DECLARATION

I, Adam Abass, declare that this thesis is my own research work which was conducted under supervision and it has not been submitted to any university for any award. Other works cited in this thesis have duly been acknowledged.

Adam Abass
Supervisors

Prof. Mavis Dako-Gyeke

Dr. Abigail A. Mills
ABSTRACT

In recent years, the issue of juvenile delinquency has become a growing concern worldwide, because in many societies, children are not expected to come into contact with the justice system. This study explored the experiences and perspectives of inmates and officers of the Senior Correctional Center in Accra. The objectives of the study were to find out reasons why inmates committed the acts that led to their detention at the Senior Correctional Center in Accra, explore benefits inmates derive in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra, explore challenges inmates face in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra, identify coping strategies adopted by inmates in the Senior Correctional Center and to ascertain the training programs available to inmates in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra. The study used a qualitative research design. Twenty-six participants were purposively recruited for this study. Eighteen of the participants were inmates and eight were officers who served as key informants. The study found that some of the delinquent acts committed by inmates were defilement, murder and stealing. The findings also indicated that inmates’ reasons for committing these delinquent acts were poor parental supervision and separation from parents, peer influence and exposure to negative behaviors from some adults and peers in the community. Moreover, the findings revealed that inmates of the Senior Correctional Center derived some benefits from their stay at the center such as cordial relationship with officers. Inmates experienced some challenges at the center such as inadequate food. Some of the strategies adopted by inmates to overcome their challenges at the center include long hours of sleep and isolation. Furthermore, the findings indicated that vocational and educational training programs were some of the programs available for the correction of inmates at the center. The study recommends that the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in collaboration with the Ghana Prisons Service put measures in place for the welfare of inmates.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family especially my parents.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My biggest thanks to God Almighty for his protection and guidance throughout this research. I would also like to give my deepest gratitude to my supervisors Prof. Mavis Dako-Gyeke and Dr. Abigail A. Mills for their profound supervision of this research. It was through their dedicated precious time, instructions and guidelines that made me to be able to carry out this research. I also thank all the Lectures, Teaching and Graduate Assistants and all workers at the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana, Legon for their support. My special thanks to my family who have supported me throughout my educational career. I thank Mr. Nurudeen Alhassan at the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), University of Ghana, Legon also for his support and to all who have supported me throughout this work.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- DECLARATION ........................................................................................................................................... i
- ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................................................. ii
- DEDICATION ............................................................................................................................................. iii
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................................................. iv
- TABLE OF CONTENTS ..................................................................................................................................... v

## CHAPTER ONE ........................................................................................................................................... 1

### INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................................................ 1

1.1 Background of the Study ........................................................................................................................ 1

1.2 Problem Statement .................................................................................................................................. 3

1.3 Objectives of the Study ........................................................................................................................... 6

1.4 Research Questions ................................................................................................................................... 6

1.5 Significance of the Study ........................................................................................................................ 7

1.6 Definition of Terms ................................................................................................................................... 8

1.7 Organization of the Study ........................................................................................................................ 8

## CHAPTER TWO ........................................................................................................................................ 10

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES .......................................................... 10

2.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 10
2.3 Reasons why Inmates Committed Delinquent Acts ................................................................. 13
2.4 Benefits Inmates Derive in the Center ...................................................................................... 18
2.5 Challenges Inmates Face in the Correctional Center .............................................................. 23
2.7 Training Programs in Juvenile Correctional Facilities .......................................................... 29
2.8 Theoretical Perspectives ........................................................................................................... 33
  2.8.1 Theory of Developmental Taxonomy (Moffitt, 1993) ......................................................... 33
  2.8.2 The Life Course Persistent Offenders .................................................................................. 34
  2.8.3 The Adolescent Limited Offenders ...................................................................................... 35
  2.8.4 Application of the Developmental Taxonomy Theory to the Study .................................. 36
  2.8.5 Cognitive Coping Strategy (Agnew, 1992) ......................................................................... 37
  2.8.6 Application of the Cognitive Coping Strategy to the Study .............................................. 38

CHAPTER THREE .......................................................................................................................... 39
RESEARCH METHODS ................................................................................................................. 39
  3.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 39
  3.2 Study Area ................................................................................................................................. 39
  3.3 Research Design ......................................................................................................................... 40
  3.4 Target Population ....................................................................................................................... 40
  3.5 Study Population ....................................................................................................................... 40
3.6 Sampling Technique ..................................................................................................................................... 41

3.7 Sample Size ............................................................................................................................................... 42

3.8 Source of Data ........................................................................................................................................... 42

3.9 Method of Data Collection ........................................................................................................................ 43

3.10 Data Handling and Analysis ..................................................................................................................... 43

3.11 Trustworthiness ....................................................................................................................................... 44

3.12 Ethical Considerations ............................................................................................................................ 45

3.13 Limitations of the Study ........................................................................................................................ 46

CHAPTER FOUR ........................................................................................................................................ 47

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS ......................................................................... 47

4.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................................. 47

4.2 Demographic Information of Participants ............................................................................................. 47

4.3 Acts Committed and Juveniles’ Arrest .................................................................................................... 49

4.4 Reasons for Inmates’ Delinquent Acts .................................................................................................... 50

4.4.1 Poor Supervision and Separation from Parents ................................................................................. 50

4.4.2 Financial Difficulties ................................................................................................................................. 51

4.4.3 Peer Influence and Exposure to Community Vices ......................................................................... 52

4.5 Benefits Inmates Derived from the Correctional Center ................................................................. 53
4.5.1 Relationship Benefits and Moral Upliftment ................................................................. 54

4.6 Challenges Inmates Faced in the Center .................................................................................. 56

4.6.1 Inadequate Food ............................................................................................................... 56

4.6.2 Health Problems ............................................................................................................. 57

4.6 Difficulties Encountered in Training Programs ......................................................................... 59

4.8 Coping Strategies Adopted by Inmates ....................................................................................... 60

4.8.1 Games, Exercises, Reading and Entertainment ............................................................... 60

4.8.2 Social Support .................................................................................................................. 61

4.8.3 Long Hours of Work, Sleep and Isolation .......................................................................... 62

4.9 Training Programs Available to Inmates ...................................................................................... 63

4.9.1 Vocational Training Program ............................................................................................ 63

4.9.2 Educational Training Program .......................................................................................... 64

4.9.3 Moral Training Programs .................................................................................................. 64

4.10 Participants Suggestions for Improvement ................................................................................ 65

4.12 Discussion of Findings .......................................................................................................... 66

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS .............................................. 78

5.1 Summary of Findings .............................................................................................................. 78

5.2 Conclusions ............................................................................................................................. 80
5.3 Recommendations ......................................................................................................................................... 81

5.4 Implications for Social Work Practice .................................................................................................. 84

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................................................... 86

APPENDIX 1 ............................................................................................................................................... 106

APPENDIX 2 ............................................................................................................................................... 108

APPENDIX 3 ............................................................................................................................................... 110
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Historically, juvenile delinquency is believed to have emerged especially in the western world when governments began to establish poor laws that gave freedom to the youth (Nayak, 2013). In recent years, the issue of juvenile delinquency has become a growing concern worldwide, because in many societies, children are not expected to come into contact with the justice system (Luebbers & Ogloff, 2011; Ojo, 2012). Although it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of juvenile delinquents who come into contact with the law, it is estimated that from the 1990’s onwards, juvenile delinquency increased by a rate of thirty (30) percent worldwide (Hamilton, Anderson, Barnes, & Dorling, 2011; Ugwuoke & Onyekachi, 2015).

Moreover, in some African countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia, the issue of juvenile delinquency has been described as alarming and challenging (Makhurane, 2014; Malayi et al., 2013; Oyafunke-Omoniyi, 2014; Robins, 2009). There is no universally accepted definition of the concept of juvenile delinquency (Sewasew et al., 2015); hence, defined in various ways by many scholars (Trenas, Osuna, Olivares, & Cabrera, 2013). It involves a juvenile’s breach of legal and social norms by committing minor to serious offenses (United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2005).

Juvenile delinquency is generally described in two forms: first, as conducts of juveniles that violate criminal laws such as murder, defilement and stealing; and secondly as conducts of juveniles that do not violate criminal laws for example lying and deceit (Ugwuoke & Onyekachi,
2015). The period of adolescence is characterized by several developmental changes (Mbwayo & Mathai, 2016). In the midst of these developmental changes, adolescents may encounter several challenges leading to problem behaviors and delinquency (Shek, Ma, & Tang, 2012). Some of the early problem behaviors in adolescents lead to delinquency in adolescents (Choi, 2006).

Additionally, juvenile delinquency has been associated with various factors some of which include personal factors such as impulsivity, low IQ, and attention deficit (Farrington, 2006; World Health Organization, 2015). Furthermore, some researchers have stated that, delinquent behaviors in juveniles are forms of developmental and some changes that occur in some adolescents which are short lived; and if left uncontrolled, may result in serious antisocial conducts (Luebbers & Ogloff, 2011). In Africa, it is stated that political events and activities to some extent have also contributed to juvenile delinquency since such events shape the behaviors of the youth (Bankole & Adelino, 2014).

Besides, today, countries have accepted that juvenile delinquents who come into contact with the law be treated rather differently from adult offenders (Robins, 2009), a notion that has led to the establishment of juvenile justice courts (UNICEF, 1998). Similarly, not only have countries established juvenile justice courts to deal with the issue, they have also set age limits for which juveniles could be held accountable for their offenses (Nisar, Ullah, Ali, & Alam, 2015). For instance, it is set at age seven for the United States, nine in Israel and 12 years in Britain (Abotchie, 2016). In Africa for example, Sudan, Ethiopia and Ghana set the age of criminal responsibility to seven (7), nine (9), and 12 years respectively (Sewasew et al., 2015).

In spite of the negative implications of juvenile delinquency, the rights of children in conflict with the law in Ghana have been largely neglected (Ame, 2011). Children who display serious
delinquency are likely to become criminals during adulthood (Abrah, 2014; Lucero, Barret & Jensen, 2015). In essence, countries are making rigorous efforts to reduce the pattern of juvenile delinquency (Nieto, 2008) and they continue to seek intervention strategies and program models that prevent delinquency, promote positive behavior (Greenwood, 2008) and develop career skills (Ameen & Lee, 2012).

Research on juvenile delinquency borders on aspects such as the juvenile justice system which focuses on custody and maintenance of juvenile delinquents. Other areas of research include: factors contributing to juvenile delinquency such as family factors, negative peer influence, the school and community factors while other studies also focus on the types of offenses committed by juveniles. This study is however focused on exploring the experiences of inmates in the Senior Correctional Centre in Accra.

1.2 Problem Statement

Juvenile delinquency is a problem in many countries including Ghana (Boakye, 2013). Available evidence suggests that its occurrence is on the increase (Boakye, 2013; Bosiakoh & Andoh, 2012). Between 1993 to 2003 it was estimated that a total of 10,488 juveniles were arrested and put in police cells for delinquent behaviors, while an estimated and 2,164 were arrested in 2005 (Ame, 2011). In 2015, it was estimated that 117 juveniles were taken to the Senior Correctional Center in Accra (World Prison Brief [WPB], 2017). At the beginning of 2017, there were about 168 inmates in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra (Ghana Prisons Service, 2017). Also, in the middle of 2017, the number of inmates at the Senior Correctional Center increased to about 185 (Ghana Prisons Service, 2017).
The confinement of delinquents in juvenile correctional facilities may bring about several problems for the inmates, the family and the nation at large. First of all, an issue of concern is that delinquents confined in juvenile correctional facilities may be exposed to health problems which may hinder their rehabilitation process. This is because inmates who may be affected with some contagious diseases may spread to other inmates. These health problems may range from physical, emotional and psychological. For instance, juveniles living in correctional facilities experience psychological problems such as fear, low self-esteem, isolation and frustration (Prendi, 2014) because they may think such facilities are prisons rather than correctional facilities for children. Moreover, juveniles detained in correctional centres suffer from health complications such as scabies, coughs, malaria and dysentery (Moore, 2010). Juvenile delinquents could also experience abuse and maltreatments from their colleague inmates (American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP], 2001).

Furthermore, detainment of adolescents in correctional facilities may lead to behaviour contamination. Since they have a decreased contact with the community (Lambie & Randell, 2013), moderate offenders may socialize with and learn from peers of similar or more serious offenses in the facilities which could lead to such inmates becoming more delinquent rather than reform (Robertson, 2015). Adolescent offenders confined to juvenile correctional facilities could also be maltreated by their fellow inmates or people who have been tasked to correct them. The correctional staff incite other inmates against others as a form of punishment (Peterson-Badali & Koegl, 2002). Ideally, adolescents should be nurtured in the home, in the school and the larger community (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). However, the confinement of juveniles who have become delinquents in correctional facilities means cutting them off from the more desired way of
nurturing, a situation which makes it difficult for their adjustment and social well-being (Hogan, Halpenny, & Greene, 2002).

Also, inmates have basic needs that must be met in these facilities in order to ensure their reformation, the inability of the center to meet these needs including food could lead inmates to engaging in offensive behaviors such as stealing and abuse amongst themselves. In addition, these inmates may be labelled as prisoners by some people rather than regard them as children going through correction for their betterment. Evidence shows that people in the community stigmatize such children as criminals which leads to their neglect even after going through rehabilitation (Liberman, Kirk, & Kim, 2014).

Additionally, care for inmates in correctional centers may put pressure on the resources of the state and the limited resources of the family of such juvenile delinquents. A large quantity of the resources used to provide care and support for inmates in juvenile correctional centres is obtained from the state budget (AAP, 2001). Also, it may also leave the family with some degree of humiliation. With regards to issues of the facilities, juvenile correctional centres may be lacking the necessary space to accommodate the increasing number of juvenile delinquents in various correctional centers. The centres may also lack the necessary recreational facilities for the social and physical development of the inmates.

Moreover, not many studies have been published on the subject of juvenile delinquency in Ghana (Bosiakoh & Andoh, 2010) in terms of both qualitative and quantitative research. The few existing studies in Ghana have focused qualitatively on areas including the rights of children in conflict with the law and the juvenile justice system; experiences of ex-juvenile delinquents; a study on juvenile correctional centres in Ghana (Abrah, 2014; Ayete-Nyampong, 2013;
Nyantakyi, 2013). In addition, studies regarding factors contributing to juvenile delinquency; effectiveness of the juvenile justice system, have also been researched into, primarily through quantitative methods (Boakye, 2013; Boakye, 2012; Bosiakoh & Andoh, 2010; Doku, 2016; Gyansah et al., 2015; Osei, 2013; Weinberg, 1964). Therefore, this study goes beyond what other studies in Ghana focused on, to qualitatively explore the challenges and coping strategies of inmates in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided the study.

