

## Parenting styles and juvenile delinquency in Zambia

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**ABSTRACT:** This main objective of this study was to explore the relationship between maternal and paternal parenting styles and juvenile delinquency among juvenile offenders at Katombora, Nakambala and Insakwe approved schools in Zambia. Despite juvenile delinquency being a pervasive and serious societal menace and widely supported by literature as linked to parenting styles, no study has explored its relationship with parenting styles. It is against this backdrop that this study was conducted. This study was limited to the four mentioned parenting styles and juvenile offenders in approved schools. Most literature reviewed links authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting styles to juvenile delinquency and authoritative parenting to prosociality. This study was guided by six theories: The Baumrind parenting typology, the social control, the cognitive, the behavioral, the psychodynamic and the Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems. It used the convergent-parallel mixed methods design, purposive sampling selected the research sites while convenience sampling selected participants for quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. A total of 132 questionnaires were administered and 25 semi-structured interviews conducted. Quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the qualitative data via thematic data analysis. Contrary to the first objective of the study findings revealed the maternal authoritative parenting style as the most prevalent. Results revealed no significant relationships between maternal and paternal authoritative, authoritarian, permissive parenting styles and juvenile delinquency, a significant relationship between paternal neglectful parenting style and juvenile delinquency and indicated that female participants reported more of paternal parenting styles the same way male participants reported more of maternal parenting styles. It was recommended that parents adopt intensive parenting; that relevant authorities sensitize parents, policy makers and stakeholders on the link between paternal neglectful parenting, single parenting, divorce, juvenile association with delinquent peers and juvenile delinquency. It was also recommended that further research be conducted in this area.

**KEY WORDS:** Parenting styles, juvenile delinquency, approved schools.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Juvenile delinquency is a worldwide phenomenon (Neissl & Singer, 2020) rising globally (Japheth et al., 2024) whose global trends indicate its increase prompting heightened attention to (Field, 2019 as cited in Japheth et al., 2024; Neissl & Singer, 2020), enduring societal crisis (Ruoyu, 2020) and is detrimental to personal advancement (Xu et al. (2023) and social order (Agarwal, 2018). Many countries define it as when children below the age of 18 years commit crimes and charged as adults (Jin et al., 2016). In this study juvenile delinquency involves all offences applicable to adults such as rape, arson, defilement, murder, manslaughter, aggravated robbery, theft, frauds, assault etc. Despite being studied for many decades, juvenile delinquency still remains one of the worlds' most severe crises requiring redress (Ehiemua, 2014), raising largely in developing countries (Japheth et al., 2024). In India, 31,170 juvenile delinquents were arrested for infringing Special and Local Laws crimes indicating a 4.7% increase from the previous year (National Crime Records Bureau, 2021). The vice was increasing speedily in many other countries globally (Shailja et al., 2023). In the United States of America (USA), there was a decrease in juvenile delinquency since the early 1990s with a 38 % arrest rate drop from 2019-2020 (Frazier et al., 2024) due to the 2019-2020 COVID-19 pandemic's heavy effects on juvenile arrest procedures and policies (Buchanan et al., 2020). Russia also experienced a similar trend as the USA between 2016-2020 (Kolesnikov, 2022). Juvenile delinquency is rising mainly in developing countries (Japheth et al., 2024; Getachew & Parmar, 2024), garnering increasing interest on it where studies indicate a notable uptick (Walker & Maddan, 2019). Juvenile delinquency statistics chiefly in developing countries are scarce and unreflective of its actual size due to the unofficial case tradition handling (Shytov & Na Pomphet, 2007) and outside-court case handling (Harrendorf et al., 2010). Zambia ranks among the early pre-independent African countries to host



studies on delinquency (Gant & Grabosky, 2000). Its magnitude is reflected in the steps its government has taken to protect juvenile rights such as the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Ministry of Community Development & Social Services, 2018) and enactment of the Children's Code Act No. 12 of 2022. Its rise is supported by the 2020-2023 Zambia Police Victim Support Unit (ZPVSU) juvenile offending statistics: 2,142 (Boys 1,674; Girls, 468) in 2020, 2,695 (2,146 boys, 549 girls) in 2021, 3,175 (2,634 boys, 541 girls) in 2022 and 3,650 (Boys 2,909, 741 girls) in 2023 where male juveniles offended more than female juveniles. Its increase trend is pattern is similar to the one recorded in 2014-2015 (ZNAYS CDC, 2015). Zambia has in the recent past experienced a rise in juvenile delinquency (Sheilas et al., 2024) and a rise in a latest form of juvenile deviance by hoodlums commonly referred to as junkies. Junkies are basically drug addicted 'alumnae' from the streets who are either in their initial or late adolescence (Kabembo, 2024) who wreak havoc by breaking into motor vehicles, market stalls and literally assault whoever dares cross their paths and go about brutalizing and terrorizing the innocent public whilst inebriated (Kaping'a, 2022) whose thieving and thuggery is open and at times brutal who rob people or leave them for dead" (Bulambo, 2023).

### *Statement of the problem*

Juvenile delinquency is an old Zambian social problem on the rise as revealed in the 1939-1962 studies on delinquency (Igbinovia, 1988). This increase is supported in the 2020-2023 Zambia Police Victim Support Unit (ZPVSU) statistics which recorded 2,142 in 2020, 2,695 in 2021, 3,175 in 2022 and 3,650 in 2023 and supported by Sheilas et al. (2024). Currently, Zambia sees a rise in a new form of juvenile delinquent referred to as 'Junkiesm', a gang of brutal juvenile thugs found in informal settlements usually inebriated who steal or "leave them for dead" (Bulambo, 2023). The gravity of junkiesm is noted from several online news headlines (Milanzi, 2023; Muchinshi, 2023; Ngoma & Phuti, 2023). Zambia has a rich history and literature on the juvenile justice system (Mumba, 2011; Robins, 2009; Muyobela, 2016; Kankasa, 2006; Simaluwani, 1985), a few studies on juvenile delinquency (Banda & Mweemba, 2016; Nanyangwe, 2013; Siwale, 2012) and parenting (Sichimba, 2015; Mooya, 2015; Muhwanga, 2015). Despite juvenile delinquency's seriousness, pervasiveness and wide literature supporting its link it to parenting styles, no study has explored the its relationship with parenting styles in Zambia. It was against this knowledge gap backdrop that this study was conducted.

