



## Relationship between Psychological Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency among Girls in Kirigiti Girls Rehabilitation and Training Center, Kiambu County, Kenya

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### Abstract

*Juvenile delinquency among girls has been on the increase all over the world and has variously been attributed to child abuse. The purpose of this study was to find out the relationship between psychological abuse and juvenile delinquency among girls committed to Kirigiti Girls Rehabilitation and Training Centre (KGRTC). This study was guided by the following research objectives, namely to; establish the extent of juvenile delinquency, prevalence of psychological abuse and find out the relationship between psychological abuse and juvenile delinquency among girls in KGRTC. The study was conceptualized by Attachment Theory and used an ex-post facto research design. The population of the study comprised of 61 girl child offenders. The research used a census inquiry that included all the 61 girls at KGRTC in the study. Questionnaires were administered to the girls in order to collect data for the study. The validity of the tools was established through expert opinion, while reliability was determined using Cronbach Coefficient Alpha and a reliability coefficient of 0.855 was attained which was considered an appropriate threshold. The data was analyzed by means of inferential and descriptive statistics with the assistance of the computer software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26. The study established that psychological abuse was positively associated with juvenile delinquency. There was a strong, positive correlation between the psychological abuse and juvenile delinquency ( $r = + .696, n=57, p < .01$ ). The findings of this research suggest the need to address the problem of juveniles from a holistic perspective including the issue of addressing childhood experiences such as psychological abuse and use of appropriate forums to sensitize parents on appropriate parenting and the consequences of child abuse.*

**Keywords:** Juvenile delinquency, psychological abuse, attachment, juvenile offending.

### INTRODUCTION

Child abuse is a global problem for public health as it negatively affects people and society. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) associates the adverse experience during childhood with a series of long-term impacts on physical, mental, and social health (Nilsson et al., 2017). Child abuse is a social phenomenon of concern for public health at a global level (Sanz-Martin, Preciado-Mercado, Inozemtseva, 2020). It is defined as any action or omission by the parent or other carer or whatever harms health, the possibility of causing harm, or the threat of harm to a child including physical, sexual, or psychological abuse; neglect; and intimate partner violence (Gilbert, Widom, Browne, Fergusson, Webb, & Janson, 2009). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2019) data, approximately three in four children all over the world have suffered physical punishment and/or psychological violence by their parents and carers. However, child abuse is often hidden (Midei, Matthews, Chang, Bromberger, 2013). Thus, only a small percentage of child victims of abuse ultimately receive support from health professionals (World Health

Organization: child maltreatment (WHO, 2022). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) associates adverse experiences during childhood (including other family dysfunctions apart from abuse and neglect) with a series of long-term impacts on mental health and maladaptive behaviours. It has been documented that traumatic experiences in a child's life affect the child's later mental health, as well as functionality (Jemal, 2021). People that have suffered physical abuse as children face elevated levels of stress in their adult lives and more general psycho-emotional problems, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicide attempts, anxiety disorders, and depression (Fuller-Thomson, et al, 2012). Research indicates that all over the world juvenile delinquency among girls is increasing rapidly, and it is now emerging as a global problem (Nilsson et al., 2017). Juvenile delinquency is defined as any criminal behavior committed by a person that is under the age of 18 years. Accordingly, juvenile delinquents are those children who commit offenses and trafficking, robbery, and offenses that result in bodily harm to other people (Agarwal, 2018; Walsh et al., 2020).

Several empirical studies point out that juvenile delinquency stems from the familial environment in which these children are brought up (Assink et al., 2019; Grady et al., 2021). According to Motamedi (2020) majority of delinquents have emotional maladjustments which are frequently the result of disordered familial conditions. The systemic traits of a delinquent adolescent, according to Hoeve et al. (2009), include disobedience to parents, leaving home, quitting school, disobeying authority figures, having an irresponsible attitude, and a tendency to engage in behaviors that put the safety of others as well as one's own to risk. Girls are rapidly attracting the attentiveness of the system of the juvenile justice system due to the offenses they commit (Smith et al., 2020). The factors that are predisposing girl-child to become lawbreakers or the challenges these girls confront as a result of their juvenile criminal behavior are not well understood. Violence is frequently experienced by children in schools, their homes, and also in the communities (Steketee et al., 2021). This could precipitate serious mental, psychological and physical suffering, resulting in physical and emotional impairment, and the consequences may persist well into their old age. Psychological abuse (also known as verbal or emotional abuse) is defined by name calling, isolation from family and friends, put-downs, jealousy, and intimidations if the victim does not collaborate (Mehrijoo & Hashem, 2018). A longitudinal study conducted in Korea by Cho, (2019) revealed that psychological abuse and maternal rejection are some of the characteristics of maladaptive parenting practices that predispose children at risk of delinquency. On the contrary, warm family environment and friendly family features like sensitivity, comfort, and regular punishment serve as palliative strategies. Cassidy (2011) study established that psychological abuse remains the most compelling indicator of maladaptive behaviors and emotional discomfort among children and suggested a link between delinquency and psychological distress pointing out that children who were most distressed were most probable to get involved in criminal behavior. The study backs up the data that a variety of family variables impact child misbehavior and psychological suffering (Badasa et al., 2019; Cho, 2019; Ward et al., 2020).

