



“It All Has to Do with Poor Parental Care”: Exploring the Predisposing Factors of Juvenile Delinquency in Ghana

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Abstract

The upsurge in the rate of juvenile delinquency over the past decades and scanty literature in the area of juvenile delinquency in Ghana necessitated this study. Accordingly, the study employed Travis Hirschi’s social bonding theory to explore the factors that predisposed the inmates of the Ghana Senior Correctional Center to delinquency. A qualitative research design was used and the researchers conducted 20 individual in-depth interviews to collect data from participants. The findings of the study revealed that juveniles at the Senior Correctional Center had weak attachment with parents and caregivers prior to their arrest. Weak parent-child attachment resulted from poor parenting (single parenting, weak socialization, weak supervision, child abuse and neglect and poverty). Additionally, the study found that weak parent-child attachment impacted negatively on the other elements of the social bonding theory (commitment, involvement, and belief). Based on the findings, the researchers suggested the need for the government and other stakeholders to implement strategies aimed at enhancing proper parenting.

Keywords: Juvenile Delinquency; Poor Parenting; Social Bonding Theory; and Qualitative Research.

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1. Introduction (The Problem)

In Ghana and other African countries, juvenile delinquency started surging upwards in the early 1980s, in response to the increasing rate of urbanization [1]. Delinquency in Africa has been attributed to poor parenting as a result of urban pressure on families to ensure proper supervision of their children [2]. This suggests that urbanization and industrialization decreased the potency of the extended family system by splitting family members. This affected the traditional African communal living, where the upbringing of children was done by the entire family. As a result, families became nuclear and individualist, leading to an era where parenting has become the sole responsibility of parents or caregivers. Consequently, parents or caregivers' inability to deploy proper parenting style and the presence of parenting deficiencies such as single parenting and poverty have become influential in determining the behavioral outcome of a child.

Crime is among the leading social problems globally, and this explains why offences committed by young people are of peculiar concern. Universally, children are perceived as "future leaders", highlighting the hope bestowed in them to positively affect national development in adulthood. Achieving low rate of juvenile delinquency has been emphasized by various international bodies as important component to national development [3]. However, over the years the rate of juvenile delinquency in Ghana has increased substantially, raising public concerns and discussions in the media [4]. Between 1993 and 2003, it was estimated that, 10,488 juveniles had been summoned to the juvenile justice system of Ghana [4]. In 2007, 276 juvenile delinquent cases were recorded and in 2010 the average daily locked-up of juveniles were 115 [5, 6].

The Juvenile Justice Act (2003) of Ghana defines a juvenile as a person under age 18 who is in conflict with the law. Juvenile delinquency involves a violation of the laws of a particular state or country and subcultural behavior that contradicts the traditional norms of a particular community by a person below age 18 [7]. This suggests that a child is considered delinquent when his or her behaviors are said to infringe on the constitution of the land and contradict the behavioral patterns expected by children of the community in which they live in. Further, delinquent children normally disobey parents, teachers, and other community members, absent themselves from school, run away from home and school, behave aggressively towards parents, teachers, and colleagues, and difficult to be changed by any kind of punishment [7]. Additionally, they engage in substance abuse [8], theft, and armed robbery [9].

Even though the causes of juvenile delinquency cannot be attributed to a single factor, some early scholars (e.g., Baumrind, Bridges, Hirschi, Patterson, [10, 11, 12, 13] attributed delinquency to poor parenting. These scholars indicated aggressive and restrictive parent child interaction [10], severe and progressive punishment [14], weak parent-child attachment [12], criminal parents [15], and child neglect [16] as predisposing factors of delinquency. Similarly, studies from the early 2000s to date have identified poor parenting style as a contributing factor to juvenile delinquency (e.g., Derzon, [17]; Dishion and his colleagues [8]; Hubbard & Pratt, [18]; Lotfi, Vaziri & Lotfi, [19]; Petrosino, Derzon, Lavenberg, [20]).

