



## Article

# The Contribution of Parental Factors to Adolescents' Deviant Behaviour in South Africa: Evidence from Three Rural Communities in South Africa

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**Abstract:** Challenges associated with adolescents are prevalent in South African societies. During the adolescence stage, children may become involved in deviant behaviour. Although a significant number of studies have focused on the factors that contribute to adolescents' deviant behaviour, including parental factors, there is paucity of research specifically in rural communities. This study explores the contribution of parental factors to adolescents' deviant behaviour in rural communities in South Africa. Guided by the qualitative approach, the present study makes use of semi-structured interviews to collect data and thematic analysis to analyse data. The parental factors identified include less parental supervision, a lack of support, an absence of parental discipline, parent's lack of concern and the inability of parents to be role models. These factors play a role in adolescent deviant behaviour, such as crime, dropping out of school and substance abuse. Therefore, by focusing on the family, especially parental behaviour, the potential to reduce adolescent deviant behaviour becomes possible. This is important in promoting the well-being of adolescents, their families and society.

**Keywords:** adolescents; contribution; parental factors; parental monitoring; socialisation; deviant behaviour



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## 1. Introduction

Adolescents' risky behaviour continues to receive attention from different stakeholders, including scholars, in the attempt to enhance their health and well-being. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), adolescents are young people between the ages of 10 and 19 years (UNICEF 2019). Adolescence is a critical transition period between childhood and adulthood, where there is rapid growth and significant changes in the physical, psychological, emotional, intellectual and social domains (Lau and Yuen 2013; Bolu-Steve and Eseré 2017). It is a period characterised by stress and tensions due to inner emotional instability, and as a result of conflicting external experiences (Oni 2010). During these years, peer pressure is very strong and some adolescents start to engage in activities that are perceived to be contrary to the norms and values of the societies, or what may be considered as normal or typical for the society (Bolu-Steve and Eseré 2017; Herington and van de Fliert 2018), which ultimately impede their well-being. This behaviour can be described as deviant behaviour, which is any violation of norms, be it in terms of behaviour, attitude or condition (Dodge 1985; Adler and Adler 2015).

Rubington and Weinberg define deviance as an alleged breach of a social norm (Rubington and Weinberg 2011). Furthermore, Jensen (2011) describes deviant behaviour as the action that violates the normative standards governing acceptable and unacceptable conduct in society. Sociologists also define deviant behaviour as "acts, beliefs and characteristics that violate major social norms, and attract, or are more likely to attract, condemnation, stigma, social isolation, censure, and/punishment by relevant audiences" (Goode 2015, p. 4). Suleiman (2011) defined deviant behaviour as an antisocial behaviour

that hinders the effective functioning of a person with others in society, impedes one from meeting their needs and has a negative effect on the well-being of others. Deviant behaviour is considered through a social process and communication (Franzese 2015). Furthermore, what is considered as deviant behaviour varies between audiences, social circles, settings, circumstances, and situations (Goode 2015). This implies that what is considered as deviance differs according to the setting or society and period; what is considered to be deviant in some societies might be normal in others (Goode 2007). Although there are differences in the way scholars define deviance, it is important to note that there are some striking similarities. For example, there is a consensus that deviant behaviour departs from social norms or ways of doing things that are approved by society, and has consequences. In the case of this study, deviant behaviour is defined as the actions in which adolescents engage that are contrary to the societal norms and expected standards, for example, substance abuse, crime, gangsterism, and being a school dropout.

Adolescents globally continue to engage in socially unacceptable behaviour that is harmful to their well-being and that of society. Some researchers identified the different types of deviant behaviour among in-school adolescents; these include truancy, examination malpractice, substance abuse, bullying, vandalism, and sexual immorality (Odumuyiwa 2001; Esere 2008). The literature from various contexts indicates the involvement of young people in deviant behaviour. For example, in America, studies reveal that young people are involved in criminal activities and the use of dangerous substances that have a significant impact on their health (Boyd 2015; Parks 2013). This comprises the use of tobacco, amphetamines, barbiturates, and heroin, which is harmful to their health (Boyd 2015). Studies in China also show that adolescents are engaging in risky behaviour, such as substance abuse, vandalism, gang violence, and theft (Lu et al. 2013; Pyrooz and Decker 2012; Cheung 2014; Chui and Chan 2013). This affects their behaviour in the present, which will have repercussions in the future, for themselves, their families and the whole society.

