

## **Abstract**

There has been serious concerns about the pace at which juvenile criminality is increasing globally (National Academies Press, 2001). Young people are increasingly becoming susceptible to a wide variety of misdemeanors; from substance abuse and addiction to murder (*ibid*). Studies have empirically described many triggers as the root cause of juvenile delinquency (Archer, 2000). Some criminologists have attributed these types of misdemeanors to the environments to which these adolescents are/have been subjected to (Wikstrom, 2004). On this basis, this research aims to assess the liability, if any, of bystanders/observers and enablers/facilitators of juvenile delinquency. The study employed a qualitative approach in evaluating the role of bystanders and enablers in juvenile delinquency. The outcome revealed that the majority of bystanders and enablers are equally as guilty as the delinquent youth. Three theories were used to rationalize these findings; the anomie-strain theory, situational action theory and self control theory (Chainey & Ratcliffe, 2005). As a result, the study recommends adequate parental guidance, in-person supervision, parental awareness, governmental inclusion, the provision of social infrastructures as well as equal opportunities, among others.



**THE ROLE OF BYSTANDERS AND  
ENABLERS IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY.**

**BY**

**OLUWATOYIN JAIYEOLA**

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Supervisor: Kim Moeller

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Over the past ten years, a considerable body of new research has largely focused on juvenile delinquency. The United Nations (UN), Five –Year perspective, 2000-2004, issued by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs states that delinquency is a serious and widespread problem in our contemporary world, particularly acute in some of the highly developed nations. The various measures established to prevent delinquency have in part failed to succeed, raising the need to review the causes of delinquency at a broader perspective, and a need for developing new methods to deal with these established causes (Young et al, 2017). Although the rate of juvenile delinquency has significantly dropped globally since the early 1990s, public fears and political rhetoric surrounding the issue have increased. Majority of programs and research studies dealing with it largely focus on the youth as the offenders (*ibid*). However, often overlooked are the roles of bystanders and enablers with inherent pitfalls leading to and during adolescence, which largely contribute to juvenile delinquency in many societies.

Early-stage mitigation of juvenile delinquency behavior is fundamental in shaping the minds of the youth into becoming responsible future individuals. Thus, societies need to provide all the required services, from the private and the public sphere namely functional schools, basic and necessary amenities, and any other infrastructure that could encourage children to become constructive and law-abiding citizens. Favorable neighbourhood setting would provide encouragement and instill good morals in juveniles (Chainey and Ratcliffe, 2005). With regard to this dereliction by bystanders and enablers, a significant number of young people find themselves battling opioid abuse, indulging in numerous illegal activities, and result to using aggression against their friends amongst many other acts of delinquency (Chainey and Ratcliffe, 2005). In every society, there have been traditionally distinguishing behavioral patterns and moral obligations which are justifiable and anticipated for a child. A child who does not achieve these moral responsibilities is deemed a delinquent (Crain, 1985)

Numerous psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, lawyers, and philosophers have done many studies and established several theories seeking to understand and explain issues surrounding delinquency(Cohen & Felson, 1979).Many of these theories imply that crime and delinquency cannot be explained by a single factor, but by biogenic, psychogenic, and

sociogenic theories. The sociogenic theory accentuates that there is a relationship between social structure and delinquency.

### **The problem**

One of the underlying problems of juvenile delinquency is to examine and deduce why bystanders and enablers fail to act and report juvenile irresponsible behaviors they witness, and sometimes which they have contributed enormously to ( Grasmick *et al*,1993). The failure to report or act in such cases is a big loss to the fight against juvenile delinquency because such acts could help to early sensitize these youngsters and thereby reduce the number of juveniles who end up being incarcerated. According to the various study findings, there have been rising concerns over what bystanders can do in regard to stopping juvenile delinquency. Failure for bystanders to take action and report such vices to authorities have been a major drawback (*ibid*).

Sadly, there are some people within the society who recruit juveniles (enablers) to carry out illegal activities; and bystanders sometimes have a good chance of spotting such individuals (enablers) for action to be taken against them, but in reality this is really lacking (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). As Cohen posites, every incident of human suffering always consists of the perpetrator, victim and the bystander (Cohen, 1993). Bystanders fail to report these cases on grounds of personal reasons as well as societal stereotypes (snitches)which sometimes make them unable to act (Courteney, 2012). In the case the situation worsen for the juvenile(s), and end up being incarcerated, sometimes the moral guilt faced by some bystanders tend to bring self-blame, especially knowing that they could have averted the unpleasant outcome but did nothing to prevent it (Inna et al, 2013). The failure to report these incidents or perpetrators have seen some juveniles who could have been helped or rehabilitated, have their future tainted or destroyed simply because of a dereliction (*ibid*)

