

**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI  
FACULTY OF ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK**

**// FACTORS INFLUENCING INDIVIDUALS TO COMMIT ROBBERY:  
A CASE STUDY OF CONVICTED ROBBERS AT KAMITI AND  
LANGATA PRISONS //**

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**Declaration**


This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of a degree, or certificate in this university or any other learning institution.

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## **Dedication**

**This study is dedicated to my daughter Sharleen Mukami and my wife Pamela Kawira for their constant encouragement and for being patient enough to see me go through my academic struggle and thus, realizing my long cherished dream.**

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### **Abbreviations/Acronyms**

|                    |                                                                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ASA</b>         | <b>American Sociological Association</b>                              |
| <b>FBI</b>         | <b>Federal Bureau of Investigation</b>                                |
| <b>G4S</b>         | <b>Group 4 Securicor</b>                                              |
| <b>GoK</b>         | <b>Government of Kenya</b>                                            |
| <b>KKV</b>         | <b>Kazi kwa Vijana</b>                                                |
| <b>NACADA</b>      | <b>National Authority for Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse</b> |
| <b>NCRC</b>        | <b>National Crime Research Centre</b>                                 |
| <b>SPSS</b>        | <b>Statistical Package for Social Science</b>                         |
| <b>SSA</b>         | <b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>                                             |
| <b>TV</b>          | <b>Television</b>                                                     |
| <b>UCR</b>         | <b>Uniform Crime Report</b>                                           |
| <b>UF</b>          | <b>Uwezo Fund</b>                                                     |
| <b>UK</b>          | <b>United Kingdom</b>                                                 |
| <b>UN</b>          | <b>United Nation</b>                                                  |
| <b>UN- HABITAT</b> | <b>United Nations Human Settlements Programme</b>                     |
| <b>USA</b>         | <b>United States of America</b>                                       |
| <b>WHO</b>         | <b>World Health Organization</b>                                      |

## **Abstract**

The study justification derives from the fact that robbery convicts in both Kamiti and Langata prisons have been on the increase despite the Kenyan government spending huge sums of money to combat the same. The study sought to address this problem by investigating factors that influence individuals to commit robbery. The guiding objectives were: To establish; personal and socio-economic attributes of robbery convicts at Kamiti and Langata prisons; the influence of drug abuse on involvement in robbery; the extent to which unemployment inclines an individual to commit robbery; the role played by family criminological history in an individual's involvement in robbery; and the extent to which physical and social environments predispose individuals to commit robbery.

The study used stratified sampling technique to pick a sample of 123 respondents. Ten key informants were also purposively selected. They included prison warders from the two prisons, officers in charge of the two prisons, court clerks and police officers. Data was analysed both quantitatively using descriptive statistics and qualitatively through themes.

The findings indicated that majority of the respondents were married, and therefore had family obligations to meet which may have compelled them to engage in robbery to earn a livelihood. Majority of them were aged 21-30 years at the time of imprisonment. This implies that they were youthful and energetic. In addition, an overwhelming majority of the respondents attested that drug abuse causes individuals to commit robbery thus, suggesting a structured relationship between drug abuse and robbery. The study further revealed that a majority of the respondents were of the view that unemployment causes individuals to commit robbery.

It was recommended that the National Crime Research Centre (NCRC), which is a government agency, needs to compile data on the high number of youths aged between 18-30 years committing robbery in Kenya and thereafter, develop approaches towards reducing it. The study further recommends review of strategies used to mitigate against robbery by addressing the social issues of drug abuse, unemployment and good parenting practices.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Crime and deviance has always been part of human society. There is no community in the world that can boast of a crime free population. Consequently, crime has been studied extensively and there are numerous attempts to explain why people commit crime although none of the studies consulted offer conclusive explanations of this problem. The rate and degree of crime varies significantly from place to place and from time to time (Otieno, 2004).

Corporate investors, international development agencies and local artisans are discouraged from initiating or sustaining economic activity by the threat of crime and violence. Investors' first look for a peaceful environment before putting their money in any place. This is often guaranteed by an effective criminal justice system which includes the Police, Courts of law and the Corrections. If the citizens' security cannot be guaranteed, then the nation cannot be able to move safely along the path of economic and social development (Barak, 2003).

Criminologists classify crime in various categories, namely: Property crimes referring to crimes that involve taking of money or property from someone. Examples of these crimes comprise robbery, theft, burglary and arson among others. Violent crimes which include robbery, forcible rape, murder, assault and battery are crimes that involve physical force, a threat of force or even bodily pain or death inflicted on a victim by an offender. White-collar and organized crimes forms another category of crime involving stings and swindles, chiselling, peddling and bribery, embezzlement and employee fraud, bank fraud and corporate crimes (Tarolla, 2002). Other categories of crime include the cyber crime and political crimes.

The many categories of crimes notwithstanding, this study focuses on robbery, a crime which involves the taking of, or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody or control of a person(s) by force, threat of force, violence and/or by putting the victim in fear (Gilligan, 1997). Thus robbery is a serious offence, that is

both a property and a violent crime since it involves use of force to obtain someone else's money or goods. (Gilligan,1997).

According to the UN HABITAT (2004) robbery is a problem that poses threat to sustainable economic development; to the quality of life and human rights. The insecurity arising from it affects the poor more intensely since it breaks down social cultural bonds and limits mobility thus contributing to the development of urban ghettos and stigmatised neighbourhoods.

According to UN World report on Crime (2012), robbery at homes and businesses increased more dramatically, by 27.3 and 41.5 per cent respectively in Southern African countries. The citizens of developing countries especially in African states suffer immensely when it comes to robbery. The stagnant and/or deteriorating economies of the third world countries is largely blamed on the increase in robberies. The Africa All Parliamentary Group along with the Royal African Society for example, indicated that between 1970 and 2008 Africa lost \$854 billion to robbery (WHO, 2004). These are essentially massive resources which could have been used to put up thousands of hospitals and schools which could reduce the suffering of poor people.

In the last decade Kenya's security situation is reported to have significantly deteriorated, particularly in the urban centres due to an upsurge of bank robberies, carjacking, child-kidnapping and burglaries, among other offences (UN- HABITAT, 2004, GoK, 2011). Throughout the 1990's Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya had to grapple with rising incidences of robbery, thus earning it the negative reputation of being a dangerous city, hence the nickname 'nairobi'(UN- HABITAT, 2004). These robberies could have possibly been triggered by a host of social economic issues for example urbanisation, industrialization, unemployment of the youth and poverty among other factors.

In Kenya robbery costs businesses considerable revenue each year and is devastating as it leads to loss of both customers and employees when fear grips a neighbourhood (GoK, 2011). Whenever firms (especially small businesses) are victims of robbery,

they often react by changing their hours of operation, raising prices to cover losses, relocating outside the community, or simply closing shop. Fear of crime isolates businesses in as much as it isolates individuals, thus rendering them even more vulnerable to crime and poverty.

A survey by UN- HABITAT (2001) points out to a high number of victims of robbery in Nairobi city. It found that about 37 per cent of the surveyed respondents had been victims of robbery, while 22 per cent had been victims of theft at least once during the previous year. Close to 18 per cent of the respondents had also been physically assaulted. This clearly suggests that robbery is crime that affects a considerable number of people in the city of Nairobi.

There is need therefore to set up plans on how robbery can be reduced considering its adverse effects on victims and the nation at large. Approaches towards reducing robbery must be tailored to match the situation at hand since influencing factors vary from region to region (Fisher, 1992). Thus, this study sought to investigate on factors that influence individuals to commit robbery focussing on convicted robbers.

Given the adverse effects of loss of lives, property, money, businesses, injuries, diminishing investments, the fear occasioned by robbery and the hypothetical explanations provided there was need to conduct a study on factors that influence people to commit robbery. It is therefore against this background that this study seeks to identify and investigate the factors that influence people to commit robbery; using a case study of robbers convicted at Kamiti and Langata prisons.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The proportion of convicted robbers at Kamiti Maximum Prison rose from 1,200 (35 %) to 1,528 (43 %) during the years 2011 and 2012 respectively, translating to almost half of the total population of the facility, i.e. 3,500. Similarly, the number of convicted robbers in Langata women prison rose from 30 (4 %) to 43 (7 %) during the same period (GoK Prison Report, 2012). It is therefore likely that due to increase of robbery, violence is becoming a major social problem in the society. Thus, increase in



violence could be attributed to likelihood of an upsurge of crime in society or recidivism among offenders.

Over the years, the fight against robbery in Kenya has been hampered by limited stakeholder participation in the formulation of strategies, programs and plans to reduce it. The fact that few empirical studies have sought to establish factors that influence robbery in Kenya has been the greatest obstacle to its management (UN HABITAT, 2004). Hence the urgent need for a paradigm shift in the approach by all the stakeholders in combating robbery. This study therefore sought to establish factors that influence individuals to commit robbery.

This study therefore brings current information to the limited body of knowledge on robbery in Kenya. By any standards there have been changes in planning and execution of robbery, therefore a current study may be a useful point of reference to other scholars.

### **1.2.1 Key Research Questions**

1. What are the socio-demographic attributes of robbery convicts at Kamiti and Langata prisons?
2. To what extent does unemployment predispose individuals to commit robbery?
3. Does drug abuse influence individuals to commit robbery?
4. Does family criminological history play a role in the involvement in robbery by individuals?
5. Does environmental factors predispose individuals to commit robbery?

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The overall objective of this study is to investigate factors that influence individuals to commit robbery; focusing on inmates convicted of robbery at Kamiti and Langata Prisons.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

This study was guided by the following specific objectives;

1. To establish the socio-demographic attributes of robbery convicts at Kamiti and Langata prisons.
2. To ascertain the extent to which unemployment inclines individuals to commit robbery.
3. To find out the influence of drug abuse on involvement in robbery by individual convicts.
4. To assess the role played by family criminological history in an individual's involvement in robbery.
5. To establish the extent to which environmental factors predispose individuals to commit robbery.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

In the recent past, crimes, particularly robbery have become so common in the Kenyan society and as such, are a major social problem. This is despite the fact that

the Government spends huge sums of money and resources in the hope of ensuring that its citizens are secure as they carry out their businesses.

Presently, the criminal justice system including the Police, Court of Law and Corrections are in the process of carrying out reforms that would help reduce crime and spur investment, since peace and security are key considerations for anyone who wants to invest in a place. The findings of this study may therefore provide these Government agencies and other stakeholders with valuable information that can be used in the design of effective policies and strategies to mitigate the high prevalence of robbery in Kenya by addressing the factors that promote individuals to commit robbery in the first place.

This study sought direct views of inmates who have been jailed for committing robbery. It is therefore one of the few researches to have been conducted on convicted robbers in Kenya due to security and bureaucratic concerns of the government. Its strength lies in the fact that it sought first-hand information from the respective convicts considering that the least one would expect in a developing economy is high crime prevalence, and particularly violent crime.

Since this study elicited first-hand information from the convicted robbers, it may be an important point of reference for future scholars.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study was conducted at Kamiti and Langata prisons. It was confined to the factors that influence individuals to commit robbery, namely: personal attributes, unemployment, drug abuse, family criminological history, physical and social environment. The study was conducted on inmates who were confined in prison. A total of 88 inmates from the two institutions were interviewed. However these are not the only robbers since there are others in other prisons in Kenya. Any generalization of the results would therefore be confined only to the two prison facilities.

The two prison facilities were selected for this study owing to the fact that they hold convicted robbers and that they are the main prisons for male and female inmates

respectively. The study was not able to cover other Prisons located far from Nairobi due to limited resources including finances and personnel.

The research findings might not be applicable to other prisons in Kenya owing to the fact that different regions in the country have different socio-economic characteristics. The study findings were also limited by the fact that there is a possibility that some inmates who committed the offence in Nairobi were transferred to upcountry penal institutions.

The study faced difficulties in mobilizing prison inmates who were the main study respondents. The high level of illiteracy among the inmates posed a challenge in their understanding and response to the questions asked.

### **1.6 Definition of Key Terms and Concepts**

**Crime:** This study defines crime as an action or omission that constitutes an offense that may be prosecuted by the state and is punishable by law. This is action or an instance of negligence that is deemed injurious to the public welfare or morals or to the interests of the state and that is legally prohibited.

**Robbery:** For the purpose of this study robbery means the taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and putting the victim in fear. Robbery is a property crime as well as a crime of violence because it involves the use of force to obtain money or goods.

**Inmate:** An inmate refers to a person confined to an institution such as a prison for having committed a criminal offence so as to be reformed. The person is supposed to follow rules and values that have been developed for prisoners inside prisons social systems.

**Prison:** A prison refers to a building or enclosure to which people are legally committed as a punishment for crimes they have committed or while awaiting trial.

**Drug abuse:** This is the habitual taking of addictive or illegal drugs. It involves a compulsive, excessive, and self-damaging use of habit forming drugs or substances, leading to addiction or dependence, serious physiological injury (such as damage to kidneys, liver, heart) and/or psychological harm (such as dysfunctional behavior patterns, hallucinations, memory loss), or death.

**Employment:** Employment refers to an occupation by which a person earns a living. It involves two parties, one being the employer and the other being the employee. The employer conceives of a productive activity, generally with the intention of creating financial revenues, and the employee contributes labour to the enterprise, usually in return for payment.

**Environmental factors:** These comprise of both physical and social environmental factors.

**Physical environment:** These are the buildings, trees and vehicles that make up the city or town. It comprises all the different factors of nature, including trees, water bodies like the lakes.

**Social environment:** Refers to the immediate social setting in which people live or in which something happens or develops. It includes the culture that the individual was educated or lives in, and the people and institutions with whom they interact.

**Broken family:** These are families where children reside in single-parent households or any other type of household other than a household in which both biological parents are present.

**Family criminological history:** refers to the presence of individuals involved in committing crime that initiates the siblings to crime later in their adult life.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the relevant literature and theories related to factors that influence individuals to commit robbery. It discusses an overview of robbery in Kenya, personal attributes of robbers, unemployment and robbery, drug abuse and robbery, family criminological history and robbery, physical environmental factors and robbery, social environmental factors and robbery and technological advances and robbery. Strain theory, Differential Association theory and Rational Choice theory are also discussed. The conceptual framework is presented later in the chapter.

### **2.2 Robbery in Kenya**

Robbery is defined as the taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear (Siegel,1989). Evidently, there is lack of consent on the part of the victim, and the intent to steal on the part of the offender.

The prevalence of robbery in Kenya is on the increase whereas other forms of crimes such as criminal damage are reported to be declining (GoK, 2011). Evidence of increase in robbery cases affect civilians and corporate bodies in equal measures with dire consequences to the country's economy.

In Kenya many people have personally experienced violence or have a friend who has been victimised. Almost everyone has heard about someone being robbed, beaten or even killed. Violence causes injuries, pain and suffering to the victim. Violent prone areas are insecure and therefore do not attract investments leading to underdevelopment. In the daily newspapers and local news bulletins we frequently hear and read stories of people who have lost lives or have been injured as victims of violent crimes such as robbery.

A case in point, is an incident reported in the Daily Nation (2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2010), where robbery was conducted at a Co-operative Bank branch along Haille Sellasie Avenue, Nairobi. During the incidence, a group of four robbers arrived at the specific bank branch in a Mitsubishi van with G4S Logo escorted by a Toyota car. The robbers had dressed like G4S security personnel and they presented themselves in order to collect eighty million shillings as per the notice already served to the bank by the genuine G4S Company. On verification of the documents they presented, the robbers collected the money and left the bank premises. They later abandoned the van and escaped in another motor vehicle to unknown destination (Daily Nation 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2010).

As regards categories of robbers in Kenya, none of the local literature reviewed offered an explanation. However studies by an American Criminologist by the name John Conklin identified four types of robbers, namely; the professional robber who carefully plans and executes a robbery, often with many accomplices. He steals large sums of money and has a long term deep commitment to robbery as a means of supporting a hedonistic lifestyle.

The opportunistic robber is the most common robber and has no long term commitment to robbery. He targets victims for small amounts of money. He is young and generally inexperienced. The addict robber is addicted to drugs, has a low level of commitment to robbery but a high level of commitment to theft. He may or may not carry a weapon.

Lastly, the alcoholic robber has no commitment to robbery as a way of life. He has no commitment to theft and usually robs people after first assaulting them. He takes few precautions and is easily apprehended more than other robbers.

In Kenya robbery manifests itself in different ways: People's homes, businesses and banks among others have been attacked by armed men and robbed of everything and in many cases the owners left dead. The value of property robbed usually runs to billions of shillings. Cars have been robbed at gun point. There are also instances when robbers do not injure their victims but they, however, threaten to injure them if they do not submit to their demands.

As a country develops, there is an increase in cases of robbery, or threat of violence, to secure money or other material objects (Mika, 2003). The basic reasons for the increase in armed robbery lie within the development process itself. The assertion implies that when development is achieved, robbery is likely to decrease correspondingly. Some element that exists within the developmental process is responsible for these robberies.

Thus, the developmental process directly or indirectly contributes to armed robbery and criminality by; disrupting the traditional mechanisms of social control. Because of urbanisation and industrialization, Kenyans are increasingly facing socio-economic alienation in urban and peri-urban areas, urban unemployment especially by the young people and failure to harness the productivity of the poor by the government (Mika, 2003). These challenges directly or indirectly predisposes the urban youth to robbery.