Further, Lotfi and his colleagues [19] found that a parenting style that employs violence and corporal punishment shaped children to become aggressive, which led children to engage in violent behaviors. Other

studies have attributed delinquent behaviors that result from aggression to parenting styles that are strict authoritarian and laissez faire or permissive [21, 22, 23]. A longitudinal study conducted by Baumrind [24] classified parenting styles into three, including authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. Baumrind opined that authoritarian parents are very strict, set behavioral standard for children to follow, and leave children with little or no space to think for themselves. Additionally, authoritative parenting style ensures proper supervision, support and control of their children, whilst permissive parents over pamper children and provide little or no control. Further, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles could lead to social vices among children, whilst authoritative parenting style has been recommended as effective parenting style [25].

Most often, the first people in every person life are parents, highlighting how important parents are in shaping the behaviors of children. One of the early studies on juvenile delinquency conducted in Ghana by Weinberg [26] found that children who had weak relationship with their parents or caregivers were more likely to become delinquents than those who had established strong relationship with parents. Further, children in a weak parent-child relationship were more likely to form a strong attachment with peers, which led them to nonconformity. A meta-analysis by Hoeve, Stams, van der Put, Dubas, van der Laan and Gerris [27] revealed that poor attachment between parents and children were antecedent to juvenile delinquency.

Additionally, family related factors such as divorce, single parenting, income level of parents and parental involvement in crime has been associated with juvenile delinquency [9]. Children from disadvantageous families, stricken by poverty and insufficient food may take to the streets to earn more money, which may increase children's risk of becoming delinquent. Unfavorable conditions at home may push children to the streets to join other children who may define crime as favorable [11].

Studies on juvenile delinquency are scanty in Ghana and other African countries. The few existing studies have been general in scope, as the focus has been on investigating the generic contributing factors to juvenile delinquency. For example, a quantitative study by Boakye examined correlates and predictors of juvenile delinquency in Ghana and indicated individual, family, and neighborhood factors as contributing factors to juvenile delinquency. Similar studies by Boasiakoh and Andoh [28] employed Sutherland's differential association theory to explore the predisposing factors of juvenile delinquency. Other studies on juvenile delinquency in Ghana have focused on rehabilitation of juvenile offenders [29].

Even though studies conducted in the Euro-American jurisdictions have reported family factors [21, 23, 25] as a contributor to juvenile delinquency, same cannot be said categorically in Ghana and other African countries. This is because the few studies in the Ghanaian context have not focused on family related factors such as poor parenting style, poverty, single parenting, divorce, less supervision and neglect to predict juvenile delinquency [9]. Based on Hirschi's social bonding theory, we are of the opinion that juvenile delinquency emanates from the family, where poor parental care, either resulting from poor parenting style or poverty or domestic violence or single parenting could be the root cause of juvenile delinquency in Ghana.

1.2 Theoretical Perspective

Social Bonding Theory (Travis Hirschi in 1969 [12])

The social bonding theory emerged from the social control theory to explain how people can be prevented from becoming delinquent through positive bonding to the society [12]. According to the social bonding theory, children are likely to become delinquent if they have a weaker bonding to the society (family, school, church, and norms and traditions). Hirschi's social bonding theory has four components, including attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief in societal norms and laws. The level of attachment of the child to family, school, and peers is a strong determinant to delinquency. Accordingly, the stronger the attachment of a child to parents, teachers, peers and other community member the less likely the child to engage in antisocial behaviors [30]. In addition, a child's commitment to conventional activities (education or employment) improves his or her interest to work towards achieving his or her aspirations, leading children to lead conforming lives. Involvement relates to the amount of time the child devotes to important activities, such as learning after school hours or doing homework. Finally, the child's belief in the laws, norms and traditions of the land could reflect on conformity.

This study sought to find out how poor parenting that results from broken home, poverty, and unfavorable parenting style could lead children to delinquency. With the family (parents) considered by previous researchers as the primary agency (agent) of socialization [31, 32]), their association with children could determine the behavioral outcomes of children. We therefore argued that weak parent-child attachment could affect other elements (commitment, involvement, and belief) of the social bonding theory. According to Hirschi, through attachment children learn the values, norms, and laws, as well as the behaviors expected of them by the society. It is assumed that poor attachment denies children the opportunity to learn and internalize societal norms, which could affect them to develop commitment to conventional activities. Again, it negatively affects their involvement in activities that would prepare them for a better future, and compel them to develop their own belief systems that contradicts societal norms, increasing their risk to becoming delinquent.