In situations whereby the juveniles are being radicalized or recruited by an adult (enabler), the bystander action would have such individuals punished simply because bystanders have opted to remain quiet. These inactions by bystanders have a way of strengthening delinquency; this inaction includes not availing themselves in court proceedings as witnesses or by availing their evidence which could be vital in the long run for curbing juvenile delinquency. Then, the question holds how is it that these individuals are not liable for the

crimes that are perpetrated by these juveniles seeing that they helped create the eventual happenstance? This situation is quite perplexing.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVE**

### *General objective*

To determine and evaluate the answerability of bystanders and enablers to juvenile delinquency using theories.

### *Specific objectives*

- (i) To define and discuss enablers and bystanders in juvenile delinquency.
- (ii) To determine the responsibility of inaction
- (iii) To validate if enablers and bystanders of delinquent behavior can be criminals.

## **3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Who is a Bystander?**

A bystander can be anyone who witnesses a situation or an event without taking part in it. He/she may also be a chance spectator, a passer-by, viewer, eye-witness, or an observer watching an incident happen but doesn't take part in it (Cohen, 1993). More technically, a bystander is an individual who watches or otherwise aware of a potentially dangerous event that is happening to another person but is not initially involved in it (Barnett, 1999). In some situations, a bystander may be legally obliged to take action if he/she is trained, employed in a particular profession, or depending on the nature of harm (Robert, 2010) e.g child abuse. The moral obligation may also motivate a bystander to get involved in a situation e.g calling the cops in the event of a robbery. Also, bystanders may take part in pro-social bystander action such as cabling gender discrimination and preventing violence against women, by noticing behavior that indicates physical or sexual abuse has started or noticing behavior that represents possible threats and to act as the situation warrant (Robert, 2010).

### **Bystander behavioral explanation**

Upon close examination of available literature regarding the bystander role in juvenile delinquency, a pre-eminent feature for its justification stems from the "I mind my business" concern owing to the fear of reprisal action (Obermann, 2010). In other cases, criminal justice processes are time consuming and most people are not willing to cooperate with law

enforcement and the judicial system to help save these juveniles. There is also no motivation for the bystanders to report some criminal cases, especially where such is taken with levity eg. child abuse and spousal abuse in some societies ( Hirschi, 1969). According to a study by Safe Horizon, it revealed that most people (bystanders) are not aware of their responsibility to act (report a crime/confront the perpetrator) as they are unaware of the effect of their inaction. In addition, it was also found that only 18% of the bystanders reported juvenile criminal behavior or took action. This percentage is quite low and the reality might reveal even more worrying statistics. The question remains what is the limit to the culpability of a bystander, if any, when he/she becomes aware of a crime and chooses not to act?

Furthermore, Safe Horizon research found that over 95 percent of the respondents in their research were aware of juvenile delinquency. Out of the total respondents involved in the research only 32% agreed that they were aware of juvenile delinquency behaviors which they didn't report for fear of being included in such cases as witnesses since they didn't want such involvement. In addition, the only percentage that ends up being reported to the authorities, like the police is only 6% which is quite low for such egregious challenges facing society.

### **Who is an Enabler?**

An enabler can be described as an individual who defends or provides assistance to another person, usually a family member or a friend in their psychotic behavior, purposely to get out of trouble. Enablers usually support other people's bad or dangerous habits either overtly or tacitly (Summer and Feldman, 1984). An overt enabler aids another's destructive habits by providing financial assistance, approval, or transportation, while a tacit enabler supports another's bad habits by remaining silent. Enablers tend to shun the idea of confronting other people about their bad behaviors since these people tend to be their family, friend, or others acquainted to them (Urban dictionary, 2011). The enabler instead prefers to play it safe and slowly watch the person destroy others/ themselves through their actions, rather than risk losing contact, friendship, love, or respect from the person (Summer and Feldman, 1984)

### **Juveniles and juvenile delinquency**

A juvenile is a young person within a specific age limit (often between ages 10 and 18 ) as specified by the laws of a country, and can be answerable legally for his/her criminal

actions (FindLaw, 2019). A juvenile can also be defined as a child who has allegedly violated certain state laws that declare his/her acts as an offense. The terms juvenile and minor are used in different legal perspectives. The term juvenile is generally used to refer to a young criminal offender, while minor is used to refer to the legal capacity of a person ( Grasmick *et al*,1993). According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), a juvenile is anyone under the age of eighteen irrespective of how each state defines a juvenile. However, the statutory definition of a juvenile delinquent is a young person who has committed a criminal offense and given a court order.

