices unique to this region?

B. The Relationship Between Parenting Approaches and Youth Crime

5. In your opinion, how do different parenting approaches affect the behavior and choices of young people?
6. Are there specific parenting methods you think encourage or discourage youth involvement in crime? Can you explain?
7. Can you share any examples or observations where a parenting style directly influenced a young person's involvement in criminal activities?
8. How do you think family structure (e.g., single-parent homes, extended families) impacts youth behavior and potential involvement in crime?

C. Challenges Faced by Parents in Raising Youth in Mukono District

9. What are the biggest challenges parents face in raising children in this community?
10. How do economic challenges (e.g., poverty, unemployment) affect parenting practices and family stability?
11. Are there any specific challenges related to raising teenagers as compared to younger children?
12. How do external factors such as peer pressure, technology, and exposure to media impact parenting in this district?

D. Causes of the Increasing Crime Rate among Youth in Mukono District

13. What are the most common types of crimes committed by youth in this district?
14. What do you think are the main reasons behind the rising crime rates among young people in Mukono?
15. How do you perceive the role of family and parenting in preventing or contributing to youth crime?
16. Are there any broader societal or environmental factors you believe play a role in youth crime in Mukono District?

E. Strategies and Measures to Curb Criminal Behavior Among Youth

17. In your experience, are there any parenting practices that have been particularly effective in preventing youth crime? Can you give examples?
18. What kinds of support or resources do parents in this district need to better guide their children and prevent criminal behavior?
19. How can schools, religious institutions, and local leaders support parents in raising disciplined and law-abiding youth?
20. What policies or programs would you recommend to help curb youth crime in Mukono District?
21. If you could give one piece of advice to parents struggling with raising children in this community, what would it be?

Probing Questions

To gain more depth, the researcher can use these probing questions:

- a) Can you elaborate on that point?
- b) Why do you think that happens?
- c) Could you give a specific example or situation?
- d) How do you think that could be improved?

Closing the Interview

- a. Summarize the key points discussed and ask if the participant has anything additional to add.
- b. Thank the participant for their time and valuable insights.
- c. Reassure them of the confidentiality of their responses and explain the next steps in the research process.

Appendix D: Key Informant Interview (KII) Guide

Researcher: Oloka Jasper

Research Topic: The Influence of Parenting Approaches on Crime among the Youth in Mukono District

Introduction

Welcome and Introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I appreciate your time and willingness to share your insights.

My name is Oloka Jasper, and I am conducting a study on how parenting approaches or approaches influence youth behavior, particularly involvement in crime, in Mukono District.

Purpose of the Interview:

The main goal of this interview is to gather expert or specialized insights on how parenting approaches and practices in Mukono District are linked to the behavior of youth, especially their involvement in criminal activities.

We aim to understand the role of family dynamics, community influence, and socio-economic factors in shaping youth behavior.

Confidentiality:

Please be assured that all the information you share in this interview will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality. Your responses will only be used for academic purposes, and no personal identifiers will be included in the final report.

Consent:

Before we begin, I would like to confirm your consent to proceed with the interview. If you are comfortable with it, I would also like to record this interview for transcription purposes. Do you agree to participate, and is it okay to record our conversation?

Target Respondents for KIIs

The key informants for this interview are individuals who possess in-depth knowledge of parenting, youth behavior, and crime prevention. These respondents may include:

- a) **Local Leaders:** Village chairpersons, community elders who have direct knowledge of community dynamics and parenting practices.
- b) **Religious Leaders:** Priests, pastors, or imams who interact with families and youth in the community.
- c) **School Administrators or Teachers:** Educators who are aware of the behavioral patterns and challenges faced by students.
- d) **Police Officers:** Officers working in child protection or community policing who have experience dealing with youth crime.
- e) **Social Workers or Counselors:** Professionals providing support to families and youth, with knowledge of the social challenges faced by young people.
- f) **NGO Representatives:** Individuals working in organizations addressing youth and family issues, offering insights into community programs and interventions.

Interview Questions

A. Parenting Approaches and Practices

1. What are the most common parenting approaches observed in families in Mukono District?
2. Can you describe the traditional approaches parents take in raising their children?
3. Are there any new trends or changes in how children are being raised in the community?
4. How do cultural norms and traditions influence parenting practices in this area?
5. Are there specific cultural practices or traditions that shape parenting in Mukono District?
6. How do these cultural factors affect the way youth are disciplined and guided?
7. What challenges do parents face when raising children in this community?
8. Are there specific pressures, such as economic hardships or cultural expectations that parents in Mukono face?
9. How do these challenges impact the quality of parenting and the behavior of youth?

