

## The Influence of The Society on Juvenile Delinquency in Uganda

Bukulu Keneth\*

*Kyungil University, Department of Public Administration, Graduate Student Daegu University, Police administration, Undergraduate. South Korea.*

### \*Corresponding Author

Bukulu Keneth, Kyungil University, Department of Public Administration, Graduate Student Daegu University, Police administration, Undergraduate. South Korea.

**Submitted:** 2026, Mar 02; **Accepted:** 2026, Apr 06; **Published:** 2026, Apr 22

**Citation:** Bukulu, k. (2026). The Influence of the Society on Juvenile Delinquency in Uganda. *Int J Criminol Criminal Law*, 4(2), 01-30.

### Abstract

*This research was conducted to examine the influence of the society on juvenile delinquency in Uganda and also look at the types of behaviors juveniles normally portray as well as finding possible solutions to the problem. For so many years, Uganda has been facing numerous serious social problems such as poverty, unemployment political instability, incurable diseases such as HIV aids among others and this has resulted into breakdown of families, deaths of many and increase in the number of orphans and street children hence leading to the increase in the number of juvenile delinquents in the country.*

*The results of the study shows that even though there are other factors to juvenile delinquency like poverty, low levels of education, mass media among others but social factors such as family dysfunction, peer influence and child abuse are said to be the major cause of the problem since most of children who are in conflict with the law come from broken families and streets according to the reports given by police of Uganda.*

*Juvenile delinquency causes various problems and does not only affect the overall growth and development of a child but also affects the society as whole, therefore this research was aimed to look at how we can improve the social atmosphere in order to combat juvenile delinquency in Uganda.*

*This paper also examined factors for juvenile delinquency in other African countries including Rwanda, Nigeria and South Africa and the results revealed that the causes to existence and increase of juvenile delinquency in these countries are almost the same and therefore this paper suggested similar solutions to eradicate this problem in the entire continent.*

*Secondary data analysis was used as methodology and data from World Bank, United Nations, Uganda annual crime reports and other academic papers were used as materials.*

**Keywords:** Youth Crime in Uganda, Property Crimes by Juveniles, Child Abuse and Delinquency, Child Protection Laws, Street Children, Education Deprivation, Family Dysfunction, Peer Influence.

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Historical Background of Juvenile Delinquency in Uganda

Juvenile delinquency refers to criminal behavior committed by minors. This behavior may range from minor offenses to more serious crimes, such as theft, assault, or even murder. Uganda like

any other developing countries is undergoing a series of cultural, social and economic changes. One of the latter is the migration of people from rural areas to urban areas in search for employment. This has caused population increase in urban centers and the acute shortage of homes and employment opportunities has forced the

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migrants to over crowd in the cheap slum dwellings and similar estates close to industrial areas where children learn different behaviors from different peers.

Juveniles are defined as any person under the age of 18 years. In any country, juveniles are considered the most important part of society. As we often come across this saying “Today’s Children are Tomorrow’s Citizens”, juveniles are expected to be the future leaders of our society. But in a country like Uganda where the crime rate is increasing day by day, we find a lot of instances where juveniles are responsible for a particular that was committed. This is very devastating and shocking news for any country seeing their future leaders committing crimes ranging from small thefts to high profile murders, sexual offenses, smuggling, etc. there are some reasons why these juveniles are committing crimes.

There might be many factors forcing them to commit such crimes. The future of our country mainly depends upon these juveniles and if they are given proper education, they will contribute their talents for a better Uganda. The reason might be anything behind the crimes that are committed by the juveniles but if this can be tackled and if the juveniles are provided with a proper environment, they can develop good skills and abilities. Such crimes committed by the juveniles should not be neglected as this has a high chance to become serious nature among them. Juvenile crimes have now become a national concern and the government has expressed concern about preventing juvenile delinquency as well as punishing juveniles appropriately for the crimes committed by them.

From 1970s and early 1980s Uganda faced many problems which affected child care and protection. Families experienced wars and civil strife, economic strains, natural disasters, disease epidemics like Aids which led to family breakdowns, overwhelming extended family system and weak social fabric of the society. These pressures have increased the number of children in different circumstances such as orphans, street children, physically abused, child labors to mention but a few.

Children in difficult circumstances are those whose basic needs are not met by the traditional social services, family, community, main stream programs and the government, such children attracted the attentions of local international organizations including individuals to respond to the situation in various forms which prompted the establishment of a number of institutional child care homes and family based international members to promote the well-being of those disadvantaged children. Among some of the children care homes include, Naguru remand home, Kampiringisa rehabilitation center, Gulu remand home and fort-portal female remand home.

In Uganda, 10,000 juvenile delinquents live on the streets of Kampala and it has been observed that most of them come to the streets because of mistreatment and lack of basic needs in their families and due to delinquency committed against their communities. Because of delinquency, communities and their families take little interest in them and this makes juvenile

delinquents develop a survival instinct which leads them into more delinquency.

The United Nations estimate that scores of millions of children and adolescents live on the streets (UNICEF, 2020) and that most of these people reside in populous cities in Africa, Latin America and India. To make ends meet, these kids often resort to criminal and other delinquent behavior. Juvenile delinquency is a significant issue in Uganda, with many young people involved in criminal activity. The causes of this are complex and varied, and may include poverty, lack of education, family dysfunction and exposure to violence. These factors can lead to a cycle of crime that is difficult to break. Addressing these factors is crucial in preventing juvenile delinquency and promoting positive youth development.

For many young people in Uganda today, traditional patterns guiding the relationships and transitions between family, school and work are being challenged. Social relations that ensure a smooth process of socialization are collapsing; lifestyle trajectories are becoming more varied and less predictable. The restructuring of the labor market, the extension of the maturity gap (the period of dependence of young adults on the family) and, arguably, the more limited opportunities to become an independent adult are all changes influencing relationships with family and friends, educational opportunities and choices, labor market participation, leisure activities and lifestyles. It is not only developed countries that are facing this situation; in developing countries like Uganda as well there are new pressures on young people undergoing the transition from childhood to independence. Rapid population growth, the unavailability of housing and support services, poverty, unemployment and underemployment among youth, the decline in the authority of local communities, overcrowding in poor urban areas, the disintegration of the family, and ineffective educational systems are some of the pressures young people must deal with.

Literature shows that before the 18th Century, children did not hold a protected status. It is only in the 18th and 19th centuries that the idea developed, that children should be treated in a special way. During the 19th century in western countries "child saving" institutions were established and eventually the state became heavily involved in reforming delinquents through the juvenile court system. The provisions of the Children's Act and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child are said to have three principle objectives, namely, to secure for the child the basic needs for subsistence and rounded growth and development, to secure for the child a framework for the child's participation in the making and implementation of decisions which affect the child and to protect the child against all forms of delinquents

Those rights intended to secure basic needs for growth and development include the right to education, the right to life, survival and development, the right to the highest attainable standards of health, the right to social security, the right to rest, play, recreation and leisure, and right to a standard of living conducive to the mental, physical and moral development of the child and the responsibilities and obligations placed on parents

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and other relatives to secure the best that is possible for the child. Those intended to secure their physical, mental, moral and spiritual development and protection from harmful practices include: protection against discrimination; the rights to family re-unification and to be brought up by one's parents or family; the right to be protected against physical and mental violation, injury and abuse, negligent treatment and maltreatment; the right to be protected against all forms of exploitation including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, economic exploitation and hazardous labor; the right to be protected against illicit narcotic drugs; freedom from torture and cruel and inhuman punishment and treatment; the right to be protected against abduction and illicit transfer and the right to be protected when in difficult circumstances.

In recent years, Uganda's children have been let down by the systems that should be protecting them. How? Although their rights are recognized by law, many of the organizations that ought to be enforcing these rights are not running. In addition, when childcare issues are raised at the village level, local councils are consistently weak at handling them. In the past, communities shared the responsibility for bringing up and protecting children. However, this traditional structure has gradually given way to the modern family unit, in which parents or guardians take care of the child's welfare and development. With the watchful eye of the community disappearing, many children have become vulnerable to mistreatment and other forms of abuse and end up running away from homes and overcrowd on streets where they learn sorts of behaviors like stealing for survival among others.

## **1.2. Existing Laws on Juvenile Delinquency**

In Uganda a juvenile is a person who is below the age of 18. And every child from 12 yrs can be held liable for any criminal act according to the 1995 juvenile act, section 88.

### **1.2.1. The Children Act 1997**

Children who are denied their right to education, in most cases end up being wasted others join the streets, others stealing becomes their means of survival and yet in the Children Act a child in Uganda has a right to be educated and be guided, implying that as children, they should be in school to be educated and guided as required of the parents and guardians.

But contrary to this the guardians or even their parents use them as a source of income by sending to steal and reports say that some parents sell their children to rich men who sexually abuse them, and it is due to the early sexual abuse that many young girls end up in prostitution and other delinquent behaviors.

### **1.2.2. The Convention on the Rights of the Child**

In Uganda a child is a person below 18 years.

Children and young people have the same general human rights as adults and also specific rights that recognize their special needs. Children are neither the property of their parents nor are they helpless objects of charity. They are human beings and are the subject of their own rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international treaty which was signed and ratified

by the Ugandan Government. It sets out the rights that must be realized for children to develop to their full potential.

The Convention recognizes the fundamental human dignity of all children and the urgency of ensuring their well-being and development. It makes clear the idea that a basic quality of life should be the right of all children, rather than a privilege enjoyed by a few.

Children constitute over half of the total population in Uganda which means that their rights and interests should be correspondingly promoted if the country is to develop at an appropriate level of growth. The reality in Uganda today is that there are many children on the streets foraging for a living, which has led many of them into conflict with the law. The children's search for means of survival more often than not leaves them at the mercy of the juvenile justice system.

Uganda adopted The Children Act, Chapter 59 of the Laws of Uganda on August 1, 1997. Under this Act, Local Councils (LCs) are responsible for child protection. If these local government councils cannot resolve a child protection case, it is brought before the Family and Children Court. Section 16 provides that "the child shall have a right to legal representation" in all matters before the family and children court. The Act does not provide any additional information about the responsibilities or duties of the legal representative for the child. The Law Development Center's Legal Aid Clinic represents children in a variety of cases, but its primary focus is on representing children in conflict with the law. Representing children who have been abused or neglected is primarily the responsibility of the state, which would prosecute these cases as criminal proceedings. Thus it seems that most child abuse and neglect cases are handled through the criminal system, whereas most civil family law cases concern maintenance and custody proceedings (Aos, S., 2000).

There are two key issues Uganda faces in implementing the provisions in The Children Act, specifically Section 16. First, Uganda does not have the institutions or financial resources to fully implement the provisions in the Act. In its own initial report to the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Rights of the Child it reports: "In the case of child abuse for instance, the Probation Officer in the present circumstances cannot do much. The officer has no ready place to take the child. Existing children's institutions are inadequate, formal fostering is still not developed owing to cultural and economic limitations. Lipsey, M and Wilson D. asserts that, the greater problem is that Probation and Welfare Officers have no resources, they are few and therefore cannot adequately solve the problems of the child's family and those of the child."

Moreover, three of the five concerns mentioned in the NGO report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child also concern a lack of funding and other resources. Second, customary law is a powerful force in Uganda and at times, it conflicts with certain provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The extended family acting as a support network and the emphasis

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on village resolution through the Local Councils (LC's) are two common elements of customary law in Uganda. Both of these factors could prohibit particularly complex or difficult cases being referred to the family and children court, instead of being resolved by the LC's.

However, it is important to note that there has been extensive training of the LC's on children's rights to legal protection by both the Ugandan government and various NGOs.

Dedicated child-rights agencies have raised the standard of juvenile justice in Kampala.

Nevertheless, many imprisoned children still face state prosecution without adequate legal assistance. Several distressing facts deserve attention. State-funded lawyers defend children accused of capital crimes. Children imprisoned for lesser charges receive the attention of a social worker probation officer. Social workers, however, are untrained in courtroom litigation. Unfortunately, this denial of experienced counsel eliminates any potential for a fair hearing.

Statistics highlight the more pernicious effects of courtroom delays. Most disturbingly, children are held well beyond their period of legal remand. Reports at Central Police Station (CPS) show that all capital suspects in Naguru Remand Home failed to receive court committals before the six-month deadline. Of these children, some of these were retained illegally in the home, while others released in accordance with the law. In addition, it is against such undesirable circumstances that the study assesses juvenile delinquency analysis of the law in order to address the many aspects of youth crime problem.

In Uganda the small percentage of officially registered births makes it difficult to concretely identify the ages of children in conflict with the law. A child in Uganda is considered a person under age 18 and the age of criminal responsibility is 12 years old. However, as less than 4% of children aged between 12 and 18 have birth certificates, determining a person's age can be a subjective process. In order to establish the age of children, the police contact their parents, assess appearance or check the children's teeth. As a result, all of the remand homes and the national rehabilitation center felt they had housed young people outside of the appropriate age boundaries.

### **1.3. Types of Juvenile Crimes in Uganda**

Howard Becker broadly classified juvenile delinquency into four types, i.e, individual, group-supported, organized and situational, based on the way the delinquent behavior is carried out and the underlying social context.

Individual delinquency is used to describe the behavior of a child who engages in criminal activities on their own accord without any assistance from others. Psychiatrists have made major contributions towards the study of individual delinquency. According to them, individual delinquency arises from psychological problems.

According to Doctor Healy, the primary cause for the display of such behavior is the feeble-mindedness of the delinquent. The intellectual impartiality of a child makes him unable to conform to moral norms set by society, which forces the child to adopt criminal behavior.

Children adopt their behavioral patterns by visualizing their immediate environment, making the family a significant factor in determining the child's behavior. Family environment, lifestyle, and relationship dynamics influence the child's mental and intellectual development. A child risks developing an anti-social attitude if parents fail to provide the expected love, compassion, and support. Poverty, lack of education, drug usage, and the criminal background of the child's family are the main forces that raise violent and anti-social behavior among children.

Heredity is also one of the factors leading to delinquent behavior in teenagers. Children inherit negative behavioral traits from their ancestors. However, a change in the environment of the child will reduce the development of those criminal traits.

Group-supported delinquency refers to the behavior of a child who engages in anti-social activities in companionship with others. Delinquents develop this behavior under the influence of the culture prevailing in their immediate neighborhood and social groups outside the family. According to the reports of the United Nations, two third of the total cases of juvenile delinquency are committed by teenagers who group themselves into gang-like organizations.

Frederick Thrasher, in his work "Gang's Theory", discusses group-supported delinquency. Each group has a unique behavioral pattern distinct from other groups, and the members incorporate it into their personalities. During this process, the groups generate animosity towards each other and disseminate criminal techniques to safeguard and promote their interests.

Peer associations are formed among same-aged people. Teenagers devote more time to peer groups than their families. Adolescents are prone to criminal tendencies because they lack adult mental and intellectual maturity at that age.

An individual is willing to take part in any immoral or unethical act that is against the norms of society to get accepted by the group. Parents fail to exercise their control as the child begins to consider the opinions of peers more highly than those of their parents.