Similarly, in Africa, adolescents' deviance is of great concern as studies highlight the evidence of violent behaviour, aggression, school dropouts, substance abuse, and crime (Aute 2019; Idris 2016; Dada 2017; Loveline and Jaja 2020). A study conducted in Kenya indicated the deviance of adolescents in high school in the form of dropping out of school, the destruction of property, injury, and poor academic performance (Aute 2019). Another study conducted in Nigeria brought to light the increase in deviant behaviour among adolescents, and this was attributed to moral decadence among the youth and a lack of discipline (Idris 2016).

In South Africa, studies show that adolescents' deviant behaviour is prevalent, evidenced by the high rates of adolescents in their school-going age abusing substances and engaging in crimes (Mathews et al. 2019; Dada 2017; Stone et al. 2012; Stats SA 2012; Gwatimba and Raselekoane 2018; Groenewald et al. 2018). For example, the National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey 2011 showed that 49.2% of South African school-going youth have used alcohol and 25.1% of these youth have engaged in binge drinking (Reddy et al. 2011). Furthermore, according to the statistics of the South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (SACENDU), 26% of all persons admitted to substance-abuse rehabilitation facilities in 2016 were under the age of 20 years (Dada 2017). This indicates alarming rates of substance abuse and other deviant behaviour among adolescents, which have implications on their well-being (Stone et al. 2012). With almost half of the population being people 20 years old or younger (Stats SA 2019), it is important to concentrate on preventing deviant behaviour among young people to enhance their own well-being, as well as that of the society and the country at large.

During adolescence, peers become increasingly significant socialising agents for behaviour (Wang et al. 2018); however, the family, specifically parents, remain important (Light et al. 2013) as the first and most immediate agents of socialisation responsible for the transmission of values and morals to children (Bolu-Steve and Esere 2017). Parents "act as role models and educators for their children, as they create home environments that transmit parental values" (Louw and Louw 2007, p. 250). Studies indicate the role of

parents in shaping the behaviour of their children. Parental bonding, attachment, support, monitoring, and discipline are associated with decreased incidents of deviant behaviour and, on the other hand, the absence of these factors are found to be associated with increased incidents of deviant behaviour (Stone et al. 2012; Tharp and Noonan 2012; Lac and Crano 2009; Lam et al. 2014; Mair et al. 2015).

There is a great variety of factors that can affect parenting practice. The quality of parenting is strongly influenced by the larger ecological context in which it evolves (Roubinov and Boyce 2017). This means that the environment in which one lives determines the extent to which one can be a good parent (Sanders and Turner 2018). Evidence indicates that parenting becomes easier and less stressful when families live in conducive, stable, and supportive homes with caring, capable, and involved parents that have access to regular employment or income-generating activities, secure housing, education, good schools, affordable health care, safe spaces for play and recreation, and social support (Sanders and Turner 2018). In contrast, stressful life circumstances, including exposure to violence, mental and physical health problems, substance abuse, poor housing conditions, and crime, can diminish parental self-efficacy and capacity (Crnic and Ross 2017). Socio-economic conditions and high levels of toxic stress within a family may powerfully influence parenting through their effects on mental health and differential access to resources, and ensuring children's survival in such circumstances becomes a major challenge for parents (Roubinov and Boyce 2017). Adolescents raised by parents from such backgrounds might become vulnerable to developing serious health, social, emotional, and behavioural challenges (Sanders and Turner 2018).

Cultural contexts also influence parental values and practices, meaning that belonging to a certain ethnic or racial group is significant to the sharing of norms, values, and attitudes that guide an individual's parenting practices (Sanders and Turner 2018; Roubinov and Boyce 2017). Although parental values, practices, routines, and rituals vary across different cultures, they have implications on the child's development and the parenting strategies used to encourage children to socialise (Roubinov and Boyce 2017; Dwairy and Achoui 2010). This suggests that cultural factors can influence the parenting style adopted by parents within a specific culture, thus later determining the child's successful transition from the adolescent stage without facing any behavioural challenges. Cultural factors combined with other factors, such as the socio-economic status of the parent, knowledge of parenting, health issues, living environment, and issues of substance abuse, can either have a positive or negative impact on the child's development and behaviour, including deviant behaviour.

