

# **Influence of Psychological Well-Being and School Factors on Delinquency, During the Covid-19 Period Among Secondary School Students in Selected Schools in Nakuru County: Kenya**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted adolescents' psychosocial modification and social interactions across the globe. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit Kenya, economic hardship was immediately felt quickly in many households that were already experiencing hardships. Soon, issues to do with food insecurity, conflicts in homes, and several reports of an increase in teenage pregnancies were witnessed. The COVID-19 pandemic also took a toll on the education system and although the government has made tremendous efforts to normalize the system, it will take up to January 2023 to do so. In the meantime, school-going children have to endure four semesters in a year instead of three. This implies short breaks and a crash program which in turn may cause psychological problems contributing to an increase in delinquency. This study has examined how COVID-19 could have contributed to delinquency among adolescents in secondary schools in Nakuru county, Kenya. Based on the findings, there seems to be a great influence between the COVID-19 pandemic and delinquency among adolescents. The study, therefore, recommends creating a conducive environment that is positive and safe for adolescents, and continuous investment in prevention efforts to minimize risk cases of adolescent delinquency.

**Keywords:** Adolescence, Delinquency, Disruptions, COVID-19, Psychological wellness, Social support

## **INTRODUCTION**

In any population in the world, adolescents comprise a unique demographic group. Even in the best of times, adolescence is a turbulent period for the individual and even their families and friends. During this adolescence period, young people experience major physical and psychosocial changes as part of the transition from childhood to adulthood and as they develop a sense of self, strive for independence, and begin to determine what they want in their lives. There is no doubt then that COVID-19-related challenges and disruptions, therefore, would have a huge impact on adolescents' lives. Such huge impacts may have long-lasting effects since what happens to adolescents during this important and sensitive developmental period can affect them for the rest of their lives. The negative or positive experiences they may go through, behaviors they adopt, or decisions made by them or on their behalf, may positively or negatively shape their pathways and horizons in their later life. The impact could either propel the adolescent on a success and self-actualization path or could serve as blocks on to realization of their full potential as adults. This therefore, has implications not only for adolescents but also for any nation's efforts in preparing the next generation roles for the future.

When Covid-19 struck almost three years ago, the whole world did not realize the kind of seismic shifts it would cause in all spheres of our lives. The pandemic caused havoc in health systems all over the world, since most countries were not prepared, economies reeled from the unexpected slow down or closure of business, and strict measures and protocols were introduced to guide social interactions. In Kenya, all institutions of learning were closed from the first week in March 2020 until the beginning of January 2021. The school closures no doubt created an abrupt and unanticipated interruption of the adolescent learners' education hopes and plans. This may have created a lot of worry, caused stress, anxiety, and uncertainty among

majority adolescents about the future and that of their education. Some adolescents could feel hopeless as far as resuming their studies was concerned, while others could have been anxious about the inevitable changes expected upon resumption of studies and enrolment. This unusual extended period of school closure also served to isolate adolescents from their friends and peers and as such, they might have felt lonely, lost and stressed. These feelings may have had adverse mental effects leading to delinquency. The effects in the case of Kenya could have resulted in the burning of schools as was witnessed all over the country during the second term of schooling in 2021.

The issue of delinquency among adolescents has remained to be a problematic issue across the world. Several gangs and groups continue to unceasingly entice adolescents to join criminal networks and to engage in violent activities through incentives, bribery, coercion, or force (Dearden, 2019). The rate of delinquency among adolescents, furthermore may have increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is with this background information in mind that this study has endeavored to analyze the concept of the COVID-19 pandemic, psychological causes of delinquency among adolescents, and the influence of COVID-19 on delinquency among adolescents. Besides, the study has recommended some mitigation measures that can be embraced to reduce delinquency cases among adolescents as the world navigated through the difficult COVID-19 period.

### Psychological Causes of Delinquency among Adolescents

A report by Population Council, (2021), following a research in Kenya titled “promises to keep: impact of COVID-19 on adolescents” states that concerning mental health, a significant proportion of adolescents reported experiencing depressive symptoms including stress during the pandemic. Close to half of all adolescents in urban areas (Kisumu 47%), Nairobi, and one-third in rural areas (Kilifi 34%) experienced symptoms associated with depression during the 9-month school closure. Adolescent girls and boys reported increasing tension in the household and cases of emotional, physical, and sexual violence over the past year. Sexual violence was almost exclusively experienced by adolescent girls, with 2% of girls reporting sexual violence cases within a month prior to the interviews. Conversely, physical violence was more prevalent among boys, with 52% of boys and 39% of girls reporting physical violence. Across all the reports of violence, half to three-quarters of the respondents stated that violence had increased compared to the pre-COVID era. The increase in conflict, tension and violence were attributed to the losses people were experiencing in employment and also income stressors arising from lockdowns restricting movement and therefore, forcing families to spend a lot of time housed in limited spaces, and in some cases, causing unintended pregnancies.

