

## A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY: BASIS FOR INTERVENTION

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### ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency is a nationwide concern, including in Asuncion and Davao del Norte. This study aims to understand the challenges faced by juveniles this undertaking aimed on the reasons for their engagement, challenges experienced, and potential interventions. Utilizing a qualitative research design, specifically phenomenology, with a descriptive approach, six juvenile delinquents from Asuncion were interviewed. The findings revealed that peer pressure, socioeconomic factors like poverty, unemployment, and the prevalence of vices, as well as unfavorable home conditions, contribute to juvenile delinquency. Mental factors such as addiction to online games and overconfidence were also identified. Proposed interventions include campus security and youth engagement programs to address peer pressure, employment, and livelihood services for socio-economic factors, and educational programs and family strengthening initiatives for home conditions. Additionally, individual counseling, cognitive-behavioral interventions, and family integrative transition are suggested for mental factors. Future studies should explore the relationship between adolescents and their parents or guardians, as this was identified as a significant factor in preventing juvenile delinquency.

*Keywords: juvenile delinquency, interventions, peer pressure, socio-economic factors, home conditions, mental factors*

### INTRODUCTION

There are existing societal issues that prevents the development of a splendid country, and one of these is juvenile delinquency. Juvenile delinquency is understood to be an offense committed by adolescents between a specified age range. The increasing number of law violators among teens from time to time is very alarming, and the problem's occurrence is dangerous and should be carefully considered, given that the

younger generation is the driving force behind creating a better world. (Sultan et al., 2016).

In Japan, since 1980, juvenile crime has become more active. The delinquent rate was highest for 14-16 years old, and common delinquent acts include rape, theft, burglary, assault, and extortion. Out of 30,939 juvenile delinquents convicted, 0.1% were charged with homicide in 2018. The reasons why youngsters committed such acts were due to the attitude of their parents, such as neglectful, harshness, spoiling or overprotection. In 2018, statistics



showed that 48.2% of the parents were considered neglectful, followed by 30.3% for harshness and spoiling or overprotection garnered 17.3%. Furthermore, an analysis of juvenile offenders in the country revealed that 70% of them have two parents who are still alive, and 90% come from financially secure, affluent, or wealthy families (The Japan Times, 2022; Uchiyama, 2022).

In January 2020, a report from the Women and Children Protection Center (WCPC) in the Philippines revealed an increased number of crimes committed by minors – that is from 10,388 in 2017 to 11 228 last year, with physical injury as the most delinquent crime made. Statistics from 2012-2015 by the PNP disclosed that 60% of the criminal behavior for juveniles fell under offenses against property, 36% against the person, and 4% of the juvenile deviances involved transgressions against specific statutes like Republic Act No. 9165 or Prohibited Drugs, Presidential Decree 1866 or Illegal Possession of Firearms, and Presidential Decree 1602 or Illegal Gambling. The prevalence of delinquency among youths in the Philippines is predominantly due to poverty, not having the chance to go to school, unstable family relationships, substance abuse, disorganization, violence, role modeling, and abuse of media (Head Topics Singapore, 2019).

Likewise, a similar problem exists in the Municipality of Asuncion, Davao del Norte. Women and Children Protection Desk reported that as of 2021, theft, physical injury, and violation of curfew are the most common crimes committed by the youth in the place. The reasons why juveniles get involved in such acts are due to peer influence, lack of guidance and supervision of parents, and lack of education.

Various researchers ventured to investigate the factors why the youth become delinquents. Through this study, we became fully aware, as well as the public, of these alarming issues, which involved minors as the culprit of community delinquency. The researchers did not find any study investigating the factors and the lived experiences of juvenile delinquency in the Municipality of Asuncion for intervention purposes to decrease the problem, which is why the researchers found urgency and gaps in the

literature that address similar concerns. The result of this study would essentially provide and contribute significant information to the government to address this issue of juvenile delinquency.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to: (1) determine what are the factors that urge the youth to engaged in various delinquent activities;(2) demystify the lived experiences and insights of the participants on their engagement to juvenile delinquencies; and (3) seek for an intervention that can be made based on the participants shared experiences and insights.

## METHODOLOGY

Babbie and Mouton (2007) describe a research design as a roadmap of how the research will be carried out or conducted. Our study was a qualitative type of research that utilized a descriptive approach. Qualitative research focuses on explaining why something happens or exists rather than how it does. It attempts to investigate and comprehend a phenomenon to make sense of an individual's or group's reality or perception of a problem (Creswell, 2009). A descriptive approach describes the traits of the population or phenomenon under study. This methodology emphasizes the "what" and "why" of the research subject. (Baht, 2020).

The purpose of this qualitative research was to primarily describe a phenomenon, a situation, an event, or a problem. An analysis was conducted without quantifying it to determine the variation in the circumstance, phenomenon, or issue. Using a descriptive research design, the researcher aims to produce new knowledge, conduct exploratory research, understand the phenomenon being studied, and focus on the "what questions" (De Vos et al., 2011).