Although an increasing number of studies identified parental factors and the contribution thereof to children's behaviour (Lam et al. 2014; Mair et al. 2015; Light et al. 2013; Wills and Yaeger 2003; Keogh-Clark et al. 2021; Gault-Sherman 2012), there are few studies in some rural areas in South Africa that explore these facets. The identification of these factors provides further insight into the problem and possible family environment context-based intervention strategies. Understanding the predictors of deviant behaviour among adolescents can help to inform efforts to prevent deviant behaviour and the problems related to it (Rusby et al. 2018). The insufficient research on deviance among adolescents and the factors contributing to it in South Africa, may have serious implications on the success of any interventions geared towards curbing deviance in this country. As such, further research on the parental factors that contribute to deviance among adolescents could solve the puzzle concerning deviant behaviour among adolescents, as well as contribute towards interventions to combat deviance.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The qualitative approach was used in this study to explore the contribution of parental factors to the behaviour of their adolescent children. Data was collected in three rural communities in South Africa: Lamberts Bay in the Western Cape Province, Calvinia in the Northern Cape, and Philippolis in the Free State Province. The participants of the study

were stakeholders living and working in the above-mentioned communities who agreed to share their views and understanding of the state of the communities they live and work in, the challenges they faced, and the well-being and factors affecting the well-being of the people in the community. The stakeholders consisted of social workers, dieticians, nurses, community health workers, and police officials working and living in the above-stated three communities. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants of the study. A total of 23 stakeholders (6 from Calvina, 13 from Lamberts Bay, and 4 from Philippolis) participated in the interviews. In Table 1, a summary of the characteristics of the 23 stakeholders that were included in the study is shown.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the participants.

Characteristics	Participants (N = 23)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	8	34.8
Female	15	65.2
<b>Age</b>		
20–29	4	17.4
30–39	10	43.5
40–49	4	17.4
50–59	4	17.4
60–69	1	4.3
<b>Education</b>		
High school	2	8.7
Completed matric	11	47.8
Diploma	3	13
Degree	5	21.7
Postgraduate	2	8.7
<b>Profession</b>		
Health worker	4	17.4
Child and youth worker	4	17.4
Social worker	7	30.4
Police officer	1	4.3
General manager	1	4.3
Cleaner	6	26.1
<b>Language</b>		
English	2	8.7
IsiXhosa	17	73.9
Afrikaans	4	17.4

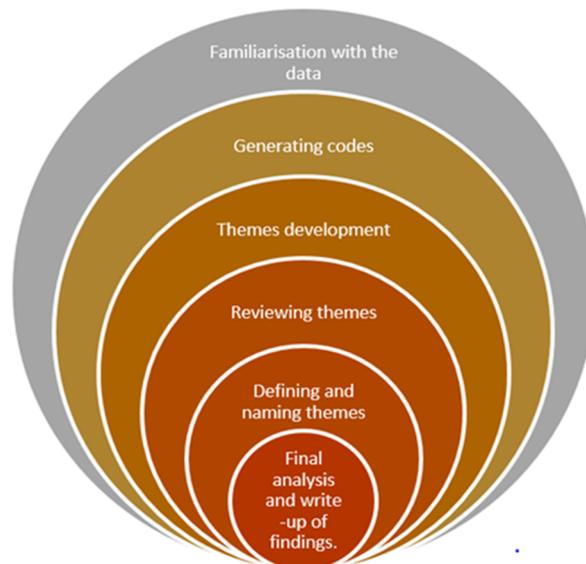
The study utilised semi-structured interviews to collect data from the stakeholders. The interviews were guided by the interview schedules developed beforehand, based on Nussbaum's 10 Human Capabilities. Probing questions were asked to follow up on the participants' responses. The interviews were conducted in English and Afrikaans, which are the predominant languages in the three areas. The interviews ranged between 40 to 70 min. The semi-structured interviews (see Table 2) comprised a series of open-ended questions to help in understanding the state of adolescents in the community from the perspective of stakeholders.

**Table 2.** Semi-structured interview guide.

Questions
1. What are the most prominent challenges faced in this community?
2. What factors contribute to the challenges you have noted?
3. Describe the state of adolescents living in this community?
4. What kind of behaviours are adolescents in this community involved in?
5. What are the factors influencing adolescents' behaviours?
6. What can be done to improve the well-being of adolescents in this community?