1. To find out the reasons why inmates committed the acts that led to their detention at the Senior Correctional Center in Accra.
2. To explore benefits inmates derive in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra.
3. To explore challenges inmates face in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra.
4. To identify coping strategies adopted by inmates in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra.
5. To ascertain the training programs available to inmates in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by these research questions.

1. What are the reasons why inmates committed the acts that led to their detention at the Senior Correctional Center in Accra?
2. What are the benefits inmates derive in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra?
3. What are the challenges that inmates face in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra?
4. What are the coping strategies adopted by inmates in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra?

5. What are the training programs available to inmates in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be useful for policy, social work practice and research. The findings will provide information for policy makers with regards to the factors that contribute to juveniles delinquent conducts. This will aid policy makers to introduce policies and programs that will educate families on the need to provide care and support for their children. Furthermore, the results of the study will inform policy makers about the conditions of inmates in the juvenile correctional facilities in order to enhance the formulation and implementation of better policies and programs for inmates’ well-being in the facilities. Additionally, the study will inform local and international non-governmental organizations in Ghana which have the interest of promoting the well-being of children in the society to provide better services for families and children.

Moreover, the findings will inform social work practitioners’ especially social workers who work with children and families about the problems that emanate from the family and the community that contribute to children’s delinquent behaviors. The findings of the study will aid social workers to do advocacy work on behalf of children who come into contact with the law. Social work practitioners will also be informed by the findings of this study on the need to educate families and the community at large not to stigmatize inmates in juvenile correctional facilities, but rather the need to realize the essence of the rehabilitation of these juvenile delinquents.
Finally, the findings of this study will contribute to research by adding to the already existing literature in the field of juvenile delinquency. Those in the academic community will also find useful the findings this study. It will serve as a reference point for academicians and future researchers who will carry out similar research in the field of juvenile delinquency.

1.6 Definition of Terms

The following terms have been defined in relation to the study.

**Juvenile:** A person who has not attained eighteen years (Carlson & Maike, 2013).

**Delinquency:** Any behavior that do not conform to societal norms and which violates the law (Kleinhans, 2013).

**Juvenile Delinquency:** The breaking of accepted societal norms usually by a person below the age of an adult (Gyansah et al., 2015).

**Correctional Center:** Any place established for the confinement, training and education of juvenile delinquents (Watkins, 2007).

1.7 Organization of the Study

The first chapter of this study comprises background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, and research questions. The first chapter also covers the significance of the study and the definition of key terms. Secondly, chapter two contains the literature review and the theoretical perspectives adopted for the study. In the third chapter, the study focused on the research methods, the research design used for the study, the target and study populations, sample size and techniques of sampling participants. The process for data collection, data handling and analysis, trustworthiness, ethical considerations and organization of the study also
falls under the third chapter. The fourth chapter is also made up of the findings of the study and the discussions of the study. Finally, chapter five includes the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and implications for social work practice.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises two sections, the literature review and the theoretical perspectives. Literature was reviewed under the following major themes: acts of delinquency that takes juveniles to the correctional center, the reasons why inmates committed the acts that led to their detention in juvenile correctional facilities; benefits inmates derive as well as challenges inmates face in juvenile correctional facilities; coping strategies adopted by inmates in the correctional center; and available training programs for inmates. The theoretical perspectives utilized in the study have also been captured under this section.

2.2 Acts Committed by Juveniles

According to Arhire (2013) some juveniles commit acts of delinquency that violate criminal law as early as age ten. It has been noted that acts mostly committed by juveniles include: theft, vandalism and property destruction (Odera, 2013). Under this theme, literature reviewed is in relation to acts committed by juveniles that took them to the correctional center.

Marle, Hempel, and Buck (2010) in a study conducted to examine reoffending among juveniles in a correctional facility in Netherland, revealed that acts of delinquency committed by juveniles that took them to the juvenile correctional facility included acts such as: murder, fraud and theft. The findings of Marle, Hempel and Buck (2010) further revealed sexual offenses such as rape of adult females and defilement of female minors as well as manslaughter. Also in the Netherlands, Megens and Weerman (2010) also found that some juvenile delinquents in juvenile correctional
facilities committed acts of delinquency that violated criminal laws such as: shop lifting, vandalism, assault and few committing acts of car theft and robbery.

Icli and Coban (2012) highlighted that the offensive acts of delinquency committed by juveniles due to which they were taken to the correctional facilities in Turkey included theft cases such as: pickpocketing, purse snatching physical assault, and use of deception to deprive others of their possessions. The authors sampled 1,526 juvenile delinquents who were placed in correctional programs (Icli & Coban, 2012). Additionally, previous studies conducted in Turkey revealed that theft cases and assault have been found to be common offenses committed by juvenile delinquents in Turkey (Bilgin et al., 2005).

Moreover, Icli, Sever, Sever, and Okten’s (2012) study also in Turkey found that acts of delinquency that caused juveniles to be arrested and put in juvenile delinquent care institutions were acts such as illegal immigration, robbery, fraud and visa violations. Other delinquent acts the study found to have caused juveniles arrests were attack on police personnel, smuggling of drugs, prostitution and murder. In another study, it was identified that possession of firearms, assault on persons with weapons, theft, drug trafficking and breach of public order were offenses found to be committed by Asian delinquents in a Canadian juvenile correctional facility (Kwok, 2009). Similarly, Shelton, Keston, Zhang and Trestman (2011) in their study revealed that delinquent acts for which juveniles in a United State correctional facility were charged by the juvenile court comprised: manslaughter, murder, physical and sexual assault, possession and use of weapon, probation violation, drug possession and theft. In Nigeria, Salawu, Alanamu, Muhammed, Adekeye, and Adeoye (2011) found that, the most common offence committed by juveniles in Ilorin were rape.
In his qualitative study in Accra, Boakye (2012) also explored the factors which made adolescents engage in delinquency. The study sample involved six participants from the Senior Correctional Center in Accra. From the findings, it was revealed that, acts of delinquency for which inmates of the center were found guilty by the juvenile court of justice included: an attempt to poison a person, stealing and the use of illegal drugs such as marijuana. With regard to the abuse of substance, it has been indicated that there is growing evidence that children who abuse substances many at times end up in breaking the law (Arhire, 2013). Boakye’s (2012) findings revealed that theft was the most common type of offense that were found to be committed by inmates. Similar to what was found by Boakye (2012) in his study in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra, Abrah (2014) also in a qualitative study explored the lived experiences of the inmates in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra and found that serious acts of delinquency committed by the inmates were defilement, stealing and fraud.

In Makhurane’s (2014) study in Gauteng Correctional Facility for delinquents in South Africa, the author explored the conditions and social wellbeing of inmates. Acts of delinquency reported to have been committed by the inmates that resulted in their detention were, hijacking and armed robbery, possession of unlicensed fire arms, theft, murder and rape. Similarly, Cole and Chipaca (2014) in a study in the Juvenile Observational Home in Angola found acts such as murder, robbery, assault, rape, possession of weapon, and burglary. Samuels (2010) indicted that among the delinquent acts that resulted in the detention of juveniles in the Western Cape Medium “A” Correctional Center were burglary, theft, and possession of weapons, murder, rape, and fraud act. In conclusion, despite the commission of these serious acts of delinquency by some juveniles, Bevan (n. d.) notes that some juveniles demonstrate lack of awareness of the negative outcomes
of committing delinquent acts. On the other hand, others are also fully aware of the negative implications of their actions (Bevan, n. d.).

2.3 Reasons why Inmates Committed Delinquent Acts

Studies conducted to explore the reasons for juvenile delinquency have largely concentrated on the individual, peer, family and the school level factors (Van der Laan, Blom, & Kleemans, 2009). Evidence from research has proved that social factors such as disrupted family, negative peer relations, community vices (Hart & Mueller, 2013) as well as individual factors such as impulsivity, aggressive behaviors and lack of emotional control contribute to juveniles delinquent conducts (Abdullah, Ortega, & Ahmad, 2015). Under this theme, some of the reasons that cause juveniles into committing delinquent acts will be discussed. Literature reviewed in this section of the study relates to issues such as family circumstances, peer relation and community factors.

Esiri (2016) emphasized that as adolescents grow, when they experience less parental attachment and care, they tend to associate more with friends, and influence from such peer associations become especially disturbing. Similarly Ayete-Nyampong (2013) also stressed that peers learn from their associations but such connections could have serious consequence. However, not all adolescents may be affected by the negative behaviors of their peers since the family background, economic situations, school conditions and the environment of adolescents differ (Esiri, 2016).

In some communities, juveniles’ exposure to the widespread of violent acts, drug use and other forms vices may cause them to become delinquents (Guan, 2012). In a study which examined the predictive factors of juvenile violence, Hawkins et al. (2000) found that situational factors
contributed to juveniles’ delinquent behaviors. The author referred to situational factors to mean, influence of alcohol or drugs, the availability of a weapon, relationship between offender and victim and the behaviors of bystanders (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000) even though the authors argue that there is little evidence to support these claims (Hawkins, et al., 2000).

In addition, in relation to separation of parents as a contributing factor to delinquency, Zeren et al. (2013) found that children from broken or separated families are observed to be weak in adopting to stress of parental separation. Consequently, they join bad friends who influence them to engage in acts that violate the norms of the community. With regard to parental attachment, Othman and Latif (2016) conducted a quantitative study in Malaysia with a sample of 92 juvenile and young offenders between 16 to 21 years. The results of this study indicated that children who are more attached to their parents develop more affection for their parents, thereby reducing the likelihood of such children to engage in delinquent behaviors (Othman & Latif, 2016). Weak parent-child attachment is the result of lack of sharing of feelings and thoughts of the child and parents inability to clearly explain rules to children to understand (Othman & Latif 2016).

Furthermore, some personal adolescent problems were found by Sahmey (2013) as reasons for juveniles to engage in delinquent conducts. These include characteristics such as aggressive behaviors, anxiety, sleep disturbances, drug use and depression (Sahmey, 2013). In a study conducted in Portugal, Simoes, Matos, and Batista-Foguet (2008) used a mixed methods design to identify the risks and protective factors of juvenile delinquency. The study sampled a total of 275 juvenile delinquents both in correctional institutions and in community service. The findings
revealed that, substance use was the main predictor of juvenile delinquency followed by academic difficulties.

Moreover, the findings also indicated that peer association was a factor that caused juveniles to offend as they were influenced into delinquency by their peers who already have engaged in delinquent acts (Simoes et al., 2008). Additionally from the findings, adolescents’ offensive conducts were related to their utilization of the limited chances available to them to engage in delinquency. For example the chance to steal an item as well as the pleasure derived from engaging in such an act moved them to steal. It was also reported that juveniles commit delinquent acts without giving forethought as well as having little knowledge of coming into contact with the law (Simoes et al., 2008).

In another study conducted on Asian Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans, Le (2002) emphasized that children who have experienced serious abuse from others stand the possibility of becoming delinquents (Le, 2002). Icli, Sever, Sever, and Okten (2012) also pointed out that in Turkey juveniles who were arrested for delinquent acts such as prostitution, drug smuggling and fraud were exploited by adults to engage in these offensive acts. In addition, illegal migrations of the juveniles from nearby countries namely Afghanistan and Pakistan into Turkey were reasons for their arrest. This was associated with social and economic instability in those nearby countries (Icli et al., 2012). In Melaka in Malaysia, a review of the factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency revealed family circumstances such as financial difficulties, bad parenting and poor education to children were risk factors that triggered juveniles to engage in delinquent behaviors (Mohideen, Anuar, Latiff, Ridzuan, & Kamarudin, 2016).
According to Frias-Armenta and Corral-Verdugo (2013) even though, violent conducts in the family as well as negative behaviors from the environment are all factors that cause juveniles to engage in delinquency, psychological and emotional problems of juveniles were the main underlying factors. Moffitt (1993) has argued that personality factors such as aggressive behaviors in some juveniles have been associated with early childhood misconducts caused by neuropsychological problems. On the other hand, it has been reported that community disorder and juveniles who associate with deviant peers in such communities are at a higher risk of engaging in antisocial behaviors (Chung & Steinberg, 2006).

Moreover, Johnson, Johnson, Johnson, and Senesie (2016) conducted a study which investigated the factors contributing to juvenile delinquency in Sierra Leone. From the findings of this study, it was observed that school dropout was a factor that contributed to the delinquent behaviors of the inmates. From the findings, school dropout was a reason because there was less connection between the child’s family and the school (Johnson et al., 2016). In relation to parenting style on a child’s behavior, Ehiemua (2014) emphasized that in African countries especially, parents lack the consciousness of the effect their style of parenting could have on their children’s behavioral and cognitive development.

On the other hand, Schaffer, Clark, and Jeglic (2009) in their study found that dysfunctional parenting has a link with juvenile delinquency. The authors explained dysfunctional parenting as a situation in which parents who are not strict with their children have them ending up engaging in antisocial behaviors (Schaffer et al., 2009). Furthermore, Mambende et al. (2016) argued children from families with parents and siblings with a criminal and an offensive history are likely to cause a child to engage in delinquency. Bella, Atilola and Omigbodun (2010) noted that
before inmates were sent on detention in the facility, they lacked primary support due to parental breakup. According to Bella and colleagues (2010) some inmates had problems with their caregivers and suffered physical abuse. This study was conducted in the Ibadan Juvenile Remand Home with a sample of 59 juvenile inmates. The findings further showed that inmates’ delinquent behaviors were as a result of neuropsychological problems in the children such as, depression, epilepsy, substance abuse, learning difficulties and suicidal attempts (Bella et al., 2010).

Boakye (2012), in his study conducted at the Senior Correctional Center in Accra, indicated that inmates’ committed delinquent behaviors as a result of getting maltreated by parents and also due to financial difficulties. Additionally, the study found that reasons given by the inmates’ of the Senior Correctional Center for their delinquent behaviors were witnessing of parental dispute that led to separation of the parents. Additionally, it was revealed that school related problems such as academic difficulties have been noted to have contributed to juvenile delinquency. Problem behaviors of juveniles were also found to contribute to juvenile delinquency (Boakye, 2012). These findings are corroborated by Cassidy (2011), who also observed that there was a display of delinquency in adolescents following parental separation.