The social bonding theory has been highlighted by scholars as applicable to studies related to family and traditional sociocultural background [33]. Whilst the theory has been predominantly in use in the United State [34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39], Asia [40], and Europe [41, 42] to study crime and juvenile delinquency, it has been under used in most developing countries, including Ghana [33]. To the best of our knowledge, the current study is the first to use social bonding theory to ascertain how poor parenting could contribute to juvenile delinquency in Ghana and other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. Accordingly, the study would contribute to filling this gap by providing information on how weak parent-child attachment could result to juvenile delinquency.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study Design

The study employed a qualitative research design. Most often, crime related studies have employed a quantitative design as method of inquiry, creating the impression that quantitative design is the ideal approach for crime related studies [43]. Nevertheless, among the weaknesses of quantitative design is its inability to

collect in-depth data of a phenomenon and inadequate richness of meaning [44]. Central to quantitative design, the hallmark of a qualitative design lies in its ability to collect in-depth data that enhance effective understanding of a phenomenon [43]. Accordingly, the qualitative design helped the researchers collect data from participants who had lived the problem under study [45]), as well as opinions of other people who had come into contact directly or indirectly with a juvenile delinquent and were knowledgeable about the predisposing factors of juvenile delinquency [46]. The research approach helped the researchers explain how juveniles became delinquent from the Ghanaian perspective. Accordingly, the study participants were able to narrate their stories regarding why they were engaged in delinquency [47]. This helped the researchers to collect in-depth data that enhanced detailed understanding of the problem under study [48].

2.2 Study Area

The study was conducted at the Ghana Senior Correctional Center (formally known as Ghana Borstal Institution). The Correctional Center is located at the Greater Accra Region of Ghana and it is situated on the same land with the James Fort Prison (A senior incarceration center in Ghana), but divided with a wall. The Senior Correctional Center was established in 1947 by the British during the days of colonial rule. During the early years of its establishment, the Center was managed by the Department of Social Welfare, until 1958 when the Ghana Prisons Service took over its administration. The Center at the time of data collection had an inmate population of 98 (all males) undergoing rehabilitation. Detention at the Center ranges between a minimum of three months to a maximum three years. The physical structure to the Senior Correctional Center depicts a normal home, with inmates housed in dormitories. This is a way to avoid stigmatization and prejudices and create the impression that inmates are not imprisoned [1]. Among the rehabilitation activities of the Center are vocational training and formal education. The vocational training includes tailoring, shoemaking, carpentry, ceramics, and auto mechanics.

2.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The researchers employed purposive sampling technique to sample participants for the study. This sampling technique was adopted because it was believed certain categories of the study population were more knowledgeable about the phenomenon under study and as such had important perspectives on the topic under study [44]. The sampling technique helped the researchers to collect data from inmates who had been in the correctional home for three months or above and staff who had worked with the Correctional Center for one year or above. Further, a number of parents or caregivers who had their children incarcerated at the Center at the time of data collection were involved. The study sampled a total of 20 participants, consisting of 11 juvenile delinquents, five correctional officers, and four parents. Juvenile delinquents were included in the study because they had lived the problem under study and helped address the purposes of the study. The inclusion of Correctional Officers in the study was ensured because they are responsible for reformation and rehabilitation at the Center and it was believed they had the needed information to help understand the topic under study. Correctional officers were used as gatekeepers to reach the parents of the inmates and juveniles. The parents were included in the study because they could provide information regarding how poor parental care resulted to juvenile delinquency.

2.4 Data Collection Procedures

The researchers collected data from primary sources. Primary data constituted data collected for the first time from the study participants. A topic guide was designed based on the purpose of the study as a guide in data collection. This aided us to conduct individual in-depth interviews with 20 participants. The topic guide gave the researchers the flexibility to probe the answers of the interviewees. This helped to provide the study with a depth understanding of the topic under study. Further, senior correctional officers helped us to get access to some parents whose children were inmates at the Center by providing us with their Mobile Phone Numbers, which were used in booking appointment with some parents who agreed to meet with us. After a series of discussions regarding the purpose of the study, parents who agreed to be part of the study were recruited. The researchers decided with the parents, individually on the time and place that would be convenient for the interviews. Interviews with parents were held at their homes and work place. Interviews with inmates and correctional officers were held at the premises of the Senior Correctional Center. Interviews with participants were held in Twi (the dominant local language) and lasted between 45 to 60 minutes. The individual in-depth interviews were audio recorded after participants' permissions were sought.