Delinquency is referred to as criminal tendencies exhibited by juveniles under the legal age of adulthood. A widely used definition was proposed by (Hirschi 1969). Delinquency is defined by acts, the detection of which is thought to result in punishment for the person committing them by agents of the larger society” (*ibid*). Juvenile delinquency comprises all public vices perpetrated by young people who constantly commit acts of crime, but cannot be legally prosecuted as an adult, due to their age. It describes the negative behaviors of children and teens that may result in criminal or legal action—frequently causing widespread problems in communities (RAND, 2019).These offenses include violations of the legal and social norms that range from minor offenses like smoking to serious crimes such as murder.

### **Causes of Juvenile Delinquency**

Sociologists have linked specific youth behaviors with the home, neighborhood, family, peers, school and other aspects that could collectively or separately influence the creation of the young people’s social environment (UN, 2004). Delinquent acts vary in degree, seriousness, and frequency, and like many other social problems, juvenile delinquency has complex roots. The multiplex nature of deviant behavior in adolescents remains evolving and as such several theories have been successfully developed by experts to explain the underlying factors that influence behavioral change in these youngsters. Some factors may include poverty, unstable homes, and irregular earning, which may force young people to steal or encourage them to join street gangs or even begin to gamble (Mary Gifford-Smith *et al*, 2005). Banham Bridges summarizes the factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency; by paying attention to those consistent acts in several case studies and reports from several authorities. These include mental factors; (obsession, uneven mental development, mental defect, psychoneuroses, abnormalities of instinct and emotion), physical factors; (lack of

sleep, sensory defects, malnutrition, endocrine disorders, etc.), home conditions; (poverty, material deficiencies, broken homes, etc.) (Hirschi, 1969). The physical and mental factors highlighted, included all factors that depend on the bodily and mental condition of juvenile offenders. The other consists mainly of the environmental conditions that a child might be exposed to from his/her early stages up until adolescence.

#### **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

In order to explore the bystander role in juvenile delinquency, a simple qualitative research was undertaken ((Davies & Francis, 2018). This study involved the use of surveys as the main method of data collection. The rationale behind this method is because it's cheap to utilize when compared to other methods of doing research. Furthermore, the use of surveys is more efficient for this type of research undertaking (Jane Sutton et al, 2015). The number of participants who took part in this research were 30 respondents. All the participants were picked in a random manner to ensure that cases of bias were kept minimal so as to ensure that the outcome was efficient (Reeves *et al*, 2008).The respondents had to meet the set criteria as they were supposed to have undergone negative experience with bystanders who never took action when they saw them indulge in negative behavior. The age of those who participated in the research were aged between 19 to 30 years of age. The participants were given questions related to bystander behaviors such as bystander reaction to when they see juveniles indulging in criminal behavior. In addition, the study also aimed at exploring the attitude of juveniles regarding the presence of bystanders in their lives so as to establish their perception about them.(Hagan & Hagan, 1997).

#### **Method**

A survey method was adopted to provide a general summary and to include a representative community of the possible bystanders and enablers in the study design. The participants were recruited both individually and privately via digital services like facebook. The digital platform was chosen because it is more popular hence making it easy to find and recruit the respondents; bearing in mind that the study targeted a youthful age/bracket, was effective to make use of social media because most of the young people use online platforms for various reasons more than any other group (Terrell, 2012). Each individual participant was supplied with a given questionnaire which they were supposed to ensure they answer

independently. The respondents lived outside of Malmo; and this was intentional so as to avoid any form of bias in the analysis of the data collected. Although the research was done online, the survey was timed one in that once a respondent clicks to start the survey, the timer would start counting the set time after which the test would end. This was done to ensure that respondents gave honest answers without being influenced by other people when writing their feedback (Patton, Hong, Patel, & Kral, 2017). In this regard, the study questions were simple and precise in order to ensure that the respondents were able to clearly understand what they were being asked before giving their own answers. Most of the questions were based on personal experience, hence it was easy to handle for the majority of the respondents. In addition, the study had put into consideration the aspect of gender so as to ensure that all chances of gender stereotypes were well factored; thus the respondents were uniform in terms of gender in that there were an equal number of males and females in the research (Hagan & Hagan, 1997).