Research conducted in Accra by Bosiakoh and Andoh (2010) at the Borstal Institute now the Senior Correctional Center revealed majority of the inmates at the center, 76.7 percent, spent most of their time with their friends or lived with friends they labeled as bad before they were convicted. The study sampled 60 participants from the center. Again, from the findings of this study, another 65 percent of the inmates noted that, their friends were arrested by the police
before their own conviction. This means that the majority of the adolescents knew the kind of peers they were relating to before their conviction.

Moreover, it has been reported by Noyori-Corbett and Moon (2010) that adolescents can possibly engage in violent behaviors later in their adult lives if they associated with antisocial peers. Surprisingly, Bosiakoh and Andoh’s (2010) study also indicated that inmates were motivated into delinquency because they felt that punishments for committing an offense were not deterring while delinquency was desirable, because their expectations were met. In conclusion, the problems of juvenile delinquency could be resolved by addressing the issues that cause children to engage in delinquency which partly originate from the individual, family and the community (Beth, John, & Zipporah, 2015).

2.4 Benefits Inmates Derive in the Center

Inmates derive several benefits and support from their stay in juvenile correctional facilities (Watkins, 2007). Some of these benefits for example range from acquisition of educational knowledge, vocational and life skills, family and societal support (Watkins, 2007). Literature on the various forms of benefits derived by inmates in juvenile correctional centers will be discussed in relation to this objective.

According to Loughrey (2016), positive attitudes of the staff as well as support from some people in the community were benefits derived by juvenile delinquents in a correctional facility in Ireland. Likewise, Sander, Sharkey, Olivarri and Mauseth (2010) in a qualitative study in Texas and California also found that inmates who were been reformed in juvenile correctional centers in both Texas and California benefited from the positive relationship with their parents in the form of their parents advocating for better learning conditions for them.
In a similar report, Djidonou et al. (2015) found that inmates were visited more frequently in the facilities by their mothers compared to their fathers. It was expressed that despite inmates not receiving their fathers for visits in the facilities, their mothers’ frequent visits helped them to be resilient. Additionally it was reported that aside the state support, inmates received assistance from management and teachers of the facility and community members (Sander et al., 2010). Self-esteem, courage, skills, passion and enhanced relationship with people were identified as benefits derived by inmates in an Irish juvenile correctional centre (O’Kelly, 2015). From the findings, these benefits were the results of inmates’ engagement in a horse training program in the correctional facility (O’Kelly, 2015). Similarly, a study by Jackson, French, Senne and Nicholas (2013) in a juvenile correctional center in the United States, found that inmates derived benefits such as conflict resolution skills, positive social interactions and communication skills through a treatment program referred to as “Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility” [TPSR].

Furthermore, Barr et al. (2011) in a qualitative study reported that the inmate boys who were fathers were allowed to receive their babies during weekends in the correctional center. As such parenting programs for delinquent teen fathers in juvenile correctional facilities have been introduced in the United Kingdom and the United States (Buston, Parkes, Thompson, Wight & Fenton, 2012). In addition, a reconnection between teen fathers and their babies enhanced the emotional attachment, commitment, and attention of such teens to their babies (Barr et al., 2011). Also, the study further observed teen-father child relationship helped in the development and learning of the inmates (Barr et al., 2011). Buston et al. (2012) further indicated that delinquents
reported of an increase benefit in parenting skills as well as an enhancement in the relationship between delinquent teen fathers and their children.

Not only do inmates benefit from family involvement in the correctional centers but also benefit from the staffs in juvenile correctional facilities. These are important people whose positive relationship with inmates enhances the development of inmates (Marsh & Evans, 2009). Roe (2015) conducted a study in a Swedish juvenile correctional centre, it was found that inmates benefited from the cordial relationship which existed between teachers and inmates because it enhanced the learning process of the inmates. Additionally, inmates were provided with a variety of leisure activities such as gymnastics, dance and swimming activities. Also, in juvenile correctional facilities, due to the risk of contracting diseases from fellow inmates, Tedeschi et al. (2007) reported that inmates in some juvenile correctional facilities in the United States were offered vaccination against Hepatitis B and other infectious and killer diseases such as sexually transmitted diseases. Besides, Young, Dembo and Henderson (2007) found that as part of the benefits in the juvenile correctional facilities, inmates are provided with physical and mental health services, building of communication skills, anger and stress management.

In a qualitative study conducted in the United States, Ryals (2011) explored inmates’ experiences in a juvenile correctional center. Eight participants were sampled for this study. The findings of this study indicated that through counseling programs, inmates who had lost attachment with their families were reunited with their families. Additionally, it was observed that friendly relationship which existed between counseling professionals and inmates made inmates feel accepted, comfortable and trusted. The findings also showed that there was improvement in inmates’ academic performance due to the effectiveness of the counseling program. In another
study, it was indicated that juvenile delinquents were introduced to “Yoga” (a kind of practice which helps in relaxation and health improvement by freeing the mind from delusions and ignorance) (Messina, 2012). Again, from the findings of this study, it was revealed that the yoga had been very useful for the psychological wellness of the inmates. Moreover, the results demonstrated that the yoga activity had helped them to learn and discover new things, gain cognitive awareness, self-reflection and enhancing their moral values.

Himelstein, Hastings, Shapiro, and Heery (2012) also in a qualitative study explored the experiences of delinquent boys in an intervention program in California. The study sampled 23 participants and the findings revealed that through their treatment programs, inmates in the facility gained improvement in their physical and psychological well-being and less stress due to relaxation periods. Furthermore, the findings pointed that through the programs, inmates developed self-control which helped them to manage negative emotions and aggressive behaviors towards other inmates. In terms of adequately meeting their basic needs, inmates in a correctional center in Tanzania indicated that they ate good food and were also provided with adequate space to sleep (Gudadi, 2014). In addition, they were secured from diseases such as malaria by getting access to mosquito nets (Gudadi, 2014).

In the same way, Singleton (2016) conducted a qualitative study in a juvenile correctional facility in the United States which revealed that relatives, friends and teachers provided physical and emotional support for the inmates. The findings indicated that these supports from relatives and friends helped to shape the attitude of the inmates to desist from negative behaviors. It was stated that encouragement from their peers and siblings boosted their academic pursuit (Singleton, 2016). Omamo (2009) assessed the effectiveness of correctional programs for
juvenile delinquents in Kenya. The study sampled 45 inmates from three juvenile correctional centers in Kenya. The results of this study indicated that majority of the inmates reported of having a friendly relationship with officers in the facility, the relationship increased the interest of the inmates in the training programs. In addition, the findings also indicated that the inmates acquired some benefits through the activities of club associations of which they were part.

Furthermore, in South England, a study which sampled 12 juvenile delinquent inmates found that the inmates gained knowledge and skill in various sporting activities such as boxing, weight lifting and also enhanced their physical and psychological well-being (Parker, Meek & Lewis, 2014). Through sporting activities, the inmates built team work and friendship (Parker et al., 2014). Similarly, Near (2014) also added that sporting activities were very crucial for inmates in a Canadian juvenile correctional facility. It was observed that inmates engaged in various sporting activities such as soccer and basketball games which made them resilient (Near, 2014).

In addition, the benefits reported by inmates in Gauteng Correctional Center in South Africa were visits from spiritual leaders such as pastors and imams whom participants received encouragement from and also gave them and purpose of life (Makhurane, 2014). In terms getting basic needs such as food and accommodation for inmates, Moumakwa (2015) in a study in South Africa related that the inmates were satisfied with their food which they indicated was recommended by a dietician and approved by the facility’s management. Additionally, the study reported that inmates were satisfied with their accommodation which accordingly was confirmed by more than 90 percent of the inmates.
2.5 Challenges Inmates Face in the Correctional Center

According to Ayete-Nyampong (2013) the life of juveniles in correctional facilities is characterized by neglect of family, friends, material and emotional denial. Also, delinquents in juvenile correctional facilities report many challenges relating to emotional and mental problems (Sedlak & McPherson, 2010). Literature reviewed in this section relates to the difficulties encountered by inmates in juvenile correctional facilities.

According to Dumont, King and Shaler (2015) in a juvenile correctional facility in Maine, some inmates indicated they were treated unfairly by correctional officers due to their race. Additionally, they were not involved in treatment programs that would benefit them and they could not also complain when rules were unequally applied to them in the facility. Abram et al. (2014) in a longitudinal study in Chicago found that juveniles on detention at juvenile detention centers faced emotional and psychological challenges through death of colleague inmates in the facility while others had suicidal thoughts. It was further revealed inmates had the problem of anxiety, fear and panic, others also encountered challenges with their authorities. Above all, depression and obsessive disorder was also identified as another challenge the inmates faced.

In a study by Mukhtar, Hashim and Abdelraheem (2007), they noted that inmates faced several health challenges such as substance abuse within their peers as well as skin diseases such as vitiligo and eczema. Others also suffered from diseases such as intestinal worms, cough and fever. Additionally, physical impairments were another health challenge indicated that affected the inmates. Visual impairments of some inmates were due to infections, shortened limb also associated with polio while others were also reported of suffering from bilharzia (Mukhtar et al., 2007). In a study conducted by Ashkar and Kenny (2008) in Australia, they also examined the
experiences of inmates in a detention facility in New South Wales. Phenomenological research design with a sample of 16 participants was employed for this study. The study found that, the facility was characterized by bullying among the inmates, drug use, and conflict between inmates and workers. Furthermore, other negative experiences which were found as challenges to inmates were fear and stress, frustration, anger, boredom, loneliness, sadness, shame, and guilt. Robertson (2015) observed that, a common issue in juvenile correctional facilities is the abuse of juveniles with lack of rule enforcement to prevent such behaviors.

In addition, Chagnon (2007) examined the relationship between coping mechanisms and suicidal attempts among delinquents in a residential facility in Quebec. Eighty-four inmates were recruited for this study. The findings indicated that twenty seven percent of the delinquents reported challenges relating to separation from a close relation such as parents, friends and significant others. Additionally, the findings revealed that about nineteen percent of the delinquents reported regular illness as their challenges in the facility. The study further observed that fourteen percent of the inmates found it difficult to adapt to disciplinary measures by the officers in the facility. Twelve percent of the inmates still had negative feelings about appearing before court. Also, it was found that ten percent and five percent of them reported of challenges relating to interpersonal conflict and stress related to school respectively.

Additionally, Prendi (2014) in a study conducted in Kavaja observed that juvenile delinquents detained in a correctional facility faced challenges such as frustration, low self-esteem and aggressive behaviors. It was further indicated that the inmates lived in small spaces in the facility and had no control over themselves except to follow orders. In addition, the study revealed that inmates found it difficult to follow strict rules and regulations in the facility. In Britain, Ireland,
Boustead and Ireland (2005) found psychological problems, bullying behaviors among inmates and anxiety as challenges encountered by the inmates in a correctional facility. Findings from this study further showed that some inmates experienced difficulties such as depression and insomnia which affected their well-being while others were also unable to socialize. According to Odera (2013) congestions in dormitories which further resulted in negative incidents of homosexual tendencies among inmates were serious challenges identified in a Kenyan juvenile correctional center. The study used a mixed method research design and 89 participants were sampled. Again, challenges reported were lack of basic needs such as clothing, food and medical products leading to poor nutrition, health complications, and stealing among inmates and from officers.

In a similar finding, Paul (2010) in a study conducted in Uganda found that overcrowding was a problem for the inmates. Overcrowding resulted in unhygienic conditions in the facilities (Paul, 2010). Rafedzi and Abrizah (2014) in their study found that a challenge confronting inmates in a juvenile correctional facility in Malaysia was the thought of their parents at home. It was reported that parents of such inmates did not maintain contact their children in the facility. The findings again indicated that some of these inmates were faced with health problems due to lack of coping skills among them. In 2010, Banda also conducted a study in two juvenile correctional centers in Zambia, the study found that the inmates faced several challenges which include abuse from some of the officers who usually drunk alcohol. To add to this, overcrowding which resulted in inmates sleeping on the floor was another challenge found by Banda’s (2010). It was further indicated that dormitories which housed the inmates had only one toilet facility which was shared by about hundred inmates. Additionally, inadequate food was also found to be
another challenge the inmates encountered. Moumakwa (2015) reported that gang groups in the facilities were indicated by some of the inmates as a challenge which affected their rehabilitation because they were been influenced negatively by some group members (Moumakwa, 2015).

2.6 Coping Strategies Adopted by Inmates

Inmates in juvenile correctional centers go through several problematic situations such as stress (Harding & Zimmerman, 1989). Because of this, inmates in these facilities adopt some strategies whether positive or negative to cope with such encountered difficulties (Cocorada & Mihalascu, 2012). This section reviews existing literature on the coping strategies adopted by inmates in juvenile correctional facilities to deal with stressful situations.

According to Brown and Ireland (2006) in their study conducted in England, coping strategies adopted by inmates to deal with psychological and emotional problems were avoidance and detachment. It was found that these strategies involved inmates not personalizing the stressor, they learnt to know more about the stressor in order to avoid it. It was emphasized that coping strategies enabled juvenile delinquents detained in correctional facilities to reduce the problem of anxiety and depression (Brown & Ireland, 2006). In their study, Ireland et al. (2005) highlighted that inmates in juvenile correctional facilities used social support such as regular interactions with families and significant others which helped in reducing their psychological distress.

Helm, Beunk, Stams and Laan (2014) also found that inmates in juvenile correctional centers resorted to active coping (for example, emotional expressions, seeking social support and problem solving) as well as passive coping (for example, avoidance) to help them overcome their problems. However, Ireland et al. (2008) also argued that some coping strategies used by inmates such as avoidance and emotional feelings towards a particular problem were not effective for the
inmates, but rather such mechanisms created more difficulties such as anxiety, insomnia and poor levels of health for the juveniles. They further indicated that the ineffectiveness of avoidance as a coping mechanism for juvenile inmates was dependent on the kind of challenge that the individual encountered (Ireland et al., 2008).

Likewise, Kirchner, Forns, and Mohino (2008) in a study conducted in Barcelona in Spain also pointed out that inmates used avoidance and approach coping strategies to deal with their challenges. It was further noted that the use of approach strategy as a form of coping mechanism helped inmates in the correctional facility to better adjust to psychological problems. On the contrary, findings indicate that some inmates in juvenile correctional centers who turn to avoidance as a form of coping mechanism were at higher risk of deliberate self-harm (Kircher et al, 2008). In addition, Chagnon (2007) in his study in Quebec compared coping mechanisms among juveniles who had suicidal thoughts and non-suicidal delinquents. The study found that, inmates who had suicidal thoughts resorted to using strategies such as aggression towards people and blaming of others for their problems.

