

AUGUSTINE OSEI BOAKYE

Juvenile Delinquency in Ghana: A Qualitative Study of the Lived Experiences of Young Offenders in Accra

Master's Thesis in Human Development

Trondheim, May 2012



NORWEGIAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY
MANAGEMENT

INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

MASTER THESIS

**Juvenile Delinquency in Ghana: A Qualitative Study
of the Lived Experiences of Young Offenders in
Accra**

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of
Philosophy degree in Human Development, Institute of Psychology, Norwegian
University of Science and Technology, Trondheim.

May 2012

Author

AUGUSTINE OSEI BOAKYE

DECLARATION

I, Augustine Osei Boakye, hereby declare that the work herein presented is my own research which was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Berit Overå Johannesen at the institute of Psychology of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Except the works of other people which have been duly acknowledged, this thesis has never been presented to the university or anywhere else for a degree.

Signed

Date

Augustine Osei Boakye

(Student)

This work has been submitted for examination with my approval in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree at the Institute of Psychology, NTNU.

Signed

Date

Dr. Berit Overå Johannesen

(Supervisor)

(PhD: Associate Professor)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother Cecilia Konadu Boahen, and my two sisters Barbara Mensah and Faustina Mensah for their prayers and support.

I also dedicate this work to my late grandmother Mama Alice, who saw this potential in me and but never lived to see my success. To aunty and her husband Mr. and Mrs. Agyeman for their enormous support which pushed me this far.

I also dedicate my work to my fiancée Ms Grace Appiah Agyekum for her prayers and support.

I love you all and God bless you all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My deepest appreciation goes to the Almighty God for his favour, protection, grace and sustenance throughout the two years of my stay in Norway and for making this thesis a success.

I am very thankful to the Norwegian State Educational Scholarship Fund (Lånekassen) for their financial support in my education and research in Norway.

My innermost gratefulness goes to the young offenders who volunteered to be part of this study, without which the study would have not materialized. I am also thankful to the officers at the correctional center for their assistance during the data collection process.

I am tremendously grateful to Dr. Berit Overå Johannesen for attending to my persistent consultation and providing me with constructive criticism and close supervision to ensure a scholarly research. Her long experience as a lecturer and a researcher is a great asset not only to the university but also to the world.

Also, I am thankful Dr. Birthe Loa Knizek for her constructive feedback and assistance during the numerous research seminars.

I am thankful to:

Prof C.C. Mate- Kole at the Department of Psychology, University of Ghana, legon.

I am so grateful for your encouragement and support.

Dr. Akosua K. Darkwah at the Department of Sociology, University of Ghana, legon.

You are the source of my earnest interest in academic research.

God richly bless you all.

ABSTRACT

In this study, I explored the perceived circumstances which make adolescents become involved in juvenile delinquency. The meanings which they make out of their delinquent behaviours were also of great interest. Using a semi-structured interview guide, the lived experiences of six (6) young offenders were collected. Following a Narrative Analysis of the young offenders lived experiences, six (6) main themes emerged as the circumstances which made them become involved in delinquency: religiosity and morality, deviant peer association, substance use and delinquency, the functioning of the nuclear family, Inadequate extended family support, apathy in schooling and lastly labeling by neighbours. As a meaning making platform, the participants saw their delinquent behaviours as a means to an end. Another construed meaning of delinquency in this study was that, proceeds from ill gotten gains amounted to 'bitter' money. The training process through which the young offenders who premeditated their acts went through was observed to be an apprenticeship model where each trainee (young offender) had a 'big-man' (a master) and a mentor (trainer). These finding were interspersed with relevant theories and literatures for a thorough discussion, with their implications for intervention and future research clearly emphasized.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Declaration.....	I
Dedication	II
Acknowledgement.....	III
Abstract	V
CHAPTER1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Background of study.....	1
1.2. Statement of problem.....	2
1.3. Aims of the study.....	3
1.4. Research questions.....	3
1.5. Relevance of the study	4
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	5
2.1 Theoretical Framework	5
2.1.1. Social Bond Theory	5
2.1.2. General Theory of Crime	7
2.1.3. Labeling Theory	8
2.1.4. Differential Association Theory	8
2.1.5. Differential Oppression Theory	9
2.1.6. Situated Learning Theory and Legitimate Peripheral Participation.....	10
2.2. Review of Related Studies	11
2.2.1. Evidence for the Effect of Parenting, Self-Control, Neighbourhood Characteristics, Peer association on Delinquency.....	11
2.2.2. Economic Challenges and Delinquency.....	15
2.2.3. Substance Use and Delinquency	16
2.2.4. Religiosity and Delinquency	18
2.2.5. The ‘Bitter’ Money conception.....	22
2.2.6. Nucleation of the Family System	23
2.2.7. Etiology of Juvenile Delinquency in Ghana	24

2.2.8. Conceptualization of Juvenile Delinquency	26
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	28
3.1. Research Method and Design	28
3.2. Site of the Study	29
3.3. Population/ Sample	29
3.4. Instruments	30
3.5. Procedure	31
3.6. Transcription and Data Analysis	33
3.7. Reliability and Validity	34
3.8. Ethical Considerations	36
CHAPTER 4: REDULTS AND DISCUSSION	39
4.1. The Lived experiences of Participants	39
4.1.1. McKenzy’s Story	39
4.1.2. Exhibit’s Story	44
4.1.3. Aikins’s Story	50
4.1.4. Escoba’s Story	57
4.1.5. Stigo’s Story	61
4.1.6. Abroad’s Story	67
4.2. Main Findings.....	76
4.2.1. Religiosity and Morality	76
4.2.1.1. Conversion onto a Constructive Path	76
4.2.1.2. Reinforcing Delinquency	77
4.2.1.3. ‘Bitter’ Money	78
4.2.2. Deviant Peer Association, Substance Use and Delinquency.....	79
4.2.2.1. Deviant Peer Influence into Substance Use as a Precursor to Delinquency.....	80
4.2.2.2 Deviant Peer Influence into Substance Use as Reinforcement to Delinquency.....	81

4.2.3. Substance Use as an Adjustment Strategy to Stressful Life.....	82
4.2.4. Deviant Peer Association and Delinquency.....	83
4.3. The functioning of the nuclear family	84
4.3.1. Inadequate Parental Support	84
4.3.2. Parental Laxity in Supervision	86
4.3.3. Parental Maltreatment	87
4.4. Inadequate Extended Family Support	87
4.5. Apathy in Schooling	89
4.6. Labeling by Neighbours	90
4.7. Meaning of their Behaviour	91
4.8. Training Process Based on Apprenticeship Model	92
CHAPTER 5: GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUTION.....	95
5.1. Overview of Findings.....	95
5.2. Limitations	98
5.3. Strengths	99
5.4. Implication and Recommendations	100
5.4.1. Community Psychological Praxis and Intervention	100
5.4.2. Future Research on Juvenile Delinquency	103
REFERENCES	104
APPENDICES	111
Appendix I: Semi-Structured Interview Guide	111
Appendix II: Informed Consent Form	114
Appendix III: Letter of Informed Consent to Parent/Guardian of participant	116
Appendix IV: Ethical Clearance Letter from the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD), Norway	118
Appendix V: Ethical Clearance letter from the Ghana Prison Service, Ghana.....	119
LIST OF FIGURES	
Figure 1: The training process to delinquency	92
Figure 2: Causes of delinquency in Ghana as suggested by the data	96

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

JHS: Junior High School

BECE: Basic Education Certificate Examination

EASI Temperament Scale: Emotionality, Activity, Sociability and Impulsivity Scale

LDS: Latter Day Saint

NYS: National Youths Study

SHS: Senior High School

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

In any human society where accepted modes of conduct are laid, deviance is inevitable (Abotchie, 2008; 1997). Deviance and crime is and has always been a threat to the serenity and tranquility enjoyed by members of a community (Adams & Evans, 1996). Beside the gradual moral degeneration which can befall perpetrators when they are embittered with deviance and crime, there arise huge custody, health and economic cost to be borne by a nation fraught with the issue of crime (Simões, Matos & Batista-Foguet, 2008). For this reason, juvenile delinquency has now become one of the important social issues which every nation try to bring under control amidst the glaring evidence that, if the right nurturance is not given to the young offenders, they may graduate to become criminals (Hess & Drowns, 2010; Kuanliang, Sorensen & Cunningham, 2008; Austin, Johnson & Gregoriou, 2000; Johnson, 1999). By reason of infancy and to avert derogatory labels, the young offenders are relinquished of their responsibility for their offence and therefore they do not get treated as an adult. Drawing from its negative consequences, juvenile delinquency has over the years become one of the critical issues which researchers of varying background as well as policy makers' battle with (Iobidze, 2009; Tarolla, Wagner, Rabinowitz & Tubman, 2002).

Children all over the world are possible future leaders (Kasser, 2011; Knjin & van Oorschot, 2008) which may demand that they perform vital roles within their family and the community in general when they matured enough. For an individual to be accepted into such an esteemed leadership positions, one key indicator is that, such a person must be a good role model who is worthy of emulation with regards to conformity to the norms and values that bind the community and abstinence from the ones that destroy it. For children to fulfill this

potential in the future, it is expected of them to refrain from deviant and delinquent behaviours that can truncate their chances in such held universal truism on leadership (Kasser, 2011). This makes it essential that as children are allowed to interact with environment in to demonstrate and reinforce their creative power (Corsaro & Johannesen, 2007), they also receive the requisite guidance and direction to be conditioned to good modes of conduct so as to refrain from destructive ways of life (Watson, 1913; Nukunya, 2003, Abotchie, 1997). The lived experiences of young offenders when adequately tapped will provide us their perspectives which will in turn add up to our understanding as a society and help us know how to improve it.

1.2. Statement of Problem

In Ghana, Bosiakoh and Andoh (2010) have emphasized an upward surge of juvenile delinquency which many well meaning Ghanaians admit as alarming. According to the Department of Social Welfare annual performance report, 276 juvenile delinquency cases were handled in the year 2007. The Ghana prison service annual report in 2010 also indicated an average daily lock-up of 115 juvenile offenders. With an increased understanding of the young offenders' perspective, stakeholders in the community can incorporate them in proactive steps which will addressing the problem rather than waiting for children to be involved in crime before any action is taken. A key step to unraveling this social puzzle of juvenile delinquency is to explore the lived experience of young offenders to find out the circumstances that got them involved in delinquent behaviours for lessons to be deduced (Simões et al., 2008, Hunte, 2006).

Again, the voice of young offender are markedly absent from the in the literature of delinquency in Ghana. This is partly because, even though there exist a plethora of literature on juvenile delinquency and how it can be prevented in the world, there is a dearth of research

with respect to Ghana (Arthur, 1997). Previous research on juvenile delinquency in Ghana can be traced to Bosiakoh and Andoh (2010), Arthur (1997) and Weinberg (1964). These studies focused on the replication of western theories of delinquency to find out if different results are likely. This influenced their research scope to operate within the boundaries of the theories and prevented them from looking at other plausible explanations. Moreover, the methodological approach that characterized the previous studies of delinquency in Ghana was quantitative in orientation which allows little room for a deeper probe into the phenomenon in Ghanaian context.

This study, rather than fitting theories into the Ghanaian context, will explore the lived experiences of young offenders in Accra to unveil from their perspective, in-depth information about the circumstances that got them involved in delinquency and thereafter, find possible theories to explain it. In this way, the finding of this study will not be a mere test of a western theory's universality but will serve as a catalyst for other plausible explanations of delinquency in Ghana to crop up. This will be useful in the policy direction of the country on delinquency prevention and will consequently serve as a way of updating the literature on Ghana.

1.3. Aim of the Study

1. To find the perception of the young offenders about the circumstances that led them to be involved in delinquency and to discover the meanings that they construct out of their delinquent behaviours.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the perceived circumstances which led some young Ghanaian males to become involved in juvenile delinquency?
2. What meanings do the young offenders construct out of their delinquent behaviours?

1.5. Relevance of the Study

This study will provide in-depth information on the reasons why some adolescents get involved in delinquency in the context of Ghana. Since delinquency has been identified as related to socio-cultural factors (Iobidze, 2009; Arthur, 1997; Weinberg, 1964), it is important to contribute to the understanding of juvenile delinquency in Ghana. The qualitative approach that will be employed in this study will also provide a room for the voice of young offenders to be captured with respect to why they got involved in delinquency. More so, the results will be useful to the country policy direction in taking proactive measure to safeguard adolescents not yet in conflict with the law. That is, the knowledge generated from this study will be local to the Ghanaian context which will be useful to individuals, governmental and non-governmental institutions championing the welfare of children on some indicators to pay close attention to in their pursuits.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Framework

To holistically combat juvenile delinquency demands an enquiry into its causal underpinnings and this has led researchers to identify risk factors which increase the likelihood of children to engage in delinquent behaviours (Green, Gesten, Greenwald & Salcedo, 2008; Simões et al., 2008; Hunte, 2006). Some of these risk factors include poor socioeconomic background, parental absence, emotional strain, negative peer influence, and negative community elements (Simões, et al., 2008; Hunte, 2006). These risk factors were deduced after thorough study of delinquency and how it develops which has led to a plethora of theories in this area. Admittedly, each of the theories on delinquency has their strengths and their limitation in the explanatory process. In this study, I present a range of theories which will serve as the explanatory framework of the young offenders' delinquent behaviours. The theories presented include the social bond theory, the general theory of crime, the labeling theory, the differential association theory, the differential oppression theory and situated learning theory. These theories are as discussed below.

2.1.1. Social Bond Theory

The social bond theory (Hirschi, 1969) posits that, as children grow up, they develop bonds or attachments to the various facets of the society and this deters them from engaging in delinquency. That is, their attachment to these institutions implores them to support and abide by the ideals which strengthen the society as a whole. Hence, delinquency according to this theory results when juveniles develop a fragile attachment, belief, commitment and involvement in conventional activities within the society (shoemaker, 2009).

According to Hirschi (1969), the main building blocks of social bond theory are four which include attachment, belief, commitment and involvement. Attachment denotes the emotional component of the theory which deals with the connectedness of adolescents to important elements of a society's social institutions. By social institutions, we are referring to the family, school, church, friends and significant others. When adolescents attached to an institution like the family, it compels them to behave well when they are outside in order to avert bad image not only for themselves but for their family as well (Abotchie, 2008).

The belief component of the theory also has to do with adolescents' acceptance of the conventional or moral code of ethic of the society which is deemed to be an avenue for reducing delinquency (Shoemaker, 2009; Regoli, Hewitt & Delisi, 2008). When adolescents buy into the norms of his community, it is reckoned to entreat them in conform to the public morality.

The next component of the theory which is commitment demands that, when adolescents' devote much of their time, energy and resources in pursuing an ambition or a goal, that will keep them focused in life devoid of delinquency. In that, they will be motivated to convert all the time that would have been used in engaging in deviant behaviours into productive ventures.

Finally, the involvement component proposes that, when adolescents' participate in conventional activities which their society has to offer, it will keep them out of delinquency. This will keep them busy and occupied and delinquency will be out of their options. This may take the form of extracurricular activities in school or at church.

Hirschi continued that, the four essential elements which make up the social bond theory are positively interrelated. Indicating that, if an adolescent has a strong attachment to the family, and school, such a person will be motivated to learn hard in the classroom and come out with

good results. In due course, he or she will be active in the extracurricular activities of the school and put up a belief that such a way of life are important for his or her wellbeing.

2.1.2. General Theory of Crime

Self-control has been identified as an important developmental ability which allows children to inhibit unacceptable behaviours (Gottfredson & Hirschi's (1990). According to the general theory of crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), juvenile delinquents have a common behavioural pattern which finds expression in their self-control. By self-control, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) are referring to the degree to which an individual is "*vulnerable to the temptations of the moment*" (p.87). They continue that, juvenile delinquents are individual who possess low self-control as compared to their nondelinquent counterparts and this compromises their ability to desist from deviant activities. The source of the low self-control common among juvenile delinquents can be traced to their early life socialization which tends to be ineffective (Longshore, Chang, Hsieh & Messina, 2004). This is because, the mastery self-control is learned just as other behaviours and attitudes are also taught within a society (Shoemaker, 2009). Hence, when parents fail to supervise their children and, or check up on them when they put up wrong behaviours by reprimanding them, they will end up promoting low self-control in their children.

Unlike the social bond theory (Hirschi, 1967) discussed earlier on which posits that adolescents with strong attachment to their parents, school or friends stand a higher chance of not becoming delinquent, the general theory of crime challenges such a position. According to the general theory of crime, an adolescent's connectedness alone to important agents in the community without strong self-control will still make him or her prone to delinquency. This is typical of situations where they are attached to deviant peers who happened to be their friends. In such a case, the essential determinant of whether they will succumb to their peer's influence or not will be determined by their self-control.

2.1.3. Labeling Theory of Delinquency

The labeling theory is often identified with the works of Becker (1963). Labeling theory holds that, the reaction society develops towards delinquency has a future repercussion on the behaviours of juvenile delinquents (Putwain & Sammons, 2002; Shoemaker, 2009). The theory continues that, society sets aside certain acts as delinquent and people who exhibit these behaviours attract the label of being delinquents. Following the attachment of delinquent label on people which the society accords to be so, the society then met treatment unto them in a way that is consistent to delinquency label (Putwain & Sammons, 2002; Regoli et al., 2008; Shoemaker, 2009). In the end, people that receive the tag of delinquency come to adapt to it as part of their self image and this affect their subsequent behaviours in the future. Akin to the labeling theory is the social psychology notion of self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1968) which entails a behavioural confirmation on the part of people who have been labeled as delinquents by the society (Putwain & Sammons, 2002). That is, since the society has label certain members as delinquents, such people overtime tend to put up behaviours that confirms the predicted manifestation of who a delinquent is.

2.1.4. Differential Association Theory

Differential association theory (Sutherland, 1939) is a social learning theory which supposes that, young people develop the attitudes and skills necessary to become delinquents through their sustained contact with other individuals who harbour the norms of delinquency (Wood & Alleyne, 2010). This indicates that, adolescent's exposure to delinquent attitudes and skills increases their propensity to also emulate such behaviours with time (Bandura, 1977). Hence, so long as young people are exposed to attitudes that are in favour of the violation of law than the ones that are law abiding, delinquency will prevail. The theory operates on the premises that:

Behaviour is learned through interaction with significant others, typically parents and peers. The likelihood of a youth becoming delinquent is determined by his or her interactions with both conventional and criminal associations. If a child has more contacts supporting criminal conducts than opposing it, he or she will become more likely to commit crime....(Regoli et al., 2008, p.191).

From the above caption, it become apparent that the techniques required performing a delinquent act is learned just as children learn to put up a good conduct in the society. Children actually becomes delinquent because they perceive that the benefits they will obtain from committing the offence to be enormous than when they abstain from it.

Also, the learning processes to delinquency ensue when adolescents interact and intercommunicate with people they share close intimacy with. Therefore, when adolescents maintain an association with their deviant peer compatriots, this relations provide the breeding ground for them to also develop and maintain similar delinquent behaviours (Vitaro, Brendgen, & Tremblay, 2000;Keijsers, Branje, Van der Valk, & Meeus, 2010).

However, the theory does not specify the nature of this learning process to delinquency. This is very necessary not only for intervention purposes but also for readers to comprehend the decisions and cost-benefit analysis that adolescents make on their path to assuming a delinquency attitude as a source of livelihoods. Hence, effort will be made in my present study to suggest a model that elucidates the training process to delinquency.

2.1.5. Differential Oppression Theory

The differential oppression theory (Regoli & Hewitt, 2006) holds that, parents and other authority figures occupy a position in the family which affords them the opportunity to maintain order in the home in ways that tend to be oppressive to children. That is, parents influence the choice of peers for their children, food, clothing, movies, sleeping time and the

like. Children on the other hand occupy a social position with limited resources that can equip them to negotiate for changes in their environment, hence rendering them powerless to submit to authority. The theory continues that, the forms of oppression meted onto children ranges from a demand to obey rules designed to meet the adult's convenience through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. These maltreatments compel children to put up an adoptive reaction which tend to be problem behaviours such as substance use, delinquency and the likes (Regoli & Hewitt, 2006). Hence, delinquency according to this theory is an adoptive strategy by children suppressed by their parents or caregiver, who make the home life for their own conveniences and uninhabitable to their wards.

2.1.6. Situated Learning Theory and Legitimate Peripheral Participation

Situated learning theory was propounded by Lave and Wenger (1991) and it explains learning which occurs directly in a community of practice. By community of practice, Lave and Wenger (1991) are referring to a group of people who have in common a profession, craft or a common passion, and often meet to learn how they can develop themselves on what they do. Hence, unlike in the classroom of the school institution where abstract and decontextualized knowledge is earned, in situated learning, the learners are directly positioned in the social context or field where the skill will be needed (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Hundeyde, 2003). This make situated learning a more practical approach to knowledge acquisition.

Legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) is a component of situated learning theory which affords a platform to account for learning that occurs in a tacit and indirect way, where newcomers move from the fringes of a community of practice towards the center (Hundeyde, 2003). That is, whiles the group is on the field engaging in the community of practice, other people assimilate the practices by watching from the outside. Hence, learning of the craft persists until the newcomers become competent and accepted members of the group that engages in the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991;

Hundeide, 2003). Through their peripheral activities, the newcomers become acquainted with the body language, vocabularies and task routines of the community members and with time and the requisite resources, they graduate to become full members of the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This indicates that, when there is a room to recruit new members to officially hold position in such communities of practice, the legitimate peripheral participants will be very much resourceful since little effort will be displaced in inducting them within the community as opposed to new comers with a blank knowledge about the communities' activities.

2.2. Review of Related Studies

2.2.1. Evidence for the Effect of Parenting, Self-Control, Neighbourhood Characteristics, Peer Association on Delinquency

The effect of parenting on adolescents' development of self-control and delinquency was investigated by Hay (2001). In this study, Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) notion that effective parenting enhances adolescent s development of strong self-control which combats delinquency was revisited. Data for the study was collected from 197 adolescents that were in a high school in an urban area of a southwestern state of the United States which was racially and socioeconomically diverse. The results of the study indicated that, parental monitoring and discipline was significantly negatively related to low self-control. Again, low self-control was found to be moderately mediating ineffective parenting and delinquency. Indicating a support for the Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) general theory of crime.

Even though this study find, support for the general theory of crime, it must however be emphasized that it employed projected delinquency measure rather that reported delinquency measure. Hence, it is possible that, different results will be likely when reported delinquency measures are used.

Albeit the fact that adolescents low in self-control stand a higher propensity to engage in delinquency, other studies which have investigated the source of low self-control have contend neighbourhood variables rather than primary care givers may be involved (Wikström & Sampson, 2003; Gibson, Sullivan, Jones & Piquero, 2010). Adolescents brought up in different neighbourhoods' have also been reported to develop different levels of self-control since their respective communal socialization and informal control are usually different (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Hence, not considering parenting inefficiency and individual differences, adolescents brought up in communities that habours strong will to communally act against deviance develop more self-control than adolescents that reside in communities with less concern about the youths way of life.

