

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES ON CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR AMONG
YOUTHS IN URBAN AREAS
THE CASE OF EMBAKASI CENTRAL, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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2025

DECLARATION

This is my own work, and it has not been submitted for academic credit at any other university.

Signed:  _____

Date 5th MAY 2025

Annita Mutuku

This project report has been submitted for examination with my approval as university supervisor.

Signed:  _____

Date 5th May 2025

DR. SOLOMON MUHINDI

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved family, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been my guiding light throughout this journey. To my parents, whose love, sacrifices, and unwavering belief in my potential have shaped the person I am today. Your dedication to my success and the values of hard work and perseverance you instilled in me have been my greatest motivation. To my siblings, for their constant encouragement and for standing by me through every challenge.

To my siblings, for your love, laughter, and constant motivation. You have been my cheerleaders, reminding me to stay focused and determined. To my friends, who have shared in the highs and lows of this experience, thank you for your companionship and encouragement. Lastly, to all the mentors and educators who have inspired me and shaped my academic path. Your guidance has been invaluable.

This work is a testament to your love and support.

Mount Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Background

The relationship between crime and socioeconomic factors differs across regions and countries. Some research has focused solely on economic factors of crime, without considering deterrent variables. This study aimed to investigate the socioeconomic influences on criminal behavior among urban youth, specifically in Embakasi Central, Nairobi County.

Methodology

The study had four objectives: to examine the impact of income level on youth criminal behavior, to explore how family structure affects youth involvement in crime and delinquency, to determine the influence of employment status on crime involvement and to examine the impact of education level on youth criminal behavior. Two theories guided this study: Strain Theory of Crime and Behavioral Criminal Theory. The study population consisted of residents of Embakasi Central, including youth, women, and men, totaling approximately 350,000 people. A sample of 214 respondents was selected (a response rate of 71.57%) against the planned sample size of 300, determined using a mathematical approach developed by Nassiuma in 2000. Data were collected through structured questionnaires from participants aged 18 years and above. Additionally, qualitative data were gathered from area administrators, such as chiefs and assistant chiefs, through in-depth interviews (IDIs). A pilot study was carried out with 10% of the respondents from the neighboring Embakasi East area to pretest the questionnaire. For the subsequent descriptive analysis, the researcher organized, cleaned, coded, and processed the quantitative data using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. The findings were presented in tables, frequencies, and percentages. Inferential statistical analysis was conducted, including Pearson correlation, to examine the relationship between youth involvement in crime (dependent variable) and the independent variables. The results showed significant correlations: income level ($r=0.912$, $p<0.05$), family structure ($r=0.874$, $p<0.05$), work status ($r=0.785$, $p<0.05$), and educational level ($r=0.719$, $p<0.05$).

Findings

The analysis demonstrated that the examined variables had a significant impact on youth involvement in criminal activities, though to varying degrees. Regression analysis indicated that fluctuations in youth criminal behavior in Embakasi Central were linked to changes in income level, family structure, work status, and educational level. Qualitative data were analyzed using a thematic approach, incorporating narratives aligned with the study objectives. The findings were presented in a structured manner to support the formulation of relevant recommendations.

Conclusion

The study recommends that the government, in partnership with employment agencies, work towards creating employment opportunities for youths. This would keep them engaged and reduce their likelihood of involvement in criminal behavior. The employers should consider offering decent wages or salaries to youths in both formal and informal jobs, which would increase their income levels and further decrease their chances of engaging in criminal activities.

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Adverse childhood experiences
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
BCS	British Crime Survey
CCJS	Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics
IDIs	In-Depth Interviews
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SED	Statista Research Department
SES	Socio-economic Status
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDC	United Nations Disarmament Commission
UNDP	United Nations Development
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Governments worldwide continue to struggle with the challenge of youth insecurity. Concerns are rising over the increasing frequency and severity of crimes committed by young individuals (World Bank, 2017). Criminal behavior is a highly discouraged behavior in most societies worldwide, as it undermines the social fabric and causes harm to individuals and communities. Youth violence ranges from bullying and physical fights to more serious crimes like aggravated robbery, rape, and homicide. Such violent acts not only cause trauma to the victims but also have significant repercussions for the offenders, their families, and society as a whole. Tackling this issue demands a comprehensive approach that addresses the social, economic, and psychological factors influencing youth criminal behavior.

Most countries face a variety of social issues, including corruption, unemployment, social diseases, drug and substance addiction, crime, and other crises that cause unsteadiness and infirmity among the country's young and adults (UNDP, 2017). These challenges create an environment that can foster feelings of hopelessness, despair, and a lack of opportunities, which can drive some young people to engage in criminal activities as a means of coping or seeking a sense of purpose and belonging. Consequently, youths resort to criminal acts and develop behavioral problems; hence, it is critical to examine the various socioeconomic factors contributing to their criminality (UNDC, 2018). This examination should inform the development of comprehensive strategies and programs that address the root causes of youth violence, provide support and intervention services, and create opportunities for young people to develop positive skills, values, and relationships. By taking a proactive and holistic

approach, governments can work towards reducing the prevalence of youth crime and promoting the well-being and social integration of young people.

The United Nations has reported that 41% of the world's unemployed are young people. This is a concerning statistic, as unemployment, when combined with other socioeconomic circumstances, can predispose individuals to higher rates of crime and victimization. Youths make up the majority of the population in cities, accounting for over 80% of the unemployed. Unemployment reduces income channels and causes youth desperation, as young people struggle to meet their basic needs and find a sense of purpose. As a result, some young people may resort to criminal conduct as a means of coping with the challenges they face. This issue requires concerted efforts from governments, communities, and stakeholders to address the root causes of youth unemployment and provide alternative pathways for young people to achieve economic and social stability. Investing in education, job training, and creating employment opportunities can help mitigate the risk of youth crime and build a more inclusive and prosperous society.

In the United States, socioeconomic factors such as low socioeconomic status and its correlates of poverty, reduced literacy levels, poor health, unemployment, wage, and income inequities, and racial factors impact criminality. According to a study conducted by Yaqub (2016) in the United States, those who have been in poverty for more than four years had a 90% chance of engaging in deviant behavior. He goes on to say that other factors that impact deviant conduct include peer pressure, media, family size, and inadequate parenting in childhood. However, according to the World Bank (2017), lack of opportunity, and a breakdown in access to various forms of capital, justice, and education are among the factors that contribute to crime among young people. Poverty and unemployment do not cause crime

among young people in and of themselves, but they do become significant factors when considered in the context of these other triggers. Various global evaluations, like those conducted by the World Bank (2017) and the UNODC (2018), have revealed that youth are the most vulnerable to criminal behavior.

In 2018, there were approximately 192,000 severe violent crimes perpetrated by American youths between 12 and 17 years old (Statista Research Department, 2020). Interestingly, the top crimes were aggravated assault and robbery crimes, with victims being primarily young people. Although minority youths account for more crimes than their white counterparts, research suggests that young criminals hail from all racial backgrounds profoundly influenced by social instability, poor economic and social environment, and poverty within their neighborhoods. According to Rekker et al. (2015), a family's socioeconomic standing (educational level, income, welfare reliance, and occupation) correlates with boys' delinquency from childhood to adolescence. Besides, social exclusion and inequalities are prevalent in the United States manifested in the disparate treatment across ethnic groups. For instance, minority-employed youths receive considerably lower incomes than their white counterparts. Similarly, minority neighborhoods have ineffective social services and resources for the youth hence the high crime rates in such areas (Wright, *et. al.*, 2016). Therefore, structural factors such as social exclusion and inequality perpetuate youth violence and impact subsequent policies to address the problem.

Youth violence is a significant public health problem in the United Kingdom, and this trend is set to rise in the coming years. According to the 2018 Youth Justice Statistics, the number of children entering the juvenile system is considerably high, with over 14,000 new offenders and 26,000 approved sentences (Fauconnier, 2019). Knife crime and acid attacks perpetrated

by youth gangs account for the most prevalent offenses in the U.K. According to Haylock et al. (2020), racial-minority groups, including African Caribbean, immigrants, and asylum-seekers, are solely responsible for most youth crimes in London. The author identifies several socioeconomic risk factors that foster youth violence: gang membership, adverse childhood experiences (ACE), race, social media, mental health factors, and economic deprivation (Haylock, 2020). Health inequalities in the UK also contribute to youth crime, especially among minority residents often marginalized by the government. Low incomes suggest limited access to quality medical care. Therefore, most socially excluded groups experience significant challenges accessing quality healthcare services attributed to low-income levels and racial discrimination, thus predisposing them to crime.

Criminal behavior among young people is prevalent in Australia, as it is in the United States and the United Kingdom. Young criminals are more likely to have interpersonal problems, a lower educational level and social participation, as well as a higher predisposition to commit crimes in the future, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (AIHW, 2021). Unfortunately, the likelihood of future criminal involvement is higher among children of parent criminals since they grow up in a criminal environment. Greitemeyer, & Sagioglou, (2018) argue that socioeconomic status influences youth aggression. Their study revealed a close association between a child's aggressiveness and their parent's economic standing (Greitemeyer, & Sagioglou, 2018). Other socioeconomic factors such as youth unemployment, poverty, precarious job markets, tensions between different youth groups, and the media's ghettoization of some Australian cities impact youth violence (Assari, Caldwell, & Mincy, 2018). Therefore, poverty is not a single

socioeconomic factor that influences criminality among the youth but an assortment of other factors.

Such risk factors are predominantly prevalent among young individuals growing up in metropolitan areas in Africa. Severe urban overpopulation and deterioration, rising poverty, ongoing wars, diseases, child and juvenile exploitation, and transnational trafficking and crime all increase the likelihood of young people in African cities engaging in criminal activity (Ashworth, Hill, & Walker, 2014). Literature is scarce on African youth crime trends and data. However, based on the scant estimates available, adolescent criminality is on the rise across Sub-Saharan Africa in cities. The majority of young people live in informal settlements, where social services and security are inadequate (UN-Habitat, 2017). In South Africa, for example, youth crimes are attributable to considerably high unemployment rates, low incomes, and prevalent income inequalities (Bhorat et al., 2017). These three socioeconomic factors vary across the four racial groups; Africans, Coloureds, Indians/Asians, and Whites. Therefore, most poor and unemployed South African youths have an increased propensity to engage in crimes without a legitimate income source.

Researchers argue that a child's primary environment consists of their parents, older siblings, and close relatives with whom they reside. This environment helps the child become familiar with the world and establishes daily patterns of interaction, facilitating their initial socialization process. Parents and the entire family bear the responsibility of shaping the attitudes and morals of children, aiming to steer them away from delinquent behaviors that could tarnish the family's reputation. The crucial aspect is how parents can instill the right character in their children, ensuring their actions remain morally upright and compassionate. Parents play a vital role in serving as role models and guiding their children's development,

with the goal of preventing them from engaging in criminal or antisocial activities that could jeopardize their future.

The crime scenario and its components are slightly different in East Africa (Shire, 2021). In addition to these crimes, many young people are also involved in armed robberies, sexual assaults, suicide bombings, kidnappings, and carjackings. Youth unemployment, poverty, drug abuse, and high rates of unemployment among young people were the four main reasons for criminal activity in the region (Walsh, 2020; Shire, 2021).

According to Colaguori, (2023) researchers distinguish between deviance behavior, which is perceived as not posing a serious threat to group life, and crime, which is defined as behavior that does pose a serious threat and is punishable by law. Crime is a civil procedure breach for which a formal sanction is imposed by a government body. Wain, (2022) posits that addressing the complex issue of youth crime in East Africa requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the underlying socioeconomic factors and provides alternative pathways for young people to engage in productive and law-abiding activities.

In Kenya, youth are the primary offenders of crime in Kenya (Wa Teresia, 2021). For instance, the number of children between the ages of 21 and 25 who are serving prison terms increased from 15,607 in 2011 to 21,904 in 2016. To give one example, 89,770 offenses were reported during the 2017–2018 fiscal year. Teenagers between the ages of 16 and 25 committed 48,710 (or 54%) of them (IEA, 2019). A recent UN-Habitat report on Youth and Crime in Nairobi indicates that young individuals in conflict with the law are most frequently detained for theft (45%), followed by assault (23%), drug possession (10%), mugging (10%), and manslaughter (7%). The report also notes that knives, machetes (locally known as

pangas), and firearms were commonly used in these criminal acts. This data highlights the serious nature of the youth crime problem in the city and the need for targeted interventions to address the underlying socioeconomic factors driving these behaviors. Money drives the majority of these crimes (UN-Habitat, 2017). According to Langat, & Odhiambo, (2021) strain theories of crime, this phenomenon either points to a country's incapacity to give its kids access to legal means of meeting their wants and financial obligations, or it points to the emergence of a new generation of criminal youngsters.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The involvement of youths in criminal activities is a multifaceted issue influenced by various socio-economic factors, particularly pervasive poverty and the inability to meet their basic needs. In Kenya, young people account for over 57% of reported offenses, and the emergence of youth-dominated criminal gangs is a growing concern for the public and security agencies alike. The escalating rates of juvenile crime not only pose immediate threats to community safety but also have profound implications for human well-being, economic stability, and social development. This surge in crime leads to increased government expenditure on healthcare for the injured and law enforcement, while also resulting in significant economic losses due to incarceration, injury, or fatalities.