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the University of the Western Cape's Research Ethics Committee. Fieldworkers were trained before data collection commenced. Recruitment was performed by fieldworkers through community-based organisations and by travelling to the places at which the stakeholders worked. The stakeholders were purposefully selected through identifying people in the community working as social workers, child and youth workers, health professionals, and police officers. The purpose, aims, and objectives of the study and research process were explained to the participants. Participants were encouraged to ask questions, and after they had understood the details of the study, they were provided with a consent form, which they completed before participating in the study. Confidentiality was ensured by allocating pseudonyms to each of the participants masking their details.

Digital recordings from the interviews were transcribed verbatim using a professional transcribing service. All the transcripts were translated into English before the analysis procedure commenced. Data were analysed inductively through thematic analysis. The analysis process (see Figure 1) firstly involved the researchers familiarising themselves with the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts; then they generated initial codes by selecting quotations or data from the interviews and allocating codes. After the coding was completed, the researchers went through the codes and the quotations, identifying the mistakes in the coding and making comments. Thereafter, the themes generation commenced through sorting different codes into related clusters. Themes were then refined by breaking them down further or merging them. Thereafter, the themes were named and defined to explain the ideas captured by each theme. Subsequently, the themes were checked against the original quotations, ensuring that the text confirmed the classification. The final analysis and the write up of the findings were then carried out, linking the themes to the quotations by the participants and then commenting on them.



**Figure 1.** Summary of the thematic analysis process used in the study.

To establish the rigour and trustworthiness in this study, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were adhered to. Credibility was ensured by translating the research instruments into the languages the participants understood to maximise their participation, and they were allowed to respond in those languages. Translations were made using language experts. After the interview, a recap of the main points was conducted with the participants to ensure credibility. Transferability was ensured by adhering to the best practice in the collection and analysis of the data. To ensure the confirmability and dependability of the findings, the same data were analysed by a team of researchers

separately, and the results were compared. Inconsistencies in the data were discussed and addressed.

### 3. Results

The study indicates that the adolescents in the communities engage in various anti-social or deviant behaviour, mainly crime, substance abuse, gangsterism, violent behaviour, and being school dropouts, which affect their well-being. One of the main themes that were developed from the data as a major contributor to the adolescents' risky behaviour was the parental factors related to the behaviour of the parents as agents of socialisation and carers of the adolescents, and its contribution to deviance in adolescents. The theme of parental factors is divided into the following subthemes: less parental supervision, parents' lack of support and knowledge of adolescent behaviour, absence of parental discipline, and the inability of parents to be positive role models. These subthemes are discussed hereafter.

#### 3.1. Less Parental Supervision

The stakeholders in the community noted that the crimes committed by adolescents is rife in the community. Young people were noted to be engaging in criminal activities, and one of the most noted reasons for this was related to a reduced amount of parental supervision or monitoring. Since parents, at times, are unable to monitor their adolescent children, the adolescents end up engaging in deviant behaviour. Some of the stakeholders aptly explained this situation as follows:

*Because that's when the parents get their pay or whatever, their grants . . . and then from what I have seen is they will end up drinking and then the children (adolescents) don't have supervision and the fights or stabbings and those kinds of things you usually see around about the end of the month. (Stakeholder 1)*

*. . . our children that are younger are involved in crime due to a lack of parent supervision . . . (Stakeholder 14)*

Parents are important in shaping the behaviour of their children, as they are the first and most immediate source of contact for children or adolescents. As highlighted by the participants, the reduced monitoring of adolescents by the parents, especially during the times when they receive an income, is linked to more incidents of criminal behaviour enacted by the adolescents. This might be because parents are preoccupied with spending their income, which they would have received, and end up neglecting their adolescent children that need their care. As a result, without monitoring, adolescents feel neglected and end up looking for support outside the home, mostly from peers who, at times, may be involved in deviant behaviour. Furthermore, the lack of parental monitoring was also linked to the increase in alcohol abuse among early adolescents. One of the stakeholders mentioned the reason for some of the adolescents engaging in the drinking of alcohol at an early age in the following manner:

*. . . 12 years. I've never seen it myself but from working at the clinic and things like that, people talk so yes, because also usually at the end of the month there is less parental supervision and incidents involving children, has just increased . . . (Stakeholder 1)*

Young people, as young as 12 years old, have been noted to be abusing alcohol in the community due to the absence of monitoring from parents. This shows the importance of parents' or elders' presence in the lives of adolescents as a mechanism to regulate their behaviour.