To verify whether neighbourhood variable are responsible for adolescents development of low self-control rather than their primary caregiver, Gibson et al. (2010) resorted to a longitudinal study data documented on human development in the Chicago neighbourhoods. Out of this data, 343 neighbourhood clusters were created to provide the frame within which samples will be drawn. Participants for the study were recruited from the already existing data on human development project which had a heterogeneous racial and socioeconomic background. A survey was administered to approximately 8782 participants' recruited from the 343 neighbourhood clusters. The primary caregivers of the participants were also recruited to evaluate their wards on the EASI temperament instrument. The results of this study indicated that, neighbourhood characteristics have a direct effect on adolescents' self-control. However, when individual characteristics of the participant were introduced, the neighbourhood characteristics effect was no longer significant. In line with Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) position on general strain theory, parenting variable was in the end adjudged to have significant effect on adolescents' self-control.

In another study, McGloin and Shermer (2009) explored the relationship between adolescents self control and deviant peer association in explaining delinquency. Unlike previous researches which paid much attention to deviant peer networks in explaining delinquency (Akers, 1998; Sutherland, 1947; Osgood & Anderson, 2004), McGloin and Shermer (2009) saw the non inclusion of self-control variables as a theoretical limitation and tested it to see if different results are likely. The data for their study was obtained from the survey data of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescents health which contained about 90000 students. These students had been drawn from about 129 different schools through a stratified sampling technique after which an interview commence in the schools. The results which followed the analysis indicated that, adolescents deviant peer relations had a significant impact on their future involvement in delinquency.

It was also revealed in the study that, self-control was not a spurious reflection of the relationship which was established between delinquency and deviant peer network. However, low self-control and deviant peers association were found to independently increase adolescents' chances of engaging in delinquent acts. Moreover, self control together with deviant peer associations, were discovered to be interrelated in forecasting adolescent involvement in delinquency.

In a similar study, Church, Wharton and Taylor (2009) applied differential association theory (1939) and the social bond theory (1969) in a longitudinally study of delinquency in the United States. The samples for the study were recruited from the Delbert Elliott's longitudinal National Youths Study (NYS) which consisted of 1,725 youths (both males and females) with age range of 11-17 years old. Drawing from the five waves data set of the NYS, Church et al. (2009) further observed how family cohesion, family stressors, youth's perceived importance of non familial relationships, youth's perceived self-image, and their association with delinquent peers affected delinquency. Following a path analysis, the study

revealed that, out of the three family variables (family cohesion, family stressors and importance of non familial relation), only family stressor had a direct effect on the youths delinquency. Beside the family stressor variable, males were reported to have a higher chance of engaging in delinquency or associating with delinquent peers as compared to females. Moreover, females were found to be resistant to delinquent peers or delinquency due to the strong positive image which they possessed, unlike males that lacked it. In the end, deviant peer association was reckons ad the best predictor of juvenile delinquency.

In a similar study, the extent to which differential association theory and the social bonding theory can be generalized in France has been investigated by Hartjen and Priyadarsini (2003). A purposive sample of 400 male and female adolescents was recruited from schools in the rural part of France. The participants above were made to respond to the NYS questionnaire which measures adolescents' delinquency. Following the analysis, it was reported that, the differential association theory rather that the social bonding theory provided a better explanation for juvenile crime in France. That is, the tenets of differential association theory could be generalized to the occurrence of delinquency in France. Moreover, the study indicated that, with respect to homogeneous male and female adolescent respondents, the differential association theory accounted for a better explanation to their delinquency bahaviours. Both the male and female respondents were deemed to be involved in delinquency through a similar paradigm that connected their peer's influence.

In a nutshell, the studies reviewed above depict the various attempts that researchers have made to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the etiology of juvenile delinquency. The literatures reviewed above suggest that the propensity of juvenile delinquency increases with inadequate parental monitoring, low adolescents self-control, deviant peers association and poor neighbourhood variables. If a sober look is taken at these studies, it becomes clear that they were all developed and researched in the western societies. Moreover, their

methodological approaches that were employed in the various studies were rooted in quantitative approach which does not allow much room for a deeper probe into the phenomenon of delinquency. A qualitative approach will be employed in this study to study the live experienced of young offenders in Ghana to see if different results are like.

2.2.2. Economic Challenges and Delinquency

The link between mothers' perceived economic hardship and adolescents' problems behaviours was examined by Burrell and Roosa (2009). Adolescents numbering 189 as well as their mothers were recruited to partake in the study. The participants were interviewed in their various homes. The mothers reported on their economic hardship and depressive moments while the adolescents reported on their involvement with delinquent peers and school functioning. Additionally, reports on parental monitoring and problem behavioural symptoms were also noted from the adolescents and their mother. The data was analyzed and the results indicated that mothers' perceived economic hardship and their young adolescents' problem behaviours were mediated by family stress and adolescents social contextual processes.

Again, Burrell and Roosa's (2009) study found mothers depression to be negatively related to parental monitoring which explains the children connection to deviant peers and subsequent involvement in delinquency. Strong relationship was also established between parental monitoring and adolescents functioning in schools and with peers.

In another study, Hunte, (2006) examined the link between the socioeconomic disadvantage and behavioural outcomes. The lived experiences of 12 socioeconomic disadvantaged youths with ages ranging from 15-19 were explored in central Trinidad. Of these participants, 6 were inmates in a youth correctional center while the remaining 6 had never been involved in delinquency and were excelling in their academic and social lives. The

12 participants were interviewed to verify why in the same socioeconomic disadvantaged environment, some became involved in delinquency while the others resisted. The finding of this study was that, the differences in the youth's behaviour could be traced to their connectedness of the youth to an available identity figure. The delinquents were observed to be lacking emotional and physical bonding to their father figures in their family which made them go out to search for one. The new father figures they saw in their neighbourhoods happened to be their peers who served as a surrogate family and predominantly noted for bandits and drug dealers.

Conversely, the non delinquent youths had a strong attachment to their parents, especially their mother. Their mothers were noted loving and supportive while periodically monitoring their peer relations and other lifestyle. Hence, the differences in the socioeconomically disadvantaged youth's behaviours obtain in the parent-child relationship as well as the peer relations.

Summed up briefly, the studies reviewed here elucidates on the various roles economic hardship can play in adolescents problem behaviour. It also indicates how some adolescents are able to cope in the face of challenging socioeconomic challenges in order to abstain from delinquency. It will be interesting to find out if socioeconomic variables emerge in this current study in accounting for my delinquency.

2.2.3. Substance Use and Delinquency

The relationship between substance use and crime at different stages of life course (adolescence and early adulthood) has been examined by Menard, Mihalic and Huizinga (2001). Their study was a longitudinal research and the participants were followed when they were adolescents through adulthood. Data for the study were collected in the United States from 1976 to 1992. Following the analysis, they found out that, the relationship between

substance use and crime was different for diverse age and diverse stages of involvement. With respect to stage of involvement, the relationship between crime and substance use was found to be stronger during adolescence compared to that of early adulthood.

Also their study reported no significant support for initiation into substance use before initiation into crime during the adolescence. Moreover, their study found that, more serious forms of crime and substance use surfaces after minor forms of crime and substance use are initiated during adolescence.

The study further reported that, following the initiation into substance use and crime, each increase the propensity using the other or the tendency to suspend the use of the other.

Indicating that, after the adolescents are initiated into crime, that increased their involvement in substance use which in turn contributes to a further involvement in crime. The opposite is true. This indicate that the relationship between crime and substance use was reciprocal and adjusting each other.

In a similar study, Ford (2005) examined the reciprocal relationship between substance use and delinquency among adolescents'. The results of the study indicated that there was both a direct and indirect relationship between delinquency and substance use. The aspect of the finding which reports a direct relationship between delinquency and substance use corroborated with the previous study by Menard et al. (2001).

However, the indirect relationship which was observed between delinquency and substance use was because social bonding acted as an intervening variable. That is in support of their hypothesis, substance use and delinquency were reported to have a negative effect on social bonding (family bonding). Hence, adolescents who had weakened bonding with their family were reported to be involved in both substance use and delinquency and vice versa (Menard et al., 2001).

In another study, D'Amico, Edelen, Miles and Morral (2008) conducted a longitudinal study in order to examine the reciprocal relationship between substance use and delinquent behavior. Participants (n= 449) for their study were recruited from the Los Angeles juvenile probation facility. The sample consisted of a male majority (87%) and the sample was racially representative. Unlike in Ford (2005) as well as Menard et al. (2001) studies above, age was controlled for in this study. Four waves of data sets were collected from the participants over 12 month period. The results of the data analysis indicated that there was a reciprocal relationship between substance use and delinquency which is a confirmation of the works by Ford (2005) as well as Menard et al. (2001) above.

To sum up, the studies above on the relationship between substance use and delinquency have unequivocally suggested that there a positive relationship between the two variables. Also the review indicated that, the relationship between substance use and delinquency is also reciprocal with each variable influencing the other. This indicates that depending on the population of study, each of the variables can stand as an independent variable or a dependent variable.

However, all the results that were presented were based on studies which were conducted in the western societies. Also the studies above used a quantitative research methodology in exploring the relationship between substance used and delinquency. This present study will therefore contribute to the ongoing discourse on juvenile crime and substance use by employing a qualitative research approach to study the lived experiences of young offender in Ghana, a non western country to see if different results are likely.

2.2.4. Religiosity and Delinquency

The relationship between religiosity and juvenile delinquency has overtime yielded conflicting result (Simpson & Brownfield, 2002). Whereas some studies in the literature suggest a strong negative relationship between religiosity and delinquency (Dilulio, 1998;

Chadwick & Top, 1993), other researchers have also provided equally compelling evidences to the suggestion that the influence of religion on delinquency is rather insignificant or spurious (Benda & Corwyn, 1997; Hirschi & Stark, 1969). Some of these studies will be review here to see why they fail to reach consensus.

Using a systematic review method, Dilulio (1998) reviewed journal of articles which examined the relations between religion and delinquency that were published within the span of time ranging from 1980 to 1997. Out of the 402 articles which popped up, 40 of it actually examined the relationship between the variables of interest here. All together, the average sample size of the 40 studies that examined the relationship between religiosity and delinquency was 2324 with a maximum sample size of 34129 and a minimum sample size of 123. The measure of religiosity in the study centered in six main categories which includes: attendance, salience, denomination, prayer, study of scriptures and religious activities. The results of this systematic review study indicated that religious measures had a negative effect on delinquency and this represented 75% of the 40 studies that were examined.

However, one of the 40 reviewed studies showed a positive relationship between religiosity and delinquency. The rest of the studies ended in an inconclusive fashion as far as the relationship between the two variables are concerned.

If a sober look is taken at the above studies, one will realize that religiosity was treated as an independent variable which affects the sort of manipulation that went on. The question therefore is whether the same results will maintain when delinquency is treaded as the independent variable.

In another study by Chadwick and Top (1993), the relationship between religiosity and delinquency among Latter Day Saints (LDS) adolescence was explored. Prior to this study, previous research had found out that, religiosity had a significant negative relationship among

the LDS adolescents (Chadwick & Top,1993) and this finding was explained in terms of the supportive religious environment that reinforce religious practices and nondelinquent activities among the LDS adolescents (Stark as cited in Chadwick & Top,1993). In their new study, Chadwick and Top (1993) revisited the notion that supportive religious climate had any relationship with delinquency among LDS adolescents. Additionally, the strength of the relationship between religiosity and delinquency was compared with peer influence and family characteristics using a multiple regression analysis. The domain of delinquency was further expanded to incorporate not only victimless crimes but also property offence and crime against other people. The same was done to religiosity which encompassed religious beliefs, private religious behaviors, spiritual experiences, public religious behaviors, family religious practices, and feelings of integration into a church congregation (Chadwick & Top, 1993). The study conducted survey with a multinational sample of LDS boys and girls (n=2,143) with ages ranging from 14-19 years old.

Chadwick and Top (1993) found out that, religiosity had a strong negatively relationship with delinquency and this was attributed to the internalization of moral doctrines and practices among the LDS adolescents which kept them away from delinquency. Religiosity was also found to be significant in predicting delinquency independently, just as peer influence and family characteristic did. This indicates the importance of religiosity in the study of juvenile crime.

In a similar study, Hirschi and Stark (1969) explored the relationship between church attendance and delinquency. The study recruited 4000 youth in from high schools in California. The self reports and record of the youth's delinquency were compared to their self admitted patterns of their church attendance as well as religious values. The result of this study was that, there was no significant relationship between church attendance and

delinquency. This indicates that, the youths that were frequent church attendants were delinquents just as their compatriots that seldom go to church.

In conjunction with family and peer influence, the relationship between religiosity and delinquency has also been investigated by Benda and Corwyn (1997). This study employed a sample of 724 adolescents selected from four public high schools in both the rural and urban vicinities of Arkansas. Data was collected through the administration of questionnaires and the results indicated that the significance of the relationship between religiosity and delinquency is not direct but underpinned by whether family and peer influence are factored into the equation. Meaning, the relationship between religiosity and delinquency was a spurious one or indirect, which challenges the earlier reports by Chadwick and Top, (1993) as well as Dilulio (1998).

Also, the type of delinquency being investigated also determined the strength of the relationship it had with religiosity. For instance, when religiosity was considered to be just an act of church attendance, it was found out that, religiosity was related to status offence but not crime. However, Benda and Corwyn (1997) also observed that, when control theory elements were factored in the test, no significant relationship was observed between churches attendance and status offence as well as crime. This study also indicates that depending on the operationalization of religiosity and delinquency, the relationship that exists between them may be significant, spurious or insignificant and this further complicated studies in these phenomena.

In summary, literatures in the area of religiosity and delinquency were reviewed in this subsection. As it was presented on the preceding pages, the results on the relationship between religiosity and delinquency are in dispute. Whereas some studies suggest a negative relationship between religiosity and delinquency, others too suggest an insignificant as well as

spurious link between the two variables. These studies were also conducted in a western context. In the present study I will explore the lived experiences of the young offenders including the role of religion.

2.2.5. The 'bitter' money conception

The concept of 'bitter' money derives from a study by Shipton (1997) which primarily explored the forms of economic exchange among inhabitants of the Luo farming community in Kenya. Two kinds of money were patronized within the Luo farming community, one being good and the other construed as evil or bad. Monies that were gained through forbidden transaction in the Luo farming community were deemed as 'bitter' money since it was believed to have been procured through a medium which creates bitterness feeling among their ancestral spirits and the community as a whole. Among the Luo's in Kenya, 'bitter' money is believed to be dangerous not only to the holder but his family as well. Hence such ill gotten money was forbidden in any familial transaction to sieve the doom which accompanied it. For this reason, Luo members who patronize 'bitter' money end up spending it quickly since the money itself is perceived to be quick money.

Shipton (1997) identified certain commodities against which transaction were deemed forbidden and evil in the community. These commodities include land, tobacco, cannabis, homestead roosters and gold. Monies obtained from the sale of land was believed to be 'bitter' money because, they perceived land to be an object collectively owned by the living, the dead and the yet to be born members of the community (Shipton, 1997). Hence, selling it denotes a betrayal to the community and the ancestors visit the perpetrators with bad luck for possessing such money.

Trading in tobacco and cannabis was also forbidden since it encouraged the youth to get rich quicker. Tobacco as a crop was believed to of great interest to the ancestral spirits and

selling it was perceived as a sign of disrespect to them while cannabis was smoke by the old men to enhance their communication with the ancestral spirits. Hence, monies from these products were believed by the Luo's to be unproductive to the holder through the machinations of the ancestral spirits (Shipton, 1997). Again, homestead rooster was a symbol of their lineage hence selling it connotes the sale of one's lineage.

In a nutshell, the concept about 'bitter' money signifies the meaning that the Luo's in Kenya attach to monetary gains procured through socially or culturally unacceptable means. Such money is seen as quick money acquired through forbidden dealings and are therefore prevented having any contact with one's family. I want to explore if the young offenders who engaged in stealing made such meaning out of their behaviour as part of their reflection.

2.2.6. Nucleation of the Family System

Two main types of family systems exist in Ghana, the nuclear family and the extended family. The nuclear family consists of married couples and their children born out of the wedlock or adopted (Abotchie, 2008; Nukunya, 2003). The extended family also consists of individual nuclear families united by ties of blood, marriage or adoption (Abotchie, 2008; Nukunya, 2003). In this way, the nuclear family can be said to be a unit of the extended family system. Ideally, members of the extended family reside close to each other and communally own landed properties of their descent line. This enables them to support themselves economically in respects such as assisting each other in cultivating the land for farming purposes; a system locally known as the "*ndoboa system*¹".

But with time, increases in the rate of migration and urbanization are weakening the cohesive power of the extended family system, leaving each nuclear family to fend for itself (Abotchie, 2008; Nukunya, 2003; Weinberg, 1964). Owing to the harsh economic conditions

¹ Ndoboa system is where members of the extended family and usually the community come together to assist one a member cultivate his farm. This is done in turns until each member of the extended family or community has his/her work on the farm done.

that accompany urbanization, there has been a drastic change in the roles that members of the family play in supporting each other in time of help. Family ties and networks previously considered important aspect of one's extended family obligation are now truncated in order to cushion the demise that accompany urbanization related economic changes (Abotchie, 2008; Nukunya, 2003; Weinberg, 1964). Members of the extended family have migrated to the urban centers of the country in order to further their education or to secure well paid job. Compelled by the stringent economic situation of the urban center, migrants prioritize their expenses and concentrate on the needs of only their spouse and children to the exclusion of their aunties, uncles, nephews, nieces, brother and the likes (Nukunya, 2003). Individuals who are able to withstand the changing economic challenges after their migration to the urban center are only able to remit back to their parents alone (Nukunya, 2003). Hence, indicating that, the extended family roles which previously heightened sense of community and belonging is gradually weakening in a fashion which Nukunya (2003) refers to as the *"compression of genealogical ties in kinship behaviour"* (p.149). In that, members of the family relegate their reciprocal obligation and responsibilities towards relatives external to their nuclear family with little exception to the most immediate ones.

In relation to juvenile crime, Busia (as cited in Wireko-Brobby, 2008) has also reiterated that the cause of juvenile crime in Ghana is attributable to failure of home with the youth at the suffering end. Unlike in the past where the care of a adolescents was a communal responsibility of the extended family and by extension the entire community, this function has now been relegated to only the nuclear family with the inception of urbanization. Hence, when the youth are in need or troubled by a problem, the extended family members feel may be reluctant or unavailable to intervene since they will also be focused on their nuclear family challenges.

2.2.7. Etiology of Juvenile Delinquency in Ghana

In Ghana, efforts have been made by researchers to ascertain the etiology of delinquency. Bosiakoh and Andoh (2010) have explored whether the juvenile delinquency is a reflection of peer group relation as held by the differential association theory. Hence, they replicated the study in the Ghanaian context to verify if similar results are likely. In Bosiakoh and Andoh (2010) study, sixty (60) young offenders from a correctional facility were recruited. Data for their study was gathered with the help of questionnaires and conversations with participants and official of the institution. The results of Bosiakoh and Andoh indicated that, the Ghanaian context provide a strong support for the theory since 46 participants indicated haven lived with a delinquent peer prior to their arrest. Again 44 of their participants also conceded that the delinquent peers they were living with were actually their friends, given credence to the deviant peer association aspect of the study.

Even though the above results suggests that the association between the participants and their delinquent peers made them become involved in crime, it does not provide any evidence that the young offenders actually learned their delinquent behaviour from that delinquent peer. This is essential because, there is a possibility for the participants together with their delinquent peers they had lived with, to be victims of disorganized neighbourhood characteristics (see Shaw & McKay, 1942; Jang & Johnson, 2001; Gibson et al., 2010). Hence, there is a need to go beyond the mere association between adolescents and their deviant peers in an attempt to explain delinquency. Moreover, the sample size of 60 participants is also not enough for such a generalization to be made about the theory in Ghana giving the quantitative orientation of their study.

In another study, Weinberg (1964) investigated whether the disorganization which results from urbanization is the backbone of juvenile delinquency in Ghana. This study recruited 107 male juvenile offenders and 95 male attending school normally (ages=10 -18) all in Accra.

Data was gathered on the adjustment strategies between the two groups which compelled one to be involved in delinquency. The results of the study was that, effects of urbanization which finds expression in disproportionate age concentration, uneven male female ratio and weakening of the extended family controls by less effective urban nuclear families controls (Weinberg,1964).

Unlike the non delinquent participants, the young offenders were reported to have experiences such as estrangements from their family, defiance and evasion of parental or adult control, alienation from school. Delinquency in Ghana according to Weinberg (1964), was reckoned to be a form of adaptation by the youths who have been estranged from their families and schools and occupying a locus in the urban center with no alternative institutions to support their livelihood. Hence, they become attracted to deviant peers networks in the urban centers for direction.

If a sober look is taken at the above studies, one will realize that the researchers attempted to replicate the differential association theory (see Bosiakoh & Andoh, 2010) and the social disorganization (see Weinberg, 1964) theory in Ghana as a way of verifying their generalizability. This made them operate within the dictates of the theories without looking at other plausible themes which can emerge out of the Ghanaian context. Moreover, their methodology too was predominantly quantitative in orientation. Hence, this current study will build on the previous research by employing a qualitative study to approach the phenomenon of delinquency in Ghana in order to get a deeper probe into it. This will allow the themes to naturally emerge and to verify which of the prevailing literature can explain it.

2.2.8. Conceptualization of Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency is a construct which has its origin in the legal circles (Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2007). Admittedly, juvenile delinquency is not a phenomenon that can be defined easily. This is because, what obtains as a delinquent behaviour in one social context might be the norm in another, making it difficult to have a universally accepted definition (Iobidze, 2009; Weinberg, 1964). Diverse disciplines have interest in the welfare of delinquents and they often end up tackling it from their perspectives, which further complicates the acceptance of a common definition (Iobidze, 2009; Regoli et al., 2008). As a construct, the Defense for Children international (2007) also refers to juvenile delinquency as “the behaviour of a child or adolescent in actual or perceived conflict with the law, or engaged in ‘anti-social’ behaviour” (p.1). Also, the Juvenile Justice Act, 2003 (ACT 653) of Ghana define a juvenile delinquent as “a person under eighteen years who is in conflict with the law” (p.4). Being in conflict with the law, the children are relinquished of their responsibility for the offence by reason of infancy and therefore do not get treated as an adult. However, such offences or antisocial behaviours might amount to criminality if it were committed by adults.