### *1.2 Study Rationale*

Juvenile delinquency is a rising problem in Zambia. Substantial research suggests parenting styles as central to shaping child behavior. Despite Zambia (Northern Rhodesia then) being among the first countries to host studies on juvenile delinquency between 1932 and 1962 (Igbinovia, 1988) and having conducted several studies on parenting (Sichimba, 2015; Mooya, 2015; Chanda, 2017; Brudevold-Newman et al., 2018), none of them solely centered on the relationship between juvenile delinquency and parenting styles among juvenile offenders in a Zambian context.

### *1.3 Main objective of the study*

To explore the relationship between maternal and paternal authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles and juvenile delinquency among juvenile offenders at Katombora, Nakambala and Insakwe approved schools in Zambia.

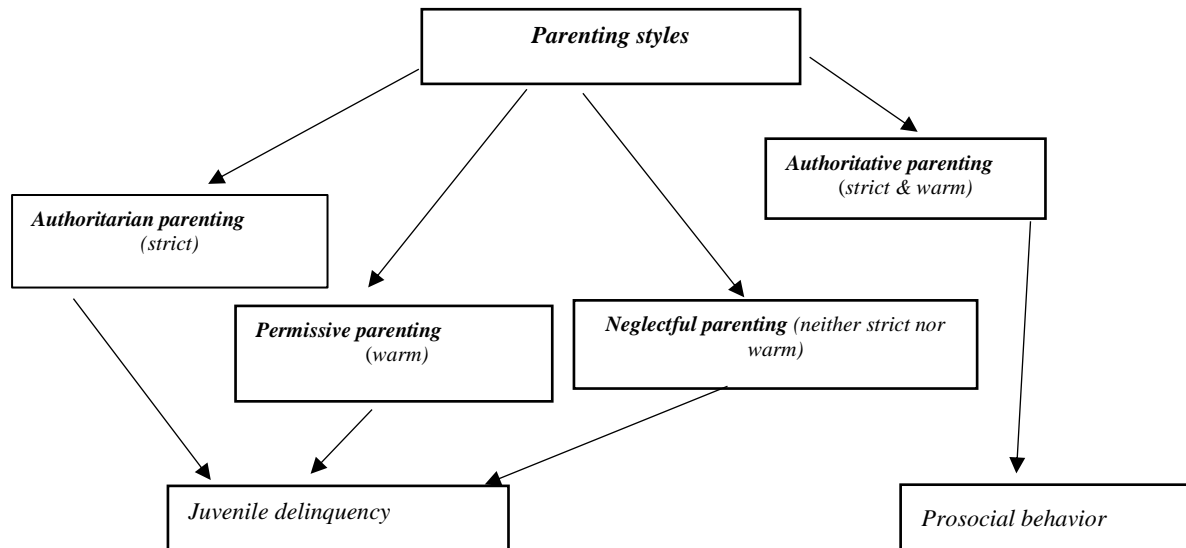
### *1.4 Specific objectives of the study were to:*

(1) Explore whether maternal and paternal authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting styles would be more prevalent than maternal and paternal authoritative parenting styles (2) Assess if maternal and paternal authoritative parenting styles had significant effects and predicted juvenile delinquency among juvenile offenders (3) Assess if maternal and paternal authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles had significant effects on juvenile delinquency (4) Explore gender differences in the maternal and paternal parenting styles among the juvenile offenders (5) Explore if the maternal and paternal authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting style themes would be more prevalent than the maternal and paternal authoritative parenting style insights or themes among juvenile offenders at the three indicated approved schools of Zambia.

*1.5 Study limitations:* This study was limited to authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles and to juvenile offenders in the three mentioned approved schools.

**2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

*2.1 Conceptual framework of the study*



In line with the conceptual framework represented in figure 1, broad literature (deductive conceptualization) places parenting styles at the center of child and adolescent behavioral outcomes. Four archetype parenting styles namely: authoritative, authoritarian, neglectful and permissive are extant. Authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting styles are associated with juvenile delinquency whereas authoritative parenting style is associated with prosocial child behavioral outcomes (Baumrind, 2012; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

**2.2 Theoretical Review**

This study reviewed six theories namely: The Baumrind parenting typology, the social control, the psychodynamic, the behavioral, the cognitive and the Bronfenbrenner ecological systems.

*2.2.1 Baumrind parenting typology theory*

This model is considered the pillar theory in understanding parenting behaviors and child behavioral outcomes. Her 1960’s initial work on parenting styles models several research on parenting (O’Connor & Scott, 2007). Parenting styles are mental constructs epitomizing typical stratagems parents use to raise their children (Baumrind, 1991) classified from the parental ‘control’ and ‘warmth’ dimensions (Baumrind, 1971). From the warmth and control parenting, she proposed four parenting styles: Authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful (Baumrind, 2012). Authoritative parenting style is associated with prosocial childhood and adult behavior whereas the three are linked to prosocial behavior (Baumrind, 1971).

*2.2.2 The social control theory*

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) proposed this theory and confidently asserted that the self-control level from social bonds explained all forms of criminal behavior across various cultures. Where parental attachment is especially feeble, both delinquent and conventional peer attachment influence criminality (Cretacci et al., 2018). Whereas effective childrearing practices such as parental warmth and concern produce self-control in children, harsh parenting practices generates antisocial behavior and delinquency (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 2009).