B. Parenting Approaches and Youth Behavior

10. Based on your experience, how do different parenting approaches affect youth behavior and decision-making?
11. Are there specific parenting approaches that tend to lead to better decision-making among youth?
12. How do permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian approaches impact youth behavior in your observation?
13. Are there specific parenting methods you believe lead to positive outcomes for children? Why?
14. What are the most effective methods of discipline or guidance you have seen in Mukono District?
15. How do these approaches foster positive behavior and decision-making in youth?
16. Can you share examples of cases where poor parenting practices may have contributed to youth involvement in crime?
17. Are there instances where a lack of supervision, neglect, or inconsistent discipline led to youth engaging in criminal activities?
18. How can these cases be used as lessons to improve parenting practices in the community?

C. Youth Crime in Mukono District

19. What are the most common crimes committed by youth in Mukono District?
20. Can you provide examples of specific crimes, such as theft, drug abuse, or violence that are more prevalent among youth in the area?
21. In your view, what are the key factors driving youth into criminal behavior?
22. Are there specific risk factors, such as peer pressure, lack of employment, or family dysfunction, that contribute to youth crime?
23. How significant is the role of family and parenting in influencing youth crime trends?
24. How do family structures, such as single-parent households or extended family support, affect youth behavior?
25. Do you believe parenting approaches play a direct role in either preventing or encouraging youth involvement in crime?

D. Challenges in Addressing Youth Crime and Family Issues

26. What challenges do parents face in effectively guiding their children, especially in the context of Mukono District?
27. Are there economic or social factors that make it difficult for parents to provide adequate supervision or discipline?
28. How do these challenges manifest in the behavior of young people?
29. How do socio-economic factors (e.g., poverty, unemployment) impact parenting and youth behavior?
30. Do you think poverty and unemployment contribute to the challenges parents face in raising disciplined children?
31. How do these socio-economic factors impact the decision-making and behavior of youth? Are there adequate community resources or programs to support parents and families in raising disciplined children?
32. Are there support systems like counseling, youth programs, or community centers that help parents in their child-rearing efforts?
33. How effective are these programs in preventing youth crime?

E. Strategies to Prevent Youth Crime

34. What role do schools, religious institutions, and local leaders play in reducing youth crime and supporting families?
35. How can schools and religious institutions contribute to shaping positive youth behavior?
36. What role do local leaders play in reinforcing positive parenting practices and reducing crime?
37. What measures or strategies would you recommend to improve parenting practices and prevent youth involvement in crime?
38. Are there specific initiatives, training programs, or resources that would be useful for parents in the community?
39. How can the community, government, and NGOs work together to reduce crime among youth?
40. Can you share examples of successful initiatives or programs in Mukono District that have positively influenced youth behavior?
41. Are there community-based programs, interventions, or initiatives that have helped reduce crime and foster better parenting

42. How can these initiatives be scaled or replicated in other parts of the district?

Probing Questions

- a. Can you provide a specific example or case?
- b. Why do you think that is the case?
- c. What challenges or barriers do you see to implementing solutions?
- d. How has the community responded to these issues?

Closing the Interview

- Summarize the key points discussed:
- Recap the main themes and insights shared during the interview. Ensure accuracy and understanding.
- Ask the participant if there is anything else they would like to add or emphasize:
- Provide an opportunity for the informant to offer any additional insights or thoughts on the topic.

Thank the participant:

- ✓ Express appreciation for their time, insights, and contributions to the study.
- ✓ Inform the participant about the next steps:
- ✓ Explain how their responses will contribute to the study, and outline the next stages of the research process.
- ✓ Inform them about the next steps in the research process and the potential impact of their contribution.

Appendix E: Assent Form for Youth Participants

Researcher: Oloka Jasper

Research Topic: The Influence of Parenting Approaches on Crime among the Youth in Mukono District

Introduction

You are being invited to participate in a research study about the influence of parenting approaches on crime among youth in Mukono District. The purpose of this study is to explore how different parenting approaches affect the behavior and decision-making of young people in your community, particularly in relation to crime.

Before you decide whether or not to participate, please read the following information carefully to understand the nature of the study and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to understand how various parenting approaches in Mukono District influence youth behavior and contribute to criminal activities. Your participation will help us identify the role of parenting in shaping youth decisions and finding ways to prevent youth crime.

What Will You Be Asked to Do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The discussion will explore the types of parenting practices in your community, how they affect behavior, and the reasons youth may engage in crime. The session will last approximately 45-60 minutes.

You may also be asked to share your opinions and experiences regarding parenting and youth behavior. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time without penalty or negative consequences.

Confidentiality

Your participation in this study will remain confidential. The information you provide will only be used for research purposes and will be reported in aggregate form, ensuring no identifying information is made public. Any recorded data will be kept securely and only accessible to the researcher. Your identity will not be linked to the data in the final report.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable with, and you can withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. If you choose to withdraw, no further data will be collected from you.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. The discussion may raise sensitive topics, but you are free to skip any questions that make you uncomfortable.