For the purpose of this study, juvenile delinquency will be defined as any act or conduct of a child in a given society or culture which would have been considered as a criminal behaviour if it were committed by an adult. Such offences may include stealing, possession or use of guns, homicide, threatening and other status offences such as child prostitution, staying out late, swearing, and the likes, depending on the society in question (Shoemaker, 2009; Regoli et al., 2008; Lilly, Cullen & Ball, 2007, Arthur, 1997).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research method and Design

In this study, I employ a qualitative research approach. My motivation to use a qualitative research approach was the possibility of developing a deeper probe or thick description of a phenomenon of juvenile delinquency (Kvale, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). That is, I wanted to go beyond the practice of getting participants to just select or tick factors that made them commit an offence, as it is usually the case in quantitative studies. Rather than just connecting my respondents to their selected factors on a questionnaire, the qualitative approach was reckoned to help me gain much insight into the life world of my participants as a way to construct judicious meaning of their current place in life. This will include an understanding of the circumstances that necessitated to my participants involvement in the delinquent behavior and the social and interpersonal context within which their offence surfaced.

The design that I planned to use for the data collection was a combination of narrative interview, diary keeping and field notes taking. Since I was interested in tracing how my participants lived experiences informed their engagement in the offence, it was imperative that I employed a strategy to provide me with their holistic report. Hence, this design was deemed most appropriate because, it gave me the opportunity to listen to the stories of the respondents. However after my interview with the participants, I distributed diaries to them for them to keep record of any events I must have missed during the interview process. On my subsequent meetings with the participants, none of them had any written record in the diary. I therefore ended up using only the interview and my field notes as the design. I took the field notes as part of the participants' clarification on contrasts and suppressed meanings that were embedded in their responses.

3.2. Site of the study

The site of this study was an all male correctional facility which was located in Accra, the capital of Ghana. The center accepts young male offenders under the age of 19 regardless of ethnic and religious background.

The young offenders are kept in the correctional facility for a period of three months minimum and a maximum of three years, depending on the gravity of the offence committed.

Administrative wise, the correctional center is one of the institutions manned by the Ghana Prison Service. Unlike the philosophy behind adult prisons, the Ghana Prison service manages the juvenile correctional center in such a way that, much emphasis is laid on vocational education and that, the children when finally released, do not have any criminal record. Hence, after serving their stay in the correctional facility, the children start with a fresh page in life which is expected to be communally acceptable. As a way of helping young offenders to get in tune with accepted modes of social conducts, the correctional facility is guided by three main aims and this has been captured in their mission statement the three R's (3R's) which include: Reformation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of the young offenders back into the society. Religious leaders, Psychologists, counselors, teachers and other specialists are brought on board to ensure that the children are duly reformed before they re-enter the larger community again.

3.3. Population/Sample

The entire young offenders at the correctional center in Accra constituted the population for this study. Out of this population, six (6) young offenders were recruited for the interview in this study as a way of gathering rich and in-depth information about their life-world to find out why they got involved in delinquency.

The participants of the study were recruited using the purposive sampling technique. Although the entire population qualifies to partake in the study, it was not parsimonious to interview all of them. The purposive sampling technique allowed for the selection of participants on the basis of: a) having participants with age disparities, b) selecting a group of offenders of which some are new arrivals in the correctional center while others being old there. It was envisaged that, the above manipulation will bring to bear, rich and nuanced differences in experiences and circumstances that led the participants into delinquency. The selection commenced after 14 of the young offenders voluntarily agreed to take part in the study.

3.4. Instruments

The materials that I used in this study include a tape recorder, a semi structured interview guide, diaries, pens, pencils and erasers. I used the semi structure interview guide as a guiding tool during the interview processes after which I asked follow up questions. The bases for my use interview guide find expression in its flexibility in inducing and incorporating unexpected significant information as well as answers for prepared interview questions (Willig, 2008). I also used the tape recorder to record the lengthy information that the participants provided. I took note of the body language and nonverbal cues that I observed during the interview process in the diary and the subsequent clarifications that I sought from my respondents were also recorded here. Another set of diaries were further distributed to the participants to enable them write down some of their experiences which they forgot to share with me during our initial interview so that on my next visit, it could be discussed.

3.5. Procedure

When I received the green light to commence the data collection from the Ghana prison Service, I visited the correctional center to formally meet the officers in charge concerning the data I intend to collect. The counselor in the correctional facility warmly received me and designated one of the officers in the center to guide me in recruiting participants. The young offenders usually have a busy schedule in the correctional center so the officer I was assigned to escorted me to their classroom and took a little of their time for the recruitment.

Out of the ones that volunteered, I used a purposive sample technique to select the ones that met the requirements of this study (i.e. Age and number of years of stay in the correctional facility) which yielded six (6) participants in all. Furthermore, I made the consent forms available for the Officer in Charge (OIC) of the Senior Correctional Center to sign as a guardian on behalf of all the participants to indicate his approval for the children to be part of the study. I was then made to explain the details of the study to the understanding of the participants before the OIC appended his signature. The participants were also assured of their freedom to participate in the research or withdraw from it in future without suffering any consequences after which they signed their copy of the consent form toward the interview process.

The head of the counseling unit in the Senior Correctional Center was also alerted about this study and their expertise that will be needed in case any of the participants break down during the interview process. The interview was arranged and conducted in a quiet and vacant auditorium of the correctional center which doubled as a chapel as well as venue for meeting visitors. Prior to the commencement of the interview, I asked the participants to indicate where in the center they would like to be interviewed. I did this to ensure that they were comfortable with the venue to reinforce their penchant to speak wholeheartedly about

their experiences without being distracted and intimidated by onlookers. All the participants unanimously agreed to the auditorium. They all emphasized they were comfortable with the room and since they are used to meeting visitors there. In all the interviews that I conducted, the Twi language was used. I used the Twi language for the interviews because it is the most widely spoken language in Ghana across the different ethnic groups. All the participants spoke it fluently and understood it just as I did and this helped us in bridging any barrier in communication.

The interviews that I conducted lasted as follows: 1 hour 12 minutes for the first participant, 1 hour 18 minutes for the second participant, 42 minutes for the third and fourth participants, and 1 hour 22 minutes for the fifth participant and finally, 39 minutes for participant six. As mentioned diaries were also made available to the participants to document issues that come to their mind after I had left so that on my return, such notes could be brought to my attention for discussion. However, on my subsequent visits, I realized that the participants had not recorded note(s) for further discussion in their diaries. I therefore asked them to keep the diaries for their personal use. Nevertheless, a diary was used to keep record of the participants' feedback on their narratives. During these visits, I took the opportunity to clarify some contrasts and suppressed meanings that were present in their narratives. I did not tape record the second conversation but took notes.

On two instances in the interview process, there were some interruptions which called for the audio recorder to be paused for some time. On the first occasion, I was having the interview with the participant close to one of the auditorium's window and half way through the interview, someone also spontaneously stood behind the window to have a conversation on a mobile phone which disrupted and created a divided attention. I therefore had to make a quick change in our seating. Our sitting position was therefore relocated to avoid the background conversation or noise from interfering in the study and the interview continued

smoothly thereafter. On another occasion, one of the officers who had become acquainted with me as a result of my frequent visits to the correctional center heard my voice while passing beside the auditorium so he entered to say hello to me. This broke the flow of story that my participant was advancing. In all the above interruptions, the question was posed again, while the audio recorder played once more for the participants to keep track of the point they were building.

3.6. Transcription and Data Analysis

Transcription and interpretation of data has been identified as the essential hurdles that qualitative researchers must satisfy in their quest to ascertain rich outcome in the data analysis process (Atkinson, 1998). This demands that, much attention and concentration is vested in the work here. I went back to the recorded audio interviews and played them several times while transcribing in a word for word fashion. The recorded interviews were all in Twi language but I needed them in English to be used in my report. I therefore did the translation of the interviews into English as well as the transcription at the same time. After transcribing all the audio interviews of the participants, I listened to the audio interviews several times along with a scan through the transcripts to verify if any aspects of the audio interviews escaped me. This was deemed necessary since I had lengthy audio materials to hand across different sets of days and anytime I feel drained in the process, the transcription had to be paused or postponed.

The transcription process produced 82 pages worth of data which was overwhelming for me as a novice researcher in qualitative inquiry. I read thoroughly through the transcripts in a repeated fashion which allowed me to be familiarized with that data as Murray (2008) has recommended. This gave me the impetus to narrow down each participant's transcript into a structure suggested by Murray (2008) which will be discussed later.

The participants I interviewed narrated extensive stories on their lived experiences and circumstances which ushered them into juvenile delinquency. As Sheridan and Chamberlain (2011) have noted, participant usually provide an account that signifies narrative mode of discourse and structure when they are implored to describe themselves and their everyday lives. Hence, the method of analysis that I employed in this study was Narrative Analysis (N.A). Narrative analysis allows researchers to reflect and recognize how stories told by their participants illuminate an insight about their lived experiences (Sandelowski as cited in Thorne, 2000). Again, Sheridan and Chamberlain (2011) has emphasized how human activities and identities are inseparable from narratives which they maintain as, “*we live in a storied world, and the stories that we tell and hear shape the very fabric of who we are and what we do*” (pg. 315). This was the basis that informed the use of narrative analysis as my mode of data analysis.

Following from the Murray’s structure on narrative analysis, each participant’s accounts were organized to portray a beginning, middle and an end. I made content of this structures; i) to demonstrate how the offences the participants had committed were integrated to their everyday lives and made reference to their meaning to it, ii) to portray how they position themselves in their interpersonal discourse (Murray, 2008). My findings were then interpreted by making references to existing literature and theories to get a better understanding of the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency in the context of Ghana and the world at large.

3.7. Reliability and Validity

Reliability of a research has been identified by Joppe (2000) to be “*the extent to which research results are consistent over time and.... reproducible under similar methodological conditions*” (p.1). Hammersley (1992) in a similar tone saw reliability to involve “*the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers*

or by the same observer on different occasions” (pg. 67). That is, whether the responses of participants in a study remain unchangeable with the passage of time or under different researchers conducting the same or similar study. This implies that, researchers must be vigilant in looking out for inconsistencies and contradictions in the voice of their respondents as a way getting the best outcome. However, maintaining strong emphasis on the consistency participants’ responses may undermine their creativity and initiative (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). This is not to say that, any haphazard accounts from research participants should be accepted without the necessary circumspection. It is therefore incumbent on researchers to be liberal in outlook in handling responses from their participants and to resolve inconsistencies in responses by having participants make meaning out of it. On this note, I made sure that, the stories my participants produced were free of contradiction by allowing the contrasts to emerge. These contrasts were recorded as field notes after which I contacted them again for them to help me reconcile them. To this end, the findings of this study can be said to have satisfy reliability criterion.

In qualitative studies, validity denotes a conscious attempt to verify whether a study has been conducted well to warrant trustworthy and useful results (Yardley, 2008). In the words of Hammersley (1990), *“by validity, I mean truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomenon to which it refers”* (p.57). This indicates that the issues of validity pertain to the accuracy on the reportage of researchers on the phenomenon which they set forth to study. To this end, the field notes which were taken in addition to the narrative interviews allowed me to resolve contrasts and suppressed meanings which were embedded in my participants initial submissions. That is, after the stories of the participants were collected, I visited them periodically to clarify and reaffirm the information I had gathered earlier and this amount to participant feedback (Yardley, 2008). The participants’ feedback helped in ensuring that the respondents’ views were not

misrepresented. The two approaches (narrative interview and participant feedback) enabled me to authenticate my participants' responses which to the best of my knowledge are valid and trustworthy. Hence, the design in the end helped strengthen the reliability and validity of my results.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

The following ethical considerations ensued in this study to safeguard the interest and welfare of the participants.

I submitted the research proposal to the Regional Committee for Medical and Health Research Ethics (REK) in Norway to request for their comments on ethical issues. Upon careful scrutiny of the research proposal by REK, the study was found to be outside the mandate of health related research. I reported the study to the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD) who found it to be in line with their regulations governing privacy in research. Ghana Prison Service was then approached for ethical clearance since they steer over the management of the correctional facility that was used in this study and upon a thorough review, the study was given the go ahead to commence.

Notwithstanding the afore mentioned ethical procedures, the following ethical positions were also considered in this study in view of protecting the interest and welfare of the participants. Before each of the interviews began, each participant was granted the opportunity to hear the purpose of the study and their rights to continue to be part or withdraw as a way to reaffirm their voluntary participation.

Consent forms were read and made available to the research participant to convey the purpose of the study and their right not to answer any question they are uncomfortable with. It was also made clear to them their right to later decline to be part of the study after given their consent. That is, if they later have a change of mind about the study and for that matter

decline, it was made sure that their decision to rescind being part of the study had no bad consequence on them. I also made the participants to understand that, the information they will provide me in this study will not influence the decision on their term(s) to serve in the correctional facility (it will neither increase nor decrease it). This was repeated during debriefing process as well. I saw it essential to provide the above information to the participants to allow them have a careful thought about the project and decide independently to be part or not. In this way, I believed they will not feel they are participating for some changes to be made to their sentence in return.

More so, it is the duty of the researcher to also make sure that the identities of the participants remain confidential or anonymous. I ensured that the information that the participants made available to me were not in a way to unveil their identity. The institution was also not given access to the personal interview accounts by the participants to prevent future victimization. For this reason, the entire information that was generated from the participants is held in good confidence. Pseudonyms (e.g. McKenzy, Original exhibit, Aikins, Escoba, Stigo and Abroad) rather than real identities were employed in the study to obscure the true identity of the participants.

On the issue of ethics of intention which is about the research having a good purpose to solve a social problem but not having a negative consequence on the participant, it was carefully considered. The study to the best of my knowledge did not pose any risk to the participants. All the questions that were asked during the interview process were keenly reviewed. The questions that I posed to the participants had no likelihood of causing a psychological discomfort to them and I constantly reminded them of their right to refuse answering questions that made them feel uncomfortable. Precautionary measures were taken in advance to cater for any erratic emotional or psychological breakdown. I alerted the head of

the counseling unit in the correctional center about this study and their expertise that will be needed in case any participant breaks down during and after the study.

My participants did express that, their time that has been volunteered in the past interviews like mine has yielded no significant results in terms of their feeding, educational/vocational training and an exit program that will help them realize their dreams, especially those who have been neglected by their family . They hope that their highly cherished information to be passed on to the government and other donor agencies for them to come to their aid. This make me feel I have a greater responsibility to accomplish since they will be counting on me to make a difference in their life.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. The Lived Experiences of the Participants

As it was said earlier on in the introduction, this study aims to explore what young offenders perceive to be the circumstances which got them into delinquency. The meanings which they create out of their behaviour were also of paramount interest. In this section, the stories of my six participants are presented. Following from Murray's (2008) structure of narrative analysis, the participants stories are presented here to show how life was like for them in the beginning, what happened along the way and how they ended up in the correctional center. Their lived experiences were storied with much emphasis on their voices and point of view which was identified to be markedly limited in the literature, especially on Ghana. In the process of presentation, the stories of the participants are interspersed with requisite quotations to elucidate their personal views as far as their behaviour is concerned and also how they position themselves in their interpersonal milieu. It is worth noting that, the participants are markedly diverse with respect to the offences they committed; some being less serious while others being highly serious.

4.1.1 McKenzy-*All I wanted was to go to school*

McKenzy (the participant's pseudonym) is a boy of 17 years of age who hailed from the northern part of Ghana. He lived with his parents who were not gainfully employed and this made life difficult for them. He also had an elder brother² who was not very much spoken of in his story. His mother was into the brewing and sale of '*pito*'³ which she later had to stop because it was not moving well and losses were incurred in the process. His father was also a

² McKenzy's brother was also living together with him and their parents. Even though his actual age was not mentioned by McKenzy, it is suspected that he was about 5 to 10 years older than McKenzy when McKenzy left with his father to the south. Children of that age in the Northern region usually start their own farm or migrate to the urban center in search of job but might not work under their parents.

³ Pito is a type of wine that is locally brewed from millet in Ghana.

labourer who worked on other people's farm in the community for a fee. At age 5, McKenzy migrate with his father to the southern part of the country in search of work in the farming villages since securing a job in the northern part became scarce. This further enervated his chances of going to school because they kept on moving from one farming community to another, most of which were remote locations with no schools available. So there was no room for him to go to school and thus McKenzy started school very late⁴.

McKenzy recounted his early childhood as very unpleasant as compared to his compatriots he saw around since they were given much attention and care. For instance, during Christmas that most children have wonderful experiences of having received new clothing, shoes, gifts and what have you from their parents, the only recollection McKenzy had was wearing a shabby dress and a torn slippers in the mist of his well dressed peers. This was what McKenzy had to say:

During Christmas, parents will buy their children clothing for them to be celebrating and all that, but my father never bothered to buy me those things whiles we were living together. Even common slippers too were a problem and if I will get one, I wouldn't be better than a broken and torn blue-bird⁵ slippers. That one too, it will be either all right or all left blue-bird slippers. So I will be wearing some very dirty clothes and mingling with my friends whilst feeling extremely shy. But I had nothing to wear so I had no option.

Moreover, there were other instances where he was brutally beaten and punished by his father for little misconducts: *“He once asked me to wash a coat for him and it was very heavy for me*

⁴ McKenzy is said to have started school late because, whiles his peers started from Kindergarten or nursery and progress upwards, he was always on the farm and did not go through that levels fully. Hence, he joined his peers in class 5 but was later asked to go back to the lower classes he had skipped since his academic background could not match that class where his peers were currently reading.

⁵ Blue-bird slippers is a common type of bathroom slippers that is won in Ghana and beyond Africa. The name blue-bird derives from a bird which is depicted on the slippers.

so I could not wash it properly. So he got angry and used the cutlass to slap me which gave me a cut.” Again McKenzy continued that whenever he complained of tiredness while working, his father maltreated him this way: *He sometimes drives me away from the house to go and sleep on trees. I will have no food. It will be raining but I will still be in it”*.

The beating and other bitter experiences became too much for McKenzy to bear and he ran from the farming village to the nearby town in order to start his own life. This happened when he was around the age of 13. Initially, he managed to live on his own through the support he got from his friends to sleep in their home and the little money he was making from working for the market women. Eventually his father confronted his friend’s uncle so he had to be sacked from their house. After this incident, McKenzy had to make his own night shelter in the market. He slept close to the mud oven as a source of warmth, or he found an uncompleted building and slept there. Even though life became a constant struggle when he was living on his own, he preferred this lifestyle to the miserable one he endured under his father’s roof. Hence, he indicated he was not going back to his father at all at age 15.

At the lorry station of the market where McKenzy was assisting people carry their loads for a fee, he coincidentally met his older brother who had left home long ago. Together, they decided to go and pay their father whom they had not seen for a very long time a visit. To their dismay, McKenzy’s father drove them out and did not want to see them again. The two brothers then went back to the Northern region where their mother lived. On their way back they did not have enough money to pay the lorry fare so they had to help the driver of the car load the good into and on top of the car before they were allowed to sit on top of the car for that lengthy journey. This was very risky and dangerous but McKenzy indicated that *“what choice do I have. So we will be sitting and sleeping top there as the bus moves”*.

When they got back to the northern region, McKenzy was still obsessed with his the goal of going to school but his mother was unable to support him financially. She was still not having a reliable job. So McKenzy managed to secure a truck-pushing job which fetched him some money for his school fee and reading materials. He then started class six and continued to the junior high school (JHS). He was however sacked at the last year of the JHS because he was flouting almost all the disciplinary rules of the school on dressing and other behaviours “*I was dressing deviantly just to flex and show off that I am in tune with the current taste of student fashion. It kind of portrays you big in the eyes of others you know.*” He also noted that:

I became notorious. I was coming to school at the time I wanted and I do anything that I want on campus. My friends in the school were dressing and behaving deviantly. While I was mingling with them but not willing to comply with their deviant behaviours, they referred to me as a colloquial guy.

Such was the labels students earned for refusing to follow the current fashion of deviating from the prescribed way of dressing. McKenzy copied what his friends were doing in order to fit in the predominant peer culture and to escape such derogatory label. In the end, he exceeded the accepted threshold which eventually got the school authorities to sack him: “*While I was copying them, I was doing it over and above them and that got me sacked*”.

Being sacked from the school came as a big blow to him because schooling was a major prospect he saw relevant to his future. This made him move full time onto the market and streets with petty stealing in addition to the truck-pushing. That is, his circumstances had regressed from schooling to working in the market and petty theft. It was at this point that he got connected to new friends who were also truck-pushers. On days where no penny was earned on their market activities, they planned and went into people’s groceries kiosks in the

night with the help of a *master's key*⁶ which barely leaves a trace behind. This lifestyle continued for a while until McKenzy woke up in dissatisfaction with his life. He therefore went back to the southern part of the country where his father was and started life there. But he did not let his father acknowledge his presence.

At this point he put into use, the skills that he had acquired by working with his father on farms. He resided with a landlady who in return required of him to work on her farm to cater for the house rent. Education then came to his mind again and now he was ready to desist from all manners of bad conduct. He joined one of the schools in the locality and could pay his fee using the money he earned from laboring. Overtime, combining education and the work became hectic for McKenzy. He earned very little from the longer hours he worked, all of which went into his rent. Hence, getting breakfast, lunch, school uniform and books was still a challenge. He therefore had to work extra hours on additional farms for a fee which resulted in fatigue and absenteeism on his school attendance.

Despite all the hard work McKenzy had displaced, he could no longer make enough money to take care of his school needs. So during the vacation, he decided to visit his mother in the north to see if he to see if she could get any financial assistance. This was very important to him since he was heading towards the completion of his JHS education. Unfortunately, his mother was unable to assist him since she had not been working for a while. It was getting closer to the date of school reopening and McKenzy had still not procured the money. He was also worried about how he was going to get back to the southern part for his school, as he said *“Unlike in the past where sitting on the top of the car was for free, it was now costing four cedis”*.

⁶ Masters key is a metallic key shaped object which has the capacity to open several types of doors or locks.

Meanwhile, McKenzy got acquainted to two boys who were on the run for some offences committed in La Cote d'Ivoire. He had no knowledge of their crime but felt they needed help after they signaled they had no one in Ghana. He shared his shelter with them. School was on long vacation so they became close friends over the period. One of these boys got to know where a shopkeeper was keeping his money and upon informing McKenzy and the other guy, they stole the money in the night "*you know when things very difficult and someone is making it flexible, you will be happy. So getting the money made me get my fees, uniform, food.... I did not have to have to steal or work on farms again*". He saw stealing the money as an opportunity to end his struggle. McKenzy was very happy to get his share of the money. He went back south and paid for all the arrears that were in his name and became poised to complete his education. The two friends of McKenzy were later arrested and they helped trace McKenzy who also got arrested.

McKenzy made meaning out of his arrest and place in the correctional center this way "*At the JHS level where education was very cheap, I struggled and eventually came in here (correctional center) to finish it. But I know it was God's plan to keep me out of stealing*".

This indicates that McKenzy saw his arrest as an ontological intervention by God to avert his bad ways. Hence the correctional institution afforded him the resources he needed to complete his school without having to steal.