### **2.3 Socio-demographic Attributes of Robbers**

According to the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), 90 percent of those arrested for robbery in the US in 1997 were males. Approximately 65 percent of the arrestees were under 25 years of age. In terms of race, blacks accounted for 57 per cent of all robbery arrests, whites 41 per cent and other races 2 per cent (Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), 2006). In Kenya, when it comes to rates of robbery by gender and age the situation is even more spectacular as 95 per cent of those arrested are males and 70 per cent of the arrestees are below 30 years of age (GoK, 2011).

Most robbers in Kenya (66 per cent) are bread winners in their families as they are married. This points to the fact that they have family obligations to meet in their families which compels them to engage in various economic activities to generate income to meet family needs. However, some of these income generating activities are illegal and serve as the starting point for them to engage in illegal activities. Ordinarily, family responsibilities puts pressure on family bread winners to engage in income generating initiatives that they could otherwise have not preferred to engage in if they had other legitimate alternative avenues to generate income. (GoK, 2011).



Studies by Rutere, (2003) found that most of the prison inmates in Kenya had only primary level education. This depicts that majority of them have poor academic backgrounds as they had not attained the secondary level or college level of education. From these findings it can be deduced that lack of good academic background motivates individuals to commit crime. The majority of the perpetrators of robbery could not anticipate the consequences of their crime before involving themselves in robbery owing to their poor level of education.

The majority of prison inmates, robbers included, are imprisoned at their youthful age (i.e. 18-30 years). This can be attributed to the fact that this is the age when a majority of youths have heavy responsibilities and have to find a way of earning a living to support their heavy financial demands. Unfortunately, growing financial needs coupled with limited opportunities to meet them is likely to propel the youths to engage in unlawful activities in order to meet their financial needs. Rutere, 2003).

#### **2.4 Unemployment and Robbery**

The World Bank estimates that 74 million people between the ages 15-24 are unemployed, which accounts for 41 per cent of all unemployed persons. Research by World Bank (2010) suggests that unemployed youths are disproportionately more likely to be perpetrators, as well as victims of robbery and violence. The growing gap between rich and poor members of society is as important as, or even more important than levels of poverty in affecting robbery and violence.

Several factors account for the high youth unemployment rates in Africa, most notably low economic growth, which is manifested in low economic activity and low investment. Low economic activity entails low overall job creation. Given the sustained population growth rates, labour markets are not able to absorb all the newcomers, resulting in scarcity of jobs, which leads to more selection by education and experience; precisely the assets that young people are struggling to acquire. This makes majority of the young people to be locked out of the job market, thus, according them minimal opportunities to generate income (Iadicola, 1998).

In Sub-Saharan Africa the lack of job prospects and the likelihood of a desolate future for unemployed young people may contribute to socially deviant behaviour including involvement in robbery as a negative coping strategy for earning a living. Furthermore, this situation could reinforce marginalization of young people from the labour market and society at large. The rise in robbery cases and other forms of crime, drug addiction and prostitution among young unemployed urban migrants is due partly to the combined effects of the lack of social networks and insufficient job opportunities (Graef, 2000).

Crime and violence are on the increase in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa among unemployed youths and adults alike (UN-HABITAT, 2004b). Youth gangs e.g Bagdad Boys, viewed as second or substitute families, typically satisfy the economic and social needs of unemployed young people through robbery. Some young people enter the criminal world at a very young age and end up becoming victims of robbery themselves. The combination of unemployment and availability of firearms is lethal. According to the Nairobi Youth and Crime Survey, the most common offences for which young offenders were arrested were robbery, theft, assault and drug possession (UN-HABITAT, 2004b). There is no doubt that unemployment, especially among young people, is a major factor which contributes significantly to increased robbery (WHO 2004a). Often times, unemployed people are forced to find alternatives to generate income, including activities in the survival-type informal sector and, in extreme cases, robbery activity. Between 1979 and 1997, much of the increase in robbery and other crimes was attributed to falling wages and rising unemployment among men without college education (WHO 2004a).

Studies by (Barak, 2003) examined the relationship between poverty, unemployment and robbery. He examined crime rates in areas marked by poverty and unemployment rather than rates of participation in robbery by individuals who are poor and/or unemployed. The trouble with this kind of research is that, on its own, it cannot tell us whether it is the poor and unemployed who are committing robbery. The tendency to draw unwarranted inferences about who is involved in crime from information about the characteristics of crime-prone places is sometimes referred to as the ecological

fallacy. Studies which have examined experiences of particular individuals generally find that individuals at the lower end of the socio-economic status are more likely to participate in robbery. However, there are some notable exceptions to this rule, but they involve crime which is relatively minor in nature. Since robbery frequently leads to arrest and imprisonment. This, in turn, reduces an individual's employment prospects, thus, crime leads to poverty and unemployment as well (Barak, 2003).

Unemployment disrupts the lives of both individuals and families. The most obvious result of job loss is financial uncertainty. Financial loss alone is a sufficient cause of family stress, but financial deprivation also generates a psychological impact. Unemployed persons report high levels of anxiety, depression and hostility (Piquero, 2001). Those people who are unemployed develop feelings of hopelessness, despair, and some even reach such depths of depression and disillusionment that they may decide to commit robbery.

A long spell of unemployment ruins a person's self-respect. Unemployment creates a sense of frustration, which sometimes leads to feelings of uselessness. It leaves a person apathetic to ordinary activities and duties or can even make a person ready to lend a willing ear to temptations of robbery in order to regain status and a sense of purpose (Barak, 2003). However, employers are reluctant to employ people with criminal records, so that the unemployment rate of those with a criminal record is higher than among those without, thus creating an incentive to return to crime if legal employment is blocked (Piquero, 2001).

While robbery may be seen as a survival alternative in the face of grinding poverty, there are poor communities where crime levels are low because behavior is constrained by informal social and cultural values.

## **2.5 Drug Abuse and Robbery**

Unlike alcohol, however, there is little evidence that drugs such as heroin, cocaine and marijuana exert any direct pharmacological effect on an individual's propensity to engage in crime. In any event, the onset of involvement in robbery usually precedes illicit drug consumption. This has led some to argue that illicit drug taking

and robbery are just different manifestations of deviant behavior rather than being causally related. The fact that many early family precursors to involvement in crime are identical with those which precede illicit drug use lends credence to this view. In fact illicit drug consumption almost certainly does cause crime by driving large numbers of otherwise law abiding people into crime (Fisher, 1992).

The influence of illicit drug consumption stems from two sources. Firstly, many individuals already involved in robbery commit far more offences once they become drug dependent. This is because offenders addicted to expensive illicit drugs usually commit higher rates of property crime like robbery to fund their addiction. Secondly, there is some evidence that competition among drug suppliers for the control of illicit drug markets occasionally prompts them to engage in robbery and other forms of crime toward each other. Drug use tends to provide another frequently cited source of influence on crime trends. For instance, over the last twenty years, Australia has experienced a rapid growth in the number of dependent heroin users. This growth has been accompanied by increased levels of crime, particularly robbery. These observations, while suggestive, do not provide conclusive evidence that drug use plays an important role in shaping long-term trends in robbery. The assumption that it does, however, is to be supported by strong evidence that drug dependence significantly increases individual rates of committing robbery (Fisher, 1992).

The present study, in regard to this factor therefore sets out to investigate if there is a relationship between drug abuse and robbery and more specifically if drug abuse influences individuals to commit crime.

## **2.6 Family Criminological History and Robbery**

Research suggests that family factors influence the possibility of committing crime. The likelihood of offending is significantly correlated to individual dispositions, for example, impulsiveness, and immediate social situations, for example, family conditions (Loeber and Farrington, 1999). In the 20th century, significant changes in family arrangements have occurred; modern family structures vary widely and include

many one-parent and homosexual households as well as extended family arrangements.

Differing family structures may directly impact on the stability of the family home and the socialization of children and adolescents. A long history of research has linked family dysfunction with future criminal offending. In part, because parents monitor and provide nurturance to children, it is thought that the loosening of bonds among family members is likely to result in more criminal involvement. In recent years, an increase in the number of juvenile delinquents has sparked interest and concern about juvenile delinquent behaviors and the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system. Many researchers and policy makers regard juvenile delinquency as one of the world's most critical social issues (Tarolla, Wagner, Rabinowitz, & Tubman, 2002).

In most cases, delinquents are viewed as individuals who come from less intact families, often referred to as broken homes. Typically, the term broken home has been operationalized to mean children residing in single-parent households or any type of household other than an household in which both biological parents are present (Rankin, 1986; Geismar & Wood, 1986). In contrast, an intact family usually refers to a nuclear family arrangement in which both biological parents reside in the household with their biological children (Kierkus & Baer, 2002). Intact family arrangements differ from modern-day family arrangements including single-parent arrangements, two-parent arrangements involving a step parent, extended family member arrangements, and the adoptive/foster family arrangement (Rankin, 1986). Over time, researchers have questioned whether intactness of family is a primary variable relating family to juvenile delinquency. Other models of understanding families' roles in juvenile delinquency have addressed families' dysfunction.

A study by Geismar and Wood (1986), examined two types of family variables: structural and functional. They divided the variables into several sub-categories, with structural factors including the number of people in the family, family arrangements, and the employment status of the mother; functional categories included the nature of family interactions and relationships, familial problems, parental monitoring of

children, and consistency of discipline. These researchers concluded that there is a slight positive correlation between involvement in robbery and both structural and functional variables. These researchers also suggested that residing in a positive atmosphere is likely to have positive effects on the child which, in turn, reduces the likelihood of juvenile delinquent behavior (Geismar & Wood, 1986). Other researchers found that many family characteristics and family environments influence teenagers involvement in robbery, for example, the number of people in a family, inconsistent parenting, familial problems, child neglect, and the children's attachment to parents (Derzon & Lipsey, 2000).

Thornberry (1987) suggests that children's attachment to their parents influences youths mostly when they are younger primarily because children, as opposed to teenagers, are monitored more closely. According to social reaction theory, society is primarily responsible for juveniles exhibiting delinquent behaviors. Rules are set up by the members of a society, and individuals establish what is considered the norm. Violators of the norm are labeled deviant or abnormal. The ways in which society chooses to deal with violators of the norms influence whether or not juveniles exposed to the juvenile justice system will be more prone to being chronic offenders in adulthood (Mahoney, 1974).

Various hypothetical explanations have been advanced on the influence of family factors on commission of robbery for example by Geismar and Wood (1986), Tarolla, Wagner, Rabinowitz, & Tubman (2002), Thornberry (1987)

The present study, in regard to this factor therefore sets out to investigate if there is a relationship between family criminological history and robbery and more specifically if family criminological history influences individuals to commit crime.

## **2.7 Environmental Factors and Robbery**

The role of the physical and social environment is probably one of the least understood aspects in robbery activities. The present evidence suggests that robbery occurs more in certain neighborhoods than others. It has also been noted that robbers learn their criminal activities from other persons that they interact with.

### **2.7.1 Physical Environmental Factors and Robbery**

Neighborhoods are rendered robbery prone simply because they contain attractive commercial or residential targets or criminal opportunities which attract both resident and non-resident offenders. Offenders often operate in a rational fashion; they prefer to commit crimes that require the least effort, provide the highest benefits, and pose the lowest risks. Researchers have applied this rational offender perspective to a range of crimes (Morris, 2000). This view suggests that robberies are more likely to occur when potential offenders come into contact with a suitable crime target where the chances of detection by others are thought to be low or the criminal, if detected, will be able to exit without being identified or apprehended. In short, the robbery and other criminal location lack a natural guardian.

Physical environmental features can influence the chances of a robbery occurring. They affect potential offenders' perceptions about a possible robbery site, their evaluation of the circumstances surrounding a potential crime site, and the availability and visibility of one or more natural guardians at, or near a site. Offenders may decide whether or not to commit a robbery in a location after they determine the following: How easy will it be to enter the area? How visible, attractive, or vulnerable do the target appear? What are the chances of being seen? If seen, will the people in the area do something about it? Is there a quick, direct route for leaving the location after the robbery is committed?

These questions assume a rational offender perspective. The relevance of this perspective to an understanding of robbery depends on a range of factors, including the type of robbery and the familiarity between offender and victim or target. The offender-based perspective relates to residents or users in a setting when it suggests potential offenders consider a setting's natural guardians. Controlling physical deterioration to reduce offenders' perceptions that areas are vulnerable to robbery and that residents are so fearful they would do nothing to stop a robbery. Physical improvements may reduce the signals of vulnerability and increase commitment to joint protective activities. Physical deterioration, in all probability, not only influences

cognition and behavior of potential offenders but also shapes how residents behave and what they think about other residents.

This focus on physical signs of disorder (Miers, 2001) is distinct from the preceding focus on territorial features. First, there is a difference in scale. Reduction of signs of disorder addresses larger physical problems than does a territorial focus. Second, the level of physical deterioration is usually too extensive for management by resident-based groups. Residents are not responsible for preventing large numbers of vacant houses or stores in a locale or for removing graffiti from the walls of a large school. One researcher has noted specifically that residents presume that deterioration emerges as a failure, in part, of public agencies (Iadicola, 1998).

Third, there is a difference in emphasis. The territorial approach concentrates on cues from resident involvement, maintenance, and protection; the signs of disorder situation represent large-scale lapses in the local order. Signs of disorder reduction, however, may complement improvement strategies based on resident-generated territorial marking and signage. Reductions in larger physical problems may encourage such markers and signage.

There is a general consensus that if the environment is planned, designed and managed appropriately, certain types of robberies can be reduced. Environmental design has formed an integral part of many crime prevention initiatives in countries such as the UK, USA, Canada, The Netherlands and Australia. Certain environments can impart a feeling of safety, while others can induce fear, even in areas where levels of crime are not high. In this regard, planning and design measures can be utilised very successfully to enhance feelings of safety in areas where people feel vulnerable (Michael, et. al 1994).

In order to understand the role of the environment in robbery prevention, it is necessary to be aware of the elements of a criminal event. At the most basic level, the following are required in order for a criminal event to occur: a ready, willing and able offender; a vulnerable, attractive or provocative target/victim, and a favourable environment. The person committing the robbery is referred to as the offender. In a



case where property is the target of an offence, this would be described as a hard target. If a person is the target, then she/he is the victim. The physical and social environment can either inhibit or enhance the opportunities for crime. A particular design feature or condition of the physical environment has the ability to hinder or enhance opportunities for crime to occur. Although vegetation has been positively linked to fear of crime and crime in a number of settings, recent findings in urban residential areas have hinted at a possible negative relationship: residents living in “greener” surroundings report lower levels of fear, fewer signs of disorder and less aggressive and violent behaviour. This study used police crime reports to examine the relationship between vegetation and crime in an inner-city neighbourhood.

Fear of robbery is higher where vegetation blocks views (Kruger, 2001). Dense vegetation is regularly used by criminals to conceal their activities (Michael & Hull, 1994). In the second, burglars themselves lent support to this notion. In this study, automobile burglars described how they used dense vegetation in a variety of ways, including to conceal their selection of a target and their escape from the scene, to shield their examination of stolen goods, and finally, in the disposal of unwanted goods (Michael, Hull, &Zahm, 1994). The clear theme in all these studies is that dense vegetation provides potential cover for criminal activities, possibly increasing the likelihood of robbery and certainly increasing the fear of crime. Large shrubs, underbrush, and dense woods all substantially diminish visibility and therefore are capable of supporting criminal activity.

### **2.7.2 Social Environmental Factors and Robbery**

The role of the social environment is probably one of the least understood aspects of crime causation. One important reason for that is the lack of well-developed theoretical models of how social environments influence individual acts of crime and the development of crime propensity. Another important reason is the lack of well-developed methodologies to study and measure the influence of social environments on individual acts of crime and the development of crime propensity (Wikstrom, 2007a).

In an effort to understand and examine the social causes of violence, the American Sociological Association (ASA) formed a study group in the 1990s. Among the conclusions drawn were that “violence is a social behaviour that reflects long and short term socialization effects. It occurs in the context of at least two people, and it is more probable under certain social situations and conditions than others”. Another finding of the ASA study group involved how individuals define and perceive violence. They found that individual and group perceptions of violence and its seriousness are mediated by social change and by cultural and social norms about what constitutes acceptable and un acceptable behaviour. Different individuals and cultures therefore define violence differently (Ferguson, 2009).

Socio-cultural factors influence the strategies of behaviour and personal beliefs, values, needs, and desires a person acquires over his or her life. These have been the focus of many well known theories of crime that emphasized such things as social learning, rational choice, self-control, and social strain. They include the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other cultural information we learn through interactions with other people and groups—as well as from cultural artefacts such as books and movies. (Robert, 1992)

The Chicago School clearly stressed humans as social beings and their behaviour as a product of their social environment. Thus, social environment provides values and definitions that govern behaviour. Urbanization and industrialization break down older and more cohesive patterns of values, thus creating communities with competing norms and value systems. The breakdown of urban life causes basic institutions such as the family, friendships and other social groups to become so impersonal, almost anonymous. (DeMelo, 1999).

The present study therefore sought to investigate the influence of social environment among other factors that predispose people to commit robbery. This is because every social environment has norms, values and customs which determine people’s behaviour.

### **2.7.2.1 Prison Factors and Robbery**

Prisonization implies the taking on in greater or less degree of the folkways, customs and general culture of the prison. Prisonization is similar to assimilation which describes a slow, gradual, more or less unconscious process during which a person learns enough of the culture of a social unit into which he is placed to make him characteristic of it (DeMelo, 1999).

