



Prevalence and determinants of juvenile delinquency in Ghana

Mark Owusu Amponsah^{a1}, University of Cape Coast, New Administration Block, Cape Coast, Ghana.
mamponsah@ucc.edu.gh, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2920-7043>

Suggested Citation:

Amponsah, M.O. (2024). Prevalence and determinants of juvenile delinquency in Ghana. *Global Journal of Sociology: Current Issues*, 14(2), 122-135. <https://doi.org/10.18844/gjs.v14i2.9622>

Received from July 12, 2024; revised from September 22, 2024; accepted from October 18, 2024.

Selection and peer review under the responsibility of Prof. Dr. Carlos Rodrigues, Universidade Fernando Pessoa, Portugal
©2024 by the authors. Licensee United World Innovation Research and Publishing Center, North Nicosia, Cyprus. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

iThenticate Similarity Rate: 7%

Abstract

Research in developed economies has largely attributed juvenile delinquency to social and biological factors. However, studies on this issue remain limited in developing countries such as Ghana. This study examines the prevalence of juvenile delinquency and its contributing factors among adolescents. A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire administered to 310 randomly selected junior high school students in the Ashaiman Municipality, an area known for high community violence. Descriptive statistics were employed for data analysis. Findings indicate that juvenile delinquency is not highly prevalent among participants. However, factors such as homelessness, neglect, abuse, poor parenting, peer pressure, and traditional and social media influence contribute to delinquent behavior. The study highlights differences in perception based on demographic variables and underscores the role of effective parenting and community interventions in addressing adolescent delinquency. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly adhered to. The findings provide insights for educators, policymakers, and social workers to develop targeted interventions for mitigating juvenile delinquency in Ghana. Pedagogical and policy implications are discussed, along with recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Child development; criminal behavior; situational crime and prevalence

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Mark Owusu Amponsah, University of Cape Coast, New Administration Block, Cape Coast, Ghana.
E-mail address: mamponsah@ucc.edu.gh

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescents' risky behavior continues to receive attention from different stakeholders, including scholars (Ame 2018; Ayete-Nyampong 2012; Hamilton et al., 2011), in an attempt to enhance their educational development, health, and well-being. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), adolescents are young people between the ages of 10 and 19 years (UNICEF 2019). Steinberg's (2009) study previously identified adolescent sub-stages as early (10 to 13 years), middle (14 to 18 years), and late (19 to 22 years). Adolescence is a critical transition period between childhood and adulthood where there is rapid growth and significant changes in the physical, psychological, emotional, intellectual, and social domains (Hung, 2024; Lau & Yuen, 2013; Bolu-Steve & Esere, 2017). It is a stage characterized by tensions and stress due to inner emotional instability or maltreatment and as a result of conflicting outside experiences (Xie et al., 2020; Oni, 2010). At this period, peer pressure is very strong, and some adolescents begin to involve themselves in practices that are regarded to be contrary to the norms and values of their society or what may be seen by others as typical for their society (Bolu-Steve & Esere 2017), which ultimately obstructs their well-being. Hence, this behavior is often perceived to be delinquent (Oni, 2010; Luther et al., 2024).

Juvenile delinquency tends to be among the key issues to be addressed in different political and institutional contexts because the individual and collective needs of adolescent offenders must be addressed, as they are also a population with high indices of rights violations (Boering et al., 2024). Although there are great differences among youth offender systems around the world, their general purpose is to control juvenile delinquency by reducing the risk of recidivism in the offender population and preventing its onset where there is no contra-normative behavior, protecting, in most cases, the fulfilment of child and adolescent rights. There is evidence that adolescents who are in the juvenile justice system constitute a heterogeneous group in terms of the problems presented, both regarding the pattern of deviant behavior and their criminogenic needs (Craig et al., 2020; Aebi et al., 2016; Barrett & Katsiyannis, 2016). Thus, the effectiveness of interventions in this field is conditioned by the adequacy of the contents and the intensity of an intervention towards the characteristics and needs of the target population, that is, to the customization of the educational or therapeutic monitoring offered to adolescents (Asscher et al., 2018; Kraemer & Kupfer, 2006).

Juvenile delinquency is of particular interest to educationalists and criminologists, and, therefore, so are the contributory factors to juvenile delinquency. Early sociologically oriented analysis in criminology recognized the links between crime and social disadvantages, such as reduced opportunities for social advancement, poverty, educational deficits, being raised in degraded neighborhoods (Shaw & McKay, 2010), deficits in family relations (Soothill et al., 2013; Huang & McKeown 2022), the difficult life situation of families of origin, or the intergenerational transmission of patterns of deviant behavior (Soothill et al., 2013). There is widespread agreement that early criminal initiation is a strong predictor of a long and prolific criminal career (Eidson et al., 2017; Duck, 2016; TE, 2001). Thus, there is a high level of social (and academic) sensitivity to early symptoms of "social maladjustment" because such manifestations indicate a risk of amplifying adult crime rates in the future. Over the years, numerous studies (mostly longitudinal or using a biographical method) have addressed this topic, producing a long list of childhood and adolescent risk factors for an individual's initiation and development of a criminal career (Van Koppen, 2018; MacLeod et al., 2012; TE, 2001). The literature indicates that juvenile offenders disproportionately come from neglectful backgrounds with cumulative disadvantages in which the child's basic needs are not met (Farrington, 2010).

Criminologists, as well as social psychologists, view families in terms of a milieu with preventive, anti-criminal potential or, conversely, criminogenic and antisocial potential. It has been argued that strong family ties are followed by a high level of social control that can deter an individual from criminal activity (Tharp & Noonan 2012). On the other hand, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are noteworthy in the initiation of criminal careers (Chomczyński, & Guy, 2021; Chomczyński, 2017), and the inability of the family to provide social control may be a major reason for turning to peer groups (Thornberry et al., 1993). Pekala et al. (2021) noted that in

criminal/delinquent families, parents often do not know where their children are, rarely explain rules of conduct to their children, and do not find time to talk about their children's important issues. Farrington (2010) went even further, claiming that parents who fail to clearly state (house) rules, monitor the child's attitudes, track what their child is doing, reinforce pro-conformist behaviors, and include children in solving conflicts and disagreements are the prime determining variables of their children's future delinquency. By implication, literature is replete with evidence of causes of juvenile delinquency ranging from lack of parental supervision; strained family ties (due to conflict, parental alcohol addiction, domestic violence, child abuse); a criminal family history; a broken family structure often followed by child neglect and social orphanhood; and being raised in foster care.