2.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

The recorded interviews were replayed and carefully listened to for the purpose of transcribing data. Afterwards, the study employed Braun and Clark's [49] six phases of thematic data analysis to analyze and present findings. In the first phase, we read and re-read through the transcribed data individually to familiarize ourselves with the data. In the second phase we individually generated initial codes and categorized the codes. We came together to discuss codes and collated the codes into potential themes in the third phase. Further, we generated thematic map to ensure that themes were consistent with the data in the fourth phase. In the fifth phase, we assigned names to the themes in a way that addressed the objectives of the study. Finally, in the sixth phase we produced the report.

3. Results

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

In this study, 20 participants were selected and 11 of them were juvenile delinquents, five were correctional officer and the other four were parents of some of the juvenile delinquents. Initially, the researchers decided to interview five parents, nevertheless, due to most of the parents' unwillingness to participate in the study, the number of parents' participation was reduced to four. Fourteen of the participants were males and 6 were females. Male participation were dominant in this study because all the inmates in the correctional center at the time of data collection were males. As a result, the researchers had to increase the number of females by recruiting three female correctional officers and three mothers.

Juvenile delinquents were between the ages of 15 and 20. The age range of the non-delinquents (correctional officer and parents) were between 29 and 53. The Juvenile delinquents had been with the correctional center between three and 21 months. The correctional officers had been at post between one and eight years and each

parent interviewed had a child serving sentence at the Center. Nine of the juveniles interviewed were serving their first sentence and the other two had been sentenced for a second time. Seven of the juveniles were living with either their mother (6) or father (1), two were living with both parents and the remaining two were not living with a parent or caregiver at the time of their arrest. All the inmates had been to Junior Secondary School (Grade 9) but none had attained Senior High Education.

3.2 Predisposing Factors to Juvenile Delinquency at the Senior Correctional Center

Juvenile delinquency like other social problems does not occur in a vacuum, rather a myriad factors come to play. In this study, the most recurring reasons that led to delinquent behaviors among the juveniles were single parenting, low income level of parents or caregivers, less supervision from parents or caregivers, child abuse and neglect. These factors were identified to be the primary contributors to delinquency among juveniles at the Ghana Senior Correctional Center. Additionally, peer influence was identified. Nevertheless, participants who attributed their delinquent behaviors to peers influence acknowledged that they spent more time with their peers due to the weak attachment they had with their parents or caregivers. All the juveniles interviewed at the Center attributed the causes of their delinquent behaviors to at least one of the factors indicated above.

3.2.1 Single Parenting as a Predisposing Factor to Juvenile Delinquency

Most often, a complete parenting is one done collectively by mother and father, where both parties deliver optimum responsibilities. It is assumed a mother and father have a unique attribute when it comes to child nurturing. Therefore, the situation where a mother or father is lacking in the upbringing of a child could be detrimental to the child's development, leading to delinquency. In this study more than half of the juveniles interviewed were living with either their mother or father. Participants attributed the causes of juvenile delinquency to broken home or divorce, separation, death of a parent(s), premarital birth, and neolocal residence, where parents live in separate abode. A correctional officer gave her assertion about the causes of single parenting:

Most of the children we have here were living with either their mother or father . . . this happens when there is a divorce or a death of a parent(s). Also, as you will agree with me in Ghana a lot of marriage couples are not living together . . . fathers especially travel to other parts of the world for greener pastures and this affects children development.

Further, a juvenile gave his life account to explain how single parenting contributed to his antisocial behavior:

Since I was born I have never set eyes on my father, my mother has been taking care of me with help from nowhere. My mother leaves home very early in the morning to the market and leaves me money for school and other daily upkeeps . . . the unfortunate thing is, at a point I stopped going to school and joined friends in the streets which led to my offence.