Organized delinquency is committed by a group of young people formally organized to engage in criminal activities. These organizations have a hierarchical structure and are guided by the established values and norms of the group. Albert Cohen was the first person to mention organized delinquency. In the book "Delinquent Boys: Culture of the Gang", Albert Cohen developed the theory of subculture. According to Cohen, the delinquent subculture is the primary reason for juveniles' involvement in crime.

Subcultures emerge as the result of existing socioeconomic disparities in society. The working-class individual who wants to achieve success and pursue their goals is constantly confronted with middle-class demands and expectations; they soon realize that the rigid social structure and low social rank prevent them from reaching their goals. Inequalities in society compel the individual to reject the existing societal norms and values and join a subgroup to achieve his goals.

Cloward and Ohlin, in their book “Delinquency and Opportunity” pointed out that youngsters who fail to adjust to their inability to achieve success through legitimate means adopt the illegitimate procedure. Juveniles blame the societal order for their failure rather than their inability. A group of individuals who have faced similar experiences and have a typical attitude of hatred towards the existing system will form a deviant subculture. These delinquent subcultures emerged in America in the 1950s. Drug trafficking among children is a prime example of organized delinquency in India. Juveniles are hired by these organized groups to deliver drugs and substances, and they are often paid in drugs.

In the types mentioned above of delinquencies, the causes for the commission of the crime by juveniles are deep-rooted. They are driven by psychological, social, or cultural factors. But situational delinquency is not deep-rooted; rather, the cause and means of control are relatively simple.

An individual who indulges in anti-social activities because of the limited impulse control or pressure caused by family and societal restraints. In comparison with other types of delinquency, situational delinquency is considerably easier to control.

David Matza referred to Situational Delinquency in his book “Delinquency and Drift”. According to Matza, every person has criminal tendencies that are suppressed in accordance with societal norms. A juvenile is caught between the delinquent world and the conventional world; despite having knowledge about the norms and values of society, the juvenile bends towards deviant behavior due to his permissive temptations. Matza called this process “Drift”.

David Matza states that techniques of neutralization enable drift. Neutralization is the process through which youth justify their delinquent acts. However, the concept of situational delinquency is not developed and is not given much relevance to the problem of juvenile delinquency.

In Uganda, juvenile delinquency has become a threat to the urban centers and families; with major characteristics of theft, arson, drug trafficking, addiction to commit crimes which altogether have constituted a threat to the general public.

Property crimes: (theft, robbery, arson), violent crimes: (assault, rape and murder) sex related crimes: (sexual assault, rape and prostitution) and cyber-crimes: (fraud, hacking and cyber bullying) are the behaviors that juveniles Uganda normally portray.

Due to absence of birth certificates and other identification documents it is hard in most cases to know the real age of juveniles who are in conflict with the law and some end up not being punished or get treated as adult offenders.

The National Identification process was consolidated into the National Identification and Registration Authority, and since then the birth certificate register has been integrated with the National ID system.

A total of 89 percent Ugandan children do not have birth certificates, according to a new report by United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). The report titled “The extent and nature of multidimensional child poverty and deprivation”, compiled after a two-and-a half year study, indicates that Karamoja Sub-region has the lowest number of children with birth certificates in the country with 1 percent, followed by West Nile with 4 percent where as Busoga and Bukedi are at 5 percent.

The statistics below show that juvenile crime in Uganda is increasing in some crime categories. There are some statistics missing especially on drug abuse, but the explanation from police is that many of the drug abusers are usually returned to their parents and may not be prosecuted by police. Some may not be entered in the criminal register. The crime prevalence is shown below:

Crime	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Sexual assault	680	785	466	534	512	545	418
Thefts	291	441	268	318	403	424	323
Assaults	344	305	163	306	298	216	208
Breaking	36	199	147	201	229	234	13
Drug abuse	57		13	27			
Robberies	87	113	62	35	48	56	66

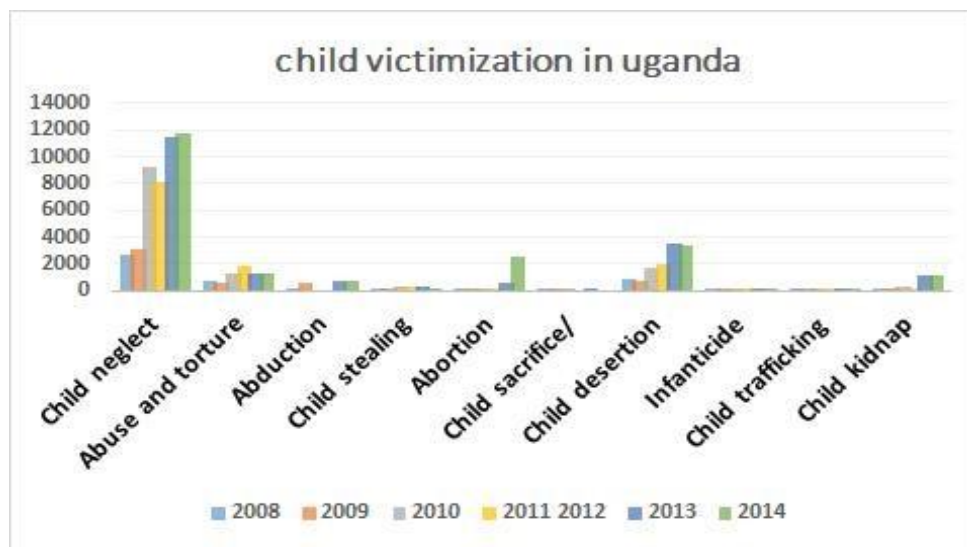
Source: Uganda Police Statistics

**Table 1: Children as offenders. Number of offenders by crime Type**

Crime	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Child neglect	2628	3126	9293	8075		11,519	11,791
Abuse and torture	660	552	1315	1775		1332	1205
Abduction	188	615				729	771
Child stealing	157	206	301	261		295	216
Abortion	48	72	23	66		555	2578
Child sacrifice	25	15	14			9	
Child desertion	870	754	1732	1973		3541	3335
Infanticide	37	46	46	66		82	55
Child trafficking	49	16	44	69		187	220
Child kidnap	100	49	238	125		1061	1146

Source: Uganda Police Statistics Reports

**Table 2: Children as Victims of Crime. Number of Victimization by Crime Type**



**Figure 1:** A Bar Graph Showing the Trends of Child Victimization from the year 2008-2014 is Presented Below

From the graph above, it can be seen that child neglect constitutes the largest proportion of crimes committed against children. According to the police, such a trend is a reflection of widespread poverty as well as society that no longer views children as belonging to the community. From the graph, it can also be seen that child abuse and torture occur at a high frequency. Finally, in 2013, the police noted an increase in child trafficking in the country. A total of 435 Ugandan nationals were trafficked to different countries. Of these, 44 were male juveniles and 36 were female juveniles. The rest were adults.

Kidnapping refers to where a child is taken out of the parent/guardian's control without the authority of the parent/guardian (S.239 Penal Code Act). Abduction on the other hand refers to where a child is taken out of the control of the parent/guardian by compulsion or deceit with the aim of doing something wrong to the child, e.g. marriage (S 241, Penal Code Act). Child stealing occurs where a child is below the age of 14 years and is taken out of the custody of the parent (S.159, Penal Code Act).

There are children who are injured in accidents which translate into criminal negligence. For example, in 2010, a total of 417 male and 217 female juveniles died in accidents. 968 male and 761 female juveniles were seriously injured in accidents including losing limbs or becoming disabled. 142 males and 111 females were slightly injured. In 2011, 365 male and 265 female juveniles died in accidents. 981 male and 703 female juveniles were seriously injured. 179 male and 141 female juveniles were slightly injured.

Children who are victims of crime such as abuse among others usually run away from their homes end up on street and start engaging in criminal activities like stealing as a mean of survival.

Girls make up almost 10% of the population of CICL (children in conflict with law) in Uganda. The criminal justice system in Uganda is also used for safe custody of girls and girls may be detained simply because they are victims of crime, for example of forced marriages, child trafficking and commercial sexual

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exploitation. Girls are also put in so-called protective custody to escape honor crimes.

Children who have been deemed to be beyond parental control or girls who become pregnant before marriage may also be handed over by their parents to the Ugandan juvenile justice system. Many studies worldwide cite the harsher treatment of women and girls in the criminal justice system due to contravening gender norms. This includes for non-violent crime such as status offenses and acts such as theft and prostitution. Status offences (such as truancy, running away from home, violating curfew laws or possessing alcohol or tobacco) are often used against girls to control their behavior. Meanwhile, girls who have turned to sex work as a survival strategy or are victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are prosecuted, instead of the adults who are exploiting them. There are calls for status offences to be identified as welfare issues, for these offences to be abolished and the conduct addressed through child protection mechanisms.

Violent crime. There are isolated cases of murders committed by children in Uganda, either on their own or together with adults. In the national rehabilitation center Kampiringisa, two girls in the center were being held for murder as of August 2010. In 2014, the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) made monitoring visits to fishing communities in Uganda and found that sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is widespread. Approximately 90% of female suspects found in police cells had been arrested for assault and causing grievous bodily harm mostly perpetrated against their partners.

Risk factors are Poverty, peer pressure, a poor home environment, and lack of guidance were cited as situations that cause children to come into conflict with the law in Uganda. More than one study in Uganda highlights the vulnerability of young people as leading to their coming in to conflict with law, as a result of them being targeted by adults. For example, girls facing the juvenile courts in Kampala are said to be there as a result of trumped up charges by their employers, with girls working as maids in homes and restaurants accused of stealing money or babies, as a way of denying them wages. Studies on the background characteristics of women in the justice system in Uganda could not be found. However, a history of trauma is almost universal among incarcerated adults in the USA (over 85%). Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is four to 10 times more prevalent among incarcerated women than in community samples.

Girls may be susceptible to peer pressure in different ways to boys. Girls experience more emotional stress from problem relationships because they are socialized to focus on relationships. This is particularly true in adolescence when relationship conflict can girls to associate with antisocial peers and romantic partners, increasing their vulnerability to delinquent behaviors.

Poverty. For both boys and girls in Uganda, theft and other crimes can be a response to poverty. One study revealed that the majority of offenses committed by children and young people in Uganda

are related to their very survival and many had been forced to steal National Strategic Programme Plan of Interventions for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children, the Northern region in which Chance for Childhood operates has the highest percentage of critically and moderately vulnerable children in the country at 62.9% (Central region has the lowest at 41.4%).

Young people aged 18-30 account for 64% of the total unemployed population in Uganda. The unemployment rate is higher among the better educated and among young women. However, even where youth are employed, 60% of paid young employees take home less than the average monthly wages/salaries. The disparity in median monthly wages by gender is significant at Shs 66,000 (USD \$20) for females and Shs 132,000 (USD \$40) for males.

Criminalization as a result of poverty or other factors further prohibits livelihood options and children are caught in a vicious cycle. Young people in Uganda said they are denied jobs after being released from prison because they lack skills and are burdened by social stigma.

A lack of livelihood options mean many young women resort to sex work and subsequently become more vulnerable to HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases, to abuse and to coming into contact with the law. Female youth are particularly engaged in brewing local alcohol as a main economic activity, which can be highly dangerous and therefore classified as the worst forms of child labor and hazardous work. Alcohol produced in the informal sector makes up about 80% of alcohol consumed in Uganda.

A major issue affecting young women and financial sustainability is access to land. Lack of land ownership and economic insecurity increases the dependence on and subordination to men, and makes women and girls vulnerable to the high rates of SGBV education and her future prospects.

Various vulnerabilities cause children to abandon their childhood and seek coping strategies to ensure their survival. Or children are forced into deplorable situations of abuse and neglect, for example by being trafficked for sexual exploitation. The common root of this lack of agency violation of their human rights is vulnerability caused by a range of factors many of which coexist and are interrelated. For example substance abuse to cope with abuse and hunger; children in street situations linked to poverty, witchcraft accusations or conflict at home; SGBV both resulting from child marriage and causing it, when a girl feels that it is her only option for escape from an untenable home life.

While girls in Uganda are generally vulnerable to human rights abuses due to gender inequality, specific groups of girls are more greatly affected. These include girls with disabilities, girls in conflict affected areas, girls who are out of school, girls subject to child marriage, child mothers, orphans, girls subject to defilement and SGBV, girls affected by HIV/AIDS, girls who have been trafficked for exploitation, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex (LGBTI) children, and girls in street situations. Many

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of these vulnerabilities co-exist for an individual child, and vastly diminish the range of available coping strategies and livelihood options. Such girls are therefore pushed further along a path which forces them into conflict with the law (such as through sex work).

The majority of children in case studies in a global Save the Children study on CICL had dropped out of school, either to work to support their families or themselves, or because their parents were unable to pay the costs of their education. A lack of education may be the result of other vulnerabilities/abuses (e.g. child marriage, children in street situations) and may lead to further forms of vulnerability/abuse (illiteracy, lack of access to higher education).

Orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) in Uganda are more likely to engage in child labor. However, many such children end up resorting to theft and street begging. A child's coping strategies and live hood options on the street are likely to result in coming into conflict with the law as a going hungry; having sex with a policeman or being arrested. All the categories of vulnerability therefore have complex interrelationships and the denial or provision of support in one area can affect other areas. For example, education is protective against child marriage, conversely poverty keeps girls in abusive relationships and forces them to marry their defilers in exchange for compensation agreed with their parents.

#### **1.4. Factors Influencing Juvenile Delinquency in Uganda**

##### **1.4.1. Social Factors**

###### **1.4.1.1. Family Dysfunction**

Family dysfunction is the major contributing factor to juvenile delinquency in Uganda. Children from broken homes or those who experience neglect or abuse may turn to criminal behavior as a way to escape their home situation. It is also believed that family influence contributes to more delinquent behaviors than peer pressure. In researches, it has been proven that families in which there is a weak emotional bonding between the members of the family, tend to have juveniles who turn out to be delinquent. Family factors that may have an influence on offending include: the level of parental supervision, the way parents discipline a child, parental conflict or separation, criminal activity by parents or siblings, parental abuse or neglect, and the quality of the parent-child relationship. As mentioned above, parenting style is not of the largest predictors of juvenile delinquency.

There are 4 categories of parenting styles which describe the attitudes and behaviors that parents express while raising their children.

1. Authoritative parenting is characterized by warmth and support in addition to discipline.
2. Indulgent parenting is characterized by warmth and regard towards their children but lack structure and discipline.
3. Authoritarian parenting is characterized by high discipline without the warmth thus leading to often hostile demeanor and harsh correction.
4. Neglectful parenting is both non responsive and non-demanding. The child is not engaged either affectionately or disciplinary by the parent.

According to research done by Laura E. Berk, the style of parenting that would be most beneficial for a child, based on studies conducted by Diana Baumrind (1971) is the authoritative child-rearing style because it combines acceptance with discipline to render healthy development for the child.

As concluded in Steinberg's Adolescence, children brought up by single parents are more likely to live in poverty and engage in delinquent behavior than those who live with both parents. However, according to research done by Graham and Bowling, once the attachment a child feels towards their parent(s) and the level of parental supervision are taken into account, children in single parent families are no more likely to offend than others. It was seen that when a child has low parental supervision they are much more likely to offend. Negative peer group association is more likely when adolescents are left unsupervised. A lack of supervision is also connected to poor relationships between children and parents. Children who are often in conflict with their parents may be less willing to discuss their activities with them. Conflict between a child's parents is also much more closely linked to offending than being raised by a lone parent.