Similarly, in Africa, adolescents' deviance is of great concern as studies highlight the evidence of violent behavior, aggression, school dropouts, substance abuse, and crime (Loveline & Jaja 2020; Aute 2019; Dada 2017). A study conducted in Kenya indicated that delinquent behaviors in high school take the form of dropping out of school, destruction of property, and injury, which lead to poor academic performance (Aute 2019). Another study conducted in Nigeria brought to light the increase in deviant behavior among adolescents, and this was attributed to moral decadence among the youth and a lack of discipline (Idris 2016). In South Africa, studies have shown that adolescents' deviant behavior is prevalent, evidenced by the high rates of adolescents of their school-going age abusing substances and engaging in crimes (Gwatimba & Raselekoane, 2018; Groenewald et al., 2018; Mathews et al., 2019; Dada, 2017). Further, in the same country, the South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (SACENDU) reported that 26% of all people admitted to substance-abuse rehabilitation facilities in 2016 were under the age of 20 years (Dada 2017).

In Ghana, Boakye (2012) explored the lived experiences of six (6) juvenile offenders in Ghana to understand the motivation behind their juvenile behaviors. After some interview sessions, the respondents revealed that deviant peer association, apathy in schooling, substance use, and delinquency were the factors facilitating their delinquent behaviors. Again, Dako-Gyeke et al. (2022) investigated perspectives of juvenile offenders and officers on juvenile delinquency in Ghana, where 26 participants, consisting of inmates and officers, were interviewed. Findings showed that parental neglect and abuse, financial constraints, peer influence, and exposure to community social vices influenced juveniles' delinquent behaviors. Previous studies have largely explored the issue of juvenile delinquency in Ghana, with particular emphasis on a range of causal factors. Even more desirable is the fact that this study sought to explore the demographical characteristics of deviant adolescents and how those characteristics contribute to juvenile delinquency. In most African countries and also in Ghana, although an increasing number of studies have identified biological (Moffitt, 2017; Leaw et al., 2015), school situational (Pekala et al., 2021), and family factors as contributing factors to juvenile delinquency, the issue of prevalence in Ghana has received little attention. The unravelling of juvenile delinquent behavior prevalence may provide insight into the problem and possible family environment context-based intervention strategies to curb the menace. Understanding the factors that contribute to delinquent behavior among adolescents can help to inform efforts to deal with the menace. Insufficient research on the prevalence of juvenile delinquency and the factors contributing to it in Ghana may have serious implications for national security issues and the success of any interventions geared towards curbing juvenile delinquency in the country.

1.1. Purpose of study

This study sought to investigate the prevalence of juvenile delinquency among adolescents in Ghana as its prime aim. In line with the aim, two objectives were explored, that is, (a)(i) prevalence of juvenile delinquency; (a)(ii) age and parental education background influence on the prevalence of juvenile delinquency; and (b)(i) factors contributing to juvenile delinquent behaviors, (b)(ii) age influence on causal factors of juvenile behavior.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Research design

A descriptive cross-sectional survey design of the quantitative research approach was used to examine the prevalence and contributing factors of criminal adolescent behavior among junior high school (JHS) students. This design was ideal because of its focus on the examination of naturally occurring and current states of juvenile delinquency in Ghana.

2.2. Participants

The study targeted all seven JHS schools (with a total number of 1600 students) in the Ashaiman Municipality of the Greater Accra Region, Ghana. The choice of the municipality was motivated by the prevalence of violent activities and related deaths (16.5% of all deaths in the municipality) (GSS, 2010). Juvenile delinquency is connected with high-profile community violence (), hence the choice for an investigation of this nature in the area. Three hundred and ten (310) people were chosen as representatives of the 1600 people using Krecje and Morgan's (1970) sampling table as a guide. There are three levels in JHS schools (first year, second year, and third year). However, for this work, only the second and third-year students were used. The second and third year (grade 7 and 8) students were used because their age fell within the recommended age-range of 10–14 years ($n = 122$, 39%), 15–17 years ($n = 172$, 56%), and 18–24 years ($n = 16$, 5%). A proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to select 310 students from the seven schools for the study. Out of the 310 students that were engaged in the study, 110 were females, while 200 were males.

2.3. Data collection instrument

The researcher crafted a questionnaire through the review of Ghana-based studies (Dako-Gyeke et al., 2022; Boakye, 2012). That is, items that formed the dimensions of the questionnaire were borrowed from those studies. The questionnaire had three dimensions, with the response type of a four-point Likert type (low score of 1-disagree and high score of 4-strongly agree). The first dimension of the questionnaire was made up of demographic variables such as gender, age range, parental education level, and grade level. The second dimension was made up of 13 items that measured the students' perception of the prevalence of delinquent behavior. The third dimension was also made up of 15 items directed toward the perception of factors that lead to the breeding of delinquent behaviors. The items were calibrated to ensure that they could produce valid and reliable responses. After the items were carefully developed and scrutinized by other experts (two individuals with measurement and evaluation backgrounds), pilot testing was conducted using 80 JHS learners who were conveniently sampled from a school close to the study site but were not used in the main data collection exercise. Even though in practice, the use of 50 samples for a pilot test of an instrument appears to dominate the literature (Jansen & Hak, 2005), a relatively larger sample (80) was used to get wider views for fine-tuning the instrument. After the pilot exercise, the students found the items clearer without any ambiguity, and so no review was done on the items. However, to be sure of sound psychometric indicators of the items, an internal consistency reliability assessment (using Alpha) was done using the pilot test data. The reliability coefficient was .87, which showed good correlation among items of the questionnaire.