4.1.2 Exhibit-*Because I move out of the house, I was under nobody's supervision*

Exhibit was 18 year old when this interview was conducted. He lived with his parents in Accra⁷ as he was growing up. His father owned a beer bar in Accra and his mother assisted in managing the bar. His parents also had another house in Adieso⁸ where his mother had raised a small grocery store. Exhibit's grandparents from his maternal line were also staying at

⁷ Accra is the capital city of Ghana.

⁸ Adieso is a town in the eastern region of Ghana which is about 1 hour 45 minutes from Accra by bus.

Adieso. Exhibit's father's beer bar was much known for a palm wine⁹ he sold. The palm wine was supplied from a village near Adieso which retained the pristine taste it is expected to have. This made Exhibit father to frequently go to Adieso as often as possible to reimburse his stock of palm wine. Dispute sparked between Exhibit's parents and was not resolved so Exhibit's mother moved back to Adieso where her parents were living and she continued life there afterwards. Exhibit moved with his mother and he also live a normal life like all his peers.

Exhibit also saw his mother to be very protective of his life. She was constantly checking up on him to ensure he does not get influenced by the recalcitrant peers in their neighbourhood at Adieso into the marijuana smoking and other social vices:

I liked moving with friends a lot and my mother did not like it. She was of the view that, not all friends are good and she tried to protect me by stopping me from seeing them but I was still not giving in to her advice. Some of these friends later introduced me to marijuana.

In the mist of theses peer relations, Exhibit managed to continue his education at Adieso without any setbacks, maybe because of the control of his mother. He was very regular in school attendance and approached all his studies with the seriousness it deserved. However, at the JHS level his peer relations started to affect his studies and he began indulging in truancy:

I had a lot of friends some of which had finished school and other too just truants like me. So when I was following them up and down, I also lost interest in school and we were just doing our own things.

When exhibit got to JHS 1, he stopped schooling and decided to come and live with his father at Accra. This was welcomed by his mother, who saw it as an opportunity for him to be away

⁹ Palm wine is a type of local wine which is very white in colour and brewed from the palm tree.

from his peers that were influencing him to stay out of school. So Exhibit finally arrived in Accra and he was warmly received by his father, who enrolled him again in JHS 1. Exhibit adapted to the place, made new friends and reestablished contact with his old peers he had before his parent's separation. He continued schooling until he got to JHS 2 where he stopped again:

At this point they were laughing at me and calling me as *school boy* which give the impression that I am not matured. You know when you are in school and your best friends are elsewhere doing other things, it kind of diverts my attention and interest in the school. So I eventually moved out and join them.

This was mind bothering to his father since Exhibit had all the support he needed. His father did all he could to put him in class again but Exhibit resisted and later move out to live with a woman who was their family friend, who also had a son like him. She lived about 25 minutes walk away. Exhibit moved out of his father's house because his father was mounting so much pressure on him to rescind his decision of stopping school.

Living in the house of the family friend, Exhibit now started a new routine; he got up early in the morning and proceeded to his father's house to get his school uniform. He then left for school with the father still asleep. After school, with his father still at work, he returned to his father's house, hanged his uniform and return to the abode of their family friend. So most of the time, Exhibit's father never saw him come and go. But the absence of the school uniform in the morning and its presence in the evening was an appreciable code for the father.

Exhibit was now not directly under the supervision of his father. He was also not taking guidance from their family friend. She presumed that Exhibit passed through his father's place every day and that the interaction with his father made him to return home late. Exhibit however, spent less and less time in school.

Exhibit had learnt smoking marijuana already through the previous peers he had in Adieso. Now he was smoking together with the woman's son. In the night he and his friends were stealing, mugging and other vices.

One thing that was striking in Exhibits account was the fact that, there were some of his classmates which he saw as potential friends. However, he never enjoyed their company since they did not possess the qualities he was interested in at the moment:

You know, I was then a marijuana smoker and this was the normal among my friends outside school. It makes you strong and fearless. None of my friends in the class knew how to smoke it, so we were not much clicking as compared to those I was moving with outside the school.

Exhibit participated in the marijuana smoking for fun and to gain a sense of belonging, but with the passage of time, marijuana became the adaptive strategy to overcome the dangers that was involved in his night stealing and mugging activities in this way:

Initially, I was doing it because, it all my friends were doing it. it was kind of fun. But later, I was doing it for the mugging and snatching of phones. It was also helping me to calm down my nerves when peddling the drugs especially when it became risky to be caught.

This was because, the new friends that Exhibit had made roamed about in town during the day and engage in all sort of social vices in the night. Exhibit later opted out of the stealing and phone snatching business in the night since one of their colleagues got killed which frightened him in the following way *“after that incident, I was just moving with them in the day and we parted ways in the night”*. Meanwhile, Exhibits father and their family friend never got a hint about all that was going on. So Exhibit continued his association with friends but was now careful and reluctant to risk his life in stealing again. He therefore started visiting a couple of

his friends who worked in the day as ‘mates’¹⁰ in a lorry stations. Exhibit sustained these visits to his friends in the lorry station and assisted them in their work by calling out for passengers. Through this process, he mastered the work of the ‘mate’ and was also able to get enough money and food on days where he never set foot in his father’s house.

Exhibit later on got the opportunity to be recruited as ‘mate’ when one was needed in the station. He was therefore not going to his father’s place for money as he used to do. The driver that Exhibit was working with used to park the car in a nearby house which was the norm for a couple of the station drivers. This same house happened to be where the marijuana seller also lived. The marijuana business was well patronized by some of the drivers and the ‘mates’. Over time, Exhibit became acquainted to the house members and could sleep there with the driver he worked for. The driver of the bus quitted the job and left for another place which made life difficult for Exhibit since he had no means of getting money for his upkeep. He survived by living on his friends’ financial support and kept going back and forth to the marijuana seller’s house, hoping that, his driver might have return with the car. It was at this point that the marijuana seller approached him and offered him the opportunity to be part of the drug peddling community.

Prior to this call, Exhibit had witnessed for a long time, from outside the group, how the drug peddler’s went about their business without making his presence suspicious. In his own words *“initially, I was not part of sellers but I had observed them for some time and noticed how to go about it. So the boss asked me whether I can do it and I said yes. I therefore proved it”*. Hence, he welcomed the call to join the group without any hesitation since he needed a job during the day. Exhibit demonstrated a clear understanding of how he got involved in drug peddling community of practice by saying that:

¹⁰ Mate is the term used for bus conductors in Ghana. Their main work is to call out loud for passengers to a destination of the bus. They also collect the bus fare from the passengers when they get on board for the driver to concentrate on the road.

I think to some extent it was because I moved from the house and I was under nobody's supervision. I was having financial difficulty and you know man had to improvise on the street to survive. That way why I started as a 'mate' and eventually ended up in the ghetto. Our family friend was also not monitoring me.

Meanwhile, Exhibit's father was not checking up on him so he did not have an idea of what his son was doing. All he knew was that, Exhibit comes home early morning and pick's his school uniform and money for school in the morning. In the evening too, Exhibit father will return from work to find the uniform hanged, which was a signal to him that Exhibit had return from school and gone to their family friends residence. Exhibit however, had put in place a strategy which helped in deluding his father of his school attendance:

If I will go to school tomorrow, I will usually be with by my boss in the ghetto¹¹. So during the evening, I take my money for the services rendered and then got to our family friend. I sometimes sleep at my boss's place and wakeup early in the morning and quickly proceed to my father's place while he will be asleep.

This meant that by the time his father wakes up, Exhibit will be gone with his school uniform and money for food. There was this small girl in their area he I attended school with and usually when he was leaving for school, he had his house attire in the bag. When school close's for the day, he hinted that *"I change into my house attire and then put my school uniform in the bag and give it to her to be taken to the house for me. Then I will proceed straight to the ghetto"*.

In his practice of marijuana peddling, Exhibit got to make some more friends who were initially his customers of the drugs. Theses friends he met bought the drugs for several purposes, some of which were: *"the "mates" were doing it to get energy in shouting in the hot*

¹¹ The house where the marijuana seller was living which also act a parking place for some of the lorry drivers..

sun and conduct their buses. Others were also smoking to go for **'movement'**- it keeps them high to go and engage in phone snatching, mugging, and stealing". Hence, his involvement in the marijuana business enabled him to continue his contact with his peers that he had been stealing with at night. Exhibit also emphasized that, life in the Ghetto was very comfortable for him because of the brotherly support he was receiving from his friends there which made him stay there longer: *"If I don't work on a particular day due to shortages from our suppliers, I ask them for money and they help me in that respect, I could borrow other things and use it to my satisfaction without any problem"*.

Overtime, concerned members of that neighbourhood had witness the youth indulging in marijuana smoking and stealing which made the report the issue to the security agents. The security agents in the area frequently responded by chased and arrested the suspects of which Exhibit was part. They usually release them because they find no evidence of social misconduct or marijuana on them. The continuous searches and chasing incidence made Exhibit's stay in the ghetto a constant headache: *"The main problem I was facing in the ghetto has to do with frequent raids and I end up getting wounded in the process of escaping them"*. It was in one of these raids by the security agents which Exhibit was arrested for peddling marijuana and sent to the correctional center.

4.1.3 Aikins- It looked very nice and attractive to me so I went and removed it

Aikins is a boy of 17 year of age. While growing up, Aikins lived with his parents until he was 9 years old when they separated. He had an elder sister who is 22 years old and a younger brother of about 7 years old (at the time of the data collection). Unlike their sister who had completed JHS and staying in the house, Aikins and his brother were still in school. Aikins father was a medical doctor while his mother was a trader. The family migrated to several parts of the country where there was a shortage in medical doctors which made the children

change school many times. Eventually, the family settled at Apesika and the children started having a stable life. But Aikins father developed problems related to alcohol. Marital dispute broke out and the couple separated. Aikins, together with his mother, migrated once more to the Ashanti region where the trading business was booming. These events made Aikins lose contact with his father.

On their arrival in Kumasi, his mother rented a wooden kiosk¹² and they got settled there. Aikins mother started working in the market as a trader. She did not get any help from the husband and she solely supported her children. In the mist of their daily struggle, Aikins accidentally set fire to their wooden kiosk and it burned down majority of their properties in it. Not only did they lose all their belongings, but Aikins mother also had to pay for the damages caused to the rented kiosk:

If she had been able to pay for the damages caused to the wooden kiosk and worked later for money, we could have survived. But she had no money to settle it so we were drove out of it and life became unbearable.

Despite this problem Aikins had caused, his mother did not channel her anger on him. She continued to be caring and supportive and did not blame him for their ruin which Aikins appreciated: *“In all this, my mother did not get mad at me. She was happy that I did not get injured out of the fire”*. Just when Aikins and his mother were trying to cope with the ordeal which came with the fire outbreak, shocking news came in. That is, four days after the fire, they received a message that Aikins father had passed away so they went for the funeral.

On their return from the funeral in Kintampo, they stayed Apesika in other to seek the emotional support and comfort of their extended family. After some weeks there, Aikins’s

¹² Wooden Kiosk is a small structure built out of lightweight plywood which was originally meant for the sale of groceries. Many Ghanaians facing economic hardships has now converted it use to their home of residence. It is often patronized by poor urban migrants who at times may be stranded in the city.

mother headed towards the city but decided not to take the children along since life there was challenging. She therefore left the children under the care of the grandmother. At this point in his story Aikins blames his problem on his mother for not being there when he needed her “*if she had stayed, I know all this would not have happen and I will not be here*”. But on another breath, he acknowledged that “*her departure was for our own good*”. That is, to enable her work in the city for money to support their education and wellbeing. These indicate an ambivalent attitude Aikins had toward his mother’s departure. In the end, Aikins complied and remained behind.

Whiles living with his grandmother, Aikins continued his schooling. However, Aikins came to realize that he had difficulty adjusting in the classroom in this way:

I had difficulty learning in class. That was because, I moved from school to school in my family’s migratory process. Whenever I get to a new school, I find myself lagging behind since they might have treated several topics which happen to be new to me.

That is, the changing of schools which was due to the various relocation Aikins experienced while growing up had affected his adjustment in the classroom. Hence, although the problem was from the different school and syllabus he was exposed to, Aikins rather attributed his academic difficulties to his personal incapacity and concluded that “*I am not a good student so I don’t have to waste my time in the classroom*”. This quenched his thirst for classroom education. Aikins’s grandmother and other members his extended family placed much importance on education so they all opposed his decision of stopping school:

She (his grandmother) was sometimes on my nerves although not too much. She kept on asking me whether my continual stay at home was serving me good. So they (the family) were always confronting me here and there about the kind of path I had taken

But Aikins did not feel competent while schooling hence he continued to be defiant to their advice on schooling.

Another incident worth nothing was the treatment Aikins was met with while living with his extended family. Aikins assisted his extended family members on their farm while living with them. He indicated that he did not enjoy how his family members were insisting that's, he assist them on the family farm. When Aikins rescind to accompany them because he was tired on a day, his family was not understanding in that regard. Aikins family therefore deprived him of food until he changed his mind to go to farm: *“they were pestering me to go to farm to help and when I refuse sometime due to fatigue, they portray me as a disobedient child and refuse to feed me”*. This treatment made him uncomfortable and reinforced Aikins decision to go and live outside where his efforts were appreciated and rewarded: *“So I was working outside rather, in other to be fed there. I preferred outside because, there, when I get tired, they understand me and appreciate my efforts”*. His friends whom he later joined in the community were also puzzled that as hard working as Aikins was, he was not working for his family members. However, Aikins reiterated that:

When I get tired, my family members will not let me rest. But when I work for people outside, they always appreciate my efforts and understand I have to rest. They also reward me when I am leaving their farm with some of the agricultural produce which could be maize, yam.

This indicates that due to the differential treatment he received, he felt more comfortable working outside rather than within the nexus of his family which restrained his personal will. Again he also felt competent that his efforts are being rewarded unlike in the classroom where he had difficulty adjusting *“wherever, I went too, I was hard working so people were giving me money as a token for my services rendered”*. For this reason, Aikins developed the

penchant for dwelling outside since he felt at peace there. Given the context within which all these decisions took place, it will be enough to say that Aikins pursued a path along which classroom education was relegated as a means of meeting his dreams. He saw Farming as relevant and rewarding medium which he pursued. Also his decision to move out was made after he felt his extended family did not satisfy him in his mother's absence. Eventually, Aikins moved out and joined the company of his friends who also practiced farming for a living.

These friends lived in the same community where he was. The friends were young guys of his age and were also not schooling. They usually move around farms in their community in search of work. As a team, they assisted farmers on their land for a fee which became their main source of livelihood. The service of farm labourers was seasonal and depended on the availability of rain fall. Hence, Aikins had to adopt by engaging in other forms of unskilled labour when farm workers were no longer needed in a particular point in the year. To survive this obstacle, Aikins resorted to working in the beer bar as an attendant which also made him to unearth some of his potentials in music and dance.

But Aikins was later sacked because he misconducted himself on the job by taking money from the bar without consulting the owner. Prior to this behaviour, Aikins had followed a friend of his to stake in a gamble game and this friend won on several occasions. This made him to have confidence that his friend was good at the game. So when his friends later approached him to contribute some money from the bars coffers Aikins did not hesitate. Aikins took the money from the sale he had made on that faithful day without consulting his employer and they went to bet in the game: *“Unfortunately, I lost that day and when I returned he asked me about the money and I was afraid so I did not tell the truth that I took his money”*. Aikins employer was later hinted by his friend about their loss which made him to lose confidence in Aikins and in working with him in the future: *“he trusted me so much*

and I abused it by hiding such a situation from him. He therefore decided to part ways with me". This indicates that, even though Aikins had committed an offence, the bar employer saw it as a minor offence which resulted from Aikins stupidity and naivety. That seems to be the reason why he did not report him to the police authorities but just sacked him from the job. Now jobless, Aikins resorted to truck pushing: *"I started working as a truck pusher and did it for about two years. It fetched me some money for my personal up keep. I was doing it both in our town and the city"*. Aikins took this alternative job to his farming partly because, that was the trend his friends also pursued: *"some of my colleague farmers' switch to truck pushing so it was kind of the norm for me"*.

Despite the fact that his friend reported him to be sacked when he used the beer bars owners money in gambling, Aikins recounted in a number of times that, he enjoyed so much support from his friends. As he noted, *"After roaming about in the day they had their place and I was always welcomed there. Again "when I am without job or money too, I could always go to them since they were living with their mother's who were always preparing food and I could get some from that end"*. Aikins also continued that, when some of his friends went to the city they helped him secure another job offer there:

It was my friends who introduced me to the car washing job. They travelled to the city and sent message back to me that it was better. So I gave it a try. Initially, the owner of the washing bay was hesitating to employ me but he later saw I was a hard worker and he gave me chance.

We see that Aikins together with his peers do not have a criminal background since their life trajectory involves the pursuit of jobs and ventures which do not flout the public morality. More so, he was hard working and made good impression on people who paved the chance for him to live with (his friends) or work with (at the washing bay).

The above caption notwithstanding, Aikins acknowledge that living outside the family was very challenging and his voice had a religious undertone:

Sometimes when my friends are away, I will just place a wooden bench outside and sleep on it. As for mosquito bites, it is only by the grace of God that protected me out there because I was not getting sick. I have faced mosquito's bites since my childhood but God took very good care of me.

He maintained that, his constant roaming about for job and not living with his family members to listen to their advice was not helpful in the end. As he said *"they could have fed me after I return from work but I was always roaming and sleeping outside home"*.

As a coping strategy to endure the challenges that came along with living outside with his friends, he got introduced alcohol use. He was the youngest among the group so he always had to take care of their errands which included buying alcohol: *"They enjoyed taking alcohol a lot and I learned to drink at that time. They sometimes send me to buy alcohol when food was ready"*. Also, on a typical bad day where no job was procured, Aikins together with his friends reassembled in a beer bar in their community to take some alcohol to overcome it: *"we took alcohol to distress and relax on bad days there were no job"*. On other instances too, Aikins and his peers took alcohol when they were farming or pushing trucks to suppress the fatigue that came with it and this further buttress the fact that beside its use as appetizer, alcohol helped them in de-stressing and served as an energy booster.

In the mist of these challenges, Aikins traced his mother in the city and paid her a visit. He was warmly received by his mother who, even though opposed to the Aikins idea of stopping school, tried to reason with him: *"She advised that I stay with her until she is able to raise money to put me in apprenticeship. She warned me if I continue moving haphazardly in search for job, I will be lured into bad conducts"*. However, Aikins was still impatient and

defiant to stay and after listening to his mother. Partly because, he had waited for so long but his mother was not coming back to assist him. So he continued his usual pattern of roaming in search of job.

After this encounter, Aikins moved back to Apesika. One afternoon, he was heading toward the bus station to see if he can get someone's load to push with the truck. On his way to the bus station, he passed through a compound where someone had dried his clothing outside. Aikins then chanced upon a pair of Jeans: *"It looked very nice and attractive to me so I went and removed it. I did not have money to buy some"*. Even though someone around asked whether it belonged to him, Aikins responded no: *"The person did not utter a word afterwards and I also took it away. This guy was not the real owner of the pair of jeans but was just a curious neighbour."* Some weeks later, the owner saw him in the bus station in the pair of jeans *"He had a unique identification mark on it and could identify it even from a distance"*. According to the owner, he had 120 cedis¹³ in his trousers and insisted that Aikins took it in addition to the trousers. He therefore accused Aikins of stealing and called for his arrest which eventually brought him to the correctional facility.

4.1.4 Escoba - *I just wanted my money back and that was all*

Escoba is a 19 year old boy who had finished his JHS education. His father was a Police Officer while his mother operated a grocery store. His father was still making time for the family even though he was working in another part of the country. Whiles growing up, Escoba lived with his parents and he saw them as very supportive in every regard:

My parents were very caring when I was growing up. All the things that I ask them, they make sure I get it. Even if they can't get it at the time I requested it, they will let me feel ok by making me understand their situation.

¹³ 120 cedis will be equivalent to about 388 NOK.

His parents made every possible effort to make him happy not only in the house but also among his peers in the school. So life seemed wonderful for him since his parents were always there to support his needs. This enabled him to go through his childhood life without any major challenges.

Outside his home, Escoba had some three friends he was very close with. He met them in his early teens and with time, they became very close friends. He attended the same school with them and they sat in the same class as well. They did virtually everything together both in the school and also in the house and he was really happy and enjoying life with them. As he indicated, they used to do school tasks and assignments together and on their spare time, hang out in beer bars. But with time, their main source of excitement was meeting in bars and drinking alcohol while smoking cigarette. Escoba's friends lived far from his house, but this was not a barrier to their friendship. Escoba was frequently visiting them in their place to listen to music, watch videos and stay there until in the evening where he will return home. There were some occasions where he even dressed as if he was going to school but only to branch to his friends' house and hang out with them. Later, when he was in the last term of JHS 2, Escoba moved out from his parents' house to a new location that was close to his friends' neighbourhood.

His motivation to move out was not because he had a problem with his parents which pushed him. Rather, it came from his three friends which were mentioned earlier on. Together, they were preparing to write the BECE examination which is a prerequisite to enter the senior high school. Unlike Escoba who was living with his parent, his friends were living alone. They had rented a house and living on their own there. They therefore advised Escoba to do the same by moving out: *"my friends told me to pack my thing and join them so that we can be together"*. Overtime, Escoba came to terms with the reality that he was being separated from the group due to the disparities in their residence. So Escoba responded to this

call by convincing his parent to allow him to also move out and live close to them so that they can all study together. It is very common to find students studying together when this exams period approaches in Ghana so it was not new to Escoba's parents what their son was requesting. Hence, they agreed and even went ahead to pay for the rent of the house Escoba was going to live in. Escoba's relationship with his friends had grown stronger since they were now living close and they could do whatever they wished without parental restraints. Now when Escoba had the opportunity to live in the same neighbourhood with his friends, and he was now not under his parents watch, his truancy in school became persistent.

Another aspect of Escoba's story worth noting was when his friends' began to lavish money on him. All the boys were students and at their age, they were not expected to be gainfully employed to have accessed such funds. Hence, it was quite surprising when Escoba emphasized they were able to afford anything that they desired to buy, be it a car, TV, fridge and what have you. It was at this point Escoba indicated that, in addition to schooling, his friends were also engaging in 'Sakawa'¹⁴ which was earning them huge sums of money. They bought their own cars and other personal belongings through the 'Sakawa' business which also enabled them to live independent of their families. Escoba was very close to his friends but reiterated that he did not learn to engage in the 'Sakawa' business. He however indicated that he enquired from his friends on how they were able to make the money and he learnt that a spiritualist had to be consulted for some rituals to be met: *"My friends have visited a 'malam' (spiritualist) who gave them some rings to wear when browsing and this ring casts some spell on their pals to send anything they request for"*.