Adolescents with siblings who have committed crimes are more likely to be influenced by their siblings and become delinquent if the sibling is older, of the same sex/gender, and maintains a good relationship with the child. Cases where a younger criminal sibling influences an older one are rare. An aggressive more hostile sibling is less likely to influence a younger sibling in the direction of delinquency, if anything, the more strained the relationship between the siblings, the less they will want to be influenced by each other.

A family, especially parents, plays a big role in the development of the child/adolescent. Issues associated with family can be one of the risk factors. These issues can be economic, social, etc. In Uganda, with the increasing number of immigrants rises the number of minors left without a parent. For grandparents or other caregivers, sometimes it is challenging to pay attention and supervise these children so they do not end up in an unfavorable environment. Improper surroundings may push a child/adolescent to commit a crime. The causes of committing a crime can be domestic violence, parental indifference and their bad habits, etc.

Often, potential perpetrators are the victims of violence. Individuals may confront violence in a variety of social settings: in family, school, etc. Children who have experienced violence are most likely to have infringed relationships with adults, cannot communicate with their peers, and become "bullies" to prove themselves, sometimes they link their fate to a criminal environment.

A human being goes through several stages of social development, among which childhood and adolescence are important. Values, patterns of behavior, and motives are forming in childhood age. At this stage, family and parents play an important role in a person's life. Further, in adolescence, people try to define their own identity,

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try to establish themselves, and often the influence of parents is replaced by the influence of peers and friends. Hence, the reason for juvenile delinquency can become imitation. They can follow the example of: Society is a second institution after family which is play very important role for the physical, social, psychological and moral development of the child. It can also prevent a juvenile from delinquency. A child receives social norms and values from their society which affects significantly behavior of the child. Numerous negative factors which is prevalent in the society that negatively impact on behavior of the children thereby associating them to become delinquents i.e., moral degradation, social deviance, immoral practices, negative values and norms(Chingtham, 2015).

#### **1.4.1.2. Peer Pressure**

Peer pressure. Children who associate with delinquent peers are more likely to engage in criminal behavior. The desire to fit in and be accepted by their peers can lead to poor decision-making. Research has shown that young people who form relationships with positive individuals and groups that pursue positive commitments and it tend to shun delinquent behaviors while on the other hand, juveniles can be engaged in activities that do not have concrete objectives and commitments. Peer rejection in childhood is also a large predictor of juvenile delinquency. This rejection can affect the child's ability to be socialized properly and often leads them to gravitate towards anti-social peer groups.

Association with anti-social groups often leads to the promotion of violent, aggressive and deviant behavior. Robert Vargas's "Being in 'Bad' Company," explains that adolescents who can choose between groups of friends are less susceptible to peer influence that could lead them to commit illegal acts. Aggressive adolescents who have been rejected by peers are also more likely to have a "hostile attribution bias", which leads people to interpret the actions of others (whether they be hostile or not) as purposefully hostile and aggressive towards them. This often leads to an impulsive and aggressive reaction.

Criminal behavior is acquired through interactions with others. An individual becomes a criminal when there is excess of conditions that promote the infringement of law over conditions that prevent such infringement, and among children, some get good company of friends, while other do not. The child who is in the bad company of friends, progresses towards crime while the child who gets into good reminds company progress to become an able citizen in the society. An individual behavior is influenced to considerable extent bit eh conduct of his companions. In order to induce the children to accept and respect the values and assumptions of audit society around them it is necessary to create such an environment in which inspiration to criminal behavior is reduced to the absolute minimum.

#### **1.4.1.3. Abuse and Trauma**

A number of children in Uganda are subjected to psychological and physical abuse in their own households. The psychological effect of these abuses not only causes near-irreversible trauma, but

also increases the risk of criminal behavior in later life. Studies show that child maltreatment can double the chance that a child may become a delinquent during their adolescent stage and up to adulthood.

### **1.4.2. Economic Factors**

#### **1.4.2.1. Poverty**

Poverty is a significant contributing factor to juvenile delinquency in Uganda. Children from poor families often lack access to education and healthcare, leading to a lack of opportunities for employment. This can lead to criminal behavior as a means of survival.

Although the direct relationship between economic welfare and delinquency is still unproven, statistics indicate that there are high rates of delinquency attributed to poverty and poor welfare. Children who engage in the most serious forms of delinquency for example are more likely to be members of poor families and those without parents, especially the orphans or those driven out of their homes by unbearable violence. Poverty limits the capacity of households to provide for daily needs of its members and as a result, members especially the youth may resort to accessing basic necessities through means considered deviant from the law and social norms such as sex for pay and theft. An assessment conducted on the causes of female delinquency indicates that need for income to feed the family, pay school fees, buy clothes, feed children and pay household rent were the driving factors behind female involvement in activities considered criminal and anti-social such as prostitution (MYICT, 2013). Of the total interviewees, 72 percent of the sex workers interviewed were supporting children financially, whereas 80 percent of them were orphans, affirming the fact that the primary push for sex work was income generation.

#### **1.4.2.2. Unemployment**

The general unemployment rate in Uganda today stands at 4.28% while the youth unemployment rate is at 6.58%. Ugandan youths, that is people aged 12 to 35, account for 78% of the country's population, or approximately 27 million people. As many as 64% – 70% of those of working age are unemployed. Which makes it hard for many to survive without legitment source of income. And many parents use their children as source of income by sending them out to still food and other items, something that is contributing to the increase of juvenile delinquency in the country.

Unemployment and lack of education. A child who is not enough mature or those who can identify themselves what is good and bad for him and they are easily influenced by the prevailing wrong practices or values of the society and they have in the greater chance to indulge in the anti-social activities. Education plays a significant role in children life. Education and criminality are linked; where education rates are high, criminality rates are low, and where education rates are low, and criminality rates are high.

One of the leading causes of juvenile criminality in any society is a lack of educational opportunities. Children may experience extreme anxiety, frustration, and idleness as a result of a lack

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of educational opportunities, which may encourage children to engage in antisocial activities (Mwangangi, 2019). It is impossible to pinpoint a single reason for a child crime. The causes of child crime differ from one child to the next. Combination of factors such as a broken home, poor family conditions, addicted parents, peer group pressure, or bad company of friends, among others, play a significant role in increasing the incidence of child crime in Uganda. However apart from these, children in conflict with the law were more aggressive than typical children. Then it is necessary to identify the causes of children being in conflict with the law in order to prevent them from engaging in anti-social activities, crime, harmful and illegal behavior, and to implement an appropriate juvenile justice system (Gupta et al., 2015). According to Be croft (2009), he found that association with Anti-social peers serves as a training ground for delinquent behavior and raises the chances of juvenile becoming delinquent.

### **1.4.3. Other Factors**

#### **1.4.3.1. HIV and Aids**

This disease has resulted in a large number of orphans with no relatives to care for them. These children are not only left without parental guidance but also with little means of survival. In order to survive, some of these children get involved in criminal activities like stealing. This cause is intertwined with poverty which forces the poor children to fend for themselves by engaging in criminal activity.

#### **1.4.3.2. Drug Abuse**

Drug abuse has become a common phenomenon among juveniles in Uganda. School-going juveniles are introduced to drugs by delinquent peers. Once addicted, the desire to acquire more drugs causes them to commit other crimes like theft to maintain this habit. Ten of the juveniles at Nagulu remand home had committed drug-related offenses. Some of these juveniles were charged with capital offenses such as rape, murder, robbery and child-to-child sex.

#### **1.4.3.3. Domestic Violence**

Some of the children claimed that domestic violence was one of the key factors that led them to desert their homes and join criminal gangs. Some children were repeatedly abused by their parents/maids. This is in agreement with Albert Bandura's learning theory [1]. Bandura believes that an environment characterized by conflicts, decay and insufficient social organization is a major determinant of delinquency among juveniles.

#### **1.4.3.4. Corruption**

One of the probation officers in Kampala complained that police officers handling children matters are sometimes prone to corruption. They are bribed by child offenders to turn a blind eye to some of their transgressions. Many victims of defilement end up being accused of lying and chased away from the units. The rich are in most cases protected. Some police officers connive with traffickers and release some unclaimed kids to them. Cases where children are victims are sometimes "messed up" by police and investigations are not completed or inconclusive. Police demand

for "facilitation" from the victim's relatives, to enable them to carry out the investigations. Money for buying supplies for kids is sometimes embezzled by police.

### **1.5. Possible Solutions to the Problem**

Prevention and intervention strategies for juvenile delinquency in Uganda should focus on addressing root causes and promoting positive youth development. Effective strategies include mentoring programs, community-based initiatives that engage youth and promote positive behavior, education, strengthening of family functions, family counseling and encouraging use of family planning like contraceptives and rehabilitation programs. It is important to address the root causes of the problem and provide support to the youth to prevent them from engaging in criminal behavior.

#### **1.5.1. Education**

Education promotes economic growth, national productivity and innovation, and values of democracy and social cohesion. Prevention through education has been seen to discourage delinquency for minors and help them strengthen the connection and understanding between peers. Educations also helps youths to compete for reasonable jobs that will enable them to earn a living.

#### **1.5.2. Establishing Centers That Supports Victims of Crime**

To help children and juveniles who are victims of crimes such as abuse among others to prevent them from becoming criminals in the future, there is a need to have such centers in Uganda. Most delinquents come from broken families in Uganda who have experienced one or two types of abuse and these children if there are not handled carefully and sensitively, they grow up and practice the same things they experienced.

#### **1.5.3. Strengthening of Family Functions**

As the saying goes, 'There is a problematic family behind the problem child,' many parts of juvenile delinquency begin with problems within the family. In fact, juvenile delinquents are often victims of domestic violence and parental indifference.

Strengthening the functional environment of the family so that children can grow and be raised healthy is very important for preventing juvenile delinquency.

#### **1.5.4. Separation of Juvenile Offenders from Adult Detentions**

In Uganda, the number of juvenile delinquents that go to correctional facilities to serve time for the crimes they have committed has been on the rise. At the same time, incarcerated youth return to the justice system at alarmingly high rates. Minority youth make up approximately two-thirds of the youth in the juvenile justice system (Griffin, 2010). Total juvenile arrest rates peaked in 2010 at 9,443 per 100,000 youth aged 10 yrs to 17 yrs and fell by one-third in 2008 (to 6,318 per 100,000). This trend has, however, changed with the current juveniles in custody having increased by over 60 percent (2008 – 2012) from 6,318 to 13,108 per 100,000.

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For children in contact with the law, being put into prison should only be a last resort and for the shortest time possible. However, this basic right, as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is all too frequently ignored in Uganda.

Vulnerable children, such as those living on the streets, are particularly likely to be arrested and detained for a wide array of minor or 'status' offenses such as vagrancy, petty theft or use of abusive language. Beating during arrest and confinement is common. Because of the lack of birth certificates and proof of age, children are often detained when they are under the age of criminal responsibility 12 years.

Despite increased awareness of the necessity to separate children from adults in detention, the lack of separate holding facilities in many police stations puts children at risk of physical and sexual abuse. Many have no access to legal representation and are denied visits from parents or relatives. Bail conditions are stringent and not easily accessible to children. In other parts of the country, children are tried in open adult courts, creating an intimidating atmosphere. Magistrates use the same procedure for children as for adults, which does not take into account the best interests of the child. There is a need to separate youth offenders from adult offenders in detention centers in Uganda in order to prevent possible recidivism (tendency of a convicted criminal to re-offend).

### 1.5.5. Family Counseling and Encouraging Use of Family Planning Such As Contraceptives

Uganda has one of the fastest population growth in the world, it is 32nd most populated country in the world and 8th in Africa with the population of 49 million people as of 2023.

Women in Uganda have an average of 7 children, which is higher the African average of 5.1 but more than double that of the global average of 2.7. Ugandan government's lack of responsibility in improving family planning is a major reason for the country's exponential population growth.

Due to high levels of poverty families can't afford taking care of these children which force them to look for what to eat by themselves using all means possible including illegal methods like stealing hence an increase in juvenile delinquency. Encouraging families to use family planning will practically reduce giving birth to unplanned children.

### 1.6. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to assess the influence of the society on juvenile delinquency in Uganda, find out what kind of behaviors do juveniles portray as well as finding possible ways that can be used to prevent juvenile delinquency.

### 1.7. Research Limitation

Due to unavailability of some data on juvenile delinquency like ages of delinquents and accurate numbers on some crimes committed by juveniles in Uganda made it hard to compare the situation in Uganda with other countries.

I hope this research helps in making those in charge of juvenile delinquents to gain more interest on this very matter and find a way to track and record behaviors committed by juveniles in order to find solutions.

### 1.8. Definitions of Key Terms

- **Delinquent:** This is a person who behaves in a way that is illegal or unacceptable to most people
- **Delinquency:** This is unacceptable behaviors among juveniles in accordance to the moral codes of the society
- **Juvenile Delinquency:** Juvenile delinquency, also known as juvenile offending, is the act of participating in unlawful behavior as a minor or individual younger than the statutory age of majority.
- **Rehabilitation Centers:** These are places where juvenile delinquents are taken for psychotherapy, guidance and for the pro-social behavior in order to wipe away the antisocial characters.
- **Remand Home:** place where young offenders are confined and rehabilitated.
- **Juveniles:** are defined as any person under the age of 18 years
- **Recidivism:** is the tendency for an offender to engage in repeated criminal behavior.
- **Genocide:** the deliberate killing of a large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation or group.
- **Unemployment:** is a term referring to individuals who are employable and actively seeking a job but are unable to find a job.

#### 1.8.2. List of Abbreviations

- **RC:** rehabilitation center
- **RH:** remand home
- **CRC:** convention of rights of child
- **UN:** united nation
- **UNICEF:** united nation international children emergency fund
- **HIV/AIDS:** human immunodeficiency virus/ acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
- **CDC:** center for disease control
- **CICL:** children in conflict with law
- **OVC:** orphans and vulnerable children
- **SGBV:** sexual and gender based violence
- **PSTD:** post-traumatic stress disorder
- **UPACR:** Uganda police annual crime report.

### 2. Literature Review

The purpose of literature survey is to analyze what has been covered of the problem under study within Uganda, the key findings, and gaps left and propose how the current study intends to fill that important void in research.

For some time now, there has been concern about the increase in the problem of youth delinquency and in a lot of cases, the society is held responsible for deviant behaviors of the youth. As young adults navigate their way from childhood into adulthood,

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they generally explore the world around them and try to fit in a very confusing and complex new world. This often leads to a change in behavior that many might term, delinquent behavior. (Horney et al., 2012) explained that juvenile delinquency is often associated with young people who just want to annoy people and make life difficult for decent, peace-loving individuals. Perhaps to properly understand the concept of delinquency and its level around the world, it is pertinent that a definition of delinquency is first attempted.

Research over the past few decades on normal child development and on development of delinquent behavior has shown that individual, social, and community conditions as well as their interactions influence behavior. There is general agreement that behavior, including antisocial and delinquent behavior, is the result of a complex interplay of individual biological and genetic factors and environmental factors, starting during fetal development and continuing throughout life (Bock and Goode, 1996). Clearly, genes affect biological development, but there is no biological development without environmental input. Thus, both biology and environment influence behavior.