2.4. Data collection procedure

Ethical standards were applied in the conduct of the study. Ethical clearance was provided by the Institutional Review Board, University of Cape Coast, Ghana. Permission was also sought from the heads of the selected basic schools, who acted as gatekeepers, to gain access to the research site. An earlier contact was made with the head teacher through identified teachers in the school to establish rapport and interact with the student participants. The benefit of the research and its impact on other relevant stakeholders were discussed with the head teachers and potential participants. Participants were made to sign a consent form to register their willingness to

participate in the study. Classrooms were used as assembly points for participants to respond to the items on the questionnaire. During the data collection phase, participants were also given the option to opt out of the study without consequence if they so desired. Other ethical considerations, such as confidentiality, anonymity, volition, protection from psychological or emotional harm, and privacy, were adhered to. For example, participants who decided to write their names on the questionnaire were asked not to do so to shield their identity. Participants had approximately 30 minutes to respond to all the items of the questionnaire. In all, 310 questionnaires were given to participants, and all 310 were received at the end of the data collection exercise. This represents a response rate of 100%. The entire data collection process lasted four weeks.

2.5. Analysis

Percentages and frequencies were used to analyze data on Objective 1 and Objective 2. However, demographic characteristics' effects on issues were analyzed using line graphs. Results were summarized in tables for easy presentation and interpretation.

3. RESULTS

Objective one sought to identify the perception of the prevalence of juvenile delinquency among JHS students in Ghana. A total of thirteen items were administered to respondents on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 representing not at all (N), 2 for rarely (R), 3 for often (O), and 4 for always (A). For interpretation, closely related responses were collapsed to form one response. For example, "Not at all" and "rarely" responses were put together as one response, which was called "rarely." Also, "often" and "always" responses were put together as one response and named "always." Table 1 presents respondents' views concerning the prevalence of criminal behavior among JHS students.

Table 1

Perception of Prevalence of Juvenile Delinquency among JHS Students

Statements	Rarely		Always	
	F	%	F	%
Deliberately damage property that did not belong to you	290	93.5	20	6.5
Take something from a store without paying	288	92.9	22	7.1
Take something that did not belong to you without asking permission	260	83.9	50	16.1
Selling marijuana or other drugs	289	93.2	21	6.8
Buying, selling, or holding stolen goods	295	95.2	15	4.8
Use someone's money without their permission	280	90.3	30	9.7
Going into a house or building to take something without permission or telling the owner	295	95.2	15	4.8
Get into a serious physical fight	275	88.7	35	11.3
Use or threaten to use a weapon to get something from someone	290	93.5	20	6.5
Shot or stabbed someone	299	96.5	11	3.5
Hurt someone badly enough to need bandages or care from a doctor or nurse	296	95.5	14	4.5
Drive a vehicle without its owner's permission	289	93.2	21	6.8
Used social media to demand money from people by pretending to be someone you are not	282	91	28	9

Source: Field survey (2021)

*Total number of participants = 310

Responses from Table 1 indicated that the perception of the prevalence of juvenile delinquency among JHS students was very low for all 13 items on the questionnaire. Even though few people among the sample admitted to having committed minor offences such as taking something that did not belong to them without asking permission (n = 50, 16%), having gotten into a serious physical fight in the past year (n = 35, 11.3%), having used

someone else's money without their permission (n = 30, 10%) and having used social media to demand money from people by pretending to be someone they were not (n = 28, 9%) and so on. Generally, major offences (such as damaging properties, especially state assets, selling marijuana, and stabbing someone to death) that are defined by Ghana's 1992 Constitution as criminality were not found among the participants.

It is often argued that personal (characteristics of the child) and situational factors (conditions of the home such as parental education) come to bear in the development of delinquent behaviors among adolescents (Marchuk, 2014). As part of the investigation, the analysis of the data showed that juvenile delinquency was not prevalent among the sample. However, minor offences that were admitted by participants to have been committed were done largely by male adolescents as compared to their female counterparts (refer to Figure 1). The implication of the finding is that male participants had more inclination towards delinquent behavior as compared to female participants. The data in Figure 1 further showed that parental education had an adverse effect on the level of delinquent behavior among adolescents. Most parents with a tertiary education level (bachelors, masters, and/or PhD) had the highest mean score for the prevalence of adolescent delinquent behavior (M = 20.2 for males; M = 19 for females). This result appears to be counterintuitive since high parental education was expected to be helpful and not counterproductive. The result, however, is not surprising because the current dispensation appears to be an era where people (especially the educated ones) concentrate more on jobs and money than building homes (McWhirter et al., 1993).

This implies that parents with such educational backgrounds are more likely to neglect adolescent children (possibly due to limited time for child care because of career building) to be influenced by peers that may bring about delinquent behaviors. In this study, parents with low education backgrounds, such as 'Advance Level' (M = 19 for males; M = 15 for females) and no education at all (M = 18 for males; M = 16 for females), were found to have the lowest tendencies for their children to adopt juvenile behaviors (See Figure 2 and Table 2 item 1). This may also be due to the fact that parents with less education may not be involved in conventional white-collar jobs that may take a lot of their family time. The finding is not surprising due to the fact that in the current world economic crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the educated class spends more time developing careers and businesses at the expense of maximum attention to childcare and family development (Roubinov & Boyce 2017).