Granted, every person who is imprisoned undergoes prisonization to some extent. The first and most obvious integrative step concerns his status. He becomes an anonymous figure in a subordinate group. A number replaces his name. He wears the clothes of the other members of the subordinate group. He develops new habits of eating, dressing; working, sleeping, the adoption of local language and the eventual desire for a good job are aspects of prisonization which are operative to all inmates (Belknap, 2009)

The aspects of prisonization which are more applicable to this research are the influences which breed or deepen criminality and make the inmate characteristic of the criminalistic ideology in the prison community. Whether or not complete prisonization takes place depends first on the prisoner, that is, his/her susceptibility to a culture which depends on the type of relationship he/she had before imprisonment i.e., his/her personality.

A second determinant affecting complete prisonization refers to the kind and extent of relationships which an inmate has with persons outside the prison walls. A third determinant refers to whether or not a man becomes affiliated in prison primary or semi-primary groups. A fourth determinant depends simply on a chance, that is a chance of placement in work gang, cell house, and with a cellmate. Other determinants depend on age, criminality, nationality, race, with every determinant being more or less inter-related. The speed with which prisonization occurs does not necessarily proceed in an orderly or measured fashion but depends on the personality of the prisoner involved, his age, crime, home neighbourhood, intelligence and the

situation of the prison. This varying speed at which this process occurs distinguishes it from assimilation, which is always a slow and gradual process (Barak, 2003).

### **2.7.2.2 Peer pressure and Robbery**

A high proportion of adult criminals have a background of early delinquency. Theft is the most common offense by children; However, more serious property crimes are most frequently committed in later youth. The causes of such behaviour, like those of crime in general, are found in a complex of psychological, social, and economic factors. Clinical studies have uncovered emotional maladjustments, usually arising from disorganized family situations, in many delinquents. The gang, a source of much delinquency, has been a common path for adolescents, particularly in the inner cities. For many boys whose contact with adult men was relatively limited, the most readily available source of male approval was peers; and, in some areas, the few successful men who might serve as adult male role models might be known to fund their lifestyle through crime. Both factors could increase the likelihood of the boys being recruited into crime in turn (Larzelere, 2000).

It has been known for a long time that young people who associate with delinquent peers are more likely to be involved in robbery (Kierkus, 2002). However, when the importance of family factors first came to be appreciated, some criminologists argued that delinquent peer influence exerted little or no influence on participation in crime. The strong association between having delinquent peers and being involved in crime was dismissed as a case of 'birds of a feather flocking together'. However, more recent research suggests that family factors and delinquent peer influence interact in their effects on delinquency. Most studies examining the joint effect of family factors and delinquent peer influence find that family factors appear to exert little or no influence on the risk of involvement in crime in the presence of controls for delinquent peer influence. It would appear, however, that juveniles are more likely to form strong attachments with delinquent peers when parental controls or parental attachments are weak. This suggests that parental factors may be a cause of involvement in crime, association with delinquent peers being a proximate cause.

It is also thought that juveniles who mix with delinquent peers are more at risk of involvement in crime simply because, delinquents communicate deviant attitudes and values. Recent research indicates that contact with offenders is important for another reason. The successful commission of many kinds of crime including robbery requires a certain measure of knowledge and skill. Delinquents are a valuable source of information about various techniques and opportunities for committing and/or profiting from robbery. Gang membership, in particular, often provides a valuable source of information about how to reduce the risk and increase income associated with crime (Kierkus, 2002).

Criminal behavior may be affected by peer effects that occur in the family, in school, on the street corner, in a gang, in the neighborhood, or in prison. Such peer effects may arise from any number of underlying mechanisms related to the social interactions between two individuals or a group of individuals. Similarly, exposure to peers with a greater intensity of criminal experience can reduce or reverse this stigma, thereby increasing the propensity of the individual to participate in criminal activity (Geismar, 1986).

Social learning may occur because individuals use the experiences of their peers to update their beliefs concerning the expected benefits or punishments of committing particular crimes, making individuals more or less likely to commit these crimes. Alternatively, social learning may take the form of the acquisition of crime-specific skills and knowledge, such as how to steal a car, how to disconnect a burglary alarm, or how to avoid being caught by the police. In this case, interactions with individuals who have experience committing a particular type of crime may allow an individual to acquire this knowledge more easily, thereby leading to increased activity in the corresponding crime category. Finally, access to individuals with experience in a given criminal activity might assist in the formation or expansion of an individual's criminal network. Networking of this sort is especially important in more complicated criminal activities such as robberies (Derzon, 2000).

In many instances, these peer effects have a reinforcing nature, whereby exposure to peers with a history of committing a particular crime increases the probability that an

individual who has already committed the same type of crime recidivates that crime. This form of a reinforcing peer effect is positive and significant for the cases of burglary, felony drug offenses, felony weapon offenses, and felony sex offenses in our main specification, and it is positive and significant for auto theft, grand larceny, petty larceny, misdemeanor drug offenses, and robbery in alternative specifications that refine the peer measure in various ways. There is strong evidence that older individuals exert stronger peer effects than younger individuals, in part because of their more extensive criminal experience, and they exert these peer effects more intensely on younger individuals (Barak, 2003).

Various hypothetical explanations have been advanced on the influence of peer pressure on commission of robbery for example by Barak 2003, Derzon 2000, Geismar 1986, Kierkus, 2002.

The present study, in regard to this factor therefore sets out to investigate if there is a relationship between peer pressure and robbery and more specifically if peer pressure influences individuals to commit crime.

## **2.8 Technological Advances and Robbery**

Technology, is the application of science to human endeavors and it involves use of tools, knowledge, and ideas to make the world better and tasks and activities more manageable, efficient, enjoyable, and entertaining. "Technology changes everything, crime included" (Clarke, 2004). It breeds new and enhances old forms of criminal behavior. With every technological advance, the potential emerges for criminal behavior to change. Technological advances have impacted criminal behavior in three ways: mass communication technology has transformed media and popular culture into a powerful influence on offender behavior. Included here is the computer technology that has created new avenues and different opportunities for criminal behavior. It further includes the investigative technology that has altered methods offenders use and the types of crimes they engage in.

Today, more than ever before, the influence of technology play a powerful role for most people in the development of cognitive and behavioral scripts. With respect to

criminal behavior, technology, media, and popular culture shape offender choices in unique ways—from the decision to commit a crime, the type of crime, and the manner in which it is committed. It also provides a ready-made script for rationalization techniques to neutralize offense behavior. It is important to recognize the inter-relationship between technology, media, and popular culture in thinking about the role of technology in criminal behavior.

Computer technology has enhanced mass communication beyond anything imaginable. Offenders are inspired by hi-tech images of crime and violence that blur the line between fantasy and reality, enjoy hearing their crimes disseminated through the news media immediately and globally, learn the latest forensic techniques on the Internet to avoid detection, and become better at what they do to stay ahead of law enforcement and investigative technology. Technology has dramatically influenced the study of crime, criminal behavior, and criminal justice.

Computer technology has also had a major influence on criminal behavior. Computer technology, particularly the internet, has created a virtual space to commit a relatively new type of crime called *cyberspace crime*. This virtual space is referred to as “the place between places” known as *cyberspace* (Britz, 2004). Cyberspace has become an underworld marketplace for criminal contraband such as drugs, weapons, child pornography and a hi-tech means of committing crimes ranging from low-level predatory offenses to highly sophisticated security breaches and information theft. Technology has had an unprecedented impact on globalization that has created vast opportunities for economic crime, organized crime, and terrorism.

Clarke (2004) argues that, with the new technology, criminologists “must no longer imagine themselves engaged in ‘pure’ science and must embrace the role of ‘applied’ scientists” by focusing less on theory and more on how to prevent and control crime. Technology-related crime is often committed by individuals from backgrounds that do not fall neatly into the traditional theories of crime that emphasize the role of socio-economic status and deprivation as primary crime correlates.

The influence of technology on crime and criminal behavior may now be moving even further toward application, with new "crime science" programs being developed that focus on understanding crime (rather than criminals), rational choice (rather than criminal dispositions), how (rather than why) crime is committed, specific crime and disorder problems (rather than general crime and delinquency), crime as normal (rather than pathological), and so on. With the unprecedented exposure to technology, it is increasingly important to examine the unique role that technology-related factors play in motivating and shaping robbery.

Once the resolution has been made to commit a robbery, a number of important decisions follow, such as how much money is "required" and what kind of target would have to be attacked in order to realize the financial expectations. Crucial factors at this juncture would be the offender's opinions about the kind of technology (for instance the weaponry) is required for the offense—whether a real, replica or "simulated" firearm would be most appropriate—and his preparedness to fire a gun should his threats need to be reinforced at any stage during the robbery. Depending on the target, his ability to organize others to cooperate in such a risky venture may also be significant.

These choices would be influenced, in turn, by the offender's access to relevant technology like the firearms, previous experience of armed robbery and his psychological make-up. Whether relatively straightforward or organized and sophisticated, these schemes and the decisions underlying them may provide important indicators of potential preventive techniques (e.g., Feeney, 1986; Harding and Blake, 1989; Kapardis, 1988). Some researchers have typified the robber as a carefully calculating rational actor. In Western Australia, for instance, Harding and Blake (1989) interviewed violent offenders, including a number of armed robbers, whom they portrayed as careful decision makers. They found that robbers who had used technology related items e.g. firearms put some effort into planning their robbery and were likely to have investigated in advance the security arrangements of their chosen target. These offenders also claimed to have given some thought to the possibility of being caught and the likely sentence if convicted. Indeed, these



researchers portrayed the gun robber as a "top-of-the-range" criminal. Seemingly, every technological or strategic advance made in the preventive arsenal is matched by sophistication (in a small number of cases) or sheer determination (in a much larger number of cases) on the parts of robbers.

Although knives are the most frequently used weapon in armed robberies, where commercial establishments, particularly financial institutions and licensed premises are targeted, robbers go for higher technology related weaponry like the firearms (Borzycki 2006). This is probably because of the greater likelihood of victim compliance. It also appears that the type of firearm used, at least in banks, has changed over time (Borzycki 2003; Matthews 2002). Pistols were used more often than long-arms in Australian bank robberies in the early to mid-1980s, but the reverse held true for the late 1980s. However, between 1998 and 2002 pistols were once more used in the majority of robberies involving firearms (Borzycki 2003), similar to trends observed for other violent crimes, like homicide (Mouzos & Rushforth, 2003).

Other ways that technology affects commission of crime especially robbery is through the media. The influence of films, television, music videos, song lyrics, and computer games on criminal behavior is a popular topic and political issue raised by media watchdogs. A long list of research findings, particularly with respect to television, shows that viewing violent media has an imitative influence on aggressive behavior and contributes to the development of the *mean world syndrome*—a view of the world as more hostile and dangerous than it actually is (Jhally, Kilbourne, & Gerbner, 1994).

## **2.9 Theoretical Framework**

The study sought sociological theories that purport to explain crime and criminality, namely: strain, differential association and rational choice theories of crime.

### **2.9.1 Strain Theories and Robbery**

The strain theory was formulated by the American sociologist Robert Merton, (1993). According to him strain is not created by a sudden social change, but rather by a

social structure that holds out the same goals to all its members without giving them equal means to achieve them, more so among the poorer segments of society. However, in middle and upper class communities, strain is minimal, since education and prestigious occupations are readily obtainable. In lower class areas, strain occurs because legitimate avenues for success are all closed. It is this lack of integration between what the culture calls for and what the structure permits that causes deviant behavior. The theory views crime to be as a result of the frustration and anger people experience over their inability to achieve legitimate social and financial success. Deviance is a symptom of the social structure.

Strain theory does not focus directly on crime, but rather upon various acts of deviance, which may be understood to lead to criminal behavior. Merton notes that there are certain goals which are strongly emphasized by society. The society emphasizes certain means to reach those goals such as education, employment, hard work; however, not everyone has the equal access to the legitimate means to attain those goals. Thus setting stage for strain.

According to Merton there are five modes of adapting to strain caused by the restricted access to socially approved goals and means. Not all the people who are denied access to society's goals became deviant. Rather the response, or modes of adaptation, depends on the individual's attitudes toward cultural goals and the institutional means to attain them.

Conformity is the most common mode of adaptation. Individuals who conform accept both the goals as well as the prescribed means for achieving the goal. Conformists accept, though not always achieve the goals of society and the means approved for achieving them. In a balanced or stable society this is the most common mode of social adaptation.

The innovators on the other hand accept societal goals but are incapable or rejects legitimate means to achieve those goals, they thus innovate (design) their own means to get ahead. The means to get ahead may be through robbery, embezzlement or other such criminal acts. Of the five social adaptations, innovation is most closely

associated with criminal behavior. This condition accounts for the high rate of crime in poverty areas, where access to legitimate means is severely limited. However, innovative adaptations can occur in any social class when members perceive a lack of appropriate means to gain social success. For example, stock frauds and tax evasion schemes are carried out by the rich Siegel, (1989).

The ritualists, on the other hand, abandon the goals they once believed to be within their reach, thus dedicate themselves to their current lifestyle. They play by the rules and have a daily, safe routine. The maintenance of strict set of manners and customs that serve no purpose is an example of ritualism. Such practices often exist in religious services, clubs, colleges and other organizations.

On the other hand, retreatists, refer to those who give up not only the goals but also the means. They often retreat into the world of alcoholism and drug addiction. These individuals escape into a nonproductive, non-striving lifestyle. Included in this category are the psychotics, psychoneurotic, pariahs, outcasts, drunkards and drug addicts.

The final adaptation model is that of rebels who emerge when both the socially accepted goals (for example, money and social status) and the legitimate means (for example, hard work) are rejected and the individuals create their own goals and their own means, through protest or revolutionary activity. This adaptation is typical of revolutionary, who wish to promote radical change in the existing social structure and who call for alternative lifestyles, goals and beliefs Siegel, (1989).

To some extent strain theory explains robbery, since it purports that whenever individuals accept the cultural goals but have no legitimate means to achieve them they tend to innovate their own means. When the goal for instance is money or property, individuals who have no employment, education and those who are lazy may rob to acquire these items.

### **2.9.2 Differential Association Theory and Robbery**

The theory was formulated by Edwin Sutherland, a U.S criminologist in 1939 in his text on “Principles of Criminology”. In his research on white collar crime, professional theft and intelligence Edwin disputed the notion that crime was a function of the inadequacy of people in the lower classes.

According to Sutherland (1939) criminality neither stemmed from individual traits nor socio-economic position, instead it was a function of a learning process which could affect any individual in any culture. The theory has various principles. The first principle of differential association is that criminal behaviour is learned. This means that criminal behaviour is not inherent and that a person who is not trained in crime does not invent criminal behaviour. By suggesting that criminal behaviour is learned, Sutherland implied that it can be classified in the same manner as any other learned behaviour such writing, painting or reading.

The second principle indicates that criminal behaviour is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication. Sutherland believed that illegal behaviour is learned actively and an individual does not become a law violator simply by living in a criminological environment. People actively participate in the process with other individuals who serve as teachers and guides to crime.

The third principle of differential association theory is that learning criminal behaviour occurs within intimate personal groups. People’s contacts with their most intimate social companions such as family, friends and peers have the greatest influence on their learning of deviant behaviour including crime as the relationship with these individuals control their interpretation of everyday events.

Learning criminal behaviour includes: learning the techniques of committing crime, which are sometimes complicated; learning the specific direction of motives, drives and attitudes. Since criminal behaviour is similar to other learned behaviour, it follows that the actual techniques of criminality must be acquired. For example, young robbers learn from their experienced associates the proper way to rob a business premise or even a neighbourhood.

The specific direction of motives and drives is learned from perceptions of various aspects of the legal as being favourable or unfavourable. Since the reaction to social rules and laws is not uniform across the society, people constantly come into contact with others who maintain different views on the utility of obeying the legal code. The attitude towards criminal behaviour of significant others in an individual's life influence the attitudes that the individual develops Siegel, (1989).

Another principle of differential association theory is that a person becomes a criminal when he/she perceives more favourable than unfavourable consequences to violating the law. A definition favourable towards criminality occurs for example, when friends talk about robbing a shop without being apprehended. A definition unfavourable towards crime occurs when friends or parents demonstrate their disapproval of crime. Commenting on Sutherland's theory of differential association, Mushanga (1999) admits that a person becomes a criminal e.g. a robber because of an excess of definitions favourable towards violation of law e.g. when friends talk about committing robbery over definitions unfavourable to violation of law e.g. when police are called to arrest robbers.

To some extent, differential association theory explains robbery, since robbery like any other criminal behaviour is learned from interaction with others. Robbers share their experiences with intimate friends; especially their fellow inmates in prison. This influences them to become robbers once they are released.

### **2.9.3 Rational Choice Theory and Robbery**

Also referred to as the rational action theory, the theory was originally inspired or rather coined by Cesare Beccaria in the 1700s (Maahs and Holmes, 2006). The rational choice theory adopts a utilitarian belief that man is a reasoning actor who weighs means and ends, costs and benefits, and makes a rational choice. Rational choice theory has sprung from older and more experimental collections of hypotheses surrounding what have been essentially, the empirical findings from many scientific investigations into the workings of human nature. Rational choice theory insists that crime is calculated and deliberate. All criminals are rational actors who practice

conscious decision making, that simultaneously work towards gaining the maximum benefits of their present situation.