*2.2.3 The psychodynamic theory*

Childhood experiences of abuse may be repressed into the unconscious and that despite not consciously remembered can affect later behavior (Feldman, 2011). This repression-coping mechanism can lead to delinquency (Shoemaker, 2005). Lawbreaking results from personality structure formed early in life and later directs choices of human behavior (Freud, 1963). Neglectful parenting impedes children’s ability to develop their superego and may produce an id-controlled-superego-absent personality, which later may rob children’s morality due to their hostility and impulsiveness (Meena, 2016).



## 2.2.4 *The social learning theory*

Behavior learned throughout life through observable experiences if rewarded becomes a habit in time and if disapproved or punished eventually becomes nonexistent (Meena, 2016). Social parent-child morality dialogues may help inculcate morality thinking into the child's belief structure; a process that has shown constructive outcomes in instructing prosocial behavior (Dunn, 2000; Laible, 2004). The differential association learning theory asserts that delinquent behavior happens in a cultural conflict context where 'association' with deviant peers increases criminal behavior (Sutherland, 1939 as cited in Moore, 2011).

## 2.2.5 *The cognitive theory*

Cognitive theorists whose basic focus is on information processing explain antisocial behavior via cognitive processes: encoding for information interpretation, proper feedback search, choosing the most fitting undertaking and eventually action-taking on the decision made (Meena, 2016). Learned inapt scripts of parental violence and inapt conduct may make children misinterpret behavioral stimuli and oversensitive to slight provocation of peer rejection and parental rejection. Children's limited information processing cues of learned inapt scripts including their hostile-people-filled worldview that normalizes criminal behavior as a normal way of instant desire gratification leads them to delinquent behaviors like drug and alcohol abuse (Meena, 2016).

## 2.2.6 *The Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory human development*

This model describes the environment as a structure of five interlaced systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystems (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 1994). It shows how juvenile delinquency is an aftereffect of interfaces at several environmental levels ranging from family factors, community and neighborhood factors to wider cultural or traditional and institutional factors like socio-economic status (Klun et al., 2024). This paradigm helps to comprehend how its multisystem is critical in explaining juvenile delinquency by assessing the way it underwrites or lessens juvenile delinquency (Sanders, 2024).

## 2.3 *Empirical literature review*

Schepers (2024) predicted variables of juvenile delinquency and results revealed that detrimental changes in both family dynamics like divorce or death of parent and in the family's socioeconomic status and social influences such as interaction with delinquent behaviors peers and those who lived in urban areas increased the likelihood of juvenile delinquency. Fabira and Muhammad (2024) found that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, socioeconomic factors and cultural values were related to juvenile delinquency. Mlay and Mpeta (2023) found poverty, peer influence, family dysfunction, gender, household size and parenting styles (single parented, both parent-parented, street-parented and then lastly those grand-parented as primary causes of delinquent behaviors. Hadulo (2022) found no relationship between parenting styles and criminal behavior, but between neglectful and authoritarian parenting styles and drug abuse. Yusuf et al. (2021) found no considerable relationship between neglectful and authoritarian parenting styles and juvenile delinquency. Onsando et al., (2021) found authoritarian parenting style as the most prevalent, followed by permissive and lastly by authoritative parenting style. Adesanya and Osinowo (2019) found that permissive parenting style predicted juvenile delinquency, a significant joint influence of permissive parenting, authoritarian parenting style, authoritative parenting style. Tapia et al. (2018) found that neglectful and authoritarian parenting styles were linked to the highest levels of juvenile delinquency. Kago (2018) found that nearly half of the participants were raised without a father figure due to either divorce, death, separation, or being unmarried; a significant relationship between the authoritarian parenting style and juvenile delinquency; no significant relationship between permissive style, authoritative parenting styles and juvenile delinquency. Rwengo (2017) found that self-control, low academic performance and academic aspirations, school drop-out, poor parenting styles, abusive families, poverty, and absentee parents were linked to juvenile offending. Adeusi (2013) found paternal authoritative as most prevalent, followed by maternal authoritative, then by maternal authoritarianism and permissiveness. Spraitz (2011) found that neglectful parenting predicted higher likelihood of juvenile delinquency; authoritative parenting style increased chance that a male respondent would use hard drugs; authoritarian and authoritative parenting predicted very few behaviors whereas permissive parenting did not predict juvenile delinquency.

## 3.0 **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed the convergent-parallel mixed methods design.

### 3.1 *Study sites*

The study employed three research sites namely: Katombora and Mazabuka male approved schools (Southern Province, Zambia) and Insakwe approved school for female juvenile offenders (Copperbelt province, Zambia).

### 3.2 Study sampling

This study employed the purposive and convenience non-probability sampling methods to select the three approved schools and participants that were available and accessible respectively.

### 3.3 Study sample

The study involved both quantitative and qualitative samples. The study sample for quantitative data consisted of 132 juvenile offenders from the three mentioned government juvenile offender remand facilities: Katombora, Nakambala and Insakwe approved schools. The age range for this sample was 8 to 18 years. The majority of the juvenile offenders were aged between 15 and 18 years. The majority of the participants (75.8 %) were from Katombora approved school, followed by 20.5 % from Nakambala approved school and 3.8 % from Insakwe approved school. The majority of the participants (96.2 %) were males from Katombora and Nakambala male approved schools. The majority of the participants reported having been raised by their biological maternal (63.6 %) and paternal (53.8 %) parents followed by their grandmothers (15.9 %) and stepfathers respectively (15.2 %). The study sample for qualitative data comprised of 25 participants: 13 males from Katombora approved school, 7 males from Nakambala approved school and 5 females from Insakwe approved school. In terms of the sex distribution ratio, the qualitative data sample was twenty to five (20:5). The female participants from Insakwe approved school were few because there were few juvenile offenders who were available at that particular time.