#### 3.2. Lack of Parental Support and Knowledge of Adolescents' Behaviour

Children depend on their environment, especially their parents, to provide for their needs, encouragement, and support. However, the study found out that some adolescents in the community do not receive the necessary support from their parents, which is necessary for positive development. This sentiment is aptly captured by the following words from the stakeholders:

*In our community, our people lack a sense of responsibility. Children leave school, they don't finish matric . . . and the parents don't feel like taking responsibility for them because many times the child would say they don't feel like going to school then the parent would say now what am I supposed to do? The mother does not feel like taking the child every day to school, she prefers to sit in the sun so it basically comes back to the lack of support and responsibility, our people do not have that, so the parents rather allow the children to leave school. (Stakeholder 5)*

*Like drug abuse, lacking parent skills, they don't know how to raise the children properly. The parents don't have parenting skills because they use drugs and alcohol. (Stakeholder 6)*

The quotations by the participants are evident of the lack of parental support and lack of involvement that make the adolescents vulnerable to deviant behaviour, for example, dropping out of school and drug abuse. Parents should make an effort to ensure that their adolescent children are in school, where they can further enhance other skills necessary for their development; however, the response by Stakeholder 5 demonstrates that some parents do not care whether their adolescent children go to school or not, and do not take the initiative to make sure that the adolescent children go to school. This could also be linked to the issues of drug abuse by some parents that were noted to be rife in the community, which impairs their ability to be good parents.

### 3.3. Absenteeism

Parental absenteeism has been noted as one of the factors associated with adolescents' problematic behaviour in rural townships. The study found out that some fathers are not involved in the upbringing of their children and some of the mothers are focused on abusing drugs. This leaves the child with no one to take care of them and, at times, in the care of grandparents who are mostly old and no longer have enough energy to deal with adolescents. Below are some of the sentiments expressed by the participants:

*Fathers are not involved, they just gave up. Mothers when they are on drugs, the grandparents are there. They are responsible to raise the kids. I mean when you're almost 60 years of age, you don't want to sit up with a child screaming, shouting and kicking because it's not your time to raise a kid. (Stakeholder 8)*

*Our children just drop out of school and just stand in front of the shops loafing for R5 or whatever, some get involved in crime at that age. And our parents are absent like in, I'm here in the flesh but I'm absent. They are busy with their own stuff so the children are on their own actually and you are not aware of what is going on in the child's life even. The drug problem is so huge in Lamberts Bay. (Stakeholder 14)*

The statements expressed by the participants explain the role of parental absenteeism on the deviant behaviour of adolescents in the community. Parental absenteeism in the community is categorised into two factors. The first is the physical absence of the parents, especially fathers, and the other is emotional absence, whereby the parents are physically present, but do not care about the adolescent children, nor do they find time to engage in activities together or develop attachments with their adolescent children, thus contributing to crime and drug abuse behaviour among adolescents.

### 3.4. Lack of Parental Discipline

Discipline is one known method of shaping and reinforcing behaviours in adolescents, so that they act in a socially acceptable manner. This study reveals that some parents in the community do not apply any disciplinary techniques to shape the behaviour of their adolescent children; instead, they are allowed to do as they please. To support this, some of the participants alluded to the following ideas:

*Parents are the biggest problems nowadays, they do not commit to discipline, they do not commit to any routine. (Stakeholder 4)*

*I won't say all of them but there are some of the parents that don't really worry when the child who is 12 or 13 years goes out of the house and comes in at any time of the night. Then they want to fight with the children, but then the children are already grown because, at 12 or 13 years they are already grown so then they want to discipline the children, which is too late because you must discipline the child from an early age. (Stakeholder 11)*

From the above statements, it can be noted that some of the deviant behaviour of adolescents are also a result of the parent's inability to employ disciplinary methods that discourage inappropriate behaviour. The stakeholders pointed out the fact that some parents do not stick to any disciplinary routine, thus resulting in adolescents dropping out of school and going out at night because they do not experience any consequences for their behaviour. Furthermore, the study found out that some parents try to start disciplining their children when they are already in the adolescent stage, however the chances of success are limited because they would have permitted the deviant behaviour to persist for a long time. This shows the importance of being consistent in disciplining the child from an early age for lifelong benefits.