Escoba and his friends managed to finish their BECE exams and were now in the house waiting for their results. The 'sakawa' business became their main preoccupant (even

¹⁴ Sakawa is a Nigerian borrowed word which is used to describe process of engaging in internet fraudulent activities.

though Escoba just following them) and the money they got from it was used in purchasing cars, having parties and much fun. One would have expected in a Ghanaian community that, Escoba would have gone back to his parent's or called back by his parent's, as it is usually the case with JHS graduates. Escoba however continued to live with his friends and his parents had no idea about the activities he was involved: *"they never checked up on me at the new place. I was rather visiting them periodically and they felt everything was alright there"*.

It was time for the youth festival occasion in the town and Escoba together with his friends attended to have some fun. This was important to them, since they had just completed their JHS level of education and all the graduates were now free to have more fun. While having fun at the festival, the program went deep into the night and getting car back home became a problem. So they had to sleep in a guest house around that location where the dance festival was held. At a point in the night, Escoba realized that he had squandered the entire 130¹⁵ cedis he took along and asked of his friends to come to his aid. His friends were also generous to the extents that, two of them were able to contribute monies to the tune of 120 cedis to him which he kept in his pocket. On the next day, they all headed towards the house and along the way, Escoba decided to pass through his mothers place to pay her a visit. On his arrival, he opted to have a shower as well. While in the bathing, his phone started ringing and his mother went into her room to check the phone. The sound was coming from his son's jeans pocket so he reached for it. In an attempt to remove the phone, she came across the huge sum of money in Escoba's pocket. It was the 120 cedis Escoba had taken from his friends the previous night. Escoba's mother became alarmed since she knew her son was not working to have earned such huge money so she held unto it to interrogate Escoba for the source of the money. Escoba indicated that his friends provided it. His mother was still not convinced because, Escoba's friends were also not working to have earned that amount of money. So she

¹⁵ 130 cedis will be approximately be equal to 430 NOK

still held on to the money and insisted to be informed about the actual source of the money. But Escoba was insistent that it was his friends that provided him the money. At this point, his mother suspected that he might have gone to steal so she asked him where he stole the money from. Escoba dashed into the kitchen and brought forth a knife to threaten his mother to give the money back to him. Escoba's mother then gave the money back to him but later reported the matter to the police station for him to be arrested.

In relation to what was going through his mind while holding then knife, Escoba recounted that: *As for me, I was not actually going to stab her with it. I just wanted to get my money back and that was all.* Indicating that he was just out of options to convince his mother to get the money back and at that spur of moment, the knife was the only thing that came to his mind.

4.1.5 Stigo - *I did not have money to take care of myself in my mother's absence so I was stealing to survive*

Stigo was 18 years old and lived at Tarkwa which is in the western region of Ghana. He was raised single handedly by his mother and the first time he saw his father was when he was about 10 years old in class four. His mother was a trader which made her travel frequently to different parts of the country. On one of these treks, Stigo's mother returned with a man and introduced him as his father. Usually, when his mother left for work, Stigo was given some money for his upkeep until his mother will return. When certain circumstances make his mother keep long in the journey, Stigo could rely on his maternal family members that were still behind at Tarkwa. At a point, Stigo's mother was not coming back for a long time. Depending only on his maternal family for his upkeep was also rarely feasible and this made life very difficult for him. Stigo no longer enjoyed living with his maternal family since they were no longer providing him the assistance he needed: *"They were not ready to assist me in*

times of trouble. For instance when I was financially broke and asked for their assistance, they will tell me to rather go and search for my mother to assist me". Whenever Stigo was playing with his cousins, they retell what their parents had mentioned earlier on his mothers where about. Combined with the feeling of being teased and insulted by his same age cousins for his dependency on the extended family, this informed his decision to move out of the house.

On another breath, Stigo also admitted that the attitude of his maternal family members towards him changed because, they discovered he was involved in marijuana use. This somewhat contradicts his initial assumption that they were just not ready to assist him and had discussed it with their children: *"They got to know that I was smoking marijuana and made me look bad in their eye"*. Even though Stigo was complaining of inadequate support from his extended family, his still found a way to continue his marijuana use without having to pay physical in cash:

We had a ghetto at a particular point on the road to school. It looked like a bar but the owner of the ghetto was a man whole was selling Marijuana to us. He had some few locally brewed gins I used to pass there to borrow some of the wee and because I was not having money to pay, I go there on weekends to clean the place for him in return.

When Stigo finally moved out of the house, he went to live with his friend Sulley. This was after his friend had also suggested he can work with him and pay him good money. This came as good news to Stigo since all the money his mother left behind had been squandered and like he said, his extended family was not supportive. Hence he accepted his friend's proposal and moved in with him.

Sulley was about two years older than Stigo. So Sulley invited Stigo to his room and took him round for him to witness all the properties he had made for himself through his

work. Occasionally, he will ask Stigo if he had got some of the properties as he points at them and Stigo's response was no. Sulley then told Stigo to calm down and not to worry since he was in the right place. Sulley then started narrating some benefit of stealing to Stigo which made Stigo come to his senses on what all the induction in the room was about. So Stigo then prompted Sulley that: *"I said to him that as for stealing he should forget about it because I will not do it"*. Sulley was however cunning and persuasive in his approach and made Stigo to understand that he will not involve him in any stealing business: *"He continued to persuading me that he will not actually go out stealing with me, but he will just steal for me and bring me the money obtained from the sale of the stolen items"*. This convinced Stigo to agree and stay there since back home, his maternal family was not supportive and the money his mother left too had finish. So he saw it as a good source of living. Hence, although Stigo saw stealing to be against the public morality, he was ready to utilize its proceeds without any qualms.

Sulley kept his word on the first few days by actually providing for Stigo, all his needs without pulling him to steal. Stigo got money for his books and food without any sweat and as he said: *"this made me see Sulley as a very good person"*. This further reinforced Stigo's trust in Sulley that he was going to take good care of him. But with time, Stigo became very curious: *"I was later wondering where on earth he was getting all those things from so I told him that I want to go with him to see where he gets them from"*. Sulley then made Stigo to understand that, he cannot just follow him onto the field when he has no knowledge about how to conduct himself there. So he therefore took the opportunity to induct Stigo into stealing as a community of practice:

He started to teach me how to survive when stealing from one of his books. After some time, he went with me. Like we planned, he decided to enter the house with his gun while I stay outside with a whistle he provided. My job was to hint when someone is heading our direction.

It is worth noticing that, the training into stealing that Stigo obtained was sought from a book in which Sulley's experiences were documented. The book was endowed with requisite information which encompassed drawings of various buildings and walls, how to jump a wall to enter a house, types of knives and their use in stealing, types of padlocks and door lock and how they can be opened. This prepared Stigo's mind to envisage how it will be like when they finally go out.

Stealing as a way of life for Stigo was a risky venture and it came with a lot of challenges. One of which was a day he recalls they got chased while stealing: *"we were once chased in the process of stealing and we had to run away. Sulley actually left me on my own and I also had to run for my life"*. In Ghana, if a thief or an armed robber is caught, the people in the neighbourhood will administer instant justice by lynching the perpetrators to death as a deterrent to onlookers. However, Stigo was not deterred by the chase to stop stealing. After they escaped from being caught, Stigo was told that: *"He (Sulley) usually says as for today we did not succeed so we will succeed next time. That was when he taught me how to handle knife when I am stealing from the book"*. This boosted Stigo's confidence to continue the stealing since he now had weapons to defend himself when chased. Later, Stigo was also introduced to the gun and how he can handle it and he was hesitant to learn it initially. This was because, he had memories of a television program where armed robbers were caught and giving instant justice: *"If I take the gun to go for robbery and I am not lucky and caught, I can be burnt to death as a punishment"*. But he was also desperate to make a living in the absence of his mother which pushed him to succumb to Sulley's teaching: *But I gave in later to learn since I did not have anybody to cater for my needs and Sulley was there for me and assisting me.*

With time, Stigo mastered the act of stealing and was even prepared to go solo without the assistance of his initiator. This was because, he came to realized that, what he was getting from Sulley for his service and effort was much less than what he had in mind. This made him

feel being cheated so he planned going on his own. This came as a shock to Sulley who thought Stigo was still not ready to work alone. Sulley went ahead to warn Stigo: *“The last time I tried to go and steal alone, Sulley advised me that I did not have weapons to protect myself so I should stop”*. Stigo was poised to do it alone so he kept his word and went without Sulley to engage in the stealing. He got arrested by the police and brought to the correctional facility. The meaning that Stigo made out of his delinquent was that *“I did not have money to take care of myself in my mother’s absence so I was stealing to survive”*.

Prior to his arrest, Stigo had to choose between schooling and stealing, it was a challenging decision that Stigo faced. This was because Stigo had a good track record in the class room. He was one of the best students in his class before he reached class four. His friend at the time, John, was always in the first position in their class. John and Stigo back then, used to learn together, do their assignments together and other academic activities as well which was benefited Stigo very much.

Besides excelling in the school, Stigo’s relationship with John also influenced him to desist from all manners of deviance. This was because, John’s father was very much religious and this had also influence John into church activities and Godly life. Hence, he also passed on those values to his friend Stigo and constantly pulled him along to church service.

But later in their friendship, Stigo was in much need of money and other needs for his personal upkeep and his attachment to John was not serving him right. The money his mother left him had finished long time and whenever he attends church with John, it was expected that he gives offertory which made him uncomfortable there: *“When my colleagues are going to deliver their offertory, I don’t feel comfortable by just sitting down and watching them. It sounds like I always don’t have money and I will look bad in their eye”*. This was making him feel inferior so he was no longer interested in associating with his friend John. It was in his

quest to replace John as his bosom friend that Stigo came across Sulley who also happened to be in his class. Sulley was truant in class attendance and had missed some of the promotional examinations. This behavior of Sulley made the school authorities to repeat him in class four for several years and made him the oldest among his classmates.

However, Stigo preferred to roll with Sulley because there were some extracurricular activities that Sulley was very good at. One of these activities was football which Stigo had much passion for. Sulley was a good mentor in the school when it comes to football because he was really good at it. This commonality brought Stigo and Sulley together when the school was preparing for an interschool tournament and made Stigo turn away from John for good.

There were a number of occasions in which Stigo indicated his drug use interfered with personal life and affected others around him. One of these instances was when he smoked marijuana purposely to get extra energy to participate in their impending football match: *“We were going to play football with other schools and I was the captain of class six. I went and smoked to boost my performance and on my return, I was just moving up and down on the school’s corridor”*. His conduct on the schools corridor drew the attention of the schools authorities and upon further interrogation, they suspected him to have smoked marijuana. The teacher tried to cane him for taking the marijuana but as Stigo was under the influence of the drug he felt energized to fight back.

Again, Stigo also recounted a particular period in time where his drug use affected his senses and influenced him to nearly killing his mother: *“I took some marijuana and I was very high. I don’t know what came over me because my senses were all gone”*. It was one afternoon and Stigo was sent by his mother to go and get her a bottle of soft drink. It is a common practice in Ghana that, when someone buys a bottle of soft drink, the crown cork is opened at the kiosk and then put back to just hang on it before it is taken to the final

destination. So Stigo did the same by opening the crown cork and on his way home dropped a rat poison into the drink. He also continued that, he disrespected his mother and did not obey her: *“I even lost respect for my mother when I started smoking and I saw her as just a small girl who could no longer punish me”*.

4.1.6. Abroad - *I knew it takes a boy to “spoil” another boy, but I did not know that a girl can do it better*

Abroad is a 17 years old boy who comes from the northern region of Ghana. He was brought up by his parents in Accra, the southern part of Ghana. His mother was a business woman who traded in the yam market in Accra while his father worked as a farmer in the northern region. Due to the nature of occupations his parent pursued, they lived separately and Abroad had to stay with his mother. Abroad had two elder brothers who were outside the country and a younger brother in Ghana. His younger brother had moved out of their home to live with friends in another part of Accra and was reportedly involved in many criminal activities. While growing up, Abroad saw his future to be very bright and desisted from all manner of activities that can truncate his success. He indicated both of his parents were supportive in every respect. His school lessons were taken seriously and he was very selective in terms of the friends he moved with since he believed that, bad friends could influence him to be deviant. This lifestyle was very much commended by his teachers who saw him as a model for his peers to emulate and until he got to class four, no bad conduct was reported of him.

During his tenure in class four, the seating positions of the class was reshuffled and he was paired with a girl to share a classroom desk. He was initially worried that he had been separated from the boy with whom he had shared desk from class one. Abroad was about one year younger than this girl. Despite his position of being mindful of the kind of peers he

associates with, Abroad was open to friendship with his girl counterparts. This was because, he perceived girls better mannered than the boys. This made him not to have any problem with taking the girl as his friend.

Indeed, the girl that Abroad shared his desk with initially appeared to be committed to her studies as she frequently reminded Abroad to focus on classroom teachings but not to pay attention to the distractions been caused by the boys at the back of the class. This further strengthened Abroad's trust in her that she is well composed just as he envisage previously about girls. It was not too long after Abroad came into contact with this girl that her whole world changed for the worse:

It was in the afternoon and the teacher who was supposed to take the class did not show up so everyone was doing what it pleased him or her. I was chatting with her and a couple of friends and she signaled that I follow her outside for something.

When they got outside, she asked Abroad to escort her somewhere. Abroad was hesitant initially because, he was afraid the next teacher might come soon and they can be in trouble. But the girl convinces him that it will not take long which made Abroad to follow her. They went to an isolated area close to the school: *"So when we got there, she brought out the 'raisler'¹⁶, and the 'starter'¹⁷. She started rapping the marijuana with the 'raisler' and used 'starter' to light fire on it"*. This was very surprising to Abroad who never anticipated this coming. The girl took in a bit of the marijuana and Abroad queried what she was doing. She replied that: *"it is a good thing so I should try it and see for myself"*. The girl passed the marijuana unto Abroad and out of curiosity, he tried it: *"I smoke a little and started coughing so I decided I was not interested in it again. I started feeling sleepy and weird"*.

¹⁶ A white paper that is used in rapping marijuana before it can be smoked.

¹⁷ A device which is used to light marijuana. It is usually used to light up cigarette.

Abroad quickly left the place, went for his school bag from the class and proceeded straight to his home.

Later on in the evening, the girl visited Abroad and as they were moving around, the girl tried to explain to him that she meant no harm to have given her the marijuana and that it was a good medicine. Abroad indicated that after he came into contact with the marijuana, he lost his senses and acted as if he was under the spell of this young girl. It was at this point where he reflected and made a conclusion about his relation to the girls: *“I knew it takes a boy to spoil another boy, but I did not know that a girl can do it better”*. The implication of Abroad’s deduction will be clearly understood in the light of transformation that he went through after he met the girl. They strolled in the neighbourhood during that evening for a while and she took Abroad to a secluded location again. They went through the marijuana smoking again: *“After a while, she gave it to me and told me to take in the smoke a little at a time. It seemed to work because I was not coughing like before. But I became dazed and felt so different”*.

This relationship came to stay since they frequently met and smoked the marijuana. After some time, the girl introduced Abroad to some of her friends, both males and females who were also into smoking marijuana in the ghetto. This affected Abroad school’s attendance tremendously since it made him dodge classes to meet his new friends. In the end, Abroad became used to the marijuana smoking and took much interest in moving out with his peers in the ghetto. He also started engaging in petty theft in the classroom and played a hide and seeks game with his classmates as a way of getting away with the money. But his continuous absences during their early morning assemble or parade created suspicion among his classmates. So on one occasion he was caught red handed and punished severely which made him to stop going to the school. This was because, he was caned in front of his colleagues as a

deterrent for such conducts which tarnished the good boy image he had earned over the years in the school.

Abroad's mother intervened by finding him another school for him to put that past behind. But this time round, he was unable to focus on his studies in school since he frequently felt the urge to smoke the marijuana and moved out of the class to visit his friends in the ghetto. This behaviour also got him into trouble since on one occasion there was a police raid and he also got arrested. Abroad's mother came to his aid by paying the fine for his release. After he was released, Abroad was still not deterred from negative peer associating and its subsequent consequences. He maintained the visits to his friends in the ghetto and at a point in time, Abroad was advised by the girl, who initially introduced him to drugs to move in and join them in the ghetto permanently. He also adhered to the call and moved out of his mother place of residence. So even though Abroad had parents who were ready to take care of him, he rather chose to stay outside. He was eventually recruited into stealing in the ghetto.

Abroad recalled that, even though he had developed friendship with some of the ghetto youth, joining them in their community was not automatic. A proper initiation had to be made for him to assess, prepare and be accepted into their community. Most of his friends were already experienced in stealing so they spoke with him about it and he also agreed to be involved: *"All the youth in the ghetto have their masters (big-men) and my friends introduced me to the one they were serving"*. Afterwards, the master gave a go ahead signal to his gang to commence training of Abroad which involved some basic thing he must know when stealing: *"So the initiator will usually teach you some basics of stealing like how to open doors, padlocks, how to use gun, knife, scissors and the rest "*. He was also given an opportunity to have a feel of what stealing will be like. This was possible since his initiator made use of his residence in the practical lesson. His master also submitted his house to be

used as a practicing forum. This helped to prepare his mind for the job and to enable him master the craft in few days. To ascertain that Abroad was ready to practice he was given an opportunity to prove his competence on the field of stealing. Abroad was left alone on the field to steal because, the recruiters saw him as a novice who had to prove his readiness after going through training. Hence, he needed to steal without assistance from his group in the ghetto so that that if he fails in the process, he will be the only one arrested. This was a risky venture but Abroad was poised to do it. He was able to do the job without leaving any traces behind and was finally reported to his 'big-man' (master) in the ghetto: *"So when I returned, I was evaluated based on my accomplishments on the field of stealing. The amount of money and other properties that one will bring denotes a 'hard boy' (very criminal)"*. Depending on the outcome of the evaluation, the trainees in ghetto might be given a go ahead to join a gang there to work as a team for the 'big-man' (Master): *"when you are successful, people begin to give you respect. By few days, I was popular in the ghetto especially doing so well"*. This determines the role that new member will be accorded to play in the community of practice which in turn define ones status in the group and the community. He was therefore welcomed to participate in all the activities that unify and strengthen them there. Abroad was later given weapons on loan to assist him engage in the stealing and with time, proceeds from his stealing was used to acquire personal weapon for him by his master.

Abroad indicated that life in the ghetto was hectic and challenging since it involved a lot of fights, power and status struggle. With respect to the fights in the ghetto, it was as a result of little misunderstandings which were not managed well among themselves. For instance *"when I bring a product from the previous night through stealing, some of my friends will ask me to give it to them and after some time, they will tell me they can't find it again"*. When this happens, Abroad will also retaliate by taking their belonging and this breed fight among the group members which can be very fatal. As he said *"the marks on my body*

represents the fights and problems I faced in the ghetto. We fight and they cut me with knife and all that. I also burn their kiosk”.

On the issue of power struggle, it is the defining platform which gets to determine the one in charge of a group in the ghetto community. When one is finally accepted into the gang, it is incumbent on him to prove his value in the group and this involved fearless prowess and knowledge on their stealing escapades. However, when new recruits demonstrate these abilities in their group, they become a threat to the current members occupying positions and sometime lead to internal feuds:

I was emerging a leader naturally since the guy who was in charge was a bit coward when we go out in the night. They gather together and decide that, the rate at which I am becoming powerful in the ghetto is alarming so they fought me and I had wounds all over.

Even though Abroad’s group resisted initially, they met later and conceded he was fit to be the leader of their group which also came with its own challenges.

Being the leader of his gang was another big challenge Abroad faced in the ghetto. This was because, he now occupied a position in which all his members looked up to. He was a big source of inspiration to his group and he was the next in order after the ‘big-man’ (master). This further increased his commitment to the community of practice even against his own will: *“I will be thinking about stopping stealing and suddenly, one of my friends will come and say, Abroad, I saw a man passing here and he was holding a laptop bag so I think you can take action”*. As a leader whom they were looking up to, he had to sustain their confidence in him that he was really in charge: *“so I had to act like a man. I therefore go and collect the laptop and that in turn heighten my reputation in the ghetto and their respect for*

me". He also had the responsibility as a leader to assist some of his group members in paying the bills of their kiosk which meant that he had a lot of work to do to retain that position.

Despite the above fights, power struggle and other challenges that Abroad was going through in the ghetto, he still felt at peace and belonging there and never dreamt of moving out of the place. He was of the view that *"I know I have been disturbing my mother already and she will start crying and all that. People have been calling her that her son is a thief, I get arrested and she comes to my aid and bail me"*. This made Abroad not to go back home to disturb her mother with the lifestyle he was leading. Also, Abroad recounted that members of his neighbourhood back home had branded him as a bad boy which made him felt not belonging *"If I go to the house, the people there have already branded me as stubborn and bad so they will be pointing fingers at me that see the stubborn boy coming which I despised"*. Hence, these factors compelled him to continue life in the ghetto where he felt belonging and much needed. Indeed, right from the day he was introduced by the girl into marijuana and subsequently to the ghetto, he continuously enjoyed the support of that community in diverse ways which sustained his interest in remaining there. Even when his relationship with some of the youth in the ghetto was initially centered on marijuana smoking, he felt their support and approval in this manner: *"if I am smoking marijuana, they applauded and motivated me that I am too good and that I can wrap big marijuana and smoke all. That I can even smoke 20 rolls (sticks) of marijuana. I was also feeling good you know"*. Again, when he was newly recruited into the ghetto gangs, his group members constantly reminded him that *"if I harbour fear in me, it will rather get me caught. They encourage me with sayings like- oh Abroad you know how to jump wall, you are too much, you are good at mugging"* which motivated him and made him felt cherished and important in their mist. This informed his basis for opting to stay with his friends when he was faced with a dilemma of choosing between going back home and staying with his friends : *"I quite remember my mother once came and call me from*

the ghetto and they advised me I shouldn't go and leave them behind so I stayed". Indicating that, the ghetto community, despite its challenges Abroad had to face there, was cherished and adorned than that of his previous home community which portrayed him as a bad one in their mist.

On the first day that Abroad led some of his group members into stealing, he recounted a remarkable and rewarding experience which sustained his interest to keep on pursuing stealing as a way of life: *"the first we stole, I made a lot of money. It was a bag full of two cedis notes. We were four boys so we shared it. I rented a room and I felt that I am now a man"*. After this experience, Abroad continued his stealing adventure on a full time basis which was earning him a lot of money and properties: *"we started the stealing big time. I was making like 500 cedis or higher in a day after my master's deduction. I will buy my shirt, my shoe, and everything, pay my rent. So that pushed me into the stealing"*. This motivated him to go on with stealing and in the end became very powerful in their community of practice. Abroad enjoyed the a certain status and respect among his friends and was therefore ready to do anything that will enable him sustain such a position in the gang: *"in ghetto, once you get such money, you become very powerful and popular and you always want to maintain that kind of life which I also did. I had more than one girl friend, a plasma TV, fridge.... "*. Hence, he had got to a point where he did not want to turn away from stealing.