Similarly, a correctional officer lamented on how single parenting could lead to poor parental care and attachment and eventually leading children to engage in social vices:

I have been in this profession for quite some time and I have come to understand that most children who are living with one parent face developmental challenges . . . most often they are the children who normally come here and even under our supervision you notice that they lack certain basic behavioral skills.

Further, a parent explained how her efforts could not stop her child from becoming delinquent:

I will acknowledge the fact that one person bringing up a child is very difficult and could negatively affect the child . . . with my case, I did all a mother is supposed to do for a child but they were not enough because the father aspect was missing . . . I cannot say everything but he started showing some behaviors which I believe he would not have done if the father was around.

The correctional officers indicated that single parenting negatively affect parenting, as it leaves a parent with limited time to monitor children and focuses on one aspect of parenting. Parents do not get time to interact with children to know their experiences with teachers and the kind of peers they associate with. Also, due to the work load of combining responsibilities of both parents, they do not get time to visit their schools to check children performances and their attitudes towards school.

To me one difficult task for parents is child nurturing, even when you are two it is difficult. It becomes more difficult when parenting is performed by one person . . . you cannot get time to visit your children at school or to look at other aspect of the child's development . . . these affect children, as a parent may not have time to know the kind of friends the child engages with.

3.2.2 Less Supervision as Predisposing Factor to Juvenile Delinquency

Most often children in their adolescent ages are faced with identity problems; trying to know who they are and what they are capable of often lead them to experiment countless activities. Children at this stage are perceived as gullible and may be attracted to imitate the behaviors of peers, which may lead them to nonconformity. At this stage they need a careful supervision and directions from parents or caregivers to be able to differentiate wrong from right and lead a conforming life. Participants commented on how less or poor parental supervision could lead children to delinquency:

Children need to be directed by parents because they are in a learning stage of their lives and they mostly become attracted to what they are exposed to . . . if they get to interact with friends more than they do with parents, there is a danger of them taking the advices of friends which may not be the best of advice and may lead them to become deviant.

A statement by a juvenile revealed that when parents spend less time with children it affects their relationship, leading children to build a strong attachment with friends who may lead them to nonconformity:

When I was home I hardly spent time with my parents . . . they left home in the morning and come home late . . . sometimes I hardly see them during weekdays, I interacted more with my siblings and friends and there were issues I never discussed with my siblings or parents but discussed with my friends. I listened to my friends more

than my parents and now I find myself here.

Parents in this study acknowledged the importance of ensuring proper supervision of children and how poor supervision could be detrimental to the child's development:

Children need to be supervised and taught what is expected of them . . . by refusing to do these as a parent affects the interactions and behaviors of the child . . . if they are not aware of what is expected from them how do you expect them to behave . . . they will behave in their own way and do what pleases them, which may lead them to the Center.

Another parent supported the assertion above by indicating:

I think children need to be monitored in whatever they do; keeping a close eye on them help to shape their behaviors and how the society want them to behave . . . lessons have been learnt so when everything is over I will know how to live with him.

Moreover, the correctional officers stressed much on the role of socialization in contributing to juvenile delinquency. Socialization plays important role in shaping the behaviors of individuals, as it teaches children the norms and traditions of the society. Effective socialization does not only strengthen parent-child attachment, but also helps children to develop commitment to education or apprenticeship, as well as getting involved in activities that would help them achieve their life aspirations and understanding and conforming to the laws and norms of the land. Nonetheless, weak socialization hampers children's attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief and could lead children to behave delinquently:

I think a child's behavior, whether good or bad depends largely on how he or she was socialized . . . some parents do not have time to teach their children what is expected of them . . . they only leave their children in the hands of another child; who may be a house help and before you realize the child lacks basic manners and had become incorrigible.

Additionally, some of the correctional officers lamented the fact that some parents are over permissive in nurturing children. Consequently, children under such parental care are hardly disciplined or corrected when they behave wrongly, which affects their relationship towards others and could lead them to nonconformity:

Some parents are too lenient to their children that they find it difficult to discipline them when they misbehave and may have a problem with anyone who may try to bring their children on track . . . to them they believe they love their children but in the end it leads the children to antisocial behaviors.