Many children reach adulthood without involvement in serious delinquent behavior, even in the face of multiple risks. Although risk factors may help identify which children are most in need of preventive interventions, they cannot identify which particular children will become serious or chronic offenders. It has long been known that most adult criminals were involved in delinquent behavior as children and adolescents; most delinquent children and adolescents, however, do not grow up to be adult criminals (Robins, 1978). Similarly, most serious, chronically delinquent children and adolescents experience a number of risk factors at various levels, but most children and adolescents with risk factors do not become serious, chronic delinquents. Furthermore, any individual factor contributes only a small part to the increase in risk. It is, however, widely recognized that the more risk factors a child or adolescent experiences, the higher their risk for delinquent behavior.

A very robust finding in the delinquency literature is that antisocial behavior is strongly related to involvement with deviant peers. One longitudinal study reported that involvement with antisocial peers was the only variable that had a direct effect on subsequent delinquency other than prior delinquency (Elliott et al., 1985). Factors such as peer delinquent behavior, peer approval of deviant behavior, attachment or allegiance to peers, time spent with peers, and peer pressure for deviance have all been associated with adolescent antisocial behavior (Hoge et al., 1994; Thornberry et al., 1994). In other words, the effects of deviant peers on delinquency are heightened if adolescents believe that their peers approve of delinquency, if they are attached to those peers, if they spend much time with them, and if they perceive pressure from those peers to engage in delinquent acts.

There is a dramatic increase during adolescence in the amount of time adolescents spend with their friends, and peers become

increasingly important during this developmental period. Moreover, peers appear to be most important during late adolescence, with their importance peaking at about age 17 and declining thereafter (Warr, 1993). Thus the decline in delinquency after about age 18 parallels the decline in the importance of peers, including those with deviant influences. Consistent with this view, in the longitudinal research of antisocial British youth by West and Farrington (1977), deviant youth reported that withdrawal from delinquent peer affiliations was an important factor in resistance from offending.

Peer influences appear to have a particularly strong relationship to delinquency in the context of family conflict. For example, adolescents' lack of respect for their parents influenced their antisocial behavior only because it led to increases in antisocial peer affiliations (Simmons et al., 1991). Patterson et al. (1991) showed that association with deviant peers in 6th grade could be predicted from poor parental monitoring and antisocial activity in 4th grade. And 6th grade association with deviant peers, in turn, predicted delinquency in 8th grade. In adolescence, susceptibility to peer influence is inversely related to interaction with parents (Kandel, 1980; Kandel and Andrews, 1987; Steinberg, 1987).

Other research suggests that adolescents usually become involved with delinquent peers before they become delinquent themselves (Elliott, 1994b; Elliott et al., 1985; Simons et al., 1994). In those cases in which an adolescent was delinquent prior to having delinquent friends, the delinquency was exacerbated by association with deviant peers (Elliott, 1994b; Elliott and Menard, 1996; Thornberry et al., 1993).

The influence of peers varies depending on the influence of parents. In general, peer influence is greater among children and adolescents who have little interaction with their parents (Kandel et al., 1978; Steinberg, 1987). Parents seem to have more influence on the use of drugs among working-class than among middle-class families, and among blacks more than whites (Biddle et al., 1980). Parents also appear to be more influential for the initial decision whether to use any drugs than for ongoing decisions about how and when to use them (Kandel and Andrews, 1987). Patterson and his coworkers emphasize both family socialization practices and association with deviant peers as having strong influences on the onset of delinquency.

He hypothesized that "the more antisocial the child, the earlier he or she will become a member of a deviant peer group" (Patterson and Yoerger, 1997:152).

Neighborhood. Existing research points to a powerful connection between residing in an adverse environment and participating in criminal acts [2]. Sociological theories of deviance hypothesize that "disorganized neighborhoods have weak social control networks; that weak social control, resulting from isolation among residents and high residential turnover, allows criminal activity to go unmonitored" (Herrenkohl et al., 2001:221). Although researchers debate the interaction between environmental and

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personal factors, most agree that "living in a neighborhood where there are high levels of poverty and crime increases the risk of involvement in serious crime for all children growing up there" [2].

Agonza (2014) conducted a study about the influence of family unit structure on juvenile delinquency at Gulu Children's Remand Home. The specific objectives of the study were to study the relationship between Juvenile delinquency and intact family structure, a single parent family structure mother only/father only), a family structure with a step parent, a child brought in a children home and for children brought up by grandparents. The study findings revealed that the family serves as a natural support system and a barrier against outside forces attempting to negatively influence children. It was also revealed that the absence of a father figure in a home has received the bulk of the blame for undermining a child's ability to adjust and fend off the social pressures of adolescence. It was also found out that the circumstances surrounding the loss of one parent are not the main issue, but the mere absence of one parent from the home affects the child's adjustment and socialization. However, there was a knowledge and environmental gap in Agonza's study, his study focused on a remand home while the current study focused on Kampala Capital City, Nakawa Division. From 1970s and early 1980s Uganda faced many problems which affected child care and Protection. Families experienced wars and civil strife, economic strains, natural disasters, Disease epidemics like Aids which led to family breakdowns, overwhelming extended family System and weak social fabric of the society.

These pressures have increased the number of Children in different circumstances such as orphans, street children, physically abused, child Labors to mention but a few. Children. The United Nations estimate that scores of millions of children and adolescents live on the streets (UNICEF, 2020) and that most of these people reside in populous cities in Africa, Latin America and India. To make ends meet, these kids often resort to criminal and other delinquent behavior.

Family is the basic socialization agency for the children. Children learn basic concepts about good and bad from their family. They make their values and set the norms of society. Therefore, a family can make or break the personality of the children. Especially, in a family the most important role is played by the parents and siblings. Family can give firm foundation to the children to become good adults.

Broken families, single parent families, separated families, frequent parents fight, lack of trust and confidence among the parents, criminality or psychological problems are some common reasons behind juvenile delinquency. Similarly, sibling's rivalry or unequal treatment between children can also make a child deviant. Therefore, parents and elder siblings have the responsibility to mold a positive personality of the child. When parents or siblings do not show moral behavior and commit crime younger siblings also get motivation to do something bad.

Adolescents with siblings who have committed crimes are more likely to be influenced by their siblings and become delinquent if the sibling is older, of the same sex/gender, and maintains a good relationship with the child. Cases where a younger criminal sibling influences an older one are rare. An aggressive more hostile sibling is less likely to influence a younger sibling in the direction of delinquency, if anything, the more strained the relationship between the siblings, the less they will want to be influence each other.

According to Shaw and Mackey Sampson et al, they believe that disorganized communities cause crime potentials in a child, because of emergency of informal social central breakdown leaving space for criminal cultures to emerge. This theory was termed ecological disorganization or the Chicago school. However, in Uganda cultures have not been traced anywhere because of the clustered police stations and posts to control the situation. JMN Kakooza stresses that crimes like stealing by teenagers is as a result of poverty and unemployment. He states at teenage youngsters find themselves abruptly translated from the shelter and dependence of school, to the very independence, which their first wages may bring them particularly this is so when the job is unskilled and no poorly paid apprenticeship has to be gone through, at this point a juvenile start developing some desires to steal.

According to Speck Kinder, Erwer Bstatiger Mutter, Stuttgart Roudinesco and Spits, in their report presented to the world health Organization, 1956, they showed the absence of a loving or an affectionate mother in early childhood of any child. Such damage may among other things lead to delinquent behaviors at a later stage to children without adequate supervision at home. Their study shows that such children are more likely to run wild than those who likely had a stable and secure background. As a way to remade child negligence, the government has enacted laws governing protection and care of children in Uganda. For instance, it is the general duty of every local government council from village to district level to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within areas, and to designate one of its members to be the person responsible for the welfare of children and this person shall be referred to as the secretary for children affairs. However, children have continued to commit crimes that leaves a question as to whether child neglect alone can lead other areas have to be, addressed apart from that suggested by speck Kinder, Erwer Bstatiger and Stuttgart.

According to Anderson (2014) statistically young people constitute the most criminally active segment of the population, although eventually youngest people will desist from criminal and deviant activity. Young people who live in difficult circumstances are often at risk of becoming delinquent. Poverty, dysfunctional families, substance abuse and the death of family members have been demonstrated to be risk factors for becoming delinquent. Insecurity due to an unstable social environment increases vulnerability, and young people with poorly developed social skills are less able to protect themselves against the negative influences of a peer group. Countries with economies in transition have witnessed a dramatic

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rise in delinquency rates. Since 1995, juvenile crime levels in many of these countries have increased by more than 30 per cent. (Ibid).

Agonza (2014) conducted a study about the influence of family unit structure on juvenile delinquency at Gulu Children's Remand Home. The specific objectives of the study were to study the relationship between Juvenile delinquency and intact family structure, a single parent family structure mother only/father only), a family structure with a step parent, a child brought in a children home and for children brought up by grandparents. The study findings revealed that the family serves as a natural support system and a barrier against outside forces attempting to negatively influence children. It was also revealed that the absence of a father figure in a home has received the bulk of the blame for undermining a child's ability to adjust and fend off the social pressures of adolescence. It was also found out that the circumstances surrounding the loss of one parent are not the main issue, but the mere absence of one parent from the home affects the child's adjustment and socialization. However, there was a knowledge and environmental gap in Agonza's study, his study focused on a remand home while the current study focused on Kampala Capital City, Nakawa Division.

Rwanyaga (2016) carried out a study about family background and environment, psychological distress and juvenile delinquency in urban areas of Uganda. The study findings revealed that for a single parent family parenthood, there was a strong correlation between street life, sex and defilement offenses. Children brought up in a step parent home had a strong inclination towards substance abuse but the correlation was even greater for stealing and refusing school. For children having come from a children's home, they had a strong correlation towards substance abuse and street life but showed a negative strong correlation with refusing school. For children brought up in a grandparent family structure, the correlation was strong for substance abuse and the highest for stealing. Rwanyaga's study concluded that single parenthood families were the most significant for all offenses in the study.

Getting relevant and up-to-date statistics on juvenile crime around the world is a daunting crime, because majority of countries do not keep proper records of the number of children in jail or prison and what their exact crimes were/are. According to the Human Rights watch (2016), the united States have the highest recorded numbers and percentage of children in jail or detention facilities in the developed world. The convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates that locking children up should only be a matter of last resort after all else fails. Similarly, it is common for children to be arrested for activities that should not even be considered criminal by any standard, for instance, kids are often locked up for the simple action of just being on the streets. According to Human Rights Watch, Cambodia and Uganda are some of the guiltiest countries that arrest children for frivolous reasons.

There is however no gainsaying the fact that youths are increasingly being found at the giving end of violent crimes. According to a 2013 United Nations Fact Sheet on Youth, violence perpetrated

by youths can be caused by various factors that work together to create a situation of social insecurity. Some of these factors include, the easy availability of arms, drug abuse, overpopulation, weak educational systems, weak policing systems, unequal distribution of wealth, and abuse of alcohol. All these factors work together to create an atmosphere of increase in delinquency levels among children and youth population in different parts of the world. In 2008, over 6000 arrests were made for every 100,000-child aged between 10-17 years in the US alone (Law enforcement and Juvenile Crime, 2008). In the year 2009, juvenile courts in the US heard over 1.5 million cases involving juveniles committing crimes and other delinquent behaviors. It is quite possible that the reason why it appears that more children are involved in the criminal justice system today might just be that the courts and law enforcement have become more efficient at processing these cases, but the fact still remains that juvenile delinquency and criminal behavior is on an increase in today's society.

Gorman-Smith D, Talan. P. H, Loweber.R and Henry D. give families with marital instability as fertile grounds for dysfunctional norms [3,4]. They observe that when marital instabilities exist within a family, the observable outcomes are seen through juveniles. These marital instabilities include; stress, estrangement, fighting of parents, coldness, and unhealthy boundaries. That is why Albert Bandura in the Social Learning Theory believes that an environment surrounded by a culture of conflicts, decay and insufficient social organization is a major source of delinquency among juveniles. According to Albert Bandura, juveniles who observe aggressive models will later be aggressive. According to the research study in KNRC and NRH, it was revealed that juvenile delinquents tend to associate with their parents particularly fathers and in turn reproduce their characters.

Troublesome families with scarce resources also influence juveniles to delinquency. This is manifested through failure to pay school fees by fathers and decay of parent-juvenile interaction that would have barred delinquency. Due to troublesome environment, juveniles start ant-social activities such as stealing their fathers' money in disguise to pay school fees, take drugs and alcohol to release stress. It is from such circumstances that Simmons, Bergeson, Carlton-Ford and Blyth (1987) believe that home environment is fundamental to the growth<sup>22</sup> of delinquency.

In conclusion, Michael Rutter and David J Smith observe that a family as a source of delinquency has four paradigms: the neglect paradigm, conflict paradigm, divergent behavior and values paradigm and disruption paradigm<sup>23</sup>[5]. The neglect paradigm has two distinct aspects and these include; lack of supervision and interaction between parents and juveniles. The conflict paradigm is important in explaining the conflicting issues between juveniles and the parents. Michael Rutter and David J Smith believe that because aspects to child development are lacking within a family, indiscipline starts among juveniles which result into delinquency [5].

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## 2.1. Theoretical Review

This section presents the review of relevant theories about juvenile delinquency. The theoretical review will demonstrate a clear understanding of theories and concepts that are relevant to the study.

There are a multitude of different theories on the causes of crime (criminology) most, if not all, of which are applicable to the causes of juvenile delinquency in Uganda including differential associations, social disorganization theory, social learning theory and the strain theory.

## 2.2. Social Disorganization

Current positivist approaches generally focus on the culture. A type of criminological theory attributing variation in crime and delinquency over time and among territories to the absence or breakdown of communal institutions (such as family, school, church, and social groups) and communal relationships that traditionally encouraged cooperative relationships among people.

A number of children in Uganda are subjected to psychological and physical abuse in their own households. The psychological effect of these abuses not only causes near-irreversible trauma, but also increases the risk of criminal behavior in later life. Studies show that child maltreatment can double the chance that a child may become a delinquent during their adolescent stage and up to adulthood.

The theory of social disorganization states a person's physical and social environments are primarily responsible for the behavioral choices that a person makes. At the core of social disorganization theory, is that location matters when it comes to predicting illegal activity. Shaw and McKay noted that neighborhoods with the highest crime rates have at least three common problems, physical dilapidation, poverty, and higher level of ethnic and culture mixing. Shaw and McKay claimed that delinquency was not caused at the individual level, but is a normal response by normal individuals to abnormal conditions. Social disorganization theory is widely used as an important predictor of youth violence and crime.

Shaw and McKay discovered that there were four (4) specific assumption as an explanation of delinquency.

- The first assumption is the collapse of community based-controls and people living in these disadvantaged neighborhoods are responding naturally to environmental conditions.
- The second is the rapid growth of immigration in urban disadvantage neighborhoods.
- The third is business located closely to the disadvantaged neighborhoods that are influenced by the "ecological approach" of competition and dominance.
- The fourth and last assumption is disadvantaged urban neighborhoods lead to the development of criminal values that replace normal society values.

