

# Unveiling the Views and Experience of Juvenile Delinquents: Toward Understanding the Nature of Juvenile Delinquency

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## Abstract

*This is a qualitative type of research that used a combination of phenomenological approach and case study method in unveiling the profile, views and experiences of the juvenile delinquents. It hopes to contribute to the current literature on guidance and counseling and to provide meaningful inputs on juvenile. Data were gathered through individual interviews with the use of validated questionnaire. The participants of this study are males, aged 16 to 18 years old, single, have reached high school level, and belonging to families with 4 to 5 members. Most of their offenses were rape and murder. Their fathers have not finished studies, whose occupations are mostly blue collar jobs. Their mothers, on the other hand, are high school graduates who are plain housewives. Before committing offense most the participants were not attending school, were constantly involved with their peers, and were earning a living. After committing offense, the participants feel guilty, disappointed, unhappy, distressed and confused. Factors that have led the participants to commit an offense were peer pressure, alcohol use, impulsive behavior, financial problem, media influence, and absentee parent. Lastly, the participants have learned values despite their experiences on the justice system. Six of them viewed the justice system of the country as slow, complicated and unfair, while four of them viewed the justice system as good.*

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**Key words:** Delinquency, juvenile

## INTRODUCTION

Almost no day passes without the appearance of various reports carrying a story of a crime committed by a juvenile, which receives great attention from the media. According to the Office of Juvenile and Delinquency Prevention, there are about 75 million juvenile in the United States; this population is likely to increase until 2015. The Federal Interagency on Child and Family Statistics reported that the number of juveniles might reach 101.6 million by 2050. If the juvenile delinquent rates continue to increase, this would translate into thousands of more juvenile delinquents. Based on the records of the Philippine National Police, crimes involving juvenile rose in 2008, totaling 2,158 cases, which included theft, drug use, rape and murder. In the 2009 annual reports of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, there were 2,959 children in conflict with the law in the community and center-based programs of the department.

In the Philippines, there were specific set of laws and rules in dealing with juvenile delinquents. According to Undersecretary Alicia R. Bala who chaired the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council in the country, there is still an increase in the incidence of juvenile delinquents in the Philippines these past few years. This may be because of the insufficient understanding of the juvenile delinquents and the unsatisfactory interventions made to them. Bala explained that most juvenile delinquents are neglected, lack parental love and need proper guidance. Most of the juveniles come from indigent and dysfunctional families, whose parents are jobless or separated, or their environment is filled with misconduct.

People are concerned over juvenile delinquents due to the belief that “today’s delinquent is tomorrow’s criminal”. Once a juvenile commits heinous offenses, people ask a lot of questions. Why did he/she do it? What is the profile of the juvenile? What are the factors that motivated the juvenile to commit the offense? These are the questions which demand clear answers. These questions challenged the researcher to pursue this study.

### **Juvenile, Juvenile Delinquent and Juvenile Delinquency**

**Juvenile.** A juvenile is a young person who is not yet old enough to be regarded as an adult. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (1998), thousands of juveniles are arrested for serious violent crimes every year. In 1997, roughly 76,000 juveniles were arrested for the serious crimes of murder, rape, robbery, and aggressive assault. Rosenheim (2002) defined juvenile as an individual who is not old enough to be held responsible for immoral acts. In most states, juvenile age is set at 18 years. Juveniles are treated and dealt with separately from adult offenders.

**Juvenile delinquent.** A juvenile delinquent is a person who is underage, usually below 18 years, who is found to have committed a crime in states where it has been declared that a minor lacks responsibility, and thus, may not be sentenced as an adult. It is categorized as a mental disorder or a behavioral issue, such as antisocial personality disorder, and sometimes diagnosed with conduct disorder partially as both the cause and resulting effects of their behaviors (Holmes, James & Javad, 2001).

**Juvenile delinquency.** Juvenile delinquency is the child’s consistency in behavior that falls toward the extreme-right end of each continuum. He or she has committed many offenses of a more serious nature over an extended period of time (Barlow & Ferdinand, 1992). Siegel (1992) defined juvenile delinquency as juvenile offending or youth crime. It is a participation in illegal behavior by minors, individual younger than the statutory age of majority. Juvenile delinquency can take many forms, including vandalism, political deviance, substance use, etc. (Boehnke and Bergs-Winkels, 2002). Span (2002) observed juvenile delinquency as the antisocial behavior of a minor, which is in violation of the general welfare of people in a larger society.

### **Factors in a Juvenile’s Life**

**Family.** The family is the basic social institution that provides support, love and affection to its members. It is the first institution where children learn to socialize in preparation for participation outside the primary group (Roman & Roman, 2006). It is within the family unit that the juveniles receive most of their knowledge on how to interact with other people and with their society. According to Sampson and Laub (1997), the juvenile who least likely to turn to delinquency are those who feel they are loved, identify with their

parents, and respect their parents' wishes. Smith and Stern (1997) concluded in their study that children who grow up in homes characterized by lack of warmth and support, whose parents lack behavior management skills, and whose lives are characterized by conflicts or maltreatment, will more likely be delinquent. In contrast, a supportive family can protect children even in a very hostile and damaging external environment. Inadequate parenting is among the strongest predictors of juvenile involvement in crime. A crime prevention research stresses that the kind of parenting behavior or family environment determines the risk of juvenile involvement in crime. If poor parenting truly increases the risk of involvement in crime, it could be possible to reduce that risk by improving the quality of parenting (Yoshikawa, 1994). An inadequate family dynamic caused by poor parental practices, such as the lack of supervision, rules that are too permissive, discipline that is inconsistent or too strict, a weak bond, and the inability to establish clear boundaries, were identified as strong risk factors for delinquent behavior (Lacourse, et al, 2006). According to Ellis (1998), a large number of children in the family is a relatively strong and highly replicable predictor of delinquency. Drezon and Lipsey (2000) believed that poor parenting skills, family size, home conflict, child maltreatment, and antisocial parents are risk factors linked to juvenile delinquency.

According to Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1986), there were parenting factors known to be related to delinquency that can be usefully grouped into four categories. The first category involves factors associated with parental neglect such as large family size, poor parental supervision, and inadequate parent-child interaction. Factors associated with parental conflict and discipline such as abuse or nagging, harsh, and erratic or inconsistent discipline fall under the second category. Comprising the third category are factors associated with deviant parental behaviors and attitudes such as parental criminality, parental violence or tolerance of violence. The last category includes those associated with family disruption such as chronic spousal conflict or marriage break-up. Lober, Farrington, and Petechuk's (2003) studies show that having a father, mother, brother or sister who displays criminal behavior is a significant risk factor for delinquent behavior in boys.

According to Simons, Simons and Wallace (2004), there is evidence to state that single-parent families, especially single-mothers, expect less of their children, spend less time monitoring them and use less effective techniques to discipline them. Children in such single-parent homes are more likely to participate in delinquency. Solo parents have difficulty in finding the time to monitor, supervise, and discipline because they find it hard to prioritize their children's needs above other life demands. Overall, this means that children have greater opportunities and motivation to participate in delinquent acts than those living in a two-parent family. Hence, the absence of one parent is a major predictor for juvenile delinquency.

According to Farrington (2006), boys from broken homes are more at risk of engaging in delinquent behavior than boys whose parents are still together, but they are no more at risk than boys whose parents are still together but who come from conflicting family environments. Turner, Hartman, and Bishop (2007) concluded that young children who live in underprivileged areas and grow up in families in which parental supervision is lacking are at risk of engaging in delinquent behavior as adolescents. Juvenile in poor, single-parent families are more likely to experience chronic psychological distress, to engage in health-compromising behavior including drug and alcohol use, cigarette smoking, and unprotected sex, to perform less well academically, to be expelled or suspended from school, to drop

out of school, to suffer from mental illness, to commit suicide, to have trouble getting along with peers, and to start their own single-parent households (Regoli & Hewitt 2000).