Recent trends in adolescent criminal behavior indicate a disturbing shift in crime commission methods, particularly in Nairobi County, where police reports highlight a notable rise in the use of weapons by youths in areas such as Kayole, Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Kibra, and Embakasi. The underlying causes of this violence are rooted in resource scarcity and limited access to opportunities, with poverty identified as a primary driver influencing

Nairobi's youth toward criminal conduct, exacerbated by high unemployment rates (Muiya, 2014).

Despite the evident correlation between crime and socio-economic variables, there is a scarcity of research in Kenya that comprehensively examines these dynamics. Many studies have focused solely on economic indicators of crime, neglecting the broader deterrent factors at play. This gap in the literature underscores the need for a thorough investigation into the socio-economic consequences of criminal behavior among urban youth. Therefore, this study aims to explore these factors in depth, with a particular focus on Embakasi Central in Nairobi County, to better understand the complex interplay between socio-economic conditions and youth crime.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the socio-economic consequences of criminal behavior among youths in urban areas, focusing on Embakasi Central in Nairobi County.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- i. To investigate the relationship between income level and criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County.
- ii. To explore how family structure correlates with the rates of youth involvement in crime and delinquency among youths in Embakasi Central, Nairobi County.
- iii. To assess the role of work status in relation to crime involvement among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County.

- iv. To examine the connection between education level on criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What is the relationship between the level of income and criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County?
- ii. How does family structure correlate with the rate of youth involvement in crime and delinquency among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County?
- iii. How is the role of work status in relation to criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County?
- iv. What is the connection between educational level and criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County?

1.6 Justification of the Study

This research findings are aimed to inform policymakers about the socioeconomic factors that contribute to youth involvement in criminal activities in urban areas, specifically focusing on Embakasi Central, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study findings are aimed to highlight the importance of including young people in the policymaking process by considering their perspectives on issues that matter to them.

The findings are expected to assist government agencies, particularly those responsible for youth affairs, in recalibrating their strategies to address youth criminality. By informing youth and crime programs and policies, the research is expected to encourage the government to enhance support for youth-run businesses, provide essential skills training for adolescents entering the labor market, and implement measures to alleviate youth poverty.

Ultimately, this study are expected to help policymakers develop effective policy recommendations aimed at addressing the root causes of youth crime, fostering nation-building rather than criminal behavior.

1.7. Study Limitations

Several limitations were encountered during this study. Accessing the sampled respondents employed in county governments proved challenging. The conservative nature of some youths regarding information disclosure, complicated data collection efforts. To mitigate this issue, the researcher sought consent and explained the contribution of the study towards youths employment creation and strategies for reduction in youth involvement in criminal behavior. Arrangements were made to motivate youths about the study's significance, and the use of research assistants familiar with the local context further eased these challenges.

The study operated under the assumption that income level, family structure, work status, and education level were the sole independent variables influencing youths involvement in criminal behavior. Other potential independent variables were assumed they would not significantly impact the results. Furthermore, there was limited literature available linking causes of youths involvement in criminal behavior in Kenya necessitating a broader review of relevant studies from around the world. Despite these challenges, they were adequately addressed and did not significantly impair the study's outcomes.

1.8. Scope of the Study

The study's scope explored the research boundaries depending on the researcher's choice of what elements to include and exclude. The current study was limited to 300 youths in Embakasi Central out of the 350,000 youths living there. It focused on the socio-economic

consequences of criminal behavior among youths in urban areas. The study investigated the influence of income level on criminal behavior, explored the impact of family structure on youth involvement in crime, determined the influence of work status on crime involvement, and examined the influence of education level on criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County. The study was carried out between Jan 2023 and December 2023.

1.9. Operational Definition of Key Terms

Crime: It is the commission or omission of an act deemed socially harmful or detrimental, precisely defined, illegal, and punishable under criminal law.

Deviance: It involves the state of diverging from socially accepted norms and engaging in law-breaking behavior contrary to societal expectations.

Youth Crime/Juvenile delinquency: It is participating in illegal behavior by minors between 12 and 17 years.

Criminality: It refers to the unruly behavior often prohibited by criminal law. It is the quality and nature of being a criminal.

Victimization: It is an act whereby an offender singles out another individual to cause them harm or loss.

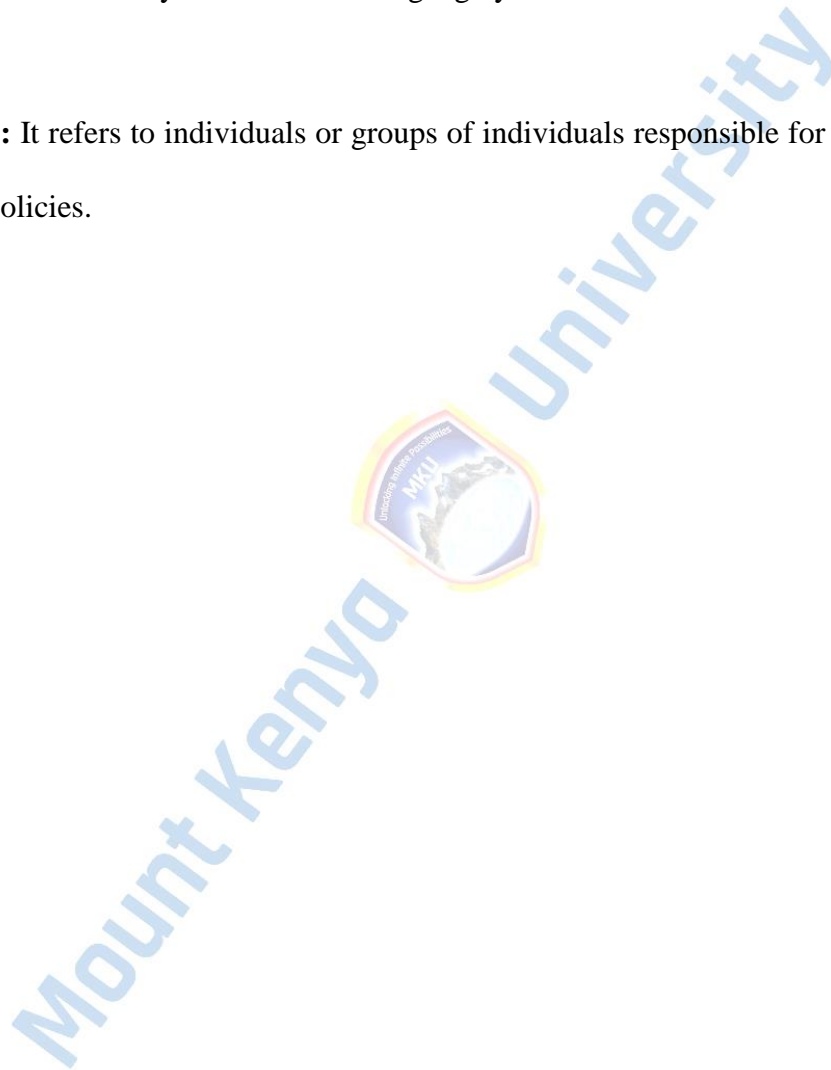
Socioeconomic Factors: They comprise society-related economic aspects that impact or relate to each other. These factors measure an individual's financial viability and social status. Socioeconomic status or standing refers to the class of an individual or particular group of people.

Urban area: It is a region surrounding a city and may refer to towns, suburbs, or towns with significant structures like roads, buildings, bridges, roads, and residences.

Youth Unemployment: It refers to the circumstance whereby young people between 15 and 24 years actively look for work but cannot secure one because of various factors.

Gangs: It involves a network of professional criminals. An organization of three or more individuals who collectively identify as a group for the sole purpose of participating in criminal and violent activity is referred to as a gang by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ, 2011).

Policymakers: It refers to individuals or groups of individuals responsible for establishing or amending policies.



CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of empirical and theoretical literature, outlines the conceptual framework, and summarizes the reviewed literature. It thoroughly examines the existing literature on a particular research topic or subject area. The four main goals of a literature review are to survey, synthesize, analyze, and present available writings on the research topic. Therefore, this chapter outlines the literature on the socio-economic consequences of criminal behavior among urban youths. Finally, this section investigates the theoretical framework, guided by strain theory, and concludes with the conceptual framework to visually highlight the variables.

2.2 Empirical Literature

2.2.1 Consequences of Income Level On Criminal Behavior among Youths

According to Nadimpalli et al. (2020), urban areas, particularly informal settlements, are often characterized by pervasive poverty, as evidenced by the proliferation of makeshift housing and inadequate social amenities. The socioeconomic status (SES) of residents in these informal urban areas is generally low. Research revealed a significant relationship between parental income and youth offending (Nadimpalli *et. al.*, 2020). Higher socioeconomic status is often associated with a reduced likelihood of negative life outcomes, but the relationship between SES and crime is a complex and understudied area. The social and economic capital available within a family can significantly influence a child's future trajectory, as these resources can serve as either an advantage or a constraint (Nadimpalli *et. al.*, 2020).

Manhica *et. al.*, (2021) conducted a study and established that low socioeconomic status during childhood is a significant predictor of criminal behavior and substance abuse later in life. This underscores the importance of addressing the socioeconomic disparities that exist within urban communities, particularly in informal settlements, as they can have far-reaching consequences on the well-being and trajectories of young people. The study concluded that to effectively address the issue of youth crime, it is crucial to consider the broader socioeconomic context in which these behaviors arise. Interventions that target the underlying drivers of poverty, such as access to education, employment opportunities, and social support, may be more effective in reducing youth involvement in criminal activities and promoting long-term positive outcomes (Nadimpalli *et. al.*, 2020).

Adeyemi *et. al.*, (2021) conducted a study in Nigeria that aimed to understand the relationship between young people's income levels and their involvement in criminal activities. This research is valuable as it provides insights into the age patterns and distributions of crime, offering important policy implications regarding investments in labor-market initiatives that can yield substantial social benefits, such as reduced insecurity. The study findings suggest that the level of labor-market opportunities is inversely related to the level of crime in many countries. Most researchers have relied on aggregated estimates of crime and unemployment due to data limitations (Juárez, *et. al.*, 2022). However, this approach runs the risk of obscuring the widely observed association between teenage unemployment and criminality, as some communities with high unemployment may have fewer means for theft and fewer people on the streets who could be targeted for robbery or other crimes.

Adeyemi *et. al.*, (2021) conducted a study on the nuances of criminal activity by youths. The authors emphasized the importance of understanding the age patterns and distributions of crime, as this can inform the development of targeted interventions and policies that address the underlying socioeconomic factors driving youth involvement in criminal activities. The findings suggest that investments in labor-market initiatives, such as job training programs, apprenticeships, and entrepreneurship support, can create substantial social benefits by providing young people with viable economic opportunities and reducing their likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior. This approach aligns with the broader understanding that addressing the root causes of crime, rather than solely focusing on punitive measures, can lead to more sustainable and effective outcomes in terms of community safety and overall social well-being.

In Kenya, areas with higher crime rates are also areas with higher poverty rates (Schuberth, 2018). These authors discovered that poverty in these areas is caused by high unemployment rates. They also stated that poverty has a direct impact on the level of crime because it causes stress, which attracts people to engage in criminal activities. According to Berger and Van Helvoirt (2018), poverty can limit access to quality education, employment, and better opportunities. The scholar also observed that people living in less privileged areas spend more time on the streets and interact with criminal gangs. Because they lack legal options, these people see illegal behavior as the only way to earn a living as well as meet their basic needs.

Trucco, (2020) posits that in Kenya, juvenile crime is strongly linked to drug abuse. Research has shown that drug dependence, particularly on opiates, can diminish an individual's moral character and lead to negative thought patterns that facilitate criminal

behavior (Henneberger, *et al.*, 2021). Studies have also suggested that the appeal and rewards associated with illegal activities play a key role in crime involvement. Crime rates appear to correlate with social dynamics, economic factors, and human willingness to engage in unlawful acts (Hawke *et al.*, 2020). However, further in-depth investigation is still needed to fully understand the complex relationship between socioeconomic indicators and youth criminality in the Kenyan context. Addressing this issue will require a multifaceted approach targeting the social, economic, and psychological drivers of criminal behavior.

2.2.2 Impact Of Family Structure On Youth Involvement In Crime And Delinquency

According to a study by Childs *et al.* (2022), juvenile delinquency can negatively impact adolescents' lives in a variety of ways, such as poor academic performance, dropping out of school, unintended pregnancies, problems finding work, and mental health difficulties. Increasing the social capital of teenagers is one effective strategy to deter delinquent behavior. The term "social capital" describes the resources that young people can use and the social links they have with other actors. These connections can help spread pro-social norms and deter delinquent behavior (Jacobsen, & Zaatut, 2022).

According to Maghsoudi *et al.* (2020), the majority of the research that has been done so far on how social capital affects teenage outcomes has been done on American samples. The effectiveness of social capital theory would be supported if social capital behaves similarly in other contexts, such as the United Kingdom. This would also imply that programs and policies targeted at boosting social capital would be helpful in preventing criminal behavior in young people. To better understand how and why certain characteristics of social capital affect adolescents in specific circumstances, scientists should investigate whether social capital functions differently in other contexts. (Addae, 2020).