Furthermore, the research put into consideration the time factor by ensuring that the study questions required simple answers and that the number of research questions was small. The collected data was also secured so as to ensure that information was kept safe for analysis. This was enabled by the availability of enough storage that necessitated the proper storage of documents. The time duration for the interview was 15 minutes (Archer, 2000). The time included familiarizing the respondents with the study and opening of the platform.

### **Procedure**

At the onset, the respondent is told that the study could be stopped at any moment, including a note that the design of the study could be challenging for the participant due to their unfamiliarity with the discourse (Summer & Feldman, 1984). The respondents were supposed to show their commitment towards participation in the research by confirming their presence in advance so as to ensure that study did not miss the target number of participants. Additionally, it was also confirmed before the questionnaire that the findings will be collected anonymously. The respondents, before beginning the actual study, were required to agree to the terms of the experiment and have been asked to adhere to its outlined terms; that it would be anonymous and also ensure an honest opinion was given as answers (Summer & Feldman, 1984).

Subsequently, participants obtained a questionnaire on their basic level psychological needs, next to the assertion of guilt, then a few questions regarding self-awareness, and queries about the desire to focus in the vignette. They were clearly told there were no correct and incorrect solutions to the problems and that researchers were primarily interested in their individual opinions, beliefs and experience as bystanders regarding juvenile delinquency. In the end, respondents were asked about demographic background, such as their age (Davies & Francis, 2018). Some of the challenges faced during this study were poor coordination during the study due to the fact that the respondents were far and the connection was through the internet hence no full control (Archer, 2000). Furthermore, some of the respondents were uncooperative in that they didn't answer all the set questions and others ended up not answering any of the said questions. The study questions were set in advance and designed by the researchers to ensure consistency in regard to the issue of juvenile delinquency. Also, the respondents were asked to answer the questions by focusing mainly on the juvenile and bystander. Below are the set research questions that formed the selection questions the respondents were supposed to answer.

### Research questions

Who are the enablers and bystanders?

How do we measure the responsibility of inaction?

Can enablers /bystanders of delinquent behavior be criminals?

The second study was conducted through qualitative means as well and employed a theoretical approach. The research mainly relies on documented theories as well as other secondary data sources (Terrell, 2012). Most of the relevant information was collected electronically. Sources included specific reports, official documents, and publications (books, scholarly articles, journals, and newspaper reports). However, most parts of this research relied on published sources. This is because these sources contained reliable and accurate information about assumptions and scholarly contributions to the selected theories on juvenile delinquency. Thus, the information collected was invaluable to the study. The main challenge was that there were no scholarly articles that link the role of bystanders and enablers to juvenile delinquency (Archer, 2000). The results were mainly qualitative, hence an open method of content analysis was adopted to present and analyze the theories.

### **Study limitation**

The limitation of this study was based on the size of the respondents who were allowed to participate in the study. In this regard, the study was only limited to 30 participants hence affecting its credibility owing to the small sample of participants involved. Another challenge was communication because the study was conducted online and connection was a problem for some respondents who were not able to access quality internet. Language barrier was also a challenge because some of the respondents I spoke with online were not able to communicate in a uniform manner, hence my interpretation of their answers could either have been exaggerated or downplayed. The barrier resulted in ineffective data collection. Another limitation is that the study wasn't able to focus on all aspects of research because of the fact that there were limited resources that wouldn't allow for the expansion of the research to focus on other aspects.

### **Result and Discussions**

#### **Survey finding**

In this survey, majority of the respondents were aware of the meaning of the two terms which are bystander and enabler. Out of the thirty respondents, 60 % of the respondents were able to define both terms correctly, an indication that they were aware of the actual bystander meaning. Only 40 % were not familiar with the actual meaning of the terms and the role played by such individuals in their lives. Out of the total number of people interviewed the percentage of female respondents who were able to define the terms well was 44% whereas the percentage of the male participants who defined the term well was 56%.

Moreover, regarding measuring responsibility of inaction, it emerged that most of the participants were not aware of any legislations or rules that are in place to ensure that responsibility of inaction can be accounted for. This could be as a result of the little or no legal backing given to some of these legislations. The responsibility of inaction thus was the least known question by the respondents. It could be as a result of the absence of well founded judicial procedure to address this issue as well.

## **5.0 Theoretical consideration on juvenile offending by bystanders and enablers**

The dangers of juvenile delinquency cannot be underestimated as the role played by bystanders and enablers to bolster it becomes imperative for this study, and needs to be examined. There are several factors that encourage delinquent behavior, and have been theoretically investigated and explained empirically; however, the role of bystanders and enablers remain un-detailedly researched (The National Academies of Sci., Eng., Med, 2001). This study has utilized the following theories below to rationalize the tendencies for youth offending and connect them with the role of bystanders and enablers.