Psychological child abuse is a pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. This may include constant criticism, threats, or rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance (Mehrijoo & Hashem, 2018). A longitudinal study conducted by Cho (2019) in Korea revealed that psychological abuse is one of the major characteristics of maladaptive parenting practices that predispose children at risk of delinquency. On the contrary, the study further established that warm family environment with pleasant features like sensitivity, comfort, and regular punishment served to significantly decrease the incidents of delinquent behaviours among children. A similar study by Cassidy (2011) investigated the relevance of family characteristics and emotional pain in juvenile delinquency in order to better understand the relative significance of family relationships, psychological distress, and family structure. The study revealed that parental

relationships characterized with psychological abuse remain the most accurate indicators of deviant behaviours and emotional discomfort. In conclusion the researcher pointed out that a strong association existed between delinquency and psychological distress, and that children who were most distressed were most probable to get involved in criminal behaviour. The findings of the study backs up the data that a variety of family variables impact strongly on child misbehaviour and psychological suffering (Badasa et al., 2019; Cho, 2019; Ward et al., 2020). Zara and Farrington (2016) investigated the psychology of juvenile offenders by looking at their criminal histories as well as their personal lives. They found out that the “anti-sociality” syndrome was significant in explaining how delinquent behaviour is a major consequence of a life marked by destructive family relationships that included emotional neglect and social rejection. In a similar study, Rasskazova et al. (2019) investigated the psychological causes of antisocial behavior in adolescents and reported that there was a higher level of dissatisfaction with parental relationships among adolescents with drug addictions. Glatz et al. (2020) concluded that, antisocial impulses, divergent thinking, and a lack of self-control were found to be psychological markers for adolescents at risk of engaging in antisocial behavior that lack enough self-control. The development of severe psychological illnesses and the emergence of deviant behaviors in adolescence are positively correlated with the exposure of children to psychological abuse (Vu et al., 2016). A child who has witnessed violence in their family of origin may grow up with an "inferiority complex". For example, violence against children is linked to the emergence of a number of serious long-term traumatic repercussions (Margolin & Vickerman, 2011). Therefore, Schwerdtfeger et al. (2013) noted that these lifelong effects of trauma may show as affective illnesses, PTSD, eating disorders, and behavior that is addictive, among others.

The development and frequency of juvenile delinquents in Kenyan is causing worry (Nguku et al., 2017). As a result, security officials and the general public are concerned about the growing number of juvenile criminals in the country (Simatwa et al., 2014). More notably, Kenya’s high rates of adolescent violence and criminality are proof of both indirect and direct consequences on family stability, social development, and economic growth, among other things (Steketee et al., 2021). Indeed, several studies indicate that there are many rehabilitation centers spread across the country to mitigate the growing need of juvenile delinquency in Kenya and many of these deal with boys very few dealing with girls (Karakus, 2020; Nyanweta & Reinsch, 2019). Despite these troubling trends on a global, regional, national, and local level, there are concerns that the children perpetually experience psychological abuse, which could be a major contributing factor to the observed high prevalence of delinquent behaviors (Nilsson et al., 2017). There are worries that the psychological abuse may have contributed to the high prevalence of delinquent activities (Nilsson et al., 2017; Omonya, 2020; Smetana, 2017; Warnasuriya, 2018).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The family is the child's first socialization institution (Alakwe & Ogbu, 2018). Indeed, the family is the most central environmental component in promoting the learning of attitudes, behavioural mannerisms, norms, and values (Alakwe & Ogbu, 2018; Warnasuriya, 2018). Furthermore, the family is responsible for teaching societal values to children in addition to constructing protective barriers against the effect of aberrant behavioral patterns through the provision of guidance, socialization, and identity formation (Zara & Farrington, 2016). However, the UN Habitat (2017) points out that juvenile delinquency among girls has increased dramatically in Kenya in recent years. This premise is affirmed by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019) which reported a steady increase in juvenile delinquent from 41.6% in 2013 to 58.7% in 2019 as indicated by confinement of girls in juvenile rehabilitation centers. This increased incidence of girl child offenders across the country is becoming a matter of grave distress to security agencies and the general public. In Kiambu County particularly, juvenile delinquency among girls is becoming an issue of serious concern. It was further observed that if this situation is allowed to continue, there would be