Social disorganization theory suggest that a person's residential location is more significant than the person's characteristics when predicting criminal activity and the juveniles living in this areas acquire criminality by the cultures approval within the disadvantaged urban neighborhoods. Therefore, location matters when it comes to criminality according to social disorganization theory.

Social disorganization theory has received a lot of attention within criminology discipline since the theory was first introduced in 1942. Many studies in U.S. large cities have duplicated the findings of Shaw and McKay ordinal study.

Social disorganization theory studies can help government and law enforcement policy-makers make informed decisions from the evidence to form strategies that help prevent criminal activity in disadvantaged communities to make it safer for all.

## 2.3. Strain

Strain theory is associated mainly with the work of Robert K. Merton, who felt that there are institutionalized paths to success in society. Strain theory holds that crime is caused by the difficulty for those in poverty have to achieve socially-valued goals by legitimate means. Since those with, for instance, poor educational attainment have difficulty achieving wealth and status by securing well-paid employment, they are more likely to use criminal means to obtain those goals.

Merton's suggests five adaptations to this dilemma are as follows

1. **Innovation:** individuals who accept socially-approved goals but not necessarily the socially-approved means.
2. **Retreatism:** those who reject socially-approved goals and the means for acquiring them.
3. **Ritualism:** those who buy into a system of socially-approved means but lose sight of the goals. Merton believed that drug users are in this category.
4. **Conformity:** those who conform to the system's means and goals.
5. **Rebellion:** people who negate socially-approved goals and means by creating a new system of acceptable goals and means.

A difficulty with strain theory is that it does not explore why children of low-income families have poor educational attainment in the first place. More importantly, much youth crime does not have an economic motivation. Strain theory fails to explain violent crime, the type of youth crime that causes most anxiety to the public.

Strain theory is when juveniles experience strain or stress and they become upset, that sometimes result in delinquent acts. It is also a leading cause of delinquency. As Agnew stated, some may engage in delinquency to reduce or escape from the strain they are experiencing. Such examples are violence, steal, run away from home and commit crime against those who have wronged them. Although strain is not the only reason they offend, it does

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play a key role in many delinquent crimes. Status offenses are specific to juveniles and refer to acts that, committed by adults, would not be considered or processed as crimes (Holden & Kapler, 1995). Common and familiar types of status offenses include truancy, curfew violation, and running away from home. There is an affluence of research that documents the over-representation of adolescents as status offenders. Freiburger and Burke argued that the effect of gender on the decision to adjudicate may be conditioned by the race and ethnicity of the juvenile offender.

Strain theories of delinquency explain the delinquency of youths as a response to a lack of socially approved opportunities. Simply put, it is a theory that explains delinquency as caused by the “strain” or frustration of not having an equal opportunity or means to achieve commonly idealized goals such as economic or social success. In this manner, we might also think of strain theories as structural theories, given how opportunities are not always evenly distributed and available to everyone, based on how they are situated within social structure.

Strain theorists regard juvenile antisocial behavior as caused by the frustrations of lower class youth when they find themselves unable to achieve the material success expected of the middle class.

Robert Merton (1957) was an eminent social theorist who elaborated strain theory from Emile Durkheim’s concept of “anomie” or “normlessness.” Merton applied Durkheim’s anomie theory as a means to explain how crime might result from the rapidly changing conditions in society; especially in societies where competition for success, wealth, and material goods are highly valued. Social disorganization leads to uncertainty, confusion, and shifting moral values, referred to as anomie or normlessness. Conditions of anomie exist when the rule of law is weakened and becomes powerless to maintain social control.

Given these social conditions, a conflict may result when persons with little formal education and access to economic resources are denied in their efforts to achieve the common goals esteemed in society. This causes an individual-level conflict and may, furthermore, produce a sense of alienation, hopelessness, and frustration.

#### **2.4. Social Learning Theory**

The Social Learning Theory was developed by Burgess and Akers in 1966; According to the sociological aspect of criminology, social interactions and individualism are the factors behind the juvenile delinquency. Usually, society does not exist as an island but rather different person interacts and this ensures that the society continues to exist. The social interaction theory and juvenile delinquency have been written extensively over the years and the studies have proved to be logically consistent and also useful in providing the empirical support. The social interaction theory on juvenile delinquency is comprised of four main explanatory concepts that is the differential association theory, definitions theory, imitation theory and differential reinforcement theory.

The main aim of social interaction theories on juvenile delinquency is to explain how such social influences as religion, family and politics shapes a person over time. The social interaction theories on juvenile delinquency assume that interplay exists between an individual, the environment and delinquent acts.

According to this theory, people develops deviant behaviors by interacting and associating themselves with those who engages themselves in deviant behavior i.e. one can learn positive or negative behavior through interaction. Sutherland in his Differentiation Association Theory argued that juvenile delinquency is caused by observation and social interaction.

According to this theory one is deemed to act in a deviant manner as a result of association with group members who favor juvenile delinquency than those members who value the societal norms. This theory, also argues that the family unit is the major source of learning behaviors. Thus, if ones’ family unit is made up of people who are engaged in deviant behaviors, then one is bound to develop the same kind of behaviors.

#### **2.5. Differentiation Association Theory**

Is a social interaction theory that was formulated by Edwin Sutherland. According to this theory, people develop deviant behaviors by interacting and associating themselves with those who engages themselves in deviant behavior that is one can learn positive or negative behavior through interaction. Sutherland in his Differentiation Association Theory argued that juvenile delinquency is caused by observation and social interaction.

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In criminology, differential association is a theory developed by Edwin Sutherland proposing that through interaction with others, individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques, and motives for criminal behavior [6]. Differential association theory is the most talked-about of the learning theories of deviance. This theory focuses on how individuals learn to become criminals, but it does not concern itself with why they become criminals.

Differential association predicts that an individual will choose the criminal path when the balance of definitions for law-breaking exceeds those for law-abiding. This tendency will be reinforced if social association provides active people in the person’s life. The earlier in life an individual comes under the influence high status people within a group, the more likely the individual is to follow in their footsteps. This does not deny that there may be practical motives for crime. If a person is hungry but has no money, there is a temptation to steal. But the use of needs and values is equivocal. To some extent, both non-criminal and criminal individuals are

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motivated by the need for money and social gain.

Sutherland proposed differential association theory in 1939 and elaborated it in 1947. Initially, he applied his theory only to systematic criminal behavior, but, later on, extending his theory, he applied it to all criminal behavior. Sutherland forwarded mainly two explanations for criminal behavior: situational and genetic or historical.

The former explains crime on the basis of situation that exists at the time of crime, and the latter explains crime on the basis of a criminals life experiences. He himself used the second approach in developing his theory of criminal behavior. Let us take an example. If a hungry boy comes across a Dhabi (restaurant) and finds the owner absent, he steals a roti (loaf of bread).

In this case, the boy steals not because the restaurant owner was absent and he himself was hungry but because he had learnt earlier that one could satisfy ones hunger by stealing things. Thus, it is not the situation which motivates a person to commit a theft; it is his learnt attitudes and beliefs.

Sutherland's main thesis (Principles of Criminology, Philadelphia, 1947) is that individuals encounter many inharmonious and inconsistent social influences in their lifetime and many individuals become involved in contacts with carriers of criminalistics norms and as a consequence become criminals. He called this process differential association.

The principles of Sutherland's theory of differential association can be summarized into nine key points.

1. Criminal behavior is learned.
2. Criminal behavior is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication.
3. The principal part of the learning of criminal behavior occurs within intimate personal groups.
4. When criminal behavior is learned, the learning includes techniques of committing the crime (which are sometimes very complicated, sometimes simple) and the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes.
5. The specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the legal codes as favorable or unfavorable.
6. A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of the law.
7. Differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity.
8. The process of learning criminal behavior by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning.
9. While criminal behavior is an expression of general needs and values, it is not explained by those needs and values, since non-criminal behavior is an expression of the same needs and values.

An important quality of differential association theory is the frequency and intensity of interaction. The amount of time that a person is exposed to a particular definition and at what point the interaction began are both crucial for explaining criminal activity. The process of learning criminal behavior is really not any different from the process involved in learning any other type of behavior. Sutherland maintains that there is no unique learning process associated with acquiring non-normative ways of behaving.

One very unique aspect of this theory is that it works to explain more than just juvenile delinquency and crime committed by lower class individuals. Since crime is understood to be learned behavior, the theory is also applicable to white-collar, corporate, and organized crime.

Sutherlands theory was supported by James Short Jr. on the basis of his study of 176 school children (126 boys and 50 girls) in 1955 (see, Rose Giallombardo, 1960: 85-91). Short measured degree of presumed exposure to crime and delinquency in the community, frequency, duration, priority and intensity of interaction with delinquent peers, and knowledge of and association with adult criminals.

All the above explained theories are applicable to the causes of juvenile delinquency in Uganda since most of the juveniles become delinquent due to poverty, breakdown of families and peer influence among others.

### **3. Statistical Data**

#### **3.1. Data Sources**

Data used was collected from the Uganda police crime annual reports. Other sources are recent published papers on juvenile delinquency, World Bank and united nation children funds (UNICEF).

Data used is from year 2008 to 2014 because the police officially started recording data related to juvenile crimes in 2008.

#### **3.2. Data**

Property crimes: (theft, robbery, arson), violent crimes: (assault, rape and murder) sex related crimes: (sexual assault, rape and prostitution) and cyber-crimes: (fraud, hacking and cyber bullying) are the behaviors that juveniles Uganda normally portray.

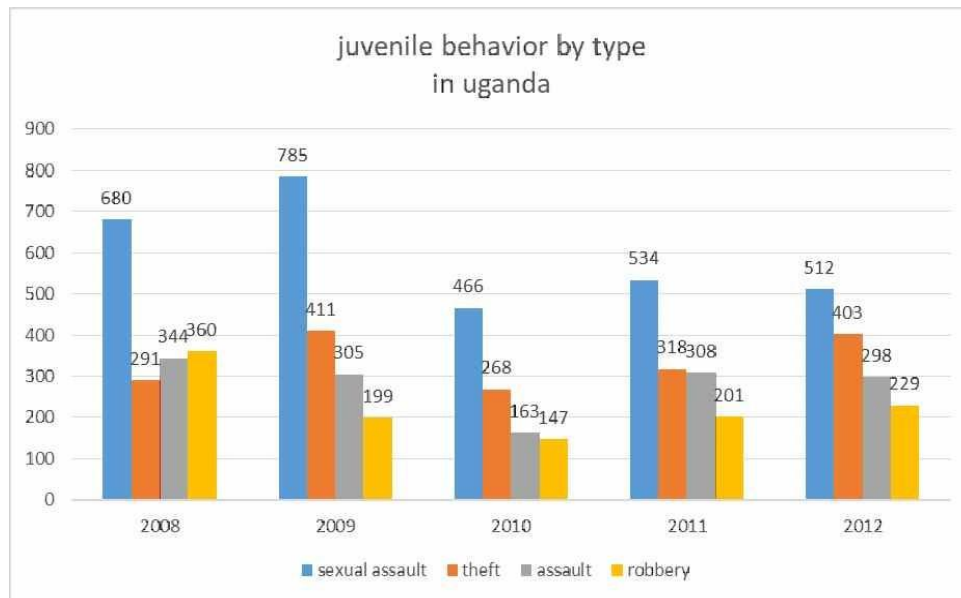
Due to absence of birth certificates and other identification documents it is hard in most cases to know the real age of juveniles who are in conflict with the law and some end up not being punished or get treated as adult offenders.

The statistics below show that juvenile crime in Uganda is increasing in some crime categories. There are some statistics missing especially on drug abuse, but the explanation from police is that many of the drug abusers are usually returned to their parents and may not be prosecuted by police. Some may not be entered in the criminal register. And robbery is sometime registered as breakings. The crime prevalence is shown below:

Crime	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Sexual assault	680	785	466	534	512	545	418
Thefts	291	441	268	318	403	424	323
Assaults	344	305	163	306	298	216	208
Breaking	36	199	147	201	229	234	13
Drug abuse	57		13	27			
Robberies	87	113	62	35	48	56	66

Source: Uganda Police Statistics

**Table 3: Number of Offenders by Crime Type**



**Figure 2: Juvenile Behavior by Type in Uganda**

### 3.3. Explanations

According to the available data shows that there is an overall decline in juvenile delinquency in Uganda from year 2008 to 2012 but knowing the real numbers of crimes committed by youth is still a problem since most of them have no any identification documents to determine their real age when they are in conflict with laws. However crimes such as sexual assaults and thefts kept increasing over years and this is due to the number of children on streets who steal to earn ends meet.

And most of juveniles who are convicted of sexual crimes normally come from abusive families and the report says that this is where they learn such behaviors.

## 4. Juvenile delinquency in Africa

### 4.1. Introduction

In this section we looked at juvenile delinquency situation in different countries in Africa including Rwanda that is considered to be among the least populated countries in Africa with 14m people today, Nigeria (225m people) which is the most populated country in Africa according to world population statistics and south Africa

that is arguably the top country with highest prevalence juvenile crime rate in Africa today.

Throughout the African continent, delinquency tends to be attributed primarily to poverty, malnutrition, and unemployment. These factors are the result of marginalization of juveniles in the already severely disadvantaged segments of society. Rapid population growth has been experienced in Africa, and the population seems to be getting correspondingly younger over time. This is coupled with the fact that few new jobs are developed in Africa, which has resulted in half of all families living in poverty. Many of the urban poor live in slum and squatter settlements with unhealthy housing. One of the most serious problems is the great number of street and orphaned children, whose numbers have been growing as a result of continuous and multiple armed conflicts, the advent of HIV/AIDS, and the breakdown of the traditional tribal culture and family influence on children. Juvenile delinquency is on the rise, with the primary offenses being theft, robbery, smuggling, prostitution, the abuse of narcotic substances, and drug trafficking among young offenders.

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In general, a juvenile delinquent in Africa is one who commits an act defined by law as illegal and/or who is adjudicated "delinquent" by an appropriate court. The legal definition in most African countries is usually restricted to persons under the age of 21 years. The exact lower and upper age limits differ from country to country. For example, in most of the East African countries, the age is eight years (Mushanga, 1976, p. 24). In Tanzania, all crimes committed by persons below the age of criminal responsibility can be legally defined as juvenile delinquency. Section 15 of the Penal Code of Tanzania states.

Similarly, in Kenya a juvenile delinquent is a child between the statutory juvenile court age of 7 and 16 years who commits an act which, when committed by persons beyond this statutory juvenile court age, would be punishable as a crime or as an act injurious to other individuals or the public. In this country, a person is considered an adult when he is 19 years old or above. At this age, if he commits a crime, he is tried in court as an adult and not as a juvenile [7]. Despite official claims to the contrary, juvenile delinquency is not only increasing in Africa but it is also widespread. There is the constant fear in Africa today that delinquents may graduate to become hardened criminals of the future. The fact that 45 percent of the population of Africa is below 15 years of age or that the proportion of young persons aged 25 years and below was estimated to be 63 percent in 1975 makes crime in Africa largely a problem involving young people (Clifford, 1974). In commenting on this, William Clifford said In spite of the widespread prevalence of juvenile delinquency in Africa, the problem has been the subject of few studies. With the exception of articles addressing juvenile delinquency in specific African countries, the scientific literature on the subject is limited. Consequently, considerable reliance must be placed in this study on materials from scattered studies involving a few studies in the region. Whether or not the overall observations made here can be applied to the rest of Africa.