Crime therefore can be influenced by opportunity which is related to cost benefits, socio-economic status, risk of detection, situational contexts, type of offence and access to external benefits. In addition, opportunities are dependent on the individual's current surroundings and consequential factors. This theory better explains instrumental crimes rather than expressive crimes. Instrumental crimes involve planning and weighing the risks with a rational mind. An example of an instrumental crime can include: robbery, tax evasion, traffic violations, drinking and driving, corporate crime, larceny and sexual assault. On the other hand, expressive crime includes crimes involving emotion and lack of rational thinking without being concerned of future consequences. Expressive crimes can include: non pre-mediated murder such as manslaughter, and assault. As a result, punishment is only effective in deterring instrumental crime rather than expressive crime since the later does not involve planning.

According to Samaha (2005), the gist of rational choice theory is that a man can be presented as an actor who reasons and carefully makes choices which are largely rational by carrying out a comparison of benefits and costs as well as ends and means. Towards this end, many criminologists as well as behaviourists believe that criminals, including robbers will carefully plan and execute their criminal acts in a way that minimizes the probability of their being apprehended. It is important to note that over time, studies have concerned themselves with the human nature and it is as a result of these investigations as well as hypothetical collections in regard to crime and its nature that the rational choice theory has been founded.

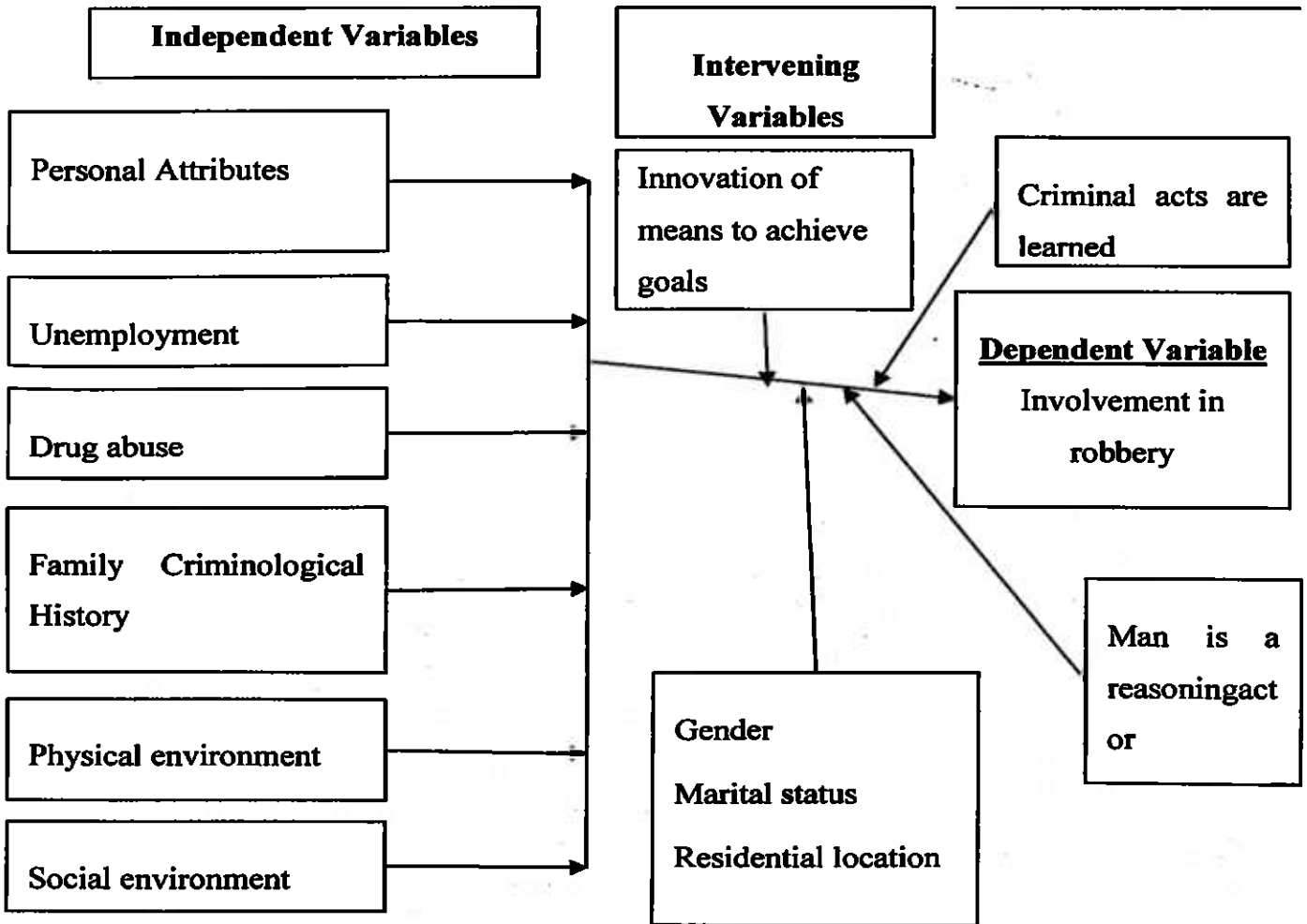
Maahs and Holmes (2006) noted that the relevance of the rational choice theory is based on the logical consistency exhibited by the theory as well its wide scope when it comes to explaining crime causation. Ideally, rational choice theory can be used to explain almost any kind of crime. If we take robbery into consideration, criminals may be motivated to engage in the same for a number of reasons including, but not in any way limited to, economic gain which may be realized when the offender sells the

stolen commodities. The offender could also steal for personal gain when the property stolen is used for personal use. Further, most offenders exhibit rational choice in their planning of criminal acts. For instance, most robbers and thieves go to the scene of crime with some form of clothing designed to conceal their real identities and a means to facilitate the theft process. This may be through carrying along a torch, forged keys (to facilitate entrance to locked buildings) as well as an assortment of weaponry to thwart any attempt to apprehend them.

## **2.10 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 2.1 shows that peoples involvement in robbery is as a result of a number of contributory factors. The intention to commit robbery is influenced by several factors that constitute the independent variables (Kothari, 2004). These factors are personal attributes, unemployment, family criminological history, and drug abuse, physical and social environment. The dependent variable in this study is the act of robbery whereas the independent variables refer to the factors that induce individuals to commit robbery. The intervening variables, which according to Kothari (2004) are independent variables that are not related to the purpose of the study but can have an effect on the dependent variable, included gender, marital status, residential location of the offender and the learning of criminal acts, man as a reasoning actor, innovation of means to achieve goals. The intervening variables were controlled through randomization to ensure that they did not influence the dependent variable.

**Figure 2.1 Conceptual frameworks on factors influencing robbery.**





## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the procedures that were followed in the study. It includes site description, research design, unit of analysis and observation, target population, sampling procedure, study sample, sources of data, data collection methods, research instruments and data analysis techniques that was used in the study.

### **3.2 Site Description**

The study is based on Kamiti and Langata prisons. Kamiti Prison which was previously in Nairobi is currently located in Kiambu County whereas Langata Prison is located in Nairobi County. Kamiti Prison stands on a 1,200-acre land. It was built for 1,300 inmates, but currently (2012) houses approximately 3,500 inmates and 700 warders. Of these 3,500 inmates 2,511 of them are serving sentences of 3 years and above, 465 are on death row and 1,360 are serving life sentences. Originally Langata prison was built for 240 inmates but now (2012) has approximately 700 inmates; 194 of them serving sentences of 3 years and above, 19 on death row and 41 on life imprisonment.

The proportion of convicted robbers at Kamiti Maximum Prison rose from 1,200 (35 per cent) to 1,528 (43 per cent) during the years 2011 and 2012 respectively translating to almost half of the total population of the facility which was 3,500 inmates. Similarly, the number of convicted robbers in Langata women prison rose from 30 (4 per cent) to 43 (7 per cent) during the same period (GoK Prison Report, 2012). All the robbers were either serving a death sentence, a life sentence or a long term sentence.

In both facilities the inmates are taken through rehabilitation programs such as vocational skills training, formal education, spiritual and pastoral counselling to ensure that once they are released they will be able to engage in meaningful economic

activities. However there is high congestion of inmates in the two facilities due to the increase in number of persons committing crime.

### **3.3 Research Design**

According to Mugenda (2008), research design refers to overall conception of the study. It refers to the process that the researcher will follow from inception to completion of the study and allows him/her to structure the collection, analysis and interpretation of data.

The present study used a descriptive research design. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques were used. Both methods of research were preferred because the researcher was able to collect in-depth data to answer questions concerning the status of the subject of study. The quantitative approach used questionnaires that enabled the researcher to collect data for descriptive statistics. Qualitative research determines and reports the way things are and also helps a researcher to describe a phenomenon in terms of attitude, values and characteristics (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The design was deemed suitable since it is useful in describing the state of affairs as they exist without manipulation of variables (Kothari, 2004). According to Orodho (2003), descriptive research design involves collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals.

### **3.4 Sources of data**

The study sought to obtain primary data from prison inmates and key informants. The data collected was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. This was because the two methods left possibility of change and of asking complimentary questions. Qualitative aspects are more dynamic, interactive and generates a more detailed data that contributes to in-depth understanding of the context in which the phenomenon under study takes place. On the other hand, the quantitative approach makes it possible for the generation of the salient background characteristics of the study population. The approach therefore, was triangulated in nature comprising of questionnaires and interview guide.

Secondary data was collected through library research, review of police crime records, prison inmates' records, review of newspapers, journals, periodicals and government publications. Secondary data is important because it reveals the nature and magnitude of the problem at hand and identifies the problem areas to be tackled.

### **3.5 Target Population**

According to Kothari (2004), a target population is a well defined set of people, services, elements, events, group of things or households that are being investigated. Mugenda, (2003), explains that the target population should have some observable characteristics, to which the researcher intends to generalize the results of the study. This definition ensures that population of interest has common characteristics. The general population of study consisted of the prison inmates at Kamiti and Langata Prisons, as well as prison wardens, prison administrators, court clerks and police officers. The total population of inmates in Kamiti Prison is 3500 while in Langata Women Prison there are 700 inmates (GoK, 2012). The specific target population for this study were 1200 convicted robbers in Kamiti Prison and 30 convicted robbers in Langata Prison.

### **3.6 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure**

Sampling is a process used by a researcher to identify people, places or things to study (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). In this study, stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques was employed to identify respondents. The study focused on the prison inmates convicted of robbery. According to current statistics (GoK, 2012), there are 1200 inmates convicted of robbery in Kamiti Prison and 30 in Langata Women Prison. Kotler et al. (2001) argues that if well chosen, samples of about 10-30 per cent of a population can often give reliable findings. Other literatures have shown that sample size selection to a great extent is judgmentally decided. In addition Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) states that in stratified sampling where population within each strata is known, a sample of 10-30 per cent is adequate representation for data collection. Therefore, from the above population of 1200 inmates from Kamiti Prison and 30 inmates from Langata women prison, a sample of 10 per cent was taken

using stratified random sampling technique which gave each item in the population an equal chance of being selected. Therefore the study sample size was 120 inmates from Kamiti Prison and 3 inmates from Langata Prison constituting a sample size of 123 respondents. Furthermore, 10 key informants were interviewed based on their expertise and experience with the robbers. These key informants comprised of prison wardens, officers in charge of prisons, court clerks and police officers.

### **3.7 Data Collection Methods and Research Instruments**

According to Koul (1984), methods of data collection are the ways to obtain relevant qualitative and/or quantitative data or information for a particular study from the relevant sources. This study used questionnaires and key informant interviews as methods of collecting data. A questionnaire and a key informant interview guide were the instruments that were used to collect the data. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the prison inmates who were the main respondents. The researcher also used key informant interview guide to collect data from the key informants. The researcher introduced himself first in order to create rapport.

#### **3.7.1 Questionnaires**

The questionnaires comprised of questions which sought to give answers that were related to the objectives of this study. Each questionnaire consisted of both closed ended questions to enhance uniformity and open ended questions to ensure maximum data collection and generation of qualitative and quantitative data. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, background information section which contained questions on personal attributes and social economic status e.g unemployment, drug abuse, family criminological history, physical environment and social environment. Semi-structured questionnaires were also used to collect primary data from prison inmates. In order to ensure uniformity in responses and to encourage participation, the questionnaires were kept short and structured so as to cover multiple-choice selections in a likert scale.

### **3.7.2 Key Informant Interview Guide**

Interviews are used to collect primary data for qualitative research since they capture the respondent's actions, attitudes, intentions and motivations in a flexible manner, (Saunders, 2000). A major advantage of using interviews for research is that interviews provide both verbal and non-verbal communication to the researcher, (Saunders, 2000). The interview guide was used to gain information from key informants who included prison wardens, officers in charge of prison, court clerks, police officers and other policy and institutional stakeholders.

### **3.7.3 Pilot Testing**

A pilot test is a preliminary study conducted before the final study to ensure that research instruments are working properly. A pilot study was done to assess the capability of the research instruments to collect required data for the research. Besides, it was essential to establish whether all the questions in the questionnaire and interview guide could be fully understood by the targeted respondents and hence the necessary rectifications were done, prior to the actual research.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

The research yielded both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data collected consisted of words and observations which were summarized to make it more intelligible. It was then categorized into variables by summarizing patterns in the responses and therefore reducing the huge mould of data into small meaningful quantities, which enabled the researcher to identify the existing relationship and variations between dependent and independent variables of the study.

The quantitative data generated was subjected to the descriptive statistics feature in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The data was entered into computer spreadsheet and then transferred to SPSS for formal summary and analysis to generate mean and standard deviation, which were presented using tables, frequencies and percentages. On multiple response questions, the study used Likert scale in analyzing

the data whereby a scale of 5 points was used in computing. They were then presented in tables as appropriate with explanations being given in prose.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher sought permission from the relevant authorities before commencing the study. On arrival at the prison facilities the researcher made formal introduction supported by a letter from the university and another one from the Commissioner General of Prisons approving the study. Respondents were assured that the study was meant for academic purposes only, and that their responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality. The researcher was polite to the respondents and only focused on the objectives of the study. The researcher also avoided asking irrelevant questions and at the end of each interview thanked each respondent for his/her participation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents data on factors that are likely to influence individuals to commit robbery: a case study of Kamiti and Langata Prisons. The study was based on a sample size of 123 respondents. However, 88 respondents comprising of 85 males from Kamiti and 3 females from Langata prison were interviewed, making a response rate of 71 per cent. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) stated that a response rate of 50 per cent and above is a good for statistical analysis and reporting. Furthermore, 10 key informants were interviewed based on their expertise and experience with the respondents. These key informants comprised of prison wardens, officers in charge of prisons, court clerks and police officers.

The quantitative data generated was subjected to descriptive statistical features in the Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS) to generate mean, percentages and frequencies, which was presented using tables, and pie charts. The study made use of frequencies on single response questions. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) the purpose of descriptive statistics is to enable the researcher to meaningfully describe a distribution of scores or measurements using a few indices or statistics.

On multiple response questions, the study used Likert scale in collecting and analyzing data whereby a scale of 5 points was used in computing the mean and frequencies. These were then presented in tables as appropriate with explanations being given in prose.

### **4.2 Socio-demographic Attributes of Robbers**

The first objective of the study was to establish the personal attributes and social economic status of robbery convicts at Kamiti and Langata prisons.

### 4.2.1 Age distribution of respondents

The study sought to establish the age distribution of the respondents as shown in Figure 4.1 below.

**Figure 4.2** Age distribution of respondents



According to the findings on Figure 4.2 above, majority of respondents 48 (53.4 per cent) were aged 21-30 years, 26 (29.5 per cent) 31-40 years while 10 (11.6 per cent) were 41-50 years. This depicts that majority of the prison inmates convicted of robbery were youthful. It can also be deduced that the convicted robbers had great potential at the time of committing the crime.

This is in line with research findings by John Laub et al at the Hindelang Research Centre in Albany, Newyork, which indicated that; the estimated rates of offending for youths aged 18-25 years is about three times greater than the estimated rates of adults of 30 years and over. In addition he also found out that, for some specific crimes, such as robbery and personal larceny, the youthful offending rate is perceived to be almost six times the adult rate Siegel, (1989).



#### 4.2.2 Location of the robbery

The study also sought to establish the place where robbery is committed. Figure 4.3 shows the place where robbers commit their acts of robbery in terms of rural, urban and peri-urban areas.