In this study, six (6) participants were included; data for identification of prospected participants can only be gathered unofficially. Hence, the convenience sampling method was used. All of them undergone in-depth interviews



(IDI). In order to reach the saturation, point where the themes were extracted in a qualitative study, the participants had to be at least six for in-depth interviews and at least six for focus group discussions. (Mason, 2010).

Availability sampling, also referred to as convenience sampling, is a particular kind of non-probability sampling technique that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in the study. Additionally, it was a type of sampling where the research would use the first primary data source available without any additional conditions. Put another way, this sampling technique entails gathering participants wherever they can be found and usually wherever convenient. No inclusion criteria were established before choosing the subjects for convenience sampling. Everyone is welcome to take part. (Dudovskiy, 2018).

The following inclusion criteria determined the study's participants: (1) all youth in Asuncion, Davao del Norte, aged 12 to 17; and (2) those youths who had encountered and reported being involved in juvenile delinquency. On the other hand, youth who haven't been implicated in such delinquent acts meet the exclusion criteria.

Convenience sampling was used to begin the data collection process in the designated research area or locality. Afterward, the researchers sought first the consent of the participants. The researchers started with the interview once they were informed about the study and consented to participate. This was recorded with the consent of the participants. After this step, the researchers gave tokens of appreciation to the participants. The participants' help was also asked to check the correctness of the data that was transcribed.

Data analysis was done through thematic analysis, a data analysis technique that searches for meaningful patterns in the qualitative data gathered from the participants (Roulston, 2001). In this regard, the study's predetermined objectives served as the basis for thematic analysis.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**1. Factors that urge the youth to engage in various delinquent activities**

**Table 1**  
*Factors that urge the youth to engage in various delinquent activities*

Emerging Themes	Core Ideas
<b>1. Peer Pressure</b> a. Influence of friends  b. Keeping up jaunts  c. Fear of being left behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Because of my friends, I did this- <b>IDI01</b></li> <li>Because of friends she skipped classes and was tempted to steal- <b>IDI02</b></li> <li>My friends encouraged me to do it - <b>IDI04</b></li> <li>It is because of my naughty friends and peer group- <b>IDI103</b></li> <li>Influenced by friends, to go to internet cafes and standby at the roadsides - <b>IDI06</b></li> <li>influenced by friends to blend with their sprees- <b>IDI03</b></li> <li>was carried away by friends; there was nothing to do, but enjoy trip- <b>IDI04</b></li> <li>"To keep up with them and acknowledge their jaunts/trips and temptations"- <b>IDI05</b></li> <li>don't like falling behind on my friends' activities- <b>IDI02</b></li> <li>Urged to go with friends because he don't like to be left behind- <b>IDI04</b></li> </ul>
<b>2. Socio-economic Factors</b> a. Poverty and unemployment  b. Prevalence of Vices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steal money to buy things because of poverty- <b>IDI06</b></li> <li>poverty is the reason why he become like that- <b>IDI05</b></li> <li>can't find any ways to have money - <b>IDI05</b></li> <li>doing this because of poverty, and can't afford to buy foods and things they want that's why they commit theft. <b>IDI05</b></li> <li>Once hooked with cigarettes and alcohol, it is hard to get away with it. - <b>IDI01</b></li> <li>enticed to buy alcoholic drinks and cigarettes - <b>IDI02</b></li> <li>buying alcoholic drinks and cigarettes - <b>IDI03</b></li> <li>drink alcoholic drinks and cigarettes with cousins- <b>IDI04</b></li> </ul>
<b>3. Home Conditions</b> a. Ill-treatment and reprimands of parents  b. Lack of Discipline and Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when scolded, wanted to go away at home, and get emotional. - <b>IDI02</b></li> <li>scolded by parents - <b>IDI03</b></li> <li>mistreated by their family- <b>IDI01</b></li> <li>family problems and reprimanded at home. - <b>IDI04</b></li> <li>Lack of discipline of parents - <b>IDI02</b></li> <li>There is no proper guidance from parents - <b>IDI03</b></li> <li>They were not well-raised by their parents - <b>IDI03</b></li> <li>They were abandoned, forsaken and not well taken care of by their family - <b>IDI01</b></li> <li>They were neglected at home and not disciplined by parents when they did wrong - <b>IDI04</b></li> <li>no guidance from the parents - <b>IDI06</b></li> </ul>
<b>4. Mental Factors</b> a. Addiction to online games  b. Becoming Overconfident as a minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tend to steal when they do not have money to pay peso WIFI for online games - <b>IDI02</b></li> <li>They'll steal/snatched money from parents to pay in for internet for online games - <b>IDI03</b></li> <li>Youth are engaged in theft to pay for internet and video games- <b>IDI06</b></li> <li>Confident as minors and believed that they will not go to prison - <b>IDI02</b></li> <li>believed that they will not go to prison, when they commit crimes - <b>IDI03</b></li> <li>they are confident that they will not be imprisoned - <b>IDI04</b></li> </ul>

Table 1 presents the different factors that can be attributed to delinquent activities among youths. As outlined below, these include peer pressure, socioeconomic factors, home conditions, and mental factors.