Contrary to the use of aggression towards other people, non-suicidal inmate adolescents also adopted strategies such as communicating their feelings to others and also adopting a problem solving approach to deal with a stressor (Chagnon, 2007). In a similar study, Shulman and Cauffman (2011) sampled 373 inmates in a Californian juvenile correctional facility and observed that the inmates sought to use social support from others for example interactions with friends, family and neighbors when such people paid them visits. They also sought for support from friends’ families, neighbors and assistance from religious organizations to enable them to cope with their challenges.
Additionally, avoidance strategy such as denial of responsibility of offense, devising problem solving techniques as well as talking to others about their feelings were mechanisms adopted by inmate in the correctional facility (Shulman & Cauffman, 2011). Regarding the use of social support as a form of coping strategy, Wan (2012) in Hong Kong contrary to Shulman and Cauffman (2011) found that despite not been able to address their problems, male delinquents did not like to use social support from others as a coping strategy. Alternatively, they tried to solve their own problems (Wan, 2012). Moreover, in a study conducted in China, Huang, Zhang, Momartin, Huang, and Zhao (2008) sampled a total of 471 participants from a juvenile reformation school. The study reported that inmates who were characterized as extroverts resorted to using social support as a form of coping mechanism to deal with trauma. The findings further observed that inmates adopted what was termed negative coping strategy for instance, the use of drugs, wishful thinking and escape from the facility (Huang et al., 2008).

Additionally, Ashkar and Kenny’s (2008) work on coping strategies adopted by inmates in juvenile correctional facilities indicated that inmates used avoidance and social exclusion as forms of coping mechanisms to deal with their challenges. The study found other inmates to also resort to exercising and prolonged sleep as forms of coping strategies to deal with difficulties. Furthermore, radio and television programs were identified as measures adapted by inmates to cope with stress (Ashkar & Kenny, 2008).

Also, Ferrer et al. (2010) in their study in Barcelona investigated the coping strategies used by inmates in juvenile correctional centers and found that inmates used self-blame approach and taking responsibility for their actions as a form of coping with difficult situations. The sample for this study was 42 juvenile and young offenders and 86 non juvenile and young offenders. The
findings of this study further revealed that inmates used isolation as a means of coping with challenges. Ferrer and colleagues further posit that other inmates also resorted to either negative means of coping such as drug use and drinking of alcohol (Ferrer et al., 2010). Other coping mechanisms noted were inmates’ use of escape attempt from the facility while others also resorted to wishful thinking, i.e. having hopes of their problems resolved. According to Prendi (2014) minors in juvenile correctional facilities who lack trust for others as well as have emotional challenges socially withdraw and isolate from others.

2.7 Training Programs in Juvenile Correctional Facilities

In recent years much attention has been shifted to the introduction and advancement of correctional programs in juvenile correctional facilities (Guan, 2012). Intervention programs are aimed at reforming juvenile delinquents in correctional centers, back into the society and these programs range from social and educational programs as well as psychological and moral programs (Garrido & Morales, 2007). For this reason, vocational and educational training programs in juvenile correctional facilities are regarded as beneficial, imparting skills and knowledge that would help improve the lives of inmates for successful transition into society (Stewart, 2002; Mucemi, 2004). This section presents literature on training programs that are available for inmates in juvenile correctional centers.

According to Yazzie (2011) in the United States, public juvenile correctional centers had programs such as drug and alcohol treatment programs, suicide and violent offense prevention programs. On the other hand, as observed by Yazzie (2011) private juvenile correctional facilities in the United States had training programs such as counseling programs for inmates and their families as well as sex offense prevention programs. But, May, Osmond, and Billick (2014)
argue a Multi Systematic Therapy program (MST), is the ideal for juvenile correctional facilities in the United States. An MST is an intensive therapy program that focuses on various aspects of the delinquent’s life such as the family, school, social as well as significant others that connect with the delinquent’s life (May, Osmond, & Billick, 2014). Still in the United States and the United Kingdom, Buston et al. (2012) found that juvenile delinquent teen fathers were introduced to child management programs. The programs aimed at imparting knowledge into inmates on pre-school child development, education on child abuse, support accessibility, child safety and first aid.

Young et al. (2007) indicated that across juvenile correctional facilities in the United States, vocational programs fairly existed. However, educational programs were most common in the facilities with majority of the juvenile inmates engaged in educational programs (Young et al., 2007). Other programs reported included sex offender treatment programs, alcohol and drug treatment programs. In a study conducted in India, Sanyal (2012) sampled 606 juvenile delinquents and young offenders in correctional homes across states in India. The findings of this study revealed that inmates in the correctional facilities were provided with vocational skill training for example jute bag making, painting, tailoring, flower and candle making.

Additionally, Sanyal’s (2012) finding revealed that the centers also made available for the inmates mental health assessment programs and anger management programs to help reform the inmates. Moreover, the inmates were provided with formal and non-formal educational training programs as part of efforts to rehabilitate them (Sanyal, 2012). Also, according to Platt, Casey, and Faessel (2006) vocational and educational training programs are essential to the correction of juvenile delinquents in correctional facilities. Furthermore, in Hong Kong, the Juvenile
Rehabilitation Division has implemented a range of programs for correcting juvenile delinquents in the correctional facilities which include the introduction of mainstream education in the facilities which require a compulsory sponsored internal and external examination (Tam & Heng, 2008).

Moreover, Tam and Hang (2008) indicated the availability of practical vocational skill training program such as air conditioning, electrical works and carpentry for the inmates. Again, the study found psychological and mental health programs for inmates’ rehabilitation (Tam & Heng, 2008). In addition, juvenile delinquents in a Turkish juvenile correctional center were given education on computer operation, and they as well go through anger management, HIV/AIDS prevention and literacy programs (Ozdemir, n.d.). In a research conducted in Kenya, Beth, Joice, and Joyce (2015) explored the training programs available in three juvenile rehabilitation centers. Programs found in the facilities for inmates’ reformation were vocational training programs which enabled inmates to gain skill for employment when they returned to their communities. From the findings of this study, it was further indicated that the inmates in the programs sat for a government trade test exam for the award of certificates (Beth et al., 2015).

Furthermore, in a New York State juvenile detention center, inmates were given training in fruits and vegetable cultivation.

Additionally, inmates were provided with workshop training to help them learn the program. Wallace’s (2005) study revealed that inmates’ desire in a garden training program facilitated the effectiveness of the program. But, for O’Kelly’s (2015) study in Ireland, training programs found were horse training. Mucemi (2004) also conducted a study in Kenya which explored released juvenile delinquents experiences with correctional programs in a correctional school. Findings of
this study showed that while in the facility, inmates received skill training in tomato sauce making, barbering, detergent making, electronic engineering, shoe making and carpentry. Counseling programs for the moral upbringing of the inmates were also reported to have existed in the facilities. Social, behavioral and emotional skill training programs help builds the inmates ability to adapt to different situations (Platt et al., 2006).

In a similar study, Paul (2010) in Uganda also researched into the challenges of rehabilitating juvenile delinquents in Uganda. This study employed both primary and secondary data sources. The study sampled 115 participants including inmates and key informants from two juvenile correctional centers in Uganda. Findings showed that correctional programs available for reforming inmates in the facilities were counseling which guided and instilled in inmates discipline. Also available were formal, non-formal educational programs and religious programs to impart moral upbringing as well as technical and vocational training programs (Paul, 2010).
2.8 Theoretical Perspectives

This study was guided by the Developmental Taxonomy Theory by Moffitt (1993) and the Cognitive Coping Strategy, a tenet of the General Strain Theory by Agnew (1992). These two theories were needed for this study because whereas the Developmental Taxonomy Theory explains the categories of juvenile delinquents and the reasons for their offensive behaviors, it does not explain coping strategies adopted by juvenile delinquents when they face challenges. The Cognitive Coping Strategy was useful in helping to explain some of the coping strategies adopted by juvenile delinquents when they encounter challenges.

2.8.1 Theory of Developmental Taxonomy (Moffitt, 1993)

The theory posits that there are two categories of delinquent children. The first category consists of a group of children who exhibit antisocial behaviors from their early ages and continues throughout their life course. Moffitt (1993) referred to this group as the Life Course Persistent Offenders. The antisocial tendencies in these children are associated with neuropsychological problems, genetic and environmental risk factors (Boutwell, Barnes, Deaton & Beaver, 2013). Moffitt (1993) also referred to the second group of offenders as the Adolescent Limited Offenders. This group engages in serious delinquency, but they neither offend at early childhood nor after the period of adolescence. Their delinquency as noted by Moffitt (1993) is as a result of mimicking their delinquent peers. In addition, the adolescent limited offenders tend exhibit antisocial behaviors when they have been denied their freedom to be independent. They resort to delinquency as a reaction to fill a maturity gap as a result of restrictions from parents (Casey, 2011).
2.8.2 The Life Course Persistent Offenders

Moffitt (1993) has emphasized that across the life course, beginning from early childhood to the period of young adulthood, some group of children continuously engage in antisocial behavior. This group of children however constitutes a small group of juvenile delinquents. For example, Moffitt (1993) notes that, life course persistent offenders engage in biting as early as age four, minor theft at age 10, they deal in drug at age 16, robbery and rape at age 22. Persistent life course offenders continue to offend during their twenties. However, they decline in their offending in their thirties (Eme, 2016).

According to Moffitt (1993), persistent offenders experience neuropsychological problems that have been attributed to brain disruption. This group of children suffers from brain problems as a result of maternal drug use, poor parental nutrition and after birth exposers to toxics (Kostic, 2013). In addition, an exposuring factor to neuropsychological problems in such children is due to maternal smoking at the time of pregnancy that leads to the child’s brain disruption and subsequently having tendencies of delinquency (Delisi & Piquero, 2011).

With the existence of problems with the brain, Moffitt (1993) indicated that, these children are born into unfavorable environments that are also not supportive but rather tend to further expose such children into delinquent behaviors. Moffitt (1993) further observed that, a child’s personality and behavior are largely molded by the child’s interaction with the environment in which the he or she lives. The structural and social aspect of the environment may also serve as a risk factor to children and result in their antisocial behaviors. Additionally, the theory points out that those children with neuropsychological problems, find themselves in families that are disadvantaged.
Moreover, parents who have children that are hard to control may lack the necessary psychological and resource strength to manage such children. This may expose such vulnerable children to antisocial behaviors (Moffitt, 1993). This author stated in support of this assertion that, serious delinquent acts could be traced to childhood and long existed history of incorrect moral upbringing (Abrah, 2014). These problems in children continue to persist due to lack of attention and examination to the neuropsychological deficits. Children’s problem behaviors often given attention are often corrected. However, some children who grow with their problem behaviors and found in disadvantaged environments are likely to worsen (Moffitt, 1993).

2.8.3 The Adolescent Limited Offenders

The adolescent limited offenders according to Moffitt (1993) involve a large group of adolescents who engage in antisocial behaviors when they are likely to derive some benefits. This group of offenders do not exhibit antisocial behaviors continually but occurs at irregular intervals unlike their life course peers. The theory further explains that, adolescents engage in antisocial behaviors as a result of a social mimicry of their life course persistent peers in order to satisfy a desire created by the lack of independence and restrictions from authorities. Furthermore, the adolescent limited offenders’ exhibit antisocial behaviors when they realize a maturity gap, that is, when they realize they are matured biologically to be adults but they are restricted from getting access to most things of adult life by parents.

As noted by Mendez (2010) maturity gap is a valid predictor of male delinquency and drug use. Moffitt (1993) notes that, not all adolescents become antisocial and some reasons were that, firstly, some adolescents get little opportunity to interact with and learn from their life course peers. Others are also restricted by cultural and religious requirements. Moffitt’s (1993) theory
further notes that some adolescents are also initiated early into adulthood. They engage in adult activities such as work and therefore they miss the maturity gap that other adolescents experience. This prevents them from either mimicking life course persistent peers or expressing a maturity gap.

2.8.4 Application of the Developmental Taxonomy Theory to the Study

Moffitt’s (1993) Developmental Taxonomy Theory has been very influential and had a lot of empirical support, it has widely been used by many researchers who have studied juvenile delinquency (Delisi & Piquero, 2011). The theory was applicable to the study because, it helped to explain some of the circumstances that led some inmates of the Senior Correctional Center to commit the acts that led to their detention.

The theory further helped the researcher to understand the continued offensive behaviors of some inmates before they were taken to the correctional center. Additionally, Moffitt’s (1993) Developmental Taxonomy Theory was applicable to the study because it helped to gain insight into how some adolescents in the correctional center were influenced into delinquency by their peers. Finally, the theory was applicable to the study because it helped to also understand the various types of delinquent acts that were committed by the inmates of the Senior Correctional Center in Accra.
2.8.5 Cognitive Coping Strategy (Agnew, 1992)

Agnew (1992) argues that adolescent inmates with strong cognitive abilities minimize the importance of strain and also develop special problem solving skills that enable them to cope when they encounter difficulties. According to this tenet, when faced with difficulties, inmates in juvenile correctional facilities use a number cognitive means with which to cope. These strategies help them to reduce, escape or end an adverse situation.

According to Agnew (1992) the first cognitive coping strategy used by delinquent inmates to minimize stress is that, they reduce the importance they attach to a difficult situation. Inmates regard difficult situations as one that is not worth thinking about. Hence, less importance is attached to the situation by claiming it is not relevant in an absolute or relative sense. They either absolutely place no importance on a particular stressor or otherwise relatively place less importance on a particular stressful situation. Moreover, Agnew (1992) argues inmates acknowledge the existence of a particular difficulty but relegate to an unimportant area of their life.

In relation to the second type of coping strategy, Agnew (1992) notes that inmates try to minimize an adverse situation by maximizing and taking advantage of positive outcomes of that situation. On the other hand, they try to minimize the effect of the stressor by not paying attention to the negative outcomes associated with that difficulty. According to Agnew (1992) inmates cope with a situation by assessing the outcomes of the situation. Finally, Agnew (1992) held the view that delinquent inmates cope with challenges by accepting the responsibility of an adversity. For example, when a juvenile commits an offensive act and he is taken to the correctional facility, even though he may dislike being in the facility, he may argue that being
there has helped him to grow as a person but in actual sense the person may think so in order to cope with the guilt of being in the facility.

