Family factors contributing to high school crime at Nzhelele East Circuit, Vhembe District

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ABSTRACT

Crime in high schools has become a major concern all over the world. High schools in Nzhelele East Circuit, Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa also experience waves of youth crime perpetrated by learners. The aim of this study was to explore family factors which contribute to youth crime amongst learners in high schools in Nzhelele East Circuit. Three high schools (i.e. Mushaathoni, Ndweleli and Mphephu) known for high rate of crime were selected. Quantitative research approach was used. Survey questionnaires were administered among learners to collect quantitative data. Stratified random sampling was used to survey 40 grade 10 and 40 grade 11 learners from each of the three high schools. In total, 240 learners participated in this study. Data was analyzed using the SPSS instrument. Appropriate ethical principals were applied to ensure that research participants were not harmed. The study found that youth crime in high schools was attributed to family factors such as absence of parents, poor parenting style, abuse and domestic violence, poverty, divorce, single parenting, and family size. The study recommended the need for a multi-pronged strategy through mobilization of relevant stakeholders (families, community leaders, education authorities, law enforcement agencies and other relevant government department to curb youth crime in high schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Youth crime has become a major concern all over the world especially that it is also committed in places which are regarded to be safe such as schools and homes. Crime is any act or action which constitutes an offence, and it is punishable by the law. In the context of this study, crime is defined as an instance deemed injurious to other learners and educators at school (Mncube & Madikizela, 2004). Therefore, this study has focused on the injurious instances committed by learners at the selected three high schools.

According to the statistics from the United Nations Development programmes (UNDP), (2017) more than 40% of students committed an offence and were suspended from schools in 2016. The study also indicates that nearly a third of them had committed physical misconduct (UNDP, 2017). Another report released by the United Nations (UN) (2017) indicates that about 46% of school principals have been either physically assaulted or witnessed physical violence in their schools in 2017. Seventy percent of other school leaders had also been threatened with violence by students in 2018, (Cornell, Maeng, Burnette, Jia, Huang, Konold, & Meyer, 2018).

Looking at Africa, the rate of school crime was at about 48% in 2019 (Burdick-Will, Stein, & Grigg, 2019). In the central and northern African countries, 73.5% of females reported that they have experienced gangster crime in their schools (ECWRC, 2019). Amongst the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa has the highest rate of school youth crime. In South Africa, the school crime rate was about 52.4% in 2017, (StatsSA, 2017). In total, 58% of all learners, translating to 1,821,054 in South Africa have experienced some form of crime where classmates were identified as primary perpetrators. Forms of crime such as threats, assaults, robbery and theft constituted 94.4%, 94.1, 32% and 22% respectively (Stats SA, 2017).
Historically, South African students are known for their violence which was displayed during the Soweto uprising in 1976. South African political history has played a critical role on the behavior of the students, especially the black majority. According to the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) (1999), the emotional, psychological, and financial state of the South African youth is still attributed to their historical experiences. Such experiences are seen to have contributed to the criminal behaviour displayed by the youth, especially blacks, Indians and colourreds as compared to the whites (Nhambura, 2020).

It is not surprising to see this criminal behaviour spilling over into schools. Hence, the rate of crimes such assault, theft, sexual harassment and threats is at about 5.8%, 15.9%, 5.3% and 14.5 respectively. From all parts of Limpopo Province Musina is the area with the highest rate of school crime. School crime in Musina is at about 23% (StatsSA, 2017). Consequently, for a child who has experienced violence, his/her school performance often decreases. Such child’s mental and physical health is also in danger (Save the Children Organization, 2017).

Literature Review

Literature relevant to the family factors contributing to high school crime is discussed below. The nexus between family dynamics and adolescent delinquency has been a focal point of scholarly exploration, shedding light on the intricate interplay of family factors in shaping high school crime. As the primary crucible of socialization, families carry profound influence over the moral and behavioral development of children, serving as the foundational bedrock upon which values and norms are instilled (Ilan, 2017).

Theoretical and Conceptual Background

Drawing from the tenets of Social Learning Theory, which underscores the significance of social interactions in the acquisition of behavior, (Akers’ & Sellers 2017; Bezuidenhout, 2020) posit that deviant or criminal behavior often emanates from direct association and interaction within familial contexts. From birth, families assume a position of intimacy and proximity to children, thereby exerting considerable sway over their socialization processes, (Zhao, & Zhao 2022).