Based on the research conducted by Rosenbaum (1989), children from single-parent families are more likely to become delinquent than children from two-parent families. Furthermore, Edward Wells and Joseph Rankin's analysis of 50 studies led them to conclude that the effect of single-parent family on delinquency is real and consistent, but of relatively low magnitude. The effect is greater for minor offenses, and weaker for serious offenses. Research conducted by Texas Youth Commission (2006) shows that a juvenile's family setting is one of the most influential factors in the juvenile's life. Based on their research, single-parent homes are more likely to become involved in delinquent behavior. The environment within a juvenile's home also has an important effect on his/her behavior. The family environment determines how well a juvenile and his/her parents get along or how well a juvenile's parents get along with each other. A 1998 United States longitudinal study tracking over 6,400 boys for over 20 years found that juvenile who grew up without their biological father in the home were about three times more likely to commit a crime that led to imprisonment than juvenile from intact families (Harper & McLanahan, 1998). Larson, Sawyers and Larson (1995) have found that juvenile of separated parents are up to six times more likely to be delinquent than children from intact families. On the other hand, according to Hawkins, et. Al. (1998), juvenile from broken homes or single parent homes are more likely to become involved in delinquent behaviors (Hawkins et al, 1998).

**Education.** Another factor that plays an important role in a juvenile's life is education. Education influences on juvenile development, along with family and other factors can shape many juvenile senses of opportunity and self-worth. Absenteeism is another very strong predictor of involvement in crime. Juveniles, who are truant, generally do poorly in school. It is possible that non-attendance is associated with delinquency only because of its association with poor school performance. There is some evidence that suggests, however, that non-attendance remains associated with juvenile involvement in crime (Glueck & Glueck, 1950). School dropouts and poor academic performers exhibit a higher incidence of delinquency and crime than graduates and academic achievers. Education is considered to be one of the stepping stones towards success (Blair & Balir, 1999). According to Hawkins, et. Al. (1998), the juveniles who are not committed to school are more likely to become involved in delinquent behaviors.

**Peer Influences.** Several studies have found a consistent relationship between involvement in a delinquent peer group and delinquent behavior. Lipsey and Derzon (1998) noted that for youth ages 12 to 14, a key predictor variable for delinquency is the presence of antisocial peers. According to McCord, Widom, and Crwell (2001), factors such as peer delinquent behavior, peer approval of delinquent behavior, attachment or loyalty to peers, time spent with peers, and peer pressure for deviance have all been associated with adolescent antisocial behavior. Juveniles are most likely to form strong attachments to delinquent peers when parental controls or parental attachments are weak. This suggests that parental factors may be a distal cause of involvement in crime, association with delinquent peers being a proximate cause. It used to be thought that juveniles who mix with delinquent peers are more at risk of involvement in crime simply because delinquents communicate deviant attitudes and values. Recent research indicates that contact with offenders is important for another reason (Bruinsma, 1992).

**Gangs.** According to Thrasher, gang is a friendship group of adolescents who share common interests, with an almost clearly defined territory, in which most of the members live. They are committed to defending one another, the territory, and the gang name in the status-setting fights that occur in school and on the streets. Walter Miller (1980) defined gang as a self-forming association of peers, bound together by mutual interest, with identifiable leadership, well-developed lines of authority, and other organizational features, who act in concert to achieve a specific purpose or purposes which generally include the conduct of illegal activity and control over a particular territory, facility, or type of enterprise. A study conducted by Wolfgang, Thornberry, and Figlio (1987) have shown that juvenile gang members consider their group a family. For adolescents constantly facing violence, belonging to a gang can provide protection within the neighborhood. In some areas, those who are not involved in gangs continually face the threat of assault, oppression, harassment or extortion on the street or at school. Gang involvement is one of the factors which is strongly related to juvenile delinquent behavior. Gang membership is associated not only with delinquent behavior, but with victimization as well. Peterson, Taylor, and Esbensen (2004) found that the most common reason juveniles give for joining a gang is for the purpose of protection.

**Drugs.** Drugs are important factors to consider when describing juvenile delinquency. Not only is using drugs itself a delinquent behavior, but it can also lead to other delinquent behavior. According to the Texas Department of State Health Services 2001 (DSHS), 91% of the juvenile delinquents in Texas have reported using illegal drugs at some point in their lives and that 84% used illegal drugs in the past year. Forty six percent of the juveniles admitted to Texas Youth Commission in 2006 were chemically dependent. Drug offenses were the second most common offense among both males and females who were admitted to Texas Youth Commission in 2006. Violent crimes are also committed by people under the influence of drugs. According to the National Institute of Justice Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) Program analysis of arrestees in 23 cities in the United States, approximately 60 percent of those arrested for homicide and 54 percent arrested for assault tested positive for recent drug use other than alcohol. Moreover, 25 percent of inmates in federal prisons and 28 percent of inmates in state prisons reported being under the influence of drugs at the time of their violent offense. The Drug Use Forecasting program also interviewed more than 4,000 juvenile males who are arrested and detained in 12 cities in 1996. Approximately 52% of the youths tested positive for marijuana compared to only 42% the previous year. Youths testing positive for cocaine increased from 10 percent in 1995 to 13 percent in 1996. Drugs are an important factor to consider when describing juvenile offenders (Ontario Provincial Police, 2005).

**Age.** The prevalence of involvement in crime typically rises from late adolescence, reaches a peak in the late teenage years and then begins to decline (Farrington, 1986). Juvenile arrest rates tend to increase steadily by age, with the highest arrest rates for most crimes occurring when juveniles are 16-18 years of age. Violent crime rates increase dramatically in the 15-17 age group. However, there is a substantial number of youth who are arrested for crimes at considerably younger ages (Snyder, 1999). Data reported by the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (2004) show that most juvenile delinquency occurs when juveniles are in their mid-teens. The average age of those juveniles referred to Texas Juvenile Probation Commission in 2004 was approximately 15 years.

**Gender.** Gender is another characteristic that is used to describe juvenile delinquency. In the research conducted by Valdez (2007), it is shown that males tend to commit more delinquent acts than females; however, the number of females who are involved in delinquent behavior has continued to rise. Based on the report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), delinquency is primarily a male phenomenon. Boys are arrested three times more often than girls. Males are five times more likely to be arrested for a violent crime and about three times more likely to be arrested for a property crime than females. Boys raised without their fathers were more than twice as likely to end up in jail as those raised with their fathers, while 70% of imprisoned adults come from single-parent homes (Georgia Supreme Court Commission on Children, Marriage and Family Law, 2004). Males are more likely to commit crime than females, at least where serious crime is concerned (Blumstein, Cohen, Roth, & Visher, 1986). The ratio of male to female participation in crime varies by offense but one recent Australian study found ratios averaging around 2:1 (Baker, 1998). In 2006, arrests of boys represented more than 70% of all juvenile arrests (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).

**Media.** According to the American Psychological Association (1993), they have concluded that young people who watch violence tend to behave more aggressively or violently, particularly when provoked. This is mainly a characteristic of 8 to 12 year-old boys, who are more vulnerable to such influences. The media bring an individual to violence in three ways. First, movies that demonstrate violent acts excite spectators, and the aggressive energy can then be transferred to everyday life, pushing an individual to engage in physical activity on the streets. This type of influence is temporary, lasting from several hours to several days. Second, television can portray ordinary daily violence committed by parents or peers through the imposition of penalties for failing to study or for violations of certain rules or norms of conduct. It is impossible to find television shows that do not portray such patterns of violence, because viewers' approval of this type of programming has ensured its perpetuation. As a result, children are continually exposed to the use of violence in different situations. Further, the number of violent acts on television appears to be increasing. Third, violence depicted in the media is unreal and has a surrealistic quality; wounds bleed less, and the real pain and agony resulting from violent actions are very rarely shown, so the consequences of violent behavior often seem negligible. Over time, television causes a shift in the system of human values and indirectly leads children to view violence as a desirable and even courageous way of reestablishing justice.

### **Characteristics of the Juvenile Delinquent in the Philippines (Based on the 2004 report of the Save the Children UK)**

To illustrate a richer picture of the juvenile delinquent in the Philippines, the present investigation extracted relevant demographic data (sex, age, education, families, and poverty) from the *Save the Children UK (2004)*.

**Sex.** Based on the findings from the 2004 report of the Save the Children UK, all the studies show that more boys than girls come into conflict with the law. In the Cebu study, police records in 1999-2001 revealed that the majority of children arrested were boys (79%). In Davao City, of the 497 arrested by the police (January-June 2002), the majority (83%) were also boys. These findings were corroborated by the Metro Manila study, which found that the majority (89%) of the 706 children in conflict with the law handled by the Family

Courts in 2001-2002 were boys. Boys also dominated the prisons, with 95% in Cebu in 1999-2001 and 91% in Davao as of November 2002.