To succeed in stealing without being caught, Abroad explored both physical and spiritual assistance which in the end guide him in his practice. He smoked marijuana to give him the physical strength and to maximize his level of alertness when they go out to steal. He also made sure that he had a knife and a gun in place to overpower his victims. Spiritually, Abroad also had magical amulets that he believed to protect him and also ward of bad luck when he was on the field stealing: *"I have visited so many fetish priests so I had a lot of amulet which protected me when stealing"*. This gave Abroad a stronger mindset that he will

always be successful when stealing. Hence he was never afraid when attacking his victim for their belonging since he believed his supernatural powers were protecting him. Indeed both his physical weapons and supernatural powers were very helpful in his stealing escapades since they enabled him accomplish tasks he would otherwise be afraid to embark on: *“I had the charm that worked against knives and gun’s attack. I was able to fight very strong men to collect their properties with the assistance of the amulets”*. However, there was an antidote to his magical amulets which sometimes raised doubt in his mind whenever he was using them: *“it sometimes did not help me at all. It was a small boy that broke all my charms since it does not work on minors”*. That is, there was a limit to the supernatural powers he had acquired for stealing and when he applied them beyond such limits, it was bound to fail. This made Abroad to re-examine his belief system as far as the magical powers are concerned and to use them in a way and manner which accords with their designated roles. Hence, he made every effort to know the antidotes of his supernatural power, so that, together with his weapon, he would always come out successful in his community of practice: *“I went back to the fetish priest to understand why my charms sometimes did not work and I became aware of when not to apply them”*.

With the assistance of the weapons and supernatural powers, Abroad grew stronger and powerful in the ghetto community to the point that, he also started recruiting new members into the community of practice. Together with his gangs, they indulged in countless number of stealing in the Accra metropolis. They participated in pick pocketing, phone snatching in lorry station in the night, mugging, car snatching, armed robbery and the likes. It was in one of these pursuits where he got arrested and brought to the correctional center. As a turning point in his life, Abroad has now assumed a different mentality to the process by which he was acquiring wealth in the ghetto. He now construed stolen money and its belongings as amounting to ‘bitter’ money. This was because, he had acquired it through the

wrong channel and his victims felt bitter about it which he believed to be something that can hunt him down. He is seeking Gods intervention: *“I pray to God to touch the heart of those people to forgive me because I did not know that I was doing.*

4.2.0. Main Findings

Having presented the stories, it will now be adequate for me to begin a thorough discussion of their lived experiences which made them become involved in juvenile delinquency. Six (6) main themes emerged as circumstance which informed my participants’ involvement in juvenile delinquency and they include religiosity and morality, deviant peer association, substance use and delinquency, the functioning of the nuclear family, inadequate extended family support, apathy in schooling and labeling by neighbour. In the end, the training process of the participants that premeditated their delinquent behaviour is presented. In relation to relevant literature on juvenile delinquency, these themes are as discussed below.

4.2.1. Religiosity and Morality

Religiosity and morality emerged as a theme in the life trajectory of my participant as far as their delinquent behaviours are concerned. Three subthemes emerged under religiosity and morality and they are as discussed below.

4.2.1.1 Conversion onto a Constructive Path

In their narratives, some the participants made sense of their presence in the correctional center as a transitory phase in their lives. They held that, it was not for nothing that they find themselves in the center. God had seen the bad tract which they were advancing and wanted to give them a better option. Narratives about God intervention manifested in several respects and characterized some participants as being salvaged to pursue a more constructive life. This can be linked to the meaning McKenzy made out of his arrest *“God had a better future*

planned for me so he wanted me to be good". That is, McKenzie came to a realization that his arrest was permitted by God to happen as a way of preventing him going wayward. Again, Abroad continued that *"if it is your time to be caught to end your bad ways, God will let it happen and you can't change it"* which also indicates that Abroad is admitting an ontological intervention from God to put an end to his ways. This portrays a common understanding that the above participants were aware that they had contravened the public morality as well as the will of God. This seems that, they are satisfied with their arrest since they were living a life contrary to God's expectations.

This is quite surprising because, one would expect that, they will be angry at God and blame Him for their current place in life. Contrary to this, they saw their presence in the correctional facility as a chance for them to make it in life again. McKenzie said that *"at the JHS level where education was very cheap, I struggled and eventually came in here (correctional center) to finish it. But I know it was God's plan to keep me out of stealing"*. Abroad also said that *"I know God wants to make me a big person in future to help my nation"* From the preceding narratives of the participants, one can infer that, the relationship between religiosity and juvenile crime here tends to be spurious. This finding can be linked to see Benda and Corwyn's (1997) report in the literature which posits relationship between the two variables tends to be spurious or indirect. That is because, religiosity was not one of the antecedent factors which made the participants to become involved in delinquency. It was however a meaning making platform which affords them an opportunity to make sense of their situation, which again has the proclivity to dissuade them from crime in future.

4.2.1.2 Reinforcing Delinquency

Religiosity and morality was also found as a subtheme which reinforced some of my participants in their stealing escapades by boosting their confidence that they are protected. This is conveyed in the following quotes *"I have visited several fetish priests for supernatural*

powers which protect me when I am stealing. The amulets protected me from gunshot, knife and energized me to fight strong victims” (Abroad). Another participant also indicated that *“before we move out to steal, I always pray in my mind to God for his protection and it was helping me” (Stigo).* This indicate that contrary to the public morality in the Ghana community that the citizenry are under the watch of the of ancestors and lesser gods who visit numerous plights on wrong doers (Abotchie, 2008; Nukunya, 2003; Gyekye, 1996), some of my participant held subordinate moral beliefs and practices counter to the prevailing public morality. This is a phenomenon which has not been reported in the literature, hence worth noting. Again, the above finding also challenges the report by Chadwick and Top (1993) as well as Dilulio (1998) that there is a negative relationship between religiosity and delinquency. This is because, as the above narratives suggests, certain forms of religious affiliation affords its followers a belief system and protection which reinforce their delinquency.

4.2.1.3 ‘Bitter’ Money

‘Bitter’ money emerged as a theme which expressed my participant’s meaning they made out of the odds they caused their victims. Abroad acknowledged that, the delinquency he was exhibiting was something which will create a bitter feeling among his victims:

Somebody has spent his time to work hard for his money or other properties and you will just go and take it like that, he will always feel bitter about such loses. The laptop that a person is using to learn, I attack them for it, and sell it in the black market for a meager fee. I knew the money and other things I got through stealing will definitely trigger bitter feeling from the victims (Abroad).

That is, he has construed that the monetary possession he obtained through stealing was not only a bad conduct but also triggers bitter feeling, hence ‘bitter’ money. He was therefore

apologetic and prayed to God to intervene in this manner: “*I pray to God to touch the heart of those people to forgive me because I did not know that I was doing*” (Abroad). As a new attitude to help him stay out of stealing Abroad envisaged that:

I have come to realized that if you don't sweat to get money, you will not take good care of it. It was quick money so it was also spent quickly and you can't do anything good with it. That is why I am saying when I get released, I will use the auto mechanic skills to work. Because I am going to sweat for it, I will spend it wisely” (Abroad).

The above narratives indicates that Abroad now hold a negative attitude towards the use of illegitimate means in acquiring wealth which is in line with Shipton (1997) concept of ‘bitter’ money as indicated in the literature. It is however worth noting that unlike in the Luo community where acquisition of ‘bitter’ money attracted an informal sanction from the community for actions such as the sale of land, tobacco, cannabis and homestead rooster (Shipton, 1997), in this present study, the acquisition of ‘bitter’ money attracted both formal and informal sanction. The formal sanction is when the participants get arrested for stealing while the informal sanctions was the labels they received in their community for engaging in stealing

4.2.2. Deviant Peer Association, Substance Use and Delinquency

Another theme which emerged to explain my participant's involvement in delinquency was the reciprocal relationship that existed between deviant peer influence into substance use and delinquency. The various ways through which the above theme manifested in my participants narratives can be categorized into two subthemes which include: deviant peer influence into substance use as a precursor to delinquency, and deviant peer influence into substance use as reinforcement to delinquency. These subthemes are as discussed on the next page.

4.2.2.1 Deviant Peer Influence into Substance Use as a Precursor to Delinquency

As a precursor to delinquency, deviant peer influence into substance use emerged to be an element which incapacitate the sense of judgment of some youth and eventually make them come into contact with peers who indulged in delinquency. It was found that, Abroad who came into contact with deviant peers was initially introduced into substance use after which the relation graduated to incorporate other social vices like stealing. Typical of this situation is embedded in his quotation below:

I was introduced to marijuana smoking by a girl in my class. She was the one who advised me to move away from my parents to stay in the ghetto where stealing was the order or the day. Those friends in the ghetto too thought me so many bad things especially how to steal and engaged in armed robbery (Abroad).

Inferring from the above narrative, it becomes clear that my participants' involvement in delinquency was as a result of the deviant peers he met, one of which initially introduced him into marijuana. Looking at Abroad's positioning in the above voice, he is morally distancing himself from the bad of activities that his peers got him involved and apportioning the blame on them. Hence, he presents his peers as the bad ones that influenced him into delinquency.

The above narrative is an expression of how peer influence into substance use played role in the life trajectory of some adolescents into delinquency. That is, at the early stage of his life, Abroad came into contact with drugs which affected his perception and judgment on the public morality and this in the end made Abroad to take delinquency as a way of life. As indicated in the literature, Menard et al. (2001) reported inconclusive results on the order of initiation between delinquency and substance use. The finding in my presents study on substance use as a precursor to delinquency contributes to the literature by presenting lived experiences where substance use clearly play a role as a precursor to delinquency. Again, the

above finding can be linked to the differential association theory (Sutherland, 1939) of delinquency since it was through Abroad's contact with his deviant peers that he learned to use drugs and engage in stealing.

4.2.2.2 Deviant Peer Influence into Substance Use as Reinforcement to Delinquency

Deviant peer influence into substance use also emerged as a circumstance which reinforced my participants into continual engagement in delinquency. This represents a category of participants that were already involved in juvenile delinquency. After their continual relations with their deviant peers, they learned to perform the delinquency well by resorting to substance use. In several respects, the participants indicated that without drugs, there would have been shortfalls in the performance which could have gotten them arrested. But their introduction to substance use helped them regain energy and confidence to forge ahead in their respective delinquent behaviours. Below are some of their experiences: Exhibit: *"I was always nervous when I was peddling the drugs out there. My colleagues gave me that idea and afterwards I realized that when I take the marijuana before peddling the drugs, it make me relax and keep my composure"*. Abroad: *"after smoking marijuana, I get to the state where I feeling like a soldier going to war. In this way when I am stealing and I get chased, I get very energized and run fast like never before"*. Stigo: *"my partner was always smoking it before we go and steal. So he usually passes a piece of it to me. When I smoke before going to steal, I get more vim out there"*. From the above quotes, it becomes evident that the use of drug was a means which boosted my participants' energy and confidence to continue engaging in their respective community of practice.

Also the above participants have positioned their voices in a way that suggests an allotment of blame onto their deviant peers as having introduced them into the use of marijuana to boost their performance. Hence, indicating their moral innocence as far as that

the initiation is concerned. This result is in line with the findings in the literature which suggest that, the relationship between substance use and delinquency becomes reciprocal (D'Amico et al., 2008; Ford, 2005; Menard et al., 2001). Moreover, the finding above is in line with the differential association theory (Sutherland, 1939) which suggests that, when adolescents come into contact with deviant peers, it increases their propensity of mimicking such behaviours.

4.2.3. Substance Use as an Adjustment Strategy to Stressful Life.

Substance use was also discovered to be an integral part of some of my participants in adjusting to the stressful and tiresome nature of the works they did. They were very young and unlike their compatriots who had their parents to take care of their personal needs, their parents were poverty stricken. Hence, they had to work hard in order to meet his needs. The nature of the truck-pushing job and the farming work which they took demanded very strong muscles, which are ready to work for longer hours. As young as they were, they had no option as to resort to substance use as energy booster. This captured in McKenzie's voice as follows: *"as a truck pusher, we always lift heavy things and you sometimes have to climb mountain and all that. So you need extra energy to do that and the marijuana will do it just like magic"*. This signifies that, even though it was illegal to use marijuana, he was ready to do everything it takes in order to make a living on his own which was very risky to his life. Aikins also reiterated that *"we took alcohol to distress and relax on bad days there were no job"*. The above quotes indicate that, the above participant engaged in substance use not to help them engage in delinquency but to adjust to their stressful life conditions they were facing.

This finding challenges the notion obtained in the literature about the association between delinquency and substance use (D'Amico et al., 2008; Ford, 2005; Menard et al., 2001). As the above quotation illustrates, their indulgence in drug use was not meant to

reinforce delinquent behaviours. However, it was an adjustment strategy they used to overcome stressful life circumstances.

4.2.4. Deviant Peer Association and Delinquency

Deviant peer association emerged as one of the circumstances which explain some participants' involvement in juvenile delinquency. Some of the participants indicated that it was the peers which they came into contact with that got them involved in committing crime. That is, in their personal sober life, delinquency was never a means to solving their problem. However, their relationship with these deviant peers persuaded them to resort to illegitimate means to end their trouble which eventually got them arrested. This was what some of them had to say concerning their deviant pals influence on them. McKenzy indicated that *“you know, when things are very difficult and my friends came up with a proposal to end it, I will be happy. After all I am not the one who was going to take it. It is sad though that in the end we all got arrested”*. Stigo also emphasised that *“unlike John who pulled me into church activities, my friend Sulley got me into stealing. I was having difficulties in my mother's absence and Sulley suggested he can work with me. So he introduced me into stealing”*). From the above captions, it becomes clear the role that deviant peers played in the participants life trajectory. That is, deviant peers capitalized on their challenging situations that my participants were facing to introduce them into delinquency as the solution. This is clearly signified in McKenzy and Stigo's positioning in the above narratives, as they seem to be morally distancing themselves as the good and innocent ones but blaming their deviant peers.

The above considerations can be linked to the differential association theory (Sutherland, 1936) as well as McGloin and Shermer (2009) findings captured in the literature review. As the literature review indicated, the youth become delinquents through their interaction with peers that support delinquency rather than the ones that were against it.

As it was seen in Stigo's case, he was morally upright during the time that he was associated with his friend John in his story. However, as his story indicate, he started engaging in stealing after he came into contact with his new friend Sulley who was into Stealing. It must therefore be noted that, these participants connection to these deviant peers was instrumental and based on the reward that they saw at the end of the tunnel; Something that their conformist friends, parents and extended family fell short to provide. This indicates that given their venerable circumstance, deviant peers was the option they saw to end their troubles.

4.3. The Functioning of the Nuclear Family

The functioning of the nuclear family also emerged as one of the circumstances that pave the way for my participants into juvenile delinquency. Embedded in this theme were inadequate parental support, parental laxity supervision and parental maltreatment.

4.3.1. Inadequate parental support

In relation to inadequate parental support, it was revealed that, unlike many teens that are supported by their parents to received food, shelter, education, financial, health, emotional and moral support, some of my participants did not enjoy these benefits to the fullest from their parents. This is an expression that McKenzy made to explain his current place in life: *"I will say it is parental care. Because, if my parents had taken good care of me, I wouldn't have gone out to steal. But I was determined to pursue my education and that was why I joined my friends to steal the money"*. This indicates that, his intention to succumb to the influence of his peers or to steal was the only option he saw to take care of the responsibilities his parents were not meeting. Stigo also puts it this way: *"I was not having my parents around to take care of me and my schooling. I actually wanted to quit stealing since it was risky, but I also had to survive you know"*. Aikins further indicated that *"my father was dead and my mother*

too was not around to support me. So I had nobody to by the dress for me". These quotes point out that the participants were cognitively mindful of the circumstance which pushed or pulled them into delinquency and inadequate support from their parents played a vital role. In relation to the literature, the above finding is in line with the propositions of the social bond theory (Hirschi, 1969) which posits that when adolescents are deprived of the requisite warmth and support from their primary care givers, their chances of getting into delinquency increases.

Again the above finding also supports the views of the general theory of crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990) since, the inadequate support from the parents rendered my participants to be vulnerable to other vices as a source as a source of livelihood. In other words, it can be inferred that, the participants' engagement in delinquency as a source of livelihood was as a result of their low self-control. Hence they became vulnerable to engage in deviance.

But if we take a closer look at the situation of the parents, we can also infer why they had difficulty meeting their children's needs. Most of these parents were not gainfully employed which meant that they did not have access to regular income. Some of parents were also poverty stricken and as McKenzy narrates, *"my mother made nothing out of the pito she was selling so there was no way she could have helped"*. Stigo and Aikins also provided a narrative to buttress the point in the following way: Stigo said that *"even though my mother's absence played a role on my involvement in stealing to survive, I also understand her for going since she wanted to get money to take care of us"*. Aikins also held that *"all she wanted to do was to get something that can take care of the family and it was sad that effort could not help"*. It is therefore not surprising that the participants' latter narratives sound more understanding for their parent's absence and not being around to support them. This further created ambivalence in the voices of the participants since in one breath, they seem to be

accusing their parents for their current place in life while on another length, they appear understanding to their parents' decision to leave them behind.

It must however be noted that despite the above ambivalence, my participants indicated that it was because their parents were not around to provide their desired needs which got them into delinquency. In relation to the literature, the participant's later sense of understanding can be likened to the findings of Burrell and Roosa (2009) which indicated that mothers' perceived economic hardship can create a stressful family environment and in turn produce adolescents' problem behaviour.

4.3.2. Parental Laxity in Supervision

In my analysis, one theme which emerged as an explanation to my participants' problem behaviour was parental laxity in supervisory roles. That is, some of the participants' parents were identified to be relaxed in outlook as far as their day to day supervision of their wards was concerned. They did not monitor in great length the sort of peers and activities that their children were engaging in. So whatever their wards were turning into was out of their sight. Typical of this can be deduced from the case of Escoba's experience. As he narrated, he moved away from his parents in order to get close to his classmate for them to study together towards their impending exams. However, his parents were not monitoring him to see what kind of life he was actually living: *"They never checked up on me at the new place. I was rather visiting them periodically and they felt everything was alright there (Escoba)"*. This provided the necessary room for Escoba to succumb to all the negative influences that his peers were indulging in which included truancy, internet fraud and the likes. It can therefore be inferred that, because Escoba was not closely supervised by his parents, he got transformed by his peers and his parents were still not aware. Hence, pulling the knife on his mother is inferred here as a sign of low self-control on his behalf which is also in line with the general

theory of crime (1990). Again, the parental laxity theme can be likened to the findings of Hay (2001) as well as Hunte (2006) which saw a negative relationship between parental monitoring/supervision and adolescents' delinquency.

4.3.3. Parental Maltreatment

Parental maltreatment is another theme which surface in this study. This has to do with the atrocious treatment McKenzy received from his father and this pushed him to go and live on the streets. Some of the narratives which my McKenzy provided to this end include: *“my father was not kind to me at all. He sometimes drives me away from the house to go and sleep on trees”*. Again, McKenzy continued that *“I think the mark is now gone. He used a cutlass to slap me and I had a cut”*. McKenzy also emphasized that *“he made me work for long hours on peoples farms and if I complain that I am tired, I will not eat that evening”*. These and much other maltreatment made the home environment uninhabitable for this participant and informed his decision to move out of the house. In relation to the literature, the above finding is in line with the propositions of the differential oppression theory (Regoli & Hewitt, 2006) which holds that delinquency is an adoptive reaction by children who are exposed to parental maltreatment and oppression. Hence McKenzy's decision to move out of the house can be inferred as a strategy he used to avert the maltreatment from his father.

4.4. Inadequate Extended Family Support

The Ghanaian society is celebrated to be collectivistic and also composed of extended families which are known to buffer the shortcomings of the nuclear family (Nukunya, 2003; Abotchie, 2008). Hence one would expect that, when children are in need but which their nuclear family is not in the position to help, the extended family members will step in. However, some of my participants indicated that, even though they enjoyed some amount of support from their extended family, they were some points in time where these supports were

insufficient. This made them to move out of the family home. This is captured in the narratives below:

When I contacted my aunty to assistance me in getting the school uniform, she openly told me that she hasn't got money for that. She told me someone was dead and she was more concerned about what to wear to the funeral and her monetary contribution towards the funeral rites so I should not disturb her (McKenzy).

From the above caption, it can be inferred that McKenzy's aunty's comment did not go down well with him. It could also be deduced that the participant felt bad about his aunty taken interest not only an outsider but in a dead person. This made him to lose faith in his extended family support to him: *"I then thought in my mind that I have been neglected by the family so I should fight for myself"* (McKenzy). Aikins presented a similar uncomfortable experience in the following way *"they were pestering me to go to farm to help and when I refuse sometime due to fatigue, they portray me as a bad and disobedient child, and refuse to feed me"*. This also indicates that, the participant's decision to move out of the house was as a result of the maltreatment and starvation that was meted unto him in his mother's absence. This further buttress the point that their extended families fell short to provide the needed support that could have kept the participants home. It was these inadequacies which paved the way for the above participants to be at the dismay of their deviant peers.

In relation to family roles in Ghana, extensive literature exists to demonstrate that, taking care of children has always been the collective role of the extended family members and to a larger extent, the society as a whole. (Abotchie, 2008; Nukunya, 2003; Gyekye, 1996). But with the inception of social change which has altered the economic, political, educational and other facets of the society, these roles have depreciated, resulting nucleation of the family. Hence, help is provided first to the nuclear family before much attention is paid

to the extended family in times of need (Abotchie, 2008; Nukunya, 2003; Gyekye, 1996). Also, as a result of the social change, new ties of social relations emerge which may be outside one's previous extended family.

4.5. Apathy in Schooling

Another finding which surfaced in the study was some of my participants' expression of apathy in schooling. Apathy in schooling meant that, the period of time that would have been used in the classroom was now vested in non-constructive activities such as roaming about on the streets and in the neighbourhood thereby falling prey to the activities of deviant peers in their community. One significant thing worth noting is the various reasons the participant indicated as informing their apathy to shun attending school. Abroad intimated that *"I was caned in front of the whole school for attempting to steal our headmaster's money and because of the shame I felt afterwards, I said to myself I will not go to school again"*. In the same vein, Stigo back the above caption by saying that *"The English teacher was caning us whenever we get low marks so I lost interest in the subjects and started skipping school"*. The above corporal punishment for the participants' misconducts and low performance created apathy in them as far as their education is concerned. They conditioned their mind that, their school attendance will be followed with an unpleasant experience which is caning. This informed the above participants' decision to move to the ghetto. Again Aikins apathy in schooling manifested this way *"I am not a good student so I don't have to waste my time in the class room"*. That is, even though Aikins's family migratory process had affected his adjustment to classroom lessons, he was rather blaming himself and this quenched his thirst for classroom education. The above finding can be linked to the social bond theory (Hirschi, 1969) which posits that when adolescents are involved in school activities and other constructive conventions of their society, it reduces their chances of being vulnerable to delinquency. That is, since the above participants were apathetic towards their school

activities, their time and energy were diverted to non constructive pursuit in which got them arrested.