an escalation of school dropout rates, insecurity, poverty and incapacitation of the future generation to participate in productive family, economic and social activities (Omonya, 2020).

Further, Sandberg (2018) suggested the need to prioritize the security of adolescents from harmful influences and ill-treatment from the family and adults in their lives, thereby allowing them to fully engage in healthy living. Studies have shown that psychological abuse among girls is a possible causal factor to juvenile delinquency; however, this relationship has largely evaded scholarly attention and consequently the scarcity of literature on the same (Alakwe & Ogbu, 2018; Garbarino & Plantz, 2017). Against this background, this research investigated the relationship between psychological abuse and juvenile offending among girls at the Kirigiti Girls Rehabilitation and Training Centre in Kiambu County, Kenya.

### **Research Objectives**

- i. To find out the extent of juvenile delinquency among KGRTC.
- ii. To determine the prevalence of psychological abuse among girls at KGRTC.
- iii. To examine the relationship between psychological abuse and juvenile delinquency among girls at KGRTC, Kenya.

### **Hypothesis**

**H<sub>0</sub>1:** There is no statistically significant relationship between psychological abuse and juvenile delinquency among girls in KGRTC, Kiambu County, Kenya.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study used mixed methods research design given its underlying philosophy that reflects that diversity of the sample and population for this investigative research. The study was conducted in Kirigiti Girls Rehabilitation and Training Center (KGRTC), in Kiambu County which is the only public girls' rehabilitation and training center in Kenya. The rehab also serves as a reception and assessment center is the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services and the Department of Children's Services. The target population comprised of 61 juvenile girls. According to Kothari (2014) when the target population is a small number, a sample survey is ineffective; instead, a census enquiry can be used to conduct a thorough enumeration of all subjects within the population. In this regard, all the 61 girls enrolled at KGRTC were included in the study. A pilot study was conducted among young girls involving the age group of 11 and 17 at Kamae Girls Borstal institution after the questionnaire was contextualized to include items about psychological abuse. Content validity was ensured by having the survey items designed to capture the indicators of the specific objectives. This helped to guarantee that the tools had all of the necessary information to answer the research questions. Instruments were also provided to professionals in psychology for verification. All confusing and ambiguous directions, as well as extraneous items were rewritten. Cronbach Coefficient Alpha was used to evaluate the instrument's reliability. A reliability coefficient of 0.855 was achieved indicating that the instrument met the stipulated threshold of 0.7 recommended for studies in social sciences. Consequently, the instrument was deemed trustworthy and hence suitable for collecting data for the study. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in data analysis, with the aide of the computer software SPSS version 26.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section provides the findings and discussion of the study in accordance with the objectives of the study.

### Extent of Juvenile Delinquency among Girls committed to KGRTC

The first objective sought to find out the extent of juvenile delinquency among girls committed to KGRTC. To achieve this, the researcher rated juvenile delinquency using 12 items on a Likert scale on a scale of 1-5. The responses obtained were used to compute a mean score and standard deviation for each statement and a global mean score for all the 12 items. The minimum score was 1 which indicated “None” or complete absence of juvenile delinquency. Scores ranging from 1-2 indicated to a very small extent, scores of 2-3 indicated a moderate extent, scores of 3-4 indicated a high extent and scores of 4-5 indicated extremely high extent. The rating of the 12 items measuring juvenile delinquency is presented on Table 1.