**Age.** The average age of children arrested in Cebu City over the study period was 14.4 years. Very few children below the age of 14 years were held in custody and the proportion of older children in custody increases with age. In Davao, children as young as 5 or 6 were rounded up and were then handed over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

**Education.** Majority of the children in the studies have reached Grade 6. In the case of Metro Manila and Davao, 38% and 36%, respectively, have been in high school. In Cebu, 8 out of 10 were out of school at the time of the offense while in Metro Manila, majority have dropped out by the age of 14. Few children had no formal education at all. According to the Cebu study, children stopped schooling because of the lack of financial support or because of peer influence.

**Families.** Children in conflict with the law in Metro Manila usually come from families with an average of seven members. About half (47%) of children in conflict with the law covered by the study lived with parents, 30% with the mother alone and only 5% with non-relatives. The Metro Manila study also revealed that 20% of the children in conflict with the law had fathers who were unemployed and the average monthly income per family was Php 5,530. In Cebu, majority of the children in conflict with the law covered by the study had parents who were alive and were living together. However, 60% of the children were not living with their parents when arrested.

**Poverty.** Poverty is a major factor in relation to juvenile delinquency and is at the root of survival offending. Survival offending involves committing a violation or offense while in the process of carrying out one's livelihood or in the act of survival. Violation of laws against peddling or selling goods on the street, or against littering, as well as, petty thieving are examples of survival offending. Poverty is one of the factors invariably linked to children's vulnerability and one of the tipping factors in producing domestic violence. All these, put together, contribute significantly to putting juvenile at risk and to pushing them to live outside their homes and among their gang or peer group or to running away from home altogether. These situations seem to dramatically increase the chance of offending. Based on the 2004 report of the Save the Children UK in the Philippines, 84.5 million population in 2002 live below the government's set poverty line of Php 38 per person per day. In the studies conducted by the IBON Foundation using government data, it is estimated that 77% of the people are not earning enough to maintain a decent standard of living and that it is even worse in rural areas where almost all 92% of rural families are poor. Figures from the National Statistics Office's Family Income and Expenditure Survey (2000) presents a more distinct picture of poverty and the dismal state of Filipino children: 27% of homes have no electricity; 20% have no access to safe drinking water; about 33% of family heads are unemployed or under-employed as of January 2002, 10% of the total workforce, or 3.4 million, were unemployed; 15% of families have working children; and 16% and 42% of those with children aged 6-12 and 13-16, respectively, are not able to send their children to school.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The present study hopes to contribute to the current literature on juvenile delinquency as it aims to unveil the views and experiences of those youngsters who fell in the category of juvenile delinquents. Specifically, this study seeks to describe the participants' experiences before and after committing offense and the factors that led them to commit an offense. It is also a target of this study to elicit the participants' views as regards the justice system of the country.

Data gathered from the participants are expected to provide meaningful inputs for guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, law makers and enforcers, lawyers, judges, educators, and researchers in their respective attempts of achieving greater awareness on understanding the nature of juvenile delinquency in order to help address the acute problem of the same social menace.

### **METHOD**

This is a qualitative study that used the combination of phenomenological and case study approaches. As such, it involves collecting information about personal experiences, introspection, life story, interviews, observations, historical interactions and visual text which are significant moments and meaningful in peoples' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). With such type of research, data are usually collected through in-depth interview to identify and describe the aspects of each participant in detail (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). In addition, the case study is an intensive investigation of a particular individual, institution, community or a group. This method is usually applied in studies on Guidance and Counseling, Medicine, Psychology, and Education (Calmorin & Calmorin, 2003).

The participants in this understaking were from a Regional Rehabilitation Center for the Youth of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The reason for choosing the rehabilitation center is because it accommodates juveniles who come in conflict with the law. Ten juvenile delinquents from the rehabilitation center were chosen to obtain information in unveiling their profile, views and experiences toward understanding the nature of juvenile delinquency. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the participants.



**Table 1**  
**Demographic Profile of Juvenile Delinquents**

Characteristics	Cris	Rey	Arnold	Robert	Larry	Julius	King	Josh	Mark	Lito
Age when crime was committed	18	16	18	16	18	16	18	17	17	17
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Civil status	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
Educational attainment	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year HS	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year HS	Grade 5	1 <sup>st</sup> Year HS	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year HS	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year HS	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year HS	4 <sup>th</sup> Year HS	1 <sup>st</sup> Year HS	1 <sup>st</sup> Year HS
Number of family members	6	5	1	4	2	4	5	5	4	7
Offenses	Robbery	Murder	Robbery with homicide	Rape	Illegal drugs	Rape	Rape	Rape	Murder	Murder

Characteristics	Cris	Rey	Arnold	Robert	Larry	Julius	King	Josh	Mark	Lito
Father Civil status	Living together	Living together	Separated	Living together	Separated	Living together	Living together	Deceased	Living together	Separated
Educational attainment	High School	High School	Unknown	Grade School	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year HS	Grade 3	Unknown	Grade School	High School	College Graduate
Occupation	OFW	Welder	Unknown	Farmer	Tricycle driver	Farmer	Unknown	Laborer	Jeepney driver	Seaman

Characteristics	Cris	Ray	Arnold	Robert	Larry	Julius	King	Josh	Mark	Lito
Mother Civil status	Living together	Living together	Separated	Living together	Separated	Living together	Widowed	Living together	Living together	Separated
Educational attainment	High School	High School	High School	1 <sup>st</sup> year HS	High School	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year HS	High School	Grade School	High School	High School
Occupation	OFW	Housewife	Vendor	Housemaid	Housewife	OFW	Laundry woman	Housewife	Vendor	Housewife

Table 1 shows most of the juvenile delinquents are 16 to 18, male, single, have achieved high school level and belong to families with 4 to 5 members. Most of their offenses were rape and murder. Their fathers have not finished studies whose occupations are mostly blue collar jobs. Their mothers are high school graduates and plain housewives.

The data gathering for this study followed five steps: validation of interview guide, obtaining permission to conduct the study, meeting all the people concerned, selection of participants and establishment of rapport, and the interview.

**Validation of the interview guide.** The initial step is the validation of the interview guide with the three experts in the field of psychology and social work. A letter was addressed to the three experts who validated the interview questions. They were provided a copy of the background and objective of the study as their reference.

**Obtaining permission to conduct the study.** For the second step, a letter was addressed to the Regional Director of the Department of Social Welfare and Development seeking for permission gathers pertinent data.

**Meeting all the people concerned.** After obtaining permission from authorities in the Regional Rehabilitation Center, they were oriented as regards the study.

**Selection of participants and establishing of rapport.** After meeting all the people concerned in the rehabilitation center, the researcher reviewed the cases of the juvenile delinquents, and chose ten juvenile delinquents with heinous offenses as participants. These ten participants were given an orientation about the rationale and methodology of the study. After the orientation, the establishment of rapport followed.

**The interview.** The researcher and the participants agreed on the schedule of interview. The participants were interviewed in the office of the head social worker away from distractions.

The data analysis in this research involved the phenomenological analysis of interview data. In analyzing data, three experts in the fields of counseling and social work were invited to assist the researcher. The first judge is a Bachelor of Education graduate and completed her master's degree in Education major in Guidance and Counseling in a Catholic university in the region. She is a registered guidance counselor and has been in the counseling field for more than 30 years. The second judge is a graduate of Bachelor of Science in Social Work in a well-known university in Manila. She is a registered social worker and has been in the field of social work for more than 15 years. She is also a candidate for Master of Arts in Social Work. Currently, she is the Head of the social workers of the Regional Rehabilitation Center for the Youth in the Region. The last judge completed her Bachelor of Arts in Social Studies major in Psychology and Economics. She is a candidate for Master of Arts in Educational Management.

The process of phenomenological analysis of interview data

1. *Transcription.* In this process, individual interviews were transcribed.
2. *Verification of interview data.* The transcribed interviews were returned to the participants for them to review and to indicate necessary clarifications.
3. *Bracketing of significant statements.* Significant statements shared by the participants were highlighted.
4. *Delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question.* Bracketed data were verified if these answer the research objectives.
5. *Defining codes for categories.* All categories are illustration concepts under which the relevant meanings were clustered.
6. *Grouping the data into categories and clustering the relevant meanings.* The researcher proceeded to the coding of categories. The processed data were given to the judges for validation.