### 3.4 Data collection tools or instruments

Being a mixed methods design, the researcher employed two data collection tools namely: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

#### 3.4.1 Study survey questionnaire

The researcher adopted Spraitz (2011)'s extended questionnaire because it measured the four parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful. It had a total number of 21 items, out of which 16 were 5-point Likert Scale items (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree & Strongly Disagree) representing 76% of the survey tool items. It had 3 components labelled Part A, Section A and Section B. Part A had 5 items that measured demographic information, whereas Section A measured 4 maternal parenting variables with 2 items which measured each parenting style making a total of 8 items and Section B measured paternal parenting styles with 2 items for each of the four parenting styles making a total of 8 items also. The researcher selected a sizeable number of statement items from Spraitz's quantitative collection tool as one of the ways of reducing psychological stress levels among the participants.

#### 3.4.2 Semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview consisted of four major parts: the 1<sup>st</sup> part was the introductory and welcoming remarks; the 2<sup>nd</sup> part consisted of guidelines regarding what the participants were expected to do; the 3<sup>rd</sup> part consisted of four narrative sentences each of which described each parenting style from the permissive, neglectful, authoritarian and authoritative. Instructions guided participants to choose one parenting style they felt best described the way they were parented most of the part they were growing up. The first narrative sentence "Did you feel that your mother and father most of the times allowed you to form your own points of view on family matters; did you feel they allow you most of the times to decide for yourself what you were going to do", described 'permissive parenting style'. The second narrative sentence "Did you feel that your mother and father responded slowly and negatively towards you; they paid little attention to you? Generally, you do feel like you raised yourself more than your mother or father did", described 'neglectful parenting style'. The third narrative sentence "Did you feel that your mother and father were strict or harsh towards you when disciplining you? Please could you now tell me the ways in which you felt your mother and father were strict or harsh towards you" described 'authoritarian parenting style'. The 4<sup>th</sup> narrative sentence "Did you feel that your mother and father were strict or harsh on you at times but also kind and caring to you at times? Please could you now tell me the ways in which you felt your mother and father were strict or harsh at times to you and also kind and caring to you at times", described 'authoritative parenting style'. The 4<sup>th</sup> part of the semi-structured interview was the conclusion which accorded gratitude to the participants for finding time and voluntarily taking part in the interview.

### 3.5 Data collection procedure

The researcher took the necessary protocol steps namely: Paying courtesy calls, self-introduction and production of introductory letters from the relevant ministries at the three research sites (Katombora, Mazabuka & Insakwe approved schools). The researcher



held about a sixty-minute mini-training for staff member research assistants. It was established that Nyanja was the commonest language among the juvenile offenders, then followed by Bemba, Tonga and Lozi languages and English (Costley et al., 2023; Kashoki and Ohannessian, 1978). The researcher and the research assistants were all familiar with all the languages understood by participants.

### 3.6 Overview of measures

The study measured three variables: Parenting styles, juvenile delinquency and demographics. The researcher emphasizes that the internal consistency of this survey tool was already ascertained. The researcher piloted it concurrently with the semi-structured interview guide data collection tool on ten selected boys and ten girls, totaling twenty participants, from Chelstone Secondary School, Lusaka District of Lusaka Province, Zambia.

#### 3.6.1 Internal consistencies: Maternal parenting style survey instrument scale

The internal reliability Cronbach's alpha coefficient based on standardized items for the four maternal parenting style scales was  $\alpha = .824$ . For an explorative study such as this one to be able to measure how closely related the set of items are as a group, the internal consistency must be  $> 0.7$ . Since this study's reliability was  $> 0.7$ , then it measured how closely related the set of items in the maternal parenting style scales were as a group. In short, the maternal parenting style scales were reliable.

#### 3.6.2 Internal consistencies: Paternal parenting style survey instrument scale

Internal reliability Cronbach's alpha coefficient based on standardized items for the four paternal parenting styles was  $\alpha = .953$ , a finding that was higher than the maternal Cronbach's alpha on all the four parenting styles.

#### 3.6.3 Juvenile delinquency scale

The juvenile delinquency scale was measured in terms of the types of offences the juveniles committed. Three sub-items measured juvenile delinquency namely: offences against property, offences against persons and offences against both property and persons. The value for offences against property was "1.00" and its label was "property". The value for offences against persons was "2.00" and its label was "person" while the value for offences against both property and persons was "3.00". Ideally, on this scale the juvenile offender who scored "3.00" committed the most serious offence because it involved juvenile delinquent acts or offences against property and persons.

#### 3.6.4 Internal consistency: Semi-structured interview

The researcher piloted the interview among 20 secondary school boy and girl pupils at Chelstone Secondary School in Lusaka, took notes, avoided total reliance on recordings and leading questions both during piloting and actual interviews; gave interviewees opportunities to explain and summarize the opinions that they had established, minimized prejudices through the usage of close-ended questions and recordings to corroborate the findings and spent adequate time at the research sites.

#### 3.6.5 Demographics

The study collected background variables such as sex, age, the maternal parent and the paternal parent who raised the juvenile offenders who raised them and the type offence the juvenile offenders committed.

### 3.7 Ethical considerations

Research ethics namely: confidentiality, no harm, informed consent, and voluntary participation were considered.

### 3.8 Data analysis

#### 3.8.1 Quantitative data analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis. The raw data of variables that measured both the four independent variables and the dependent variable were transformed by computing new variables to create new scales. The dependent variable raw data were transformed into a continuous scale to clean and organize it to ensure it was analyzable. The researcher ran descriptive statistics and measures of central tendencies, used medians of the transformed parenting style scales to construct maternal and paternal prevalence scales enabling him to address the study's first objective on parenting styles prevalence. He ran the Independent Samples t-test which included the Levene's Test to test for the equality of variances and the t-test to test for the equality of means in order to ensure that the assumption for homogeneity of variance for the sample was met. The researcher ran the t-test to enable him address the study's fourth objective on gender differences regarding the maternal and paternal parenting styles between the male and female juvenile offenders in the three approved schools. The researcher ran linear regression analysis to predict juvenile delinquency, the criterion variable based on the four independent or predictor variables.