According to Anser *et al.* (2020), early childhood poverty strengthens the linkages between poverty and family support and criminality. The quickness and intensity of poverty-related lack of support, as well as whether these experiences are sustained or brief. According to Cheteni, *et al.*, (2018), poverty enhances one's chances of committing and becoming the victim of a violent or property crime. Despite this, decades of changes to education, welfare, housing, and the labor market have steadily worsened the social and economic prospects of impoverished, single young men. Young males have been forced outside of both the legal and illegal economies, further marginalizing them, as a result of criminalization policies, which have further impoverished an already vulnerable demographic. Long-term and escalating crime patterns have been largely a result of their misery and marginalization (Cheteni, *et al.*, 2018).

Awonaike & Fadairo, (2024) investigated the effect of family structure and parental control on the rate of juvenile delinquency among boys at the Oregun Remand Home in Lagos, Nigeria. It examined the development of delinquent acts by children within their family setting, negative parenting practices that led to children's bad behavior, and the measures taken by parents, the government, and voluntary organizations to reduce or eradicate juvenile delinquency (Awonaike & Fadairo, 2024). The study found that most of the delinquent juveniles were unhappy with their current situation due to maltreatment by step-parents after the death or separation of their biological parents (Awonaike & Fadairo, 2024). The study suggested that children should be shown love and affection, closely monitored, and given opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings (Awonaike & Fadairo, 2024).

Juvenile delinquency is becoming a bigger problem in Africa as more and more young people engage in illicit activities including theft and joy-riding (Waruiz et al., 2021). According to Dakogyeke et al. (2020), family dysfunction, exposure to violence, poverty, and a lack of educational chances are some of the hypothesized causes of delinquency in the African environment. The scarcity of efficient programs for prevention and intervention, coupled with restricted access to resources and services for youth, exacerbates these problems even more. African countries have implemented several preventive measures, including restricting alcohol use, stepping up police presence, and creating dedicated juvenile police units (Fufa et al., 2021). While different African nations handle juvenile offenders in different ways, the majority have created their own juvenile justice systems, which include courts, prisons, and support programs (Fufa et al., 2021). Nonetheless, there is still work to be done to determine how well these systems work to address the underlying causes of juvenile delinquency and offer all-encompassing support to young people.

The majority of adult criminals are lured to crime not just because of poverty, but also because of a lack of acceptance and affection at home, and the amount of juvenile offenders in the current criminal justice system is worrying (Copelon, 2018). Rejected teenagers from low-income neighborhoods and homes typically regard crime as their only option for survival, especially since most informal settlements have higher crime rates than high-income regions. According to Onsando's (2021) investigation at the Kamiti Youth Corrective Training Centre, at least 70% of all convicts at Kamiti Prison appeared rejected, destitute or came from a low-income family. According to Ng'ang'a (2017), disorganized neighborhoods marked by poverty, weak social controls, and social exclusion allow crimes to go unnoticed,

resulting in active crime involvement among youth. Copelon, (2018) recognizes the link between poverty and crime.

2.2.3 Implication of Work Status on Crime Involvement Among Youth

Laenen and Larsen (2018) claim that there are two categories of unemployed people in Denmark: those who participate in the country's voluntary unemployment insurance fund (UI fund), and those who do not. While the latter are eligible for means-tested social assistance (usually known as welfare benefits), the former are entitled to unemployment insurance payments. Unemployed people with personal wealth or a spouse in the workforce may be ineligible for aid or have their benefit amount reduced unless they are members of a UI fund (Mailand, & Larsen, 2018). To qualify for membership in a UI fund in the early 1990s, a person had to be employed, self-employed, or have completed at least 18 months of a recognized type of post-secondary education.

According to Noja, *et al.*, (2018), employment might be a turning point for both potential and current offenders. At work, people are given pro-social surroundings. Peers may expose potential offenders to law-abiding norms in such circumstances, either producing a normative change or instilling in those considering criminal behavior a fear of punishment from peers (Charlopova, et al., 2020). Employment has a socializing effect in both scenarios. The Australian literature on work status and crime involvement presents a more nuanced picture, highlighting the complex interplay between employment, socioeconomic factors, and criminal behavior. Studies have found that unemployment and underemployment are associated with increased risks of involvement in property crimes, violent offenses, and substance abuse, particularly among marginalized populations and young offenders (Weatherburn & Schnepel, 2015). However, research also suggests that the relationship

between work and crime is bidirectional, with criminal histories and justice system involvement posing significant barriers to obtaining and maintaining stable employment (Mackey & Allard, 2018). Comprehensive approaches that address both employment and broader social determinants of crime have shown the most promising results in reducing recidivism and promoting desistance in the Australian context (Bartels & Jorgensen, 2018).

The South African context reveals complex linkages between work status and crime involvement, particularly among marginalized populations. High rates of youth unemployment, coupled with economic inequality and limited access to quality education, have been identified as key drivers of criminal activity in many South African cities and townships (Naidoo & Kanji, 2016). Research suggests that young people who are unable to find stable, formal employment often engage in illegal income-generating activities, such as robbery, drug trafficking, and gang-related crimes, as a means of survival and social status (Motsoeneng & Masuku, 2020). Interventions aimed at improving job opportunities and vocational training for at-risk youth have shown promise in reducing recidivism and promoting desistance from crime (Gould & Burger, 2019).

In Tanzania, the scarcity of family resources within many communities has had a detrimental impact on the well-being of juveniles and young individuals. Families grappling with hardships often find themselves overburdened without adequate assistance, and unfortunately, some of this weight falls upon the shoulders of adolescents (Rodgers, 2019). Consequently, many young people in Tanzania contend with an array of challenges within hostile and unsafe environments. In the case of low-income students in Tanzania, the absence of adequate educational resources often drives them towards criminal activities.

The well-being of juveniles and young adults in Tanzania has been negatively impacted by the lack of family resources in many places. Families facing difficulties frequently find themselves overworked without proper support, and regrettably, teenagers bear a portion of this burden (Rodgers, 2019). As a result, a large number of Tanzanian youth face several difficulties in unfavorable and dangerous settings. The lack of proper educational tools frequently pushes Tanzania's low-income students toward criminal activity. Many young people lose interest in their studies and turn to the streets when they are unable to succeed in school due to a lack of resources (Berkowitz et al., 2019). Furthermore, Tanzania's low-income neighborhoods lack strong educational frameworks that would support and nurture the next generation of leaders. The lack of resources feeds the cycle of poverty and crime that young people experience.

According to Agha Khan University (2016), lower-working-class kids who aspire to excel are usually valued in mainstream culture. However, due to a lack of job opportunities and high rates of youth unemployment, most low-income people have little opportunity to fulfill their aspirations. These variables contribute to "status frustrations," in which individuals abandon mainstream society's norms and values in favor of delinquent subculture's norms and values. Failure among students, according to Zulkarnain (2021), contributes to status frustration, prompting individuals who oppose mainstream norms to drop out or participate in delinquency. In a Kenyan study that explored the relevant elements that drove urban crimes in Nakuru town, Inzunza, (2022) discovered that youth employment strongly contributed to criminal activity among the youth.

Waruiz *et. al.*, (2021) did a study to examine relationship between work status and crime involvement in Kenya has highlighted several key trends. The study indicated that

unemployment and underemployment are significant risk factors for juvenile delinquency and adult criminal behavior in many Kenyan communities (Waruiz *et. al.*, 2021). Young people who lack stable employment opportunities often turn to illegal activities, such as theft, drug dealing, and violent crime, as a means of supporting themselves and their families (Muthee & Githinji, 2019). Conversely, secure and fulfilling work has been shown to serve as a protective factor, providing youth with a sense of purpose, financial stability, and prosocial peer networks that deter involvement in criminal lifestyles (Odhiambo & Ndege, 2018).

2.2.4 Influence of Educational Level on Criminal Behavior Among Youths

Pascua, (2019) posits that urban crime and low educational levels among youth are two serious issues with overlapping characteristics and common root causes. However, there has been little research demonstrating a link between the two social issues. Involvement in education can lead to criminal involvement and vice versa (Rud, 2015). As a result, these children are more likely to face negative outcomes throughout their lives, such as poor health, unemployment, and criminal involvement. School dropout rates are high among adolescents, which is when criminal activity may peak (Kassem, et al., 2019). In Europe, for example, the average school dropout rate is over 10%, with 30% of juveniles reporting involvement in some form of criminal behavior. As a result, criminality and educational level have similar origins.

Using the Technology of Skill Formation, Makri, *et. al.*, (2021) carried out a thorough literature evaluation on the connection between youth criminal behavior and schooling. Child crime is different from adult crime in nature. We look into studies that assess interventions for children and adolescents as well as research that examines the connection

between education and young people's criminal behavior (Aldridge & McChesney, 2018). The first one implies a connection between schooling and juvenile criminality. The latter indicates that while early criminal activity is likely to have a detrimental impact on educational level, education does lessen the probability of criminal behavior during adolescence and the first few years of adulthood. Peer effects, skill development, and incapacity effects are a few potential components of these advantages, which may also have undiscovered underlying mechanisms (Verma & Sharma, 2021).

Australian research on the impact of education level on youth criminal behavior offers a more detailed perspective on this complex relationship. Studies indicate that lower educational attainment, especially among socioeconomically disadvantaged youth, is linked to a higher likelihood of engaging in different forms of crime. However, the underlying causal mechanisms are often intricate and multifactorial (Weatherburn & Schnepel, 2015). Research suggests that factors such as family background, peer influences, and access to social support services can play a significant role in shaping the educational and criminal trajectories of young Australians (Bartels & Jorgensen, 2018). Comprehensive, evidence-based interventions that address the educational, social, and economic needs of at-risk youth have shown the most promise in reducing youth offending and promoting positive outcomes (Mackey & Allard, 2018).

The South African context reveals a complex interplay between educational level and criminal behavior among youth, with socioeconomic disparities playing a significant role. Research indicates that young people from disadvantaged communities, where educational resources and opportunities are limited, are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system (Makhubu & Ncontsa, 2017). Low levels of educational attainment, combined

with limited job prospects and social marginalization, have been identified as key drivers of gang involvement, substance abuse, and violent offenses among South African youth (Ngalo & Maphosa, 2020). Conversely, access to quality education, including programs that address the underlying social and economic determinants of crime, has been shown to promote positive youth development and reduce recidivism (Sukhraj-Ely & Davids, 2019).

Leban and Masterson (2022) claim that criminal behavior in youth can be strongly correlated with future adverse outcomes, such as adult crime, poor academic achievement, and early school departure. A young person's decision to stop attending school may potentially inspire them to commit crimes. On the one hand, a relationship between criminal involvement and low educational achievement may develop over time. However, because there are so many interconnected variables that affect both criminal behavior and education, it may be difficult to isolate a single causal link (Kalu, *et al.*, 2020). Understanding the tangential connections between education and youth crime may help identify potential solutions for lowering crime and educational disparity in society.

Research examining the relationship between educational level and criminal behavior among Kenyan youth highlights several important trends. Studies have found that lower levels of educational attainment, particularly among young people from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, are strongly associated with increased risks of involvement in criminal activities, such as theft, drug trafficking, and violent offenses (Mbithi & Ndege, 2020). Youths who have dropped out of school or are performing poorly academically often lack the skills, knowledge, and opportunities necessary to pursue legal and fulfilling livelihoods, leading them to turn to illegal means of income generation and social status (Omondi & Wawire, 2019). Conversely, access to quality education, including vocational

training and life skills development, has been shown to serve as a protective factor, instilling young people with a sense of purpose, prosocial values, and the tools to build productive futures (Juma & Mwangi, 2018).

2.3 Theoretical Literature.

The theoretical framework supports the hypothesis of a research endeavor. Theories explain how and why the current research problem arises. The Strain Theory as well as the Sub-Culture Theory served as the foundation for this inquiry.

2.3.1 Strain Theory of Crime.

The strain theory holds that certain stresses or strains, such as a lack of income, raise the possibility of crime. These tensions give rise to negative feelings like anger and irritation. People are driven to action, and breaking the law is one way to do it. The strain of anomalies, which is characterized by a stark contrast between societal expectations and institutionalized means, is what leads to crime and deviance, claims the strain theory, first advanced by Robert Merton in 1938 (Merton, 1938).

According to Bishopp *et al.* (2020), the strain theory is a sociological theory that believes that pressure-derived social anomalies, such as a lack of money or a low education, encourage people to commit crimes. In the 1930s, American sociologist Robert K. developed the assumptions that underpin strain theory. These strains elicit unpleasant emotions such as anger and fury. Crime is one possible reaction to these emotions, which put pressure on people to take corrective action.

Agnew (2020) exemplifies the benefits and drawbacks of the strain hypothesis. The strength of the generic strain hypothesis lies in its ability to analyze how structural factors and cultural

values interact to create variations in crime and delinquency across different groups. This is particularly helpful in understanding group disparities in criminal behavior. However, strain theory does not fully account for white-collar crime, which provides criminals with opportunities to achieve their goals through legal and legitimate means. Crimes motivated by gender inequality cannot be explained by strain theory.