**Table 1: Rating of Juvenile Delinquency**

	n	$\bar{x}$	s
1. Robbery	61	2.40	1.70
2. Sexual assault	60	2.50	1.50
3. Insulting other people	61	3.20	1.30
4. Physical assault	61	3.10	1.50
5. Substance abuse	61	2.90	1.70
6. Running away from home	61	3.60	1.60
7. Harassing somebody in the street	61	2.30	1.70
8. Theft in the school/home	61	3.00	1.50
9. Arson	61	1.50	1.00
10. Vandalism	61	2.10	1.50
11. Truancy	61	3.00	1.60
12. Breaking into car/home	61	2.10	1.50
<b>Aggregate Mean Score (<math>\bar{x}</math>)=2.57, s=1.06</b>			

Analyzed data presented on Table 1 on delinquent behaviors of girls committed at KGRTC indicated that the most prevalent forms of delinquent behaviours among the girls were; insulting other people ( $\bar{x}$ =3.20, s=1.30), physical assault ( $\bar{x}$ =3.10, s=1.50), running away from home ( $\bar{x}$ =3.60, s=1.50), theft in the school/home ( $\bar{x}$ =3.00, s=1.50) and truancy ( $\bar{x}$ =3.00, s=1.60). These behaviours had scores ranging from 3.0-3.9 indicating a high extent. The second category of delinquent behaviours ranged from mean score between ( $\bar{x} = 2.0$  and  $\bar{x} = 2.9$ ) interpreted as occurring to a moderate extent. These behaviours included were robbery ( $\bar{x}$ =2.40, s=1.70), sexual assault ( $\bar{x}$ =2.50, s=1.50) substance abuse ( $\bar{x}$ =2.90, s=1.70), harassing somebody in the street ( $\bar{x}$ =2.30, s=1.70) vandalism ( $\bar{x}$ =2.10, s=1.50) and breaking into car/home ( $\bar{x}$ =2.10, s=1.50). Lastly, arson ( $\bar{x}$ =1.50, 1.00) was the least manifestation. The global mean score ( $\bar{x}$ =2.57, s=1.06) indicated that juvenile delinquency among the girls occurred to a moderate extent.

The study revealed that the crimes committed by the girls that included: robbery, sexual assault, insulting other people, physical assault, substance abuse, running away from home, harassing somebody in the street, theft in the school/home, arson, vandalism, truancy and breaking into car/home. These findings concur with Smith et al. (2020) whose review of literature established that girls are increasingly becoming involved with the juvenile justice system because of the crimes they commit. The girls’ involvement in criminality came out clearly from the findings represented in of children’s’ offenses. As Muchai and Jefferson (2012) for example, opined, the number of girls engaging in crime and who are sent to correctional and rehabilitation centers in Kenya is increasing. The findings from the study bring more light on the magnitude of juvenile offending. In practically every region of the world, juvenile criminality has increased, according to other research (United Nations, 2003).

### Prevalence of Psychological Abuse among Girls at KGRTC

The second research objective sought to establish the prevalence of psychological abuse among girls at KGRTC. To rate the prevalence of psychological abuse, the girls were provided with 17 items in a Likert scale which rated their experiences pertaining the target subscale. Using the responses obtained from the Likert scales, the researcher computed a mean score and standard deviation for each statement which was used to rate the prevalence of psychological abuse on a scale of 1-5. The minimum score was 1 which indicated “Never” or complete absence of abuse. Scores ranging from 1-2 indicated ‘rare’ or ‘to a very small extent’, scores of 2-3 indicated ‘sometimes’ or ‘to a moderate extent’, scores of 3-4 indicated ‘often’ or ‘to a high extent’ and scores of 4-5 indicated ‘frequently’ or ‘extremely high’. A summary of their responses is presented on Table 2.

**Table 2: Prevalence of Psychological Abuse among Girls at KGRTC**

S.No	Statement	N	$\bar{x}$	s
1.	Rebuked when spoken to	60	3.30	1.43
2.	Blamed after making mistakes	61	3.46	1.31
3.	Punished for something never done	61	3.28	1.45
4.	Gifts withdrawn for no apparent reason	61	1.75	1.29
5.	Devalued from childhood	61	2.51	1.57
6.	Called names by those around you	60	3.25	1.48
7.	Suggestions not taken seriously	61	3.18	1.31
8.	Forbidden to get involved in social groups	61	3.38	1.36
9.	Ignored/rejected by those around you	60	2.65	1.30
10.	Forced to do things one hates	61	2.72	1.45
11.	Forced to do immoral things	61	2.00	1.38
12.	Exposure to fearful objects, animals, darkness, heights, etc.	61	2.28	1.44
13.	Humiliation/constantly being criticized	61	2.49	1.51
14.	Threatening and using abusive language	61	3.05	1.45
15.	Sarcasm and making child subject of jokes	61	2.74	1.32
16.	Blaming and scapegoating	61	3.16	1.38
17.	Making a child do degrading acts	61	2.13	1.30
<b>Global mean score (<math>\bar{x}</math>=2.78, s = .95)</b>				