### 3.8.2 Qualitative data analysis

The researcher employed the deductive thematic analysis to analyze the qualitative data and developed themes using the predefined theories and theoretical frameworks that were premised on particular inquiries of concern. He first transcribed the data, then identified statements that related to the theme through the use of codes and separated relevant from irrelevant data and then splitting the pertinent data into phrases that reflected a single thought. He then assigned the codes into a general grouped the statements into meaningful units that form into categories that indicated how the many phenomenon meanings were experienced. He then sought divergent views by analyzing several ways in which individuals experienced the phenomenon, built a complex using several meanings he identified and created the general themes regarding how the participants experienced the parenting styles phenomena retrospectively.

## 4.0 RESULTS

This study was a mixed methods research design and presented the findings based on its five mentioned objectives.

### 4.1 Demographic information

The study had 132 participants whose majority were males from Katombora and Nakambala approved schools (96.2%) where the former accounted for the majority (75.8%). The age range for the participant majority (85.6 %) was between 15 and 18 years and most of the juvenile delinquencies were property-related (48.48 %) followed by person-related (38.63 %). The majority (63.6%), of the participants were biological maternal parents raised followed by biological paternal parents raised (58.3%). Refer to table 1 below:

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics: Demographic information**

Variable	Index	Frequency	Percentage
Approved School	Katombora	100	75.8
	Nakambala	27	20.5
	Insakwe	5	3.8
Sex	Male	127	96.2
	Female	5	3.8
Age range at confinement	15-18 years	113	85.6
	11-14 years	11	8.3
	8-10 years	6	4.5
	Could not recall	2	1.5
Juvenile delinquency related to	Property	64	48.48
	Persons	51	38.63
	Both Property and Person	17	12.87
Maternal parent	Biological mother	84	63.6
	Grandmother	21	15.9
	Stepmother	13	9.8
	Sister	7	5.3
	Aunt	5	3.8
	Cousin	1	0.8
	Unexplained	1	0.8
Paternal parent	Biological father	71	53.8



Stepfather	20	15.2
Grandfather	18	13.6
Uncle	9	6.8
Brother	4	3.0
Cousin	2	1.5
Unexplained	7	5.3

(n=132)

**4.2 Prevalence of the maternal and paternal parenting styles**

The study’s first objective was to explore whether maternal and paternal authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting styles would be more prevalent than maternal and paternal authoritative parenting styles. Instead, results revealed that the maternal authoritative parenting and the paternal authoritarian parenting styles were more prevalent than the authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting styles. Refer to table 2 below.

**Table 2: Prevalence of parenting styles**

Parenting styles	Responses	Percentage (%)
Maternal authoritative	Yes	68.2
Paternal authoritarian	Yes	66.7
Paternal authoritative	Yes	65.2
Maternal neglectful	Yes	58.3
Maternal authoritarian	Yes	56.8
Paternal permissive	Yes	53.8
Paternal neglectful	Yes	51.5
Maternal permissive	Yes	50.0

**4.3 Effects of the maternal and paternal authoritative parenting styles on juvenile delinquency**

**4.3.1 Effects of the maternal authoritative parenting styles on juvenile delinquency**

This study’s second assessed whether maternal and paternal authoritative parenting styles had significant effects on juvenile delinquency. Results indicated no significant effects of the maternal authoritarian parenting style ( $t(130) = .529, p = .598$ ), permissive parenting style ( $t(130) = .628, p = .531$ ), the authoritative parenting style ( $t(130) = .511, p = .610$ ), the neglectful parenting styles ( $t(130) = .698, p = .486$ ) on juvenile delinquency. Refer to table 3 below.

**Table 3: Effects of the maternal parenting styles on juvenile delinquency**

Levene’s Test on equal variances assumed	t-test for equality of means					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	md	95% CI	
					Lower	Upper
Maternal Authoritarian F (1,130) =1.544, p=.216	.529	130	.598	7.82	-21.44	37.08
Maternal Permissive F (1,130) =2.750, p=.100	.628	130	.531	10.38	-22.35	43.12
Maternal Authoritative F (1,130) =1.064, p=.304	.511	130	.610	7.70	-22.08	43.12
Maternal Neglectful F (1,130) =2.178 p=.142	.698	130	.486	11.91	-21.84	45.66

Significance level =  $p < .05$

F = F statistic, T = t-score, df = degree of freedom, Sig. = Significance, md = mean difference, CI = Confidence Interval





4.3.2 Effects of the paternal parenting styles on juvenile delinquency

The third objective assessed whether the maternal and paternal authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles had significant effects on juvenile delinquency. Results revealed that the three parenting styles had no significant effects on juvenile delinquency: Authoritarian parenting style  $t(130) = -.463, p=.644$ ; paternal permissive parenting style  $t(130) = -.520, p=.604$ , authoritative parenting style  $t(130) = -.394, p=.694$ , neglectful parenting style  $t(130) = -.221, p=.825$ . Refer to table 4 below.

**Table 4:** Effects of the paternal parenting styles on juvenile delinquency

Paternal parenting styles	Levene's Test on equal variances assumed					
	t-test for equality of means					
	t	df	Sig.	md	95 % CI	
				Lower	Upper	
Paternal Authoritarian $F(1,130) = .903, p=.344$	-.463	130	.644	-13.08	-68.90	42.75
Paternal Permissive $F(1,130) = 2.750, p=.100$	-.520	130	.604	-14.86	-71.44	41.72
Paternal Authoritative $F(1,130) = 1.064, p=.304$	-.394	130	.694	-11.40	-68.69	45.88
Paternal Neglectful $F(1,130) = 2.178, p=.142$	-.221	130	.825	-6.58	-65.55	52.38

Sig.level  $p < .05$

F = F-statistic, t = t-score, df = degree of freedom, Sig. = Significance (the p-value), md = mean difference, CI = Confidence Interval

4.3.2.1 Analysis of variance: Maternal and paternal authoritative parenting styles on juvenile delinquency

Results showed that 4.6 % of the change in juvenile delinquency was accounted for by the maternal and paternal authoritative parenting styles (Table 5 refers) but was insignificant both for the maternal authoritative parenting style ( $t [1.915], p>.05$ ) and for the paternal authoritative parenting style ( $t [1.211], P > .05$ ) as reflected from the coefficients on table 6 and from the ANOVA results ( $F(2, 123) = 2.957, p > .05$ ) on table 7.