Moreover, the seminal work of McGee, Whitten, Williams, Jolliffe, & Farrington (2021) and Ward, Arzt, Berg, Boonzaier, Crawford-Browne, Dawes, & van der Spuy, (2012), emphasizes the pivotal role of families in shaping adolescents' adjustment to school environments, with family influences bearing weight on subsequent behavioral outcomes within educational settings. However, the impact of family extends beyond mere adjustment, permeating into the realm of delinquency as well.

Indeed, the literature outlines a variety of family factors that contribute to the propensity for youth involvement in criminal activities within high school. These factors encompass diverse dimensions, including family structures, interpersonal relations, parenting styles, values imparted within familial contexts, and a familial history rife with deviant behavior.

In this review, this research aims to synthesize extant literature on the multifaceted interplay between family factors and youth/adolescent delinquency, providing insight into the complex mechanisms through which family dynamics shape behavioral outcomes within the high school environment.

Empirical Review and Hypothesis Development

Family factors contributing to youth crime

Presence of both parents

Family structure refers to the position held by family members and their influence on the life of a child. The breakdown in the traditional family structures where both parents are available, or present can result in a breeding ground for social problems amongst the children within single parent’s families. These social problems may lead to youth crime. A single parenting family might be due to death of spouse, divorce, or separations (Farrington, 2003; Ward et al, 2012).

Based on the findings of Petrosino, Derzon, Lavenberg (2009), children perceived their fathers as the dominant figure in the family, and mothers as the warmth figure. However, an absence of maternal deprivation has been seen as a contributory factor towards youth crime. Thus, based on the findings of research, most youth offenders stated that their relationship with their father was troubles, or they become criminals because they lacked father figure. This means that the presence of both parents helps to stabilize the emotional state of young people, and lead youth to have less chances of becoming criminals.

The size of the family

The size of the family plays a critical role on determining whether the child becomes a criminal or not. The size of the family has implications on various areas of the family lifestyle, and it can lead to the problem of antisocial behaviour by children or young people. The size of the family relates to the control that parents have over their children. In large families, time is spread very thin, and children do not receive enough time, proper attention, and supervision; “As the number of children increases the amount of parental attention decreases” (Siegel, Welsh & Senna, 2003).
Birth order in the family

Birth order refers to the position that children hold in the family. According to Adler (1937) there is the first child, the middle child, and the last-born child. However, all these positions have effect on the personality of a child, and it can also determine whether the child will be deviant or not (Eckstein, et al. 2010).

The last-born child in the family, unlike the first and the middle child, is the most loved child by the members of the family. Last born children mostly develop a spoiled and entitled attitude. They compete with the first and middle born, and they have low expectation of responsibilities from the parents. These low acceptances of responsibilities from parents and other family members lead them to laziness and shrinking of responsibilities and may commit crime because they have plenty of time in their hands (Heilbrun, Lee, & Cottle, 2005).

Quality of Relationship with other siblings

The relationship amongst the siblings and other family members also plays a critical role in shaping the behaviour of the child. These relationships have greater effect on the emotions of the child. According to De Figueiredo, & Dias, (2012), quality siblings’ relationship refers to the relationship where siblings are close to each other. In this form of relationship siblings share and appreciate one another. When there are quality relationship children tend to spend much time together which helps them to develop good coping abilities and strategies (Eddleston, & Kidwell, 2012). However, when the family lacks quality relationships they lack communication skills, appreciation and lot of conflicts may occur in such families. When the siblings lack conducive relationship, they develop poor coping abilities which make them to commit crime (Dowden, Antonowicz, & Andrews, 2003).

Divorce or separation

When parents separate from each other children are left vulnerable. Divorce amongst parents causes great confusion on children. They never know who to trust and who to rely on because their parents are separating (Mercer, & Drew, 2021). When a child is exposed to divorce, they become more confused because they will have to choose one parent to stay with. The confusion may lead such youth into deviant behaviour. According to (Harden, 2007), the confusion and frustration children have after divorce increase the risk for delinquency and the corresponding risks of divorce exposure. The later possibilities after divorce are that the child might develop the criminal behaviour as a way of coping with parental separation.