**2. Intervention Plan drawn from the shared insights and experiences of the juvenile delinquents**

Based on the results from the shared insights and experiences of the juvenile delinquents, the following intervention plans were developed to address the factors leading to increased delinquent activities among youth:

There should be close monitoring of classroom attendance for peer pressure areas to



decrease the records of students who cut classes. Solidification of campus security and youth engagement programs shall also be done to encourage the youth to participate in recreational activities such as sports, dance, community outings, and other youth-related activities. Through these ways, the youth will be more focused on their studies and have less time to hang out with their friends and engage in delinquent activities; improve the physical, social, and emotional well-being of a juvenile, and the excess energy of the youths will be directed away from high-risk behavior and toward a life free of crime.

To address concerns on the aspect of socio-economic factors, employment, livelihood, the providence of skill training, and educational programs are some intervention plans that parents, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Local Government of Asuncion, and Philippine National Police (PNP) may implement so that the youth will be able to get a stable and decent job, will be able to acquire or discover skills that will enable them to earn money, and will have obtained a much-needed awareness on the dangers of engaging in vices and crimes. When these approaches are realized, they may improve low-income people's well-being as they'll be provided with skills, job opportunities, health care, and other forms of assistance. It will also increase the youth's awareness of vices and other delinquent activities, which thereby reduces the number of young people who commit crimes as a result of poverty and unemployment.

In the aspect of home conditions, the Municipal Welfare & Development (MSWD) and the Local Government Unit of Asuncion would collaborate to conduct workshops on Parent-child interaction therapy, Functional Family Therapy, and Family Strengthening so that the parents will be able to comprehend their child's actions and would be able to effectively manage their child. It

will also pave the way for the child to understand why their parents were so cruel to them and or why they were reprimanded at home. When successfully actualized, families can help young people make wise decisions that will have a long-term impact on the lives of minors, reduce risk factors while increasing protective factors that have an immediate impact on adolescents, and parents will be able to learn effective parenting techniques such as how to reduce behavioral issues in their children and how to build a stronger familial relationship.

Finally, the LGU and PNP may conduct Individual Counseling Educational programs, Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions, and Family Integrative Transition in the mental factor area. Through these, addiction to online games will be reduced as the youth are able to learn about the laws governing juvenile delinquency, and they'll also increase their awareness and knowledge of the issue, which potentially prevent them from engaging in delinquent behaviors. Successful implementation of these initiatives would allow delinquents to express themselves freely, understand the consequences of their actions, and create awareness of the juvenile delinquency laws, which are expected to reduce the number of youth offenders in the community.

## CONCLUSIONS

The qualitative research findings and analyses provided concrete evidence that youths become lawbreakers because of peer pressure, socioeconomic position, home conditions, and mental factors. As guardians, educators, mentors, head teachers, or administrators, we must have as much understanding and information as possible about why they might be interested in engaging in criminal activity so that we may better prepare ourselves to speak to them – our children and students.

An intervention plan proposed by the researchers is the road map for assisting a young person in developing specific skills or achieving goals and away from juvenile delinquency. The intervention plan provides suggestions for programs and actions to be taken to address the issues and factors revealed during the in-depth interview on why youth become delinquents. Furthermore, it also specified the agencies and people responsible for performing the intervention plan and initiatives. In essence, early intervention not only prevents the loss of young lives but also precludes the start of adult criminal careers and reduces the likelihood that children will grow up to commit serious and violent crimes. As a result, crime has less of an impact on society, which thereby creates a sound and peaceful space for humanity.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings suggest several recommendations for addressing juvenile delinquency. It is crucial for parents to create a safe and loving environment at home, ensuring secure journeys to school to reduce the likelihood of children turning to delinquent activities. Collaboration among parents to maintain a safe neighborhood, share information with the police, and supervise children's activities is essential. Parents must also allow their children to face legal consequences for their actions to instill a sense of responsibility and deter delinquent behavior. To prevent boredom-driven delinquent activities, parents should coordinate supervised activities and initiate community groups to oversee engagements. Understanding the reasons behind juvenile delinquency, including general and personal factors, recruitment tactics, and consequences, is imperative. Future research should explore these aspects in larger communities, including the treatment of juvenile

offenders and the role of parents or guardians. Additionally, involving parents in studies is essential to comprehend the dynamics contributing to juvenile delinquency. Researchers should stay informed and adaptive, seizing opportunities to enhance society's understanding and communication with juvenile offenders in an ever-evolving landscape.

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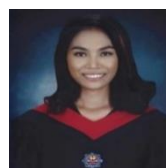
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