**Table 5: Summary of statistical data and statistical models in the prediction of change in juvenile delinquency by the maternal and the paternal authoritative parenting styles**

R	R-Square	Adjusted R	Std. Estimate Error
.214	.046	.030	.69

**Table 6: Coefficients between the maternal authoritative and paternal authoritative parenting styles and juvenile delinquency**

Parenting styles	B	Beta	t	Sig.	95% CI for B	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Maternal authoritative	.005	.170	1.915	.058	.000	.011
Paternal authoritative	.001	.108	1.211	.228	-.001	.003

Sig. level  $p < .05$

B = Unstandardized coefficients, Beta = Standardized coefficients, CI = Confidence Interval, Sig. = significance, t = (t-score)



Table 7: ANOVA between the maternal and the paternal authoritative parenting styles and juvenile delinquency

	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	2.829	2	1.414	2.957	0.56
Residual	58.830	123	.478		

Sig. level  $p < .05$

SS = Sum of Squares, df = degree of freedom, MS = Mean of Squares, F = F Ratio, Sig. = Significance level.

4.3.2.2 Relationship between the maternal and paternal authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles and juvenile delinquency

The third objective of this study was to assess if the maternal and paternal authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles had significant effects on juvenile delinquency. Results revealed that 11% of variance in the dependent variable was accounted for by the independent variables (Table 8 refers) and was significant  $F(6, 119) = 2.336, p < .05$  (refer to table 9), but only the paternal neglectful parenting style was significant  $t(2.719), p < .05$  (Refer to table 10).

Table 8: Summary of statistical data and statistical models on the prediction of change in juvenile delinquency by the maternal and the paternal authoritarian, neglectful, and permissive parenting styles.

R	R-Square	Adjusted R	Std. Estimate Error
.325	.105	.060	.68

Table 9: ANOVA by the maternal and the paternal authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting styles on juvenile delinquency.

	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	6.496	6	1.083	2.336	0.36
Residual	55.163	119	.464		

Sig. level  $p < .05$

SS = Sum of Squares, df = degree of freedom, F = F Ratio, Sig. = Significance Level, MS = Mean of Squares

Table 10: Coefficients between the maternal and paternal authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting styles and juvenile delinquency.

Parenting styles	B	Beta	t	Sig.	95% CI for B	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Maternal authoritarian	.004	.100	1.103	.272	-.003	.010
Maternal neglectful	.002	.082	.691	.491	-.004	.008
Maternal permissive	-.001	-.048	-.408	.684	-.007	.005
Paternal authoritarian	.000	-.035	-.150	.881	-.006	.005
Paternal neglectful	.006	.492	2.719	.008	.001	.001
Paternal permissive	-.003	-.289	-1.446	.151	-.008	.010

Sig. level  $p < .05$

B = Unstandardized coefficients, Beta = Standardized coefficients, CI = Confidence Interval, Sig. = significance, t = (t-score).

4.4 Gender differences in maternal and paternal parenting styles among juvenile offenders

The fourth objective of this study explored gender differences in the maternal and paternal parenting styles between male juvenile offenders.



**4.4.1 Gender differences in the maternal parenting styles among the male and female juvenile offenders**

Results revealed that the maternal permissive parenting style among the male juvenile offenders had the highest mean score (M=18.98) of all the parenting styles and was higher than the maternal permissive parenting style among the female juvenile offenders (M=8.60). Basically, results revealed that all the maternal parenting styles mean scores were higher among the male juvenile offenders than among the female juvenile offenders (Refer to table 11 below).

**Table 11: Maternal parenting styles gender differences among the juvenile offenders**

Maternal parenting style	S	M	SD
Authoritarian	M	<b>13.81</b>	32.95
	F	6.00	1.00
Permissive	M	<b>18.98</b>	36.86
	F	8.60	1.14
Authoritative	M	<b>11.50</b>	33.53
	F	3.80	.45
Neglectful	M	<b>17.91</b>	38.00
	F	6.00	1.00

S= Sex, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

**4.4.2 Gender differences in paternal parenting styles among male and female juvenile offenders**

Results revealed that female juvenile offenders reported more of the paternal authoritarian, permissive, authoritative and neglectful parenting styles compared to the male juvenile offenders. Refer to table 12 below.

**Table 12: Paternal parenting styles gender differences among the juvenile offenders.**

Paternal parenting styles	S	M	SD
Authoritarian	M	30.72	60.96
	F	<b>43.80</b>	86.20
Permissive	M	31.14	61.89
	F	<b>46.00</b>	84.99
Authoritative	M	32.20	62.65
	F	<b>43.60</b>	86.32
Neglectful	M	36.61	64.58
	F	<b>43.20</b>	86.55

S = Sex, M = Mean, SD = Standard deviation

**4.5 Parenting styles a priori meaning units, subthemes and major themes**

Many a priori themes exhibited authoritative parenting style characteristics and only a few themes demonstrated characteristics of the authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles. Out of the 25 major themes from the 25 semi-structured interviews, 18 characterized the authoritative parenting style, 3 characterized the authoritarian parenting style, two 2 characterized permissive parenting style and the other 2 characterized neglectful parenting style. Refer to table 13 below.