**Figure 4.3 Location of robbery incidences**

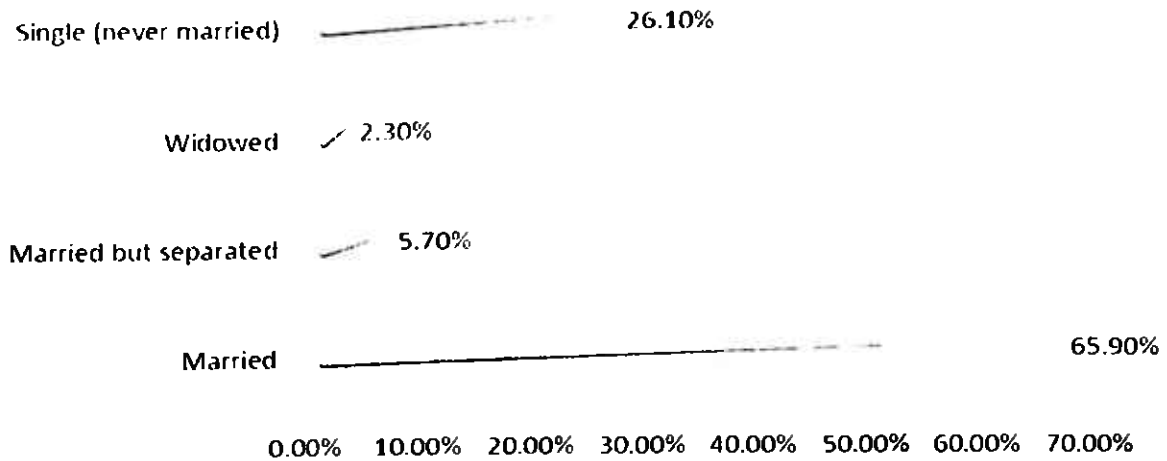


Figure 4.3 above shows that majority of the respondents 59 (67 per cent) committed robbery in urban areas, 19 (22 per cent) in peri-urban areas while 10 (11 per cent) committed robbery in rural areas. This illustrates that majority of the convicted robbers committed the crime in urban areas. This could be because they anticipated that their victims would have more wealth as compared to people in the rural areas. In the urban areas the weapons that they used in robbery were readily available and they bought them at fair prices. In addition, the robbers indicated that in the cities, they could not be easily identified as opposed to rural areas where people know their neighbours.

#### 4.2.3 Marital Status

The study also sought to establish the marital status of the respondents. The findings are as shown in Figure 4.4 below.

**Figure 4.4 Maritalstatus of the respondents**



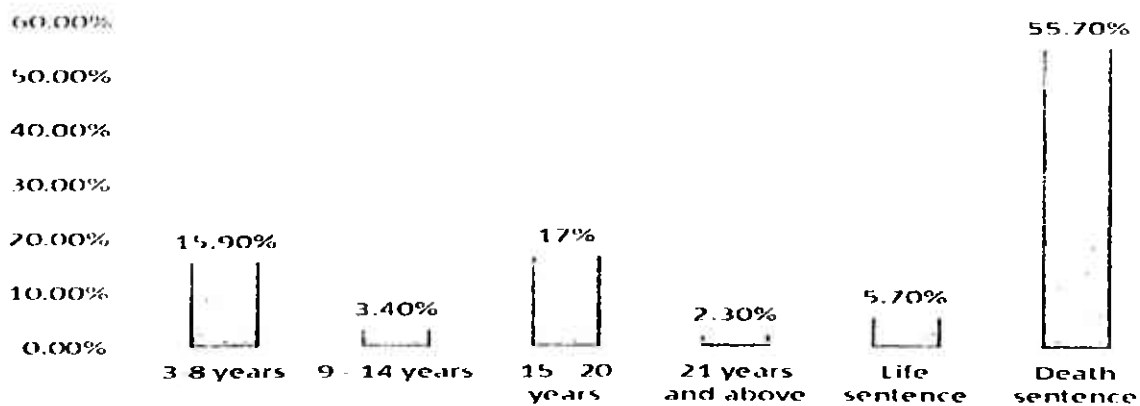
From the above findings, 58 (65.9 per cent) of the respondents were married, 23 (26.1 per cent) were single and never married while 5 (5.7 per cent) were married but separated. This depicts that most of the respondents were bread winners in their families as they were married. Thus, respondents had family obligations to meet which may have compelled them to engage in various illegal activities to generate income. Some of these obligations may have spurred prison inmates to engage in illegal activities including robbery.

Ordinarily, family responsibilities exert pressure on the family bread winners to an extent that some of them may engage in illegal income generating initiatives, including robbery. The rational choice theory posits that man can be presented as an actor who reasons and carefully makes choices which are largely rational by carrying out a comparison of benefits and costs as well as ends and means. Criminals will carefully plan and execute their criminal acts in a way that minimizes the probability of their being apprehended. Samaha (2005).

#### **4.2.4 Length of imprisonment**

The study sought to establish the length of the term of imprisonment for the respondents.

**Figure 4.5 Length of imprisonment**



According to the above findings, the majority of respondents 49 (55.7 per cent) were serving death sentences, 15 (17 per cent) were serving 15-20 years terms, 14 (15.9 per cent) were serving 3-8 years terms while 5 (5.7 per cent) were serving life sentences. From the findings it can be deduced that majority of the respondents had engaged in serious robberies and were serving death sentences. This point to the likelihood that the prison inmates could have engaged in other minor offences before they committed robbery. Thus, the propensity to engage in robbery was a gradual process that was aggravated by various factors. Hence the likelihood that the intended sample comprised mainly of serial recidivists.

**4.2.5 Level of education of the respondents**

Education is a vital tool for development: Thus, respondents were required to indicate their highest academic qualifications.

**Table 4.1 Highest academic qualification of the respondents**

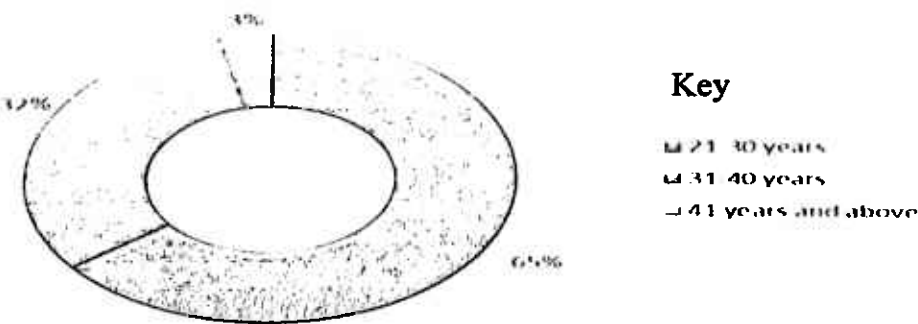
|                     | Frequency | Percent      |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|
| No formal education | 6         | 6.8%         |
| Primary level       | 39        | 44.3%        |
| Secondary level     | 33        | 37.4%        |
| College/ university | 10        | 11.3%        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>88</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Table 4.1 above shows that close to half of the respondents 39 (44.3 per cent) had standard primary education, 33 (37.4 per cent) had secondary education while 6 (6.8 per cent) had no formal education. This depicts that the majority of the prison inmates had poor academic background as majority had not attained secondary level of education. From the findings it can be deduced that lack of good academic background would most likely contribute to individuals to commit crime. The lack of good academic background denies individuals access to quality jobs in the public and private sectors since the job market in Kenya is highly competitive. The lack of job opportunities owing to poor academic background makes individuals economically vulnerable and some of them use negative coping mechanism like robbery to make ends meet. The majority of the perpetrators of this crime could not anticipate the consequences of their crime before involving themselves in robbery owing to their poor level of education.

**4.2.6 Age of the Respondents at the time of Imprisonment**

The study sought to establish the age of the prison inmates at the time of imprisonment.

**Figure 4.6 Age of the Respondents at the time of imprisonment**



From the findings on figure 4.6 above, the majority of the respondents 57 (64.8 per cent) were 21-30 years when they were imprisoned, 28 (31.8 per cent) had 31-40 years while 2 (3.4 per cent) had 41 years and above, when they were imprisoned. This illustrates that majority of the prison inmates convicted of robbery were imprisoned at

their youthful age as they were between 21-30 years old. This was, therefore at a time when they were being subjected to lots of unmet needs and had to find a way of earning a living to support their families and also their increasing financial demands. Thus, growing financial needs coupled with limited opportunities to meet them may have propelled them to engage in unlawful activities to meet their personal needs and family obligations.

### 4.3 Unemployment and Robbery

The second objective of the study was to establish whether unemployment causes individuals to commit robbery.

The responses were as follows.

**Table 4.2 Unemployment and Robbery**

| <b>Does unemployment cause individuals to commit robbery?</b> |                  |                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
|                                                               | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
| <b>Yes</b>                                                    | <b>63</b>        | <b>71.6%</b>   |
| <b>No</b>                                                     | <b>25</b>        | <b>28.4%</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>                                                  | <b>88</b>        | <b>100.0</b>   |

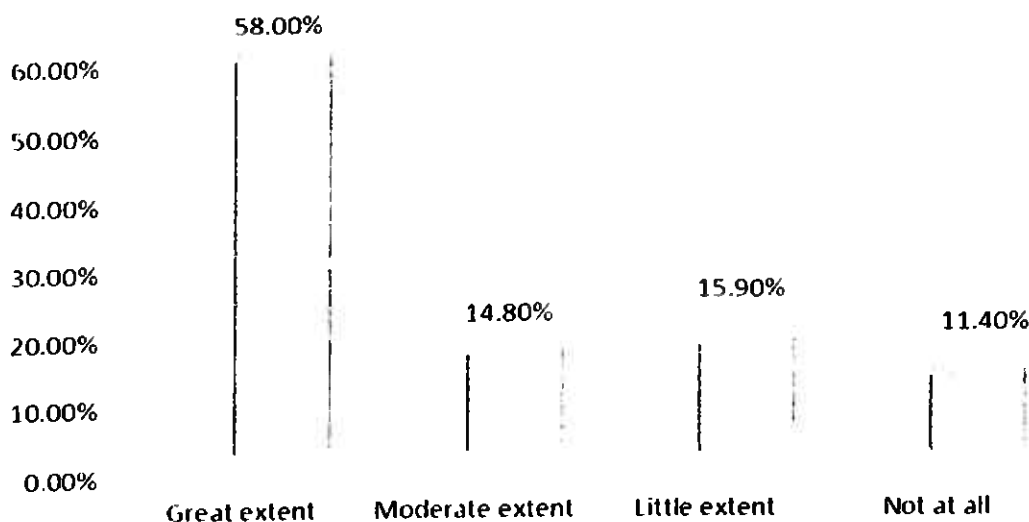
From table 4.2 above majority of the prison inmates interviewed 63 (71.6 per cent) posited that unemployment causes individuals to commit robbery while 25 (28.4 per cent) indicated that unemployment never causes individuals to commit robbery. The findings are collaborated by the results of all the (100 per cent) key informants who posited that unemployment causes individuals to commit robbery. The findings depicts that high unemployment levels among the respondents inclines them towards committing robbery as a source of generating income. On the other hand, employment reduces the chances of individuals committing robbery as they have alternative sources of the much sought finances. This finding is in line with Graef's, (2000) views who postulated that the lack of job prospects and the likelihood of a desolate future for unemployed young people in Sub-Saharan Africa may contribute to socially deviant behaviour and adoption of negative coping strategies to earn a living e.g

robbery. Thus, the rise in robbery cases and other forms of crime, drug addiction and prostitution among unemployed youths may partly be due to combined effects of the lack of social networks and insufficient job opportunities Graef, (2000).

Respondents who indicated that unemployment never causes individuals to commit robbery argued that the lack of employment should motivate the youths to come up with creative alternative ways in the informal sector to generate income. In addition, they indicated that involvement in robbery was not a solution to unemployment as the consequences were dire to the youths who engaged in it. This finding is corroborated by Piquero, (2001) who established that while robbery may be seen as a survival alternative in the face of grinding poverty, there are poor communities where crime levels are low since behavior is constrained by informal social and cultural values. However, in the urban areas, the scene of most of the crimes, involvement in robbery is viewed as survival alternative in the face of grinding poverty.

The study further sought to establish the extent to which unemployment causes individuals to commit robbery.

**Figure 4.7 Extent to which unemployment causes individuals to commit robbery**



According to the results, the majority of the respondents 51 (58 per cent) posited that unemployment causes individuals to commit robbery to a great extent, 14 (15.9 per

cent) to a little extent, 13 (14.8 per cent) to a moderate extent while 10 (11.4 per cent) indicated that unemployment does not cause individuals to commit robbery. The finding depicts that unemployment, as a factor, increases the propensity of individual to commit robbery. This finding is corroborated by the Nairobi Youth and Crime Survey in 2004, which established that the most common offences for which young offenders were arrested for robbery, theft, assault and drug possession (UN-HABITAT, 2004b). There is no doubt that unemployment, especially among young people, is a major factor which contributes significantly to robbery growth (WHO, 2004a).

#### **4.3.1 The effect of unemployment on robbery**

The study also sought to establish the contribution of unemployment to robbery. The ensuing responses were ranked on a five point Likert scale as follows: 1- To a very low extent, 2- To a low extent, 3- To a moderate extent, 4- To a great extent and 5- To a very great extent. The mean and standard deviations were generated from SPSS and are as illustrated in table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3 The effect of unemployment on robbery**

|                                                                                                                                                                     | Very low extent | Low extent | Moderate extent | Great extent | Very great extent |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Lack of job prospects and the likelihood of a desolate future contribute to socially deviant behaviour like engaging in robbery                                     | 0               | 3          | 7               | 40           | 38                |
| Robbery is a coping strategy to earn a living for the Kenyan unemployed youths                                                                                      | 32              | 26         | 14              | 11           | 3                 |
| Robbery is a crime for those who want to get rich quickly                                                                                                           | 25              | 22         | 17              | 15           | 7                 |
| Unemployment, especially among young people, is a major factor which contributes significantly to growth of robbery incidences                                      | 6               | 12         | 19              | 28           | 23                |
| Politicians focus on robbery-fighting initiatives as central to controlling robbery but overlook the impact of labor markets in causing robbery                     | 19              | 19         | 21              | 18           | 11                |
| Individuals at the lower end of the socioeconomic status scale are more likely to participate in robbery                                                            | 12              | 15         | 22              | 22           | 17                |
| Committing robbery leads to arrest and imprisonment which in turn, reduces an individual's future employment prospects and create an incentive to return to robbery | 2               | 6          | 12              | 35           | 33                |

According to the above results, 38 (43.2%) of respondents agreed to a great extent that lack of job prospects and the likelihood of a desolate future contribute to socially deviant behaviour like engaging in robbery while 33 (37.5%) of respondents agreed to a great extent that committing robbery leads to arrest and imprisonment which in turn, reduces an individual's future employment prospects and create an incentive to return to robbery. Meanwhile 23 (26.1%) of respondents agreed to a great extent that unemployment, especially among young people, is a major factor which contributes significantly to growth of robbery incidences whereas 17 (19.3%) are of the view that individuals at the lower end of the socioeconomic status scale are more likely to participate in robbery.



However, 21 (23.8%) of respondents agreed to a moderate extent that politicians focus on robbery-fighting initiatives as central to controlling robbery but overlook the impact of labor markets in causing robbery while 25 (28.4%) of respondents agreed to a very low extent that robbery is a crime for those who want to get rich quickly.

The findings illustrates that the high rate of unemployment in the country coupled with limited livelihood opportunities has made the youths to seek alternative coping strategies some of which are illegal like involvement in robbery. However, these alternative coping strategies create a vicious cycle as they reduces an individual's future employment prospects and create an incentive for recidivism. The findings are shared by Graef, (2000) who established that the lack of job prospects and the likelihood of a desolate future for unemployed young people in many Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries is a likely motivation to socially deviant behaviours including robbery, as a negative coping strategy to earn a living. Furthermore this situation could reinforce marginalization of young people from the labour market and society at large. He therefore concludes by opining that the rise in robbery cases and other forms of crime, drug addiction and prostitution among young unemployed migrants is due partly to the combined effects of the lack of social networks and insufficient job opportunities (Graef, 2000).

#### **4.4 Drug Abuse and Robbery**

The third objective of the study was to establish the influence of drug abuse on robbery involvement by individual convicts.

The study therefore sought to establish whether drug abuse causes individuals to commit robbery.

**Figure 4.8 Does drug abuse influence individuals to commit robbery?**



From the above pie-chart, an overwhelming majority of the respondents 73 (83 per cent) posited that drug abuse causes individuals to commit robbery. Only 15 (17 per cent) of the respondents attested that drug abuse never causes individuals to commit robbery. Equally an overwhelming majority of the key informants 9 (90 per cent) were also in agreement that drug abuse causes individuals to commit robbery. This therefore illustrates the existence of a structured relation between drug abuse and robbery. Offenders addicted to expensive illicit drugs are likely to commit higher rates of property crimes like robbery, theft and pilfering among others to fund their addiction. This is because drug abuse stifles the moral conscience of the abusers thus, increasing their propensity to commit crimes for example, robbery.

More specifically, the study sought to establish whether the prison inmates were under the influence of drugs when they committed the robberies they were convicted for.