2.8.6 Application of the Cognitive Coping Strategy to the Study

The cognitive coping strategy was also applicable to this study because, it helped the researcher to gain further insight into how inmates in the Senior Correctional Center developed problem solving strategies to deal with their challenges that they encountered at the center. It assisted in understanding how the inmates coped with their challenges by minimizing the importance they attached to difficult situations. For example inmates who faced challenges with inadequate food decided to pay little attention to hunger and thought about their parents. Moreover, the theory has helped to understand how inmates devise other cognitive means to overcome their challenges. For instance, at the Senior Correctional Center, when some inmates faced some challenges such as having feelings for their relatives and friends, they devised other cognitive strategies such as having the hope that it is not the end of life for them and that they would leave the center soon which helped them to cope with the longing for their friends and families.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods used in data collection. It also discusses the study area, the research design adopted for the study as well as the population for the study. The sampling technique, sample size and the source of data for the study has also been elaborated in this chapter. Finally, the chapter explains how data was collected and analyzed, ethical considerations and the organization of the study.

3.2 Study Area

The study site was the Senior Correctional Center in Accra. The center was formerly referred to as the Borstal Institute. It is located in the same vicinity with the James Fort Prison at Roman Ridge in Accra. According to (Bosiakoh & Andoh, 2010) the Center started operating in 1947 by the colonial masters. Before the Ghana Prisons Service took over its operation in 1958, it was under the administration of the Department of Social Welfare. The Senior Correctional Center currently has an inmate population of about 185.

Inmates on detention in the facility are juveniles and young offenders who have been arrested and found guilty by the Juvenile Court of Justice in Ghana for committing delinquent acts that violated the law. Initially, inmates’ detention at the center was a mandatory three years. However, the passage of the Juvenile Justice Act 2003 Act (563) modified the mandatory three years to a minimum of three months and a maximum of three years. The period of detention now depends on the seriousness of the offense committed by the person. At the Senior Correctional Center, age is essential in determining what type of treatment is given to the child (Ayete-
Nyampong, 2013). In addition, the research topic was selected because of the researchers’ personal interest in finding out why juveniles engage in acts that violate the law, and second, because the population for the study was available and convenient for the researcher to obtain.

3.3 Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design, specifically phenomenology. The phenomenology approach enables a researcher to explore and acquire comprehensive information into people’s experiences and the meaning of their experiences (Miner-Romanoff, 2012). This design is ideal for getting lots of information where much is not known to help obtain deep understanding into an issue (Smith, Bekker, & Cheater, 2011). The study employed phenomenology because it enabled the researcher to obtain enough information about the experiences and perceptions of inmates and officers in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra. Furthermore, the design was adopted for the study because the study did not aim to generalize the findings, but reflect the experiences of the inmates and perceptions of the officers in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra.

3.4 Target Population

The population that was targeted for this study comprised all inmates, officers and staff of juvenile correctional facilities in Ghana.

3.5 Study Population

The study population comprised all inmates and officers of the Senior Correctional Center in Accra. Inmates in the Senior Correctional Center were recruited for this study because first, the center was the largest correctional facility in Accra which housed both juvenile delinquents and young offenders. Second, the Senior Correctional Center was the only correctional facility
operated by the Ghana Prisons Service. This site also attracted the interest to the researcher because, the Ghana Prisons Service was responsible for correcting juvenile delinquent inmates together with young offenders who turned eighteen years while on detention at the Center, and by law were not required to be transferred to the prison but remain in the Senior Correctional Center till the end of their sentence. Also, in Ghana, other juvenile delinquent correctional facilities were not operated by the Ghana Prisons Service but rather the Department of Social Welfare now the Department of Social Development.

**3.6 Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling technique was employed for this study. In purposive sampling, the researcher deliberately selects participants in order for them to provide accurate and sufficient data given the topic of study (Yin, 2011). The objective of purposive sampling technique is to create a sample that can be referred to as being representative of the population (Michael, 2011). This method was therefore employed because the researcher deliberately selected inmates and officers from the Senior Correctional Center who helped the researcher to obtain the needed information.

Based on this sampling technique, a specific inclusion criteria was developed by the researcher. The key informants (officers) gave their perceptions on the reasons why inmates committed the acts of delinquency and the benefits inmates derived from the center. They also provided information on the challenges inmates faced in the center and their coping strategies. Finally, they gave their views on the training programs inmates went through at the Senior Correctional Center to ensure their correction.
**Inclusion criteria**

Inmates selected for the study were between 12 to 17 years of age. This was because, the facility is meant to house juvenile delinquents within that age range who had been found guilty of an offence by the Juvenile Justice Court of Ghana and confined to that facility. Second, inmates who had stayed at the center for over a year and were in a training program were also included in the study. This was because, after staying more than a year at the center, those inmates may have had some experiences in terms of the training programs they were going through. Inmates and officers selected for the study were fluent in either English or Twi languages because these were the two languages the researcher was fluent in. Officers included in the study had worked in the Senior Correctional Center for over a period of three months.

**3.7 Sample Size**

Twenty-six participants were recruited for the study. All participants for the study were selected from the Senior Correctional Center. Eighteen of the twenty-six participants were inmates of the center and the remaining eight were officers from the center as key informants. Out of the eight key informants, two of them did administrative work at the center, two were from the vocational training workshops, two were teachers from the formal and non-formal educational units and the remaining two officers were from general duties (guards).

**3.8 Source of Data**

The source of data was primary. The researcher collected primary data from the participants through the in-depth interviews and observations that were made.
3.9 Method of Data Collection

An interview was scheduled with the participants and the researcher developed interview guides in English language informed by the objectives of the study for both inmates and key informants. The interview guides were used in conducting the in-depth interviews with the participants. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) notes that in-depth interview is meant to be an individual and intimate meeting that calls for open, direct and verbal questions to obtain detailed narratives and stories. Note taking was used to record all the interviews with the participants because the Ghana Prisons Service and the Senior Correctional Center did not give approval for the use of an audio recording device.

Some of the interviews were conducted in Twi while others were conducted in English language. Alongside the interview, the researcher also used observation as part of the data collection process. Creswell (2014) notes that observation as a method of collecting data from participants involves taking field notes at the research site. In the observational process, the researcher took notes of the verbal and non-verbal expressions of the inmates and officers in the center, the open activities that went on in the environment and things in the environment such as the state of the facilities among others. Each interview lasted between one and half hours to two hours because interviews were not audio recorded but recorded through note taking. Interviews were conducted at the premises of the Senior Correctional Center at a time convenient for the participants.

3.10 Data Handling and Analysis

The data collected from the participants were safely kept in the researcher’s computer to avoid access by third parties. The data was analyzed using Bryman and Burgess (1994) five stages to qualitative data analysis. The first stage involved the researcher familiarizing with the data.
data was read through several times to gain an overview of the data and become involved in it. Secondly, thematic frameworks were identified from the responses provided by the participants, recurrent themes and important issues were also developed for each major theme.

In the third stage which involved indexing, notes were added to the data for easy understanding after which charting was done. In the charting process, the data was rearranged and headings and sub headings created based on the themes. Finally, the stage was concluded with mapping and interpretation of the data. The data was put together and interpreted as a whole out of which the findings were generated.

3.11 Trustworthiness

In ensuring the credibility of the study, peer examination and the thick description processes were used. According to Krefting (1991) peer examination involves allowing experts and colleagues with experience in qualitative research to question the research process and findings of the study. In accordance, the researcher requested experts in qualitative research in this case supervisors and the help of experienced colleagues to question the research process and findings of the study. Criticisms and feedbacks were provided frequently from supervisors and input from colleagues. This processes ensured the trustworthiness of the study.

Furthermore, in ensuring the trustworthiness and credibility of the study, the thick description process was adopted. Creswell (2000) notes that through the thick description process, the setting of the study, the participants and the themes of the study are described in detail in order to allow readers and reviewers to understand and make decisions on the findings. Based on this, the setting of the study, the voices from the participants and the themes for the study were described in detail so as to enable readers to get more understanding of the process and the findings.
3.12 Ethical Considerations

A letter was sent from the Department of Social Work, University of Legon, to the Ghana Prisons Service for their approval to gain access to the Senior Correctional Center. After permission had been granted by the Ghana Prisons Service for access into the facility, the approval of the officer in charge of the Senior Correctional Center was also obtained. Before permission was granted by the Officer in charge at the facility, the purpose of the study and the aim for which the study was conducted was explained to the officer. Again, the purpose for which the study was conducted was explained to the officers and inmates who were to be recruited for the study after which some were purposively selected for the study. Inmates’ who were willing to be part of the study and met the inclusion criteria gave their assent by signing an individual agreement form before participating in the study.

The officers as key informants who also met the inclusion criteria also agreed and signed a consent form before taking part in the study. Inmates and officers were informed that, personal information provided in the study would be kept secret and undisclosed to unauthorized persons. Again, they were assured that pseudonyms would be used in place of their actual names which they agreed. The pseudonyms used in place of names of participants were numbers. This was decided in accordance with which inmate or officer was interviewed first. For example, inmate one, inmate two, officer one, officer two etc were used in place of the actual names of the participants. All works reviewed in the study were also duly acknowledged to avoid plagiarism.
3.13 Limitations of the Study

In conducting this study, some limitations were encountered. During the process of transcribing the data from Twi to the English language, some words were difficult to translate into English. However, the researcher managed to provide similar interpretations for these Twi words. Since interviews with the participants were recorded only through note taking, it was possible some data could have been lost. The findings of the study could not be generalized. However, the findings reflect the experiences of the participants at the Senior Correctional Center.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the study. The section captures the demographic information of the participants, and the presentation of the findings based on the major themes for the study. In addition to the major themes, findings have also been put under sub themes that emerged from the findings of the study. The major themes include, reasons for inmates’ delinquent behaviors, benefits inmates derived in the center, challenges inmates faced at the center, coping strategies adopted by inmates to deal with challenges and training programs available for inmates in the Senior Correctional Center in Accra. The final section of this chapter is made up of the discussion of findings.

4.2 Demographic Information of Participants

All inmates interviewed were between 15 to 17 years. Five inmates were 15 years old; four were 16 years old and the remaining nine were 17 years old. In terms of educational level, 13 of the inmates were in JHS before they were detained at the Senior Correctional Center. Three were in primary level and two indicated that they never attended school. Inmates’ religious affiliation revealed that out of the 18 inmates, one was a Traditionalist, four were Muslims and the remaining 13 were Christians. Before their arrest, one inmate indicated he was living alone before he committed the act. One of them was living with his friend before he was arrested. Two lived with other relatives and not their parents.

Five of them lived with both parents before they were arrested. The remaining nine inmates lived under the care of single parents either father or mother. In terms of duration of stay at the Center,
all inmates interviewed had been at the Senior Correctional Center for over a year. Occupation of parents and guardians revealed that four of the inmates had their parents or guardians engaged in farming activities, four inmates reported that their parents or guardians engaged in trading and one indicated that his parent/guardian was a civil servant. Two stated that their parents/guardians were drivers, one reported of parent or guardian working as a mechanic, three were engaged in other businesses and the remaining three were unemployed.

A total of eight officers were interviewed as key informants. Two each were from the administrative office, the workshop units, educational unit, and the guards (known as general duties). Six of the key informants were males and two were females. All key informants were Christians. In terms of number of years key informants had served at the Center, one officer had worked for a period of 19 years, three had worked for a period of 24 years, two worked for a period of 26 years, one had worked for 28 years and another worked for a period of 33 years.

Four had tertiary level education, three had vocational and technical training and one had junior secondary school certificate. In terms of the ranks of the officers, one had obtained the rank of an Assistant Superintendent of Prisons (ASP), another officer had also obtained the rank of Senior Chief Officer (SCO) and there was one Chief Officer (CO). The remaining five officers obtained the ranks of Assistant Chief Officers (ACO’s).
4.3 Acts Committed and Juveniles’ Arrest

The findings of the study indicated that three types of delinquent acts that violate criminal law led to the inmates’ arrest and subsequent detention at the Senior Correctional Center. These include: defilement, stealing and murder. One inmate committed murder, five committed acts of defilement and the remaining 12 committed acts of stealing.

Before they were taken to the Senior Correctional Center, some inmates indicated that they committed repeated acts of delinquency especially stealing for which they were arrested severally by the police. However, they were left to go without being arraigned before court. Some participants stated that they were aware of the consequences of their actions, while others had no idea of the repercussions. These were some responses from the inmates as to whether they were aware or not of the consequences before committing those acts:

An inmate indicated he was not aware of the consequence of the act before he committed it:

*When we were going to steal, I thought I would not be punished even if we were caught because, I am still a child. There were other children in my area who stole and they were caught but they were left because they were considered as children* (Inmate Three).

Another inmate who expressed that he was aware of the possible consequence of the act stated that:

*Before I planned to have sex with her, I knew her father would react badly and if my friends heard of it, won’t I be ashamed of myself, but I ignored all those ideas because I planned to do it* (Inmate Eleven).
4.4 Reasons for Inmates Delinquent Acts

Inmates attributed the reasons for their delinquent behaviors to various reasons such as poor parental supervision and separation from parents, financial difficulties, peer influence and exposure to immoral behaviors from adults and peers in the community they came from.

4.4.1 Poor Supervision and Separation from Parents

Some inmates of the Senior Correctional Center reported that they committed the acts of delinquency as a result of poor supervision from their parents. The key informants also indicated that poor supervision from parents was a reason why some of the inmates committed delinquent acts. These were some of the responses from the inmates and key informants in relation to poor parental supervision and child’s separation from the parents as reasons for their delinquent conducts:

*My mother left to Kumasi after she got married to a new husband. As a result I began to stay alone in Berekum. She usually sent me money for my daily expenses yet I stopped sleeping at home and consequently I became a street boy which exposed me to stealing* (Inmate One).

Another inmate also gave his account of how he engaged in the act because he wanted to travel from home to his mother in Kumasi:

*When my friends told me to come so that we go and steal from the man in the melcom, I was afraid but because I also had on my mind I wanted to travel to Kumasi to see my mother I was forced to join them to steal* (Inmate Four).

In relation to poor parenting, a key informant stated that:
Some of them are not well cultured by their parent. That is their parents do not give them good training (Officer Three).

4.4.2 Financial Difficulties

Some also indicated that their delinquent behavior were as a result of financial difficulties. They did not get the needed financial support from parents and relatives to meet their basic needs. Hence, stealing became an option for them to survive. These voices below from inmates and key informants support the issue of financial difficulties which accounted for inmates delinquent behaviors:

Sometimes when I was asked to do anything or buy something on campus my father always told me he did not have money so I should ask my grandfather who did not also have money, so I thought the only thing I could do to get those items to school was to steal (Inmate Sixteen).