Family discipline and morals

Discipline is a training that produces a specific character and a pattern of behaviour in a child and may come in a form of punishment and rewards which intend to correct and train a child to behave in a certain way. Whereas Morals refer to the rules set apart by parents that need to be followed by children and other family members. Family morals help children to have guidelines that they follow so that they become better adults (Farley, Cotton, Lynne, Zumbeck, Spiwak, Reyes, & Sezgin, 2004). When children lack discipline, they lack self-control. However, inconsistent discipline may lead to youth crime because children are not aware of what their parents expect from them, and they are not aware of what is right and wrong.

Family violence and conflict (domestic violence)

Children who have been raised from unstable homes were parents abuse each other either verbally or physically suffers psychological and emotional when they grow up. The norms and values of the families where children are easily imitated and reproduced by such children. Therefore, children from violent families are likely to become violent when they are in a school setting (Delson & Margolin, 2004).

Exposure to violence can disrupt the normal development of children, and it might have a profound effect on their mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing. According to (Ali, & Masood, 2018) this exposure may affect children differently causes by different kinds of conflicts and violence in family settings. Some children who are exposed to family violence and conflicts may develop fear and a feeling of insecurity, which may lead them to joining gangs to have a sense of belonging (Dowden et al. 2003).

Family child abuse and domestic violence

Children who are abused and maltreated have a great chance of becoming criminals. Becoming troublesome in school is common for victims of abuse and neglect. According to Siegel (2003), children who are abused and neglected are not given proper care and support by their parents which give them a greater chance for committing crime. Physical, emotional, and sexual abuse to a child has a long-term impact on a child’s life, thus children who are abused might become violent. That could be because they carry lots of anger inside them. Such children might also develop low self-esteem because they know they cannot defend themselves.

Criminals in the family

Akers, (2017) stated if the parents of a child have a history of criminal behaviour, there is a possibility that a child in such a family may adopt and repeat such behaviour. Most boys who become delinquent have no positive adult role models in the family. It might have happened that their parents, brothers, and other relatives are likely to be in and out of prison for criminal activities. In this case there is a possibility of transference of deviant behaviour from the parents to a child.
Poverty

Children living in poverty are at a greater risk of becoming criminals. Such children may develop behavioral problems which include aggression, depression, and the development of low self-esteem. The tendency of bullying by taking lunch boxes and money is mostly displayed by children from poverty-stricken households (Farmington, 2003).

Some children from poor families are forced to join gangs so that they can get food and shelter. Such experiences influence them to be involved in drug dealing and substance abuse. Many girls from poor background seduce other school mates for exchange of money and food. Crimes of house breaking and stealing are common for children from poverty-stricken homes (Cicerali & Cicerali, 2018).

Unemployed parents

Children in the family depend on their parents for provision of food, shelter education and clothing (Cicerali & Cicerali, 2018). However, parents who are not employed are not able to support their children properly, especially financially. When children’s needs cannot be satisfied it creates an opportunity of delinquency. Economic deprivation affects the children emotionally. Children may develop anger because their parents are not able to meet their needs (Squires, 2018).

Low family monthly income

“Economic deprivation has a negative impact on peer relationships and offenders” (Young, & Trickett, 2017). Most of the learners who are economically deprived live in poor households and deprived areas or villages and they are at a high risk of becoming criminals.

Children who come from families with low income, unlike children from middle and high income suffer and have fewer chances to finish their education in order to gain economic power. Because such learners do not see greater opportunities, they involve themselves in criminal activities, so that they may satisfy their financial needs and other materials. According to Peterson, (2018), learners who live in deprived areas experience a high rate of crime, and they also fear becoming the victims. Often such youth seek to protect themselves by using weapons and forming of gangs. Most of learners from low-income families are influenced by teachers and other learners to become drug addicts and sell drugs to other learners in order to get money (Peterson, 2018).

Low socio-economic status

“Socio-economic status refers to parent’s education, occupation and their income in the family” (Simpson, 2020). Most parents who are poorly educated might experience problems and are unable to help their children with schoolwork (Simpson, 2020). The children from families which parents are not educated become ignorant of the schools’ work as their parents are not able to be involved. It became easy for children who came from uneducated parents to be involved in criminal activities because their parents may lack knowledge on what is expected from their children at school. They may rob their parents’ money and waste other resources because parents lack information on what is really needed at school due to their level of education.

Children who are from families where they are not content with parental earnings stand a greater chance of being involved in crimes of stealing and bullying other learners as they are unable to be satisfied with what they get from home. Children from families where there is no income involve themselves in criminal activities to provide for themselves (Dutta, Jana, & Kar, 2020).