## FINDINGS

### CASE #1 - CRIS

#### Demographic Characteristics

Cris is 18 years old, male and single, have achieved second year high school, committed illegal possession of deadly weapon and robbery. His parents are living together, are both high school graduates and are both working abroad.

#### Experiences before Committing Offense

Cris related that he had stopped from schooling because he was so sluggish in studying his lessons, in doing his assignments and in attending his classes. He always wants to be with his friends, go around different places, eat, and drink.

*“Natigil ako sa aking pag-aaral noon dahil sa katamaran ko, at gusto ko, lagi kong kasama ang mga barkada ko, gala-gala at inom-inom lang pag may pera.”* [I stopped schooling then because of laziness and I wanted to be always with my peers, going around and drinking if we have money.]

According to Cris, before committing the offense, the only thing in his mind is to have money to defray the expenses in their outing. He found solution to his problem by stealing the bag of the woman inside the jeep.

*“Sa natatandaan ko po, mga alas onse ng umaga na ‘yon. Malapit lang sa aming lugar yung pinangyarihan. Nagmasid-masid muna ako sa mga pampasaherong ng jeep noon. Ang nasa isip ko ay makahanap ng mananakawan. Kaya ang ginawa ko inisnatch ko ang isang babae na nakasakay sa jeep, inagaw ko ang kanyang bag. Napilitan lang talaga ako na gawin iyon dahil na rin sa pangangailangan at impluwensiya ng aking mga barkada na nagset ng outing. Wala naman akong magulang upang hingian ng pera at wala naman akong ibang pagkukunan. Ang nasa isip ko lang talaga noon ay makasama sa outing at magkapera.”* [I remember it very well. It was around eleven o'clock in the morning then. I observed first the area of the public utility vehicle near our place. The only thing that came to my mind was to steal and to have money. So I decided to grab the bag of the lady in the public vehicle. I was constrained to do that because of the influence of my peer group. I want to be with them then, however, I do not have parents to support me and I don't have any means.]

### Experiences after Committing Offense

Chris felt sorry for what he has done. He was ashamed to the people in their place because they have come to know about his case. He related that, like what they always say, being sorry always comes at the end.

*“Siyempre po, nagsisi rin ako sa nagawa kong kasalanan at nahihiya rin lalo na po at nalaman sa aming lugar ang ginawa ko, tapos binigyan ko pa ng problema ang mga kapatid ko at lola ko.”* [Of course, I was sorry for what I have done and I was ashamed because the people in our place came to know about it. Also, I have given my siblings and my grandmother a problem.]

### The Factors that have led the Participant to Commit an Offense

Chris committed offense because of financial constraint and influence of his friends. He wanted to go with them in their outing and does not want to be left behind by his friends.

*“Iyon sir, kagipitan na rin sa pera at impluwensiya na rin ng barkada. Gusto kong makasama sa kanila sa outing. Sila ang madalas kong kasama, papaiwan ba ako sa kanila.”* [Because of financial problem and the influence of my peers. I want to go with them in their outing, I always go with them. I do not want to be left behind.]

### Views on the Juvenile Justice System

Cris discovered that the juvenile justice system does not put into jail the youth who committed a crime; instead it places them in a rehabilitation center to learn values, to continue their studies and to teach them about life.

*“Ok lang naman. Buti na lang hindi nila kinukulong ang mga batang nagkasala sa batas na tulad ko. Kasi akala ko noong hinuli ako ng mga pulis e ikukulong na ako ng matagal sa police station. Buti na lang ay linipat nila ako dito sa center at dito ko pinagbabayaran ang pagkakasala ko. Madami akong natutunan dito sa center, mga magagandang asal. Mahalaga ang bawat bagay dito, may seminar sa paggawa ng sabon, nag-gagardening kami at nag-aalaga ng mga manok. Nabigyan din ako ng pagkakataon na maipagpatuloy ko ang aking pag-aaral.”* [It's okay. It's good that they do not put into prison young people like me who commit a crime against the law. I was transferred here in the center to pay for what I have done. I have learned many good values here in the center. Everything is important here. We do many things, like we have a seminar on how to make soap. We also have gardening and we raise chicken. I was also given the chance to continue my studies.]

## CASE #2 – REYNALDO

### Demographic Characteristics

Reynaldo is 16 years old, male, single, have achieved second year high school, and has committed murder. His parents are living together, and both are high school graduates. His father is a welder while his mother is a plain housewife.

### Experiences before Committing Offense

Reynaldo is attending school but after his class, he goes along with his friends roaming around in their place and sometimes works in the handicraft to sustain the needs of his family.

*“Nag-aaral po ako, second year high school na po ako. Pagkatapos ng klase ko pupuntahan ko na ang mga kaibigan ko, gala-gala lang malapit sa bahay namin. Minsan naman nagtatrabaho ako sa handicraft malapit sa amin, yung gumagawa ng basket na yari sa yantok.”* [I was in my second year high school. After school I go with my friends. I sometimes work in the handicraft in our place, I make basket out of rattan.]

Reynaldo narrated that he was with his peer group before committing the offense. On their way home after watching basketball game there was a certain group who blocked their way and asked them if they were a member of a fraternity and all of a sudden they were attacked by the group.

*“Ganito po kasi iyon, kasama ko ang aking mga kabarkada na sina Jerry, Renz, Peter at Arvin. Mga alas siyente ng gabi pauwi nakami galing sa pagnonood ng basketball. Nung pauwi na kami may grupo na humarang sa amin at tinatanong kung miyembro kami ng fraternity. Pagkatapos noon bigla nalang may isang sumutok sa kanila at sinugod kami. Doon na nagsimula ang gulo, siyempre kami ay lalaban din.”* [I was with my peer group Jerry, Renz, Peter and Arvin. Around seven in the evening, after we watched a basketball game on our way home, a group of men blocked our way and they asked us if we were members of a fraternity. All of a sudden, they attacked our group. Of course we had to fight back.]

### Experiences after Committing Offense

Reynaldo was so scared and felt uncertain as to what may happen next because the person whom they had a clash with died. He fell on the wrong side of the law, worried, and agitated.

*“Siyempre natakot ako ng sobra, lalo na namatay yung nakaaway namin, takot na takot ako sa nangyari sa amin ng mga kaibigan ko. Sa oras na iyon, di ko alam ang aking pakiramdam, matapos iyon, pumasok din sa isip ko na hindi na lang sana ako*

*sumama sa mga kaibigan ko. Naisip ko rin na tumakbo na lang sana ako at umiwas. Gulong-gulo ang isip ko noon, umiwas na lang po sana ako.*” [Of course, I was so afraid especially because the person whom we had a fight died. I was so afraid of what happened to us. During that time, I did not know what to feel. I had regrets of having joined the group. I have thought of running away and not joining them. I was so lost then. How I wish I could have not joined them.]

### **The Factors that have led the Participant to Commit an Offense**

Reynaldo committed offense because of the fraternity that they had encountered, the influence of his peer group, and because of his impulsive behavior.

*“Napagtripan at napag-initan po kami ng mga fraternity, impluwensiya na rin ng barkada kaya napasama sa gulo. “Padalus-dalos po ako sa naging desisyon at uminit ang ulo ko kaagad.”* [The fraternity started it all. It was the influence of my peer group that’s why I was involved in the trouble. I was so impulsive with my decision. I should have kept my cool.]

### **Views on the Juvenile Justice System**

Reynaldo comes upon a lot of things particularly the importance of his family, interpersonal relationship, values and the importance of education in his life. However, he feels sad because he really misses his parents and relatives.

*“Hustisya? Maganda naman dahil marami akong natutunan dito, maliit na bagay dito mahalaga, yung hindi namin gaanong pinapansin sa laya dito mahalaga talaga. Marami akong natutunan dito, ipagpatuloy ko pa ang aking pag-aaral, nakasama ang mga iba’t-ibang batang tulad ko na nagkasala na gustong magbago. Natututo akong makisama, magtrabaho at tumayo sa sarili, pero malungkot dito, wala ang aking mga magulang, namimis ko na sila.”* [Justice? It is good because I have learned many things that are important. What we do not give attention to when we were free, here, we pay attention to them. I have been in the company of different youths who have committed mistakes and who would want to change for good. I have learned how to get along well with others, to work and to stand on my own, but I am lonely because my parents are not with me. I miss them.]

## **CASE #3 – ARNOLD**

### **Demographic Characteristics**

Arnold is 18 years old, male and single. His highest educational attainment is Grade Five. He committed robbery with homicide. His parents are separated. The educational attainment and occupation of his father are unknown. His mother is a high school graduate and a fish vendor.