The most prevalent forms of psychological abuse experienced by the girls was being blamed after making mistakes which the study established the girls had experienced to a great extent ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.46, s= 1.31). One way we challenge ourselves to learn to do things differently is by learning from our errors. However, blaming children after making mistakes makes them feel categorized, unworthy, unwanted and even hated explaining why children may turn to aggression and delinquency, while others develop suicidal tendencies. This study revealed that the girls had to a great extent experienced blame after making mistakes. This is consistent with Felson and Palmore (2018) whose study revealed that blaming people brought guilt, sympathy and anger toward offenders. This was affirmed by our study as being blamed by others after making mistakes indicated the highest form of psychological abuse of girls committed at KGRTC.

Other forms of psychological abuse with a mean score ranging from 3.05 and 3.30 were interpreted as occurring to high extent and included; threatening and using abusive language ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.05, s=1.45), blaming and scapegoating ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.16, s=1.38), suggestions not taken seriously ( $\bar{x}$ =3.18, s=1.31), called names by those around you ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.25, s=1.48), punished for something never done ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.28, s=1.45), rebuked when spoken to ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.30, s=1.43), and forbidden to get involved in social groups ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.38, s=1.36). One of the most frequent types of child abuse, according to the Child Crime Prevention and Safety Center (2022), is



emotional/psychological abuse, which occurs when a parent or caregiver participates in behavior, statements, or activities that are detrimental to a child's growth and well-being (Berdychevsky et al.,2022). A pattern of behavior known as psychological child abuse affects a child's emotional growth or feeling of self-worth (Moise, 2020; Moitra & Mukherjee, 2012). Withholding affection, support, or advice are examples of this, as well as unrelenting criticism, threats, or rejection. All actions, words, and behaviors that parents, caretakers, or other major individuals in a child's life have a negative psychological influence on the child are generally considered to be psychological abuse of children. These findings encourage researchers to use family social ties as a potential concept in their work on delinquent behavior. It's crucial for adolescents to feel emotionally safe in their homes so they can express their emotions in a secure setting (Morris et al., 2017). These environments should have clear expectations for behavior, conduct, and affective displays as well as be predictable and steady. Emotionally safe environments should be safe places to make mistakes when it comes to managing their activities and achieving their goals, just as they should be for psychologically regulated weaknesses. Consequently, in view of the above arguments, the observed high incidence of being forbidden to get involved in social groups on the girls could have predisposed them to engage in juvenile activities.

The third form of psychological abuse experienced by girls committed at KGRTC was being rebuked when spoken to with a mean score ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.30, s=1.43). This supports the findings of Mishra and Biswal (2020) who found that lack of effective parental guidance and supervision is a major contributor to juvenile criminality. The main contributor to girl delinquency is parental rejection and deprivation, specifically the lack of maternal affection and emotional support. Boys' delinquency is primarily caused by a lack of parental involvement and inadequate amounts of quality time spent with them by parents. The other forms of psychological abuse with mean score ranging between 2.00 and 2.74 were interpreted as occurring in moderate extent and included; forced to do immoral things ( $\bar{x}$ = 2.0, s=1.38), making a child do degrading acts ( $\bar{x}$ = 2.13, s=1.30), exposure to fearful objects ( $\bar{x}$ = 2.28, s=1.44), humiliation/constantly being criticized ( $\bar{x}$ = 2.49, s=1.51), devalued from childhood( $\bar{x}$ = 2.51, s=1.57), Ignored/rejected by those around you ( $\bar{x}$ = 2.65, s=1.30), forced to do things one hates ( $\bar{x}$ = 2.72, s=1.45), sarcasm and making child subject of jokes ( $\bar{x}$ = 2.74, s=1.32) . Gift withdrawn for no apparent reason had the lowest representation of psychological abuse having a mean score of ( $\bar{x}$ =1.75). Giving girls gifts and then withdrawing it back is a form of humiliation and the low representation of psychological abuse as shown by low mean score indicates that parents may not have used this form of disciplining their children to hurt them but out of outbursts of anger and temper out of desperation to force the girls to change their bad behaviour (Eide et al., 2018). This study compliments the findings by Valderrama (2014) and Peng et al. (2022) that established that a gift can become a crucial component in peoples' lives. The withdrawal of gift can make children feel very unpleasant, angry, hated, devalued and can easily result to violence if not handled properly as it may result to moodiness, irritability, and anxiety (Cheever et al., 2014).