After analyzing crime statistics in the United States by class, Merton (1938) found that people from lower socioeconomic levels were more prone to commit acquisition-related crimes like theft. The two main social goals for most people are material wealth and success, but achieving these goals can be challenging due to class inequality that arises in society (Agnew, 2020). The tendency of those on the margins of society to engage in criminal activity is explained by their preference for illegitimate goals, but people must fight to accomplish these goals through legal means. This theory helped the researcher determine the goals that the study's participants hope to accomplish and the methods they used to do so, which makes it essential to this study.

Finally, strain theory suggests that abnormal conduct arises naturally from people's pain when opportunities to fulfill culturally valued goals are taken away from them. For example, despite the fact that a small proportion of the population is wealthy, Western society places a high value on economic achievement. The ability of the generic strain theory to account for the ways in which institutional arrangements and cultural attitudes interact to predict offending rates across groups is one of its benefits for comprehending group disparities in criminal activity. This approach is supplemented by behavioral criminal theory.

2.3.2 Behavioral Criminal Theory

Behavioral Theory is the second theory pertinent to this study. Subsequent psychological theories of crime were grounded in behavior theory, notably those proposed by American psychologist B.F. Skinner (1904–1990). Skinner viewed all human behavior—both criminal and non-criminal—as learned and, therefore, subject to manipulation through reinforcement and punishment, a perspective aligned with behaviourism (Loughran, 2019). According to a theory, someone who engages in criminal behavior either learns it from a close relative or friend who rewards them for it or from watching a movie or television show where the action is praised. Because these ideas may be applied to a wide range of behaviors, the learning perspective provides useful tools for comprehending crime and delinquency.

According to the theory, there is always some sort of conditioning when behavior is learned and reinforced through rewards or punishment (Berg, & Schreck, 2022). As a result, if a person is in the company of people who condone and even promote criminal behavior, especially those in positions of authority, that person continues to engage in that behavior. People who socialize with others who perform illegal behavior and advocate definitions that support it are more likely to be exposed in person or symbolically to prominent criminal/deviant models. It creates a desirable or justified condition discriminatory to the activity and has already received an incentive to do so. The likelihood of their participating in criminal and deviant behavior rises, while the likelihood of them conforming to the norm falls (Calling, *et al.*, 2019).

The concept of this theory asserts that human behavior develops through learning and formative experiences and that people adapt or adjust their behavior in response to the reactions it elicits in others (Berg, & Schreck, 2022). Social theory, a division of behavior

theory, is the most pertinent to criminology. The most well-known social theorist in this area is Albert Bandura. He maintains that the capacity for aggression is not innate in humans and that violence is a taught trait. Three main factors contribute to aggressive behavior: 1) familial ties, 2) the environment, and 3) the media. Research on family contact indicates that aggressive caregivers are more likely to create violent children (Berg & Schreck, 2022). According to the second source of behavioral disorders and environmental experience, people who live in unsafe environments are more likely to be violent than people who do. This is because they are used to strained situations that make them deviant to moral values hence the theory is also relevant to the strain theory of crime.

The idea is relevant to the study because it demonstrates the relationship between socioeconomic conditions and the complex of mental disorders and criminal behavior. People who have psychosis, a severe mental illness, have false perceptions and/or false beliefs. A recent study found that individuals with psychoses, such as schizophrenia, are more likely to conduct violent crimes, mostly against people who are significant to them (Calling *et al.*, 2019). Although it is clear how someone detached from reality could harm others, most psychotic individuals do not engage in criminal behavior. Theory is essential for behavior explanation because it provides a systematic framework for understanding and predicting human behavioral patterns. Theories offer explanations for why people behave in a certain way and are founded on empirical data. This kind of conditioning involves teaching and reinforcing behavior through incentives or penalties (Calling *et al.*, 2019).

2.4 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a set of ideas that illustrate the relationship between independent and dependent variables (the outcomes). The key indicators discussed in the literature are all represented in the diagram. The conceptual framework of the analysis highlights the link between the independent and dependent variables.

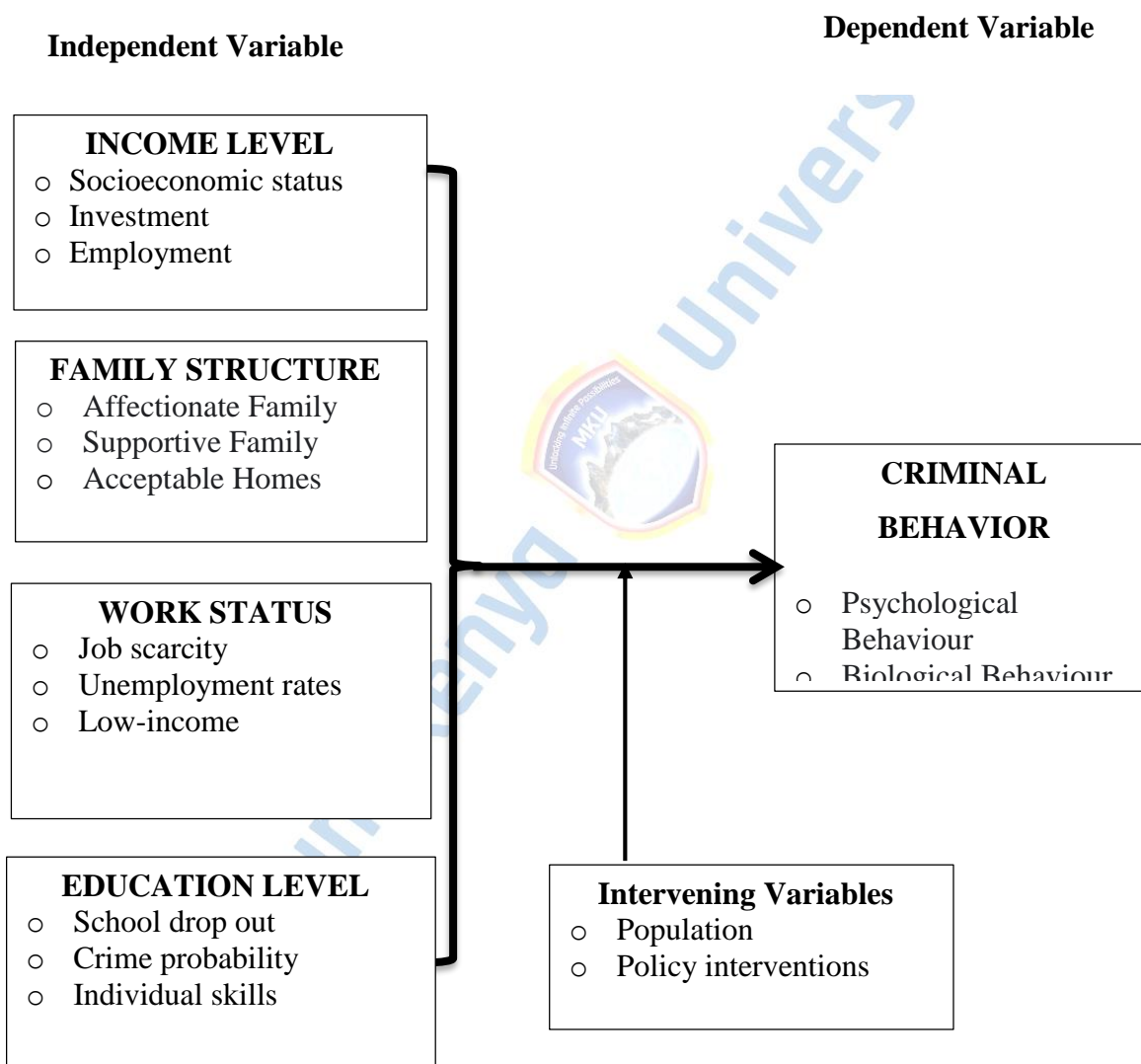


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework
Source: (Researcher 2023).

Elements of the Conceptual Framework

Income Level: encompasses several factors that influence youth behavior. Socioeconomic status reflects overall wealth and living conditions, which affect access to resources and opportunities. Investment refers to financial commitments that can enhance youth prospects, while employment relates to job availability and stability. These elements shape the financial security of youths, which can significantly impact their choices and likelihood of engaging in criminal activities.

Family Structure: plays a crucial role in youth development and behavior. An affectionate family provides emotional support, potentially reducing the likelihood of delinquency. A supportive family encourages positive behaviors and offers guidance, which can deter criminal behavior. Acceptable homes—stable and nurturing environments—foster healthy development, further minimizing the risk of youth involvement in crime. The dynamics within a family can therefore influence how youths navigate challenges and make decisions.

Work Status: is another critical element in the framework. Job scarcity affects the availability of employment opportunities for youths, while high unemployment rates can lead to increased crime as young individuals seek alternative means of income. Low-income situations can push youths toward criminal activities for survival. The relationship between work status and crime is significant, as economic instability often correlates with higher rates of delinquency.

Education Level: is directly linked to youth outcomes. High school dropout rates are associated with a greater likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior. Conversely, higher education levels can reduce crime probability by providing better job prospects. Individual skills acquired through education can empower youths to pursue legitimate opportunities,

thereby decreasing their chances of resorting to crime. Education serves as a protective factor against criminal behavior.

Criminal Behavior itself is influenced by various psychological, biological, and social factors. Psychological behavior encompasses mental health issues that can affect decision-making and susceptibility to crime. Biological behavior includes genetic or physiological predispositions that may make individuals more prone to criminality. Social behavior involves interactions with peers and the community, which can either encourage or discourage criminal activities. Understanding these dimensions is essential for addressing youth crime effectively.

2.5 Recap of Literature Review

This study reviewed various empirical literature in line with the four study objectives. The first set of literature reviewed captured the influence of income level on criminal behavior among the youths. For instance, Nadimpalli, *et al.*, 2020; Manhica, *et al.*, 2021; Adeyemi, *et al.* 2021 and Schuberth, 2018 showed that most urban areas, particularly informal settlements, are typically marked by abject poverty, as evidenced by shanty houses and substandard social amenities. The socioeconomic status (SES) of urban informal residents is relatively low, with the majority engaging in criminal activities to support their families. This is the opposite of higher socioeconomic status which often reduces the likelihood of negative life outcomes. For example, some communities due to high unemployment may have fewer resources available for stealing and fewer people on the streets who could be mugged or robbed.

Second, in terms of the impact of family structure on young criminal behavior, examined literature revealed that there is a link between family and crime that is strengthened by early

experiences of childhood (Cheteni, Mah, & Yohane, 2018). Similarly, unacceptable homes attract the majority of adult criminals, and the amount of juvenile offenders in the existing criminal justice system is worrying (Copelon, 2018; Onsando, 2021; Ng'ang'a 2017). Some research has also shown that families that do not show adequate affection to their children during their developmental stages are characterized by weak social controls, and social isolation allows crimes to go unnoticed, culminating in active crime involvement among children.

Laenen, & Larsen (2018) claim that unemployed persons frequently participate in criminal activity. According to Noja, Petrovi, and Cristea (2018), work might act as a turning point for both potential and current offenders. Peers may expose potential offenders to law-abiding norms in such settings (Charlopova, Andon, & Free, 2020), either triggering a shift in norms or instilling in those considering illegal action a fear of punishment from peers. In both situations, employment has a socializing effect. Agha Khan University (2016) claims that the majority of low-income people have little possibility of fulfilling their goals due to the dearth of jobs and high rates of youth unemployment. These causes cause "status frustrations," in which people reject the norms and ideals of mainstream society in favor of those of a delinquent subculture. In conclusion, youth employment has a sizable impact on youth engagement in crime (Inzunza, 2022).

Lastly, concerning the influence of educational level on criminal behavior among the youth, reviewed literature showed that low educational levels among youth are two serious issues with overlapping characteristics and common root causes (Pascua, 2019). School dropout rates are high among adolescents, which is when criminal activity may be at its peak (Kassem, Ali, & Audi, 2019). In Europe, for example, the average school dropout rate is

over 10%, with 30% of juveniles reporting involvement in some form of criminal behavior. As a result, criminality and educational level have similar origins. Using the Technology of Skill Formation, Makri, Vlachopoulos, and Martina (2021) also showed how education and young people's criminal conduct are related. According to research by Verma and Sharma (2002), education appears to lower the likelihood of criminal activity in youth and early adulthood.



CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The third chapter outlines the research methodology, research design, study area, sampling design, sample size, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. It covers all these topics in detail, discussing the research design, target area, data requirements, demographic and sampling procedures, data collection tools, and data analysis methods. This chapter emphasizes the approach used to guide the entire research process and gather data for the topic under study.

3.2 Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to the procedures followed during a study. According to Mishra and Alok (2022), research technique outlines the processes or strategies used to discover, select, compile, and assess data on a given topic. The methodology section of a research report allows the reader to critically assess the study's overall reliability and validity (Elrashdi, Aljabour, & Omar, 2022). This study employed a mixed approach, which enables the integration of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Mixed methods allow researchers to conceptually and analytically merge qualitative research with quantitative data to facilitate interpretation (Farewell et al., 2020). In this study, both semi-structured questionnaires and key informant interviews were utilized to gather quantitative and qualitative data.