## Experiences before Committing Offense

Arnold stopped from schooling. He used to work then in a diesel store, had a simple life, and was living on his own. Arnold worked at an early age because he wanted to help his mother and relatives.

*“Nagtatrabaho po ako noon, helper sa tindahan ng diesel, simple lang po, nakakakain naman po ng maayos. Pero magmula po noong nagtrabaho na ako, tumigil na po ako sa aking pag-aaral. Kasi gusto ko rin pong makatulong sa amin lalo na sa nanay ko.”* [I used to work then. I was a helper in the diesel store. Life was simple and I eat well. It is when I started to work that I stopped in my studies because I wanted to help my mother and my relatives.]

Before committing the offense, Arnold went to his uncle and coworker to invite them to drink. After that he went to the store of his boss, he is drinking as well and looked mad. His boss started to hit him, but Arnold avoided him and run away. However due to the influence of alcohol he had the courage to get the gun immediately and shot his boss.

*“May 16, mga alas dos y medya siguro iyon pinuntahan ko ang tiyuhin ko at isa pa naming kasamahan. Niyaya ko silang uminom. Madalas ito ang nagiging libangan namin ang pag inom. Tapos mga alas quarto iniwan ko sila upang pumunta sa tindahan ng boss ko. Nakita ko ang boss ko na umiinom din at mukhang galit na galit. Pagkakita niya sa akin bigla nalang niya akong pinalo pero nakailag ako at nakatakbo. Hinabol pa rin niya ako at sabay sabing ninakawan ko daw siya. Nung mga oras na iyon dala na rin ng impluwenisya ng alak nung nakita ko yung baril ng boss ko dali-dali ko itong kinuha at pinaputok sa kanya.”* [May 16 around two thirty, I went to my uncle and my coworker to invite them to drink. Our past time drinking. Around four, I went to the store of my boss. I found him drinking and looked mad. When he saw me he immediately beat me but I tried avoiding him by running away. He chased me and he said that I stole something from him. During that time, I was in the influence of alcohol. When I saw his gun I immediately grabbed and hit him.]

## Experiences After Committing Offense

Arnold felt sorry for what he has done.

*“May halong pagsisisi na rin po kasi napatay ko siya at nakulong po ako at napunta dito sa center.”* [I feel sorry because I killed him, now I am imprisoned and I am here in the center.]

### **The Factors that have led the Participant to Commit an Offense**

Arnold was under the influence of alcohol which emboldened him to exchange blows and kill his boss. According to him, his boss hit and scolded him always.

*“Dahilan? Siguro sir dahil sa impluwensiya ng alak, lumakas ang loob ko upang lumaban. Sa totoo lang po sir, sinasaktan po kasi ako ng boss ko lalo na po pag lasing po siya. Kaya yun po siguro, napuno na rin ako at napatay ko nga lang po siya.”* [The reason? Maybe sir because of the influence of alcohol, I had the courage to fight. To tell you the truth sir, my boss hit me especially when he was drunk. Maybe that was the reason why I got fed up and so I got him killed.]

### **Views on the Juvenile Justice System**

To Arnold, the justice system in the country is slow. As he had experienced, his case dragged because the lawyer who was supposed to attend to him was frequently absent. Consequently, he was made to stay in jail for quite a while before being transferred to the center.

*“Iyon sir, mabagal ang batas sa mga kabataan. Base sa aking karanasan. Sir, biruin mo ilang beses kaming nagpabalik-balik sa abogado palaging wala kaya siguro natagalan ako sa kulungan ng Limay dahil doon. Tapos ilang buwan din ako sa kulungan bago ako napunta dito sa center. Ngayon naman e magtatatlong taon na ako dito sa center e ilang beses pa lang akong naghearing. Mabagal ang hustisya dito sa atin sir. Dito naman sa center sir, wala naman po akong masabi sa mga staff, ok naman po sila, mabait at marami akong natutunan dito lalo na po nung payagan akong mag-aral ulit.”* [That’s it, sir. The justice is delayed for the young based on my experience. Just imagine sir, we had been going back for several times to see our lawyer but he was always busy. This was probably the reason why stayed long in Limay jail. I stayed long in prison before I was brought here in the center. I am now three years in the center and I only had a few hearings. Justice is delayed in our country. I can’t say anything about the staff here in the center, sir. They are all good to me, they allowed me to study again.]

## **CASE #4 – ROBERT**

### **Demographic Characteristics**

Robert is 16 years old, male and single. His highest educational attainment is first year high school. He committed rape. His parents are living together. The father of Robert finished elementary and works as a farmer while his mother completed first year high school and works as a house maid.



### Experiences before Committing Offense

Robert stopped from his schooling and worked in the farm in order to help his father.

*“Ginagawa? Uhhmm, nag-aaral ako noon pero tumigil ako, nagtrabaho na lang po ako. Mas gusto ko po kasing makatulong sa tatay ko, nagsasaka din po ako.”* [What I do? I was studying then, but I stopped and worked because I wanted to help my father. I was also working in the farm.]

Robert narrated that before committing offense he played with his cousin and they were left in the house and he just imitated and wanted to experiences the actions he watched on television.

*“Naglalaro kami noon kasama ko yung pinsan ko sa kanilang bahay ng niyaya ku siyang gawin ang mga napapanood ko. Nang dumating ng kanyang nanay nagsumbong siya at kaagad akong kinausap ng nanay niya. Ginaya ko lang naman ang mga napapanood ko at gusto kong maranasan ang kanilang ginagawa.”* [We were playing then in the house of my cousin and led her to imitate what we were watching. When her mother came, she told her mother about what we did. Right away her mother talked to me about it. I said that I was just imitating what I’ve watched so I can have a feel of it.]

### Experiences after Committing Offense

Robert admitted that what he did was an immoral act. He was ashamed for what he did and felt sorry for it.

*“Mali po ang ginawa ko at nagalit ang mga kamag-anak namin sa akin, pati na sa aking tatay. Hiyang-hiya po ako sa kanilang lahat, nagsisisi din po at nahihiya.”* [What I have done was wrong. This made my relatives, especially my father, got mad at me. I was so ashamed of what I have done and I felt sorry for it.]

### The Factors that have led the Participant to Commit an Offense

Robert related that he just imitated what he watched out of curiosity.

*“Ginaya ko lang yung mga napapanood ko at nakikita ko sa TV at gusto ko lang pong malaman kung ano ang pakiramdam ng ganon.”* [I was just imitating what I watched and saw on TV. I just wanted to know how it feels like doing it.]

### Views on the Juvenile Justice System

According to Robert, at first he had a difficulty in dealing with the people in the center but later on, he was able to adapt to the system and learned many insights especially about life.

*“Nakakatakot lalo na noong una, noong nagtatanong-tanong sila. Pero marami akong natutunan dito sa center. Maganda naman ang pamamalakad nila. Mga tamang asal po nakapagpatuloy ko pa ulit ang aking pag-aaral dito sa center.” [It frightens me especially during my transfer here at the center... the time they have asked questions. Nevertheless, I have learned many things here and they teach us values. I am able to continue my studies.]*

## CASE #5 – LARRY

### Demographic Characteristics

Larry is 18 years old, male and single. His highest educational attainment is third year high school. Larry violated RA 9165 or violation of the comprehensive dangerous drugs act. His parents are separated. His father's educational attainment is only second year high school while his mother is a high school graduate. His father is a tricycle driver while her mother is a housewife.

### Experiences before Committing Offense

Larry always wants to be with his friends smoking and drinking. He had stopped from his schooling because he was sluggish in doing his lessons.

*“Ano lang, gala-gala kasama mga barkada ko, inom at yosi kasama nila. Huminto ako sa pag-aaral ko noon, tinamad kasi ako at gusto ko lang parating kasama ang mga barkada ko.” [I just go with friends, drink alcohol and was into smoking, too. I stopped in my studies then because I was lazy in doing school works.]*

Due to the influence of his uncle and friends, Larry was encouraged to buy shabu to try it for a change.