**Figure 4.9 Whether respondents were under the influence of drugs**

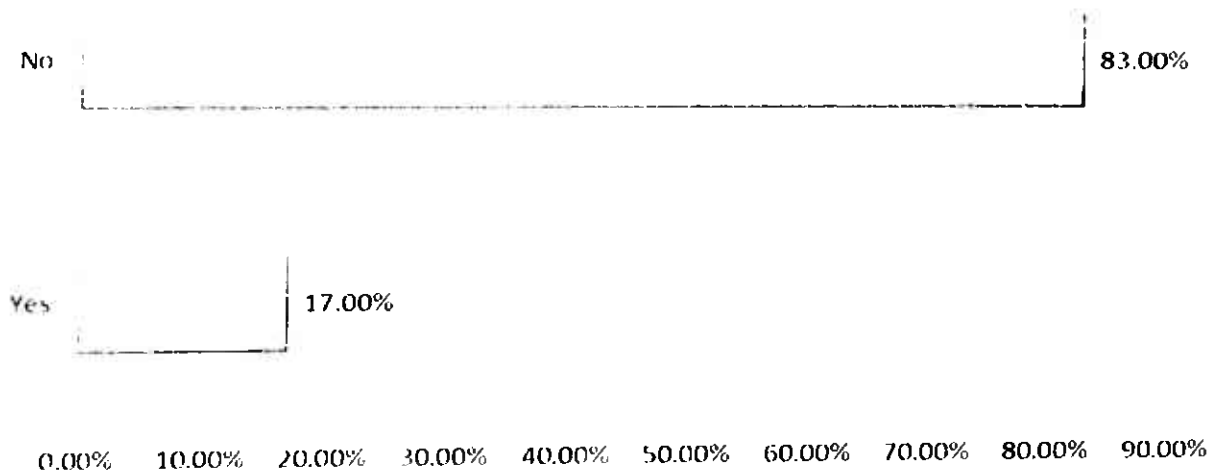
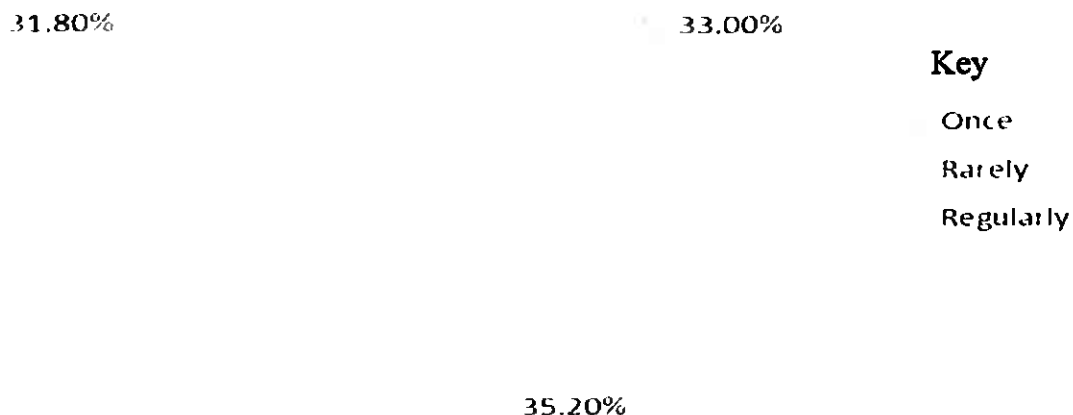


Figure 4.9 shows that 73 (83 per cent) of respondents reported not being under the influence of drugs while committing the crime, save for only 15 (17 per cent). The findings if credible depicts that drug abuse was not a major motivator to robbery, as majority of the respondents posited that they were not under the influence of drugs while committing the robbery. The findings concur with Fisher, (1992) who argued that the onset of involvement in robbery usually precedes illicit drug consumption. This has led some to argue that illicit drug taking and robbery are just different manifestations of deviant behavior rather than being causally related. The finding is also supported by the rational choice theory which insists that crime is calculated and deliberate. According to the theory all criminals are rational actors who practice conscious decision making, that simultaneously work towards gaining the maximum benefits of their present situation (Samaha, 2005). The robbers viewed the use of drugs while embarking on robbery as something that would reduce their reasoning ability and thus majority were not under the influence of drugs while committing robbery

The 17% respondents who confirmed using drugs at the time of committing robbery were further required to indicate for how long they had been using the drug.

**Figure 4.10 Duration of drug use by respondents**

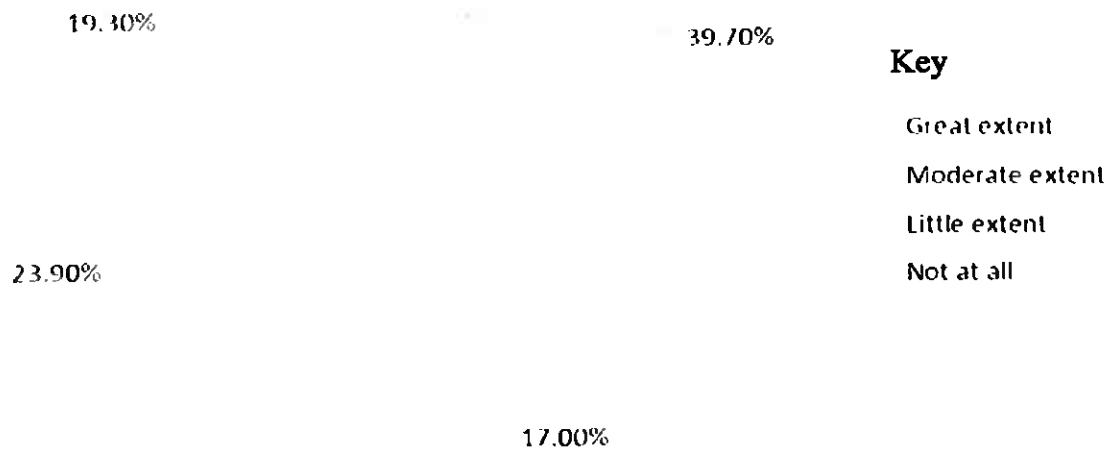


From the above findings, 29 (33 per cent) of the respondents posited that they used drugs once, 31 (35.2 per cent) rarely used drugs while 28 (31.8 per cent) of the respondents used drugs regularly. This, if true depicts that use of drugs influence individuals to commit robbery to a small extent as most of the convicted prison inmates had not used drugs when committing robbery.

According to Fisher, (1992), there has been rapid growth in the number of dependent drug users over the last twenty years accompanied by increased levels of crime, particularly robbery. These observations, while suggestive, do not provide conclusive evidence that drug use plays an important role in shaping long-term trends in robbery. The conclusion that it does, however, is supported by strong evidence that drug dependence significantly increases individual rates of committing robbery (Fisher, 1992).

The research also inquired from the respondents on the extent to which drug abuse induce individuals to commit robbery.

**Figure 4.11 Extent to which drug abuse induce individuals to commit robbery**



From the above findings, 35 (39.7 per cent) of the respondents attested that drug abuse induces individuals to commit robbery to a great extent, 21 (23.9 per cent) to a little extent, 17 (19.3 per cent) not at all while 15 (17 per cent) posited that drug abuse induces individuals to commit robbery to a moderate extent. Thus the majority of the respondents interviewed (56.7 per cent) are in agreement that drug abuse led to addiction which in turn motivates individuals to commit robbery as it reduced their moral conscience, thus contributing towards involvement in robbery.

The study also sought to establish the effect of drug abuse on individuals to commit robbery. The responses were rated on a five point Likert scale indicating to what extent respondents agree to the statements, where: 1- To a very low extent, 2- To a low extent, 3- To a moderate extent, 4- To a great extent and 5-To a very great extent. The mean and standard deviations were generated from SPSS and are as illustrated in table 4.4 below:

**Table 4.4 The effect of drug abuse on individuals to commit robbery**

|                                                                                                                       | Very low extent | Low extent | Moderate extent | Great extent | Very great extent |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Alcohol consumption increases the risk of criminal activity                                                           | 11              | 14         | 9               | 30           | 24                |
| Robbery cases tend to cluster around premises with high rates of alcohol consumption                                  | 27              | 21         | 6               | 16           | 18                |
| There is a significant influence of illicit drugs on crime where people who commit robbery also consume illicit drugs | 34              | 26         | 4               | 13           | 11                |
| Drugs influence individual's propensity to engage in robbery                                                          | 19              | 17         | 6               | 25           | 21                |
| The onset of involvement in robbery usually precedes drug abuse                                                       | 39              | 30         | 2               | 9            | 8                 |
| Individuals already involved in robbery commit far more offences once they become drug dependent                      | 1               | 3          | 6               | 45           | 33                |
| Offenders addicted to expensive illicit drugs commit higher rates of robbery to fund their addiction                  | 5               | 8          | 11              | 36           | 28                |

Table 4.4 above shows that majority (51.1%) of the respondents agreed to a great extent that individuals already involved in robbery commit far more offences once they become drug dependent while 36 (40.9%) of respondents agreed to a great extent that offenders addicted to expensive illicit drugs commit higher rates of robbery to fund their addiction. Meanwhile 30 (34.1%) of respondents agreed to a great extent that alcohol consumption increases the risk of criminal activity while 25 (28.4%) of respondents agreed to a great extent that drugs influence individual's propensity to engage in robbery. However, 27 (30.6%) of respondents agreed to a very low extent that robbery cases tend to cluster around premises with high rates of alcohol consumption while 27 (30.6%) of respondents agreed to a very low extent that there is a significant influence of illicit drugs on crime where people who commit robbery

also consume illicit drugs. In addition, 39 (44.3%) of respondents agreed to a very low extent that the onset of involvement in robbery usually precedes drug abuse.

The findings generally illustrate that drug abuse increase the propensity to engage in robberies. Dependency on illicit drugs is therefore likely to influence robbers to commit more serious offenses to fund their drug addiction, as besides interfering with their reasoning capabilities, they make them to believe that they cannot be easily apprehended when they commit the robberies. The findings are in line with DeMelo's, (1999) who postulated that there is a significant influence of illicit drugs on robberies where people who commit robberies also consume illicit drugs. According to Fisher, (1992) the influence of illicit drug consumption on commission of robbery as many individuals already involved in robbery commit far more offences once they become drug dependent. This is because offenders addicted to expensive illicit drugs usually commit higher rates of property crime, like robbery, to fund their addiction (Fisher, 1992).

#### 4.5 Family Criminological History and Robbery

The fourth objective of the study was to assess the influence of family criminological history on individuals' involvement in robbery.

The study therefore sought to establish whether individuals who came from a family with criminological history had a tendency to commit robbery.

**Figure 4.12 Relationship between family criminological history and robbery**

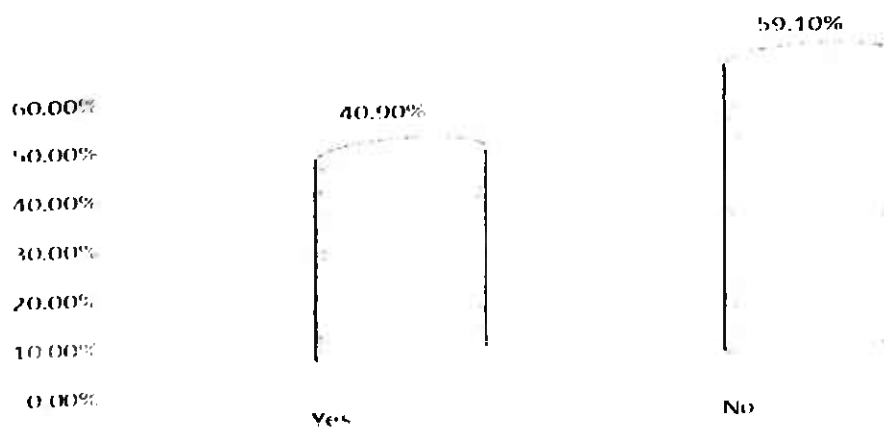
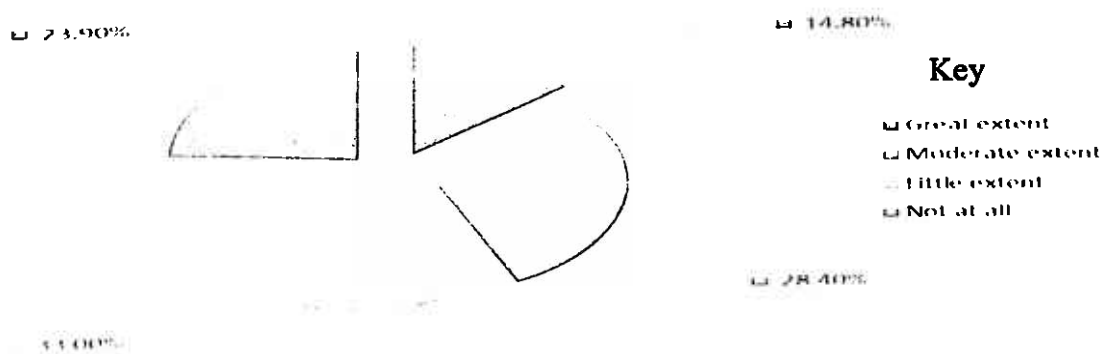


Figure 4.12 shows that majority of the respondents 52 (59.1 per cent) attested that not all individuals who came from a family with criminological history committed robbery. Only 36 (40.9 per cent) of the respondents indicated that individuals who came from a family with criminological history tended to commit robbery. In addition, 7 (70 per cent) of the key informants indicated that individuals who came from a family with criminological history tend to commit robbery. Only 3 (30 per cent) of the key informants indicated that individuals who came from a family with criminological history did not commit robbery. The findings reveal that the nature of the family influenced the tendency of the individuals to commit robbery whereby respondents who were involved in robbery were likely to learn the behavior from their close associates in their immediate families. Thus, robbery convicts may have acquired the habit through socialization either from parents, elders or role models in the society.

The findings are corroborated with Farrell (2006) who posited that high proportions of parents from families with criminological history believe that involvement in some crimes is a harmless activity. According to Loeber & Farrington, (1999) family factors influence the possibility to committing robbery. The likelihood of offending is significantly correlated to individual dispositions, for example, impulsiveness, and immediate social situations, for example, family conditions. There is a link between family dysfunction and future criminal offending Loeber& Farrington, (1999).

Respondents were also requested to indicate the extent to which the family criminological history causes individuals to commit robbery.

**Figure 4.13 Family criminological history as a cause of robbery**





From the above findings, 29 (33 per cent) of the respondents posited out that the family criminological history caused individuals to commit robbery to a little extent, 21 (23.9 per cent) to not at all, 24 (28.4 per cent) to a moderate extent while 12 (14.8 per cent) said that the family criminological history caused individuals to commit robbery to a great extent. This illustrates that family criminological history inclines individuals to commit robbery to a small extent. The findings concur with Tarolla, Wagner, Rabinowitz, & Tubman, (2002) who established that in part because parents monitor and provide nurturance to children; it is thought that the loosening of bonds among family members other than the criminological history of the parents may result in more criminal involvement.

#### 4.5.1 Influence of family criminological history on commission of robbery

The study sought to establish the influence of family criminological history on individuals to commit robbery. The responses were rated on a five point Likert scale indicating to what extent respondents agree to the statements, where: 1- To a very low extent, 2- To a low extent, 3- To a moderate extent, 4- To a great extent and 5- To a very great extent. The mean and standard deviations were generated from SPSS and are as illustrated in table 4.5 below:

**Table 4.5 Influence of Family Criminological History on commission of robbery**

|                                                                                                       | Very low extent | Low extent | Moderate extent | Great extent | Very great extent |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Broken families contributes to future criminal activity of the children including engaging in robbery | 22              | 20         | 2               | 28           | 15                |
| The intactness of family is the primary factor relating family to juvenile delinquency                | 3               | 4          | 6               | 49           | 26                |
| Absence of close relationships between the teenager and his or her parents influence delinquency      | 14              | 18         | 5               | 33           | 18                |
| Residing in a family with positive morals reduces the likelihood of committing robbery                | 7               | 10         | 8               | 41           | 22                |

According to the results, majority of the respondents 49 (55.68 per cent) agreed to a great extent that the intactness of family is the primary factor relating family to juvenile delinquency while 41 (45.45 per cent) respondents agreed to a great extent that residing in a family with positive morals reduces the likelihood of committing robbery. Meanwhile 33 (37.5 per cent) out of respondents also agreed to a great extent that absence of close relationships between a teenager and his/her parents influence delinquency. Only 28 (31.8 per cent) of respondents also agreed to a great extent that broken families contributes to future criminal activity of the children including engaging in robbery.

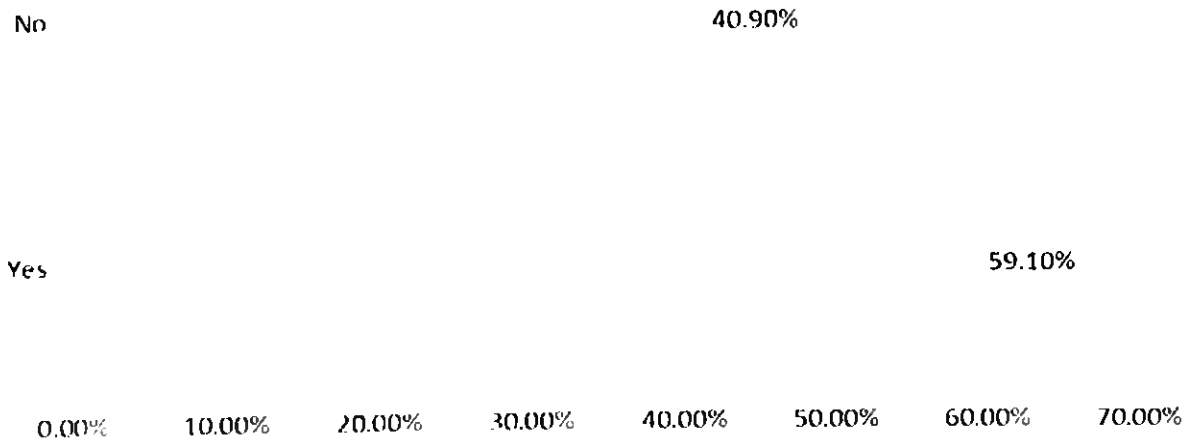
The findings imply that the lack of family stability which is characterized by poor parenting is likely to contribute towards individuals being involved in crimes like robbery. The lack of close relationships between the teenagers and their parents predispose them to delinquency which later develops to more serious offenses like robbery. Involvement in robbery is learnt gradually for a long time. The finding further concurs with the social learning theory which postulates that expectancies are developed prior to direct experiences with a specific behaviour (e.g. robbery) and may be acquired from family, friends, the media and other social interactions (Maahs& Holmes, 2006).