A juvenile delinquent in Africa is one who commits an act defined by law as illegal and or who is adjudicated "delinquent" by an appropriate court.

Juvenile delinquency is not only increasing in Africa but it is also widespread. There is the constant fear in Africa today that delinquents may graduate to become hardened criminals of the future. Although official government statistics in Africa do not project an alarming picture, the problem of delinquency may not be so simple.

It is impossible to state clearly how much delinquency there is in Africa. There are several reasons why very little is known about the extent or nature of delinquency in Africa: Illnesses in addition, anomalies arising from the ambiguity in the definition of juvenile or what constitutes delinquency, the varying limits of criminal responsibility in the various countries, and the "dark figures" estimation problems have all contributed to misleading statistical information on juvenile delinquency in African countries.

The age of criminal responsibility varies from one country to another, and this has led to the inclusion of minors ranging in age from 8 to 21 years in the juvenile delinquency statistics. It is difficult to define categorically where juvenility ends and youthfulness begins. The conceptual problems relating to the definitions of crime and delinquency on one hand and the emergence of categories of offenders as "juvenile delinquents," "adolescents," "children beyond parental control," and "children in need of care/protection" have compounded the confusion.

The way juvenile law in most African countries is enforced also affects the credibility of delinquency statistics. The erratic enforcement of juvenile legislation is primarily due to the fact that although most countries have juvenile delinquency legislation differs.

Another reason that it is difficult to know just how much delinquency exists in African countries is the fact that people tend to handle the problem of juvenile offenders themselves, without resorting to either the police or the juvenile authorities.

Rather than go to the police to bring charges, the injured citizen will go to the parents of the guilty party in order to obtain compensation, and if the parents of the minor are unknown, the offender is likely to receive a good spanking from the victim. Numerous reasons have been suggested as feasible causes of juvenile delinquency in African countries. Among these are; rapid urbanization in the new states/towns, instability within family structure, lack of employment and educational opportunities, urban migration, the impersonality of urban life, lack of parental control, and individual maladjustment.

Juvenile delinquency is one of the most serious problems that need to be addressed both in developed and developing countries. It is the root for more organized and sophisticated crimes that costs society and government heavily for addressing it.

Juvenile delinquency has now become one of the important social issues which every nation tries to bring under control a midst the glaring evidence that, if the right nurturance is not given to the young offenders, they may graduate to become criminals.

Adolescent (juvenile) age offenses are acts of delinquencies or crimes that will harm individual, community and society at large and hence the urgency and importance of resolving this social problem.

#### **4.2. Rwanda**

Age of criminal majority in Rwanda is 14 years (Article 77 of Decree-Law No 21/77 of August 18, 1977 establishing the Penal Code). Article 185 according to which "a minor who is under prosecution must be defended by a counsel.

In 1994 out of 6 million people of Rwanda almost 1 million lost their lives in genocide, which is 16 percent of the population of Rwanda by that time and thousands of children were left with

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either one or no parent. Several studies say that even children participated actively in genocide and killed their fellow children under their parent's commands. This tragedy caused trauma to these children and most of them grew up and instilled the same beliefs in their children which is a factor to the occurrence juvenile delinquency such as assaults, sexual violence among others in Rwanda today.

Recent study finds that over 50% of children in Rwanda are victims of sexual, physical or emotional violence. In Rwanda, 5 in 10 girls and 6 in 10 boys experience at least one form of violence – sexual, physical or emotional – before age 18. Children are most often abused by those they know: parents, neighbors, teachers or friends.

The Government of Rwanda is committed to protecting children and youth from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. Acknowledging a lack of relevant and comprehensive data, the Government conducted the Violence against Children and Youth Survey (VACYS) in 2015-2016. This study, supported by UNICEF Rwanda, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the International Development Research Center (IDRC), collected data from over 2,000 children and young people to understand the scale and nature of violence in Rwanda.

The study found that 24 per cent of girls and 10 per cent of boys were victims of sexual violence. Physical violence affected 37 per cent of girls and 60 per cent of boys. Emotional violence was also a concern; 12 per cent of girls and 17 per cent of boys were victims at some point during childhood.

“This survey is an important foundation for developing prevention strategies and for improving services for victims. The Government recognizes the importance of a multi-sectorial approach to prevent and respond to violence against children, especially given its impact on human capital and economic development,” said Dr. Diane Gashumba, Minister of Health.

When children are victims of violence, the effects can extend beyond physical scars. In addition to serious injuries, children who are victims of violence are also likely to miss or abandon school, or experience psychological distress. In some cases, this distress can even lead to thoughts of suicide.

Unfortunately, instances of violence are usually not reported. About 40 percent of girls and 60 percent of boys did not recount their experiences to anyone, even if they knew where to seek help. Many children did not report violence because they thought it was not a problem or that it was their fault.

Addressing current instances of violence is also essential to protecting future generations. The study found that boys are 8 percent more likely to abuse other children if they are victims of violence themselves, and that about 60 percent of young people, especially girls themselves, believe women should tolerate violence to keep families together.

#### **4.2.1. Major Causes of Juvenile Delinquency in Rwanda**

Most of the delinquent behaviors are never deliberately committed by sober minded individuals of the Rwandan society; rather, there are historical and environmental factors behind the said incidences. This section outlines some key factors blamed for the increased incidences of delinquent behaviors among Rwandans especially children and the youth as highlighted below;

##### **4.2.1.1. Drug and Substance Abuse**

It may not be claimed that substance abuse causes delinquent behavior or delinquency causes alcohol and other drug use. However, the two behaviors are strongly correlated. Young people who persistently use and abuse substances often undergo and an array of legal, social, health and personality related problems that may culminate into delinquency.

##### **4.2.1.2. Excessive Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs**

Distorts one's mental capacity to restrain themselves from acts considered illegal and or against the socially approved norms. In fact, recent study findings linking Drug abuse to recent criminal activity including; theft, drunk driving, rape, involvement in fights, among others in Rwanda (WHO, 2014).

##### **4.2.1.3. Poverty**

Although the direct relationship between economic welfare and delinquency is still unproven, statistics indicate that there are high rates of delinquency attributed to poverty and poor welfare. Children who engage in the most serious forms of delinquency for example are more likely to be members of poor families and those without parents, especially the orphans or those driven out of their homes by unbearable violence. Poverty limits the capacity of households to provide for daily needs of its members and as a result, members especially the youth may resort to accessing basic necessities through means considered deviant from the law and social norms such as sex for pay and theft. An assessment conducted on the causes of female delinquency indicates that need for income to feed the family, pay school fees, buy clothes, feed children and pay household rent were the driving factors behind female involvement in activities considered criminal and anti-social such as prostitution (MYICT, 2013). Of the total interviewees, 72 percent of the sex workers interviewed were supporting children financially, whereas 80 percent of them were orphans, affirming the fact that the primary push for sex work was income generation.

##### **4.2.1.4. The Breakdown of the Structure and the Functioning of the Family**

This is by far the leading cause of delinquent behaviors especially among the children and even youth, in line with the “Theory of social disorganization”, that attribute delinquency to the absence or breakdown of communal institutions, such as the family (McKay, 1942). According to this theory, the personality of the child is affected by poor or defective relationship with and between parents and being subject to frequent humiliations. The lack of emotional involvement of parents into a child's early life, the failure to set limits to the degree of deviance tolerable among the children and use of authoritarian type of child rearing among others could

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also give rise to delinquency among the youth. Violence: Any individual subjected to verbal, physical, sexual and psychological violence is likely to develop physical and psychological trauma as a result. Various studies have shown a clear relationship between youth victimization and a variety of problems later in their lives, including mental health problems, substance abuse, impaired social relationships, suicide and delinquency.

#### **4.2.1.5. The Influence of Peer Groups**

However may be detrimental to one's line of choices including joining undertaking illegal and anti-social behaviors like pre-marital sex, petty theft, alcohol and drug abuse, idleness and disorderly, among others. This is because; the peer group is an adolescent's main source of social interaction (Thomas F. Tate, 2006).

#### **4.2.2. Effects of Delinquency**

Delinquency is like a "double edged sword that hurts two at once". It not only hurts one's community and country but also leaves significant impacts to the life of the delinquent themselves. In fact, not until one recovers from delinquency, a delinquent life is a simply a "wasted life".

The section below highlights some of the key consequences of conducts of delinquency to the individuals themselves but also the entire community and country at large;

##### **4.2.2.1. Health Implications**

Drugs, due to their chemical structures, can affect the body in different ways, resulting into temporally or permanent physical and mental impacts to the victim. Most of the abused drugs directly or indirectly target the brain's reward system, flooding the circuit with dopamine, a neurotransmitter present in regions of the brain that regulate movement, emotion, cognition, motivation, and feelings of pleasure. When drugs enter the brain, they can actually change how the brain performs its jobs, leading to compulsive drug use, the hallmark of addiction. Persistent abuse of drugs both oral and injected can result into weak immune system, cardiovascular conditions including heart attacks, further, use of drugs can result into liver failure, seizures, stroke and widespread brain damage affecting memory, attention and decision-making, sustained mental confusion and permanent brain damage. Indulgence in reckless acts of delinquency such as prostitution may also lead to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/Aids.

##### **4.2.2.2. Socio-Economic Impacts**

An individual's involvement in anti-social and or criminal behaviors such as prostitution, drug abuse among others especially in the African community setting tarnishes their families' image amongst members of the society, since the trademark behaviors of a delinquent are attributed to the entire family. In extreme cases, the delinquent but also their other family members may be socially discriminated, tagged social misfits and vulnerable to social stigma and deprivation of social ties such as intermarriages.

#### **4.2.3. The Recent Developments in Respect to this Problem Include the Following**

##### **4.2.3.1. Mass Education and Awareness**

The government and its stakeholders have sustained education and sensitization campaigns against the potential causes and consequences of indulging in delinquency. There are ongoing campaigns against; drug/substance abuse, alcoholism, prostitution among others, especially targeting; the youth, students, street children, prostitutes among others. The government through the Ministry of Education together with the Ministry of health are working closely with anti-drug clubs in schools to sensitize students against drug abuse and other leading causes of delinquency. To ensure sustainable mindset change, the lessons on drug abuse prevention and management are scheduled to be integrated into the education curricula especially for secondary schools and higher learning institutions.

##### **4.2.3.2. Establishment of Transit and Rehabilitation Centers**

The government established rehabilitation centers such as Iwawa, to restore the productive capacity of former delinquents through mental healing, skills enhancement and post-rehabilitation follow-up for successful reintegration into normal livelihood. Currently, IWAWA rehabilitation and vocational training center serves only male delinquents but plans are underway to establish the same centers that accommodate even their female counterparts such as Gitagata being piloted in Bugesera district. Further, government has established regional transit centers that receive delinquents who undergo a thorough screening exercise to ascertain whether the inmates will either be referred to the rehabilitation centers or be rehabilitated and sent back to their communities in a reformed manner. So far, the intention is to have at least one transit center in every district and the city of Kigali. The outstanding challenge however remains matching skills attained by former delinquents in rehabilitation centers to the labor market needs, to increase their absorption and employ-ability to avoid potential recidivism.

#### **4.3. Nigeria**

The Nigerian constitution of 1999 as amended, defines juvenile delinquency as "a crime committed by a young person under the age of 18 years as a result of trying to comply with the wishes of his peers or to escape from parental pressure or certain emotional stimulation". However, before a youth in Nigeria can be classified a delinquent, he must have been arraigned before a Juvenile court and proved to be guilty of some offenses. Such offenses like habitual truancy, drug addiction, prostitution, stealing, cultism and arm robbery to mention just a few.

The causes of Juvenile delinquency are multiple and include peer pressure, parental neglect, parental imitation, genetic or biological factors, poor education, lack of opportunities, media violence, poverty, divorce and child abuse (Miguel, 2017). This has great consequences on the juvenile as well as the society as a whole.

One major factor affecting juvenile delinquency according to Dantiye and Haruna (2004) is family well-being. Dysfunctional families and lack of familiar attachment 'and supervision are one

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of the most potent factors that influence juvenile delinquency (Martin 2005). As values, norms and models of behavior arise from the family, dysfunctional families will transmit dysfunctional norms (rather than functional norms) to their children, and this in turn affect their beliefs, personality, attitudes and behavior (e.g. cause deviant behavior).

Based on empirical findings of the study carried out by Adegoke, three variables namely family stability, family cohesion, and family adaptability were drawn on and from the results obtained, there was a cumulative effect such that the presence of more than one of these negative family attributes compounded the likelihood of delinquency [8]. Since children who are inadequately supervised by parents, whose parents fail to teach them the difference between right and wrong, whose parents do not monitor their whereabouts and activities, whose parents discipline them erratically and harshly, and those who experience some measure of violence in the home are more likely to become delinquent. It has therefore become apparent that a healthy home environment is the most important factor necessary to keep children from becoming delinquent.

The educational experience of youths affects juvenile development, alongside familiar experiences and socio-economic status, as the school environment may affect a child's self-esteem and self-worth (Martin 2005). Youths in Nigeria who fell into delinquency have been found to have performed more poorly in school and have a much higher rate of having troubles in school than non-delinquents (Olotuah and Adesiji 2009). This is consonant with general societal trends in other countries which show that poor academic performers and school drop-outs tend to commit delinquent acts much more than high academic achievers and graduates. Negative Peer Influence is another contributing factors of juvenile delinquency, according to the empirical study by Adegoke delinquents tend to be socialized by peers, they commit crimes or delinquent acts due to their close association and attachment with peer groups that endorses antisocial conduct. This is opposed to character logical delinquents whose behaviors tend to stem from individual motivations and a social personality disorientation (Meldrun, Young and Weerman 2009).

Negative peer influence is often found to be linked to the absence or lack of parental influence and familiar attachment. As family attachment, research has shown that youth groups and juvenile gangs 'compensate or the imperfections of family and school', with youths considering their gang members (Marte 2008). Youth violence often results from disputes between youth gangs over trivial issues and rivalry amongst these gangs always lead to fights. As noted, youth involvement in gangs is strongly related to other factors such as educational experience and family well-being. Most youths who turn to gangs are usually school drop-outs or non-academically inclined students who "feel ostracized" by their classmates, teachers and parents and they join gangs for company, friends and a sense of belonging. Alemika and Chukwurna (2005) reported that youths are involved in crimes of violence that include murder, rioting, extortion and unlawful assembly. Notably, such

youth violence is commonly the result of disputes between youth gangs over trivial matters and rivalry amongst these gangs which lead to fights.

Poverty and Youth Unemployment is another contributing factors. In many African countries, there is evidence of an increase in juvenile crime taking place concurrently with economic decline, especially in large cities (Moser, 2006). He explained further that, the rapid urbanization process, together with persistent poverty, inequality, political violence, the inadequacy of social services, the consolidation of transnational crime organizations, the spread of drug use and drug trafficking, the disintegration of families and social networks, and the availability of weapons, are all considered and often cited as the root causes of the upsurge in juvenile crime. The vulnerability of youth to poverty and marginalization is well illustrated by the number of adolescents working to supplement family income in Nigeria.