Table 13: Parenting styles from meaning units, subthemes and major themes

Meaning unit	Sub-theme	Major theme
<p>If you haven't followed the rules like not going to neighbors to play... my mother and father used to be upset and beat me...stinging me food" but praise me when I've done something...</p> <p>If I wronged them "...they caned me to stop me from stealing...tell me not to repeat it because I continued you I would end up in jail...if I pass at school they would buy me a gift...Even the time I've been in prison they are there for me..."</p> <p>My father...used to bring us bans...encouraged us that things would be ok... focus in school...tell me why it was wrong for me to come back home at that time...when I did well at school my parents would buy me gifts...when I did something wrong...my parents would scold me...even by beating us..."</p>	Parental control and support	Authoritative parenting
<p>My mother used to give me a lot of freedom to do what I wanted...She never used to trouble me when I did something wrong...even when I come back home late she didn't really mind..."</p> <p>When I made a mistake he would support me, when I took something home, he would tell me to bring it back and would even buy me something and tell me that I shouldn't do that again.</p>	Parental indulgence	Permissive parenting
<p>They did not pay attention to my education nor buy me things that I needed for school...I used to buy the things I needed for school for myself...</p> <p>If my step brothers asked something from my stepfather, he gave them quickly sometimes even behind my back</p>	Parental indifference	Neglectful parenting
<p>Sometimes I haven't done something wrong but it's her child who did...she accused me of doing it...sometimes beating me the two of them...sometimes she can just say; you should go to your mother who spoiled you I'm not your mother...</p> <p>When I go out to drink beer and come back drunk, they wouldn't be happy with my behavior and what I have done and so they would be harsh on me and discipline me in one way or the other so that I do not repeat it again. Sometimes they caned me, sometimes they would talk to me in an inappropriate way whereby someone can understand and change for a better future.</p> <p>And when I did something wrong like when I went to steal...they would tell me to go somewhere else or beat me into my bedroom if I sneaked in When I told them that I needed things for school, they would tell me to go buy for myself. when I did something wrong, they would take me to the police and have the police beat me up.</p>	Parental control	Authoritarian parenting



4.5.1 *Non-parenting style meaning units, sub-themes and major themes*

Other major themes that emerged included: Single parenthood, death, poverty, alcohol use divorce and peer influence. Refer to table 14 below.

**Table 14: Non-parenting style meaning units, sub-themes and major themes**

Meaning unit	Sub-theme	Major theme
I was raised by my mother I went to live with my mother My mom was the one who raised me and she loved me very much	Single-maternal parenting	Single parenthood
My father also died in 2004 My dad died in 2007 Both my parents are dead	Parental death	Death
My mother moves a lot; she sells fish...she used to leave me at my auntie’s place. I used to go and work in farms so that I could raise some money. At the time I was young, we were poor. I stopped going to school and started; I started selling alcohol and cigarettes on the streets	Low socioeconomic status	Poverty
When I go out to drink beer and come back home drunk, they would not be happy with my behavior	Alcohol consumption	Alcohol abuse
When I reached grade 7 my parents split He rejected my mom	Parental separation	Divorce
I started living with my friends. They were strict with me when I was doing things like being around	Attachment to peers	Peer influence

**5.0 DISCUSSION**

The first quantitative objective and fifth qualitative objective was to explore whether the maternal and paternal authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting styles would be more prevalent than the maternal and paternal authoritative parenting style among the juvenile offenders. But, contrary to the first objective, findings revealed maternal authoritative parenting style as most prevalent, followed by paternal authoritarian parenting style, maternal neglectful and then paternal authoritative parenting style. This finding resonates with Kiriakidis (2008)’s Scotland study which revealed authoritative parenting as the most prevalent. Likewise, this finding is similar to Adeusi (2013)’s study which found maternal and paternal authoritative parenting style more prevalent than the other maternal and paternal parenting styles. This study’s finding that revealed the paternal authoritarian parenting style as the second prevalent parenting style was not commensurate with the first objective of this study, but, some studies find authoritarian parenting style most prevalent and authoritative parenting style least among juvenile offenders (Onsando et al., 2021; Tapia et al., 2018; Hembram, 2016; Fayeye, 1994). However, these findings support this study’s finding which revealed paternal authoritative parenting style least prevalent thereby supporting the first objective of this study. An explanation why the authoritative parenting style was expected to be least prevalent among the juvenile offenders in this study was because various research reveal that children raised under it developed self-confidence (Ebenuwa-Okoh & Ugoji, 2023; Tiwari, 2022; Lavrič & Naterer, 2020; Martinez et al., 2020; Osorio & Gonzalez-Camara, 2016) and thus were less likely to engage in delinquent behaviors. One of the possible explanations suggested by the researcher as the factor underpinning this outcome was probably the self-blame mental state of the participants where while in incarceration they searched for the respectable descriptive possible that best described how they were raised and authoritative parenting seemed the best fit of that task because its dichotomous “strict-warmth” parenting dimension characterizes both a loving/caring and a punishing parenting. They realized not only how valuable their parents’ warmth