### **Anomie-strain theory**

According to this theory, it can be suggested that children tend to commit acts of crime and delinquency when exposed to strains (Seigel, 2007). It has been proven that the rates of delinquency and crime can only be controlled when these strains are reduced (Agnew et al, 1992). The strain theory has been described in two distinct forms; individual strain and structural strain (Konty, 2005). Individual strain theory argues that an individual's life experiences and social encounters translated into pain and suffering can influence their behaviors, and increase their likelihood of committing crimes (Rasheed Ibrahim et al, 2020). On the other hand, structural strain theory stipulates that the sources of social and economic strain could determine the behavior of an individual (*ibid*). Therefore, a minor would most likely carry out acts of delinquency when he/she is living in a deteriorated environment (structurally strained) or individually strained (ill-social conditions). In the happenstance that the government and other individuals who control the social and economic resources constrain them from reaching these youngsters directly or otherwise, this could aid their resolve to delinquency on the structural scale.

The strain theory largely dwells on the conflict between goals and means. It argues that the alternative methods to overcome frustrations and unequal distribution of wealth, and achieve societal goals results in crime and delinquency (*ibid*). According to strain theorists, most people share similar goals and values, however the socio-economic status of individuals limits their ability to achieve these personal goals ( Harrington & Leitenberg, 1994). As the affluent live out their dream of good education success and wealth, the poor are more disadvantaged and marginalized in pursuing these goals. This leads to frustrations and anger,

which in turn fuel the development of delinquent and criminal behavior (Seigel, 2007). Most strain theorists propose that juvenile delinquents come from poor backgrounds and are unable to pursue their prescribed legitimate goals through legitimate means, hence their subscription to criminal tendencies (*ibid*). This suggests that bystanders and enablers are the social and legal dictators that define legitimacy and illegitimacy. They, however, fail to provide equal opportunities to all persons, pursue the accepted goals through the accepted methods, irrespective of the social classes. Therefore, juvenile offenders are just but victims of social inequality, created by society and her legal dictators (Rasheed Ibrahim et al, 2020).

The contrast between the affluent and the impoverished could also create an environment of mistrust and envy, which may, in turn, fuel aggression and violence. In this theory, a strain is cited as enough motivation for criminal behavior (*ibid*). Juvenile offenders may think that they have the right to humiliate others as payback for the humiliations they have suffered as such; they cultivate a sense of injustice and social disconnect to cope with the social inequality projected by society (Banyard, 2011). This could further set off frustration, violence, and eventually a criminal lifestyle. These environments may harm a minor psychologically. For instance, a child born and raised into a poor family may question himself/herself psychologically about his/her social status, and what offense he/she must have committed to deserve the misfortune. These ill-thought may misguide the minor into justifying his/her inclination towards criminal behavior. However, the strain theory failed to ultimately establish the underlying reason why the poor and the vulnerable are given an automatic pass to join the league of delinquents. Robert K.Merton modified the anomie-strain theory to explain the options people develop in response to strain experiences. According to him, there are two cultural elements that interact to generate conditions which have anomic capacity (Hirschi, 1969).

Furthermore, he argued that the goals of acquiring wealth and power are uniform throughout societies. However, strain is experienced when access to socially accepted methods is stratified by social status. Those exempted from the legitimate socio-economic structure get frustrated and eventually find themselves in the path of crime and delinquency (*ibid*). In most cases, these individuals are usually poor, living in disadvantaged areas, marginalised and usually find illegal solutions to the problems of achieving the socially defined goals.

Merton's modified version of the strain theory explains five mechanisms that people usually adopt to cope comfortably with strains and stresses as explained below;

**Conformity**: This is described as the willingness of individuals and groups to accept the set cultural goals and means set to attain them. Those who conform, use good education and other legitimate means to achieve their desired wealth and success (Seigel, 2007).

**Innovation**: This describes the attitude of individuals who accede to cultural goals but refuses to follow legitimate means in reaching them, thus finding other means of attaining their desired objectives (*ibid*)

**Ritualism**: This category sees individuals practice beliefs that are not typically goal driven, in other words, they try to carve a niche for themselves through institutionalized ways even though it holds no promising expectation. The ritualists find solace in embracing traditional patterns irrespective of the intended purpose. The poise for success for these kind individuals is not pressing, hence the low level of criminality (*ibid*).