### **Relationship between Psychological Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency among Girls in KGRTC**

The third research objective sought to establish the relationship between psychological abuse and juvenile delinquency among girls in KGRTC. To achieve this, the researcher rated juvenile delinquency using 17 items on a Likert scale (Table 1). The computed variable "juvenile delinquency" was correlated with psychological abuse using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient in order to establish the relationship between the two variables, namely, psychological abuse and juvenile delinquency.

In order to establish whether the relationship between juvenile delinquency and psychological abuse among girls at KGRTC was statistically significant, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) which stated thus, was tested;

***H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistically significant relationship between psychological abuse and juvenile delinquency among girls in Kirigiti Girls Rehabilitation and Training Centre, Kiambu County, Kenya.***

The researcher calculated the Pearson product moment correlation between the two variables in order to see whether there was a statistical association between psychological abuse and juvenile delinquency. The two variables (independent and dependent) were measured at the ratio level in preliminary analyses to ensure that the conditions of linearity, normalcy, related pairings, and the absence of outliers were not violated (Roni & Djajadikerta, 2021).

### **Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Psychological Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency**

After ensuring that the data set met all the four conditions of; level of measurement, linear relationship, normality, related pairs and no outliers, the researcher computed Pearson correlation coefficient between physical abuse and juvenile delinquency. The findings are presented on Table 3.

**Table 3: Correlation between Psychological Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency**

Variable		Psychological Abuse	Juvenile Delinquency
Psychological Abuse	Pearson Correlation	1	.696**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	58	57
Juvenile Delinquency	Pearson Correlation	.696**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	57	60

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

To evaluate the linear relationship between psychological abuse and juvenile delinquency, a Pearson correlation was calculated. The study showed that there existed a strong, positive correlation between the two variables ( $r = + .696$ ,  $n = 57$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This indicates that increase in psychological abuse results in increase in juvenile delinquency. Further, Turner et al. (2021) observed that juvenile offenders had high rates of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs, such as psychological abuse and neglect). Furthermore, in non-offending juveniles and adults, ACEs appear to raise the likelihood of acquiring pertinent mental health issues. This was in agreement with our study.

For young people, violence is frequently present in their homes, schools, and communities (Steketee et al., 2021). Such exposure could potentially have a negative impact on someone's mental and emotional well-being, with effects that could last well into adulthood. Psychological abuse in the home, where parents psychologically abuse their children, is a specific source of worry. The likelihood of engaging in violent delinquent behavior later in life is increased by both direct and indirect exposure to abuse and cruelty throughout childhood (Steketee et al., 2021). The outcomes of this study are in line with those of a study by Steketee et al. (2021) which revealed a link between psychological abuse and juvenile crime.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that psychological abuse has a significant influence in the development of juvenile delinquency among the girls at KGRTC. As cited in this study, individuals are born with attachment behavioral machinery that drives them to seek lovingness with attachment symbols in stressful situations. Indeed, attachment



proponents believe that human beings' connection requirements are present throughout their lives. Therefore, during times of adversity, the attachment behavioral system offers persons with dependable help, a sense of attachment security and protection. The findings of this study revealed that there was a strong positive correlation between psychological abuse and juvenile delinquency with Pearson correlation coefficient,  $r=+.696$  indicating that an increase in psychological abuse results in an increase in juvenile delinquency. The research findings indicated that to address the impact of psychological abuse on juvenile delinquency, heavy investment on psychotherapy to treat the girls' inner hurts and childhood trauma, counseling measures, empowerments of parents by organizing conferences on adaptable parenting practices need to be seriously considered.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations if implemented and sustained would probably make a positive impact on the problem of juvenile delinquency among girls.

- i. Heavy investment on psychotherapy for treatment on inner hurts of girls and the trauma they experienced.
- ii. Develop programs where parents are extensively trained and educated in order to improve parents' capacity to on appropriate child rearing practices.
- iii. The government should develop regulations requiring parents to attend events connected to their adolescents' extracurricular performances that include conferences and other activities hosted by the government, NGOs, churches and correctional facilities

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