3.3 Research Design

Pandey and Pandey (2021) define research design as an exploratory strategy for obtaining answers to research questions and controlling variance. A research design serves as a detailed blueprint that guides a research project toward its objectives. This study adopted a

descriptive research approach to evaluate the impact of socioeconomic determinants on criminal behavior among juveniles in urban areas, specifically focusing on Embakasi Central in Nairobi County. The choice to use a mixed-methods approach was based on the need to gain a thorough understanding of the complex relationship between socioeconomic factors and youth criminal behavior. Combining both qualitative and quantitative methods allowed this study to collect detailed, rich insights alongside statistical data. As highlighted by Harrison, Reilly, & Creswell (2020), a mixed-method study involves gathering and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data within the same research framework (Truong et al., 2020).

This mixed-methods approach enabled the collection of diverse data on key variables such as income level, poverty, work status, and education, allowing for a detailed exploration of how these factors impact youth involvement in criminal behavior. Quantitative data were gathered through questionnaires distributed to selected youths in Embakasi Central, offering measurable insights into the prevalence and trends of criminal activity. At the same time, qualitative data were obtained through interviews with directors of NGOs and youth welfare associations, providing contextual perspectives and real-life experiences. This combination of data types strengthens the validity and depth of the findings, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the issues being studied.



3.4 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Embakasi Central constituency, one of the seventeen constituencies in Nairobi County. Embakasi Central comprises five voting wards: Kayole North, Kayole Central, Kayole South, Komarock, and Matopeni/Spring Valley. This dynamic constituency is home to a diverse population, representing various ethnic groups and socioeconomic backgrounds, and grapples with substantial challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and crime. These factors make it a critical focus for research on youth behavior, particularly criminal activity. The constituency is home to numerous NGOs and community organizations dedicated to addressing issues related to youth welfare, education, and crime prevention, highlighting its relevance for studies exploring the impact of socioeconomic determinants on youth criminal behavior.

3.5 Target Population

The target population refers to the complete group of individuals or entities from which researchers aim to draw conclusions or make inferences. In research, it is crucial to define the characteristics of this population, as well as any relevant subgroups, to ensure that the findings are applicable and meaningful. The target population's characteristics, as well as those of any subgroups, must be thoroughly stated when cost-effectiveness research is being conducted (Taherdoost, 2016).

3.6 Sampling Procedures and Techniques

A sub-group can be chosen from a population to participate by sampling (Kim et al., 2018). A simple random sampling method was employed to collect quantitative data from youths aged 18-35 years. Additionally, a purposive sampling technique was used to select key informant interview (KII) respondents who provided qualitative data. Because the study was

looking at particularly sensitive crime topics, the researcher may explore utilizing purposive sampling for KII respondents. Certain individuals or groups of individuals may refuse to cooperate. Low, Bentley, and Ghosh (2020) argue that the sample size should accurately represent the population being studied in order to generalize the findings, while also being small enough to meet budgetary and economic constraints.

3.7. Sample Population

Population is any group of institutions, individuals, or items that exhibit similar traits, according to Taherdoost (2016). The study's target population was 300 respondents who were interviewed in this study. In this study, only those respondents above the age of 18 were interviewed. To guarantee that every respondent had an equal opportunity to be selected, both stratified and simple random sampling methods were used to choose a sample from Embakasi Central.

According to Taherdoost (2016), the sample size should be representative of the population in the study to allow for generalization of the findings, while also being small enough to meet budgetary and economic limitations. A target sample size of 300 respondents was randomly selected. This is determined by using the mathematical approach developed by Nassiuma in 2000 (Kadam & Bhalerao, 2010).

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

Equation (3.1)

Where n = sample size;

N = population size;

C = coefficient of variation which is 0.5 and

e = error margin which is 0.05.

$$n = \frac{350000(0.5)^2}{0.52 + (91 - 1)0.052} = \frac{22.75}{0.25 + (90)0.225} = \frac{22.75}{0.475} = 300$$

3.8. Construction of Research Instruments

The construction of research instruments involves designing tools to effectively gather data for the study. In this research, the primary instruments utilized were questionnaires and interview schedules. A Likert scale was employed to develop the questionnaires, aligning with the study's objectives. The formulated statements specifically addressed the influence of various factors, including income level, poverty level, work status, and educational level, on criminal behavior among youths. This structured approach ensures that the data collected is relevant and comprehensive for analyzing the research questions.

The study constructed interview schedules by defining the objectives of the interview and identifying target participants to ensure relevant data collection. Researcher developed a series of open-ended and closed-ended questions that align with these objectives, ensuring clarity and neutrality to encourage honest responses. The questions were then organized logically, starting with general inquiries before delving into more specific topics to build rapport with participants.

3.9. Testing for Validity and Reliability/Trustworthiness

The pilot testing for the study's validity and reliability was conducted in two phases. Initially, face validity was assessed by distributing twenty-seven random questionnaires to participants within the target population of 300, specifically in the Embakasi East Constituency. This approach aimed to gauge respondents' interpretations of the questions and ensure clarity. According to Low, Bentley, & Ghosh (2020), a sample size of 10% is considered sufficient for a pilot study, making the selection of nine respondents appropriate for this context.

The study also sought for the expert opinions on research instruments. Content validity was evaluated by asking the same 3 experts to review the questionnaire in detail. They were encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions for adjustments in the phrasing and framing of the questions. This iterative process helped refine the questionnaire, ensuring that the items accurately captured the intended concepts and were comprehensible to the target audience. Through incorporating the insights from the pilot study, the researchers aimed to enhance the overall quality and effectiveness of the data collection instrument before the full-scale study commenced.

3.10. Data Collection Methods and Procedures

The study utilized a comprehensive data collection procedure, employing both primary quantitative and qualitative methods. Primary data was obtained through structured questionnaires and Key Informant Interviews (KII), as detailed in APPENDIX F and APPENDIX G. Questionnaires were selected as the primary instrument due to the study's focus on individual perspectives regarding the independent and dependent variables, allowing for the collection of quantitative data from 209 respondents. In parallel, qualitative

insights were gathered from five key informants through KII, enriching the data set with in-depth perspectives.

To ensure smooth data collection, the researcher first obtained the required research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) and secured permission from the university. This ensured compliance with ethical standards and institutional guidelines. The researcher then prepared by purchasing A4 paper to print the questionnaires, which were organized into file binders for easy distribution.

To optimize response rates, the researcher implemented a systematic follow-up strategy. After distributing the questionnaires, the researcher scheduled a two-week period for completion. To encourage timely responses, reminders were sent three days after distribution via friendly email and text messages, gently prompting respondents about the approaching deadline. This proactive communication helped to maintain engagement and ensure a higher completion rate.

After the two-week period, the researcher conducted a drop-and-pick procedure to collect the completed questionnaires, ensuring that the data was gathered efficiently and securely. This multifaceted approach not only enhanced the reliability of the data collection process but also provided a rich dataset that could be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, leading to more nuanced findings in the study.

3.11. Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures

The data analysis process for this study was structured to ensure the integrity and reliability of the findings. Following the guidelines set by Low, Bentley, and Ghosh (2020), a response rate exceeding 30% or 40% of the total sample size was deemed sufficient for generalizing

the study's results. Once all disseminated questionnaires were returned, the researcher undertook a thorough review of the data to identify and rectify any errors, such as typos, omissions, exaggerations, or biases. Questionnaires that contained errors were excluded from further analysis to uphold the integrity of the dataset.

The cleaned and error-free data were then organized and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.0. Descriptive statistics were applied to offer a comprehensive summary of the quantitative data. This included calculating frequencies, means, and standard deviations, which were presented in well-organized tables. These visual representations made it easier to interpret the data and highlighted important trends and patterns relevant to the research questions.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, qualitative data were analyzed using a thematic approach. This method involved identifying, examining, and reporting patterns or themes within the qualitative responses gathered from the Key Informant Interviews (KII). Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to delve into the contextual factors influencing youth criminal behavior, capturing the nuances of participants' experiences and perspectives. The qualitative data were systematically coded, organizing responses into coherent themes that provided deeper insights into the factors affecting youth involvement in crime.

By triangulating the quantitative and qualitative data, the analysis enriched the overall findings of the study. This multifaceted approach not only enhanced the robustness of the research but also offered a comprehensive interpretation of how socioeconomic determinants impact youth criminal behavior. The integration of both data types allowed for a more nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between various factors, ultimately

contributing to more informed conclusions and recommendations for future research and policy interventions.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research refer to a set of principles that govern study designs and methodologies. These include voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, the potential for harm, and the disclosure of results. Ethics issues were used because human subjects were included in the investigation. First, the researcher would request a letter from the institution as well as a letter from NACOSTI (APPENDIX C). The researcher would follow the data findings and not bias them. Human subjects may be subjected to stressful or unpleasant situations during experiments. Respondents were pressured into responding in a certain way and were given informed consent to choose whether or not to participate in the study. They were guaranteed that the information they supplied was used solely for the study and were treated with the utmost secrecy. Finally, participants were notified of their ability to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The aim of the study was to examine the socio-economic effects of criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study objectives were to investigate how income level affects criminal behavior among youths, explore the impact of family structure on youth involvement in crime and delinquency, assess the influence of work status on crime involvement, and examine the role of education level in shaping criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central, Nairobi County. This chapter contains research-based study findings.

4.1 Questionnaire Return Rate

Five key informants and 294 respondents were sampled for the study from Embakasi Central. Questionnaires were handed out to respondents, while Focus Group Discussions were conducted with group leaders, who served as the main informants. Table 4.1 presents the response rate for both completed interviews and submitted questionnaires.

Table 4.1: Rate of Return Questionnaire

Questionnaires	Number Issued	Response Rate	Percentage
Questionnaires	294	209	71.09
KII	5	5	100.00
Total	299	214	71.57

Source: Field Data 2023

A 71.09% return rate was achieved by returning 209 of the 294 questionnaires that were sent out, filled out, and completed. Additionally, five important informants gave full FGD, resulting in a 100.0% return rate. As a result, the study's overall response return rate was 71.57%. Saleh and Bista (2017) state that a response rate of at least 70% is necessary for

social science analysis. It was concluded that the response rate was suitable for the study as a consequence. Nonetheless, the high response rate was made possible by the researcher's personal follow-up with the participants and allowance of sufficient time for them to finish the survey. The convenience of the key informants was also considered while KII scheduling.

4.2 Demographic Information

To comprehend the study respondents' profiles in connection to the study's goals, the researcher collected background and demographic data from the study participants. This included the gender, age, and educational level of the youths in Embakasi Central. Study findings are presented as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Demographic Information

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Respondents Gender	Female	66	31.6	31.6
	Male	143	68.4	100.0
	Total	209	100.0	
Respondents age	26 – 35 years	94	45.0	45.0
	36 – 43 years	89	42.6	87.6
	44 – 52 years	18	8.6	96.2
	Over 53 years	8	3.8	100.0
	Total	209	100.0	
	What are Your Academic Qualifications?	University Degree	22	10.5
	Primary School	90	43.1	53.6
	High School	72	34.4	88.0
	College Level of Education	22	10.5	98.6
	Total	209	100.0	

Source: Field Data 2023

The study's demographic findings reveal a significant gender imbalance, with 68.4% of respondents being men and only 31.6% women. This disparity may suggest underlying social or cultural factors that influence participation in the study, potentially reflecting broader societal trends in the context being examined. The predominance of male

respondents could impact the generalizability of the findings, as women's perspectives and experiences may be underrepresented.

The age distribution indicates that a substantial portion of participants (45.0%) falls within the 26 to 35 age range, while 42.6% are between 36 and 43 years old. This suggests that the study predominantly captures the views of younger to middle-aged adults, which may influence the relevance of the findings to older populations. The small percentages of participants aged 44 and above (8.6%) and those over 53 (3.8%) highlight the need for future research to include a more diverse age range to understand the perspectives of older individuals.

Educational attainment among respondents reveals that 43.1% completed only primary education, while 34.4% reached secondary education, and only 10.5% achieved a diploma or degree. This low level of higher education may have implications for the study's findings, as educational background can significantly influence individuals' perceptions, decision-making processes, and access to information. The predominance of lower educational attainment might suggest that the population studied could face challenges related to socioeconomic status, limiting their opportunities and resources.

4.3 Consequence of Income Level on Criminal Behavior Among Youths

The first study objective sought to investigate the consequences of income level on criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County. Initially, respondents were asked to evaluate specific statements about the impact of income level on youth criminal behavior. They rated these statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represented Strongly

Agree, 2 for Agree, 3 for Neutral, 4 for Disagree, and 5 for Strongly Disagree. The results are summarized in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Consequence of Income Level on Criminal Behavior Among Youths

STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
Poor socioeconomic status promotes criminal behaviors among young people	14 (6.7%)	80 (38.3%)	78 (37.3%)	31 (14.8%)	6 (2.9%)	1.44	.500
Youths with strong economic activity in a big way succeed in shunning societal vices	72 (34.4%)	76 (36.4%)	11 (5.3%)	43 (20.6%)	7 (3.3%)	1.56	.500
Lack of investment among the youths allows them to idle and engage in unwelcomed vices	70 (33.5%)	85 (40.7%)	18 (8.6%)	33 (15.8%)	3 (1.4%)	1.32	.470
Young people who have investments spend most of their time in the business premises and thus least indulge in criminal acts	84 (40.2%)	82 (39.2%)	5 (2.4%)	15 (7.2%)	23 (11.0%)	1.54	.501
Lack of formal employment creates an opportunity for young people to be involved in criminal activities	88 (42.1%)	72 (34.4%)	35 (16.7%)	11 (5.3%)	3 (1.4%)	1.48	.502

Source: Field Data 2023.