Delinquency among adolescents can be described as fundamentally criminal acts committed by adolescents typically defined belonging to between eight and twelve years age bracket. It is generally a by-product of anti-social behavior. Anti-social behavior includes behaviors that serve to either cause damage in interpersonal relationships or are not acceptable by the society, and in some cases, both. In most cases, anti-social behavior is identified among self-hurting youths or those truant from school and who finally engage in theft and drug and substance use disorder (Buchanan, Castro, Kushner & Krohn, 2020). Therefore, a significant factor in adolescent delinquency may at times be associated to a form of anti-social behavior.

A lot of crimes by young people result from a weakened or defective superego that fails to sufficiently control the basic and robust early childhood desires, resulting in deviant behavior. Psychoanalytic schools of thought of negligence attribute the lousy behavior of adolescents to instincts and drives within the human psyche that have not been resolved. Conflict is likely to lead to deviant behavior in young people. According to Sigmund Freud's proposition, the personality has three integral parts; the id, ego, and superego. He largely relied on psychoanalysis to dig into a person's past experiences to reveal and resolve unconscious conflicts (Shannon, McKim, Anderson, & Murph, 2019). Thus, Freud is recognized as having revealed the link between delinquent behavior and personality formation, specifically the unconscious sense of guilt that

a child develops and retains, and which in turn influences adolescent delinquency.

It is important to note that aggression is a critical factor in adolescent delinquency since many acts of aggression are typically undertaken on other human beings and, therefore, are criminal activities. According to Pung, Yaacob, Baharudin, and Osman (2015), there are two types of aggression hostile aggression and aggression, which is instrumental. Hostile aggressions institute crimes or acts with emotional and impulsive motivations, whereas instrumental aggression is calculated and influenced by a goal or target-driven behavior. The noticeable difference in the reason behind aggressive behavior may have resulted in escalating violence broadcasted in mass media. Therefore, the situational circumstances being faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including personality traits, determine how adolescents become aggressive. In Kenya, as was the case in most parts of the world, schools closure in 2020 served as a major interruption to adolescents' lifestyle and routine. Adolescents may have been worried about amongst other things, repeating classes, school fees (a lot of parents were laid off and businesses collapsed, being infected with COVID-19 while in school, and possible delays in completing school. It could have affected their mental health in different ways and may have been expressed in form of stress, anxiety, depression, worry, shame, embarrassment, isolation, desperation, frustration, sadness, low self-esteem, and stigma.

It has been noted that criminal behavior starts most intensely before and during puberty and reaches a peak after the end of puberty, and then decreases. Adolescents who seem to be in command of their lives in puberty begin to make decisions alone. They are even more able to take risks easily than adults. Substance abuse, seen as one of the riskiest behaviors, can lead to criminal behavior, either through self-harm to the adolescent or by destroying the environment. It can be concluded that children who abuse substances can commit crimes more quickly. Adolescents, in search for an identity, may isolate themselves from society during such times. If this process reaches the point of alienation of the adolescent from their own body and social and emotional environment, destructive reactions may occur in the individual (Shannon et al., 2019). Therefore, the most severe consequence of these behaviors is what is regarded as criminal behavior.

It is no wonder that psychiatric disorders, especially major depressive disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, common manifest in adolescents and children forced into crime. The report by (the Population Council, 2021) states that nearly half of adolescents who participated in their study reported experiencing symptoms related to depression. If this is the case, how were the adolescents helped? And if no interventions were made to mitigate the depression, this might have caused the destructions that were witnessed in schools in the recent past.

A study by Lange, Reichl, Lange, Tucha, and Tucha (2010) noted that some types of personality disorders also reveal criminal behavior. Anti-socials that are not socialized, devoid of empathy, irresponsible, impulsive, and lacking in feelings such as guilt are highly prone to committing crimes. It has been established that some abnormal behaviors witnessed in childhood form the basis for future crime-related behaviors. Behavior disorder is a condition accompanied by problematic behaviors that do not comply with the norm, fighting, lying, cruelty to animals, etc.

In addition, high impulsivity and low intelligence level come to the fore in juvenile delinquency. A study by Binik et al. (2019) revealed that children with low levels of intelligence are more likely to be impulsive and deceived by other people and have behavioral problems, and are more likely to commit a crime. Hence, low cognitive skills and behavioral issues in childhood clearly show the link between academic failure and crime. Following the COVID-19 outbreak, there has been an upsurge in cases of delinquency among adolescents.

### **Relationship between Delinquency among Adolescents and COVID-19**

Adolescents a population predominantly more vulnerable to the disturbances the COVID-19 epidemic has

initiated, several are at the risk of being late in education, economic chances, health, and welfare throughout an important stage of life growth and development. More than one billion adolescents, or sixty percent of all registered students (Buchanan, Castro, Kushner & Krohn, 2020), are negatively impacted by school terminations, poverty, and joblessness rates due to COVID-19 disease dramatic spread.