This inmate also gave an account of how financial difficulties of his family contributed to his delinquent behavior and said:

I did steal to feed myself and buy things for myself since I was the one taking care of myself, I needed to make myself comfortable. When I left the house, I could not work, so I thought all I could do was to steal and feed myself (Inmate Thirteen).

An officer made this statement in support of financial difficulties contributing to inmates’ antisocial behaviors:
If the economical challenge becomes severe, and there is no food, what do they do? They have to get an option to survive. So they say, I stole to buy food (Officer Four).

4.4.3 Peer Influence and Exposure to Community Vices

Some inmates in the Senior Correctional Center also committed acts of delinquency due to negative peer pressure. An inmate indicated that he engaged in delinquency because he was exposed to immoral behaviors in his community from some adults and peers which was also confirmed by an officer that delinquent acts committed by inmates could be as a result of inmates exposure to vices from some people in the communities the inmates lived. These were some of the submissions made by the inmates with regards to how their peers and some adults in their communities influenced them to commit delinquent acts:

A friend of mine had a phone which had a lot of pornographic movies and he had been bringing it to school for us to watch. This gingered my sexual desire to practice what I have watched (Inmate Fifteen).

Another inmate also said shared how he became delinquent because his friend introduced him to a game center:

I was arrested because my friends introduced me to a game centre where I used to bet with the money I made from the fishing. That day I needed money to go and play the jackpot but I didn’t have any so I planned to steal (Inmate Eight).

To buttress these statements made by these inmates who were influenced through bad friendship, an officer said that:

52
I think peer influence plays a part when you have bad friends, they serve as a source of attraction to you to follow their lead. They can influence you wrongly (Officer Eight).

Regarding influence due to exposure to social vices in the community, an inmate and an officer indicated that:

The people that were bad were normally the adults. We the young ones were influenced by their behaviors. When I moved to that area I witnessed them engage in these bad activities such as smoking therefore I also joined them (Inmate Ten).

The environment too can be a cause. If one lives in an environment where one sees hooliganism, he or she thinks that the best way to live is to become like those people and so copies the behaviors of the people (Officer Eight).

4.5 Benefits Inmates Derived from the Correctional Center

Inmates reported that they derived some benefits from their stay at the Senior Correctional Center. These benefits were from the training programs, counseling and religious services, their relationship with the officers’ in the facility as well as benefits from visitors such as family relation, friends and other philanthropists. These benefits have been explained under the following sub themes: moral upbringing, relationship benefits and benefits derived from the training programs.
4.5.1 Relationship Benefits and Moral Upliftment

According to majority of the inmates, they derived benefits from their relationship with the officers, fellow inmates, relatives and other visitors to the center. These benefits were in the form of receiving items such as food, money and words of encouragement. The counseling and religious services also had positive impact on their lives. These services led to changes in their lives from negative behaviors to positive lifestyles. Some inmates also indicated that their stay at the correctional center had helped them to stay away from peers in the community who otherwise would have continued to influence them into engage in antisocial conducts. The following are voices of inmates and an officer regarding some of the benefits from their relations, counseling and religious services.

“Our relationship with the officers is fine here, some are very nice, they advise us positively to change our ways from bad to good, to humble ourselves and also respect elderly people. An example could be a madam I cannot mention her name but she is very good to us. Some of the things she does for us include giving us advice, bringing us extra food to eat when we are not satisfied (Inmate Ten).

My father visits me but he doesn’t give me money. He encourages me a lot. He tells me to call him when I need something but there is no phone to call (Inmate Twelve).

Here visitors are the only people who can give us money, but even that, it has to be given to the officers before we can have it (Inmate Eight).

With respect to their moral upliftment, some inmates made these statements:

For now, I have known my mistakes and learnt a good way of talking to the officers and inmates unlike when I use to disrespect back at home (Inmate One).
I have been happy I left my friend who used to influence me to go and smoke, because if I were to still be with him, I would have become a cocaine addict (Inmate Five).

I have changed from those bad acts I use to engage in I do not think to go back to those acts again in my life (Inmate Ten).

An officer also said this in support of benefits inmates derived from the counseling and religious services:

Some of them have come here to know that what they have done was wrong and they have a sort of remorse for their actions and they said they want cause it (Officer Four).

4.5.2 Benefits from Training Programs

In terms of the benefits from their programs, all inmates interviewed indicated that they had acquired some form of knowledge and skill in the training programs they were going through. The following voices represent some of the comments from the inmates in respect of the advantages they derived from their training programs:

The Peace Program (a program to instill into the inmates peace and tolerance of others) has really helped me, I have even obtained a certificate in that (Inmate Three).

Another inmate also said this in relation to the benefit he derived from the vocational training program:
The NVTI (National Vocation Training Institute) program has helped me a lot especially in my shoe-making job, I have gained more experience, I can now make better shoes to sell (Inmate Eleven).

Another officer added that inmates were registered in the Basic Education Certificate Examination and the National Vocational Training Institute. He stated that:

As I speak, seven of the inmates are in SHS. We are currently preparing 21 boys to go and write the BECE, 41 boys are also registered to go and write the NVTI (Officer Four).

4.6 Challenges Inmates Faced in the Center

From the findings, inmates of the Senior Correctional Center revealed that they were faced with several challenges that hindered their physical, psychological and developmental progress. The challenges are: feeding, health, emotional and accommodation.

4.6.1 Inadequate Food

One challenge that was common to all inmates was insufficient food. Inmates indicated that their three square meals cost an amount of GH 1.80 pesewas. Officers at the center also made mention of the fact that providing adequate food for the inmates was a major challenge confronting them. Regarding the challenge with inadequate food, these were the responses from some inmates:

When we wake up every day our morning, afternoon and evening food sum up to GH 1.80pesewas. In the afternoon, we eat gari with palm nut soup without fish, pepper and onion only salt and water plus palm nut (Inmate Nine).

Another inmate also said in relation to the issue of mal nutritious food served to inmates at the center:
The food we eat here is very bad. For banku and soup, you can even see your face in the soup (Inmate Seven).

An officer also shared his opinion on the problem of inadequate food for inmates at the center. He made mention that:

Boys are kind of people who eat a lot but the food given to them daily in this center is not sufficient (Officer Four).

4.6.2 Health Problems

Inmates indicated several health challenges they faced in the Senior Correctional Center. Some attributed these health problems to frequent and long hours of lock up in their dormitories which denied them the opportunity to engage in regular exercises. They also linked their health problems to overcrowding in the facility, poor lavatory and bath systems in the dormitories. The sharing of these deteriorated baths and lavatories by many inmates resulted in exposure to a disease they refer to as “Brocoarse”. Others attributed their health problems to the inadequate nutritious food they were served in the center, while others also linked their health problems to the change of environment. Some inmates went through emotional and psychological difficulties due to excessive thinking about the relatives. Others’ emotional and psychological challenges were because of negative remarks from some community members towards them when they went outside the facility on an assignment. The voices below represent some statements by inmates with respect to some reasons to their health problems at the center:

Because we have to sleep after we finish eating, it has been affecting my health because I don’t get to do more exercises as soon as we complete our meals (Inmate Four).
For my physical well-being I have suffered a lot since I was brought to the centre. I usually used to vomit blood and often have repetitive sicknesses (Inmate Five). All the time I am psychologically affected because we are locked down from 6 p.m. in the evening to the next morning 6 a.m. each and every day and they take the keys to the security gate. I hate this practice (Inmate Five). When our toilet got spoilt, we faced a lot of problems. You have to pass through a long process before you can use the toilet (Inmate One).

Another inmate who also suffered an emotional difficulty regarding separation from family and friends and reactions from the community said that:

I always think about my family because leaving them in the house and coming to stay here alone is difficult. I was the boy that my father used to give a lot of advice. Some adults see us outside and talk all sorts of things which I feel so bad and regret of being a stubborn boy. One woman once told me that if I were to be her son she would kill me when I come back home for bringing such a disgrace to the family (Inmate Eight).

Some officers regarding the poor health conditions of inmates also mentioned that:

We are beginning to experience overcrowding in the dormitories. Under normal circumstances a dormitory is supposed to take about 20 people but we can have about 28 people in one dormitory, this is the challenge we have (Officer One).

They are psychologically affected because of the separation from the larger society (Officer Two).

Some of the inmates normally fall sick due to the change of environment (Officer Five).
4.6 Difficulties Encountered in Training Programs

In terms of challenges encountered with the program, some inmates expressed difficulty in comprehending what they were taught in class and at the workshop. This was because some inmates expressed that they panicked when the same officers who served as their teachers/trainers at the class and workshop also served as their escorts. They also stated that they disliked their uniform they wore to the training and school site. Some officers also affirmed these statements that were made by the inmates by observing that some inmates feel that even some of the training programs inmates do are seen by them as a punishment. These were some of what inmates said in relation to the challenges they encountered while going through training:

*I don’t usually understand what we are being taught in the classroom because I do panic anytime I am in the class. This is because the teachers that teach us are the same people that escort us to work and other things, so when I see an officer in the class I don’t feel comfortable* (Inmate Thirteen).

Another inmate expressed his dislike for the uniform inmates wear to the workshop and school and he stated that:

*I don't feel happy wearing the blue jersey, I want to wear the normal school uniform worn at home by all students* (Inmate Four).

An officer made this statement regarding how inmates perceived their training which he saw as a challenge:

*Inmates feel they are punished to stay in this facility; this brings about the difficulty in getting them into the mood of learning* (Officer Eight).
4.8 Coping Strategies Adopted by Inmates

From the findings of this study, several coping strategies were adopted by the inmates of the Senior Correctional Center to overcome their challenges that confront them in the facility. Coping strategies adopted by the inmates to deal with their challenges include the use of games and exercises, social support, prolonged working and prolonged sleep.

4.8.1 Games, Exercises, Reading and Entertainment

From the study’s findings, Inmates adopted strategies such as the watching of television, listening to music, playing games like volley ball, soccer, and jogging as well as reading to overcome their challenges. The following voices support what the inmates said regarding the use of games, entertainment and exercises to respond to challenges they faced at the Senior Correctional Center. Inmate Eleven stated how singing helped him to cope.

When I am thinking a lot I sometimes sing to myself so that I can forget the past and focus on my future (Inmate Eleven).

Another inmate also indicated that:

I often discussed soccer issues with my friends and on Fridays I played football in order to help me forget about my family and friends back at home (Inmate Three).

An officer said this regarding the use of games such as television programs by inmates to deal with stressful situations.

They have television to relieve them of boredom. Some resort to sleeping all the time while others too play indoor games like basketball, draughts, cards, some also do compose their own music (Officer One).
4.8.2 Social Support

Some also resort to the use of interactions and communications with family members through phone calls and visits from relatives to cope. They also resort to building close relations with officers in order to help them deal with their challenges. Others simply decide to engage their fellow inmates in prolonged conversations to help them avoid excessive thinking. These were some of the voices from inmates and an officer with respect to the use of social support as a form of coping strategy for the inmates. These inmates shared their experiences on how they coped through chatting and cracking jokes with his friends as well as support from relatives:

"When I miss my parents I engage in a lengthy conversation with my friends. We crack jokes amongst ourselves which often makes me to forget about the thoughts of my parents." (Inmate Four).

"My mother I will say helps me a lot overcome the problem of hunger while am here. I always complain to her of the insufficiency of food I eat here. She brings me food when she gets the chance." (Inmate Eight).

An officer also said this in relation to using officers’ relation as a means of dealing with their challenges:

"We also talk them a lot to forget about anything and live need life because they are needed by the society." (Officer One).
4.8.3 Long Hours of Work, Sleep and Isolation

Another strategy used by some inmates to do away with their challenges was resorting to working for long hours as well as sleeping for long hours. Others also resort to isolation from their fellow inmates to a quiet place which could be defined as a negative coping strategy in order to cope with challenges. Inmates either decided to over work while work in general has come to a break. These were voices from inmates in support of using sleep and work to cope with their challenges:

One important thing that helps me to overcome too much thinking is going to the workshop to continue with the unfinished job of making furniture (Inmate Four).

When I get unsatisfied after eating I become sad so the only way I do to handle it is to sleep when I sleep I can’t remember anything anymore (Inmate Thirteen).

An officer supported this by submitting that:

They have television to relieve them of boredom. Some also resort to sleeping all the time (Officer Four).
4.9 Training Programs Available to Inmates

Inmates of the Senior Correctional Center go through various training programs for their reformation. These programs have been categorized under three main sections namely, vocational skill training programs, educational programs and moral training programs. They gave various reasons for choosing their training programs. Some of the voices in support of the reasons are as follows:

*My choice of program was because my father opted for it* (Inmate Three).

*Before I chose this trade the officers asked me several times about it and that was the one I showed interest in* (Inmate Eight).

*Through counseling they are given some time to think about the program they want to do and draw a conclusion for themselves* (Officer Three).

### 4.9.1 Vocational Training Program

The inmates were trained in various vocational programs such as tailoring work, blacksmith, electrical engineering painting and art and auto mechanic.

One inmate shared his experience with the training program he was enrolled in:

*I chose welding because that is what I like and that is what I believe would help me in the future. I wasn’t forced to choose it* (Inmate Eighteen).

Another inmate also said this regarding his tailoring program:

*I do tailoring work because I want to become a tailor in the near future* (Inmate Eight).
4.9.2 Educational Training Program

Beyond the vocational training programs, inmates were also given education in formal and non-formal ways to ensure their reformation. These inmates said this in relation to why they chose the school over the workshop:

*I chose the school over the workshop because one of the administrators asked me what I wanted to do in future, which I said I wanted to become a sound engineer and a musician. He asked me to go to school so I can become what I want to be in future* (Inmate Nine).

*I used to go to school when I was in my mother’s house. I also like to speak English frequently and also write well* (Inmate Seven).

4.9.3 Moral Training Programs

The moral training programs were those meant to instill in the inmates good moral behavior. Such programs include: the Drug counseling program, religious programs such as the Eagles of Jesus Program, Asomdwe (Peace) Program and Plan Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) program. These were some voices of the participants regarding their moral training programs.

*In this center, we have the W.A.N.T.E.D. Program as we call it but, the full name is Worthy, Accountable, Name, Thankful, Empowered and Determination. In this program we are thought how to plan our future* (Inmate One).