Table 4.3 above presents results on the consequences of income level on criminal behavior among youths. In responding to whether poor socioeconomic status promotes criminal behaviors among young people, a bigger percentage of respondents, 38.3% (80) agreed and was closely followed by 37.3% (78) who decided to remain neutral on the matter. Those who strongly agreed were 6.7% (14) while 2.9% (6) strongly disagreed whereas 14.8% (31) of the participants disagreed poor socioeconomic status promotes criminal behaviors among young people. This simplifies that low socio-economic status promotes crime rates among the youth. The findings indicating that low socioeconomic status promotes youth criminality align closely with prior research. Nadimpalli et. al., (2020) highlighted that impoverished urban areas, often characterized by inadequate social amenities and informal settlements, show a notable link between low parental income and youth offending. In these environments, limited economic opportunities push many toward criminal activities as a means of survival. This relationship underscores the broader impact of socioeconomic

factors on youth behavior, where lack of social and economic resources in families either advantage or constrain young people's futures.

In addition, 36.4% (76) of the respondents agreed that youths with strong economic activity in a big way succeed in shunning societal vices, while 34.4% (72) strongly agreed. Those who remained neutral were 5.3% (11) while 20.6% (43) disagreed. A smaller percentage of 3.3% (7) strongly disagreed. In responding to a statement, lack of investment among the youths allows them to idle and engage in unwelcomed vices, 33.5% (70) strongly agreed, 40.7% (85) agreed, 8.6% (18) were neutral, 15.8% (33) disagreed while 1.4% (3) strongly disagreed. The study findings were in support of Adeyemi et al., (2021) and Manhica et al. (2021) reinforce that low socioeconomic status during childhood significantly predicts criminal and substance use behaviors later in life. Addressing such disparities requires considering the community-wide socioeconomic context and implementing interventions focused on improving access to education, employment, and social support. This broader approach can yield long-term positive effects on reducing youth involvement in crime.

Moreover, 40.2% (84) of the respondents strongly agreed that young people who have investments spend most of their time in the business premises and thus least indulge in criminal acts close to that percentage, 39.2% (82) agreed, those who remained neutral were 2.4% (5), 7.2% (15) disagreed while 11% (23) strongly disagreed. Among those who responded, 42.1% (88) strongly agreed that lack of formal employment creates an opportunity for young people to be involved in criminal activities. 34.4% (72) agreed with the fact while 16.7% (35) were neutral. Those who disagreed with this matter were 5.3% (11) and 1.4% (3) strongly disagreed. The findings concurred with Adeyemi et al. (2021) who found that economic opportunities for youth, such as business, labor-market initiatives

and job training, directly reduce crime by providing young people with sustainable alternatives. This research supports policy approaches that invest in employment programs as effective means of combating youth crime. Juárez et al. (2022) further noted that communities with higher teenage unemployment experience more crime, emphasizing that access to job opportunities is a significant factor in crime prevention. Similarly, Research by Berger and Van Helvoirt (2018) also links poverty directly with crime, suggesting that poverty-driven stress leads individuals toward criminal activity. Limited access to quality education, employment, and secure livelihoods in impoverished regions exacerbates youth involvement in crime as illegal activities become a means of economic survival. Therefore, the study's findings underscore the need for comprehensive socioeconomic interventions to reduce crime rates and improve overall social well-being among the youth.

Security personnel, senior police officers, and chiefs/assistant chiefs were asked to identify the socio-economic factors driving youth involvement in criminal activities in Embakasi Central Sub County.

They stated that the absence of a stable income was a significant factor pushing youth toward criminal activities. Young individuals without financial resources were more vulnerable to recruitment into criminal gangs and radicalization [Respondent D4, 2023, Embakasi Central Sub-County].

This can be ascertained by one of the respondents who said:

"There were multiple factors driving criminal behavior. Unemployment, low income, and gang affiliations were key reasons pushing young people toward crime. In some cases, jobless youth were radicalized within gangs, leading them to engage in assaults and other terror-related activities. Consequently, a

significant number of young men chose to participate in criminal activities"
 [Respondent D3, 2023, Embakasi Central Sub-County].

Study findings imply that the economic well-being of the young people keeps them engaged hence least engaging in criminal activities. This was supported by Berger and Van Helvoirt (2018), who illustrated that poverty can limit access to quality education, employment, and better opportunities hence ease of engagement in crime. The findings of the study align closely with the Strain Theory of Crime, which posits that societal pressures and the inability to achieve culturally approved goals can lead individuals to engage in criminal behavior.

4.4 Impact of Family Structure on Youth Involvement in Crime and Delinquency Youths

The second objective sought to establish the impact of family structure on youth involvement in crime and delinquency youths. Family affection, family support, and acceptance were considered to influence youths' involvement in criminal acts. Responses were rated on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represented Strongly Agree, 2 for Agree, 3 for Neutral, 4 for Disagree, and 5 for Strongly Disagree. The analyzed results are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Impact of Family Structure on Youth Involvement in Crime and Delinquency Youths.

STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
In countries where families are affectionate, many youths shun all criminal	77 (36.8%)	91 (43.5%)	3 (1.4%)	17 (8.1%)	21 (10.0%)	1.87	.997
Youths that lack support from their families are unfriendly and tend to engage in forms of criminal acts.	95 (45.5%)	73 (34.9%)	16 (7.7%)	9 (4.3%)	16 (7.7%)	1.62	.488
Most of the youths with little support from their family embrace theft as a way of meeting their desired needs.	71 (34.0%)	87 (41.6%)	7 (3.3%)	25 (12.0%)	19 (9.1%)	1.93	.577
Youths who live in a none acceptable homes do not mind their behaviors	82 (39.2%)	91 (43.5%)	1 (0.5%)	17 (8.1%)	18 (8.6%)	1.43	.735

Source: Field Data 2023

Findings in the above table showed that 43.5% (91) of the respondents agreed that in countries where families are affectionate, many youths shun all criminals. Those who strongly agreed to this matter were 36.8% (77) of the respondents while 10.0% (21) strongly disagreed. Moreover, 1.4% (3) and 8.1% (17) were neutral and disagreed respectively. The findings concurred with Copelon, (2018), that the majority of adult criminals are lured to crime not just because of poverty, but also because of a lack of acceptance and affection at home, and the amount of juvenile offenders in the current criminal justice system is worrying.

In Table 4.4 above, a bigger percentage of the respondents 45.5% (95) strongly agreed that youths who lack support from their families are unfriendly and tend to engage in forms of criminal acts, this was followed by 34.9% (73) of the respondents who agreed while an equal percentage of 7.7% (16) both remained neutral and strongly disagreed respectively. A smaller percentage of 4.3% (9) disagreed. Ng'ang'a (2017) also supported these findings, noting that disorganized, impoverished neighborhoods with weak social controls and high levels of social exclusion create environments where crimes often go unnoticed, thus increasing youth involvement in crime. This illustrates how a lack of family and community support systems can result in social isolation, making young people more vulnerable to delinquent behaviors.

In responding to a question that most of the youths with low support from their family embrace theft as a way of meeting their desired needs, 41.6% (87) of the respondents agreed, while those who disagreed were 12.0% (25). 3.3% (7) were neutral while 34.0% (71) and 9.1% (19) strongly agreed and disagreed respectively. In addition, 39.2% (82) strongly

agreed that youths who live in a none non-acceptable homes do not mind their behaviors. Those who agreed were 43.5% (91), 0.5% (1) were neutral, 8.1% (17) disagreed and those who strongly disagreed were 8.6% (18). This gives the implication that whenever societal support is given, youths feel appreciated and shun criminal activities. In addition, a research by Awonaike & Fadairo (2024) emphasized the role of family structure and parental control in reducing juvenile delinquency. Their study found that children who experienced neglect, particularly those mistreated by step-parents following the separation or death of their biological parents, were more likely to engage in criminal behaviors.

The quantitative findings were supported by findings from the qualitative data that indicated that;

"The emergence of adolescent delinquency has been linked to a wide variety of individual circumstances and traits. Children raised in poverty are more likely to grow up in situations that support criminal behavior. Violence and antisocial conduct are prevalent in the neighborhoods and communities where many poor families reside" [Respondent D5, 2023, Embakasi Central Sub-County].

The findings of the study on the effect of family structure on youth involvement in crime in align well with Behavioral Criminal Theory, which emphasizes the influence of environmental and social factors on an individual's propensity for criminal behavior. The research revealed that family structure plays a crucial role in shaping youth behavior, particularly in relation to criminal involvement.

Youths raised in supportive and loving family environments are significantly less likely to engage in criminal acts. This aligns with the theory's assertion that positive reinforcement,

such as love and support, fosters pro-social behavior and discourages delinquency. In contrast, a lack of familial support can be perceived as rejection, leading young individuals to seek alternative means to satisfy their emotional and material needs, which may include engaging in criminal activities.

4.5 Implication of Work Status on Crime Involvement Among Youths

The third study objective investigated the implication of work status on crime involvement among youths in Embakasi Central. Respondents were requested to rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represented Strongly Agree, 2 for Agree, 3 for Neutral, 4 for Disagree, and 5 for Strongly Disagree. The analyzed findings are displayed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Implication of Work Status on Crime Involvement Youths

STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
Job scarcity is a key factor that promotes youth's engagement in criminal behaviors.	100 (47.8%)	71 (34.0%)	19 (9.1%)	2 (1.0%)	17 (8.1%)	1.60	.897
Youths who cannot secure jobs always resort to stealing as a way of earning a living.	83 (39.7%)	96 (45.9%)	16 (7.7%)	9 (4.3%)	5 (2.4%)	1.63	.485
A high rate of unemployment promotes criminal acts among young people.	73 (34.9%)	97 (46.4%)	15 (7.2%)	5 (2.4%)	19 (9.1%)	1.94	.853
Low-income earners engage in theft as a way to supplement some of their needs.	99 (47.4%)	73 (34.9%)	15 (7.2%)	18 (8.6%)	4 (1.9%)	2.00	.861

Source: Field Data 2023

In assessing the implication of work status on crime involvement in youths, Table 4.5 shows that 47.8% (100) of those who responded strongly agreed that job scarcity is a key factor that promotes youth's engagement in criminal behaviors. Furthermore, 34.0% (71) agreed while 9.1% (19) were neutral to the matter. A smaller percentage of 1.0% (2) disagreed while those who strongly disagreed were 8.1% (17). The findings imply that unemployed young people always have no option but to get involved in criminal acts. The study's findings that job scarcity significantly contributes to youth involvement in crime are consistent with other research. For instance, Waruiz et al. (2021) found that unemployment and underemployment

are key risk factors for both juvenile delinquency and adult crime in Kenya. Young individuals without access to stable job opportunities frequently turn to illegal means, such as theft, drug trafficking, and violence, to support themselves.

A statement that youths who cannot secure jobs always resort to stealing as a way of earning a living, received a strong agreement from 39.7% (83) of the respondents, the majority of the respondents, 45.9% (96) agreed while 7.7% (16) were neutral. 4.3% (9) disagreed while 2.4% (5) strongly agreed. Similarly, Noja et al. (2018) suggest that employment can be transformative for at-risk youth, providing both a socializing influence and exposure to pro-social norms. Work environments often instill a sense of responsibility, reduce idle time, and surround individuals with peers who follow societal laws, creating a deterrent effect on criminal behavior.

In Table 4.5, a bigger number of those who responded 46.4% (97) agreed that a high rate of unemployment promotes criminal acts among young people. This was followed by 34.9% (73) who strongly disagreed. Those who strongly disagreed with the point were 1.9% (4) and 8.6% (18) disagreed. 7.2% (15) were neutral. Still, in Table 5, 47.4% (99) of those who were interviewed strongly agreed that low-income earners engage in theft as a way to supplement some of their needs. 34.9% (73) agreed while 7.2% (15) were neutral. Only a small percentage, 1.9% (4) strongly disagreed while 8.6% (15) agreed. The findings were in support of studies conducted by Naidoo & Kanji (2016) and Motsoeneng & Masuku (2020) who pointed out that young people without job prospects often turn to gang-related crime or other illicit income sources as a survival strategy. Efforts to improve job and vocational training opportunities have shown promise in reducing recidivism and promoting desistance, emphasizing the importance of employment-based interventions.

"Various strategies are employed to combat crime in the study area, including empowerment programs, community policing, and dismantling criminal gangs, among others. However, the effectiveness of some of these approaches is hindered by insufficient resources and other challenges." [Respondent D1,2,4, Embakasi Central Sub-County].