and control parenting dimensions were but also probably realized that all what their parents wanted was nothing but the best for them. The majority of the juveniles in adjudication remand facilities did not consider their parents accountable for their criminal behaviors (Mwangangi, 2019). A possible explanation the researcher considered most applicable regarding why authoritative parenting was prevalent emanated within the principles of the contemporary intensive parenting theory. Intensive parenting is the tendency where parents devote or invest their substantial time and resources around their children and their children's needs (Egami, 2024; Bryzek et al., 2024; Ishizuka, 2019). Contemporary parents are alternatively expected to dedicate their substantial time and resources to their children (Ishizuka, 2018 as cited in Gauthier et al., 2021). The researcher suggests that authoritative parenting was prevalent because lacked intensiveness where authoritative parents did not invest their considerable emotions, energy, time, and financial resources to their children thereby rendering authoritative it passive, lukewarm and devoid of its prosociality. This study's second specific objective explored whether authoritative parenting style would have significant effect on juvenile delinquency on juvenile delinquency. Considerable literature links authoritative parenting to prosocial behavior (Schepers, 2024; Sun et al., 2023; Hadulo, 2022). This finding is supported by many studies that highpoint positive outcomes linked to authoritative parenting's dichotomous 'control' and 'warmth' child nurturing dimensions (Sadeghi et al., 2022; Andal et al., 2016; Undiyaundeye, 2013; Steinberg et al., 2006; Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martins, 1983; Baumrind, 1971). The study's third specific objective assessed whether the maternal and paternal authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles had significant effects on juvenile delinquency among juvenile offenders. Results revealed that maternal authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting styles had no significant effects on juvenile delinquency. However, paternal neglectful parenting style had significant effects on juvenile delinquency. This study outcome is directly consistent with Tapia et al. (2018)'s study which found that paternal neglectful parenting style predicted the greatest levels of juvenile delinquency because it had the potential of exposing juveniles to involvement in delinquent behaviors. This finding is further supported by various studies with the difference being that their findings do not only place paternal neglectful parenting style but also maternal neglectful parenting style at the center of juvenile delinquency (Xavier & Arjunan, 2014; Spraitz, 2011; Haapasalo, 2001; Steinberg et al., 2006). why was paternal neglectful parenting the only predictor of juvenile delinquency exclusive of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles as established by wide literature. The researcher suggests possible predictors of juvenile delinquency other than parenting styles. Some studies suggest child-step-parent relationships, separation and poverty predicted juvenile delinquency (Hadulo, 2022), family and environmental parenting behavioral effects (Fabira & Mohammad, 2024; Garcia & Martinez, 2024; Mlay & Mpetu, 2023; Wagith, 2023; Lee, 2021; Spence, 2021), deleterious changes in family undercurrents like divorce, death of parent, poverty and interaction with delinquent peers (Schepers, 2024) and poverty (Bhuiyan et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2023; Rekker et al., 2015; Gudadi, 2014), single parenting (Folorunsho et al., 2024; Kroese et al., 2021) as predictors of juvenile delinquency. Zambia signed and ratified the 1989 UNCRC in 1990 and in 1991 respectively. Child rights and social media are potential contemporary factors that exert significant influence over the effects of authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting styles in the development of juvenile delinquency. Distinguished salient child rights include the right not to be subjected to punishment, the right to privacy, freedom of expression, association and to peaceful assembly (UNICEF, n.d.), the enactment of the Children's Code Act No. 12 of 2022 (Munyima, 2023) which protects all aspects concerning children in contact and in conflict with the law and the abolishment of all forms of corporal punishment in schools in 2003 (Kabungo & Munsaka, 2020; Phiri, 2022). The no-corporal-punishment policy take-off in Zambian schools has led to new uncountable kinds of pupil indiscipline (Simuyaba, 2020), to the dilution of teachers' power and self-worth (Kabungo & Munsaka, 2020) and to long-term consequences of prospective continuation of violence to adulthood (Oben & Hui, 2025). The fourth specific objective of this study assessed if there would be statistically significant gender differences in the maternal and paternal parenting styles among the juvenile offenders. Results revealed significant gender differences among the juvenile offenders where the majority of both sexes reported being parented by permissive parents, though overall, female juvenile offenders reported more paternal permissive style compared to the male juvenile offenders. Generally, female juvenile offenders reported more paternal authoritative, authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting styles compared to male juvenile offenders. This finding is partially supported by Adeusi (2013)'s study which found that the majority of the female than male juvenile offenders reported paternal authoritarian and permissive parenting styles exclusive of the other parenting styles as established by the findings of this study. Overall, male juvenile offenders reported more maternal permissive parenting style compared to female juvenile offenders i.e. they reported more of their opposite sex female (maternal) authoritative, authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting styles than did female juvenile offenders. The researcher suggests that this gender difference in maternal and paternal parenting styles finding shows the socio-



psychological attachment bond that develops between juveniles and their opposite sex parents. However, the researcher found no literature to support this finding. Generally, there is limited literature on gender differences in maternal and paternal parenting styles among juvenile offenders. The fifth specific objective of this study which was qualitative in nature explored whether maternal and paternal authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting style major themes would be more prevalent compared to the maternal and paternal authoritative parenting style themes among juvenile offenders. This specific objective was similar to the first specific objective with the difference being that the first specific objective was quantitative while the fifth specific objective was a qualitative. Findings revealed that almost all the major themes characterized authoritative parenting style whereas only a few characterized authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles. Apart from the parenting styles major themes that merged, other major themes developed: Poverty, single-parenthood, paternal death, maternal and parental death, drug abuse, and attachment to delinquent peers.

## 6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO PARENTING STYLES AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

The findings of this study are keynote in the construction of what the researcher considers a comprehensive understanding regarding juvenile delinquency from the Zambian context.

### 6.1 Contribution to theory

The current study was grounded in six theoretical viewpoints namely: Baumrind parenting typology theory, psychoanalytic theory, social control theory, social learning theory, and the ecological systems theory attachment theory. Consistent with the six stated theoretical structures reviewed in the current study, paternal neglectful parenting style was found to be associated with juvenile delinquency whereas authoritative parenting styles was not found to be associated with juvenile delinquency. This study also revealed factors beyond parenting styles namely: poverty, grandparenting, single-parenting, divorce, parental death, exposure to delinquent peers, stepmother and stepfather childrearing, which according to vast literature are linked to juvenile delinquency. These findings contribute to the theoretical review on parenting styles and juvenile delinquency.

### 6.2 Recommendations

It was recommended that parents adopt intensive parenting; that relevant authorities sensitize parents, policy makers and stakeholders on the link between paternal neglectful parenting, single parenting, divorce, juvenile association with delinquent peers and juvenile delinquency. It was also recommended that further research be conducted in this area.

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