Figure 1

Parental education and juvenile delinquency

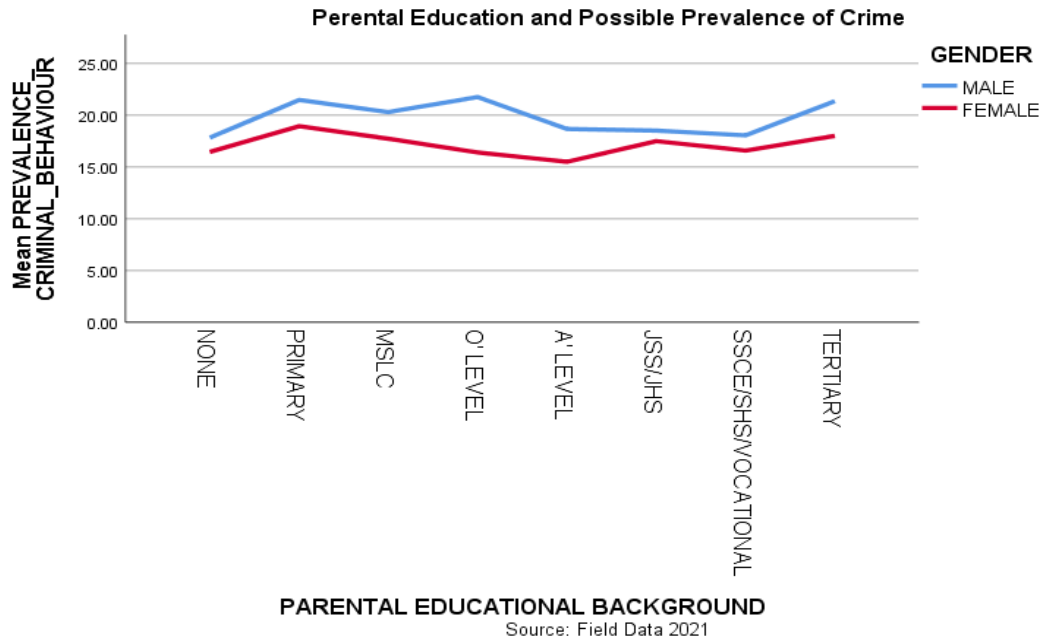
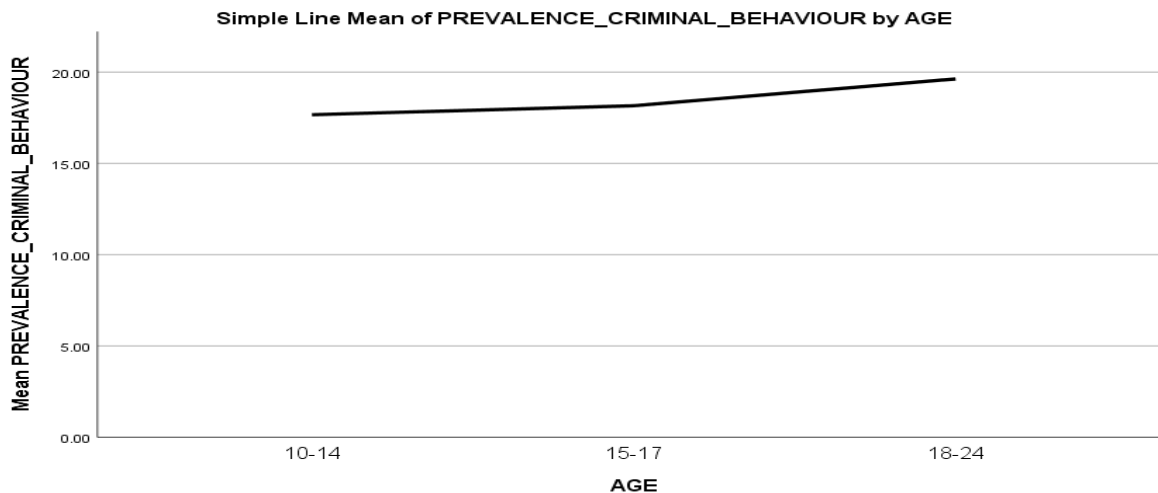


Figure 2
Prevalence of juvenile delinquency by age



The data further showed that within the adolescents' age categories, adolescents within the age range of 18–24 years were more prone to exhibiting delinquent behavior, while their counterparts within the age range of 10–14 years exhibited lower tendencies (See Figure 2). The graph indicates an age-increase trend of delinquent behavior among adolescents within the sample. The implication is that age affects juvenile delinquency. Unarguably, the situation may be more daring when the individual is situated within a social context that has a lot of criminal variables (such as rampant smoking, excessive drinking, clubbing, prostitution). The finding has implications for parenting models, clinical counselling, and school guidance.

The second objective was to identify the factors that contribute to the development of delinquent behaviors among JHS students. A total of twelve items were administered to respondents on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 for

Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 for disagree (D), 3 for agree (A), and 4 for Strongly Agree (SA). For purposes of interpretation, responses to strongly disagree and disagree were merged into disagree, and responses to strongly agree and disagree were merged into agree. Table 2 presents respondents' views concerning the factors responsible for the development of criminal behavior.

Table 2
Factors contributing to juvenile delinquency

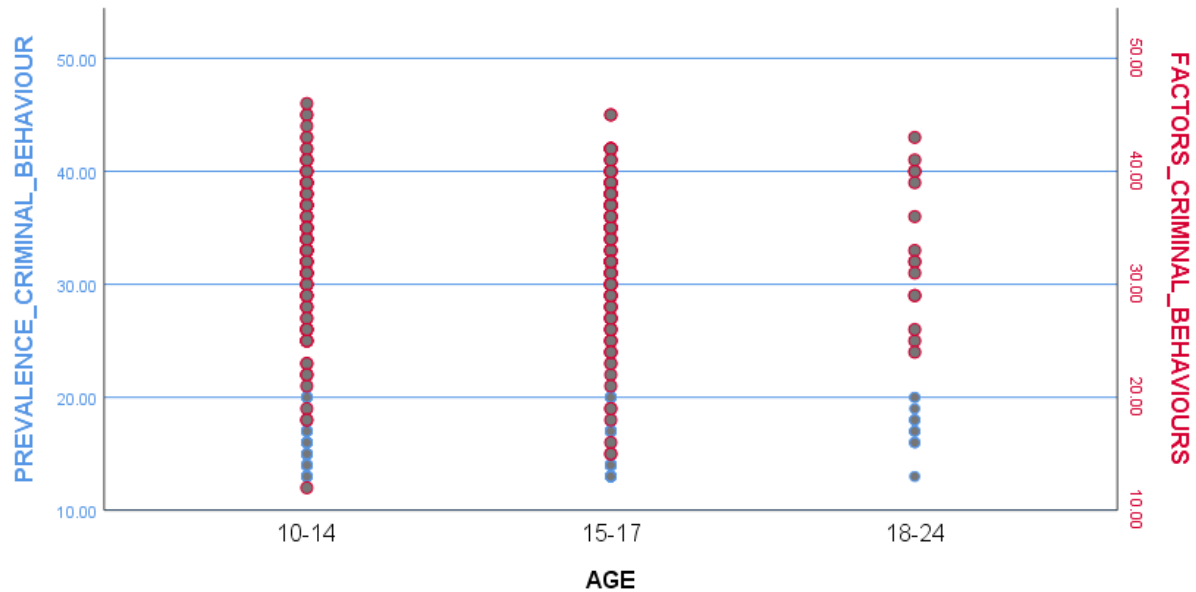
Statements	Disagree		Agree	
	F	%	F	%
Lack of education	83	26.8	227	73.2
Inadequate parental guidance	80	25.8	230	74.2
Erratic/harsh discipline at school/home	169	54.5	141	45.5
Lack of adequate supervision	112	36.1	198	63.9
Maltreatment of children, including neglect and abuse	108	34.8	202	65.2
Homelessness	84	27.1	226	72.9
Peer pressure	86	27.7	224	72.3
Rebellion against parental authority	143	46.1	167	53.9
Substance use	109	35.2	201	64.8
Income inequality	136	43.9	174	56.1
Broken marriages	142	45.8	168	54.2
Social media influence	97	31.3	213	68.7