A study by Loeber and Farrington (2011) noted that several of these adversities being experienced are similarly known danger factors related to violence, crime, and drug or substance use disorder. Such factors expose adolescents to heightened victimization and participation in crime throughout the pandemic period and after. The jeopardies, amplified by quarantine and restriction processes, include inadequate access to schooling and occupation, disparity, stress within households or families, deprived general well-being, mental health, community and social network losses.

The adolescents who had been put under various quarantine forms are at greater risk of violence, abuse and exploitation, which may include cyberbullying, domestic violence, and conscription by radical groups and other criminal networks. These victims were less probably to pursue help and access support services, with lockdown procedures supplementary restraining access to positive coping strategies, for example, community service, sports, official or non-official education, and different types of physical activity (Dahal, Khanal, Maharjan, Panthi & Nepal, 2020). It is likely that adolescents may adopt negative coping strategies in this conditions, namely, self-harm, and substance and drug use.

While some parts of the world may have experienced decreases in killings and other types of delinquency during the COVID-19 pandemic, organised crime and gangs operate constantly with much brutally in some countries. Several gangs mostly comprising of youth aged between 13yrs and 24 years have been terrorizing people in Kenya, more so the “Confirm gang” as has been witnessed in Nakuru County between the months of May and July 2022. There have been reports of criminal clusters imposing health measures and contributing services to people to create additional support in some communities (Dahal et al., 2020). These continued socio-economic and cerebral health issues have led to amplified violence, youth crime, and oppression. It therefore goes to show that numerous reasons explain why adolescents join gangs with the aim of committing crimes. The utmost collective reasons are related to noble pressure. Peer pressure enhances the desire to fit in within a group, a yearning to be esteemed and obtain status in order to feel powerful. It is very possible that money is used to entice them to join.

Similarly, numerous other issues can put adolescents in dangerous paths of committing crimes or joining a gang. According to Wintle (2020), these issues can be separated into the family, individual, environmental factors, and social groups. This helps to create the much needed clarity that several things can propel an adolescent into getting involved in criminal events. Several individual danger elements include educational problems and omission from learning institutions, cerebral health problems, squat self-esteem, emotional distress, violent behavior, participation in alcohol use disorder, and other drugs and substances. Family jeopardy factors include problems at home, namely abuse, neglect, drug or alcohol use, illness, domestic gang associates, absence of a role model, and financial difficulties. The social danger factors include peer pressure, peers linked to a criminal setting, lack of a fit with peers, and not getting involved in peer events during leisure time. The surroundings likewise play a significant role with the environmental danger factors comprising living in poverty stricken homes, job redundancy, social disparities, and prevailing peer engagements. Hence, the risk factors above need to be deliberated when evolving strategic measures to avert adolescents from engaging in criminal activities.

With adolescent misconduct on the rise, it is of utmost importance to reflect on how the prevailing condition created by COVID-19 could influence adolescent delinquency. Dearden (2020) revealed that during the movement restriction due to the outbreak, it has been realized that gang-linked offenses in some states in America reduced, as individuals were required to leave the streets, thus, trailing their places of carrying out businesses and other gang-linked undertakings and crimes. Nevertheless, Quigley (2020) noted

that some terror due to the disaster might increase adolescent aggression and make it easier for gangs to access them, as COVID-19 makes them more vulnerable.

Consequently, several individuals lost their occupations, jobs, and this increased poverty rates (Wintle, 2020). This likewise touches adolescents, as they undergo suffering due to a drop in salary of their parents and some of their guardians lose their jobs. As penury is a jeopardy factor, this implies that extra adolescents could become susceptible to deception by a gang (Quigley, 2020). It has been established that poverty might push some family members, especially the youth, to join gangs and do wrong things to make money, which puts adolescents at risk, as they would be exposed to an unfavorable conditions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also altered adolescents' mental health in a negative way as feelings of anxiety and stress continue to rise. Isolation makes it less challenging to be engrossed with negative or unhealthy mental activities, which may carry additional fears, such as worries about significant others in their lives or uncertainties about the future (Dearden, 2020). Such situations make it easy for adolescents to be lured into joining a gang or engage in criminal activities to enable them cope with daily hardships.

Now that the restriction orders have been removed in all parts of the world, the drive for appropriate targets in coping with challenges will gradually increase, thereby generating various channels of moving on with life. Compared to the high monitoring levels during the COVID-19 restrictions, parenting rates will likely drop as adolescents have progressively left their families and have either gone to school or to meet with their friends and schoolmates. Relaxation of regulations has facilitated movement amongst interested criminals whose aptitudes to be in dwellings where crime, mostly property crime, could have been formally restricted. Eventually, now that the economy is opened fully, adolescents can have the freedom of moving into their neighborhoods (Wintle, 2020). Therefore, it goes without saying that the occurrence and frequency of criminal conduct will also increase amongst adolescents.