**Retreatism**: This category of individuals abandon the well defined societal driven goals and the institutionalized means of attaining them. Due to inability to achieve these set goals via legitimate and illegitimate means, such persons end up disconnecting physically and mentally from society. This could be dependent on factors such as health, education, ignorance etc. The will to pursue a purpose is often missing in these individuals (*ibid*).

**Rebellion**: Herein, the individuals completely reject the societal defined goals and the practices that would ensure its realization. They substitute it for their own defined goals and means by which it is attained. In some instances, this could be adopted as an act to confront a corrupt system of government and in others it could be seen as a revolt where people challenge the system of practice for the purpose of adopting or replacing it with other practices (*ibid*) It could be about a lifestyle, politics, culture, religion etc.

Table 1: Merton's Anomie strain adaptation means.

<b>Adaptation modes</b>	<b>Cultural goals</b>	<b>Conformity to institutional means</b>
Conformity	Cultural goals accepted	Means accepted
Innovation	Cultural goals accepted	Means rejected
Ritualism	Cultural goals are rejected	Means accepted
Retreatism	Cultural goals rejected	Means rejected

Rebellion	Cultural goals rejected/replace	Means are rejected/replaced
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Out of Merton's distinct adaptations modes, I would also submit that innovation could be considered to have affinity with violence and criminal behavior. He asserts that many people want material ownership and convenience, but the lack of sufficient financial strength to satisfy their wants result in these strains. The strain then experienced could see the disadvantaged go through any means necessary to resolve their problems.

**Situational action theory**

Wikstrom's situational action theory explores crimes from a moral action perspective (Wikstrom and Treiber, 2007). He explains deviant behaviour from the context of the individual and environmental perspective. (Schepers, 2016).The theory asserts that delinquency is governed by rules that are value based in regard to what is right and what is deemed as being wrong (Wikstrom, 2004;2010). The activity hypothesis joins two traditional style approaches of criminology; the Routine Activity Theory and the General Theory of Crime(Gottfredsson and Hirschi, 1990)). Wikstrom characterized the restraint procedure as the effective avoidance of some activity options that contend with individual virtues (Wikstrom and Treiber, 2007). The ability to practice self control is a quality that has been characterized as a person's capacity to resist outer strain so as not to act against their virtues (Wikstrom and Treiber, 2016). SAT characterizes wrongdoing as an uncommon instance of good infringement, without relying upon law guidelines or distinctive social situations (Schepers, 2016).

The essential thought behind the SAT is that guilt arises because of the connection between an individual's character and situation they are subjected to (*ibid*). SAT combines the individual based hypotheses and environmental perspectives as the key issues of criminological conjecturing. As indicated by the hypothesis, the acts of misconduct could arise as a result of the connection between a person's penchant for wrongdoing which is most times facilitated because of their criminogenic setting (Wikstrom et al, 2012). Misconduct and criminal acts are seen to exude from a recognition decision process dependent on the activity options an individual sees, and the ethical choices an individual chooses in a given circumstance (Anderson, 2005).

Schepers et al describes the interaction between four actors and how they account for wrongdoing and misconduct. “*interaction between exposure and propensity (exposure has a greater effect when propensity is high); interaction between deterrence and propensity (perceived deterrence exerts a greater influence when propensity is high); interaction between personal morality and self-control (self-control has a greater impact when personal morality is weak) (Schepers, 2016; Pauwels et al, 2018); and interaction between causes of the causes and selection effects (mainly concentrating on mediation effects of informal social controls by propensity) (Schepers, 2016)*”. The social factors that influence a person's involvement in wrongdoing and misconduct can be best explored as reasons for the criminal conduct. Thus, SAT argues for the significance of individual perspective and procedures in existence, without mixing them up, as the base of misconduct. This reinforces the uncertainty for criminal tendencies owing to the fact it is practically difficult to comprehend the reason for wrongdoing, in the event that one doesn't methodically comprehend the reason(s) for the reason of wrongdoing and misconduct (Wikstrom et al, 2012). Along these lines, the situational action theory proposes that the reasons for the causes are best explored considering the social and individual conformities which are determined by social and individual norms (*ibid*). The reasons for causes ought to be examined by the social conditions and self-improvements all through life of the individual. All things considered, the reasons for the causes are the main social conditions that influence an individual's affinity and introduction to various criminogenic settings (Schepers, 2016).