*“Gabi iyon noong niyaya ko yung kaibigan ko na umiskor malapit sa lugar namin. Gusto ko kasi subukan impluwenisya na rin ng tito ko at mga kaibigan kaya para maiba naman hindi lang puro inom at yosi.” [It was late in the evening then when I ask my friend to buy a shabu near our place. I wanted to try it because I was influenced by my uncle and friends; this is something different from drinking and something.]*

### Experiences after Committing Offense

Larry feels unhappy for what he has done. He learned many things especially when he was given a chance to continue his studies. However, he pointed out that life in the center is not easy.

*“Nagsisisi siyempre kasi mahirap ang buhay dito. Pero marami akong natutunan, lalo na ngayon napabilang ako sa mga*

*pinapaaral ng DSWD dito sa center. Natuto akong magluto, magtanim ng mga gulay. Natuto rin akong gumawa ng sabon, gumawa ng tinapay at last week, napabilang din ako doon sa mushroom seminar yata iyon.* [I regret what I have done because life is not easy here in the center. But I learned many things, especially when the DSWD has sent me to school here in the center. I have learned how to cook, how to grow vegetables. I have also learned how to make soap, how to bake bread and last week, I was a part of the mushroom seminar.]

### **The Factors that have led the Participant to Commit an Offense**

Larry revealed that he learned to use drugs because of the influence of his peers and his uncle. He related at first that he is not used to it, but later on, he got used to it.

*“Alam ko namang bawal pero impluwensiya na rin siguro ng mga barkada ko. Sa kanila ako natutong gumamit, kasama ang isa kong tiyuhin. Nung una, nahihilo ako pag gumagamit ako pero hindi nagtagal, nasanay na rin ako at nagustuhan ko na ang tama nito sa aking katawan at hinahanap-hanap ko na ito.”* [I know it’s bad, but due to the influence of my peers, I have learned to use it with them and with my uncle. At first, I felt dizzy whenever I used it, but later on, I got used to it and I began to like what I felt and so I became addicted to it.]

### **Views on the Juvenile Justice System**

Larry related that the system is good for modification of the youth who committed crime. They will learn more insights to their lives.

*“Ok naman, maganda ang sistema para sa mga kabataan na nagkasala sa batas. Siguradong marami silang matututunan lalo na dito sa center. Mahirap lang pero magbabago ang buhay mo lalo na ang ugali ng isang bata na tulad ko.”* [It is okay, the system is good for the youth who commit crime against the law. It may be hard, however it can change your life and attitude especially for a child like me.]

## **CASE #6 – JULIUS**

### **Demographic Characteristics**

Julius is 16 years old, male and single. His highest educational attainment is third year high school. He committed rape. His parents are living together. Julius’ father finished grade three and works as a farmer while his mother finished third year high school and works abroad.

### Experiences before Committing Offense

Julius was studying in school and helping in the farm. Every night, he would go out with his friends - hanging around, eating, and drinking.

*“Nag-aaral ako. Tapos tumutulong din na magbilad ng palay. Tuwing gabi naman, lumalabas kami ng mga kaibigan ko doon sa amin, tambay lang, kain-kain at inom.”* [I was studying and was helping in the ricefield. Every night, I would go out with my friends hanging around, eating and drinking.]

Before committing the offense Julius was with his friends and cousin, they drank together.

*“Nasa bahay kami noon ng pinsan ko nagkayayaang uminom. Bumili kami ng dawalang Tanduay ng mga kaibigan ko. Noong maubos na namin sa natatandaan ko umuwi na ang mga kaibigan ko, ako na lang ang natira at ang pinsan ko. Lyon nangyari na ang pangyayari dahil sa kalasingan ko nagalaw ko ang pinsan ko.”* [We were in the house of my cousin when we thought of drinking. My friends bought two bottles of Tanduay. I remember that after we finished drinking, my friends left and we were left in the house of my cousin. Because I was drunk, I had sex with her.]

### Experiences after Committing Offense

Julius is scared, ashamed and did not know what to do. His relatives were angry because of what happened. He felt sorry for what he did. To Julius, he will do everything to make up for his offense.

*“Natatakot, nahihya, hindi ko alam ang gagawin ko. Galit na galit ang mga kamag-anak namin at hiyang-hiya ako sa kanila. “Sobrang nagsisisi ako sa nangyari. Sabi ko nga sa sarili ko, buti pang hindi na ako uminom wala sanang nangyari sa amin. Heto ako ngayon nakakulong dito, pero swerte na rin na dito ako napunta sa center kaya gagawin ko ang lahat para mapagsisihan ang aking nagawa at makapagbagong buhay.”* [I was afraid, ashamed and confused. My relatives were angry at me, I was ashamed to them. I feel so sorry for what I did. Had we not drunk, the occurrence would not have happened. I am now here in penitentiary but I am lucky enough that I am here in this center. I will do everything so that I will be able to make up for my sins and start a new life.]

### The Factors that have led the Participant to Commit an Offense

To Julius too much alcohol intoxication was the reason that has led him to commit offense.

*“Alak! Sobrang alak! Hindi ko na alam ang mga sumunod na nangyari.”* [Alcohol! Too much alcohol! I got intoxicated and did not know what happened after that.]

### **Views on the Juvenile Justice System**

According to Julius, life in the center is difficult because he was away from his parents. He said the juvenile justice system is fine because he was given a chance to change and have a new life.

*“Mahirap ang buhay dito lalo na malayo ka sa mga magulang mo. Okay naman po kasi nabibigyan ng pagkakataon ang mga tulad kong kabataan na nakagawa ng mali para makapagbagong buhay at makapagsimulang muli. Naniniwala ako na habang nabubuhay tayo mayroon pa ring pag-asa upang makapagbago.”* [Life is difficult here because you are far from your parents. It is good because youth like me who have committed crime against the law are given the chance to change and have a new life. I would like to believe that as long as we are alive there is hope for us to change.]

## **CASE #7 – KING**

### **Demographic Characteristics**

King is 18 years old, male and single. His highest educational attainment is second year high school. He committed rape. His father is already dead. His mother is high school graduate, and works as a laundrywoman.

### **Experiences before Committing Offense**

King was studying then before committing the offense. He had stopped because of the offense filed against him. He used to be with his niece and just stay home.

*“Nag-aaral ako noon, nahinto lang po ako noong nangyari ang kaso. Ako ang nagbabantay sa pamangkin ko at nagpapaligo sa kanya dahil sa kanila ako nakatira. Sa bahay lang ako ng ate ko nanunuod lang ng TV, hindi ako masyadong lumalabas doon kasi konti lang ang mga kaibigan ko doon.”* [I used to study then. I stopped because of the case. I used to be with my niece and bathed her because I lived with them. I just stayed in the house of my sister and watched TV and I did not usually go out of their house because I only have few friends there.]

### **Experiences after Committing Offense**

It is so hard for King to move on because according to him, he did not do the crime filed against him. King feels ashamed.

*“Ang hirap, hiyang-hiya pa ako! Lalo na po hindi ku naman talaga ginawa ang kinakaso nila sa akin, ako lang naman ang nagpapaligo sa pamangkin ko.”* [It is so difficult, I am so ashamed. Especially I did not do the crime they filed against me. I just bathe my niece.]

### **The Factors that have led the Participant to Commit an Offense**

King is the one who bathed his niece, and most of the time, he was with her. Perhaps, this was the reason why he was accused of rape.

*“Siguro po dad, dahil ako ang nagpapaligo sa anak ng ate ko! At madalas, ako po ang kasama niya kaya ako ang pinagbintangan.”* [Maybe because I was the one who usually bathed the daughter of my sister and more often I am with my niece. So they accused me of the crime.]

### **Views on the Juvenile Justice System**

To King the law is unfair and too slow. He also narrated that the case filed against him has been dropped. Yet, he is still in the center waiting for his release order from the court.

*“Ang masasabi ko lang, hindi patas ang batas para sa amin at ang bagal pa. Sabi ko nga dati, iniurong na ang kaso, eh bakit nandito pa ako ngayon. Ang tagal ko ring nakulong sa Iba at Masinloc.”* [What I can say is that the law is unfair to us and it is too slow. I know the case has already been moved, but why is it that I am still here? I have stayed for a long time in Iba and Masinloc.]

## **CASE #8 – JOSH**

### **Demographic Characteristics**

Josh is 17 years old, male and single. His highest educational attainment is fourth year high school. He committed rape. His parents are living together and both finished elementary level. His father's occupation is laborer, while his mother is a plain housewife.

### **Experiences before Committing Offense**

Josh was studying then and selling pandesal in their place. To Josh, he was with his friends drinking alcohol before committing rape.