Lifting the COVID-19 restrictions has concurrently decreased amounts of adolescent regulation and has enhanced chances for peer interaction. As most parents have gone back to work, there are other pro-social establishments, such as learning institutions and extra-curricular activities, which if not regulated, and this will leave adolescents with substantial quantities of unsupervised and unstructured time. With less social limitations, meetings have been allowed to take place, adolescents will no doubt be utilizing their unrestricted time associating with peers. Nivette et al. (2021) revealed the chances for free time with small associates make a setting where adolescents are more likely to get engrossed in divergent activities. Consequently, the new found freedom and chances of rejoining with criminal peers and the boredom of life lacking pro-social changes may further lead to an upsurge in adolescent crime. Further, many young people stand to be exposed to emotional, physical, and sexual violence, and others may become vulnerable to personal and social risks such as alcohol and drug abuse as well as teenage pregnancy.

Moreover, the undesirable effects of lockdown on households' financial circumstances, predominantly for homes with more significant disadvantage concerns before the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be felt for a long time to come. The scourge has considerably squeezed most families that can slightly afford to meet their basic needs, thus worsening previously unsubstantiated situations. Adolescents' reactions to the deteriorating family financial circumstances may similarly impact their tendency to commit crimes (Coker, 2021). For instance, there is a connection between promptly increasing joblessness after the countless collapse of businesses and adolescents' expression of negative behaviors. Therefore, a spike in crime rates may spread similarly or perhaps exceeded levels witnessed before COVID-19.

Parenting style may contribute to insolent adolescent behaviors especially if poor monitoring and volatile discipline tendencies are involved. Violent and hostile behavior tendencies in childhood are one of the most jeopardising factors for belligerent conduct in adolescence. This is because initial aggression is likely to spiral into school failure, damaging emotional, social growth and development, noble rejection,

delinquency, and grown-up crime (Cho, Bello, Christie, Monterosso & Leventhal, 2021). Thus, poor parental supervision, which was widespread during COVID-19, may lead adolescents to affiliate with deviant peers, thus leading to delinquency.

In addition, poor socio-economic status, negative parental attitudes, feelings of inferiority complex, little or no attention, and a myriad of other motives can contribute to numerous types of mental issues in young people and, more significantly, adolescents. For example, COVID-19 has led to episodes of fear, depression, complexes, and excessive aggression. Such kind of episodes will provoke or propel adolescents to commit a crime (Cho et al., 2021).

A strong correlation has been observed between child abuse and delinquency. A lot of cases of child abuse and neglect have been reported during the COVID-19 pandemic and this will have its own impact on delinquency. The probability of possessing criminal records are nearly twice as great for neglected and abused youths as compared with adolescents who do not witness maltreatment (WHO, 2020). Therefore, the upsurge in maltreatment increases the probability of committing crimes among the abused victims, thus more adolescents will have criminal records. As adolescent delinquency is on the rise in most countries in the world, it is important to heighten awareness of the factors that may help subsidize delinquency among adolescents and appropriate ways that can be embraced to minimize the causes of delinquency.

## METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to allow the researcher to identify and understand the psychological, social, and mental impact of COVID-19 on the delinquency witnessed among adolescents in Kenya in recent times. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among five selected secondary school students in Nakuru county. Random sampling was used whereby 42 students selected from the seven schools were identified to participate in the study. The participants filled self-administered questionnaires which had items measuring psychological well-being, effects of, COVID-19, and peer influence n= 290 students. **The objectives of the study were as follows:-**

1. To determine the extent COVID-19 affected the psychological well-being of secondary school students in Nakuru County.
2. To establish the school factors that may have contributed to delinquent behavior in schools.

### Instruments

To measure student stress or perception, The COVID-19 Student Stress Questionnaire which helped to assess sources of stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown among students was used. The questionnaire has 7 items. Each item is rated on a five-point Likert scale 1 = not at all stressful (or has not happened), 2 = somewhat stressful, 3 = moderately stressful, 4 = very stressful, and 5 = extremely stressful. A questionnaire measuring stress among students was used to determine school factors that may have caused stress among students. This instrument had fourteen items. The items were rated on a five Likert scale with 1= strongly disagree 2= 3 agree 4=strongly agree=unsure 4= strongly agree.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### Demographic information

All the participants were secondary school students ranging from form one to form four. Their age bracket was between 14 and 18 years old. The students were sampled from seven secondary schools in Nakuru county which were randomly selected. Participants Were 290 male and female students randomly selected from the participating schools. Students who made mistakes in scoring any of the items were excluded from the data analysis. Table 1 indicates the results obtained from the COVID-19 student stress questionnaire.

**Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for the psychological well-being of students during the Covid-19 pandemic**

Description	Not at all Stressful	Somewhat stressful	Moderately Stressful	Very Stressful	Extremely Stressful	Total	
	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	Mean	Std. Dev
1. How did you perceive the risk of contagion during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic?	30	69	20	74	87	2.98	0.98
	10.3	23.7	6.9	25.5	30		
2. How did you perceive the condition of social isolation imposed during the period of COVID-19 pandemic?	32	38	62	102	54	2.98	0.839
	11	13.1	21	35.1	18.6		
3. How did you perceive the relationships with your relatives during the period of COVID-19 pandemic?	21	86	40	105	33	3.15	0.693
	7.2	29.6	17.7	36.2	11.3		
4. How did you perceive the relationships with your colleagues during the period of COVID-19 pandemic?	31	65	26	94	66	2.89	0.89
	10.6	22.9	8.9	32.4	22.2		
5. How did you perceive the relationships with your teachers during the period of COVID-19 pandemic?	84	86	10	70	35	2.59	0.933
	28.9	29.6	3.4	24.1	12		
6. How did you perceive your academic studying experience during the period of COVID-19 pandemic?	20	84	21	86	74	2.61	0.835
	6.8	28.9	7.2	29.6	25.5		
7. How did you perceive the changes in your sexual life due to the social isolation during the period of COVID-19 pandemic?	40	63	30	91	60	3.34	0.888
	13.7	21.7	10.3	31.3	20.7		

The results indicate that 74 (25.5% of the students felt the risk of contagion during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic as very stressful while 87 (30%) found it extremely stressful. Those who found the pandemic

period not stressful were 30 (10.3%) and 69 (23.7%) found it somehow stressful. Only 20 (6.9%) of the students found it moderately stressful. The item which was labeled Fear of Contagion, was meant to help in rating perceived stress related to the risk of infection. This was a relevant dimension which, indeed, is supported by previous studies on the key role played by the fear to be infected, the fear of infecting others (e.g., family, close friends, or elderly parents) to become ill, as well as the fear of infecting others (Ahorsu et al., 2020; Brooks et al., 2020; Taylor et al., 2020). Stigma was also a major source of fear.

The second item sought to establish how the students perceived the condition of social isolation imposed during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The results indicate that 32 (11%) of the students did not find isolation stressful. 38 (13.1%) found it somewhat stressful while 62 (21%) found isolation moderately stressful. A majority of the students 102 (35.1%) found isolation very stressful while 54 (18.6%) students found it extremely stressful. For young people who were used to a lot of activities including going to school, being isolated was no doubt stressful as expressed by a majority of the students. For the students who did not find isolation stressful, they could have been engaged in other activities at home for example cultivating, looking after animals, or studying.

The study further sought to establish how the students perceived the relationships with their relatives during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of the 290 students, 21 (7.2%) indicated not at all stressful, 86 somewhat stressful, and 40 (17.7%) moderately stressful. However, a majority of students, 105 (36.2%) found it very stressful while 33 (11.3%) perceived it as extremely stressful. The relationships with relatives need to be carefully focused on, considering the forced full-time closeness, with almost exclusive sharing of time, resources, and spaces throughout all days. This also is a consequence of the closures of the schools, a big number of which are boarding schools, which forced several students to return back home, but also considering the great number of students studying in day schools, who had to deal also live under completely changed conditions.

On the item on how the students perceived the relationships with their colleagues during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic, 31 (10.6%) were perceived as not at all stressful, 65 (22.9%) somewhat stressful, and 26(8.9%) moderately stressful. The majority of the students 94(32.4%) perceived it as very stressful while 66(22.2%) perceived it as extremely stressful. Most of the students could only mix with their closest neighbours. Some of these neighbors were not probably their own age and therefore playing together or sharing common interests could have been an issue. Others could have been forced into behaviors that they couldn't resist just to "fit in". Therefore, this indicates that in situations where adolescents perceived their peers as being supportive of a particular behavior, the perceived rewards in terms of peer acceptance and fun may outweigh adolescents' abilities to prioritize the costs and risks and contravene peer support and therefore contributing to delinquency.

The students were also asked to rate how they perceived their relationships with their teachers during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic. A majority of the students 84(28.9%) did not find it stressful while 86(29.6%) found it somewhat stressful. Ten (10)(3.4%) students found the relationship moderately stressful while 70(24.1%) students thought the relationship was very stressful as compared to 35 (12%) who found it extremely stressful. The almost equal number of responses in those who found the relationship not stressful and those who found it very stressful could be due to the fact that schools were closed and for most of the students especially the ones who had no internet connection in their homes had no contact with their teachers. For the form fours, they could have experienced stress due to the pressure the teachers created by sending them a lot of exercises to be done during that time. This was an examination class and teachers could have been making a lot of effort to reach out to them which may have resulted in stressing the students.