*We have the peace education program that teaches us peace and how to tolerate others. It also teaches us how to show respect towards others and also gives us hope* (Inmate Two).
Regarding the moral training programs, an officer made mention that inmates were provided moral training by a religious organization, he said:

*We have the University of Ghana Inter Denominational Church Program which is meant to instil in them the fear of God and moral guidance* (Officer Four).

### 4.10 Participants Suggestions for Improvement

Several submissions were by the inmates and officers which they thought would help improve their conditions at the Senior Correctional Center. These suggestions were directed towards the government, non-governmental organizations and individuals who provide support to them at the center. These were some of the voices on submissions that were made regarding the ways to improve inmates’ conditions at the Senior Correctional Center.

*We need the government to come and build a wall around the centre for us so that, we will not be locked indoors thinking we would run away* (Inmate Three).

Another inmate made this suggestion on improvement in the food served for inmates at the center:

*I suggest that there should be at least an improvement with the food that is provided to us. If they change it, it will be fine but if they can’t change it they should at least improve upon it* (Inmate Nine).

This was an officer’s suggestion for improvement regarding increasing the number of social workers at the Senior Correctional Center:

*A lot of social workers I think should be employed in order to increase the hands in the welfare and also the prison services* (Officer Five).
4.12 Discussion of Findings

The study explored the experiences and perspectives of inmates and officers of the Senior Correctional Center in Accra. Based on the findings of the study, it was revealed that, inmates who were interviewed committed delinquent acts such as stealing, murder and defilement. As a result of committing these acts, they were arrested and charged by the juvenile court of justice and taken to the Senior Correctional Center for detention. These acts reflect the findings of Marle, Hempel and Buck (2010) who conducted a study in Netherland and found that acts of delinquency committed by the juveniles before they were taken to a correctional facility included sexual offence against female minors, murder, and stealing.

In addition, Shelton et al.’s (2011) study in the United State also found acts such as murder, physical and sexual assault, theft, and drug possession. Icli and Coban (2012) found that murder and stealing were acts of delinquency juveniles committed before their arrested and detention in juvenile correctional facilities. It was observed from the findings of this study that some of the inmates’ who engaged in stealing broke into people’s property, i.e. people they knew or lived with as well as the properties of people they did not know. Besides, two inmates who engaged in defilement claimed that they were falsely accused of committing the act but they were innocent, while another two also reported they deliberately planned to engage in the act defilement. With regards to the inmate who committed murder, he expressed that the act was accidental and not deliberate however, he was arrested and taken to the juvenile court and sentenced to the Senior Correctional Centre. Moreover, some inmates indicated that before their detention at the Senior Correctional Center, they had committed several acts of stealing and got arrested, but on each arrest they were released by the police on the account that they were minors. In support of this
finding on repeating delinquent acts, Moffitt (1993) in her Taxonomy Theory emphasized that some group of children continually engage in antisocial behaviors through to the age of adolescence.

In relation to being aware of the possible consequence of committing the delinquent acts, some inmates in this study pointed out that they were aware of the possible consequence of the acts before they committed such acts. Other inmates in the study also stated that they thought they would not be held accountable to the acts they committed because they were minors. Accordingly, Bevan (n.d.) emphasized that some inmates before committing the acts of delinquency had no idea of been punished however, others knew about the fact that they could be punished for committing such acts.

Additionally, the study found that reasons that led inmates to commit delinquent acts were poor parental supervision for some of them, others were due to separation from parents. According to Zeren et al. (2013) children from broken or separated families are observed to be weak in adopting to stress of parental separation, they end up joining bad friends and becoming delinquents. Inmates went further to indicate that they were subjected to physical and verbal abuses from their guardians which put them in frustration the result of which was their delinquent behaviors. It was similarly found by Bella et al. (2010) who reported that inmates had problems with their guardians who made them to go through forms of abuses.

Furthermore, financial difficulties from parents and guardians in the home were reasons given by some of the inmates for committing delinquent acts. Financial challenges from the family made it difficult for them to meet some basic needs of life. Another major reason for inmates’ delinquent behaviors was as a result of peer influence and for one inmate it was because he was
exposed to immoral behaviors from some adults and peers in his community. In consistence with this finding, Boakye (2012) observed that negative family circumstances such as financial difficulties and maltreatment of children by parents and guardians were reasons for inmates to commit delinquent acts.

Also emerging from the findings, inmates and officers were strongly of the view that inmates found protection from peers who influenced them into delinquency because they were subjected to cruel treatments by their step parents. Similarly the Developmental Taxonomy Theory by Moffitt (1993) emphasizes that majority of adolescents called the Adolescent Limited Offenders engage in delinquent behaviors by learning from their peers to overcome restrictions from their parents and be independent. Influence of peers was found to be mostly the reason for inmates’ delinquent behaviors. Additionally, with regard to the reasons, some officers also made mention that in an environment where a child sees all kinds of negative behaviors, it may become a motivating factor for that person to see such behaviors as an option. This finding corroborates Chung and Steinberg’s (2006) findings that community display of negative behaviors contribute to juvenile delinquency. They indicated that a community that is characterized by social vices and juveniles being exposed to such community antisocial behaviors, the juveniles are at a higher risk of engaging in antisocial behaviors (Chung & Steinberg, 2006).

Furthermore, some inmates were lured into acts such as stealing because they saw their friends possess attractive materials such as clothing, shoes and phones which they could not afford. Moreover, some inmates stated that that they had a lot of trust for their peers than their parents and guardians because their peers understood them better. Bosiakoh and Andoh (2010) found
that inmates spent a lot of time or lived with friends they labeled as bad before they were convicted.

Peer influence was a factor that caused juveniles to offend as they were influenced into delinquency by their peers who already engaged in delinquent acts (Simoes, Matos and Batista-Foguet, 2008). Also in conformity to the findings on peer influence as a reason for juveniles delinquent behaviors, Ayete-Nyampong (2013) study conducted in Accra revealed that peers learn from their associations and such connections have serious consequence. In addition, Moffitt (1993) in her Developmental Taxonomy Theory put forward that the group of adolescents referred to as the adolescent limited offenders engage in delinquent behaviors due to learning from their peers.

The findings indicated that inmates derived several benefits from their stay in the Senior Correctional Center. Benefits were in terms of behaviors and moral upliftments, benefits from their relationship with officers, support from officers and other people as well as and the advantages they derived from their training programs. The inmates pointed out that they had experienced a transformation from their initial negative behaviors to moral and positive behaviors. Some stated that the advice they received from counselors services at the center had imparted in them the sense of tolerance, respect and helped them to desist from engaging in behaviors that brought them to the Senior Correctional Center. Through counseling sessions, some had established a reconnection with their family members they previously had conflict with as a result of their negative behaviors.

Also, inmates benefited from career a program. Through that they were educated about the training programs they chose for their career. The findings support Ryals (2011) who conducted
study in the United States and found that counseling for juvenile delinquents brought about the needed change in their lives. Religious activities also impacted positively on the lives of inmates in the Senior Correctional Center. They engaged in religious programs which further imparted in them religious values such as the fear of God and respect for parents, officers and fellow inmates.

Makhurane (2014) similarly found that spiritual guidance from religious services enabled to model inmates into positive lifestyle. The findings further revealed that inmates benefited from their relationship with the officers at the center. According to the inmates, some of the officers served as parents for them, they provided some additional support for them for example, food, advice and moral support. Also, from observations made at the center, it showed that some officers and inmates related well as some officers were found playing in a jovial manner with inmates. This result fell in line with the finding of Kwok (2009) who found that cordial relationship with officers was beneficial to Asian juvenile delinquents in a Canadian Correctional facility. This also falls in line with the study of Gudadi (2014) in Tanzania who found that inmates as part of their benefits were provided with good food and adequate accommodation.

In support of the finding on good relationship between inmates and officers, Odera’s (2013) study found that the existence of a good relationship between officers and inmates ensured a transformation in the lives of the inmates. In terms of the advantages derived from the training programs, inmates and officers alike noted that some of the inmates have obtained certificate from training programs organized by non-governmental and religious organization. Those in vocational training programs had also acquired some skill which could be useful for them and to the community when they leave the center. Through observations made at the Senior
Correctional Center, the dormitories which housed the inmates were neatly painted with nice surroundings however, the dormitories were small in size to accommodate the growing number of inmates.

Inmates experienced several challenges at the Senior Correctional Center and these included: inadequate food, health problems, inadequate accommodation which led to overcrowding and challenges with their training. In terms of inadequate food, inmates indicated that, they were fed with less nutritious meals. Both key informants and inmates alike stated that in a day, the three square meals provided for the inmates in the center cost an amount of GH 1.80 pesewas. This resulted in the provision of low nutritious meals which further contributed to inmates’ health problems.

Furthermore, inmates faced challenges with their health at the center. Inmates observed that their health was badly affected due to the food they were provided with and also from the lack of regular exercises. Some made mention that they suffered from skin diseases due to the common sharing of few toilet facilities available for the many inmates. An inmate reported that he often vomited blood since his arrival at the center. As evidence to this, Rafedzi and Abrizah (2014) and Mukhtar et al. (2007) in Malaysia and Sudan respectively found health challenges for example skin diseases such eczema and vitiligo which affected the inmates. This finding also confirmed Odera’s (2013) finding that challenges inmates faced in the correctional center included the lack of medical products leading to serious health complications for the inmates.

Another challenge inmates faced was inadequate accommodation. Participants pointed out that inmates were beginning to experience overcrowding in their dormitories. An officer mentioned that usually a dormitory at the Senior Correctional Center should be occupied by about twenty
boys however, due to the gradual increment in number of inmates at the center, a dormitory took more inmates than required. An officer further observed that, the entire inmate population should be around 120 inmates at the Senior Correctional Center however, due to overcrowding, the Center had about 165 inmates, three less than the figure given by the Ghana Prisons Service at the beginning of year 2017.

Accordingly, Paul (2010) also found in his study in a Ugandan correctional center that inmates faced the challenge of overcrowding in the facility and indicated that this was unhygienic to the health of the inmates. Inmates in the Senior Correctional Center observed that they had problems with the few toilet facilities in the dormitories and that they had difficulty accessing the toilet. Moumakwa (2015) and Banda (2010) similarly in South Africa and Zambia also respectively found that each dormitory which housed inmates in the correctional center had only a toilet which was shared by about a hundred inmates.

When inmates were faced with difficulties, coping strategies become very useful for the inmates of the Senior Correctional Center. Inmates resorted to the use of some strategies to help them deal with their challenges they faced at the center. From the findings, inmates noted that when they were faced with difficulties such as inadequate food, emotional and psychological challenges, they coped through activities such as games, exercises and other forms of entertainment. In addition, they played games such as soccer, basketball, and tennis. Others also used their time to watch entertainment programs on television to forget of their difficulties. Others sung to themselves to help them cope.

In agreement with the result on games and exercise as coping strategies, Ashkar and Kenny (2008) similarly found that inmates of juvenile correctional facilities engaged in reading,
exercising and prolonged sleep as a form of coping with difficulties. Another coping strategy found to be useful for the inmates was the use of excessive and long hours of sleep. Others also isolated themselves from their fellow inmates to a quiet place in order to think about themselves. This is in consonance with Chagnon (2007) who found that in times of challenges, inmates withdrew themselves from others in order as a form of coping. Others also observed that working for long hours helped them to do away with excessive thinking.

In addition, some inmates and officers indicated that religious activities played a vital role in helping inmates to overcome their problems at the center. They either went to church or the mosque to pray to God for relief. Others resorted to the reading of devotional books to help them overcome difficult moments. Another strategy inmates adopted to cope with their challenges was the use social supports which was confirmed by Helm et al. (2014). They released stress through excessive chatting with fellow inmates and also by calling some officers with names borne by some of their relatives especially parents.

Some inmates also found comfort in words of encouragement from the officers at the center while others always looked at the motto of the center which states “Boys” and the respond “We shall rise again”. Inmates felt relieved of their problems when a family member or any group of people paid them a visit in the facility. Social support as coping strategy was found by Shulman and Cauffman (2011) as well who indicated that inmates in juvenile correctional facilities used social support seeking such as from friends, families, neighbors and organizations to cope with their challenges. In relation to Agnew’s (1992) Cognitive Coping Strategy which asserts that inmates try to minimize an adverse situation by maximizing and taking advantage of positive outcomes of that situation, this study found that inmates minimized and coped with the
difficulties of separation from their family and friends by taking advantage and replacing some of the officers at the Senior Correctional Center as their parents.

The main objective of detaining juvenile delinquents in the Senior Correctional Center is not for punishment but for the good reformation of inmates to fit into society. For that reason, several training programs have been made available for the inmates in that facility to ensure that they come out from that institution as reformed people. Training programs in the center have been categorized into three main sections.

There are vocational training programs at the center which involved skill training programs. The programs include auto mechanic repairs, carpentry, tailoring work, electrical work, blacksmith, weaving with bamboo, painting, masonry, fitting, bead making and ceramic work. After inmates had learnt the skill successfully, they were enrolled in the National Vocation Training Institute (NVTI) examination. When they successfully passed the NVTI exam, they were enrolled in some selected vocational and technical training schools.

The vocational training programs were available for the inmates to choose from in order to learn to obtain knowledge and skills for their future. This finding agrees with the findings of Sanyal (2012) who found that juvenile delinquents in juvenile correctional facilities in India were provided with vocational training programs such as painting and tailoring work. Also, Mucemi (2004) in addition also found that inmates in a Kenyan correctional center were given training in tomato sauce making, training in barbering, detergent making, electronic engineering, shoe making and carpentry.
In terms of the training programs, inmates also had the option to enroll in formal and informal educational programs. The formal educational program began from the Junior Secondary School level where inmates were prepared and registered for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Consistently, Young et al. (2007) in USA found that training programs for juvenile delinquents in the United States were mostly educational programs. Inmates who were not yet in any vocational training program or enrolled in the formal educational unit must be part of the non-formal school to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills. After a successful completion of the BECE inmates were registered with some selected Senior High Schools in Accra. Inmates were required to join specific educational and training schools because they had to stay at the Senior Correctional Center and be moving in and out of the facility to school. This was because they had not finished serving their term of detention at the center.

Inmates also go through moral training programs at the center. These moral training programs were organized by non-governmental organizations. The programs include the Drug Counseling Program which was meant to educate the inmates on the negative effects of substance abuse which was similarly indicated by Yazzie’s (2011) study in the United States. Also, inmates had the W.A.N.T.E.D program fully known as Worthy, Accountable, Name, Thankful, Empowered and Determination which is meant to empower and guide the inmates to plan for a better future.