Malnutrition

Families with unemployed parents are not able to provide proper and healthy food to their children. Most of the children from such homes suffer from malnutrition and are mostly isolated in schools and they are most likely to be involved in criminal activities (Voola, Voola, Wylie, Carlson, & Sridharan, 2018). Bullying and theft are mostly associated with children who are malnourished.

Research and Methodology

This study has used the quantitative approach, as this method allows the researcher to stretch and involve many participants in the study. Creswell (2016) defined quantitative approach as the approach which is used to describe, test relationships, and examine the cause and effects of the relationships. In this study the researcher has used a quantitative method in the form of learners’ survey to gain comprehensive picture of family factors causing crime among high school learners in Nzhelele East circuit.

The population of this study were selected high school learners in Nzhelele East Circuit. Three secondary schools known for high crime rate in Nzhelele East Circuit was selected purposefully. The sample size is 240 randomly selected learners from Grade 10 and 11. Both male and females are included in the study.

Random sampling was used to select the participants for the survey. The researcher used stratified random sampling, whereby the researcher uses the class list to select 40 learners from Grade 10 and another 40 learners from Grade 11 in each of the three schools. In total 240 learners where sampled. Survey questionnaires were used as a method of collecting data.

The quantitative data from survey questionnaires was coded, captured and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Version data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, namely frequency distributions. The results were tabulated.
and reported graphically based on the statistical information compiled. The interpretation of the results was done at the same time as the analysis.

**Findings and Discussions**

After the coding and capture of quantitative data from survey questionnaires, the data was imported into SPSS, where it was organized and cleaned to ensure accuracy and consistency. The researcher checked the missing values, and inconsistencies in responses. Thereafter, descriptive statistics were applied to summarize and describe the main characteristics of the data by including measures such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and range, providing a comprehensive overview of the dataset.

Further, the frequency distributions were generated to display the distribution of responses for each survey question. The researcher counted the frequency of each response option and presented it in tabular form. Graphical representations such as bar charts, and pie charts were created to visually illustrate the findings derived from the frequency distributions. Below are the findings and representation of data.

**Response Rate**

The researcher distributed questionnaires to selected 40 learners from grade 10 and another 40 from grade 11 learners in each of the three schools in Nzhelele East circuit in Vhembe District. Breakdown pertaining to the response rate of the questionnaires is presented in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: General Response Rate](image)

As depicted in Figure 1, the response rate was very high with an overall response rate of 96%. This can be attributed to the high interest in the topic generated amongst the respondents. The topic under study was quite interesting amongst most of the respondents. The high response rate might also entail that the findings are representative of all the participants in the research.

**Demographics Characteristics of the Respondents**

In total, 232 respondents participated in the study. Of these, 49% were female and 51% male. The majority of respondents came from the 19 to 24-year age group with a frequency of 146 respondents with the 14 to 18-year age group recording the least frequency of about 87 respondents. Table 1 below summarises the demographic profile of the sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-18 years</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-24 years</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Family factors contributing to youth crime.**

The section presents, describes and analyses information pertaining to factors that contributes to youth crime which was obtained from the survey. Information pertaining to family factors, economic factors and environmental factors are discussed in this section.
A number of family factors as discussed earlier in the review may cause youth crimes, under this subsection respondents were asked if family factors such as presence of both parents, size of family and birth order in the family may contribute to youth crime. Data and information pertaining to the respective questions proffered by the respondents which took part in the survey is depicted below.

**Presence of both parents**

The respondents were asked to divulge information on whom they stay with and information in Figure 2 came out from the survey.

![Figure 2: Presence of both parents](image)

As shown in Figure 2. Majority of the surveyed students stay with their parents as reflected with a frequency of 104. The second most frequently occurring are the students staying with siblings who posted a frequency of 73, with 20 students confirming that they stay with their grandparents. Lastly, students who stay extended families posted a lower frequency of 15 out of the possible 232 students who took part in the survey. With these figures one may see that there are many learners who are not staying with their parents, and it’s apparently 110 of them. Based on the figures above the researcher may conclude that parental absence may also play a role in school crime. This is in consistent with a study by Farrington (2003) stating that the breaking down of family structure where both parents are available result in breeding ground for social problem among the children within such family.