#### **4.6 Physical Environment and Robbery**

The fifth objective of the study was to inquire from the respondents whether physical environment influences individuals to commit robbery.

The research inquired on the extent to which a person's physical environment predisposes him/her to commit robbery.

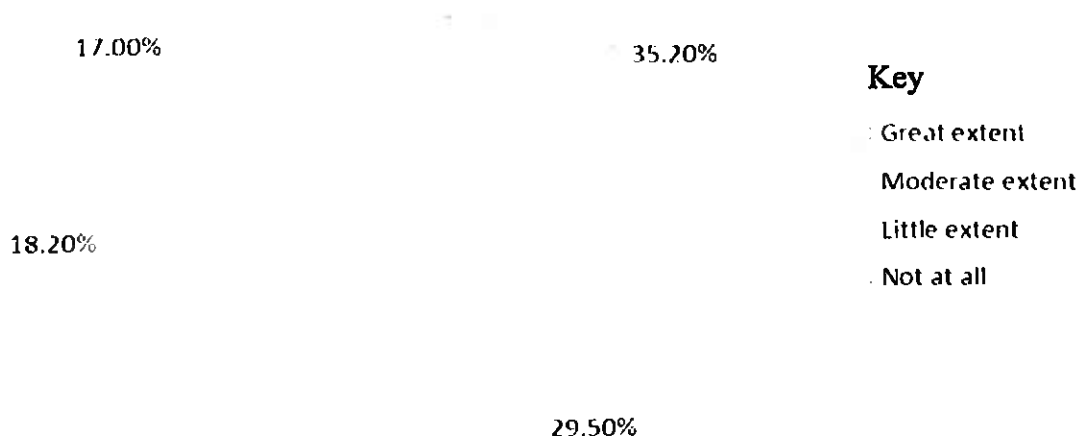
**Figure 4.14 Influence of physical environment on individuals to commit robbery**



From the above findings, majority of the respondents 52 (59.1 per cent) indicated that the physical environment influences individuals to commit robbery, while 35 (40.9 per cent) of them posited that physical environment never influences one to commit robbery. On the other hand, majority of the key informants 8 (80 per cent) indicated that physical environment influences individuals to commit robbery while 2 (20 per cent) posited that physical environment never influences individuals to commit robbery. This illustrates that the status of physical environment determines the occurrence of robbery in an area. The findings imply that the phenomenon of robbery is area-specific as the robbers are likely to attack their victims in certain areas of the town where they cannot be easily apprehended by police such as dark alleys, poorly lit pathways and overcrowded streets. According to Morris, (2000), neighborhoods are rendered robbery prone simply because they provide the highest benefits, and pose the lowest risks.

The study further sought to establish the extent to which the physical environment influences individuals to commit robbery.

**Figure 4.15 Physical Environment as a cause of robbery**



According to figure 4.15 above, 31 (35.2 per cent) of the respondents indicated that physical environment influences individuals to commit robbery to a great extent, 25 (29.5 per cent) to a moderate extent, 16 (18.2 per cent) to a little extent while 15 (17 per cent) said that the physical environment did not influence individuals to commit robbery at all.

The findings depicts that one of the major factors influencing individuals to commit crime was the physical environment. Thus the offenders often operate in a rational fashion whereby they prefer to commit crimes that require the least effort, provide the highest benefits, and pose the lowest risks. Thus robberies are most likely to occur when potential offenders come into contact with a suitable robbery target where the chances of detection by others are thought to be low or the criminal, if detected, will be able to exit without being identified or apprehended. In such cases, the robbery activities site lacks a natural guardian.

The finding is in line with the rational choice theory as most offenders exhibit rational choice in their planning of criminal acts. The robbers carefully plan and execute their robberies in areas that minimize the probability of being apprehended. Rational choice theory insists that robberies are calculated and deliberate since criminals are rational

actors who practice conscious decision making with regard to their surroundings that simultaneously work towards gaining the maximum benefits of their present situation (Maahs& Holmes, 2006).

The study further sought to establish the influence of physical environment on individuals to commit robbery. The responses were rated on a five point Likert scale indicating to what extent respondents agree to the statements, where: 1- To a very low extent, 2- To a low extent, 3- To a moderate extent, 4- To a great extent and 5-To a very great extent. The mean and standard deviations were generated from SPSS and are as illustrated in table 4.6 below.

**Table 4.6 influence of the physical environment on commission of robbery**

|                                                                                                                       | Very low extent | Low extent | Moderate extent | Great extent | Very great extent |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Dense vegetation provides potential cover for robbery activities                                                      | 23              | 16         | 1               | 26           | 22                |
| Planning and design measures can be utilized very successfully to mitigate against robbery occurrence                 | 16              | 11         | 3               | 31           | 27                |
| Potential offenders come into contact with a suitable robbery target where the chances of detection by others are low | 2               | 4          | 5               | 42           | 35                |
| If the physical environment is planned appropriately robberies can be reduced                                         | 12              | 8          | 3               | 34           | 31                |

Table 4.6 above shows that most respondents 47.72 per cent agreed to a great extent that potential offenders come into contact with a suitable robbery target where the chances of detection by others are low. Meanwhile 38.63 per cent respondents also agreed to a great extent that if the physical environment is planned appropriately robberies can be reduced. In addition, 35.22 per cent respondents concurred to a great extent that planning and design measures can be utilized very successfully to mitigate

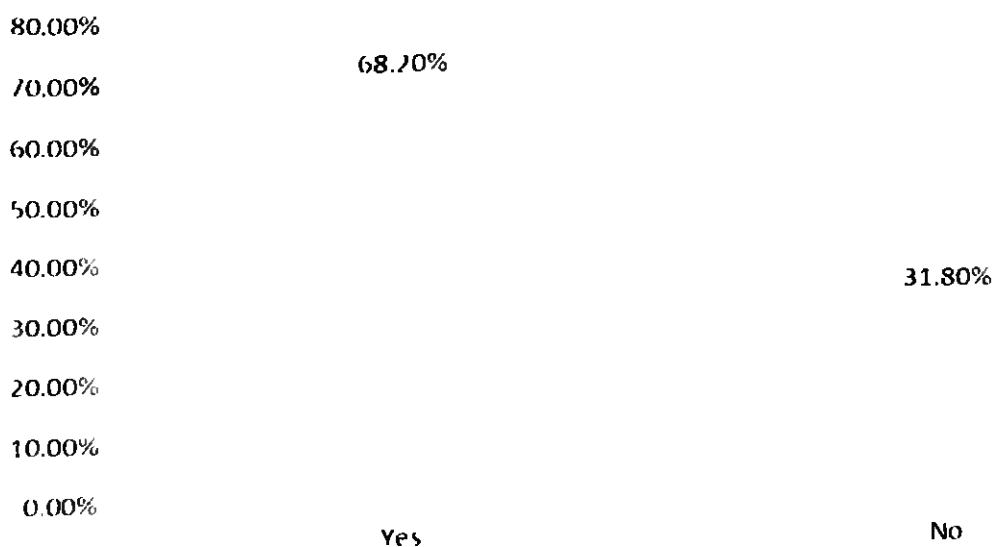
against robbery occurrence while only 29.54 per cent respondents agreed to a great extent that dense vegetation provides potential cover for robbery activities.

The study findings implies that the occurrence of robberies is likely to be motivated by the physical environment where the offenders come into contact with a suitable robbery target with reduced chances of being apprehended. This may include poorly lit corridors, areas with dense vegetation and deserted walk paths. The findings are in line with Morris, (2000) who indicated that offenders often operate in a rational fashion; they prefer to commit crimes that require the least effort, provide the highest benefits, and pose the lowest risks. Thus robbery are most likely to occur when potential offenders come into contact with a suitable crime target where the chances of detection by others are thought to be low or the criminal, if detected, will be able to exit without being identified or apprehended (Morris, 2000).

#### **4.7 Social Environment and Robbery**

The study sought to establish whether social environments influence individuals to commit robbery.

**Figure 4.16 Influence of social environment on individuals to commit robbery**



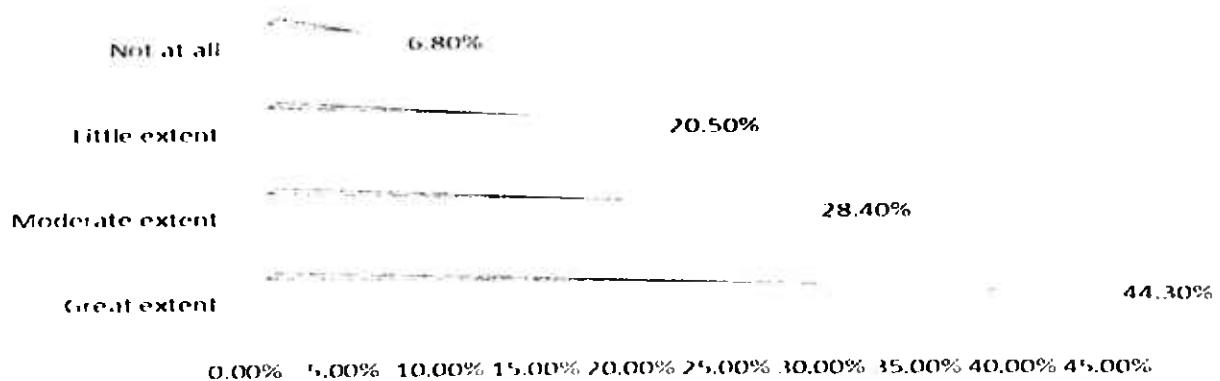
From the above findings, majority 59 (68.2 per cent) of respondents indicated that social environment influences individuals to commit robbery, while 28 (31.8 per cent) posited that social environment never influences individuals to commit robbery. In addition, majority of the key informants 8 (80 per cent) indicated that social environment influences individuals to commit robbery. Only 2 (20 per cent) of the key informants were of the view that the social environment never influences individuals to commit robbery.

The finding therefore illustrates that the social environment contributes towards involvement in robbery. Individuals who commit robbery are likely to learn about it from the people they live together with who include their friends, peers and family members. Individuals can also learn about robberies from past prison experiences as a convict. According to social learning theory, expectancies are developed prior to direct experiences with a specific behaviour (e.g. robbery) and may be acquired from family, friends, the media and other social interactions (Maahs& Holmes, 2006).

The finding is also corroborated by Ferguson (2009) who found out that individual and group perceptions of crimes like robbery and its seriousness are mediated by social change and by cultural and social norms about what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Therefore different individuals and cultures define crimes like robbery differently. DeMelo, (1999) argues that humans are social creatures and their behaviour is a product of their social environment, implying that robbers learn about robbery from people they interact with in the society.

The study inquired on the extent to which the social environment influences individuals to commit robbery.

**Figure 4.17 Extent of influence of the social environment on robbery**



From the above findings, 39 (44.3 per cent) of the respondents indicated that social environment influence individuals to commit robbery to a great extent, 24 (28.4 per cent) to a moderate extent while 17 (20.5 per cent) posited that social environments influence individuals to commit robbery to a little extent. This finding illustrates that the social environment is a significant factor influencing individuals to commit robbery. The finding concurs with that by the strain theory which stipulates that strain is not created by a sudden social change, but rather by a social structure that holds out the same goals to all its members without giving them equal means to achieve them (Robert, 2001). Strain theory therefore purports that when individuals accept the cultural goals but have no legitimate means to achieve them they tend to come up with their own means which are sometimes illegal, like robbery. When the goal for instance is money or property, individuals who have no employment and education may rob to acquire these items (Robert, 2001).



## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations on factors influencing individuals to commit robbery. The factors investigated were: personal and socio-economic attributes, drug abuse, unemployment, family criminological history, physical and social environments.

### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

The following section gives the key findings based on the study objectives.

#### **5.2.1 Socio-demographic Attributes of Robbers**

The study established that the majority of the prison inmates 48 (54.4 per cent) were aged 21-30 years. This depicts that majority of the prison inmates convicted of robbery were youthful and had great potential to succeed in life if they engaged in positive livelihood activities.

The study found that the majority of the prison inmates 59 (67 per cent) committed robbery in urban areas, 19 (22 per cent) in peri-urban areas and 10 (11 per cent) in rural areas. The implication therefore was that majority of robberies occurred in town areas, on account of its high populations. Respondents committed robbery in urban areas as they anticipated that their victims would have more money and property as compared to people in the rural areas. In the urban areas the weapons used in robbery were readily available and they could acquire them. In addition, respondents indicated that they could not be easily identified in towns as opposed to rural areas where people know their neighbors. The majority of the respondents, 58 (65.9 per cent) were married and had families to cater for. This implies that majority of them were bread winners in their families and had family obligations to meet which may have compelled them to engage in robbery to earn a livelihood.

A high proportion of the respondents 39 (44.3 per cent) had primary education, 6 (7%) had no formal education while 33 (37.4 per cent) had some secondary education.

This if true depicts that the majority of the prison inmates had low levels of education. It was therefore concluded that their low levels of education attainment is likely to have predisposed the individuals to commit crime. Thus, majority of the robbery perpetrators could not have anticipated the consequences of their crime commission owing to their poor level of education.

In addition, the majority of the respondents 57 (64.8 per cent) were 21-30 years when they were imprisoned. This illustrates that majority of the individuals who commit robbery were imprisoned at their youthful age. This is an age bracket at which they had to find a way of earning a living to support their families and to also meet their increasing financial demands. Thus, growing financial needs coupled with limited opportunities to meet them may have propelled the youths to engage in robbery to meet their financial needs.

### **5.2.2 Unemployment and Robbery**

The study revealed that a majority of the respondents 63 (71.6 per cent) posited that unemployment causes individuals to commit robbery as a source of generating income. On the other hand, employment reduces the chances of individuals to commit robbery as they have alternative sources of the much sought finances. The former finding is corroborated by Graef, (2000), who postulated that lack of job prospects and the likelihood of a desolate future for unemployed young people in Sub-Saharan Africa may contribute to socially deviant behaviours and adoption of negative coping strategies for earning a living, like robbery.

The rise in robbery cases and other forms of crime for example, drug addiction and prostitution among unemployed youths is due to effects of lack of social networks and insufficient job opportunities (Graef, 2000). This finding is supported by Piquero (2001), who established that while robbery may be seen as a survival alternative in the face of grinding poverty, there are poor communities where crime levels are low because behavior is constrained by informal social and cultural values.

### **5.2.3 Drug Abuse and Robbery**

The study established that majority of the respondents 73 (83 per cent) posited that drug abuse causes individuals to commit robbery. Thus, suggesting the existence of a structured relationship between drug abuse and robbery. More specifically, drug addicts are more likely to commit serious types of property crimes like robbery in order to fund their drug addiction.

A significant proportion of respondents (34.09 per cent) observed that alcohol consumption increases the risk of criminal activity while(28.40 per cent) of respondents agreed to a great extent that drugs influence individual's propensity to engage in robbery. The finding illustrates that drug abuse increase the propensity of individuals to engage in robbery. Besides, dependency on illicit drugs is likely to influence robbers to commit more serious offenses to fund their drug addiction, since the addiction interferes with their reasoning capabilities and makes them to believe that they cannot be easily apprehended when they commit the robberies.

The finding is in line with DeMelo's, (1999) who postulated that there is a significant influence of illicit drugs on robbery where people who commit robbery also consume illicit drugs. Individuals already involved in robbery commit far more offences once they become drug dependent. This is because the offenders are struggling to fund their drug addiction (Fisher, 1992).

### **5.2.4 Family Criminological History and Robbery**

The study further established that the nature of the family influenced the tendency of the individuals to commit robbery as attested to by 52 (59.1 per cent) of the study respondents. Its assumed that robbery convicts may have acquired the habit through socialization either from their parents, peers or elders in the society. This finding is corroborated by Farrell (2006) who posited that high proportions of parents from families with criminological history hold that involvement in crime is a harmless activity. According to Loeber & Farrington, (1999) the likelihood of offending is significantly correlated to individual dispositions, for example, impulsiveness, and

immediate social situations, for example, family conditions. There is therefore a link between family dysfunction and future criminal offending.

The study revealed that family criminological history predisposes individuals to commit robbery to a lesser extent as indicated by 29 (33 per cent) of the respondents. The finding concurs with that by Tarolla, Wagner, Rabinowitz, & Tubman, (2002), who established that because parents monitor and provide nurturance to children, it is thought that the loosening of bonds among family members may result in more criminal involvement.

The findings further concur with the social learning theory which postulates that expectancies are developed prior to direct experiences with a specific behaviour (e.g. robbery) and may be acquired from family, friends, the media and other social interactions (Maahs & Holmes, 2006).

#### **5.2.5 Physical Environment and Robbery**

The study revealed that the status of physical environment determines the occurrence of robbery in an area as attested by the majority of the respondents 52 (59.1 per cent). The findings imply that the occurrence of robbery is area specific as the robbers are likely to attack their victims in certain areas of the town where they cannot be easily apprehended by police. These may include poorly lit corridors, areas with dense vegetation and deserted walk paths. According to Morris, (2000), the neighborhoods are rendered robbery prone simply because they contain attractive commercial or residential targets or criminal opportunities which attract both resident and non-resident offenders. Offenders often operate in a rational fashion; they prefer to commit crimes that require the least effort, provide the highest benefits, and pose the lowest risks.