4.6. Labeling by Neighbours

Among the lived experiences of my participants, one theme that surfaced was the notion of being labeled by the neighbours. Abroad indicated that, life became hectic for him while living outside. This was because, fighting and status struggle was the order of the day which brought unto him several casualties: *“the marks on my body represents the fights and problems I faced in the ghetto. We fight and they cut me with knife and all that. I also burn their kiosk”* (Abroad). This compelled Abroad to go back home where he could find refuge. However, he rescinded going back home because, his neighbours had labeled him as a ‘criminal boy’ and this made him not feeling belonging there: *“If I go to the house too, my neighbours they have branded me as stubborn and criminal. So they will be pointing fingers at me that see the bad boy coming”* (Abroad). This made him felt that he belonged to the street and the ghetto than home: *“so instead of going home, I usually stay in my room at the ghetto”* (Abroad). In other words, he came to accept the proposition that was leveled against him so he eventually felt people who behaved like him were found in the ghetto. In relation to the literature, the above finding is in line with the labeling theory (Becker, 1963) which maintains that, when society attach tags to adolescents as delinquents, this in turn make them behave in a way which satisfies the definition of delinquency. Hence, it can be inferred that, self-fulfilling prophesy (Merton, 1968; Putwain & Sammons, 2002) was at play in the life trajectory of Abroad.

4.7. Meaning of their Behaviour

Various narratives of my participants provided several interrelated themes which connote meaning they are trying to make out of their delinquent behaviour. Some of the participants provide narratives to suggest that, the offences which they committed were a means to an end. That is, against the backdrop that they were now living without the support of their families, the delinquent act was the only means they became preoccupied with as an alternative livelihood. Stigo indicated that *“I did not have money to take care of myself in my mother absence so I was stealing to survive”*. Exhibit corroborated with the above narrative by adding that *“I move out of the house and I had to take care of myself so peddling the drugs was helping me get some money”*. Moreover McKenzy recapped that *“All I wanted was to go to school but my parents were not able to help in that regard. So joining my friends to steal the money was a good option I saw”*. These quotes indicate how the above participant made sense of their delinquent behaviour.

In the same vein, a similar comment was made by Escoba which also buttress the point that, his actions toward his mother with the knife was a means to an end. Escoba indicated that *“As for me, I was not actually going to stab her with it. I just wanted to get my money back and that was all”*. That is, Escoba’s decision to pull a knife on his mom was the means he saw to prove how serious he was about getting the money back. These quotes from my participants above indicate that, given the circumstances within which they found themselves, engaging in delinquency was a means they saw to meet their respective ends they perceived.

4.8. Training process based on apprenticeship model

As it was mentioned earlier on, the young offenders of this study differed tremendously on the degree of seriousness. Aikins for instance provides an account which does not warrant him to be called a ‘criminal’ and that, the offence he committed was more spontaneous and impulsive. As Akins rightfully put it *“it looked very ice and attractive to me so I went and removed it. I did not have money to buy one”*. However, Abroad, Stigo and Abroad on the other hand provided narratives to the suggestion that their delinquent behaviour was premeditated which can also be characterized as involving serious offences. Again, the voices of Abroad, Stigo and Exhibit also overlapped in some respects as far as their learning of delinquency was concerned. In this section, I have modeled out the training process through which Abroad, Stigo and Exhibit got to learn their respective delinquent behaviours which is shown in the diagram below.

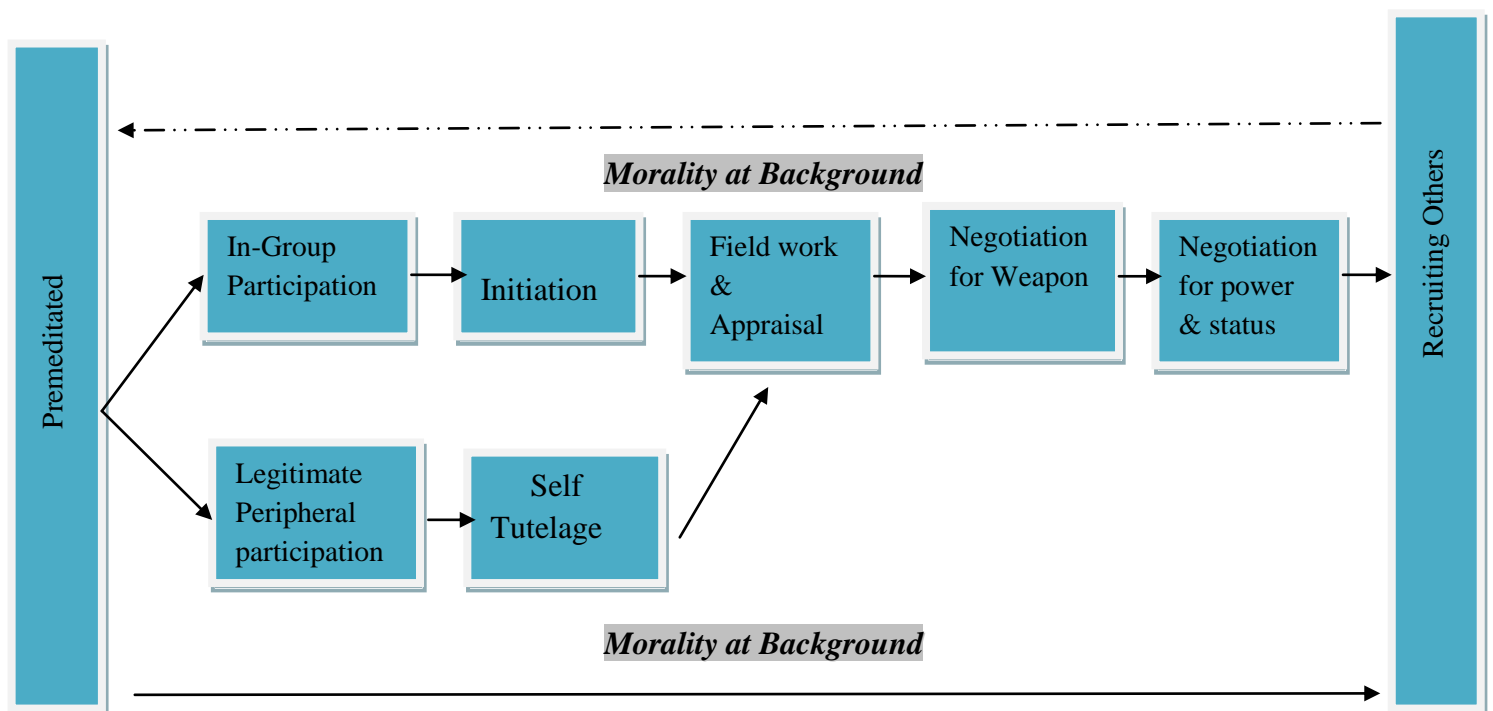


Figure 1: *The training process to delinquency*

As show in the diagram on the previous page, Abroad, Stigo and Exhibit provided narratives to the suggestion that, the offence that they committed was actually premeditated. Hence, they knew exactly what they were doing. These groups of participants could further be subdivided into two main categories; in-group participants' which fit the situated learning theory, and then a tacit participant who fits into the legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Abroad and Stigo constituted the in-group participants which involved engaging in stealing as a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and were also given some form of initiation into the group: *"All the youth in the ghetto have their 'big-men' (masters) and my friends introduced me to the one they were serving"* (Abroad). Stigo continued that *"So he started to teach me how to survive when stealing from one of his books which contained drawings of houses and police men with a guideline to escape from being caught, how to jump a wall, run, fight, use a knife"*. Usually the initiation is such that, much emphasis is played on the benefits with the cost downplayed.

However, as a legitimate peripheral participant, Exhibit was not initially part of the mainstream in-group community which was peddling the drugs, but happened to be within the social milieu and for that matter assimilated some of the techniques of engaging in the drug peddling business (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Hence, as a legitimate peripheral participant, Exhibit got co-opted into the mainstream in-group when new members were needed:

"Initially, I was not part of sellers but I had observed them for some time and noticed how to go about it. So the boss asked me whether I can do it and I said yes. I therefore proved it" (Exhibit).

The next aspect of the model/training process leading to the acceptance new members demand a demonstration of one's acquired skills on the field which is usually followed by an appraisal from the group leader or the *Big-man*: *"So when you all return from the field, you*

will be evaluated based by the big-man” (Abroad). Stigo also indicated that “he pointed to me some of the mistakes I made while we were out there and warned it can get us arrested”.

Successful candidates are then given the opportunity to engage in the community of practice with the rest of the group and some of their proceeds from their practices are accumulated overtime towards the acquisition of their weapons: *“so the ‘big-man’ will use your money to get you weapons” (Abroad). With time, their performance in the community of practice will determine the status they are supposed to hold within the group: “The amount of money and other properties that you will bring denotes you are a “hard boy” (very criminal) and people begin to give you respect. By few days, you will become popular in the ghetto” (Abroad). Stigo also corroborated with the above view by adding that “I realized that because he recruited me, he was cheating by pocketing much of our proceeds. That was why we parted ways”.* Successful candidate who go through this training process and are now powerful in the community of practice start their own group by recruiting new member who will pay allegiance to them. One thing worth noting is that, as the participants were being trained into the community of practice, they also incorporated a moral framework which undermines their previously held public morality: *“before we move out to steal, I always pray in my mind to God for his protection and it was helping me” (Stigo). Abroad also indicated that “I have visited several fetish priests for supernatural powers which protect me when stealing”.*

In a nutshell, the training process of the three participants can therefore be said to be based on apprenticeship model where each trainee had a mentor and a big-man. The mentors are the deviant peers who initiated the above participants into the delinquency while the big-men are the bosses in charge of the community of practice. This training process model is an application of Lave and Wenger (1991) study on community of practice to show the mainstream and peripheral paths of learning to be a member of a group that collectively pursue a common practice.

CHAPTER 5

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Overview of Findings

Prior to this study, the plethora of literature on juvenile delinquency had linked it to risk factors such as negative peer influence, poor socioeconomic background, parental absence,, negative neighbourhood factors, family violence, and others (Green et al., 2008; Simões et al., 2008; Hunte, 2006;). However, these studies were conducted in western societies and their methodologies were also quantitative in approach. Since delinquency has been identified as a function of socioeconomic variables, (Iobidze, 2009: Arthur, 1997; Weinberg, 1964) it becomes imperative to find out if similar findings will maintain in cultures outside western societies. A qualitative approach was also used to harness the nuance levels that are embedded in risk factors that will emerge.

Bosiakoh and Andoh (2011) as well as Weinberg (1964) had conducted studies on juvenile delinquency in Ghana, but all of which were centered on the replication of western theories. This implies that, they operated within the dictates of the theories which did not allow them to look for other plausible explanations beyond their targeted theories. This present study explored the lived experiences of young offender in Accra. Of paramount interest was to find out the circumstances which made theses adolescents to become involved in delinquency. Also, the meanings which they made out of their delinquent behaviours were explored. The results of this study indicated that in the circumstances surrounding the life trajectory of my participants' involvement in delinquency are centered on five main factors which are encapsulated in the model on the next page:

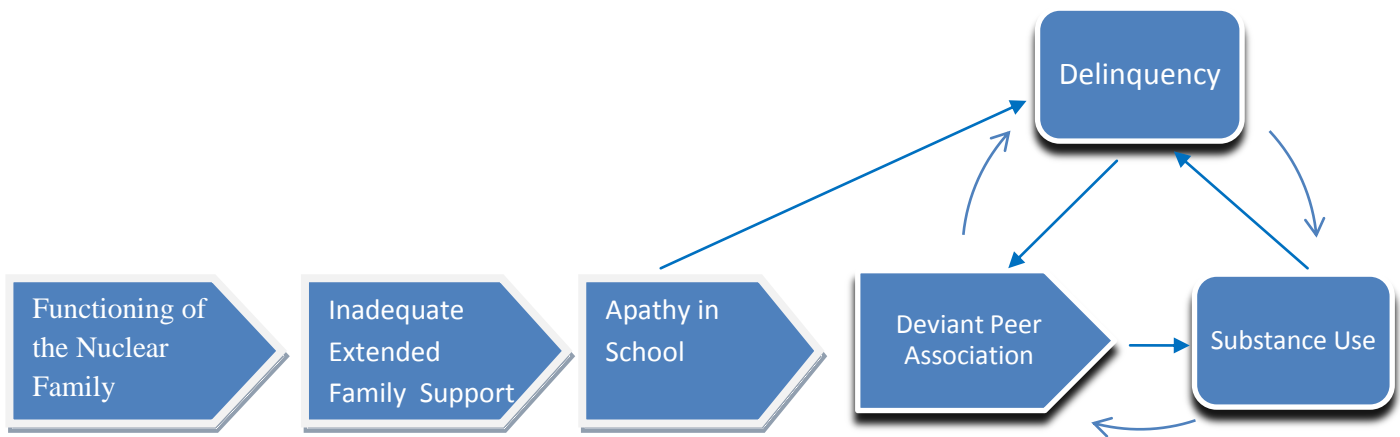


Figure 2: *Causes of delinquency in Ghana as suggested by the data*

The model above is an extract deduced from my data which represents the various circumstances that made my participants to become involved in delinquency. Looking at the model above, it becomes apparent that circumstances which pushed or pulled my participants into delinquency originated from the functioning of the nuclear family. That is, participants perceived that, since their parents were not around to take care of their basic need and monitor or supervise how they are coping in their day to day activities, life became unbearable (Aikins, Stigo, Escoba, Exhibit and Abroad). In the same vein, the maltreatment that was visited onto McKenzy made him move out onto the streets where deviance was the way to survive. This indicates the way in which functioning of the nuclear family was involved the life trajectory of my participants to delinquency.

Inadequate support from the extended family members also emerged as the next circumstance which paved the way for some of my participants to become involved in delinquency. Aikins, McKenzy and Stigo perceived that, at the time where their parents were unavailable to meet their needs, they expected their extended family members to set in and fulfill those responsibilities. Conversely, the extended family members were not supportive in regards which they expected. Hence, my participants went outside to their peers which were willing to assist in such capacities.

Apathy in the school system was another medium which increase some of my participants' chances of engaging in delinquency. Because, of the corporal punishment that was meted out to them for poor performance (Stigo) and minor misconducts (Abroad), there was no motivation to going to school and learn. Again, residential mobility exposed Aikins to different learning and classroom conditions which affect the pace with which he adjusted to his studies. In the end, the above participants' were left idle and wandering about on the street and in neighbourhoods and this made them venerable to deviant peers as a source of companionship.

Being associated with deviant peers was the next circumstance which paved the way for my participants to commence their delinquent acts. Some participants perceived that their parents and extended family members were not supportive enough. Hence, their peers were the available source they could rely on for support. However, some of these peers who were in a position to support them were already into some deviant activities' which was also against the law. Gradually and slowly, my participants were influenced into these activities which eventually got them arrested.

One thing which stood out was the reciprocal relationship which existed between deviant peer association, substance use and delinquency. As indicated in the above model, once the participants come into contact with their deviant peers, they are further introduced into delinquent behaviours such as stealing. For them to carry out the stealing effectively, the participants were further initiated into substance use which helped calm their nerves and boost their confidence (Exhibit, Stigo). Conversely, Abroad was rather introduced into substance use first before the initiation into stealing followed. This indicate that the relationship between substance use, peer influence and delinquency progress in both a clockwise and anticlockwise direction.

Religiosity also played a role in some of my participants' delinquency behaviours. The belief that God understood their situation through their prayers and was willing to protect them out there, it reinforced their continual engagement in the delinquency (Stigo, Abroad). Likewise, the amulets which Abroad obtained from the spiritual leader (*malam*) reinforced his belief that he can engage in the stealing without being caught. Nevertheless, a spurious relationship was also observed between religiosity and delinquency as McKenzy and Abroad linked their arrest to an ontological intervention of God to avert their deviant life.

In conclusion, the results of this study revealed that, juvenile delinquency in Ghana cannot be narrowed down to just a single theoretical or causative agent. Several circumstances come to play before adolescents get to put up a delinquency act. Some of these circumstance included the functioning of the nuclear family, inadequate extended family support, schooling apathy, deviant peer influence and substance use. These circumstances were explained in the light of available theories and literature in the area of juvenile crime. As a meaning making, the young offenders generally indicated that, given the circumstance within which they found themselves at that moment, engaging in delinquency was the only option they were preoccupied with to meet their ends. That is, delinquency was a means to their end. As a new resolution, Abroad held acquisition wealth through stealing was not only against God's will and the public morality but amounted to 'bitter' money since it triggered bitter feeling from his victims.

5.2. Limitations

One limitation of this study is that the findings are based on young offenders who were institutionalized. That is, the study made use of young offenders that were kept in a correctional facility which is different from most of the studies I reviewed which made use of adolescents' projected delinquent behaviour. Hence, it is unclear whether the same results might have crop up if non-institutionalized young offenders or less serious delinquents were

used. This indicates that, one must be cautious when interpreting the findings to the other population of young offenders which are not confined in a correctional facility.

Also, all the participants that were used in this study were entirely males. This was because, the correctional facility which was selected for this study was an all male institution. Hence, I was unable to get access to female young offenders. This raises some amount of uncertainty because, it is not clear if the same or similar results would have been yielded if female young offenders were included in the study.

5.3. Strengths

This study contributed to the understanding of juvenile delinquency from a nonwestern society and for that matter, Ghana, since the literature in this area has been reported to be lacking (Bosiakoh & Andoh, 2010; Arthur, 1997). This study has added up to the limited literature on delinquency in Ghana and has demonstrated that, no single theory of delinquency is adequate in explaining the phenomenon in Ghana. Which means that, unlike the previous studies in Ghana which replicated existing theories, this study went all out to find plausible explanations to delinquency which yielded results of nuance levels.

Moreover, previous literatures on juvenile delinquency were noted for just providing explanation to the risk factors which pull or push adolescents into it without indicating how they got to learn and perform the delinquent acts. This study went further to suggest a training process through which the participants that premeditated on their delinquent behaviour perceived to have nurtured them into the delinquency. The training process based on apprenticeship model, as suggested by this study, did not only portray how in-group members in a gang train new arrivals, but it also demonstrated how newcomers at the periphery of the group get to learn the delinquency. This training process model will be useful since it will be filling that data lacuna.

More so, the results of this study has provided knowledge that will in turn help us take a second look at adolescents' problem behaviours and reflect as a society on how social change is impacting on the synergy which previously heightened sense of community and protection for the youth. That is, the family as an institution is known to be the buffer to adolescents' problem behaviours in communalistic context like Ghana (Abotchie, 2008; Nukunya, 2003; Gyekye, 1996). However, this study reported that there were some lapses in the way it functioned, which paved way for my participants to progress to their deviant peers. It therefore becomes clear that, there is something which this institution was doing previously to protect its wards. Hence, there will be the need to revisit some of the communal ways of life that was in place and keeping adolescents' problem behaviour like delinquency in check.

5.4. Implications and Recommendations

5.4.1. Community Psychological Praxis and Intervention

The principles of community psychology has been documented as naturally fitting in handling social and health problems in the Ghanaian context (Akotia & Barimah, 2006). Hence, a call on community psychologist to come on board in our quest to handle juvenile delinquency cannot be over emphasized. That is, when community psychologists are involved in the country's concerted effort to bring down juvenile crime, it will allow room for their core values such as primary prevention, empowerment and ecological metaphor and the likes to be incorporated, which will in the end nip delinquency in the bud.

As it surfaced in this study, the relationship between deviant peer influence, substance use and delinquency tend to be reciprocal. This means that, any intervention which purports to curb juvenile crime must be multifaceted in approach and targeting not only adolescents' substance use behaviours but also their relationships with deviant peers. Community psychologist can be helpful in this regard since one of their principles is ecological metaphor

which guides them in tackling problems holistically. In this way, community psychologist can set up an intervention which pays keen attention adolescents relations to deviant peers and well as adolescents' substance use behaviour. Such interventions can be a source of empowerment for parents and other caregiver to aid them when they are raising or monitoring their children, especially in a high risk delinquency environment.

Also, the circumstances which got the participants into delinquency can be trace to multiple factors such as functioning of the extended family, deviant peer influence, apathy in school, inadequate extended family support and the likes. This demands that, in an attempt to solve the problem of juvenile delinquency, equal attention must be paid to these factors. However, the norm in Ghana tends to be that, much interest is vested in the reformation of the adolescents' in the correctional center with little attention to the other circumstances which constrained them to engage in the delinquency. To this end, some of the participants go through the reformation process without any of their parents or family member visiting. There is therefore the need for an ecological approach to be to be used in handling delinquency in Ghana. Community psychologist can help in this regard since the ecological metaphor is a core value which guides their interventions. In this way, while the adolescents' reformation process is underway, other micro factors (family/parenting, school, peers, church) which are also causally involved will be taken care of. It is only through holistic approach of curbing delinquency that will truncate the likelihood of recidivism after the young offenders are released back into the society.

Empowering parents on the risk and protective factors of adolescent problem behaviours has also been identified to be a gateway approach in curbing the menace (Iobidze, 2009; Spoth, Redmond & Shin, 1998). Hence, there is the need for child monitoring and supervisory resources to be made available to parents in order to empower them as far as parenting skill is concerned. It is hope that by doing so, conscious attempt is being done to

reduce the risk factors to delinquency while increasing the protective factors (Iobidze, 2009; Spoth et al., 1998). In this way, they will be well placed to monitor their wards activities and to step in when the need arises. Also, parents will be well informed about their roles which can exposed their wards to delinquency and implore them to amend such ways. Since empowerment is one of the key principles of community psychologists', it will be a good idea if they are brought on board to act as facilitators to parents (especially migrants in the urban centers).

The interventionists can also target the stakeholders in educational sector and remind them of the negative consequences that corporal punishment can have on the life of school children. This can be a wakeup call the stakeholders in the school institution to monitor and condemn the continuous use corporal punishment by teachers at school.

It will finally be recommended that neighbourhood with a higher risk of breeding juvenile delinquents is factored by interventionists in the quest of bringing it down. Juvenile delinquency in Ghana has been identified to flourish in transitory and slums of major urban area (Arthur, 1997; Weinberg, 1964) since anonymity in these communities tends to be high. Such localities usually have inhabitants who are marginalized from the mainstream society which the youth usually left without role models to emulate from. Hence, the youths end up reciprocating the deviance which tends to be a way of life there. Community psychologist can intervene through the process of citizen participation by helping such transitory and slum communities come up with their own solution. This can be done through mobilizing the youth and other members of such communities to come to terms with the negative repercussions' of juvenile crime and enquiring from them how the problem can be solved. In the is way, the interventionist will end up involving the community members in the decision making process which will in turn make them feel committed to ensuring that better results are recorded. This

in a way will promote sense of community among the members and will also keep the youth at check. The community psychologist role here will be just a facilitator rather than an expert.