**Family size**

With regard to how family size contributes to youth crime in the circuit, most of the respondents indicated that they belong to smaller families, with the majority falling between 0 to 5 siblings (56%). The second group with the largest frequency fell between 5 to 10 family members (33%), the group of 10 to 15 family members posted 9% and more than 15 family members recorded the least percentage of 2% as shown in Figure 3.

![Figure 3: Size of family](image)

However, the study suggested that children who came from large families are at a risk of offending at school. This is in relation with the study conducted by Siegel (2003) who discovered that in large family’s time is spread very thin and children do not receive proper time, attention and supervision from their parents. The study also established that as the number of children increases the amount of parental attention decreases.
Birth order in family

As shown in Figure 4, the majority of students are middle born with a frequency of 93 (f=93), the second largest frequency are first born (f=71). However, smaller percentages came out from last born group with a frequency of 32.

Looking at the matrix above the researcher may conclude that childbirth in the family truly affects children. Based on the results most of the learners’ committing crimes in school are influenced by the order of birth in their families. This is in consistent with study by Eckstein (2010), who mentioned that the positions that children have in the family may affect their personality and determine whether the child will be deviant or not. The study by Akers (2017) discovered that the first-born child find pressure in the family as parents have lots of expectations on them. Furthermore, the middle and last born are competitive and may develop deviant behavior because of jealousy, while the only child is spoiled and may develop deviant behavior too.

Generally, most respondents in the survey were amongst the middle born and first born. The two segments usually constitute students who have some degree of responsibility in their families. The other two segments, the last born and only child constitute teenagers who are usually spoiled and always have time to engage in criminal activities since some family responsibilities are usually not pinned on them.

Family discipline and morals

Results from the survey indicates that, 171 participants faced family abuse at home, like being beaten, sexually assaulted and being left at home alone. Only 61 of the participants did not face such kind of abuse. 159 of the participants indicated that some of their family members have been in conflict with the law, while 73 indicated otherwise. This shows that some of the family abuses recorded are as a result of family members going against the law as those without record of abuse have no family members involved in breaking the law.

The above abuses were also conceded to family members involved in smoking marijuana, parents involved in drinking alcoholic substances as well as them fighting as indicated by numbers in Figure 5 which shows a total of 113, 136 and 193 respectively. Of those who were not exposed to family abuse they had a total of 139, 96 and 39 respectively as clearly indicated by Figure 5.

Generally, family moral and discipline are serious aspects that perpetuate to youth school crime. The above statement is supported by the theory of Akers (2017) who explain deviant behaviour as a behaviour produced through direct association with people who possess the same character. In this instance the family is the primary source of association. The study further indicated that children
learn and imitates the behaviours displayed by parents or other family members through direct association. There for based on the matrix above if the children came from the families characterised by fighting, such children learn displays the violent behaviour at school. The same may apply to children who came from families who drinks and smoke.

Furthermore, children who came from families whose family members are in conflict with the law commit more crime in school. This is supported by the same study of Akers (2017) who stated that the frequency and nature of contact with family members produces same character. Thus, according to the study children imitates the behaviour of family members as they learn.

Moreover, large number of learners from abusive homes are committing crimes in schools. This is evident form the study by Siegel (2003) who discovered that children physically, emotionally and sexually abused children suffer a long-term impact, thus such children are violent. Such children use violence to release their anger, according to the study.

**Unemployed parents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Parent’s employment status</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53 % of the participants indicated that their parents were employed while 35% indicated that their parents were not employed. 10% were self-employed while 2% were involved in other different ways of earning an income. Considering the percentages, not all parents were employed earned enough to support their families satisfactorily. Hence the increase in crime rates in school students.

The matrix above is in support of the study by Squires, (2018) who mentioned unemployment of parents affects children and influence them to commit crime in schools, because their parents are unable to meet their needs.

**Parents income**

Parents’ income is a factor in perpetuating crime. Less salary for the family means less economic status and less food on the table and other necessities.75 of the participants indicated that their parents’ salary was below R1500, 72 of them indicating that it was below R5000. 56 of the participants indicated that their parents earned from R6000 to R10 000 while only 29 indicated that their parents earned more than R10 000. Showing a high number of parents earning less than necessary to cater for the whole family influences school students to engage in criminal activities like theft, selling drugs among other factors.