By participating, you will help generate important information that can contribute to understanding how parenting approaches influence youth behavior and crime. However, there is no direct benefit to you for participating.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Oloka Jasper – Researcher

Email: ngiwa88@gmail.com

Phone: +256701220842

If you have concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Ethics Committee at Makerere University Kampala

Consent

By signing below, you acknowledge that you understand the nature of the study, what is being asked of you, and your rights as a participant. You consent to participate voluntarily in this research.

Participant’s Name:..... Signature: Date:

Researcher’s Name: Signature..... Date.....

Appendix F: Informed Consent Form for Key Informants

Researcher: Oloka Jasper

Research Topic: The Influence of Parenting Approaches on Crime among the Youth in Mukono District

Introduction

You are being invited to participate in a research study on the influence of parenting approaches and practices on youth crime in Mukono District. The aim of this study is to gather expert opinions from individuals like you who have experience working with youth, families, and community development.

Please read the following information carefully, which will help you understand the purpose of the study and what is expected of you if you choose to participate.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to understand how different parenting approaches affect the behavior of youth and their likelihood to engage in crime. We will examine how cultural norms, socio-economic factors, and family dynamics influence youth behavior, and what strategies can help mitigate youth crime in Mukono District.

What Will You Be Asked to Do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in a Key Informant Interview (KII). The interview will last about 30-60 minutes and will cover topics such as your professional insights on parenting practices, youth behavior, and crime in the community.

You will be asked to respond to open-ended questions about the influence of family dynamics, community resources, and parenting approaches on youth crime in Mukono. Your input will be valuable in understanding the broader context of this issue.

Confidentiality

All information provided during the interview will be kept confidential. The results will be used solely for academic purposes, and no personal identifying information will be published. Any recorded data will be securely stored and accessible only to the researcher.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Your decision will not affect your professional relationship with the researcher or any other parties involved.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no significant risks associated with participating in this interview. The topics discussed may be sensitive, but you are free to skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering.

Your participation will provide important insights into the role of parenting in shaping youth behavior and the prevention of crime in Mukono District. However, there is no direct benefit to you for participating.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

Oloka Jasper – Researcher

Email: ngiwa88@gmail.com

Phone: +256701220842

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact the Ethics Committee at Makerere University Kampala.

Consent

By signing below, you confirm that you have read and understood the information provided above and agree to participate voluntarily in this study.

Participant's Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:**

Researcher's Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:**

Appendix G: Informed Consent Form for Parents of Youth Participants

Researcher: Oloka Jasper

Research Topic: The Influence of Parenting Approaches on Crime Among the Youth in Mukono District

Introduction

You are being invited to allow your child to participate in a research study about the influence of parenting approaches on youth behavior and crime in Mukono District. The aim of this study is to understand how different parenting methods impact youth involvement in criminal activities and decision-making.

Please read the following information carefully to understand what your child's participation will involve, and what your rights as a parent are.

Purpose of the Study

This research will explore how parenting approaches influence youth behavior and involvement in crime. By gathering perspectives from youth, key informants, and parents, we hope to identify effective parenting strategies that can help prevent youth crime.

What Will Your Child Be Asked to Do?

If you agree for your child to participate, they will be asked to take part in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) or Interview, depending on their age and preference. The session will last about 45-60 minutes and will focus on their perceptions of parenting, behavior, and the relationship between family practices and crime.

Your child's participation is voluntary, and they can choose to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Confidentiality

All information collected will be kept confidential. The identity of your child and any other personal details will not be shared publicly or linked to the study results. Any recorded data will be stored securely and will only be accessible to the researcher.

Voluntary Participation

Your child's participation is completely voluntary. They have the right to refuse to answer any questions they do not feel comfortable with and may withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no major risks associated with participating in this study. The questions discussed may bring up sensitive topics, but your child is free to skip any question they are not comfortable answering.

While there are no direct benefits for your child, their participation will help generate valuable information about parenting approaches and their impact on youth behavior and crime prevention.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

Oloka Jasper – Researcher

Email: ngiwa88@gmail.com

Phone: +256701220842

For any concerns regarding your child's rights, please contact the Ethics Committee at Makerere University Kampala

Consent

By signing below, you confirm that you have read and understood the information above and agree to allow your child to participate in this study.

Parent's Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Researcher's Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix H: Observation Checklist for Youth, Parents, and Community Members in Mukono District

Researcher: Oloka Jasper

Research Topic: The Influence of Parenting Approaches on Crime among the Youth in Mukono District

Introduction

The following checklist is designed to guide the researcher in observing parenting approaches, youth behavior, and interactions within the community of Mukono District. The observations aim to gather qualitative data about the influence of parenting on youth behavior, particularly in relation to crime. The observations will focus on interactions between parents, children, and community members in various settings.