There was also the Eagle of Jesus Program aimed at instilling the fear of God in the inmates, the Asomdwe (Peace) Program also imparted in the inmates peaceful co-existence and tolerance with people. Additionally, there was the Planned Parenthood Association Program which was aimed at providing sex education to the inmates. Inmates were received certificates when they successfully participated in some of these programs. The findings on the educational and
religious programs are in line with Paul’s (2010) study in Uganda who found that training programs for inmates in the juvenile correctional facility were formal and non-formal educational programs as well as religious programs.

Participants of this study, made several suggestions that they thought could help improve the conditions of the inmates in the Senior Correctional Center. Firstly, inmates suggested that, the government should extend further support to them by increasing the amount of money allocated for their daily food expenses. They also suggested that government should build a wall around the center so that they would not be locked indoors for several hours. Inmates also requested the Ghana Prisons Service to replace officers who were teachers and also served as escorts to the inmates because they felt uncomfortable about that.

Inmates further requested the government to change the uniform they wore at the center and replace with the uniform worn by every government school child in order not to see them as prisoners. The study participants sought for the government’s assistance to help provide training materials for their vocational training programs. In addition, they entreated non-governmental agencies, groups and individuals to extend their support to them in the form of basic items such as food, soap, clothing and other basic needs. They also entreated more religious bodies to help support them with religious activities.

In conclusion, the findings of this study reveal several reasons why inmates committed the acts that led to their detainment in the Senior Correctional Center. The findings also reveal benefits inmates derive in the center, their challenges at the center and strategies they adopt to cope with challenges. Additionally, the findings show the training programs inmates go through for their correction at the center. Furthermore, the findings also indicate suggestions made by inmates that
if carried out could help improve their conditions at the center. This study contributes to existing literature in the field of juvenile delinquency by adding to the few studies conducted in Ghana on the experiences of inmates and perceptions of officers in juvenile correctional facilities, especially with focus on the challenges and coping strategies adopted by inmates.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of this study, conclusions, recommendations and implications for social work practice. The study focused on exploring the experiences and perceptions of inmates and officers at the Senior Correctional Center. The study aimed at finding the reasons that led inmates to commit the acts that sent them to the correctional center for detention, the benefits inmates derived in the center as well as the challenges that confronted inmates in the center and the coping strategies inmates adopted to deal with their challenges at the Senior Correctional Center.

The findings of the study indicated that inmates committed delinquent acts such as stealing, defilement and murder. The findings also revealed that inmates were influenced into committing these acts due to reasons such as poor parental supervision and separation from their parents. Furthermore, inmates’ reasons for engaging in the acts included financial difficulties of their families which led them to resort to delinquency such as stealing in order to meet certain basic needs of life. Moreover, the cause of inmates’ delinquent behaviors was their association with bad friends who influenced them to engage in these vices. Others also reported of maltreatment and abuse from their guardians. Lastly, from the findings, an inmate indicated that he engaged in stealing because he was exposed to immoral behaviors from some adults and peers in the community that he came from.
Findings of the study further showed that inmates derived benefits from their stay in the correctional center. The findings revealed that inmates benefited from counseling and religious services by obtaining spiritual guidance. They noted that access to these services in the facility made them to change their negative behaviors to that of acceptable behaviors. Additionally they gained benefits from their relationship with officers, fellow inmates, relatives and other visitors.

From the findings, they also benefited from the training programs at the center because they had acquired some form of skill and knowledge through involvement in these programs. Inmates also earned a certificate through participation in some of the training programs.

In addition, the findings of the study indicated that the inmates faced challenges with inadequate food. Others also experienced health challenges which resulted from low nutritious and inadequate food as well as diseases contracted through the use of their lavatories. The lack of regular exercises for inmates was also found to be a cause for inmates’ health challenges. Inmates further complained of accommodation problems stating that they had inadequate washrooms which led to overcrowding in the dormitories.

Moreover, coping strategies adopted by the inmates to deal with challenges as revealed by inmates include: the use of games, entertainment, exercises and sleep. Some resort to the use of isolation and long hours of work to cope with difficult times. Social support was found to be very useful for the inmates to cope with their challenges. Inmates used their interactions with fellow inmates, family members and outside friends who visited and cordial relations with officers at the center to help them cope with their challenges.
In terms of the training programs, the study found that there were vocational skill training programs such as, mechanic work, bead making, blacksmith, carpentry and electrical work. The center also had educational programs for which the inmates were registered to write the BECE exam as well as non-formal educational programs that provided inmates with basic literacy and numeracy skill. Other programs at the center for the inmates’ correction were those organized by non-governmental agencies namely for example narcotic education program and sex education program.

Inmates and officers made suggestions that government should help improve their conditions by increasing the budget that is allocated for their daily meals. They also pleaded with the government to erect a structure in the form of a wall around the facility so that they can get the opportunity to freely move within the facility and to avoid been locked in their dormitories for long hours. From the findings, inmates again suggested that prison officers who served as trainers and teachers should not be their escorts because it put some fear in them while in the classroom or the workshop. Inmates also suggested to non-governmental organizations to also extend their support to them through provision of some basic needs and services.

5.2 Conclusions
Based on the findings of the study, some conclusions were made. The inmates of the Senior Correctional Center who participated in the study committed delinquent acts such as stealing and defilement which violates criminal law. However, some were influenced to commit such acts due to factors such as poor parenting, peer influence and negative community behaviors. Again, from the findings, inmates derived several benefits from their stay at the center. Not only did inmates
benefit from their training programs at the center, but also they benefited from other things in the facility such as relationships.

Additionally, the findings of the study revealed that inmates were faced with challenges at the Senior Correctional Center, such as poor health conditions which hindered their training. Inmates adopted some positive coping strategies to overcome their challenges, while some were negative. The findings revealed that inmates were provided with vocational, educational and moral training programs at the Senior Correctional Center for their correction which were beneficial to the reformation of the inmates.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, some recommendations are made to government, non-governmental organizations, groups, families and individuals. The findings revealed that inmates of the Senior Correctional Center committed delinquent acts due to reasons such as peer influence, poor parenting, parental separation and exposure to social vices from some adults and peers in the community. The study therefore recommends that community level programs such as symposiums and forums should be organized to educate families especially parents on the need to carry out responsible parenting to children and to also educate the community on the negative effects of social vices on the development of children. The educational programs could be organized by the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection, and the Department of Social Development in collaboration with other child centered non-governmental agencies such as UNICEF Ghana, Plan Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG), and Ghana NGO’s Coalition on the Rights of the Child and Child Rights International as well as World Vision Ghana.
Moreover, findings revealed that inmates derived benefits from their stay at the Senior Correctional Center such as benefits from their relationships with officers, relatives and other visitors. Based on this, it will be recommended that officers at the Senior Correctional Center especially contributed to a large extent inmates’ benefit at the center. It would therefore be recommended that the Ghana Prisons Service provide officers at the center with better incentives to enable them provide better services and assistance to the inmates.

Also, the findings of the study revealed that inmates faced several challenges at the Senior Correctional Center such as problems with food, health and accommodation. In respect of that the study would recommend that the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection in collaboration with the Ghana Prisons Service should raise the budget allocated for providing food for the inmates at the center. In addition to that the Gender Ministry could also partner with the Ministry of Health to provide regular health screening programs for the inmates.

There could also be sanitary inspections on regular basis at the center to help ensure that inmates are protected from diseases. To end the accommodation challenge, the study would recommend that inmates should be relocated to a new facility established by the Ministry of Gender in collaboration with the Ghana Prisons Service and through the support of non-governmental bodies such as UNICEF Ghana and World Vision Ghana. The new facility could be expanded and fenced with recreational facilities so that it would help promote the training and social development of inmates.

Besides, the study found that inmates were not comfortable with officers escorting them, teaching them at the same time in the classroom. Based on this finding, it will be recommended that officers who escort the inmates to avoid escape should not be the same officers who teach
them in the classroom. Moreover, from the findings, it was indicated that there were only two social workers at the Senior Correctional Center to serve the welfare needs of over 100 inmates. For this reason, the study recommends the need for the relevant stakeholders such as the Department of Social Development and the Ghana Prisons Service to train and also provide more social workers at the center to serve the welfare needs of these inmates.

Finally, the findings revealed that inmates were provided with educational and vocational training programs at the center. It was found that programs for the correction of inmates were educational, vocational and moral in nature. With regards to these findings, the study would recommend to government through the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection and appeal to other organizations to make available for inmates adequate training resources such as workshop materials and text books for the training of inmates. Also, it will be recommended that inmates should be provided with sponsorships packages to motivate them to work hard to attain heights in education and vocational skills.

Sponsorship packages could as well come from the government for instance from the Ghana Education Service and the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection. Other non-governmental agencies that could also be of great assistance include World Vision Ghana, UNICEF Ghana, Plan Ghana and Child Rights International. This study also recommends for future researchers to consider doing a mixed method study. While the qualitative bit explores the experiences of the inmates in the correctional center, the quantitative aspect will also investigate the delinquent acts committed by inmates as well as the perceptions of the general public on inmates’ stigmatization.
5.4 Implications for Social Work Practice

Social workers play a very essential role in ensuring that the physical, psychological and emotional needs of inmates in juvenile correctional facilities are met. Social workers have the responsibility to intervene for the betterment of children in juvenile correctional facilities. Among other roles as professionals, they work as advocates, clinicians and educators for the betterment of children.

Social workers as counselors help individuals to express their needs, clarify their problems as well as help to identify solutions and interventions for individuals to promote their well-being. Social workers therefore should help provide counseling services to the inmates of the Senior Correctional Center and their families in order to help address some of their needs. Also, social workers as advocates work for the voiceless people in the community, for that reason, they should advocate through channels such as the ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to request the government to ensure that, some of the challenges outlined by the inmates in the Senior Correctional Center such inadequate food, health problems and problems regarding their training programs are addressed.

Social workers as clinicians ensure the physical and psychological well-being of individual’s as well as their social functioning. They should therefore collaborate with the needed agencies such as the Ministry of Health to organize regular health education and screening programs for the inmates in the Senior Correctional Center. Furthermore, social workers as linking agents link vulnerable individuals and groups to the needed resources. Accordingly, they should link up with non-governmental organizations such as UNICEF Ghana, World Vision Ghana, Plan Ghana, Child Rights International, Ghana NGO’s Coalition on the Rights of the Child and some...
community leaders such as parliamentarians and to help contribute towards the development of these children through the provision of scholarships and other needed support.

Moreover, social workers as educators should also ensure that more education is provided to the general public on the need to avoid stigmatization of these inmates when they return to the community. This could be effective through collaboration between the media and other relevant stakeholders. Finally, social workers in the juvenile courts should also be more professional in their dealing with children who come into contact with the law by ensuring that, the principles guiding the treatment of children who have come into contact with the law be applied appropriately when dealing with such juvenile at the juvenile court.
REFERENCES


Juvenile Justice Act 2003 Act (563) [Ghana].


Omamo, O. C. (2009). *An assessment of factors related to the effectiveness of government rehabilitation schools for delinquent adolescents in Nairobi and Western counties in*


Samuels, J.A. (2010). *Challenges that offenders face upon release that contribute to recidivism in the Department of Correctional Services: A case study of the West Coast Medium ‘A’ Correctional Centre in the Western Cape* (Master’s thesis, University of the Western Cape). Retrieved July 11, 2017 from


APPENDIX 1

CONSENT FORM FOR INMATES AND OFFICERS OF THE SENIOR CORRECTIONAL CENTER IN ACCRA

The above mentioned research is being conducted by an MPHIL student from the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana, Legon. The interview will be conducted to obtain your input on the topic: Life in a correctional facility: Experiences and perspectives of inmates and officers. The research is purely for academic purposes and all information provided will be treated as such. If you give the authorization, this interview will be tape recorded to ensure that the researcher gets every detail of the interview and at the same time give attention to the interviewing process. I firmly assure you that every information provided in this interview will be kept confidential to avoid access by unauthorized people.

Kindly read the following statements and sign or thumbprint as proof of your consent to participate:

1. I volunteer to participate in this research
2. I understand the research is for academic work and that I may withdraw from this research at any time without any penalty.
3. I understand the researcher will not disclose my name in any report using information from this interview and that, my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.
4. I have read and understood the explanation provided to me and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INMATES AND OFFICERS OF THE SENIOR CORRECTIONAL CENTER, ACCRA

RESEARCH TOPIC:

LIFE IN A CORRECTIONAL FACILITY: EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES OF INMATES AND OFFICERS

Demographic Information of Inmates

a) Age of participant.
b) Participant’s level of education.
c) Area of residence before coming to the correctional center.
d) Negative behaviors of the people in the area.
e) Religious affiliation of participant.
f) Person inmate was living with before being brought to the center.
g) Treatment by the person.
h) Occupation of your parents/guardian.
i) Duration of stay in the correctional center.

Reasons that Account for Acts Committed by Inmates

1. Acts that brought the inmate to this center.

2. Reasons for committing act.

3. Awareness of the possible consequences of committing the act.

Benefits Inmates Derive in the Correctional Center
1. Positive experiences in the facility:
   a. Positive impact of counseling and religious service.
   b. Positive aspect of officers’ relation.

Challenges Inmates Face in the Correctional Center

2. Challenges due to separation from home and community.
3. The community’s reaction towards inmates.
4. Positive impact of counseling and religious service.
5. Physical and psychological well-being

Coping Strategies Adopted by Inmates in the Senior Correctional Center

1. Means of handling challenges (Inmates to link specific challenges to specific coping strategy).
2. The role of your family, peers etc. in overcoming challenges at the center.
3. Officers’ role in overcoming challenges.

Training Programs Available for Inmates at the Correctional Center

1. Training programs available at the center.
2. Selection of training programs available in the facility.
3. Factors that influence choice of one program over the other.
4. Suggestions on ways to improve conditions in the center.
5. Difficulties encountered in relation to the programs.
APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR OFFICERS

Reasons that Account for Acts Committed by Inmates

1. Reasons that account for inmates’ delinquent act.

Benefits Inmates Derive in the Correctional Center

1. Positive experiences of inmates in the correctional center.

Challenges Inmates Face in the Correctional Center

2. Challenges inmates face in this correctional facility.

Coping Strategies Adopted by Inmates in the Correctional Center

1. How the inmates cope with challenges at the center.

Training Programs Available to Inmates in the Correctional Center

1. Programs targeted at reforming inmates at the facility.