Thus robbery are most likely to occur when potential offenders come into contact with a suitable crime target where the chances of detection by others are thought to be low or the criminal, if detected, will be able to exit without being identified. In short, the robbery and other criminal activities site lack a natural guardian (Morris, 2000).

### **5.2.6 Social Environment and Robbery**

Majority 59 (68.2 per cent) of the respondents indicated that social environment influences individuals to commit robbery. It's therefore more likely that individuals learn crime from the people they live together with who include their friends, peers and family members. People can also learn about robbery from past prison experiences as a convict.

This finding is corroborated by Ferguson (2009) who found that the individuals and group perceptions of crimes like robbery and its seriousness are mediated by social change and by cultural and social norms about what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Hence, different individuals and cultures define crimes like robbery differently. DeMelo, (1999) argues that humans are social creatures and that their behaviour is a product of their social environment, implying that robbers learn robbery from the people they interact with in the society.

The findings concur with strain theory which purports that when individuals accept the cultural goals but have no legitimate means to achieve them they tend to come up with their own means which are sometimes illegal like robbery. When the goal for instance is money or property, individuals who have no employment and education may rob to acquire these items (Robert, 2001).

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study established that commission of robbery is as a result of several factors, namely personal attributes, unemployment, drug abuse, family criminological history, physical and social environmental factors. Crime poses threat to sustainable economic development; to the quality of life and human rights since investors' first look for a peaceful environment before investing in any place. There is need to intensify the fight against drug abuse in Kenya since there is an existence of a structured relationship between drug abuse and robbery, where drug addicts commit robbery in order to fund their drug addiction.

Creation of employment opportunities for the youth will enable them engage in meaningful economic activities to earn livelihood. Furthermore, there is need to map crime zones in the urban centers so as to intensify policing since occurrence of robbery is area specific. Finally, parents need to bring up children with good morals. This will prevent them from learning criminal acts from the people they live together with including; friends, peers and family members. People can also learn about robbery from past prison experiences as a convict. There is therefore an urgent need for stakeholder participation in the formulation of strategies, programs and plans to reduce robbery.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

- 1. The relevant government agency namely, the National Crime Research Centre (NCRC) needs to compile data on the number of youths aged between 21-30 years committing robbery in Kenya and thereafter develop approaches towards reducing it.**
- 2. The National Authority for Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) should intensify the fight drug abuse, since individuals addicted to illicit drugs are likely to commit higher rates of property crime like robbery to fund their addiction.**
- 3. The Kenyan government through the Kazi Kwa Vijana (KKV) initiative, the newly launched Uwezo Fund (UF) and the private sector should endeavour to provide funds and create more employment opportunities for youths so as to reduce their involvement in crime, particularly robbery.**
- 4. The county governments and other stakeholders especially the Police should improve the physical environment of urban centres by reducing congestion to curb the occurrence of robbery due to poor planning.**
- 5. The study also recommends that the government and other stakeholders should conduct regular countrywide sensitization campaigns on good parenting practices in order to bring up a young generation with good morals.**

6. The Government needs to improve and sustain free primary and secondary education since poor academic attainment makes individuals economically vulnerable and some of them use negative coping mechanism like robbery to make ends meet.
7. The Kenya Prisons Service together with the Probation Department needs to effectively play their rehabilitative role by emphasizing on current and relevant rehabilitation programs to avoid recidivism among offenders.

### **5.5 Suggestions for further studies**

Since this study was on factors that influence individuals to commit robbery: a case study of Kamiti and Langata Prisons, the researcher suggests that;

1. A similar study should be done on other prison facilities in the country for comparison purposes and in order to allow for generalization of the findings to a wider population.
2. A study should be conducted to find out whether delinquents who were involved in minor offences such as theft graduated to adult robbers.

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## APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE PRISON INMATES

Dear respondent,

This questionnaire is for the purpose of academic research only and the information you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please answer all the questions provided as honestly as possible, to the best of your knowledge.

**DO NOT** write your name on this questionnaire.

**Section A: Background Information** (Tick (✓) the appropriate option (bracket))

1. Please tick against your gender?

a) Male [ ] b) Female [ ]

2. Place of residence at the time of arrest -----

3. What is your current age bracket?

a) 21-30 Years [ ] b) 31- 40 years [ ]  
c) 41-50 years [ ] d) 51 and above years [ ]

**Section B: Personal attributes of Robbers**

4. What is your marital status?

- a) Married
- b) Married but separated
- c) Widowed

d) Single (never married)

e) Others (please specify)

5. What is your religion? -----

6. How long is your term of imprisonment?

a) Less than 3 years [ ] b) 3-8 years [ ]  
c) 9-14 years [ ] d) 15-20 years [ ] e) Over 21 years [ ]

f) Life sentence [ ] g) Death sentence [ ]

7. What is your highest academic qualification?

- a) No formal education [ ] b) Std 1-8 [ ]  
c) Form 1-4 [ ]  
d) College/University

8. Which year were you imprisoned?

9. What was your age at the time of imprisonment?

- a) 21-30 Years [ ] b) 31- 40 years [ ]  
c) 41-50 years [ ] d) 51 and above years [ ]

10. Which is your tribe? -----

11. What type of robbery had you committed that warranted your conviction?

12. What is the number of accomplices that were involved in the robbery?

### Section C: Unemployment and robbery

13. What was your occupation before the imprisonment?  
.....

14. Do you think that unemployment causes individuals to commit robbery?

- a) Yes [ ] b) No [ ]

b). If yes, how does it influence individuals to commit robbery?  
.....

15. To what extent does the unemployment causes individuals to commit robbery?

- a) Great extent [ ] b) Moderate extent [ ]  
c) Little extent [ ] e) Not at all [ ]

16. What is your level of agreement with the following statements on the effect of unemployment on individuals to commit robbery? Use a scale of 1-5 where 1= Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree and 5= Strongly agree

|                                                                                                                                                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lack of job prospects and the likelihood of a desolate future contribute to socially deviant behaviour like engaging in robbery                                     |   |   |   |   |   |
| Robbery is a coping strategy to earn a living for the Kenyan unemployed youths                                                                                      |   |   |   |   |   |
| Robbery is a crime for those who want to get rich quickly                                                                                                           |   |   |   |   |   |
| Unemployment, especially among young people, is a major factor which contributes significantly to growth of robbery incidences                                      |   |   |   |   |   |
| Politicians focus on robbery-fighting initiatives as central to controlling robbery but overlook the impact of labor markets in causing robbery                     |   |   |   |   |   |
| Individuals at the lower end of the socioeconomic status scale are more likely to participate in robbery                                                            |   |   |   |   |   |
| Committing robbery leads to arrest and imprisonment which in turn, reduces an individual's future employment prospects and create an incentive to return to robbery |   |   |   |   |   |

17. Suggest other ways in which lack of employment lead individuals to commit robbery.....

**Section D Drug Abuse and Robbery**

18. Do you think that drug abuse causes individuals to commit robbery?

- a) Yes [ ]    b) No [ ]

b). If yes, how does it influence individuals to commit robbery?

.....

19. While committing the crime were you under the influence of drugs?

- Yes [ ]    b) No [ ]

b) If yes, what type of drug?

.....

c). For how long had you used the drug?

Once

Seldom

Regularly

20. To what extent does drug abuse induce individuals to commit robbery?

- a) Great extent    [ ]    b) Moderate extent    [ ]

- c) Little extent    [ ]    e) Not at all    [ ]

21. What is your level of agreement with the following statements on the effect of drug abuse on individuals to commit robbery? Use a scale of 1-5 where 1= strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3- neutral, 4-agree and 5= strongly agree



|                                                                                                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alcohol consumption increases the risk of criminal activity                                                           |   |   |   |   |   |
| Robbery cases tend to cluster around premises with high rates of alcohol consumption                                  |   |   |   |   |   |
| There is a significant influence of illicit drugs on crime where people who commit robbery also consume illicit drugs |   |   |   |   |   |
| Drugs influence individual's propensity to engage in robbery                                                          |   |   |   |   |   |
| The onset of involvement in robbery usually precedes drug abuse                                                       |   |   |   |   |   |
| Individuals already involved in robbery commit far more offences once they become drug dependent                      |   |   |   |   |   |
| Offenders addicted to expensive illicit drugs commit higher rates of robbery to fund their addiction                  |   |   |   |   |   |

22. Suggest other ways in which drug abuse lead individuals to commit robbery.....

**Section E Family Criminological History and Robbery**

23. Do you think that individuals who come from a family with criminological history tend to commit robbery?

a) Yes [ ]    b) No [ ]

24. If yes, how does family criminological history influence individuals to commit robbery?

.....

25. To what extent does the family criminological history causes individuals to commit robbery?

- a) Great extent [ ]      b) Moderate extent [ ]  
 c) Little extent [ ]      e) Not at all [ ]

26. What is your level of agreement with the following statements on the influence of family criminological history on individuals to commit robbery? Use a scale of 1-5 where 1= Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3- neutral, 4-agree and 5= Strongly agree

|                                                                                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Broken families contributes to future criminal activity of the children including engaging in robbery |   |   |   |   |   |
| The intactness of family is the primary factor relating family to juvenile delinquency                |   |   |   |   |   |
| Absence of close relationships between the teenager and his or her parents influence delinquency      |   |   |   |   |   |
| Residing in a family with positive morals reduces the likelihood of committing robbery                |   |   |   |   |   |

27. Suggest other ways in which family criminological history lead individuals to commit robbery?

.....

**Section F Physical Environment and robbery**

28. Do you think that physical environment influences individuals to commit robbery?

- a) Yes [ ]      b) No [ ]

b). If yes, how does it influence individuals to commit robbery?

.....

30. To what extent do the physical environment influence individuals to commit robbery?

- a) Great extent      [ ]      b) Moderate extent      [ ]  
 c) Little extent      [ ]      e) Not at all      [ ]

31. Suggest other ways in which physical environment influence individuals to commit robbery?

.....

32. What is your level of agreement with the following statements on the influence of physical environment on individuals to commit robbery? Use a scale of 1-5 where 1= Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3- neutral, 4-agree and 5= Strongly agree

|                                                                                                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dense vegetation provides potential cover for robbery activities                                                      |   |   |   |   |   |
| Planning and design measures can be utilised very successfully to mitigate against robbery occurrence                 |   |   |   |   |   |
| Potential offenders come into contact with a suitable robbery target where the chances of detection by others are low |   |   |   |   |   |
| If the physical environment is planned appropriately robberies can be reduced                                         |   |   |   |   |   |

**Section G: Social Environment and robbery**

**33. Do you think that social environment influences individuals to commit robbery?**

- a) Yes [ ]    b) No [ ]

**b) If yes, how does social environment influence individuals to commit robbery?**

.....

**34. To what extent do the social environment influence individuals to commit robbery?**

- a) Great extent    [ ]    b) Moderate extent    [ ]  
c) Little extent    [ ]    e) Not at all    [ ]

**35. Suggest other ways in which social environment influence individuals to commit robbery?**

.....

**36. In your opinion which one of the above factors most influences people to commit robbery?**

.....

**Thank you for your time and participation**

## APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE KEY INFORMANTS

This guide is for the purpose of the academic research only and the information you give will be treated confidentially. Please answer all the questions provided as honestly as possible, to the best of your knowledge.

### Section A: Background Information (Tick (✓) the appropriate option (bracket))

1. Please tick against your gender

- a) Male [ ]      b) Female [ ]

2. What is your age?

- a) 18-25 years [ ]      b) 26-35 years [ ]  
c) 36-40 years [ ]      d) 40 years and above [ ]

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

- a) Post Graduate [ ]      b) Graduate [ ]  
c) Diploma [ ]      d) Secondary [ ]  
e) Primary [ ]  
f) Others (specify)

4. How long have you served as an officer in this department?

- a) Less than 1 year [ ]      b) 1-5 years [ ]      c) 6-10 years [ ]  
d) 11-15 years [ ]      e) Over 15 years [ ]

### Section B: Unemployment and robbery

5. Do you think that unemployment causes individuals to commit robbery?

- a) Yes [ ]      b) No [ ]

If yes, how does it influence individuals to commit robbery?

.....

6. To what extent does the unemployment causes individuals to commit robbery?

.....

7. Suggest ways in which the government and other stakeholders can do to resolve lack of employment?

.....

**Section C Drug Abuse and Robbery**

8. Do you think that drug abuse causes individuals to commit robbery?

a) Yes [ ]    b) No [ ]

If yes, how does it influence individuals to commit robbery?

.....

9. To what extent does the drug abuse causes individuals to commit robbery?

.....

10. Suggest ways in which the government and other stakeholders can do to resolve illicit drug consumption by the youth to reduce individuals' propensity to commit robbery? .....

**Section D Family Criminological History and Robbery**

11. Do you think that individuals who come from a family with criminological history tend to commit robbery?

a) Yes [ ]    b) No [ ]

If yes, how does family criminological history influence individuals to commit robbery? .....

12. To what extent does the family criminological history causes individuals to commit robbery?

.....

13. Suggest ways in which family disfunctions can be dealt with to change cases of individuals committing robbery?

.....

**Section E Physical Environment factors and robbery**

14. Do you think that physical environment influences individuals to commit robbery?

a) Yes [ ]    b) No [ ]

If yes, how does it influence individuals to commit robbery?

.....

15. To what extent do the physical environment influence individuals to commit robbery?

.....

**Section F: Social Environment and robbery**

16. Do you think that socialenvironment influences individuals to commit robbery?

a) Yes [ ]    b) No [ ]

If yes, how does socialenvironment influence individuals to commit robbery?

.....

17. To what extent do the socialenvironment influence individuals to commit robbery? .....

18. What recommendations would you make regarding the factors influencing individuals to commit robbery in Kenya?

.....

**Thank you for your time and participation**



### APPENDIX 3: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Joseph M. Kaburu,  
University of Nairobi,  
P. o Box 30197,  
Nairobi, Kenya.  
29<sup>th</sup> August, 2012.

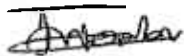
The Commissioner of Prisons,  
Prisons Headquarters,  
P. o Box 30175,  
Nairobi.

Dear Sir,

#### RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

I am a bona fide student at University of Nairobi, taking a Master of Arts degree in Criminology course. As a requirement for the fulfillment of this Masters degree, I intend to carry out research on 'FACTORS INFLUENCING INDIVIDUALS TO COMMIT ROBBERY' in Kamiti Maximum Prison and Langata Women Prison. I am a staff of Prisons Headquarters and I kindly seek your permission to carry out data collection among the prison officers and inmates in the above two mentioned facilities. I will highly appreciate your support.

Yours faithfully,



Joseph Mwenda Kaburu  
C50/71557/2008.

Approved  
leave us with a copy of the  
final document.  
Joseph Mwenda Kaburu  
29/8/2012

**APPENDIX 4: LETTER OF ALLOCATION OF M.A SUPERVISOR**

**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL WORK**

**INTERNAL MEMO**

---

**FROM:** The Coordinator, Module II Programme, Sociology

**DATE:** 28/08/2012

**TO:** Joseph Mwenda Kaburu – C50/71557/2008

---

**SUBJECT:** ALLOCATION OF M.A. PROJECT SUPERVISORS

Through this memo and in response to your request, I wish to inform you that the Department has appointed **Dr. Chepkonga** as Supervisor for your M.A. Project Paper: Entitled: **"Factors influencing individuals to commit robbery: A case study of Kamiti and Langata Prisons."**

You are advised to contact him immediately after the receipt of this memo to discuss the modalities of supervision as you write the paper.

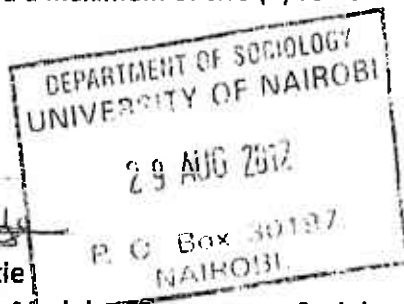
Please note that you are expected to complete your paper within a minimum of one (1) semester and a maximum of two (2) semesters.

Thank you.



**Dr. Pius Mutie**

**Coordinator, Module II Programme, Sociology and Social work**



c.c. Dr.Chepkonga - Supervisor

**APPENDIX 5: LETTER OF PERMIT TO COLLECT DATA**



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL WORK**

Fax 254-2-245566  
Telex 22095 Varsity Ke Nairobi Kenya  
Tel. 318262 Ext. 28167

**P.O. Box 30197  
Nairobi  
Kenya**

2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2012

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**RE: JOSEPH MWENDA KABURU**

This is to confirm that the above named is a bona fide M.A. student in the Department of Sociology and Social Work. He has presented his project proposal entitled: **"Factors influencing individuals to commit robbery: A case study of convicted robbers at Kamiti and Langata Prisons."**

Mr. Mwenda required collecting data pertaining to the research problem from selected organizations to enable him complete his Proposal which is a requirement of the Masters degree.

Kindly give him any assistance he may need.

  
**Dr. R.M. Ocharo**  
Chairman, Dept. of Sociology & Social Work



c.c. Dr. Chepkonga  
Supervisor