The International Labor Office n Dantiye and Haruna (2004) estimates that there are at least 15 million children working in urban Africa, and that approximately half of these are between the ages of 6 and 14 years old. World Bank (2009) estimates that in Nigeria, 54 percent of urban adolescents and children aged 6-14 are working, most of them in the precarious informal sector and in hazardous conditions. In many cases, street children later become young offenders, having already encountered violence in their immediate social environment as either witnesses or victims of violent acts.

Moser (2006) asserted that the socio-economic status of youths is often related to and intertwined with the amount and quality of support they receive. For example, parents from low-income families have to work long hours, and this may diminish the time spent with their children and may result in adequate and poor communication between parent and child.

Study by Yaqub (2006) found, that the "most serious" delinquents tended to hail from lower-income families where parents work long hours with meager income. It is important to note that there is considerable empirical research on poverty and juvenile delinquency in Nigeria. Ekpeyong, Raimi and Ekpeyong-(2012) concluded that poverty in cities is a major driver of juvenile criminality, it was deduced from their study that 69% of the respondents attested to the fact that children from poor homes commit more crime than those from rich homes. Olotuah and Adesoji (2009) has another study that support the finding, that those children from poor homes find themselves in conflict with the law more often than their counterparts from rich homes, they affirmed that the poor children more often leave home because of the poor living conditions and are consequently exposed to criminality early in their lives.

The juvenile who commits a crime suffers effects that he or she is probably unable to predict. Some of them end up being incarcerated in remand homes and borstal homes serving punishment for offenses they have committed. Others miss school

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and end up dropping out from school. While in other cases, those in remand homes are exposed to unhealthy relationships with other delinquents, who may be more involved in criminality. In the long run, such interaction may likely lead to recidivism thereby making the juvenile a perpetual offender and he or she can be tried and sentenced as an adult.

The consequences of Juvenile delinquency in Nigerian society are not only devastating but enormous. They destroy both lives and properties and they also retard the growth and development of the country.

Juvenile delinquency has also contributed to the bad image of our country Nigeria. For the fact that most of the delinquent want to get rich quick, corruption and ritual killing has become the order of the day, advance fee fraud and other type of cyber crimes, do or die politics where thuggery and fighting is the norm. These and many other consequences of delinquency have had drastic effect on the political, social and economic reputation of the Nation.

#### 4.4. South Africa

A juvenile is defined as anyone under the age of 18. Rights for juveniles include access to social services, protection from neglect and abuse, alternative care when removed from the family, access to legal counsel, and not to be detained unless it is the last resort (Terrill, p. 351).

Due to the high prevalence of violence, juveniles are at risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator. Regarding reducing juvenile recidivism, attention on the family, schools, and community needs to be addressed. The family is a source of violence especially for young boys who experience physical abuse. Children are also exposed to gang violence and become involved by the age of 11.

Alcohol and drug usage in the family are abused in the family and some children may have issues related to fetal alcohol syndrome and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder due to maternal prenatal use of tobacco, cocaine, and methamphetamine (Terrill, p. 356).

Research on juvenile gangs in Africa tends to focus on the nation of South Africa or the region of West Africa, because of their modernized society that breeds the conditions for gang membership (Pinnock, 1996). In both areas of Africa, urbanization and economic factors have been considered as primary contributors to the emerging gang problem. However, it should be noted that Africa, in general, is characterized by a great deal of political instability and corruption, with this being particularly true in Western African nations such as Nigeria, Dakar, and Senegal.

In South Africa, the need to earn a wage and the adjustment to urbanization has impacted the family system, which has not effectively adapted to the newer form of society. In the process, extended-family support systems and their role of extending guidance, mentorship, and discipline to youth have all but disappeared. This has affected youth in a very profound manner that results in many spending more time on the streets in urban

areas of South Africa and developing criminal associations.

Pinnock (1996) contends that gangs, similar to traditional society, provide support and a sense of direction to youth who feel accepted by the gang culture. As we have seen in Chapter 12, this same desire for belonging and acceptance is found among many youth who join gangs in the United States. Many marginalized youth in South Africa found the acceptance they desired within the structure of street gangs. Others gravitated toward the emerging political groups that rose against apartheid and the government. Street culture and the involvement of youth in street gangs or political formations are not homogeneous but are composed of a variety of groups established to meet the different needs of the youth.

Youth in some major towns in South Africa grow up spending their time on the streets. Many of these juveniles, particularly the males, are drawn into gangs due to prior family affiliations; they may have even been born into a world of gang membership. It is not uncommon for youth to have parents who are, or were, gang members, so they naturally take on the inherited roles from their parents who were involved in the gang life. Yet again, this demonstrates how theoretical explanations like differential association and sub-cultural theories explain how gang membership is perpetuated across generations. Youth often model the behaviors seen in their dysfunctional parents and seek out the feelings of inclusion offered by gangs. This is reinforced by the understanding that gang life can provide opportunities for economic improvement and for gaining a sense of power, acceptance, and purpose (Pinnock, 1996).

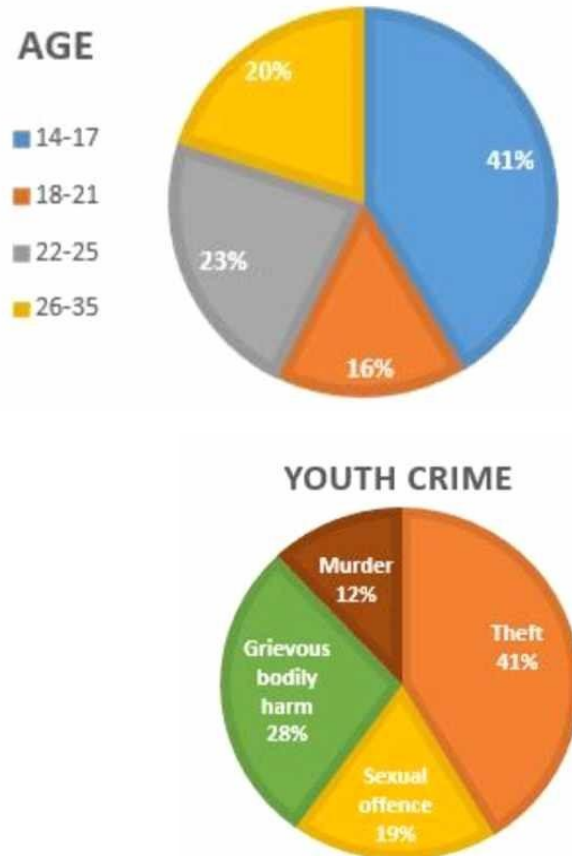
Lastly, gang operations in South Africa tend to center on the supply and trade of drugs in the community, in surrounding areas, and, at an even higher level, internationally (Dissel, 1997). As with gangs in Mexico and Central America, it is common for adults to lead gangs that have operations extending past mere local street operations. Nevertheless, these youth play an important role in the drug trafficking process perpetuated by organized adult criminals in the areas of South Africa.

According to Ntshangase, risk factors within society that have the likelihood of leading to juvenile delinquency, are family structure, poverty, the economy, population growth, and racism (p. 15). The juvenile justice system in South Africa uses diversion as a component in reducing juvenile recidivism. Diversion programs for juveniles include; life-skills, peer/youth mentoring, wilderness therapy, skills training/educational or entrepreneurship programs, therapeutic programs, oral/written apologies, community service or multi-modal programs, victim-offender mediation, and family group counseling (Cooper, p. 69-70).

Juvenile delinquency has become one of the most serious anti-social behavior in South Africa today. Rural communities are also increasingly getting deeply affected by juvenile delinquency (Roberts, 2012). While young people's development and future are also adversely affected, many other side effects of juvenile delinquency are also felt by their families and rural communities. Juvenile delinquency rate in South Africa has been rapidly

escalating. Thus, South Africa is witnessing more cases of this phenomenon because more young people are contravening the country's laws by their increased engagement in criminal activities. According to Roberts (2012), juvenile delinquency refers to antisocial or illegal behavior by children or adolescents who are between the ages 7 to 18. Furlong (2009) also corroborates this by stating that offending behavior increases during the early teenage years and peaks in the late teens.

45% of young South Africans are convicted of crime every year and More than 45 275 out of 154 648 crimes are committed by juvenile every year. A total number of more than 26 810 juveniles were sentenced and 18 046 were on remand within the South Africa's correctional services in 2018 There is no official data on juvenile delinquency in south Africa but to the crime statistics shows that juvenile from the age of 14 to 17 occupies 41% out of 100 by the crimes committed by youths.



**Figure 3:** Theft leads the crime committed by juveniles and youth and the factors responsible for this are as follows

#### 4.4.1. Factors to juvenile delinquency in South Africa

##### 4.4.1.1. Dysfunctional families

Many young people come from dysfunctional families because of alcohol abuse, domestic violence, poverty, divorce, lack of parental care, child neglect and abuse, lack of credible authority figures and poor or non-existent parental supervision (Graham & Bowling, 1995). Young people who do not get appropriate parental care and guidance may feel unloved and not valued in their families. Such a feeling may push them into juvenile gangs in which they may develop anti-social behavior such as stealing, alcohol and drug abuse. Such young people may, in the end, start engaging in criminal activities just to make themselves feel happy and experience a sense of belonging (Shoemaker, 2000).

##### 4.4.1.2. Peer pressure

Young people tend to associate with people outside the family as

they grow. They have a strong need of a substitute for family love and group-belongingness. The absence of parents or other family members to guide them may leave them with no choice as the peer group or the gang presents itself as a kind of close care givers that will serve their purpose (Bursik & Grasmick, 2000). They get attached to people who are willing to associate with them for the purpose of belonging. Since they are impressionable, they may be negatively influenced by their peers into criminal activities. Peer groups tend to form subcultures that often defy authority of adults and established family and community structures (Federal Bureau of Investigation Crime Report, 2009).

##### 4.4.1.3. Lack of Education

School leaving is a turning point which attenuates greater likelihood of engagement in criminal activities by thy youth. Education is a vital and useful instrument for the training and preparation

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of young people for the future. In the process, young people's behavior is also shaped in accordance with the accepted norms of the family and community (Bohm, 2001). Inadequate schooling by most young people in South Africa is likely to influence them to engage in criminal activities since they may not be qualified to find a decent job to fend for themselves.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

The results of this research shows factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency in Africa are almost the same including poverty, family dysfunction, peer influence, use of drugs among others and therefore this paper suggests the use of similar measure like strengthening of family functions, encouraging use of family planning, establishing centers to support children who are victims of crime and promoting education to reduce levels of illiteracy among juveniles in Africa.

### **5. Comparison between Uganda and South Korea**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

In Uganda a juvenile is a person who is below the age of 18. And every child from 12 yrs can be held liable for any criminal act according to the 1995 juvenile act, section 88.

In Korea it is grouped into three whereby the first group is for children below the age of 10; these cannot be punished even if they commit a certain crime according to the law. The second group is for juveniles between the ages of 10 to 14; these also are not subject to any criminal punishment, instead they are subjected to protective measures such as juvenile detention or probation, which is not the same case in Uganda. In Uganda juveniles from the age of 12, 13, and 14 above are all subjected to criminal punishments if they commit a certain crime. The third group is for juveniles between ages of 14 to 19; these can be subjected to both protective and criminal disposition, which is the same case in Uganda even though there is a slight difference in the age where by in Uganda is from age of 12 to 18 while in Korea is from age of 14 to 19.

#### **5.2. Juvenile behavior types in both countries**

Juvenile delinquency shows two general types of behaviors and that is status offense and delinquent offense.

Status offenses are not considered to be good for children and adolescents. Because of the age of the offender, these behaviors are proscribed. If these offenses are committed by adults, behaviors

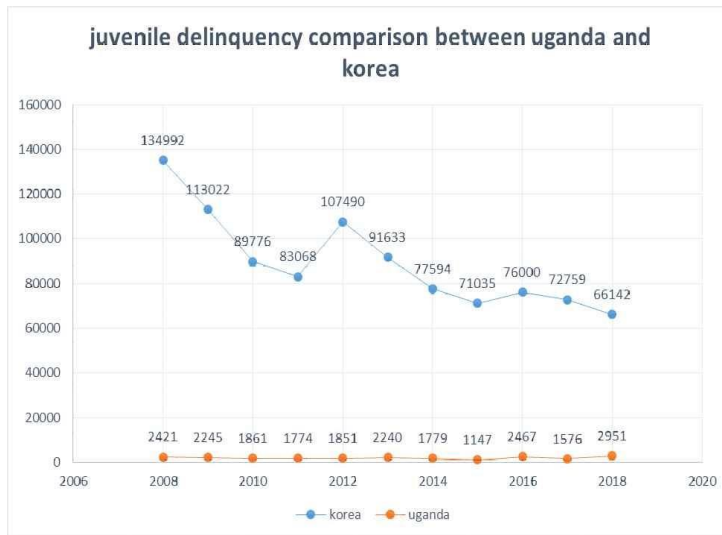
are not illegal. Drinking or possessing alcohol, consuming tobacco, running away from home, truancy or not attending school without any good reason, and violating curfew are examples of status offenses.

Delinquent offenses violate the legal statutes that also apply to adults in the criminal justice system. Acts of violence are included under delinquent offenses such as murder, rape, armed robbery, aggravated and simple assault, harassment, stalking and other similar offenses. Delinquent offenses include acts that are concerned with property crimes, such as burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, arson, damage to property, criminal mischief, vandalism, and others.