The sixth item sought to establish how the students perceived their academic experience during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some 20(6.8%) students did not perceive their academic studying as stressful, this compares with 86(29.6%) who found it somewhat stressful and 21(7.2%) who perceived it as moderately stressful. The perceptions of those who found it very stressful were 84(28.9%) students and 74(25.5%) perceived it as extremely stressful. During the school closures imposed by the COVID-19



pandemic between March 2020 and September 2020 for Grades Four, Eight, and Form 4, and up to December 2020 for all other classes, adolescents reported accessing some form of remote learning which was riddled with various challenges. Some of the interviewed students engaged in some sort of remote learning, mostly by reading the few textbooks available at home. However, only 2 in 10 adolescents accessed learning materials via mobile phones, television, and/or radio. 97% of adolescents reported that despite attempting remote learning, they were faced with multiple challenges limiting the quality of their learning, including reduced time for learning due to household chores, lack of internet bundles, distractions in the home environment, power failure, etc.

Students were also required to rate how they perceived the changes in their sexual life due to social isolation during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic. A minority of the student 40(13.7%) did not perceive it as stressful. The students who rated the item as somewhat stressful were 63(21.7%) while those who rated the item as moderately stressful were 30(10.3%). The other students, 91(31.3%) and 60(20.7%) found it very stressful and extremely stressful respectfully. Most of those who found it extremely stressful were mainly form threes and fours. They were probably missing the intimacy and companionship of their close friends. From this perspective, and in line with research emphasizing the strong weight of containment measures such as quarantine and social distancing on individuals’ psychological health and wellbeing (Brooks et al., 2020; Horesh and Brown, 2020; Lee, 2020a; Williams et al., 2020), the item also captured the perceived sense of loneliness derived from living this condition, often far from their loved ones (Sahu, 2020; Zhai and Du, 2020).

The second objective of the study was to establish school features that could have contributed to delinquent behavior in schools. The results are indicated in table 2.

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for School Factors that may have contributed to delinquent behaviour in schools**

Description	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	
	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	Mean	Std. Dev
I am worried that even if I study hard, my grades will not improve.	90 31.0	73 25.2	20 6.9	70 24.5	32 11.0	2.58	0.930
I am annoyed that there are too many test subjects	11 3.8	33 11.4	20 6.9	138 47.9	79 27.2	3.87	0.567
I am having a difficult time in school	63 21.7	53 18.3	37 12.8	101 34.8	32 11.0	2.98	0.839
I am at the limit of my capacity	20 6.9	87 30.0	40 13.8	105 36.2	34 11.7	3.15	0.693
I am dissatisfied with my teachers	62 21.4	68 23.0	24 7.9	100 34.1	32 11.5	2.89	0.890
My school atmosphere is too rigid	87 30.0	85 29.3	13 4.5	65 22.4	37 12.8	2.59	0.943
I am annoyed at having to take too many tests	25 8.6	86 29.7	23 7.9	86 29.7	82 28.3	2.62	0.834
My teachers are very critical	40 13.8	62 21.4	30 10.3	91 31.4	62 21.4	3.24	0.886

Description	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	
	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	Mean	Std. Dev
I have too much to worry about besides studying at school	74 25.5	62 21.4	14 4.8	74 25.5	55 19.0	2.91	1.038
I am worried because teachers do not care about me.	68 23.4	72 24.8	37 12.8	49 16.9	57 19.7	2.85	0.979
I have not experienced any warm or trusting relations with teachers	80 29.7	54 18.6	30 10.3	67 23.1	54 18.6	2.88	1.021
There is no school support infrastructure for the students	87 30.0	64 22.0	31 10.7	77 26.6	24 8.3	2.60	0.884
The school does not have adequate enough facilities	66 22.6	82 28.2	31 10.7	65 22.5	38 13.1	2.75	0.895
I would rather not be in school	91 31.0	75 25.9	20 6.9	47 16.2	47 16.2	2.59	0.993

**Note:** SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, U=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Agree

The first item stated that I am worried that even if I study hard, my grades will not improve. The study findings revealed that on a majority of student 90 (31.0%) strongly disagreed while 73 (25.9%) disagreed. Those who were undecided were 20 (6.9%). Another 71 (24.5%) of the students agreed with the statement and 32 (11.0%) strongly agreed. The students find themselves under a lot of pressure to perform well in school. The bright students may have no worries about their performance. However, the fear of educational failure may evoke mixed responses from significant others in the learner’s life including but not limited to teachers, parents, and guardians, or even their close friends. These reactions may help solidify feelings of social inadequacy affecting the student’s self-esteem and could in some cases, may lead the underperforming student into patterns of chronic delinquency.

On item number two those who strongly disagreed with the statement that indicated annoyance with having too many test subjects were 10 (3.8%) while 33 (11.4%) disagreed. Those who were not sure were 33 (11.4%). The undecided were 20 (6.9%). A majority of the students 139 (47.9%) agreed and 79 (27.2%) strongly agreed. Students experiencing emotional problems may encounter academic difficulties compared to their peers with less emotional problems in class. The pressure and expectations of schools to achieve a high mean score require that schools administer several tests each term apart from the main school examinations. The intention is to get the students prepared well. This however puts a lot of pressure on students which affects them psychologically since they have to study all the time and have little time for anything else.