Source: Field survey (2021)

*Total number of participants = 310

From Table 2, 11 factors were identified as relevant to the development of delinquent behaviors among JHS students. A total of 227 (73.2%) indicated that a lack of education among children was the most prevailing factor. This was followed by homelessness, with 226 (72.9%). The next factor responsible for delinquent behavior was inadequate parental guidance (230, or 74.2%). Peer pressure 224 (72.3%), social media influence 213 (68.7%), and maltreatment of children, including neglect and abuse 202 (65.2%), were the fourth, fifth, and sixth factors, respectively. Other factors responsible for the development of delinquent behaviors were substance use 201 (64.8%), lack of adequate supervision 198 (63.9%), rebellion against parental authority 167 (53.9%), income inequality 174 (56.1%), and broken marriages 168 (54.2%). The factors so mentioned were those accepted by participants as the contributing factors to tendencies and execution of delinquent behavior.

Figure 3
Causal factors and crime tendencies based on age



Source: Field Data 2021

The investigation revealed a lack of education on the part of the adolescents, homelessness, poor parenting, peer pressure, and media influence, among a host of others (Refer to Table 2). Beyond these causal factors, further investigation was done to ascertain the age group of adolescents that are often influenced by most of these causal factors. Results in Figure 3 show that adolescents within the age-range of 10–14 years were influenced by a lot of these factors in the exhibition of delinquent behaviors as compared to older adolescents and young adults (age 18–24 years). Those within the middle adolescent age group (15–17 years) were moderately influenced by fewer factors. This is to say that the factors that affected middle-year group adolescents were not as much as young adolescents or as little as aged adolescents. The data appears to suggest that as children mature, lesser influences tend to influence them to be deviant. This may be because as children age, they begin to have a more mature way of thinking that reduces their tendencies to exhibit delinquent behaviors. The finding has implications for the moral education framework within the country of Ghana.

4. DISCUSSION

The study sheds light on the prevalence of juvenile delinquency among adolescents in Ghana, in particular within the Ashaiman Municipality. The study revealed that juvenile delinquent behaviors were not prevalent among the sample. This assertion is made about the data position that respondents rarely engaged in the 13-item juvenile delinquent behavior in the community. Even though delinquent behavior is rarely seen, some petty offenses (such as taking someone else’s belongings without asking the individual in class or spending someone else’s money without permission) were reported to have been committed by a limited number (16% and 9.7%, respectively) of the respondents. The findings as indicated in this study contradict a lot of earlier studies conducted in the sub-region. As juvenile delinquency is seen as a low occurrence in Ghana, the same issue is reported at a high rate in Nigeria (Idris, 2016), Kenya (Aute, 2019), and South Africa (Gwatimba & Raselekoane, 2018; Groenewald et al., 2018; Dada, 2017). The disparities in findings may be due to variations in cultural contextual variables, which play a significant role in parenting. For example, in Ghana, demanding and responsive approaches dominate child-rearing practices within various tribes, which may not be the case in other nations in the sub-region. Baumrind’s parenting style perspectives referred to such types of parenting as authoritative parenting (Simons et al., 2005; Wright & Cullen, 2001). The success of authoritative parenting lies in the fact that it can strike a balance between control (demandingness) and support (responsiveness), which fosters children’s internalization of various norms and values that are essential to their psychosocial development (Baumrind, 1996). Authoritative

parenting has been most frequently identified in prior research as an effective parenting style to promote child development and inhibit deviant behavior (Baumrind, 1996). In this present study, male adolescents were shown to have higher probable offending tendencies, even for petty offences. Within Ghanaian cultural mix ideologies, the typical domineering free-range mentoring of boys versus a submissive style for girls is at the heart of the disparities in gender trends of delinquency.

The study further revealed that parents with a higher educational background have a higher chance of neglecting their children. Such neglect may be a possible cause of delinquent behavior among the children in subsequent years. The desire for career building and progression among the highly educated may deny them of adequate time to monitor and provide adequate care for their children at home, which may lead to problem behaviors in the years ahead. Studies have shown that juvenile offenders come from neglectful backgrounds with cumulative disadvantages in which the child's basic needs are not met (Farrington, 2010). Weak parental monitoring and ties are thus seen as the foundations of adolescent delinquent behavior (Chomczynski, 2017; Tharp & Noonan, 2012). The evidence provided in this study is in line with other factors that breed delinquent adolescent behaviors, including lack of education on the part of the adolescent, homelessness, poor parenting, peer pressure, media influence, and so on. As a person advances in age, these factors tend to diminish in their influence on an individual's propensity to commit crime (possibly because of increased knowledge of the consequences of some of the factors). These factors were surprising because most of these factors are social variables that provide an atmosphere for nurturing the adolescent both cognitively and morally. For example, the school provides an avenue for intellectual and moral training through the implementation of a codified curriculum to meet the holistic developmental needs of the individual.