The above findings are inconsistent with the study conducted by Simpson, (2020), which indicated that children from low family income involve themselves in crime so that they may satisfy their financial needs and other materials. Another study by Young & Trickett, (2017), indicated that most of the children who are economic deprived lives in poor households and lack basic needs, due to that they are at high risk of becoming criminals.

![Figure 6: Salary Per Month](image-url)
Poverty was named a factor that influences crime in school students. Of the participants who took to the survey, 128 who were beneficiaries of the social grants indicated that poverty was among the factors that influence crime in students while 104 who did not receive in social grants also indicated the same. Food shortages also indicated that poverty is a perpetuator of crime in schools as shown by 112 of the participants. However, even though 120 of the participants indicated that they did not face any food shortages, they acknowledged that food shortages at home influenced crimes in schools.

The study conducted by Cicerali & Cicerali, (2018), indicated that it is easier for a child from poverty-stricken home to join gangs in order to gain food and other needs.

**Implications**

For the families, the study findings highlighted the importance of parental involvement and support in preventing youth involvement in high school crime. The study further emphasizes the significance of positive family dynamics, effective communication, and parental monitoring in shaping adolescent behavior. Families will benefit from the study’s interventions focused on strengthening parent-child relationships and promoting positive parenting practices which may reduce the level of crimes in high schools. The study findings will also be beneficial to school in developing school-based interventions aimed at promoting a safe and supportive learning environment for all learners. This study has delved into the anti-crime programs, like anti-bullying programs which may be very helpful to the school to address the crime incidents as well as helping both the offenders and perpetrators.

Further, the study findings will also benefit the community as well as other government agencies. Community leaders, school governing bodies, as well as community police forums may find value in the study's findings for informing community-based interventions aimed at addressing youth crime. Initiatives such as community cohesion, where proper community collaborations are developed with local organizations and agencies to implement programs that target at-risk youth and provide support services for families in need could be adopted to reduce the levels of crime in local high schools.

**Conclusion**

In a nutshell this study has covered the causes, effects and the nature of crime committed in high schools. The study discovered that among other factors family factors plays a role in influencing young people in high school to commit crime. The study also recommends relevant departments to offer training to educators including all schools and community stakeholders to build relationships and identify areas common grounds, clarify roles and responsibilities, acknowledge capacity constraints, and explore the practical means to overcome challenges of crime facing many high schools in South Africa.

The study recommends relevant government departments to develop policies that will help to curb the issue of crime in high school. Such policies must include measures to improve school security, enhance support services for students at risk of involvement in crime, and promote positive school climates conducive to learning and safety.

The study further recommends relevant departments to offer training to educators including all schools and community stakeholders to build relationships and identify areas common grounds, clarify roles and responsibilities, acknowledge capacity constraints, and explore the practical means to overcome challenges of crime facing many high schools in south Africa. The training can empower educators and stakeholders with the knowledge and skills needed to address crime in high schools.
More so, the study recommend government to employ social workers and learners support agents in schools, so that that may counsel and advice learners facing problems. Employment of learner’s support agents may also help in identifying and exploring the challenges that learners faced during and after school. These professionals can also help identify and address underlying issues contributing to high school crime, such as social and emotional challenges faced by students.

More social programs, subsidies, government housing, free education, must be offered to more people who are economically deprived. Providing social programs, subsidies, government housing, and free education to poor individuals can help alleviate poverty and reduce the risk factors associated with high school crime. By addressing socioeconomic disparities, governments can create more equitable opportunities for all students.

Community stakeholders should develop programs that will help learners not to commit crime. These programs can include mentoring, afterschool activities, and youth development initiatives aimed at promoting positive behaviors and preventing delinquency. Community stakeholders should further raise public awareness of the existence of crime in schools. So that other people will not fall victims of such. The study also recommends politicians to raise awareness at every public appearance about the impact of crime to the learners and other community members.

Government to network with other financial agencies to help lower economic class to reduce cost of living and consumer spending. This might help to reduce poverty and malnutrition. The study also recommends the government to formulate the legislature on birth rate as to how many children should parents have. This will help to reduce family size which will help parents to be able to cater.

The study also recommends that parents, government, community structures and non-governmental stakeholders must work together in tackling the issue of crime in schools. Tackling high school crime requires collaborative efforts among parents, government agencies, community structures, and non-governmental stakeholders. By working together, these stakeholders can leverage their collective resources and expertise to address the root causes of high school crime and implement effective prevention and intervention strategies.

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Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to restrictions.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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