On the statement “I am having a hard time in school” 63 (21.7%) strongly disagreed, 53 (18.3%) disagreed with the statement and 37(12.8%) were undecided. Those who agreed with the statement were 101 (34.8%)

and those who strongly agreed were 32 (11.0%). Research has shown that school-related variables are important contributing factors to delinquent behavior than effects of either family or friends (Delbert, et al, 1974). This is because schools have the responsibility of educating virtually everyone during most of their formative years and also because so much of an adolescent's time is spent in school. Therefore, there may be a logical relationship between delinquent behavior and the activities that take place or not in schools.

The fourth item intended to measure the students' capacity and limit. 20 (6.9%) strongly disagreed while 87 (30%) disagreed. 40 (13.8%) could not make up their minds on the item. A majority of the students 105 (36.2%) felt that they had reached their limit while. A study carried out by Gold (1978), indicated that students who do well academically have a better attitude about themselves than do weak students. Poor academic performance thus can be directly linked to delinquent behavior. It is generally agreed that students who are chronic underachievers in school are also the most likely to be delinquent (Rathus, 1990). A research done by Thomberry et al (1991) concluded that students who reported that they did not like school had not done well in school and could not concentrate on their homework and were also the ones most likely to self-report delinquent acts.

The statement that sought to gauge the students' satisfaction with their teachers had 62 (21.4%) stating that they strongly disagreed, 68 (23%). A small percentage 24 (8.7%) were not sure of the statement. Most of the students 100 (34.1%) were not satisfied with their teachers while 32(11.5% strongly agreed with the statement.

The study also sought to establish if the students found the school atmosphere rigid. A majority of the students 87(30%) tended to strongly disagree. 85 (29.3% disagreed. A minority of students 13 (4.5%) did not rate the statement. 65 (23.4% and another 37 (12.8%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively. Secondary schools can be considered as a primary instrument of socialization therefore they are bound to affect the level of delinquent behavior by students. School rules if deemed harsh and unreasonable by students may cause them to become delinquents. This is because students likely to disobey rules and regulations which they deem as oppressive and which they may not feel part of, if they were not involved in their formulation. On the other hand, the form of punishment meted on the students when they make mistakes may affect them psychologically making them dislike being in school.

On the statement, "I am annoyed at having to take too many tests" a small number of students 25(8.6%) strongly disagreed while 86(29.7%) disagreed. 23 (7.9%) students were undecided and 86 (29.7% and another 82 (28.3%) agreed and strongly disagreed.

For students who saw their teachers as very critical, 40(13.8%) strongly disagreed 62 (21.4%) agreed 91(31.4%) agreed and 62 (21.4%) strongly agreed. Those who were undecided were 30 (10.3%). Agnew (2004) stated that adolescents were more likely to be delinquent when they do not like their teachers. Likewise, Hirsch (1969) argued that a greater level of attachment toward teachers would be associated with lower delinquency (Kempf, 1993). As a result, when secondary school students have good relations with their teachers, they may not want to risk their relations and may then be less likely to involve themselves in delinquency.

The statement that "I have too much to worry about besides studying at school" saw 74 (25.5%) of the students strongly disagree while 62 (21.4% disagreed. There were 14 (4.8%) of the students who were not sure. Another 74 (25.5%) agreed that they had other matters occupying their minds while 55 (19%) strongly agreed. The loss of income generating businesses for many families Kenyan has reduced their ability to care for their families adequately, and this situation is yet to improve for some even as we come to the close of the year 2022. This can greatly affect how students behave in schools

The tenth statement "I am worried because teachers do not care about me" had 68(23.4%) strongly

agreeing and another 37 (12.8%) of the students were unsure while those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 49 (16.9% and 57 (19.7%) respectfully. An important criterion for measuring of Psychological Well-Being is defined as “positive relations with other individuals”. This is linked to the ability to express strong feelings of empathy and affection for all human beings and to be capable of greater love, deeper friendship, and more complete identification with others (Ryff & Singer, 1996). If students feel strongly that teachers do not care about them, this will affect how they feel about themselves and also about the school environment as a whole.

The study also looked at the relationship between the students and their teachers. Those who strongly disagreed with the statement concerning experiencing a trusting or war relationship with their teachers were 80 (29.7%) while those who disagreed were 54(18.6%). Another 30 (10.3%) students were undecided while 63 (23.1%) agreed and those who strongly agreed were 54 (18.6%). Feelings of isolation and students’ perceptions that the students are not receiving emotional support from significant others may also play a role in the etiology of delinquent or aggressive behaviors (Gottfredson, 1997). Students’ life in school involves hundreds of hours spent interacting with their teachers. Levels of delinquency may be lower in schools where teachers demonstrate positive attitudes towards students and are concerned about them. The concern may be shown through teachers meeting with students with problems on a regular basis and by teachers creating a pleasant atmosphere for students to study in. Studies show that a close student-teacher relationship can be associated with positive outcomes whereas conflicted relationships are linked with unfavorable school attitudes, classroom disengagement, and poor academic performance (Agnew, 2001).