Again, the family as a social structure performs the role of parenting that safeguards child monitoring, care, and the eradication of streetism (Kuntsche & Kuntsche, 2016). The family also provides the first socialisation in which values and morals are transmitted (Suharsono et al., 2009; Lestari 2016). Therefore, family members, especially parents, have a role in shaping adolescents' behavior through social contact. However, evidence of a lack of parental guidance is a factor that leads to juvenile adolescent delinquency. In this direction, the finding aligns with studies that show that low parental monitoring is associated with an increased likelihood of engagement with different forms of deviant behavior (Keogh-Clark et al., 2021; Muchiri & Dos Santos, 2018; Marceau et al., 2020). Adolescents largely depend on information from peers and the media (both traditional and social) to direct their personal lives. If these adolescents are not solidified with home-based morals, they tend to be lured by the negativities of online media information and peers. For example, studies showed that higher levels of social media use among adolescents are associated with more frequent engagement in drug use, risky sexual acts, and violent behavior with a small-to-medium magnitude of effect (Vannucci et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2021). Teenagers tend to turn to their friends whenever they feel unsatisfied with their family (Shong et al., 2019). At this stage, friends become the strongest support in a teenager's life; thus, getting friends' approval on many things remains an utmost priority. The factors so discussed emphasize the essence of building the two most important social structures (school and family) to serve as drivers of good morals to eradicate adolescent delinquency, which may be a recipe for national security disaster.

5. CONCLUSION

The significance of our study emphasizes the prevalence of delinquency and the factors that build up such behavior among adolescents. It was clear that delinquent behavior was not common among the adolescents in the community that was investigated. Even though delinquent behavior was not frequent among the sample, the study showed evidence of male adolescents having a higher tendency to be delinquent than female adolescents. Adolescents under the care of parents with higher educational backgrounds were found to be at risk of developing delinquent behavior. The obvious reason may be due to the career-building interests among parents with higher education backgrounds that often hinder quality care for their wards. The findings imply that over-emphasis on education, career building, and progression among the adult population with less regard to quality time of care

for the adolescent population can be detrimental to the quality of training of the adolescent child (especially for males) and national security as a whole. Failure to put children into schools, which often happens due to neglect and abuse (economic), as well as broken homes, peer pressure, and social media influence, are known building blocks for criminal behavior among adolescents' children. The findings of the study recommend proactive child-rearing practices for male adolescents different from those for females. The spotlight of this approach will ensure that every aspect of the adolescent's behavior is monitored and mentored. The research discourages family settings that focus primarily on career building and education, to the neglect of home-craft moral training. That is, adequate time should be allotted for adolescent home monitoring to prevent the breeding of delinquent behavior. This may reduce crime within communities and the nation as a whole.

Parents' and teachers' roles in the provision of primary behavioral guidance cannot be overemphasized. Even though the study provides evidence for the low occurrence of delinquent behaviors among adolescent students in the study setting, it is nevertheless imperative for stakeholders (such as parents, teachers, school psychologists, and counselors) to implement a range of social and educational models hinged on delinquency prevention. Setting the home and school environment free from violent behavior is key for dealing with delinquent adolescent behavior. Parents and teachers should be bothered and be interested in the cyber content of what their children watch and read. This is premised on the observational learning principle that children often learn from what they observe in the environment. Parents, especially those with higher education backgrounds, should devote adequate time out of their busy schedules to the proper molding of their children. Setting an appropriate home and school environment with social anchors such as social mentors, school club advisors, academic advisors, and school counselors establishes a social and situational framework for dealing with emerging delinquent adolescent behavioral tendencies. Delinquency behavior prevention through social development programs (such as school guidance services) and individual treatment mechanisms is necessary in promoting social mentorship and a lower societal rate of crime.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval: The study adheres to the ethical guidelines for conducting research.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

REFERENCES

- Aebi, M., Barra, S., Bessler, C., Steinhausen, H. C., Walitza, S., & Plattner, B. (2016). Oppositional defiant disorder dimensions and subtypes among detained male adolescent offenders. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry*, 57(6), 729-736. <https://acamh.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jcpp.12473>
- Ame, R. K. (2018). The origins of the contemporary juvenile justice system in Ghana. *Journal of Family History*, 43(4), 394-408. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0363199018798099>
- Asscher, J. J., Deković, M., Van den Akker, A. L., Prins, P. J., & Van der Laan, P. H. (2018). Do extremely violent juveniles respond differently to treatment?. *International journal of offender therapy and comparative criminology*, 62(4), 958-977. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0306624X16670951>
- Aute, D. A. (2019). Secure parental attachment and deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Homabay County-Kenya. *Science Journal of Education*, 7(6), 127-133.
- Ayete-Nyampong, L. (2012). Situating CRC implementation processes in the Local contexts of correctional institutions for children in conflict with the law in Ghana. In *children's rights in Ghana: Reality or rhetoric?* edited by Robert Kwame Ame, DeBrenna LaFa Agbényiga, and Nana Araba Apt. London: Mot Juste.
- Barrett, D. E., & Katsiyannis, A. (2016). Juvenile offending and crime in early adulthood: A large sample analysis. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 25, 1086-1097. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10826-015-0304-6>
- Baumrind, D. (1996). The discipline controversy revisited. *Family relations*, 405-414. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/585170>
- Boakye, A. O. (2012). *Juvenile delinquency in Ghana: A qualitative study of the lived experiences of young offenders in Accra* (Master's thesis, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, Fakultet for samfunnsvitenskap og teknologiledelse, Psykologisk institutt). <https://ntnuopen.ntnu.no/ntnu-xmlui/handle/11250/270842>