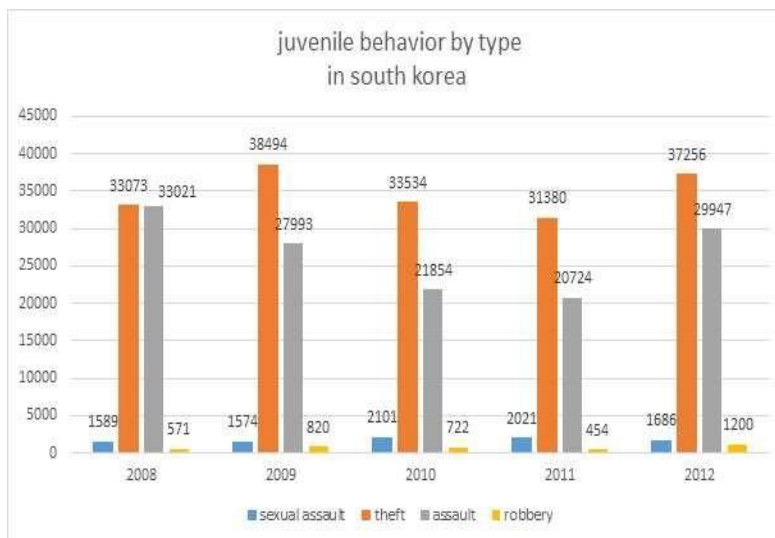
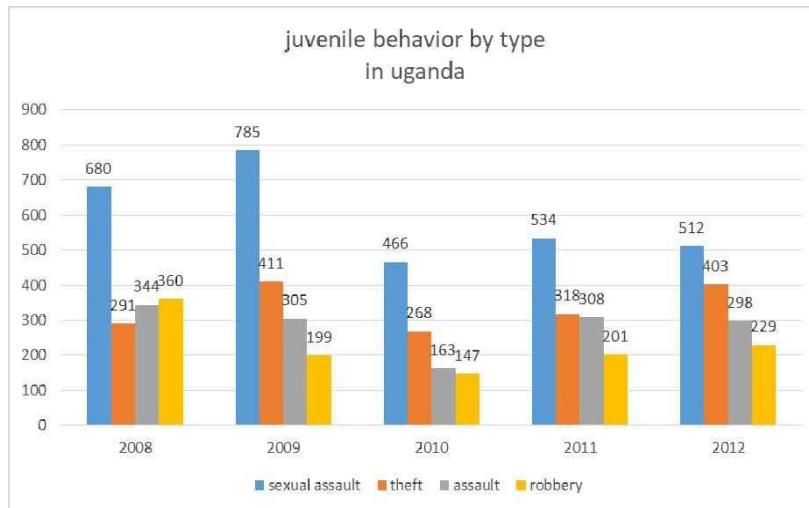
Property crimes: (theft, robbery, arson), violent crimes: (assault, rape and murder) sex related crimes: (sexual assault, rape and prostitution) and cyber-crimes: (fraud, hacking and cyber bullying) are the behaviors that juveniles in Uganda and Korea normally portray.

In Korea juveniles repeat the same crimes and still don't get punished due to the minimum criminality age, therefore there is a need to lower the criminality age as the minimum age of criminal responsibility has stayed at 14 since 1958. Moreover, criminal minors have shown to have higher re-offending rates than adults. According to the Ministry of Justice, while 4.5% of adults became repeat criminals in 2021, the re-offending rate for criminal minors was 12%. Therefore, in order to reduce the juvenile re-offending rate in South Korea, it seems reasonable to support stronger punishments against underage offenders and lower the bar of punitive action.

Crime and Criminal Statistics data showed physical assaults by minors almost doubled to 6,600 in 2015 from 3,600 in 2011. Experts cite the most serious issue in juvenile crime is recidivism. Recent data showed 12.3 percent of underage offenders committed crimes again, compared to 5.6 percent of adults, possibly due to the lack of stern punishment. From the graphs above shows that even though there was a decline in juvenile crimes from year 2008 to year 2012 in both countries, there was an increase in some crimes like theft and assault in south Korea and this is due to an increase in re-offending rate something that is arguably because of low minimum age for criminal responsibility.



**Figure 4: Juvenile Delinquency Comparison Between Uganda and Korea**



**Figure 5: Juvenile Behavior By Type in Uganda and South Korea**

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In Uganda sexual assault has steadily increased in juveniles and according to the research it is due to the sexual abuse these juveniles undergoes or sees people doing in the places where they live that trigger them to practice the same actions, on the other hand theft crimes has increased due to poverty and family dysfunction that force a number of children run away from homes, end up on streets and start stealing as a mean of survival.

### **5.3. Factors influencing juvenile delinquency in both countries**

#### **5.3.1. South Korea**

Juvenile delinquency might be caused by the interaction of personal and socio-environmental factors. Personal factors are mostly biological and psychological, from the developmental aspect; socio-environmental factors include family and school matters (S. J. Lee, 2009). Earlier research concludes that adolescents commit delinquencies for a variety of reasons, including the individual's temperament, such as depression or aggressiveness; familial environment, such as parental attachment or parental violence (J. Y. Kim & Nam, 2012); school environment factors, such as teachers, friends, and school record, (T. K. Kim, 2007); and social factors, such as harmful local community environment, and so on (Borduin & Ronis, 2012; K. S. Jeong, 2007; S. G. Lee, 2005; Rockhill, Vander Stoep, McCauley, & Katon, 2009).

##### **5.3.1.1. Physical development**

The difference in the maturity level in puberty or the level of physical-sexual development of an adolescent compared to peers has a close relationship with psychological development and social adjustment behaviors of adolescents. The characteristics of physical development have a connection with delinquency. Adolescents who diverge from the normal rate of growth for their age develop a distorted body image due to their own sense of anxiety or isolation from their peers. In other words, the tendency for adjustment problems and/or problematic behaviors increases when the adolescent perceives that his/her own degree and speed of growth and development are different from peers (Petersen, 1988 as cited in S. J. Kim & Kim, 2012). The more dissatisfaction with their own physical changes, the higher the possibility of adjustment/behavioral problems for adolescents (Hyun, Kim, & Kim, 2004). The increase in tendency for problematic and aggressive behaviors occurs for those who are more mature among

female students, while it is more prevalent in those with slow growth for male students (Buchanan, Eccles, & Becker, 1992; S. J. Kim & Kim, 2012). Thus, body image according to one's individual maturity level exerts direct influence over aggressive and problematic behaviors.

##### **5.3.1.2. Emotional problems**

Delinquency during adolescence has a connection with emotional problems, such as depression or anxiety (Loeber, Farrington, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Van Kammen, 1998), and delinquency during adolescence often occurs together with depression (C. S. Kim, 2007; J. W. Kim & Oh, 1993; Y. J. Kim & Baik, 2000; Kwak & Mun, 1995). For adolescents, the more serious the degree of depression, the higher the frequency of delinquent behavior, and depression in early adolescence increases due to delinquency. Depression of adolescents differs according to gender, and many studies show that female adolescents experience more depression than male adolescents (J. S. Lee & Lee, 2012). Depression in female adolescents can be predicted if the adolescent has an experience of delinquency, such as minor theft (Lalayants & Prince, 2014). Friendship during adolescence has an influence on delinquency (Montgomery, Thompson, & Barczyk, 2011). Adolescents spend more time interacting with their friends than they do with their parents at home, and the relationship with friends has an influence on an adolescent's formation of his/her sense of identity and belonging, as well as interpersonal intimacy. Thus it is more likely that experience in inappropriate friendship might have a negative influence on the mental health of adolescents. Deviant behavior was found to increase in adolescents when their behavior, especially society-friendly behavior, is constricted and they are exposed to such behavior (Jian, Toh, Hung, & Ang, 2013).

Previous research (J. M. Kim & Lee, 2008; Sohn, 2005) reported that a group exclude by friends showed higher levels of depression compared to other groups, and the higher the attachment to their peers and the higher the quality of friendship, the lower the level of depression (Yoo et al., 2007; Yoon, Cho, & Lee, 2009). Peer attachment and depression differed by age and gender, being higher in middle school students than high school students (Yoo et al., 2007). Male adolescents with depression were directly influenced, in order of strength, by schoolwork problems, friendship, and communication. For female adolescents, the influences were, in order of strength, friendship, communication with their mothers, and schoolwork problems (K. R. Choi, 2010a).

##### **5.3.1.3. Friendship**

Some research reports that having delinquent peers during adolescence has a greater influence on juvenile delinquency (H. S. Park & Kim, 2008). Being exposed to a delinquent peer is not only the most influential factor in committing delinquency but also has synergistic effects on delinquency with other variables (Noh, 2005). If an adolescent has a friend with antisocial traits, the adolescent is likely to commit an anti-social behavior. Conversely, if a friend of an adolescent is of normative traits, the likelihood of the adolescent presenting anti-social behaviors is rare (H. S. Park, & Kim, 2008). The influence of the behaviors of friends during

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adolescence arises more clearly when the adolescent becomes an adult (Regnerus, 2002). In this respect, the factors influencing juvenile delinquency are diverse and complicated.

#### **5.3.1.4. Educational environmental factors**

Students experience frustration, tension, and stress due to tests, excessive competition, and grade-oriented curriculum and evaluation.

Numerous problems such as truancy, bullying, school violence, and dropping out of school due to school life where each student's specialties or individuality are not respected occur at school.

#### **5.3.1.5. Mass media factor**

Violent and obscene programs on TV serve as a trigger to encourage juvenile delinquency. By being exposed to excessive expressions of violence that are far from reality for a long time, teenagers learn violence naturally and have an attitude of taking it for granted.

The mass media is likely to cause moral insensitivity to criminal behavior, inform the means of flight or technology, and induce delinquent behavior.

### **5.3.2. Uganda**

#### **5.3.2.1. Social factors**

##### **5.3.2.1.1. Family dysfunction**

Family dysfunction is the major contributing factor to juvenile delinquency in Uganda. Children from broken homes or those who experience neglect or abuse may turn to criminal behavior as a way to escape their home situation. It is also believed that family influence contributes to more delinquent behaviors than peer pressure. In researches, it has been proven that families in which there is a weak emotional bonding between the members of the family, tend to have juveniles who turn out to be delinquent. Family factors that may have an influence on offending include: the level of parental supervision, the way parents discipline a child, parental conflict or separation, criminal activity by parents or siblings, parental abuse or neglect, and the quality of the parent-child relationship. As mentioned above, parenting style is not of the largest predictors of juvenile delinquency.

##### **5.3.2.1.2. Peer pressure**

Children who associate with delinquent peers are more likely to engage in criminal behavior. The desire to fit in and be accepted by their peers can lead to poor decision-making. Research has shown that young people who form relationships with positive individuals and groups that pursue positive commitments and it tend to shun delinquent behaviors while on the other hand, juveniles can be engaged in activities that do not have concrete objectives and commitments. Peer rejection in childhood is also a large predictor of juvenile delinquency. This rejection can affect the child's ability to be socialized properly and often leads them to gravitate towards anti-social peer groups.

##### **5.3.2.1.3. Abuse and Trauma**

A number of children in Uganda are subjected to psychological

and physical abuse in their own households. The psychological effect of these abuses not only causes near-irreversible trauma, but also increases the risk of criminal behavior in later life. Studies show that child maltreatment can double the chance that a child may become a delinquent during their adolescent stage and up to adulthood.

#### **5.3.2.2. Economic factors**

##### **5.3.2.2.1. poverty**

Poverty is a significant contributing factor to juvenile delinquency in Uganda. Children from poor families often lack access to education and healthcare, leading to a lack of opportunities for employment. This can lead to criminal behavior as a means of survival.

Although the direct relationship between economic welfare and delinquency is still unproven, statistics indicate that there are high rates of delinquency attributed to poverty and poor welfare. Children who engage in the most serious forms of delinquency for example are more likely to be members of poor families and those without parents, especially the orphans or those driven out of their homes by unbearable violence. Poverty limits the capacity of households to provide for daily needs of its members and as a result, members especially the youth may resort to accessing basic necessities through means considered deviant from the law and social norms such as sex for pay and theft.

##### **5.3.2.2.2. Unemployment**

The general unemployment rate in Uganda today stands at 4.28% while the youth unemployment rate is at 6.58%. Ugandan youths, that is people aged 12 to 35, account for 78% of the country's population, or approximately 27 million people. As many as 64% – 70% of those of working age are unemployed. Which makes it hard for many to survive without legitment source of income. And many parents use their children as source of income by sending them out to still food and other items, something that is contributing to the increase of juvenile delinquency in the country.

### **5.4. Prevention strategies**

#### **5.4.1. Strengthening of family functions**

As the saying goes, 'There is a problematic family behind the problem child,' many parts of juvenile delinquency begin with problems within the family. In fact, juvenile delinquents are often victims of domestic violence and parental indifference. Strengthening the functional environment of the family so that children can grow and be raised healthy is very important for preventing juvenile delinquency.

#### **5.4.2. Strengthening of schools coping skills**

It should be considered that the school environment is closely related to delinquency, not just a structural problem of the school, but to the values and social structure of the entire society.

The social atmosphere that evaluates schools by the number of students entering top universities should be urgently improved, practical and step-by-step personality education and social

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education should be attached to the curriculum as essential subjects to prevent student delinquency and strengthen school functions.

#### **5.4.3. Establishment of Cooperation System among Related Organizations in the Community**

Governments should prepare support measures to strengthen the role of families, schools, and communities, and present more specific programs to improve the educational system and social environment that can prevent youth problems.

#### **6. Conclusion**

Every country in the world has faced the problem or still facing the problem of juvenile delinquency at some point in time. However, the problem of juvenile delinquency is much higher in developing countries like Uganda. In the developing world, there will be many factors that can affect the growth of a child. They are adversely affected by the changing conditions. People have to work hard to earn a living in the present era. And most of the time they had to leave their children alone in the home and they interact less with their children. Parent-children interaction is a most important aspect which can majorly influence the shaping of a child's life. In order to tackle the juvenile delinquency problem, every person in society has to contribute to it for the successful eradication of juvenile delinquency. Separate rules have to be made for different kinds of crimes committed by them. If they are really found guilty of the offence, they have to be punished appropriately in a rehabilitation center. It is important to educate parents on how to behave with their children if they commit any mistake and it is also important to provide children with proper legal and social education so that they can understand what is wrong and what is right.

Juvenile delinquency is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive approach. By addressing the societal factors that contribute to this problem, we can develop effective strategies to prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency in Uganda and make a positive impact on the lives of the youth and the community as a whole.

Juvenile delinquency is a significant issue in Uganda, with many young people involved in criminal activity. The causes of this are complex and varied, and may include poverty, lack of education, family dysfunction and exposure to violence. These factors can lead to a cycle of crime that is difficult to break. Addressing these factors is crucial in preventing juvenile delinquency and promoting positive youth development.

The results of this research indicates that the major causes of juvenile delinquencies are societal issues including family dysfunction, peer pressure, child abuse, presence of incurable diseases such as HIV aids among others. Therefore if we want to genuinely fight this issue there is a need in strengthening of family functions to ensure that children grows in a health family environments, establishing centers that can support children who are victims of crimes in order to prevent them from becoming potential criminals and also making awareness of the problem through educational

programs. Many people in Uganda are ignorant about juvenile delinquency and how serious it is, where by most of delinquents are not reported or punished for their behaviors. A problem cannot be solved if it is not recognized first, parents and the society should be on how to handle children who develops juvenile behaviors.

Juvenile delinquency is not only increasing in Uganda but it is also widespread. There is the constant fear in the country today that delinquents may graduate to become hardened criminals of the future. Although official government statistics do not project an alarming picture, the problem of delinquency may not be so simple. Another reason that it is difficult to know just how much delinquency exists in Uganda is the fact that people tend to handle the problem of juvenile offenders themselves, without resorting to either the police or the juvenile authorities. if we continue to handle the problem this way, then creating room for recidivism is inevitable. children no matter how younger they are, they need to fully understand the consequences of their own actions.

Juvenile delinquency is one of the most serious problems that need to be addressed both in developed and developing countries. It is the root for more organized and sophisticated crimes that costs society and government heavily for addressing it.

Juvenile delinquency has now become one of the important social issues which every nation tries to bring under control a midst the glaring evidence that, if the right nurturance is not given to the young offenders, they may graduate to become criminals.

Adolescent (juvenile) age offenses are acts of delinquencies or crimes that will harm individual, community and society at large and hence the urgency and importance of resolving this social problem.

This research also suggests that the government should put more emphasis on registering all children in Uganda and make sure they all poses birth certificates which will help in differentiating their age in the time of need [9-43].

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