The findings on the impact of employment status on youth involvement in crime align with the Strain Theory of Crime. This theory suggests that individuals may turn to criminal activities when they face strain caused by their inability to attain culturally valued goals through lawful means. The study revealed a clear link between work status and youth involvement in crime, indicating that job scarcity is a significant driver of delinquent behavior. Young individuals who struggle to find employment often face substantial strain, as they are unable to meet their economic needs and societal expectations. In response to this strain, they may resort to stealing and other illicit activities as a means of survival.

This trend is particularly pronounced among low-income earners who lack viable livelihood opportunities, making them more prone to criminal acts. The inability to secure stable employment creates a sense of frustration and hopelessness, pushing these youths toward illegal activities as an alternative means of achieving financial stability.

4.6 Influence of Education Level on Criminal Behavior Among Youths

The fourth study objective investigated the influence of education level on criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central. The respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5: 1 - Strongly Agree, 2 - Agree, 3 - Neutral, 4 – Disagree, 5 -Strongly Disagree. These were analyzed and presented as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Influence of Education Level on Criminal Behavior among Youths

STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
Youths who dropped out of school more often indulge in criminal acts	95 (45.5%)	84 (40.2%)	15 (7.2%)	13 (6.2%)	2 (1.0%)	1.60	.493
Well-educated youths rarely take part in any form of criminal act	101 (48.3%)	79 (37.8%)	11 (5.3%)	4 (1.9%)	14 (6.7%)	1.54	.501
The youths whose guardians and parents do not mind their education have a high probability of committing a crime.	62 (29.7%)	118 (56.5%)	14 (6.7%)	15 (7.2%)	0 (0.0%)	2.81	1.131
Youths who have acquired work-related skills engage in economic activities thus they rarely indulge in criminal activities.	84 (40.2%)	82 (39.2%)	5 (2.4%)	15 (7.2%)	23 (11.0%)	1.91	.843
Unskilled youths are more often idle and thus more often indulge in criminal activities.	107 (51.2%)	73 (34.9%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (5.3%)	18 (8.6%)	2.23	.654

Source: Field Data 2023

In determining the influence of education level on criminal behavior among youths, 45.5% (95) of the respondents in Table 4.6 strongly agreed that youths who dropped out of school more often indulge in criminal acts. 40.2% (84) agreed while 7.2% (15), 6.2% (13), and 1.0% (2) were neutral, disagreed, and strongly disagreed respectively. The findings showing that school dropouts are more likely to engage in criminal acts aligns with findings from Kassem, Ali, & Audi (2019), who noted that high school dropout rates among adolescents correlate with peaks in criminal activity. This suggests that the educational environment plays a critical role in shaping youth behavior, where disengagement from school can lead to increased vulnerability to criminal influences.

Moreover, 48.8% (101) of the respondents strongly agreed that Well-educated youths rarely take part in any form of a criminal act, from the total response, 37.8% (79) agreed while 5.3% (11) were neutral on the matter. Those who agreed and strongly disagreed were 1.9% (4) and 6.7% (14) respectively. This implies that a low level of education is linked to a high crime rate. A study by Kassem, Ali, & Audi, (2019) supported that school dropout rates are high among adolescents, which then puts criminal activity to be at its peak. Moreover,

the significant agreement that well-educated youths are less likely to participate in criminal activities underscores the protective factors associated with educational attainment. This observation is supported by the works of Verma & Sharma (2021), who highlight that education can mitigate the likelihood of criminal behavior during adolescence and early adulthood through mechanisms such as skill development and peer influence.

There was an agreement above the average of 56.5% (118) that the youths whose guardians and parents do not mind their education have a high probability of committing a crime. 29.7% (62) strongly agreed and 6.7% (14) were neutral. 7.2% (15) of the respondents disagreed. The finding that youths whose guardians neglect their education have a higher probability of committing crimes emphasizes the role of family background and support systems. Weatherburn & Schnepel (2015) argue that familial influences, alongside social support, significantly shape educational and criminal trajectories. This relationship indicates that parental engagement in a child's education is crucial in preventing criminal involvement.

Response from Table 6 shows that 40.2% (84) of the respondents strongly agreed that youths who have acquired work-related skills engage in economic activities thus they rarely indulge in criminal activities. Those who agreed were 39.2% (82) of the respondents, 2.4% (5) of the respondents decided not to make any decision concerning the matter 7.2% (15) disagreed and 11.0% (23) strongly disagreed. Furthermore, the **40.2%** of respondents who strongly agree that youths with work-related skills engage in economic activities—and therefore commit fewer crimes—reflects the insights from Aldridge & McChesney (2018). Their research shows that skill acquisition through education not only provides practical benefits

but also fosters a sense of purpose and belonging, which can deter involvement in criminal activities.

An above-average number of respondents 51.2% (107) strongly agreed that unskilled youths are more often idle and thus more often indulge in criminal activities. 34.9% (73) agreed 5.3% (11) and 8.6% (18) both disagreed and agreed respectively to the subject. (Kalu, Menon, & Quinn, 2020). Understanding the tangential connections between education and youth crime may help identify potential solutions for lowering crime and educational disparity in society. Lastly, the assertion that **51.2%** of respondents agree that unskilled youths are more prone to idleness and subsequent criminal behavior aligns with findings from Ngalo & Maphosa (2020). This indicates that low educational attainment, combined with limited job prospects, is a key driver of criminal behavior, including gang involvement and substance abuse.

"Government officials always argue that there are in place several measures aimed at combating crime and the key among them is promoting education and training to the young population. These included educational empowerment through establishing training centers such as artisan colleges where youths can learn skills to help them engage in self-employment. Through education, young people can obtain skills that can help them to engage in economic activities that in turn make them occupied and not free to be involved in criminal acts [Respondent D2, 2023, Embakasi Central Sub-County].

The findings regarding the influence of education level on criminal behavior among youths align with the framework of Behavioral Criminal Theory. This theory posits that behavior is learned and influenced by environmental factors, including social interactions and educational experiences. It supports that the youths who drop out of school are more likely to engage in crime. This aligns with the theory's assertion that educational environments play a critical role in shaping behavior. Higher educational attainment is associated with reduced involvement in delinquency, as education often provides not only knowledge but also socialization that reinforces pro-social behaviors and norms. The research emphasized the importance of parental and guardian support in prioritizing education. Youths who lack encouragement in their educational pursuits are more susceptible to engaging in criminal acts, highlighting the role of social reinforcement in behavior.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study established that several factors affect youth involvement in criminal behavior. For instance, socioeconomic status promotes, economic activity, taking part in investment, and formal employment are some of the key things that directly influence involvement in criminal acts by youths.

5.1.1 Consequence of Income Level on Criminal Behavior Among Youths

The first objective aimed at investigating the consequences of income level on criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County. The study revealed a significant correlation between income levels and criminal behavior among youths, indicating that lower income and unstable job opportunities often lead to higher rates of delinquency. Young individuals lacking stable economic engagement tend to have more idle time, which can be diverted into criminal activities such as theft, drug trafficking, and robbery. Those actively involved in income-generating activities are less likely to engage in crime, as their focus remains on productive pursuits. The absence of formal employment emerges as a crucial factor driving youth into criminal acts, compounded by job scarcity and low earnings. Qualitative insights from community leaders and law enforcement corroborate these findings, highlighting the urgent need to address socioeconomic factors that contribute to criminal behavior.

5.1.2 Impact of Family Structure on Youth Involvement in Crime and Delinquency

Youths

The second objective was to examine how family structure influences the rate of youth involvement in crime and delinquency in Embakasi Central, Nairobi County. The study revealed the vital role of family structure in influencing youth involvement in criminal behavior. Youths who grow up in supportive and loving environments are significantly less likely to engage in criminal acts. In contrast, a lack of familial support is often perceived as rejection, driving young people to seek alternative means of meeting their emotional and material needs, including criminal activities. The research highlighted that youths with low levels of family support are more susceptible to theft and other unlawful behaviors, particularly in unstable home environments where parental guidance is lacking. This dynamic is especially pronounced in urban areas, where familial breakdown can create vulnerabilities that lead to increased delinquency.

5.1.3 Implication of Work Status on Crime Involvement Youths

The third objective was to assess the implication of work status on crime involvement among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County. The study revealed a clear link between work status and youth involvement in crime, therefore, job scarcity is a significant driver of delinquent behavior. Young individuals who struggle to find employment often resort to stealing and other illicit activities as a means of survival. This trend is particularly evident among low-income earners who lack viable livelihood opportunities, making them more prone to criminal acts. Qualitative insights from local security personnel further supported these findings, indicating that economic marginalization plays a critical role in pushing youths toward crime. The study showed the importance of economic security and

stable work environments in deterring youth from engaging in illegal activities, underscoring the need for comprehensive policy interventions.

5.1.4 Influence of Education Level on Criminal Behavior among Youths

The fourth objective was to investigate the impact of education level on criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central, Nairobi County. The study found a significant connection between education levels and youth criminal behavior, showing that individuals who drop out of school are more prone to criminal involvement. Higher educational attainment is associated with a decrease in delinquent behavior. The study highlighted the vital role of parental and guardian support in emphasizing the importance of education, noting that youths who lack encouragement in their educational efforts are more likely to engage in criminal activities. In addition, the acquisition of work-related skills significantly lowers the propensity for crime, as these skills provide alternative avenues for personal and economic development. The study also identified idleness as a key factor contributing to criminal involvement, particularly among unskilled youths facing limited employment opportunities. These underscored the importance of promoting accessible education and skill development, highlighting the need for community initiatives that emphasize the value of education and create pathways to employment, ultimately fostering positive youth development and reducing criminal behavior.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concluded that there is a multifaceted nature of youth involvement in criminal behavior. Basically, low income and lack of employment opportunities significantly contribute to delinquency. Young people resort to various criminal acts, including pickpocketing, drug trafficking, and robbery, primarily as a means to secure immediate

financial gain. This behavior is exacerbated by inadequate family structures that fail to provide proper guidance and monitoring, allowing youths to associate with negative influences and criminal networks.

Furthermore, the study highlighted the critical roles of work status and educational attainment in shaping youth behavior. Employed youths, who are engaged and productive, are less likely to contemplate criminal activities, as their focus remains on their responsibilities. In contrast, those with lower levels of education often find themselves idle and without viable alternatives, making them more susceptible to engaging in crime as a means of survival.

5.3 Recommendations per Objective

In line with the study objectives, this study made the following recommendations;

1. The government should develop and implement targeted economic empowerment initiatives that provide young people with job training, skills development, and entrepreneurship opportunities. These programs should focus on creating sustainable income-generating activities to reduce idle time and discourage engagement in criminal behavior.
2. The government should promote family-based support programs that aim to strengthen familial bonds and provide emotional and practical assistance to at-risk youth. Workshops and counseling services can help parents enhance their support for their children, fostering environments that discourage delinquency.
3. There is need for the government to increase access to quality education and vocational training for young people, especially those at risk of dropping out. Initiatives should emphasize the importance of education and provide mentorship

programs to guide youths in their academic and career paths, ultimately reducing their likelihood of criminal involvement.

4. Government should implement community policing strategies that foster collaboration between law enforcement and local communities. Engage youth in positive community activities and programs to build trust and provide alternatives to criminal behavior, thereby creating a safer environment for young people.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

- This study recommends a study on the influence of family structure and support on youth involvement in crime and delinquency in major slums in Kenya.
- Another study should be conducted on the influence of education level on criminal behavior among youths in major slums in Kenya.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CONSENT AND CONSENT FORM SIGNING

Researcher: Annita Mutuku

Institutional Affiliation: KEMU

Introduction

I am requesting you to participate in this research project. Before you decide whether to participate in the study, I would like to discuss the study's objective, risks, and benefits. If you agree to participate in the study, I will tell you what I anticipate of you. It is critical that you understand that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate in this study, I will require you to sign your name or make a mark on this form. I will give you a duplicate of this form to keep. This is known as informed consent.

It is critical that you understand the following:

- You are not required to participate in this study if you do not like to.
- If you do participate, you may withdraw at any time.
- If you decide not to participate in this study, you can still participate in another later.

Purpose of this research

Unemployment is a key issue that is thought to promote youth's involvement in criminality. Socioeconomic factors are considered key indicators of youths' criminal behavior. It is important that all these factors be examined for a better understanding of triggers to criminality and thereafter solutions to such deviant behaviors be addressed. Failing to understand such may translate to high insecurity issues in the estates.

I, therefore, wish to understand the socio-economic consequences of criminal behavior among youths in urban areas. If we understand these factors contributing to this, I will therefore develop strategies to help you and other young people always affected by unemployment issues.

Study procedures

If you accept to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer a few questions about your experience and ideas on the impact of socioeconomic factors on criminal conduct among urban youngsters.

Risks of participation

Answering questions about your experiences and thoughts of the contribution of socioeconomic consequences to youths' criminality may trigger sad memories of the effects of insecurities in the estates where you live. While participating in the study, the researcher will make every attempt to ensure your privacy and confidentiality. You have the option to withdraw from the program at any time. Your decision to participate has no bearing on the services you receive at this clinic.