- Amponsah, M.O. (2025). Prevalence and determinants of juvenile delinquency in Ghana. *Global Journal of Sociology: Current Issues*, 14(2), 122-135. <https://doi.org/10.18844/gjis.v14i2.9622>
- Boering, A., Groenman, A. P., van Dam, L., & Overbeek, G. (2024). Effectiveness, working mechanisms, and implementation of youth-initiated mentoring for juvenile delinquents: a multiple-methods study protocol. *Health & justice*, 12(1), 5. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40352-024-00258-9>
- Bolu-Steve, F. N., & Esere, M. O. (2017). Strategies for managing deviant behaviour among in-school adolescents as expressed by secondary school counsellors in Kwara State, Nigeria. *Inkanyiso: Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 9(1), 87-98. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijhss/article/view/165513>
- Chomczyński, P. (2017). Emotion work in the context of the resocialization of youth in correctional facilities in Poland. *Polish Sociological Review*, 198(2), 219-235. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=570774>
- Chomczyński, P. A., & Guy, R. (2021). 'Our biographies are the same': Juvenile work in Mexican drug trafficking organizations from the perspective of a collective trajectory. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 61(4), 946-964. <https://academic.oup.com/bjc/article-abstract/61/4/946/6067284>
- Craig, J. M., Piquero, A. R., & Farrington, D. P. (2020). Not all at-risk boys have bad outcomes: Predictors of later life success. *Crime & Delinquency*, 66(3), 392-419. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0011128719854344>
- Dada, S. (2017). *Own Analysis of the 2016 SACENDU Data on the Total Number of Patients Admitted for the Period January to December 2016: July–December 2016 (Research Brief)*. Cape Town: Medical Research Council.
- Dako-Gyeke, M., Adam, A., & Mills, A. A. (2022). The quagmire of juvenile delinquency: Perspectives of inmates and officers in a correctional facility in Accra, Ghana. *Deviant Behavior*, 43(2), 241-257. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01639625.2020.1808770>
- Duck, W. (2016). Becoming a drug dealer: Local interaction orders and criminal careers. *Critical Sociology*, 42(7-8), 1069-1085. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0896920514552534>
- Eidson, J. L., Roman, C. G., & Cahill, M. (2017). Successes and challenges in recruiting and retaining gang members in longitudinal research: Lessons learned from a multisite social network study. *Youth violence and juvenile justice*, 15(4), 396-418. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1541204016657395>
- Farrington, D. P. (2010). Family influences on delinquency. *Juvenile justice and delinquency*, 10, 203-222. http://samples.jblearning.com/9780763760564/60564_CH10_Springer.pdf
- Groenewald, C., Khumalo, S., & Essack, Z. (2018). Speaking through pictures: Canvassing adolescent risk behaviours in a semi-rural community in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. *South African Journal of Child Health*, 2018(1), s57- s62. <https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.7196/SAJCH.2018.v12i2.1514>
- Gwatimba, L., & Raselekoane, N. R. (2018). An evaluation of the effectiveness of diversion programmes in the rehabilitation of the youth and the promotion of juvenile justice in South Africa. *Gender and Behaviour*, 16(1), 11168-11181. <https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.10520/EJC-fe24bbae6>
- Hamilton, C., Anderson, K., Barnes, R., & Dorling, K. (2011). Administrative detention of children: a global report. <https://orbilu.uni.lu/bitstream/10993/50029/1/MUZZI%2C%20M%20%282011%29%20Administrative%20detention%20discussion%20paper.pdf>
- Huang, Y., & McKeown, S. (2022). Examining the association between family environment and adolescent delinquent behaviours in China. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 31(10), 2871-2884. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10826-022-02348-4>
- Hung, J. (2024). *Left-Behind Children's Juvenile Delinquency and Substance Abuse in China*. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-981-97-2162-7.pdf>
- Idris, O. (2016). Causes of deviant behaviour among in-school adolescents in Lagos. *Unpublished M. Ed Project submitted to the department of educational foundation, Lagos State University*.
- Jansen, H., & Hak, T. (2005). The productivity of the three-step test-interview (TSTI) compared to an expert review of a self-administered questionnaire on alcohol consumption. *Journal of Official Statistics: an international quarterly*, 21(1), 103-120. <https://repub.eur.nl/pub/20960/>
- Keogh-Clark, F., Whaley, R. C., Leventhal, A. M., & Krueger, E. A. (2021). Sex differences in the association between parental monitoring and substance use initiation among adolescents. *Addictive Behaviors*, 122, 107024. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0306460321002094>
- Kraemer, H. C., & Kupfer, D. J. (2006). Size of treatment effects and their importance to clinical research and practice. *Biological Psychiatry*, 59(11), 990-996. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006322305012102>
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and psychological measurement*, 30(3), 607-610. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/001316447003000308>