*“Nag-aaral po ako noon at nagtitinda ng pandesal sa amin. Umiinom kami noon kasama ko ang aking mga kaibigan at iyong babaeng iyon, nakainom lang ako ng konti pero hindi ko na namalayan o sa implwensiya na rin ang alak at may nangyari na nga sa amin nung babaeng kainuman namin.”* [I was studying and was selling pandesal in our place. We're drinking then with my friends together with the girl, I was in the influence of alcohol when I had a sexual encounter with that girl.]

### Experiences after Committing Offense

Josh is so ashamed in their community because the whole barangay knows about it.

*“Hiyang-hiya po kasi ako hindi ko naman talaga intensiyung gawin, sobrang nakakahiya lalo na sa lugar namin. Alam ng buong barangay.”* [I feel awkward because it is not my intension to do that thing. It is too embrassing especially in our community the whole barangay knows about it.]

### The Factors that have led the Participant to Commit an Offense

Josh committed rape because of the influence of his peer and alcohol.

*“Siguro po sa impluwensiya na rin ng mga kabarkada ko na uminom kasi, kung hindi ako uminom noon, malamang hindi ako nakasuhan ng rape at wala ako ngayon dito.”* [Maybe because of the influence of my peers. If I did not submit myself to alcohol then, I will not be accused of rape and I will not be here now.]

### Views on the Juvenile Justice System

According to Josh, the juvenile justice system is unjust and very slow.

*“Ang masasabi ko lang, hindi po patas at napakabagal po ng batas.”* [The justice system is unfair and very slow.]

## CASE #9 – MARK

### Demographic Characteristics

Mark is 17 years old, male and single. His highest educational attainment is first year high school. He committed murder. His parents are living together; both are high school graduates. His father is a jeepney driver while his mother is a vendor.

### Experiences before Committing Offense

Mark just leisurely walks with his friends on their way home, a group came across their way and it all started.

*“Wala po, gumagala lang po sa lugar namin kasama ang mga barkada ko. Bale kasama ko sina Peter at iba pang barkada namin noong pauwi kami pagkatapos namin manood ng basketball. Bigla nalang kaming hinarang ng mga lalaki at sabay sabing mga fraternity kayo ‘no? Iniwasan na namin sila kaso hinarangan pa nila ang daan namin. Tapos may bigla nalang sumugod at nanuntok sa*

*amin. Yung nagsimula na ang gulo.*" [None, I was just strolling with my friends. I was with Peter and my other peers, we were on our way home after watching basketball game. When suddenly a group came upon and asked us if we belong to a fraternity group. Suddenly they attacked and punched us. That is where it all started.]

### **Experiences after Committing Offense**

To Mark, he learned not to be impulsive in making decisions and choosing good friends to go with is essential.

*"Iyon sir, wag dapat padalus-dalos sa mga disisyun at iwas barkada po. Piliin ang mga taong pakikisamahan para hindi po mapahamak."* [That's it Sir. I should not be impulsive in making decisions and I have to avoid my peers. We must choose people whom we go with so that we will not be put in trouble.]

### **The Factors that have led the Participant to Commit an Offense**

According to Mark, the fraternity started it all, although he was still involved in the case because of his impulsive behavior.

*"Yung mga fraternity ang nagsimula pero kasama po kasi ako sa mga sumuntok at nakirambol. Sabi nga po sa korte, accessory to the crime po ako."* [It was the fraternity who started it all but I am one of those who punched and I joined the chaos. According to the court, I am an accessory to the crime.]

### **Views on the Juvenile Justice System**

To Mark the justice system is good. He learned many things particularly in the center. He learned how to value what he has.

*"Maganda naman po ang system kasi hindi po kinukulong ang mga batang tulad namin na nagkasala sa batas. Parang ordinaryong bata din po kami na nakakapag-aral dito sa center. Busog po kami sa pagkain at marami kaming natututunan, lalo na po sa pag-uugali at tamang asal."* [The system is good because they do not imprison children like us. I have learned many things in the program here in the center which I have not given importance to when I was still free. I have learned to value what I have now and to give importance to things that I have.]



## CASE #10 – LITO

### Demographic Characteristics

Lito is 17 years old, male and single. His highest educational attainment is first year high school. He committed murder. His parents were separated. Lito's father is a college graduate who works as a seaman while his mother finished high school and is a housewife.

### Experiences before Committing Offense

Lito was in school then; he was in first year high school. After his class, he usually goes with his friends to play basketball and drink.

*“Nag-aaral din ako, first year high school, simple lang, pagala-gala sa amin pagkatapos ng pasok, minsan naglalaro ng basketball, minsan umiinom.”* [I was also studying. I was in first year high school. Life was so simple. After class, I go with my friends, sometimes I play basketball, and sometimes I am into drinking alcohol.]

Lito was with his peers before committing the offense. They were on their way home when suddenly a group blocked their way.

*“Kasama ko po ang aking mga kabarkada, katapos lang namin manood ng basketball game nang bigla nalang kaming hinarang ng isang grupo at pinagtripan na ayaw kaming padaanan at parang naghahamon at tinatanong kung miyembro daw ba kami ng isang fraternity. Tapos bigla nalang sinugod at sinuntok yung kaibigan namin kaya lumaban na rin kami ng mga kasama ko.”* [I was with my peers, we watched a basketball game and suddenly a group came across to block our way and they were asking if we were members of a fraternity group. Unexpectedly, they hit one of my peers, so we defended ourselves.]

### Experiences after Committing Offense

Lito was scare, especially when he knew the person involved in the trouble died. He did not know what to do. He could not sleep for days. He could not believe it happened. He thought it was just a dream.

*“Siyempre natakot ako, lalo na namatay yung nakaaway namin. Sa totoo lang, di ko talaga alam ang aking gagawin sa mga oras na iyon, di ako nakatulog ng ilang araw di ko maisip na mangyayari sa akin ito.”* [Of course, I was afraid, especially when the person we got into trouble with died. To tell you the truth, I really did not know what to do then. I was not able to sleep for how many days. I couldn't believe that it happened to me.]

He related:

*“Ang bilis ng pangyayari, ilang segundo lang, heto na ako ngayon nasa rehabilitation center na. Ika nga nila, nasa huli ang pagsisisi.”* [Things happened so fast and here I am now in this rehabilitation center. As they always say, regret always comes at the end.]

### **The Factors that have led the Participant to Commit Offense**

Lito said that the fraternity started it all and because of the influence of his peers that he got into trouble.

*“Nagpagtripan lang kami ng mga fraternity iyon, impluwensiya na rin ng barkada kaya napasama sa gulo.”* [I was just picked-on by the fraternity. It is also the influence of my peers that is why I was involved in the chaos.]

### **Views on the Juvenile Justice System**

Lito said justice is slow because most of his hearings are postponed. On the other hand, with regard to the programs of the center, he learned a lot of things which he did not mind before. He learned the importance of decision making. Lastly, he hopes that his hearing will be finished so that he can go out and start a new life. However, Lito said, he will move to another place because there are a lot of bad guys who live in their area.

*“Hustisya? Heto mabagal tsaka puro postponed ang mga hearings namin. Dito naman sa programa sa center, marami akong natutunan mga bagay na hindi ko pinapangalagaan sa labas, dito malaking bagay. Natuto akong magpahalaga at pangalagaan ang mga bagay na meron ako ngayon. Natutunan ko rin dito na huwag maging padalus-dalos sa mga desisyon at isipin muna ng mabuti bago gawin upang hindi mapahamak o mapasama. Sana matapos na ang mga hearings namin at makalabas na ako dito sa center upang makapagsimula ulit ng bagong buhay. Pero lalayo ako sa lugar namin, marami kasing masasamang loob doon.”* [Justice? Slow, and most of our hearings are postponed. However, with regard to the programs here at the center, I learned a lot, things that I don't value outside, here they mean a lot. I learned how to value the things that I have. I learned how to be careful with making decisions and to think twice before doing something so as not to get into trouble. I hope that the hearings will be finished so that I can go out of the center and start a new life. But I will move away from our place because there are a lot of bad guys who live there.]