5.4.2. Future Research on Juvenile Delinquency

This current study brings to the fore the various circumstances which has the propensity to increase adolescents' involvement in juvenile delinquency and these include, the functioning of the nuclear family, inadequate extended family support, deviant peer influence, apathy in school, substance use and the likes. It is worth noting that the above findings were based on an all male study. Hence, future research can improve on this study by incorporating female young offenders to see if same or similar results will maintain.

Moreover, the participants for this presents study were entirely institutionalized young offenders which indicates that, they were judged to be involved in serious offences. However, there are other status offences such consumption of alcohol, cigarette smoking, truancy, which does not require the culprits to be brought to a correctional facility. Future research can include participants with status offences in a study of this nature in order to holistically explore delinquency to its fullest and verify if different results are likely.

Finally, this study reported a positive relationship between religiosity and delinquency. The participants indicated that, their belief in Gods protection and the amulet or talisman which they obtained from their traditional priests reinforced their confidence of being protected from all sort of dangers that came with the stealing. This was contrary to the finding reported in the literature on religiosity and delinquency (see Dilulio, 1998; Chadwick & Top, 1993). It will therefore be recommended that, future research should explore religiosity and delinquency further to verify why such a relationship crops up despite the general expectation that religiosity reduces delinquency. Also, such a study in future can explore why certain forms of religious beliefs reinforce juvenile delinquency?

References

- Abotchie, C. (1997). *Social Control in Traditional Southern Eweland of Ghana: Relevance for Modern Crime Prevention*. Accra: Ghana University Press.
- Abotchie, C. (2008). *Social Structure of Modern Ghana*. Accra; Hans Publication.
- Adams, M. S. & Evans, T. D. (1996). Teachers Disapproval, Delinquent Peers and Self-Reported Delinquency: A Longitudinal Test of Labeling Theory. *The Urban Review*, 28(3):199-211.
- Atkinson, R. (1998). *The Life Story Interview*. Sage University Papers on Qualitative Research Methods, 44. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Akers, R. L. (1998). *Social Learning and Social Structure: a General Theory of Crime and Deviance*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Akotia, C. S., & Barimah, K. B. (2006). Community psychology in Ghana: Challenges, successes and prospects. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 16(2): 173-176.
- Arthur, J.A. (1997). Rehabilitation of Juvenile Offenders in Ghana. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 24 (1): 23-37. Retrieved on September 16, 2010 from http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/Jo76v24no1_03.
- Austin, J., Johnson, K. D., & Gregoriou, M. (2000). *Juveniles in adult prisons and jails: A National Assessment*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance. Retrieved on 25th October, 2011 from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/bja/182503.pdf>.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. New York: General Learning Press.
- Becker, H. S. (1963). *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: The Free Press
- Benda, B. B., & Corwyn, R. F. (1997). Religion and delinquency: the relationship after considering family and peer influences. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 36: 81-92.

- Bosiakoh, T. A & Andoh, P. K. (2010). Differential Association Theory and Juvenile Delinquency in Ghana's capital city - Accra: The case of Ghana Borstal Institute. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 2(9): 198-205.
- Burrell, G. L. & Roosa, M. W. (2009). Mothers' Economic Hardship and Behavior Problems in Their Early Adolescents. *Journal of Family Issues*, 30(4): 511-531.
- Chadwick, B. A., and Top, B. L. (1993). Religiosity and delinquency among LDS adolescents. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 32: 51-67.
- Church, W.T., Wharton T., & Taylor, J.K. (2009). An examination of differential association and social control theory: Family systems and delinquency. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 7(1): 3-15.
- Corsaro, A. W., & Johannesen, O. B. (2007). The Creation of New Cultures in Peer Interaction. In J. Valsiner & A. Rosa (Eds), *the Cambridge Handbook of Sociocultural Psychology* (pp.444- 459), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- D'Amico, D. J., Edelen, M. O., Miles, J. N., & Morral, A. R. (2008). The Longitudinal Association between Substance Use and Delinquency Among High-Risk Youth. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 93: 85-92.
- Department of Social welfare (2007). *Annual Performance Report*.
- Dilulio, J. J. (1998). Religiosity and Youth Crime. In D.B. Larson & B. R. Johnson (Eds), *Religion: The Forgotten Factor in Cutting Youth Crime and Saving At-Risk Urban Youth*(pp.6-19), The Jeremiah Project Report.
- Ford J.A. (2005). Substance use, the social bond, and delinquency. *Sociological Inquiry*, 7: 109–128.
- Ghana Prison Service (2010). *Annual report*. Accra: Unique Xpressions

- Gibson, C.L., Sullivan, C.J., Jones, S., & Piquero, A. R. (2010). "Does it take a village?"
Assessing neighborhood influences on children's self-control. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 47: 31-62.
- Gottfredson, M. R., & Hirschi, T. (1990). *A general theory of crime*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Green A. E., Gesten E. L., Greenwald M. A. & Salcedo O. (2008). Predicting Delinquency in Adolescence and Young Adulthood: A Longitudinal Analysis of Early Risk Factors. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 6(4): 323-342.
- Hammersley, M. (1990). *Reading ethnographic research: A critical guide*. London: Longmans.
- Hammersley, M. (1992). *What's wrong with ethnography?: Methodological explorations*. London: Routledge.
- Hartjen, C. A. & Priyadarsini, S. (2003). Gender, Peers, and Delinquency: A Study of Males and Females in Rural France. *Youth & Society*, 34: 387-414.
- Hay, C. (2001). Parenting, self-control, and delinquency: A test of self-control theory. *Criminology*, 39, 707-736.
- Hess, K. M. & Drowns, R. W. (2010). *Juvenile Justice*. 5th ed. Wardsworth: Cengage Learning.
- Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes of delinquency*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hirschi, T. & Stark, R. (1969). Hellfire and delinquency. *Social Problems*, 17:202-213.
- Hundeide, K. (2003a). Becoming a Committed Insider. *Culture & Psychology*, 9:107-12.
- Hunte, M. (2006, March). A Qualitative study of Delinquency and Achievement among Low Income Youth in Trinidad. A Paper presented at SALISES 7th Annual Conference. University of West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados.
- Iobidze, M. (2009). Anti-Juvenile Delinquency Policy in Georgia within the framework of

- the global perspective (Master's Thesis). Department of Public Administration
Georgia Institute of Public Affairs, Georgia.
- Jang, S. J., & Johnson, B. R. (2001). Neighborhood Disorder, Individual Religiosity, and
Adolescent Use of Illicit Drugs: A Test of Multilevel Hypotheses. *Criminology*, 39,
109-143.
- Jensen, G. F. (2003). Social Disorganization Theory. *Encyclopaedia of Criminology*.
Richard A. Wright (Editor). Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers.
- Johnson, D. (1999). Rehabilitating Criminals Before They Grow Up. *World Future Society*,
33(10): 11-13.
- Joppe, M. (2000). *The Research Process*. Retrieved on 10th October, 2010 from
<http://www.htm.uoguelph.ca/pagefiles/MJResearch/ResearchProcess/home.html>
- Kasser, T. (2011). Cultural Values and the Well-Being of Future Generations: A Cross-
National Study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 42: 206-215.
- Keijsers, L., Branje, S., Van der Valk, I., & Meeus, W. (2010). Reciprocal effects between
parental solicitation, parental control, adolescent disclosure and adolescent
delinquency. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 20: 88-113.
- Knjin, T. & van Oorschot, W. (2008). The Need for and the Societal Legitimacy of
Social Investments in Children and Their Families: Critical Reflections on the Dutch
Case. *Journal of Family Issues*, 29 (11): 520-1542.
- Kuanliang, A., Sorensen, J.R., & Cunningham, M.D. (2008). Juvenile Inmates in an Adult
Prison System: Rates of Disciplinary Misconduct and Violence. *Criminal Justice and
Behaviour*, 35(9):1186-1201. Retrieved on 20th November, 2010 from
<http://cjb.sagepub.com/content/35/9/1186.full.pdf+html>.
- Kvale, S. (2006). Dominance through interviews and Dialogue. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12 (3):
480-500.

- Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London; Sage.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lemert, E. M. (1951). *Social pathology: Systematic approaches to the study of sociopathic behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Leventhal, T., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2000). The neighborhoods they live in: The effects of neighborhood residence on child and adolescent outcomes. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(2), 309-337.
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.A. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publication.
- Longshore, D., Chang, E., Hsieh, S. & Messina, N. (2004). Self-Control and Social Bonds: A Combined Control Perspective on Deviance. *Crime & Delinquency*, 50(4): 542-564.
- McGloin, J. M. & Shermer, L. O. (2009). Self-Control and Deviant Peer Network Structure. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 46(1):35-72.
- Menard, S., Mihalic, S. & Huizinga, D. (2001). Drugs and crime revisited. *Justice Quarterly*, 18(2): 269-299.
- Merton, Robert K (1968). *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press.
- Murray, M. (2008). Narrative psychology. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (2nd ed. pp. 111- 132). London: SAGE.
- Nukunya, G. K. (2003). *Tradition and Change in Modern Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology*. 2nd ed. Accra, Ghana University Press.
- Putwain, D. & Sammons, A. (2002). *Psychology and Crime*. East Sussex: Psychology Press.

- Regoli, R. M. & Hewitt, J.D. (2006). *Delinquency in society*, 6th ed. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Regoli, R.M., Hewitt, J.D., & Delisi, M. (2008). *Delinquency in Society: Youth Crime in the 21st Century* (7th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Shaw, C. R. & McKay, H. D. (1942). *Juvenile Delinquency in Urban Areas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Shipton, P. (1997). "Bitter Money: Forbidden Exchange in East Africa". In R. Grinker and C. Sheridan, J. & Chamberlain, K. (2011). The Power of Things. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 8:315-332.
- Shoemaker, D.J. (2009). *Juvenile Delinquency*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.
- Simões, C., Matos, M. G., & Batista-Foguet, J. M., (2008). Juvenile Delinquency: Analysis of Risk and Protective Factors Using Quantitative and Qualitative methods. *Cognition, Brain, Behavior. An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 7(4):389-408.
- Simpson, J. & Brownfield, D. (2002) "Religion and Crime." *Encyclopedia of Crime and Justice*. 2002. Retrieved from on April 12, 2012 from <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3403000221.html>
- Spoth, R., Redmond, C., & Shin, C. (1998). Direct and Indirect Latent-Variable Parenting Outcomes of Two Universal Family-Focused Preventive Interventions: Extending a Public Health-Oriented Research Base. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 66(2), 385-399.
- Steiner (Eds), *Perspectives on Africa* (pp. 163-169). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Sutherland, E. H. (1939). *Principles of Criminology*, 3rd ed. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company.
- Tarolla, S., Wagner, E., Rabinowitz, J., Tubman, J. (2002). Understanding and treating

- juvenile offenders: A review of current knowledge and future directions. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 7 (2), 125-143.
- Thorne, S. (2000). Data analysis in qualitative research. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 3(3): 68-70.
Retrieved on 1st of March, 2011 from <http://ebn.bmj.com/content/3/3/68.full.html>.
- Vitaro, F., Brendgen, M., & Tremblay, R. E. (2000). Influence of deviant friends on delinquency: Searching for moderator variables. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 28: 313-325.
- Watson, J. B. (1913). Psychology as the Behaviorist Views it. *Psychological Review*, 20: 158-177.
- Weinberg, S. K. (1964). Juvenile Delinquency in Ghana: A Comparative Analysis of Delinquents and Non-Delinquents. *Journal of Criminal Law and Police Science*, 55 (4) 471-481.
- Wikström, P. H. & Sampson, R. J. (2003). "Social Mechanisms of Community Influences on Crime and Pathways in Criminality." In B. B. Lahey, T. E. Moffitt & A. Caspi (Eds), *The Causes of Conduct Disorder and Serious Juvenile Delinquency* (Pp.118-48), New York: Guilford Press.
- Willig, C. (2008). *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology (2nd Ed)*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Wireko-Brobby, K. (2008). The Root of Indiscipline in Contemporary Ghanaian Society- A Sociological Perspective. *Journal of Science and Technology*, 28(2): 125-133.
- Wood, J., & Alleyne, E. (2010). Street gang theory and research: Where are we now and where do we go from here? *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 15: 100-111.
- Yardley, L. (2008). Demonstrating Validity in Qualitative Psychology. In J. A. Smith *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods (2nd ed) (pp.235-251)*. London: SAGE Publication Ltd.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

INTERVIEW GUIDE

How old are you?

Where did you live immediately before the arrest?

Where do you come from?

How long have you been in this correctional facility?

A. Delinquency related questions

1. What offence did you commit or what delinquent behavior were you arrested for?
2. Can you narrate the situation or circumstances that got you involved in this delinquent behaviour? (push or pull factors)
3. Can you narrate to me how the learning process for this delinquent behavior was?
4. Can you tell me about what you achieved as a result of engaging in the delinquent behavior?

B. Relationship with the family before arrest.

1. Can you describe the composition of your family and other members in your household?
2. Were you living with your parent(s) or a guardian(s) up to the time of arrest?
3. What was their occupation?
4. How would you describe your relationship with you parents? Emotionally....
5. Can you describe the daily routine of your parent(s) or guardian(s)?
6. Can you describe your daily routine in the house?
7. How would you describe your relationship with your siblings and other family members? Emotionally....
8. Do you have any relative who has been arrested by the police before?
9. What are some of the challenges you confronted in your family?

C. School background before the arrest

1. Can you take me through how your typical day in school was like?
2. How did you get to school and back every day? (The process involved in going to school and coming back home).
3. Did you have a favorite teacher?(if yes why & if no why not)
4. Did you have a favourite subject?(if yes why & if no why not)
5. Did you have a best friend at school?(if yes, seek more description; if no ask why)
6. What are some of the challenges you confronted in your school?

D. Relationship with the friends before arrest

1. Can you describe the most important friends that you used to hang out with?(age, occupation, number, etc).
2. Can you take me through your daily routine with them?
3. Can you describe to me some of the things you and your friends spend most time doing? What are some of the things you would not do with those friends?
4. How would you describe your emotional relationship with your friends?
5. Were there some support that your friends provided for you?(eg. advice)
6. What are some of the challenges you confronted whiles you were with your friends?
7. Do you have a friend who has been arrested by the police before?

E. Community or neighbourhood background before the arrest

1. Can you describe the neighbourhood you were living in? (Kind of people, their occupation, some activities there, structures).
2. Can you describe some good as well as bad elements that were in your neighbourhood?
3. Do you know any member of the neighbourhood who was arrested by the police before?

F. Experience in the rehabilitation center

1. Can you tell me more about your normal routine in this correctional facility? ie. From Monday-Sunday.
2. Can you describe your relationship with your family members ever since you were brought to this corrections center?
3. How is the institution helping you in the re-socialization process?
4. How can the institution make your life profitable upon your release?

Appendix II

Informed Consent Form

I am Augustine Osei Boakye, a student at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and I am currently pursuing my Masters (MPhil) in Human Development.

As part of my master's degree program, I am now in Ghana to collect data for my master's thesis which is on the topic "Juvenile Delinquency in Ghana: A Qualitative Study of the Lived Experiences of Young Offenders in Accra." This research will involve a personal interview of six (6) young offenders who will be willing to volunteer for the study. This will ensue after consent has also been sought from their superiors and parents/guardians. The interview with the young offenders will be audio recorded to enhance their responses adequately documented. This is purported to enable the researcher perform a thorough analysis of the responses provided by the young offenders in relation to the topic in question.

AIM OF THE STUDY

This research intends to gather in-depth information about why children get involved in delinquent behaviors as seen from the perspective of the children themselves. The results will be useful to the country policy direction in protecting children not yet in conflict with the law. Also, it will be useful to governmental and non-governmental institutions operating correctional facilities to re-socialize the young offenders to fit back into the society upon their release to abstaining from delinquent behaviours. Moreover, there is a dearth of literature on Ghana with respect to juvenile delinquency and the voice of young offenders so a study like this could inform further research.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of participants' information will be strictly observed in this research. Your name and other traceable information will be held in absolute confidence. The tapes will remain in the custody and control of the researcher always and would not be given out for any purpose to anyone who is not working directly with the researcher. The researcher will not share information which could identify you with anyone or in publication. Person identifying

information that will be obtained from the participants will be destroyed when the entire research comes to an end, at the latest 30th August, 2012.

PARTICIPATION

Partaking in this research is on voluntary bases. After your decision (free will) to volunteer for this study, you are still entitled to withdraw from the study at any point in time and you can also decide not to respond to questions which pose discomfort to you.

CONTACT

For enquiries or concerns, the researcher can be directly contacted with the telephone number 0244029184 or through the e-mail: boyzco504@yahoo.co.uk. You can also further contact my supervisor, Prof. Berit Overå Johannesen at Berit.Johannesen@svt.ntnu.no.

(Signature of researcher)

(Date)

Consent of Informants/Participants

I certify that the purpose of the study has been thoroughly explained to me in a language I understand to my satisfaction and I have received a copy of the consent form. I understand that any information obtained from me for this research will be kept confidential. To further ensure privacy, I have the option of using a pseudonym. I understand that participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse participation at anytime in the course of the interview. I agree to participate in this study.

(Signature of participant)

(Date)

Appendix III

Letter of Informed Consent to Parent / Guardian of the participant

Dear Parent / Guardian,

I am Augustine Osei Boakye, a student at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and I am currently pursuing my Masters (MPhil) in Human Development.

As part of my master's degree program, I am now in Ghana to collect data for my master's thesis which is on the topic "Juvenile Delinquency in Ghana: A Qualitative Study of the Lived Experiences of Young Offenders in Accra." This research will involve a personal interview of six (6) young offenders who will be willing to volunteer for the study. This will ensue after consent has also been sought from their superiors and parents/guardians. The interview with the young offenders will be audio recorded to enhance their responses adequately documented. This is purported to enable the researcher perform a thorough analysis of the responses provided by the young offenders in relation to the topic in question.

AIM OF THE STUDY

This research intends to gather in-depth information about why children get involved in delinquent behaviors as seen from the perspective of the children themselves. The results will be useful to the country policy direction in protecting children not yet in conflict with the law. Also, it will be useful to governmental and non-governmental institutions operating correctional facilities to re-socialize the young offenders to fit back into the society upon their release to abstaining from delinquent behaviours. Moreover, there is a dearth of literature on Ghana with respect to juvenile delinquency and the voice of young offenders so a study like this could inform further research.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of participants' information will be strictly observed in this research. Your wards name and other traceable information will be held in absolute confidence. The tapes will remain in the custody and control of the researcher always and would not be given out for any purpose to anyone who is not working directly with the researcher. The researcher will not share information which could identify your ward with any one or in publication. Person

identifying information that will be obtained from the participants will be destroyed when the entire research comes to an end, at the latest 30th August, 2012.

PARTICIPATION

Partaking in this research is on voluntary bases. After your ward's free will to volunteer for this study, he is still entitled to withdraw from the study at any point in time and he can also decide not to respond to questions which pose discomfort to him.

CONTACT

For enquiries or concerns, the researcher can be directly contacted with the telephone number 0244029184 or through the e-mail: boyzco504@yahoo.co.uk. You can also further contact my supervisor, Prof. Berit Overå Johannesen at Berit.Johannesen@svt.ntnu.no.

(Signature of researcher)

(Date)

Consent of Informant/Participants

I certify that the purpose of the study has been thoroughly explained to me in a language I understand to my satisfaction and I have received a copy of the consent form. I understand that any information obtained from my ward for this research will be kept confidential. To further ensure privacy, my ward has the option of using a pseudonym. I understand that participation is voluntary and my ward has the right to refuse participation at anytime in the course of the interview. I agree that my ward..... should participate in this study.

(Signature of parent/guardian)

(Date)

Appendix IV

Ethical Clearance Letter from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), Norway

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS

NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



Harald Hårfagres gate 29
N-5007 Bergen
Norway
Tel: +47-55 58 21 17
Fax: +47-55 58 96 50
nsd@nsd.uib.no
www.nsd.uib.no
Org.nr. 985 321 884

Berit Overå Johannesen
Psykologisk institutt
NTNU
Dragvoll
7491 TRONDHEIM

Vår dato: 23.05.2011

Vår ref: 26960 / 3 / KS

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILRÅDING AV BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 07.04.2011. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

26960

Juvenile Delinquency in Ghana: A Qualitative Study of the Lived Experiences of Young Offenders in Accra.

Behandlingsansvarlig
Daglig ansvarlig
Student

NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder
Berit Overå Johannesen
Augustine Osei Boakye

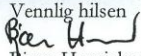
Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/-helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.08.2012, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Bjørn Henriksen


Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Kontaktperson: Katrine Utaaker Segadal tlf: 55 58 35 42

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Augustine Osei Boakye, Moholt Alle 3-52,, 7050 TRONDHEIM

Avdelingskontorer / District Offices:

OSLO: NSD, Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tel: +47-22 85 52 11. nsd@uio.no

TRONDHEIM: NSD, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, 7491 Trondheim. Tel: +47-73 59 19 07. kyrr.svarva@svt.ntnu.no

TROMSØ: NSD, HSL, Universitetet i Tromsø, 9037 Tromsø. Tel: +47-77 64 43 36. martin-arne.andersen@uit.no

Appendix V

Ethical Clearance Letter from the Ghana Prison Service, Ghana

In case of reply the number and date of this letter should be quoted



HEADQUARTERS
The Ghana Prisons Service
P. O. BOX 129, ACCRA
GHANA WEST AFRICA
TEL: 760093/760094
Fax: 233-21-772865
Email: prisons@4u.com.gh


Your Ref. No.....

My Ref. No. OC/1082/V. 17/2011

Date. *30th* June 2011.....

RE: LETTER INTRODUCTION
AUGUSTINE OSEI BOAKYE

1. Permission is given to the above named student of the Ghana Institute of Journalism to conduct his study at the Senior Correctional Centre on the topic: "**Juvenile Delinquency in Ghana: A Qualitative Study of the Lived Experiences of Young Offenders in Accra**".
2. He would be required to report to the Officer-In-Charge of the above-mentioned centre for guidance and direction prior to the commencement of his research.
3. You are to advise him that taking of pictures within the precincts of the prison is prohibited. He will also be guided in his interviews with the inmates.
4. He is expected to submit a written report on his study to this office as it will help the Service in its effort to improve the conditions.
5. The Service wishes him good luck in his study.


IK TSEGAH
DIR. OF PRISONS/ADMN. & FIN.
For: AG. DIR.GEN. OF PRISONS

AUGUSTINE OSEI BOAKYE
C/O. AFIA SERWA MENSAH
P. O. BOX AN 19840
ACCRA - NORTH

Info:

The Officer-In-Charge
Senior Correctional Centre
ACCRA

/dl/