The SAT hypothesis recommends that the likelihood of individuals to default lies upon their affinity towards wrongdoing, their exposure to criminogenic settings, and the interaction between these two factors (Pauwels et al, 2018). The probability of criminal conduct relies to a great extent upon the criminal propensity of an individual and his exposure to criminogenic circumstances (Banyard, 2011). An individual's conduct can likewise be influenced by his/her neighbourhood setting, hence individuals with a high inclination towards wrongdoing will in general be bound to succumb, particularly when they are exposed to a criminogenic setting. On the other hand, those with a low affinity for wrongdoing will in general be more averse to the conduct even when exposed to criminogenic settings (Wikstrom et al, 2012). SAT depends on a model where the cooperation between the individual and his/her setting can give rise to criminal conduct. In that capacity, delinquent conduct is seen as a result of the interaction between the propensity to commit crime and the setting (*ibid*). The recognition decision process depends on an individual's encounter and can be constrained by his/her

propensities or pondering in an educated dynamic. SAT submits that the propensity of an individual to carry out demonstrations of wrongdoing could lie upon the child's introduction to the criminogenic environment at the point when they are youngsters (*ibid*).

### **Self-control theory**

The theory of self-control was established in 1989 by Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi. The concept was proposed to examine delinquent behavior in response to the limitations of the theory of social control. With the theory of self-control, all criminal behavior is the result of a single root issue identified as low self-control (Gottfredsson and Hirschi, 1990). According to self-control theory, individuals with high self-control are considerably less likely to engage in criminal behavior in their entire life than those who have low self-control (*ibid*). Self-control theory was coined to address the voids left by the theory of social control, and to further expound on the causes of criminal or deviant behavior ((Bartusch et al, 1997). The founders of the theory were convinced that the school of thought could describe all kinds of deviant and criminal behavior. The theory has been lauded for its both-inclusive quality, which applies to all, regardless of age, race, sexuality or social status (Summer & Feldman, 1984). Simply put, the theory of self-control or the general theory of crime has been well received because of its comprehensive discourse on the causality of crime. Conversely, the theory has not escaped criticism despite the number of proponents and the prevalent use it has generated. Most of the critiques stemmed from the writer's faith that the theory applied to all forms of crime and delinquent behavior, irrespective of the severity of the criminal activity (Bartusch et al, 1997).

According to self-control principle, an individual's engagement in criminal conduct is mainly based on his/her low self-control character trait. Therefore, the theory holds that criminal activity and aberrant behavior stem from low self-control, and individuals with low self-control will take part in misconduct at a substantially high rate. There are several features associated with low self-control, and this could make such individuals prone to criminality throughout their entire life if it remains (Ameklev et al, 1993). As per the authors of the theory of self-control, individuals who participate in criminal activities during their adolescent years are also sufficient to induce motivation to adulthood. They proposed that

self-control usually consists of a set of distinctions between persons that influence them in order to respond momentarily (enablers) without regard to repercussions (Akers, 1997).

Self-control theory specifies that self-control is secure, and people with low self control seem to be very impervious to committing a crime in all social settings at all stages of their life after early life (Banyard, 2011). It also suggests that individuals with low self-control tend to be short-sighted, impetuous, emotional, and unsympathetic, self-centered and presumptuous about the necessities of others (*ibid*). As such, these individuals are unstable in friendships, relationships, and professions. They often have low thresholds and choose to use physical force to respond or settle disputes instead of the verbal option. In some cases, they engage in non-criminal pursuits that are analogous to crime (Hirschi, 1969). These practices often include, but are not restricted to, smoking, drug addiction and promiscuous sex, as such, these people are more prone to risks (*ibid*). The indicators of self-control according to Gottfredson and Hirschi includes; impulsive behavior, temper, ego-centeredness, risk-seeking, physical activity basic tasks. Most importantly, the authors have argued that self-control was not necessarily the only condition that leads to crime and delinquency(Gottfredsson and Hirschi, 1990). The lack of self-control doesn't really necessitate crime because it can be mitigated by environmental stimuli.

Conversely, high self-control decreases the possibility of criminal activity by the fact that those that have it would most likely not commit crimes in their lifetime (Hirschi, 1969). The theory of self-control suggests that poor child-rearing strategies are the main reason for low youth self-control. Gottfredson and Hirschi asserted that proper parenting and child-rearing behaviors are necessary requirements for the promotion of self-control in children. These methods involve: tracking the child's behavior, recognition of aberrant behavior and choice of conduct (*ibid*). A person is not conceived with low self-control; the characteristic is built up during early adolescence and can be emblazoned in the individual's character (*ibid*). *For example*, inadequate parental management will yield low self-control, and therefore will impact the individual's personal preference when challenged with an opportunity for potential profit from a small investment. Once low self-control has been developed in a child's life, the characteristic remains constant and unaltered even in adult years (Winfrey & Bemat, 1998). Children should not be blamed exclusively for their deviant acts, as parents are deemed complicit given that they choose to act as youth crime spectators and sycophants. It

can be suggested that juvenile delinquency could be curbed if all parents/guardians have a goal to minimize deviant behavior through sound parenting skills, good oversight and proper child management practices (Rasheed Ibrahim et al, 2020).