3.2.3 Low Income Level of Parents

Poverty has played influential role in shaping many social problems, including juvenile delinquency. In this study, most of the participants attributed the cause of juvenile delinquency to poverty. Poverty in juvenile's households jeopardized the statues of parent-child relationship, as it compelled children to engage in work to

support their upkeep. Children involvement in job to support home placed them at the same level of parents in terms of house upkeep, which made them difficult to control. In other words, as the juveniles became exposed to money, they became somewhat difficult for their parents or caregivers to control:

My son was very calm until he started selling on the highway . . . everything changed so fast; he became very difficult to control . . . he stopped going to school and came home when he wanted and left when he wants . . . he left home and never returned until I received a call from the police that he and some guys had been arrested.

A statement by a correctional officer was in support of the above statement:

When household expenditures become a shared responsibility of parents and children, then it is going to be difficult for the parents to control such children . . . a situation like this puts parents in a stiff position when it comes to correcting the child when he or she misbehaves.

Additionally, selling on the streets and markets exposed juveniles to bad friends who in turn introduced them to delinquent activities, as recounted by a juvenile:

I got to know my friends when I started selling on the streets . . . they introduced me to stealing and kiosk breaking, as they made me believe it is the best way to make money and they had done it for years.

A juvenile who was sentenced for trafficking drugs and smoking cannabis revealed how selling on the streets to support home led him to the act:

When I started selling I made new friends who were already in the business . . . as colleagues they made me know the other side of street business . . . we took the drugs from the 'capo' and sold to the 'ghetto boys' and smoke some until we were arrested and sent here.

3.2.4 Child Abuse and Neglect

Juveniles who experienced maltreatment and neglect developed aggressive behaviors toward parents, colleagues, and other persons. Most often, abusive children felt unloved, which hampered their attachment with caregivers or parents and led juveniles to build a strong attachment with bad friends. Additionally, neglected children lacked parental attachment, direction and control. Juveniles who were neglected by parents adopted survival strategies, which led them into delinquent behaviors such as phone snatching and gang robbery, as revealed by a juveniles:

At a pint in my life, there was no one to pay my school fees and buy me food, I felt dejected and unloved and had to survive so I joined a group on the street who taught me how to snatch phones and steal . . . this was what I did to provide for myself.

A statement by another juvenile was in support of the above:

I took to the streets when I was nine . . . after the death of my parents there was no one in the family to take care

of me so I had to join friends to the city to sell doormat . . . I joined a gang of armed robbers and we were caught . . . as the youngest among the group, I was sent here.

Another juvenile recounted on how maltreatments from her father and step mother contributed to his delinquency:

I was not happy at home because my step mother always found mistakes with everything I did . . . my father sided with her and never asked my side of the story but went ahead and flogged me miserably and denied me chop money . . . it got to a point I had to steal to make ends meet and it ended me up here.

Furthermore, a correctional officer gave her view concerning how child maltreatment could result to delinquency:

What I have observed over the years is, juveniles who experienced corporal punishment in their homes before coming here tend to be more aggressive . . . they are very stubborn and seem not to be afraid of anything, which makes it difficult to change such children.

Moreover, progressive flogging by parents and caregivers made children accept that whatever they do would attract similar punishment. As a result, juveniles became unconcerned about the consequences of their behaviors and subsequently became incorrigible:

To me flogging children is not the solution . . . children need to be talked to when they misbehave . . . what I have observed over the years is flogging stubborn children do not change them but strengthens them to continue misbehaving . . . after all everything they do is punishable by flogging.

A juvenile gave his view on how progressive flogging strengthens delinquency:

When I started running away from school my father and sometimes my class teacher subjected me to beating . . . I remember my father bought a bunch of cane, showed them to me that whenever I misbehave the cane would be my reward . . . at a point I was no more afraid to be beaten and I became very bad.

4. Discussion

The study explored the predisposing factors to juvenile delinquency among juveniles at the Ghana Senior Correctional Home. Using Hirschie's social bonding theory, the study focused on how poor parenting could jeopardize parent-child attachment and in turn put children at the risk of delinquency. We reported based on findings that juveniles at the Senior Correctional Center had a weak attachment with their parents, which resulted to their engagement in delinquency. This is supported by the social bonding theory which posits that weak parent-child attachment could result to delinquency [12]. The findings of the study have revealed that weak parent-child attachment affected juveniles' attachment to school but strengthened children attachment with bad peers. Juveniles who had a deplorable relationship with parents built a somewhat cordial relationship with bad friends who led them to delinquency. Additionally, weak parent-child attachment negatively affected other

components (commitment, involvement, and belief) of the social bonding.