The other two statements were checking on school support infrastructure and also enough facilities were rated as follows 87 (30% strongly disagreed, 64 (22%) disagreed 31 (10.3%) were unsure while 77 (26.6%) agreed and those who strongly agreed were 24 (8.3%). For adequate facilities, 66(22.6% strongly disagreed, 39 disagreed, 82 (28.2 agreed and 65 strongly agreed. A small number 31 (10.7% were undecided. Most leading theories of delinquency see the school as a key factor in contributing to delinquent behavior. Adequate or lack of school facilities may constitute a major determining factor in ensuring quality or lack of quality education. It serves as one of the yardsticks for measuring the level of educational growth and development in any school.. The implication is that a substantial spending of the school/ government budget be allocated for their establishment. When school facilities are not properly managed and maintained, they it is likely to affect the academic performance of students. Provision of good quality education requires a school to have adequate physical facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, and human resources in form of teachers and support staff which are acquired based on the availability of financial resources in schools. Facilities refer to the entire environment of the school to facilitate the teaching-learning process. Many of the participating schools do not have functional libraries, and where you find some, the books that are there are not current or relevant to the current competency-based secondary school programmes being introduced in the schools. This may be one of the factors affecting learning and subsequently affecting academic performance in most schools sampled. Due to the 100% transition policy declared in 2019 by the government of Kenyan, most classrooms are hosting more than a hundred students exceeding the original capacity of 50 students per classroom. In this situation, it is hard for either the teachers or the students to move freely as expected in the classrooms. It is no wonder that many teachers do not give assignments to students regularly as expected, since it is difficult to correct assignments on a daily basis from such huge numbers. This practice has affected students’ academic performance drastically in the said schools, causing some students to drop out. School dropout is a major cause of delinquency.

Among the participants, very few came from schools that have laboratories that are well equipped to enable students to carry out experiments in science courses such as Biology, Physics, and Chemistry. When it comes to meal times, a lot of students eat their meals in the fields since the dining halls are too small or they eat in shifts. The playing fields are also crowded making it impossible for students to participate fully in their favorite games. These situations compounded with other does affect students psychologically and

may cause delinquency in some cases.

The last statement in the instrument “I would rather not be in school” had 90(31% strongly disagreeing and 75(25.9%) disagreeing. An equal number 47 (16.2%) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. 20 (6.9%) of the students were not sure. According to proponents of social control theory (Hirschi, 1969), by maintaining strong bonds to social institutions, individuals are less likely to engage in delinquency (Sampson and Laub, 1997). Bonds to parents and family and commitment and success in school are most important in adolescence (Thornberry et al., 2003). Affective (for example, social support) and informal control elements (for example, monitoring and discipline) of these bonds place restrictions on adolescents’ behavior. Indeed, a lack of parental support, monitoring, and attachment has been linked to engagement in delinquency in adolescence (Craig, 2015; Hoeve et al., 2012). Research findings in this area are contentious, however, and mechanisms through which peer rejection leads to delinquency are clear. Aggression has been suggested as an explanation of the connection between peer rejection and delinquency.

## CONCLUSION

All schools in Kenya resumed learning in January 2021, much to the relief of all stakeholders including, learners, parents, and teachers. The resumption brought back hope and a sense of normalcy. A factor that will remain constant in all the occurrences is that for adolescents the school provides safety, happiness, and hope, and therefore being in school is key. In this regard, it is of utmost importance that our schools strive to maintain physical and emotional health and safety for the students, inculcate a sense of belonging, connectedness, and offer psychological and support. Schools need to be places where academic challenge and engagement abide, and social and emotional competence for students, teachers and support staff is readily available to improve the well-being of all stakeholders and thereby reducing delinquency and improve academic performance

Young people could have borne the brunt of the pandemic and as the world nations move towards full recovery from the ravages of COVID-19V, a well thought out, concerted and collaborative approach to adolescents’ well-being being is needed to help build resilience into all systems. While other numerous ongoing efforts in an effort to restore normalcy after COVID-19 are noticeable, they unfortunately focus on youth who have completed their formal education or on a single topic (for example gender-based violence or digital skills building), leaving the multiple, needs of adolescents unaddressed. A holistic approach is required.

As the Kenya government makes a move to address the crises created by COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical to ensure that challenging situations created by or escalated by the pandemic are identified and resolved as soon as possible. If not, they may hinder any long-term plans or success to build resilience in the young population and enhance recovery and growth.

Roadmaps may be required to enable the Kenya to plan for the immediate and long-term COVID-19 crisis mitigation and recovery actions for adolescents especially in the whole area of mental health to enhance their psychological well-being. In the long-term, a focus on early adolescence will be required to create an environment that protects them and enhances their future potential, and thereby preventing delinquency, based on the lessons that have been learned from the pandemic crisis in Kenya and other regions.

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