### **Measuring the responsibility of inaction**

A bystander and enabler of juvenile offending may either be an accomplice or co-offender (Rasheed Ibrahim et al, 2020). For the most part, these individuals aid/support or ignore deviant behavior by either staying silent or providing assistance of whatever kind to them(*ibid*). Sociologists have associated some aspects of crime and youth offending with young people's social environment including, home, neighborhood, school, peers, and other influential variables (Wikstrom, 2012). Theoretically, most acts of crime and delinquency among the youth can be connected to the bystanders and enablers effect; hence bystanders and enablers facilitate some of the causes of juvenile delinquency (*ibid*).

Hence, the responsibility of the inaction of bystanders and enablers can be measured by analyzing the trend in the rate of juvenile delinquency. This will suggest that the juvenile delinquency is directly related to the role of the bystander or enabler. In simpler terms, when crime/crime types become prevalent amongst individuals, it could mean that the inaction of bystanders and enablers is at a new high and conversely it would mean that if crime rate drops so will inaction from bystanders and enablers reduce(Rasheed Ibrahim et al, 2020). There are other indicators that could curb juvenile delinquency and these include guidance and counseling, child time management, parental management, and type of parenting styles. Other parameters include; child-bearing practices, children's exposure to environmental settings, provision of amenities, and basic infrastructure, among others (*ibid*).

## **6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

Juvenile delinquency is a predicament that is rapidly progressing throughout the globe. If not addressed, this might wipe out an entire generation of young people and pave the way for an unstable society full of crime. Therefore, all social actors are morally obliged to join in the fight against juvenile delinquency. The issue can no longer be ignored considering the problems it poses to society. When young people with delinquent behavior fail to be rehabilitated, they are most likely to develop into career criminals as they grow in age and

exposure. The world is quickly changing as a result of constant advancements in technology and innovation, so is the rate of crime and juvenile delinquency. Juveniles no longer commit minor crimes such as truancy, alcohol, and drug abuse, but instead progressed into serious crimes that include armed robbery, rape, and even murder (*ibid*).

As a result, several scholars, researchers, and philosophers have scientifically evaluated, empirically identified, and theoretically proven different factors that influence the youth's inclination to juvenile delinquency (Konty, Mark 2005). It is necessary to evaluate and understand the varying roles played by conventional parties to minimize the impacts of delinquency and eliminate its roots. One way to do that is by evaluating the role of bystanders and enablers concerning delinquency. Bystanders and enablers in juvenile offending refer to all parties responsible for the general upbringing and development of a minor. These are not limited to guardians, parents, siblings, relatives and other family members, but also include neighbors, religious leaders, school, and the government. It can be argued that every child born into the world is without any criminal tendencies and as such their immediate environment forms part of what shapes their on-going behavior. In other words a child is a product of his immediate environment.

In light of these, a minor should not be entirely blamed for his/her delinquent behavior, instead, bystanders and enablers should also be accountable since they all have a part to play in reducing delinquency. The study, therefore, provides various recommendations to the key stakeholders in the upbringing of a child. On one hand, parents and guardians are expected to provide adequate parental supervision, guidance, and counseling to their children, as well as forge an effective mutual beneficial parent-child relationship. On the other hand, the government and other institutional administrators should provide equal access to opportunities, adequate social amenities, and basic infrastructures that limit a child's exposure to the criminogenic setting(s).

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**8.0**

**Appendix A**

The role of bystander and enabler in juvenile delinquency

**Survey**

What is your gender? ----- How old are you?

Male

Female

Other

Have you seen juveniles indulge criminal behavior this year? Yes \_ No \_

If yes, kindly indicate the frequency -

A. daily

B. weekly

c. monthly

Kindly recall the last time you witnessed a young person indulge in crime and criminal behavior and state how you reacted.

.....

.....

.....

Did you call the authorities or inform another person? Yes ..... No .....

Who are enablers and bystanders

?.....  
.....

Do you think people should intervene when they witness young people engaging in crime related behaviors yes .....No .....

Can bystanders/enablers of delinquent behaviors be criminals?

Yes .....No .....

Kindly give one reason as to why you think people fear intervening when juveniles engage in crime/misconduct/misdemeanor .