### 3.5. Parents' Lack of Concern and Knowledge of the Child's Behaviour

The study also found out that lack of concern on the part of the parents is common, as parents sometimes refuse to accept any information or reports of their child's behaviour from significant others, for example, educators that spend time with the adolescent children. They ignore warnings of the bad behaviour of their adolescent children and sometimes choose to blame other people for the behaviour of their adolescent children. A lack of parental concern and knowledge about the child's behaviour contributes to their anti-social behaviour. Some of the stakeholders mentioned the following ideas:

*... then you tell the parents that the child misbehaving in class, that parent will go to school, and the school manager and the school secretary, all the teachers are wrong, that child is never wrong (Stakeholder 4).*

*Yes and then currently it's our drug use, yes tik is taking over our community and children just don't listen ... , parents refuse to believe, they see some differences in the child and that their behaviour has changed but they are ignorant they just don't want to ask or know if something is wrong (Stakeholder 5).*

*We have a big problem with children that do not attend school ... we have very few parents that do something about the case ... .our parents just don't care...the parents don't worry about their children. As I said, the child can do it if he or she wants to. (Stakeholder 6)*

The information obtained from the stakeholders in the community reveals a lack of concern from some parents for the adolescents' behaviour. This is shown by ignoring any signs of deviant behaviour or not showing interest in knowing what the child is doing. Bad behaviour among adolescents, for example, misbehaving at school, abusing drugs, and truancy, have been attributed to parents' lack of concern by the stakeholders. This is because parents are trusted as the first agents of socialisation who are supposed to help regulate their adolescent children's behaviour. Their failure to invest their time in knowing what the children are doing has implications on the behaviour and well-being of their children.

### 3.6. The Inability of Parents to Be Positive Role Models

The behaviour of the parents guides their children's behaviour, beliefs, and attitudes both in the present and in future. Parents can either be positive or negative role models to their children. The study found out that some adolescents in Lamberts Bay do not have positive role models in their parents due to the anti-social behaviour of their parents, to which children are daily exposed. One of the stakeholders explained this in the following manner:

*... they don't know about doing sports and stuff like what youngsters are supposed to do, so they drink from an early age so now they are continuing the cycle of the parents drinking and abusing the mother or the girlfriend or stuff like that. So the parents drink in front of their children, they drink and they do drugs and they fight with the children you see? Those are their role models, so they have negative role models in the community who they look up to and think this is the way you must be and you must act. (Male stakeholder, 32 years old, Lamberts Bay)*

The failure of some parents to be positive role models has been noted to be related to the choices and actions of the adolescents. As cited in the statement above by one of the participants, some adolescents are raised in families characterised by substance abuse and violence, mainly by their parents, who should be responsible for moulding the values to pass on to adolescent children. As a result, the adolescents adopt anti-social acts because they are inducted into them by their parents. They grow up to think that this harmful behaviour is acceptable in society. This indicates the extent to which a lack of parental role models affects the behaviour of the adolescent child.

#### 4. Discussion

The paper aimed to explore the parental factors that contribute to deviance among adolescents in rural South Africa, an area that has not received much attention from scholars. The lack of attention on specific issues in rural areas further marginalises rural populations; therefore, attention must be paid to the issues they face with the goal of remedying their conditions. As such, this study explored the parental factors that contribute to deviance among adolescents in rural South Africa to promote strong and resilient families.

The results were divided into six themes representing the commonalities identified in the interview data. According to this study, the deviant behaviour of adolescents results from the absence or limited supervision or monitoring of adolescent children, which provides the adolescents with the opportunity to engage in crime and other forms of anti-social behaviour, for example, alcohol and drug abuse. This confirms the findings of other studies that show that low parental monitoring is associated with an increased likelihood of an engagement with different forms of deviant behaviour (Keogh-Clark et al. 2021; Gault-Sherman 2012; Muchiri and Dos Santos 2018; Marceau et al. 2020). The family environment strongly influences the behaviour and well-being of people within that family, according to the socio-ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 1994). For example, the lack of time parents invest in monitoring, socialising with, and instilling positive values in their children is associated with deviant behaviour among adolescents (Wolhuter and Van der Walt 2020). Therefore, parental monitoring or presence is essential to ensure that adolescents in rural South Africa transition into adulthood without facing many difficulties.