Most of the juveniles interviewed had poor relationship with their parents or caregivers prior to their arrest. Factors such as single parenting, poverty, child abuse, neglect, and less supervision were elements of poor parenting, which led the juveniles to behave delinquently. Previous scholars (such as Baumrind and his colleagues, Boakye, Hoeve and his colleagues) have also reported these family factors as an antecedents to juvenile delinquency. Most often, poor parenting that results from poverty puts children in a disadvantageous position [11], where children have to play the role of supportive breadwinners (children working to provide for their basic needs and supporting their upkeep). Children who happened to find themselves in such situations were exposed to work in the external environment with adults and other children who eventually lured them to delinquent activities.

The findings of the study have shown that weak socialization contributed to delinquency among juveniles at the Senior Correctional Center. Weak socialization resulted from less child supervision and over permissive parenting style. In Ghana and other developing, as well as developed countries, socialization has been highlighted as one of the important mechanisms through which children get to internalize their traditions and norms [31, 32]. Failure to effectively socialize children could lead to a lifelong behavioral malfunctioning, which may lead children to behave antisocially.

Further, past studies have reported that permissive and authoritarian parenting styles could contribute to behavioral malfunctioning and eventually lead to juvenile delinquency [14, 8, 18]. Most often, children who go through strict supervisions that are coupled with abuses tend to develop some level of fear in the presence of their parents or caregivers. This may prevent children from sharing sensitive information with parents but with friends. Accordingly, bad advices received from friends may not be shared with parents or caregivers and may lead children to delinquency. Nevertheless, over permissive parenting style that gives children unlimited room to exhibit whatever behavior they want, could also prove detrimental to children. Most often, children under such weak supervision are given little or no directives as to which behavior is appropriate or unapproved. Findings from previous studies have discouraged these parenting styles (authoritarian and permissive) and have encouraged parents to adapt parenting style that enhances parent-child attachment through reasonable supervision, support and control (authoritative).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of the study have highlighted the factors that contributed to delinquency among juveniles at the Ghana Senior Correctional Center. Juvenile delinquency is a serious social problem that negatively affects children development and national development as a whole. The prospects of a nation's future depend largely on how its children are prepared to take over the responsibilities of adults on a later stage. Nevertheless, high Juvenile delinquency rate hampers the transition, as it leaves children to spend a significant number of their developmental ages in correctional homes.

The early ages of a person's life are mostly spent with parents or caregivers. The family as one of the primary

agencies of socialization is tasked with the responsibility of socializing its members to become responsible citizens in future. Given this, improper parenting coupled with poor socialization negatively affects the conducts of children, leading them to behave contrary to the norms and laws of the land. Participants in this study attributed the predisposing factors to juvenile delinquency to poor parenting. Poor parenting, according to the findings resulted from single parenting, child abuse, neglect, poverty, less supervision and weak socialization, which in turn led to weak parent-child attachment. Of concern is that weak attachment affects children relationship with parents, which could impact negatively on children's commitment to conventional activities and involvement in socially accepted activities and eventually lead children to behave centrally to the norms and laws of the land.

As a result, we have recommended that the government of Ghana and other stakeholders implement strategies that would mitigate the factors that contribute to poor parenting. Single parent and low income households should be supported in their children upkeep by the government. It is believed this effort would lessen the burden on single and poor parents and limit the number of children deployed to sell on the streets to support their upkeep. In addition, social workers in performing their roles as advocates, educators, and brokers should advocate for a tailored-to-fit policy interventions that would ensure that abused and neglected children are sheltered and protected by the state. Also, social workers should educate parents and caregivers through platforms such as churches and mosques, traditional media, and social media on the need to ensure effective supervision and socialization of their children. Also, parents and caregivers should be equipped to exhibit the best parenting style that would enhance a strong parent-child attachment. Additionally, social workers should link parents and incorrigible children to available institutions for assistance.

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