General Information

Date of Observation: _____

Location of Observation: _____

Time of Observation: _____

Type of Setting (e.g., home, community center, school, market): _____

Participants Involved:

Youth (Age Range): _____

Parents: _____

Other Community Members: _____

Observation Categories

1. Parenting Style and Interaction with Youth

➤ Parental Authority:

- a. Parents appear to have clear authority over their children.
- b. Parents seem passive, avoiding direct interaction or control.
- c. Parents use physical punishment.
- d. Parents engage in verbal reprimands.
- e. Parents are supportive, showing warmth and understanding.

f. Parents are distant or disengaged.

➤ **Disciplinary Practices:**

- a. Parents set clear boundaries and rules.
- b. Parents demonstrate inconsistent enforcement of rules.
- c. Parents enforce consequences for rule-breaking (e.g., timeout, withdrawal of privileges).
- d. Parents focus more on positive reinforcement than punishment.
- e. No clear discipline strategies observed.

➤ **Parent-Youth Communication:**

- a. Parent speaks respectfully with the youth.
- b. Parent listens attentively to the youth's concerns.
- c. Parent and youth engage in meaningful discussions.
- d. Parent seems to dominate the conversation, not allowing the youth to speak.
- e. Parent ignores the youth's input or requests.

2. Youth Behavior and Attitudes

➤ **Youth Respect for Authority:**

- a. Youth follow rules without questioning.
- b. Youth challenge or question authority figures.
- c. Youth express hostility or resentment towards authority figures.
- d. Youth seem indifferent to authority.

➤ **Youth Social Interaction:**

- a. Youth interact respectfully with peers and adults.
- b. Youth show signs of aggression or hostility towards peers/adults.
- c. Youth seem isolated or withdrawn.
- d. Youth engage in positive group activities (e.g., study groups, sports).
- e. Youth engage in anti-social or disruptive behavior (e.g., bullying, stealing).

3. Community and Social Environment

➤ **Role of Community Members (e.g., Leaders, Teachers, Religious Leaders):**

- a. Community members actively support youth development and behavior.
- b. Community members are engaged in youth discipline.
- c. Community members seem disconnected from youth issues.
- d. Community members show concern for youth behavior but are limited in their actions.

e. Community leaders and parents work together to guide youth behavior.

➤ **Youth Engagement in Crime-Related Activities:**

- a. No visible signs of youth involvement in criminal activities.
- b. Youth are engaged in minor illegal activities (e.g., petty theft).
- c. Youth display aggressive or violent behavior.
- d. Youth are involved in group activities that seem to promote positive values (e.g., volunteering, sports).

4. Environmental Factors

➤ **Neighborhood Influence on Youth Behavior:**

- a. The neighborhood seems supportive of youth, with safe spaces and resources.
- b. The neighborhood has a high level of social cohesion and communication.
- c. The neighborhood seems unsafe, with visible signs of crime (e.g., vandalism, drug use).
- d. The neighborhood provides limited resources or support for youth (e.g., lack of recreational spaces).

➤ **Family Socioeconomic Status:**

- a. Families appear to have stable financial situations.
- b. Families seem to face economic hardships (e.g., low-income households, unemployment).
- c. Youth show signs of financial distress (e.g., working at a young age).

Specific Observations of Youth Behavior

- Youth appear engaged in community or school activities.
- Youth demonstrate frustration or rebellion towards authority figures.
- Youth seem to have access to positive or negative role models in the community.
- Youth display signs of neglect or lack of supervision.

Other Notes and Observations

Researcher's Reflection

- a. How do the observed behaviors align with or differ from the expected parenting approaches?

- b.** What patterns or trends can be identified regarding youth behavior and their relationship with parental approaches?
- c.** Are there any noticeable correlations between community resources and youth involvement in crime?

Appendix I: Map Showing Location of Mukono District



Appendix J: Introductory Letter

MAKERERE

P. O. Box 7062 Kampala, Uganda
Cables: MAKUNIKA



UNIVERSITY

Tel: 256-41-542241/542265
Fax: 256-41-542265
E-mail faculty@chuss.mak.ac.ug

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF LIBERAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION AND PEACE STUDIES**

9th December 2024

RE: INTRODUCING MR. Oloka Jasper

This letter serves to introduce Mr. **Oloka Jasper** our student of Masters of Arts in Peace and Conflict Studies. His registration number is **2022/HD03/23178U**. He is researching on **“Examining the Influence of Parenting Style on Crime Among the Youth in Mukono District.”**

We are requesting you to accord him the necessary support to enable him to undertake his research on the above topic. ~~We thank you for your time and support.~~

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mbabazi'.

Dr. Veneranda Mbabazi
Associate Professor and Head of Department of Religion and Peace Studies
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Makerere University
v.mbabazi@mak.ac.ug or venembabazi@yahoo.com