### **Summary of Findings**

For the purpose of summarizing significant findings, the following tables are presented showing the categorization of data:

**Table 2**  
***Experiences before Committing Offense***

<b>Category</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
EXPERIENCES	Not attending school	6
	Constant involvement with peer	5
	Earning a living	3
	Simple living	3

**Table 3**  
***Experiences after Committing Offense***

<b>Category</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
EXPERIENCES	Guilt feelings	6
	Disappointed	5
	Unhappy	5
	Fear feelings	3
	Confusion	3

**Table 4**  
***The Factors that have led the Participants to Commit an Offense***

<b>Category</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
RISK FACTORS	Peer pressure	8
	Alcohol use	3
	Impulsive behavior	2
	Financial problem	1
	Media influence	1
	Absentee parent	1

**Table 5**  
***The Juvenile Delinquents' Views on the Juvenile Justice System***

<b>Category</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
VIEWS	Learned values	10
	Justice delayed	5
	Complicated system	4
	Unjust system	2

## DISCUSSION

The prevalence of involvement in crime typically rises from late adolescence, reaches a peak in the late teenage years (Farrington, 1986). Essentially, this statement is proven in this study with the participants' ages when their respective crimes were committed. Of the ten (10) participants, four (4) are 18 years old, three (3) are 17, and the other three (3) are 16. Though such trend may be slightly reputed by other researchers, such as Snyder (1999) who found that a substantial number of the juvenile arrested for crimes were at younger ages, the fast rising rate of occurrences of crimes by juvenile delinquents is truly alarming.

In such ages, the juveniles are supposed to be in school preparing for a career or could already be productively employed while pursuing a college degree. At home, they could be the ones trained by their own parents to take care of household responsibilities as their preparation for greater responsibilities in the society in the later years. But their sorry state as juvenile delinquent has snatched those worthwhile opportunities away from them.

Past literatures contend that boys tend to do acts against the law more than girls do. Such contention appears to be still a trend today as in the case of all the participants in this study who are all male. In the research conducted by Valdez (2007), it is shown that males tend to commit more delinquent acts than females. Meanwhile, on the report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, delinquency is primarily a male phenomenon. Boys are arrested three times more than girls.

Another factor that plays an important role in a juvenile's life is education. Most of the participants lack interests on their studies, are frequently absent from classes and have poor performance. Of the ten (10) participants, three (3) are third year high school, three (3) are second year high school, two (2) are second year, one (1) fourth year high school, and the other one is a grade five pupil. There is some evidence that non-attendance to school remains associated with juvenile involvement in crime (Glueck & Glueck, 1950). School dropouts and poor academic performance exhibit a higher incidence of delinquency. According to Hawkins, et. al. (1998) the juveniles who are not committed to school are more likely to become involved in delinquent behavior.

Number of sibling also has an effect on the juvenile's life. Essentially, this statement is proven in this study; most of the participants come from families with a large number of members. This study confirms the findings of Ellis (1998) that a large number of children in the family is a relatively strong and a highly replicable predictor of delinquency.

There is evidence to state that single-parent families, especially single-mother, expect less of their children, spend less time monitoring them and use less effective techniques to discipline are more likely to participate in delinquency (Simons, Simons, & Wallance, 2004). This detail is proven in this study with the participants' parents' marital status. Of the ten (10) participants, six (6) were living together but had less time monitoring their children and used less effective techniques to discipline their children. Three (3) of the participants have parents who were separated, and one (1) has a single-parent. Such findings jive with the results of the research conducted by Rosenbaum (1989) stating that children from single-parent families are more likely to become delinquent.

As such, juvenile's family is one of the most influential factors in the life of juvenile because it is within the family that the juvenile received most of their knowledge about how

to interact with other people and with the society. To Sampson and Laub (1997), juveniles who least likely to turn to delinquency are those who feel loved, who can identify with their parents, and respect their parents.

Family members' and significant others' awareness and understanding of the profile of the juvenile may help them assist the juvenile in his adjustment. Family support to the juvenile delinquent is obviously very important.

Based on the findings, it is observed that the participants had common experiences before and after committing crimes. Foremost of the conditions of the participants was that they were not in school prior to the crime. This seems to underline the importance of education in molding a person's character. To Hawkins, et. al. (1998), the juveniles who are not committed to school are more likely to become involved in delinquent behavior.

A peer group's influence is obviously one critical factor in the life of a juvenile – it could either make or break his future. To McCord (2001), factors such as peer delinquent behavior, peer approval of delinquent behavior, attachment or loyalty to peers, time spent with peers, and peer pressure for deviance have all been associated with adolescent antisocial behavior.

While factors such as alcohol use, impulsive behavior, financial problem, media influence and absentee parent were found to be of lesser impact among the participants, they were identified among the elements why a person would commit a crime.

Even though all of the participants claimed learning during their stay in the rehabilitation center, it is this study's opinion that they should be provided with flexible curricula that include academic, vocational, social, and daily living skills. The rehabilitation center facilities may be checked regularly or may be improved suitably and should meet the developmental needs of the juvenile delinquents. All the staff of the rehabilitation center should have specialized training relevant to working with juvenile delinquency. They should work closely with the juvenile delinquent to ensure that the terms of their respective rehabilitation program are being served well as intended. This may be done through systematic monitoring of their progress and meeting them regularly to spot and address arising needs. Involvement in sports and other beneficial activities of the juvenile may also be encouraged through the center's provision of ample opportunities.

To address the identified problems with regard to the justice system of the country, concerned government agencies from local to the national levels may consider the retraining of judges, defense attorneys, prosecuting attorneys and other court officials in the area of child development and other areas relevant to juvenile delinquency. Finally, establishment of clear structured health education programs with primary focus on sexually transmitted diseases, human immunodeficiency virus and other related health- concerns may also be ensured for a holistic formation of the juvenile.

### **The Emerging Framework**

Reflecting on the findings of the study that were based on the participants' experiences and views led this research to form a framework titled "Understanding What Could Make or Break the Future of the Juvenile" which is proposed to guide counselors, social workers, psychologists, law makers and enforcers, lawyers, judges, educators, and

researchers to understand the situation of a juvenile at a glance. It can be surmised from the diagram (Figure 1) how the different elements of the society may create impact in the life of a juvenile. If unguided, peer pressure, impulsive behavior, alcoholism, poverty, and having an absentee parent may lead a juvenile to delinquency. On the other hand, what can lead a juvenile to live a happy, useful and meaningful life as citizen is having strong family ties, healthy family relationship, education and government support.

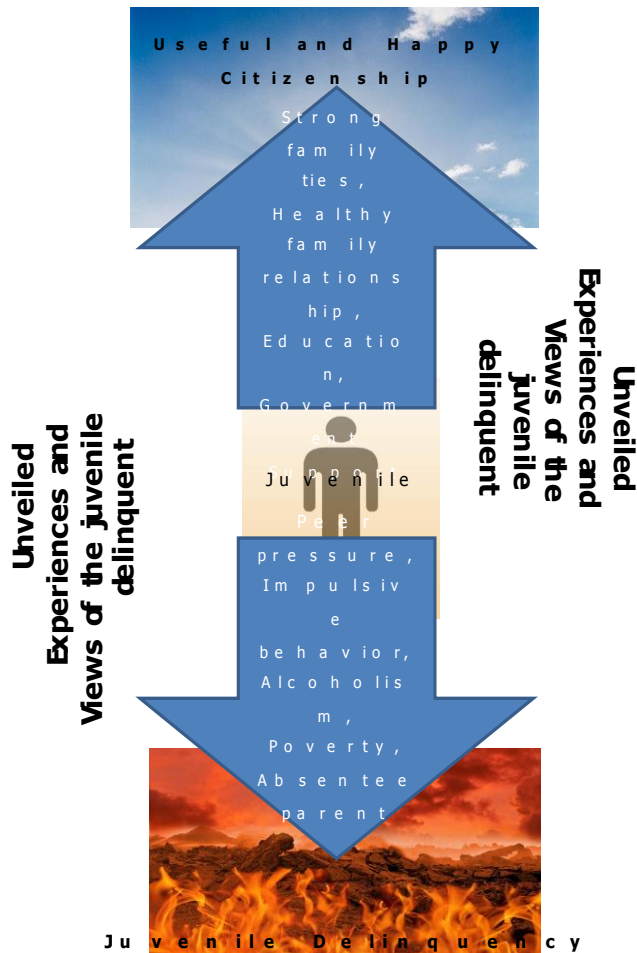


Figure 1. Emerging Framework: Understanding What Could Make or Break the Future of the Juvenile

**Figure 1. Emerging Framework: Understanding What Could Make or Break the Future of the Juvenile**

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