- Amponsah, M.O. (2025). Prevalence and determinants of juvenile delinquency in Ghana. *Global Journal of Sociology: Current Issues*, 14(2), 122-135. <https://doi.org/10.18844/gjs.v14i2.9622>
- Kuntsche, S., & Kuntsche, E. (2016). Parent-based interventions for preventing or reducing adolescent substance use—A systematic literature review. *Clinical psychology review*, 45, 89-101. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0272735815300465>
- Lau, W. W., & Yuen, A. H. (2013). Adolescents' risky online behaviours: The influence of gender, religion, and parenting style. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(6), 2690-2696. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563213002434>
- Leaw, J. N., Ang, R. P., Huan, V. S., Chan, W. T., & Cheong, S. A. (2015). Re-examining of Moffitt's theory of delinquency through agent-based modeling. *PLoS one*, 10(6), e0126752. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0126752>
- Lestari, S. (2016). *Psikologi keluarga: Penanaman nilai dan penanaman konflik dalam keluarga*. Prenada Media. [https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=4VDODwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Lestari,+S.+\(2016\).+Psikologi+Keluarga:+Penanaman+Nilai+dan+Penanaman+Konflik+dalam+Keluarga.+Kencana:+Prenada+Media.&ots=TgsTOzZr1f&sig=0o13ISCVv4kFkFAAM5xZRxgzGY](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=4VDODwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Lestari,+S.+(2016).+Psikologi+Keluarga:+Penanaman+Nilai+dan+Penanaman+Konflik+dalam+Keluarga.+Kencana:+Prenada+Media.&ots=TgsTOzZr1f&sig=0o13ISCVv4kFkFAAM5xZRxgzGY)
- Loveline, Y., & Jaja, N. D. (2020). Domestic Violence and the Development of Anti-Social Behaviours among Adolescent Students in the South West Region of Cameroon. *Noble International Journal of Social Sciences Research*, 5(8), 114-134. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/nap/nijssr/2020p114-134.html>
- Luther, A. W., Leatherdale, S. T., Dubin, J. A., & Ferro, M. A. (2024). Classifying patterns of delinquent behaviours and experiences of victimization: a latent class analysis among children. In *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 53(3), 693-717. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10566-023-09767-4>
- MacLeod, J. F., Grove, P., & Farrington, D. (2012). *Explaining criminal careers: Implications for justice policy*. Oxford University Press. <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/33482>
- Marceau, K., Nair, N., Rogers, M. L., & Jackson, K. M. (2020). Liability in parent-and child-based sources of parental monitoring is differentially associated with adolescent substance use. *Prevention science*, 21(4), 568-579. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11121-020-01094-7>
- Marchuk, I. (2014). The fundamental concept of crime in international criminal law. *A Comparative Analysis, Berlin-Heidelberg*. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-3-642-28246-1.pdf>
- Mathews, S., Abrahams, N., Martin, L. J., Lombard, C., & Jewkes, R. (2019). Homicide pattern among adolescents: A national epidemiological study of child homicide in South Africa. *PLoS One*, 14(8), e0221415. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0221415>
- McWhirter, J. J., McWhirter, B. T., McWhirter, A. M., & McWhirter, E. H. (1993). *At-risk youth: A comprehensive response*. Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishing Co. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1993-97916-000>
- Moffitt, T. E. (2017). Life-course-persistent versus adolescence-limited antisocial behavior. In *Developmental and life-course criminological theories* (pp. 75-103). Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315094908-4/life-course-persistent-versus-adolescence-limited-antisocial-behavior-terrie-moffitt>
- Muchiri, B. W., & Dos Santos, M. M. (2018). Family management risk and protective factors for adolescent substance use in South Africa. *Substance abuse treatment, prevention, and policy*, 13, 1-10. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s13011-018-0163-4>
- Oni, A. A. (2010). PEER GROUP PRESSURE AS A DETERMINANT OF ADOLESCENT SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS. *Journal of Educators & Education/Jurnal Pendidik dan Pendidikan*, 25. [http://eprints.usm.my/34589/1/APJEE_25_11_Adesoji_\(189-202\).pdf](http://eprints.usm.my/34589/1/APJEE_25_11_Adesoji_(189-202).pdf)
- Pękala, K., Kacprzak, A., Pękala-Wojciechowska, A., Chomczyński, P., Olszewski, M., Marczak, M., ... & Rasmus, P. (2021). Risk factors of early adolescence in the criminal career of Polish offenders in the light of life course theory. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(12), 6583. <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/18/12/6583>
- Roubinov, D. S., & Boyce, W. T. (2017). Parenting and SES: relative values or enduring principles? *Current opinion in psychology*, 15, 162-167. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352250X16301518>
- Shaw, C. R., & McKay, H. D. (2010). Juvenile delinquency and urban areas: A study of rates of delinquency in relation to differential characteristics of local communities in American cities (1969). In *Classics in environmental criminology* (pp. 103-140). Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781439817803-9/juvenile-delinquency-urban-areas-study-rates-delinquency-relation-differential-characteristics-local-communities-american-cities-1969-shaw-mckay>

- Amponsah, M.O. (2025). Prevalence and determinants of juvenile delinquency in Ghana. *Global Journal of Sociology: Current Issues*, 14(2), 122-135. <https://doi.org/10.18844/gjs.v14i2.9622>
- Shong, T. S., Abu Bakar, S. H., & Islam, M. R. (2019). Poverty and delinquency: A qualitative study on selected juvenile offenders in Malaysia. *International social work*, 62(2), 965-979. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0020872818756172>
- Silva, M. C. D., Cruz, A. P. M., & Teixeira, M. O. (2021). Depression, anxiety, and drug usage history indicators among institutionalized juvenile offenders of Brasilia. *Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica*, 34, 17. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10566-023-09767-4>
<https://www.scielo.br/j/prc/a/d5XPVM6QVLTjXywyBGFZzq/?format=html&lang=en>
- Simons, R. L., Simons, L. G., Burt, C. H., Brody, G. H., & Cutrona, C. (2005). Collective efficacy, authoritative parenting and delinquency: A longitudinal test of a model integrating community-and family-level processes. *Criminology*, 43(4), 989-1029. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2005.00031.x>
- Soothill, K., Fitzpatrick, C., & Francis, B. (2013). *Understanding criminal careers*. Willan. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781843927105/understanding-criminal-careers-keith-soothill-claire-fitzpatrick-brian-francis>
- Steinberg, L. (2009). Adolescent development and juvenile justice. *Annual review of clinical psychology*, 5(1), 459-485. <https://www.annualreviews.org/content/journals/10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.032408.153603>
- Suharsono, J. T., Fitriyani, A., & Upoyo, A. S. (2009). Hubungan pola asuh orang tua terhadap kemampuan sosialisasi pada anak prasekolah di TK Pertiwi Purwokerto Utara. *Jurnal keperawatan soedirman*, 4(3), 112-118. <https://jks.fikes.unsoed.ac.id/index.php/jks/article/view/239>
- TE, M. (2001). Childhood predictors differentiate life-course persistent and adolescence-limited antisocial pathways among males and females. *Development and Psychopathology*, 13(2), 355-375. <https://elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=6552326>
- Tharp, A. T., & Noonan, R. K. (2012). Associations between three characteristics of parent–youth relationships, youth substance use, and dating attitudes. *Health promotion practice*, 13(4), 515-523. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1524839910386220>
- Thornberry, T. P., Krohn, M. D., Lizotte, A. J., & Chard-Wierschem, D. (1993). The role of juvenile gangs in facilitating delinquent behavior. *Journal of research in Crime and Delinquency*, 30(1), 55-87. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0022427893030001005>
- UNICEF. (2019). Adolescents overview. Available online: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/adolescents/overview/>
- Van Koppen, M. V. (2018). Criminal career dimensions of juvenile-and adult-onset offenders. *Journal of developmental and life-course criminology*, 4, 92-119. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40865-017-0074-5>
- Vannucci, A., Simpson, E. G., Gagnon, S., & Ohannessian, C. M. (2020). Social media use and risky behaviors in adolescents: A meta-analysis. *Journal of adolescence*, 79, 258-274. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140197120300142>
- Wright, J. P., & Cullen, F. T. (2001). Parental efficacy and delinquent behavior: Do control and support matter?. *Criminology*, 39(3), 677-706. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2001.tb00937.x>
- Xie, Q., Bi, T., Du, Y., Kou, H., & Yang, B. (2020). Childhood maltreatment is associated with aggression among male juvenile delinquents in China: The mediating effects of callous-unemotional traits and self-control. *Frontiers in psychology*, 11, 1373. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01373/full>