Parental monitoring and knowledge of the adolescent's whereabouts and the activities in which they are engaged are strong predictors of reduced deviant behaviour in adolescents (Lac et al. 2011; Neiderhiser et al. 2013; Kuntsche and Kuntsche 2016; Criss et al. 2015; Mair et al. 2015). However, the present study found that some parents do not pay attention to any information about their adolescent children's behaviour, especially in the school setting. Since parental knowledge of a youth's behaviour may be considered as one of the main resources for parents to avoid having a child that engages in deviant behaviour (Criss et al. 2015), their lack of knowledge of the child's behaviour promotes the adolescent's deviant behaviour, specifically his or her misbehaviour at school, which includes truancy. This, therefore, results in a failure to achieve anything academically, thus further exposing the adolescents in rural areas to a cycle of poverty. This notion is supported by Suliman who indicated that, when parents do not consistently react to the undesired behaviour of an adolescent, the child might continue to engage in more deviant behaviour (Suleiman 2011).

The family is the first environment for socialisation, in which values and morals are transmitted (Suharsono et al. 2009; Lestari 2016). Therefore, family members, especially parents, have a role in shaping adolescents' behaviour through social contact. Studies show that children observe how to socialise from their families and imitate that behaviour (Rob-

biyah et al. 2018; Machmud 2013; Lestiawati 2013). The findings of this study demonstrate that some of the adolescents' deviant behaviour are a result of the type of role models they have in the home. Parents in the homes who are the adolescent children's first point of education engage in anti-social behaviour; therefore, adolescents imitate this kind of behaviour, to which they are exposed. Similarly, other studies support this finding by highlighting that the poor moral conduct of parents and their failure to be good leaders/role models can negatively impact the adolescents' behaviour (Parks 2013; Goode 2007). This indicates the need for parents to lead lives that are descent, in order for their children to copy such positive qualities. This ultimately leads to better and resilient families and communities.

Discipline is one of the important behavioural control mechanisms, which act as a protective factor in adolescents' positive development and problem prevention (Kincaid et al. 2011). The stakeholders revealed that the problematic behaviour of adolescents is sometimes a result of parents not implementing and adhering to any discipline mechanism. This shows that some of the parents in the community are orientated towards the permissive type of parenting, whereby adolescent children are allowed to do as they please without any form of punishment (Baumrind 1978). This type of parenting has been strongly linked to deviant behaviour, as supported by the social control theory (Kempf-Leonard 2019; Hirschi 1969), which determines that deviant behaviour results from the weaknesses of the forces, in this case parents, in restraining behaviour (Schreck et al. 2006).

Furthermore, adolescents who have emotionally close affective ties with parents or other adults are more likely to conform to social norms due to a social bond, primarily socialised through the family, and thus are also less likely to commit norm-violating behaviour (Harris et al. 2020). Even though this is stipulated, the stakeholders in the community revealed that some parents in the rural communities are absent, either physically or emotionally. Therefore, due to their unavailability, they do not have the chance to develop ties with their adolescent children or the time to socialise with or instil positive values in adolescent children in the family. As a result, this increases the likelihood of adolescents' involvement in deviant behaviour because, at this stage, peers become increasingly important socialising agents for the children (Ryan 2000; Wang et al. 2018); if strong foundations for good behaviour are not laid by the parents and elders in the family, the adolescents' behaviour might be shaped by negative peer groups.

## 5. Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest that negative parenting behaviour and practices are associated with deviant behaviour among adolescents. Therefore, to effectively deal with deviant behaviour among adolescents, it is relevant to resolve factors in the family, including parental factors, which promote deviant behaviour among adolescents. The family is the most immediate and important agent of socialisation; as such, interventions should be focused on promoting positive values and behaviour in families, which can lead to a stable society. Family practitioners must also concentrate on enhancing positive parenting practices, as well as parental behaviour, to promote adolescents' healthy development. Policy strategies for adolescents' well-being should be targeted towards promoting responsible and positive parenting practices and behaviour as protective factors in the development of adolescents. There is a need for researchers to further explore the ways in which family ties can be strengthened, specifically focusing on the parents as primary agents of socialisation. The engagement of scholars with the community is required through workshops and webinars consisting of different stakeholders to bring awareness of the challenges faced by adolescents and their parents, as well as to devise solutions that are specifically tailored to their unique needs.

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