Benefits of participating in this study

You may receive no direct advantage from participating in this study. The knowledge gained in this study may be useful to you or others in the future.

Costs to You

There is no cost to you for participating in this study.

Confidentiality

Your responses to the questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. Identifying information of any sort will not be given to anyone or any organization that is not working on or managing this study without your express written permission. We will not post or discuss anything that could be used to identify you in public. All of your information, including the connection between your name and code, will be kept private. This study's publication will not use your name or identify you personally.

Problems or Questions:

If you have any queries concerning the study, please contact us Annita Mutuku, 0720 384 777. If you have any concerns about your rights as a study participant, please contact Dr. Muhindi, 0715 112507.

Do you have any questions now?

Consent Form (Statement of Consent)

Participant’s statement

I have read this permission form, or I have had it read to me. I had the chance to discuss this research project with the researcher. My inquiries have received clear, understandable responses. I am aware of the risks and benefits. I am aware that I have the complete right to decline taking part in this study at any moment. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I acknowledge that every effort will be made to keep the details of my personal identification a secret. By signing this permission form, I affirm that I am a research subject and that I have not given up any of my legal rights in doing so.

I agree to participate in this research study: Yes No

I agree to provide contact information for follow up Yes No

Participant printed name:

Participant signature / Thumb stamp _____ **Date**

Researcher’s statement

The participant listed above has received a detailed explanation of the key details of this research study from me, the undersigned, and I believe that the subject has comprehended and freely and voluntarily provided his or her consent.

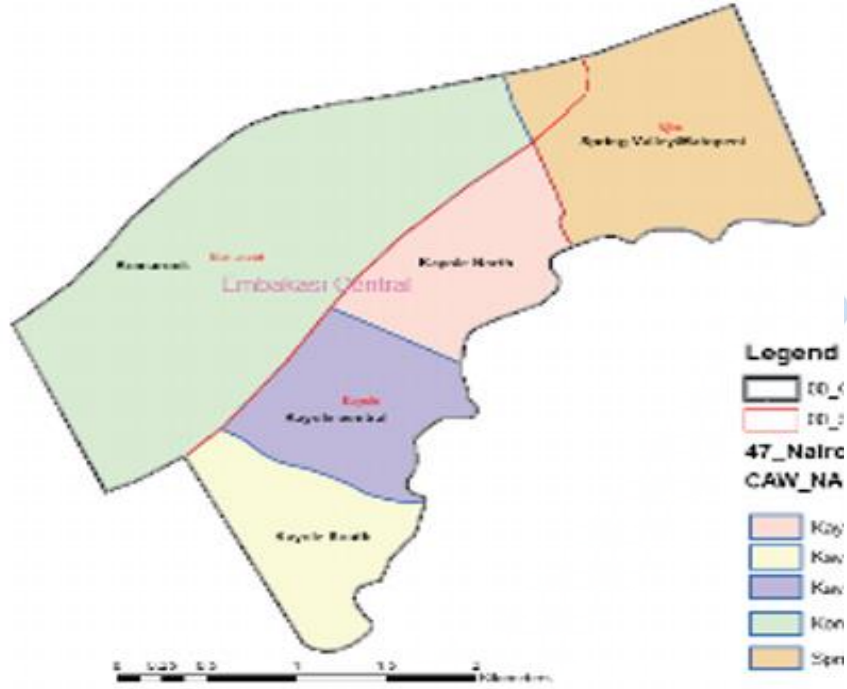
Researcher’s Name: _____

Date:

Signature

APPENDIX B: AREA OF STUDY

30 REVISED ENBAKASI CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY COUNTY ASSEMBLY WARDS



APPENDIX C: RESEARCH BUDGET

Item	Cost in Kshs.
Printing and binding costs	30,000
Photocopy and copy preparations	11,000
Telephone charges	3,000
Authorization letters/permits	2,000
Transport subsistence	5,000
Piloting the study	5,000
Main study	30,000
Contingencies (10% of total)	8,600
Total	94,600

APPENDIX D: RESEARCH SCHEDULE

	March/April	May/June	July	August	Sept.
Topic Selection					
Proposal Preparation					
Corrections					
Pilot Study					
Modification of research instruments					
Authority to collect data					
Field data collection					
Data coding, cleaning, and grouping					
Data analysis and interpretation					
Draft report writing					
Submission of final research project report and report defense					

APPENDIX E: LETTER OF PERMISSION FOR DATA COLLECTION

Annita Mutuku

P.O.BOX

MACHAKOS

7/10/22

S

To whom it may concern,

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES ON CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR
CRIME AMONG YOUTHS IN URBAN AREAS: THE CASE OF EMBAKASI
CENTRAL, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

My name is Annita Mutuku, I am a postgraduate student at Mount Kenya University pursuing a Master's of Arts degree in Criminal Studies. I am currently undertaking a research project on Socio-Economic Consequences On Criminal Behavior Crime among Youths in Urban Areas: The Case of Embakasi Central, Nairobi County, Kenya.

I am happy to let you know that you have been selected to participate in the study. As a result, I need you to fill out the questionnaire that will be provided to you with information. Your identity will be kept private, and we'll only use the information you give us for research.

Yours faithfully,

Annita Mutuku

APPENDIX F: QUESTIONNAIRE
(FOR RESIDENTS FROM EMBAKASI CENTRAL)

Introductory Remarks

I am Annita, a student in the School of Social Sciences at Mount Kenya University. I'm now working on my research project, which is necessary to be awarded the Master of Arts in Criminal Studies degree. The study is on The Socio-Economic Consequences On Criminal Behavior Crime among Youths in Embakasi Central, Nairobi County, Kenya.

The study's conclusions and suggestions will advance the understanding of neighborhood security-related issues. Therefore, I would like to gather information that would help in achieving the goals of this study. Please respond to the questions by checking the appropriate box and/or providing an explanation. Your input will be much valued, and the data you provide will be handled with the utmost discretion. Please respond to the inquiries on this questionnaire.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender of Respondent.
 - a) Male
 - b) Female
2. Age of respondent.
 - a) 26 – 35 years
 - b) 36 – 43 years
 - c) 44 – 52 years
 - d) Over 53 years
3. What is your level of education?
 - a) University Degree
 - b) College level of Education
 - c) High School
 - d) Primary School

Section B: Consequence of Income Level on Criminal Behavior among Youths

The statements below are concerned with the Consequence of Income Level on Criminal Behavior among Youths. Using the scale given, tick in the appropriate column.

1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree					
STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5
Poor socioeconomic status promotes criminal behaviors among the young people					
Youths with strong economic activities in a big way to succeed in shunning societal vices					
Lack of investment among the youths gives an opportunity for them to idle and engage in unwelcomed vices					
Young people who have investments spend most of their time in the business premise and thus least indulge in criminal acts					
Lack of formal employment creates an opportunity for young people to be involved in criminal activities					

Section C: Impact of Family Structure on Youth Involvement in Crime and Delinquency Youths

4. The statements below are concerned with the Impact of Family Structure on Youth Involvement in Crime and Delinquency Youths. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements? Using the scale given, tick in the appropriate column.

1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree					
STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5
In countries where families are affectionate, many youths shun all criminal					
Youths that lack support from their families are unfrieny and tend to engage in forms of criminal acts.					
Most of the youths with low support from the family embrace theft as a wayof meeting their desired needs.					
Youths who live in a none acceptable homes do not mind their behaviors					

Section D: Implication of Work Status on Crime Involvement Youths

5. The statements below are concerned with the influence of Work Status and Crime Involvement Youths. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements? Using the scale given, tick in the appropriate column.

1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree					
STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5
Job scarcity is a key factor that promotes youth's engagement in criminal behaviours.					
Youths who cannot secure job always resort to stealing as a way of earning a living.					
High rate of unemployment promotes criminal acts among the young people.					
Low income earners engage in theft as a way to supplement some of their needs.					

Section E: Influence of Education Level on Criminal Behavior among Youths

6. The statements below are concerned with the Influence of Education Level on Criminal Behavior among Youths. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements? Using the scale given, tick in the appropriate column.

1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree					
STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5
Youths who dropped out of school more often indulge in criminal acts					
Well educated youths rarely take part in any form of criminal act					
The youths whose guardians and parents do not mind about their education have high probability of committing a crime.					
Youths who have acquired work-related skills engage in economic activities thus they rarely indulge in criminal activities.					
Unskilled youths are more often idle and thus more often indulge in criminal activities.					

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

**APPENDIX G: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE
(BOARD OF DIRECTORS)**

Introductory Remarks

I am Annita Mutuku, a student at Mount Kenya University, School of Criminal Studies. I am currently undertaking my research project as a requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Criminal Studies. The study is on the Socio-Economic Consequences of Criminal Behavior Crime among Youths in Embakasi Central, Nairobi County, Kenya.

The findings and recommendations of the study will contribute to the knowledge of the security sector. I would therefore wish to collect data that will help me in realizing the objectives of this study. Please answer the questions. Your contribution will be highly appreciated and the information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Research Questions

Consequences of Income Level on Criminal Behavior among Youths

1. How does the level of income influence criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County?

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.....
.....

2. To what extent do low-income earning youths engage in criminal-related behaviors in urban setups?

.....
.....
.....

Impact of Poverty on Youth Involvement in Crime and Delinquency Youths

3. How does poverty impact on youth involvement in crime and delinquency youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County?

.....
.....

4. How does living in abject poverty contribute to the high rate of crimes committed by youths perceived to be poor?

.....
.....

Implication of Work Status and Crime Involvement Youths

- 5. Does work status influence criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County?
- 6. To what extent does unemployment contribute to crime among the youth?

.....
.....
.....

Influence of Education Level on Criminal Behavior among Youths

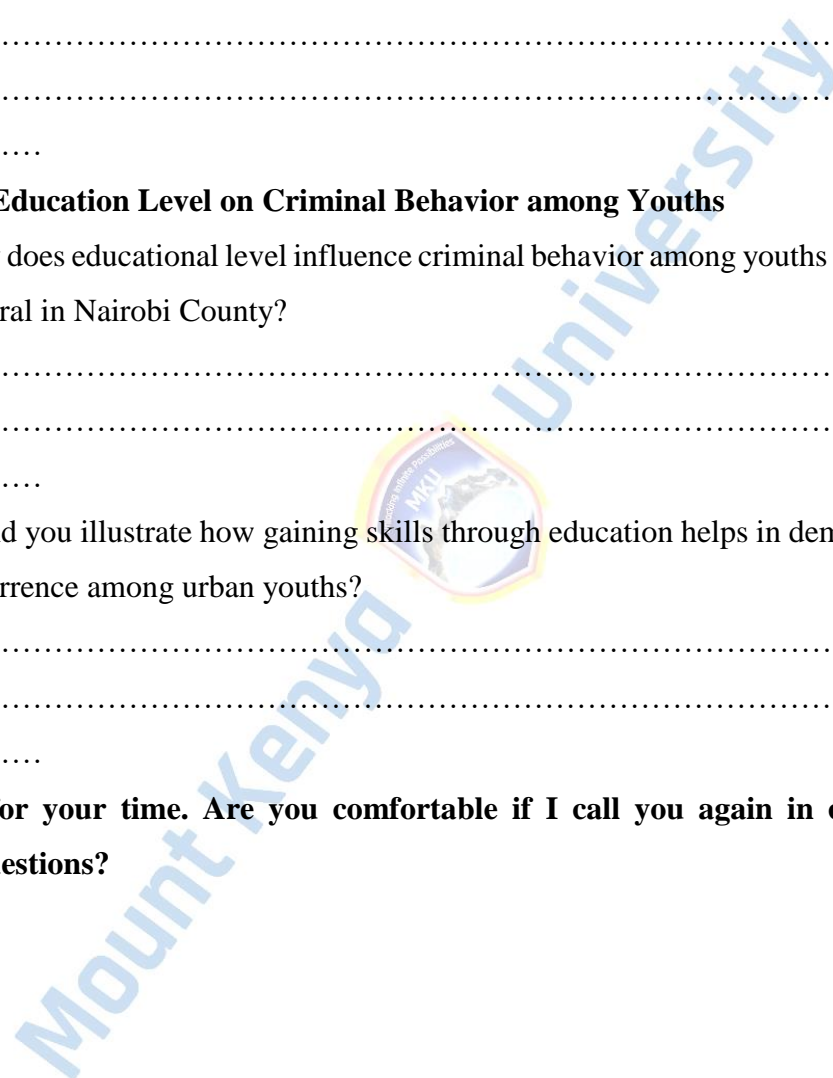
- 7. How does educational level influence criminal behavior among youths in Embakasi Central in Nairobi County?

.....
.....
.....

- 8. Could you illustrate how gaining skills through education helps in demoting crime occurrence among urban youths?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your time. Are you comfortable if I call you again in case I have additional questions?



APPENDIX H: TURNITIN REPORT

Annita Mutuku

ORIGINALITY REPORT

18%	16%	2%	8%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	erepository.uonbi.ac.ke Internet Source	2%
2	Submitted to Mount Kenya University Student Paper	2%
3	ikesra.kra.go.ke Internet Source	1%
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