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**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**

**EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF JUVENILE  
DELINQUENTS IN AKURE CORRECTIONAL  
HOME; ONDO STATE – NIGERIA.**

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## ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency is a global phenomenon that has affected the individual culprits' moral standings and also the general morality of the society. Though a global issue, its effects are felt more in developing countries such as Nigeria where there is less attention paid to the measures that are necessary for attending to the issue. It is based on this neglect that, this study was carried out to discover the predisposing factors to juvenile delinquency, the challenges of rehabilitation and experiences of juvenile delinquents at the Akure Correctional Home. A qualitative research design was employed, 20 participants were purposively sampled and in-depth interviews were conducted to collect information. Findings from the study showed that family malfunctioning and peer influence are the major predisposing factors to juvenile delinquency. Besides, there were challenges in the rehabilitation process, including inadequate resources and personnel. These have affected the rehabilitation of juveniles at the Home negatively. Moreover, juveniles of the correctional home experienced physical abuse from rehabilitation officers and other inmates. Based on the findings, the study recommended thorough education programmes on proper parenting, adequate allocation of funds, and the need for rehabilitation officers and other security officials to treat juveniles with dignity and respect.

## DEDICATION

To my dear parents Mrs. Angelina Onyenagubor and Late Mr. Canice Onyenagubor, the Salesians of Don Bosco AFW province. Also to all those who have promoted the genuine understanding of parenting.



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**TABLE OF CONTENT**

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	i
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	ii
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	iii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	iv
<b>TABLE OF CONTENT</b> .....	v
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	2
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	2
<b>1.0 Background of the Study</b> .....	2
<b>1.1 Statement of the problem</b> .....	4
<b>1.2 Objectives of the Study</b> .....	6
<b>1.3 Research Questions</b> .....	6
<b>1.4 Significance of the Study</b> .....	6
<b>1.5 Definition of Terms</b> .....	7
<b>1.6 Organization of the study</b> .....	8
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	11
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	11
<b>2.0 Introduction</b> .....	11
<b>2.1 Factors Contributing to Juvenile Delinquency</b> .....	11
<b>2.1.1 Family Dysfunction and Peer Pressure</b> .....	12
<b>2.2 Challenges in Rehabilitating Juvenile Delinquents</b> .....	15
<b>2.2.1 Experience of Juvenile Delinquents</b> .....	17
<b>2.3 Preventive Measure of Juvenile Delinquency</b> .....	19
<b>2.3.1 Psychological and Cognitive Therapists in Mitigating Juvenile Delinquency</b> .....	20
<b>2.3.2 Family Involvement and Restorative Justice in Mitigating Juvenile Delinquency</b> .....	24
<b>2.4 Theoretical Framework</b> .....	26
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	28
<b>METHODOLOGY</b> .....	28
<b>3.0 Introduction</b> .....	28
<b>3.1 Research Design</b> .....	28
<b>3.2 Study Area</b> .....	28
<b>3.3 Target Population</b> .....	29
<b>3.4 Study Population</b> .....	29
<b>3.5 Sampling Techniques</b> .....	30
<b>3.6 Sample size</b> .....	30
<b>3.7 Sources of Information</b> .....	30
<b>3.8 Methods of Data Collection</b> .....	31

3.9 Data Handling and analysis .....	31
3.10 Ethical Considerations.....	32
3.11 Credibility and Trustworthiness.....	33
3.12 Limitations of the Study .....	85
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>PRESENTATION OF DATA AND DISCUSSIONS .....</b>	<b>34</b>
4.0 Introduction.....	34
4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants .....	34
4.2 Factors Contributing to Juvenile Delinquency at the Akure Juvenile Correctional Home ...	35
4.2.1 Family malfunction as a predisposing Contributor to Juvenile Delinquency .....	35
4.2.2 Peer Influence as a Predisposing Factor to Juvenile Delinquency .....	44
4.3 Challenges in Rehabilitating Juveniles at the Akure Juvenile Correctional Home .....	46
4.3.1 Challenges in Rehabilitation at Akure Correctional Home .....	47
4.3.2 Experiences of Juvenile Delinquents at the Akure Juvenile Correctional Home.....	57
4.4 Preventive Measure to Juvenile Delinquency at the Akure Correctional Home .....	63
4.5 Discussion of the Findings .....	70
4.5.1 Predisposing Factors of Juvenile Delinquency .....	70
4.5.2 Challenges and Experiences of Juveniles.....	72
4.5.3 Mitigating Juvenile Delinquency .....	75
4.6 How the Findings Addressed the Structural Functionalist Theory.....	76
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>78</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	78
5.2 Summary of the Findings .....	78
5.3 Conclusions.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.4 Recommendations.....	82
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE.....</b>	<b>100</b>



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Background of the Study**

Juvenile delinquency is becoming an urgent concern globally, and a major issue that affects the economic, social, health, and governance in many societies (Moser, 2006). This phenomenon is evident throughout the world and thus, poses a threat to present and future generations (Annie and Bhadra, 2014). It is widely considered a complex problem that exacts a substantial and continuing toll on the society (Mulvey, Arthur, and Reppucci, 1997). Juvenile delinquency occurs in simple and complex societies which affects the security of a community, as well as jeopardize human relations (Haque, 2012).

In most developing countries, like Nigeria, juvenile delinquents are at a higher risk of becoming criminals in their adulthood due to poor rehabilitation centers (Boakye, 2013). Juvenile delinquency negatively affects mainly the physical and psychological development of children (Brown, 1998). Most often, juvenile delinquency comes as a result of poor family background (single parenthood, poverty, and family maltreatment) and peer pressure as well as poor state mechanisms to ensure children wellbeing (Ikediashi, 2010). This implies that, the way a child is brought up by his or her parents, the kind of individuals the child associates with and the response from state policies could be strong determinants of delinquent behaviour. Accordingly, effective prevention and control methods of juvenile delinquency will require collective efforts involving all stakeholders (family, government and non-governmental organizations) in child development (Ebuehi and Omogbemi, 2011).

In Africa, juvenile delinquency became rampant with the emergence of colonialism because it was perceived by the continent as a vehicle of change (Ugboajah, 2008). Nonetheless, colonial disruption of the social setting of the African families (the traditional extended family) and clan ties led to job redundancies (Ugboajah, 2008). Consequently, affected children migrated to the emerging new cities as safe havens, but rather found themselves homeless and on the street. The proliferation of cities and social changes and complexities that accompany this process (urbanization), including urban poverty, led to an increase in the juvenile crime rate in Africa (United Nation, 2008). As one of the countries with rapid population growth in Africa, Nigeria has a current population of 182 million and a growth rate of 3.2 % (Population Reference Bureau, 2015). It is estimated that a greater number of the urban adolescent and children ranging from 6-14 are working in the informal sector and under hazardous conditions (World Bank, 2009). From a geographical analysis, countries with more urbanized populations have higher registered crime rates than those with well-rooted rural lifestyles and communities (Moser, 2006).

In Nigeria, there are huge numbers of juvenile delinquents living on the streets of Lagos, Ibadan, Onitsha, Akure and many other parts of the country (Oloko, 1999). These children sometimes engage in nefarious activities and hardly return home. It is assumed that most of them come to the streets because of mistreatment, neglect and lack of basic needs in their families (Ebuehi and Omogbemi, 2011). As these children took to delinquency, their respective communities and families took little or no interest in them and this resulted in the juvenile delinquents developing a survival instinct leading them into further delinquent activities. In some instances, these children are for one reason or the other expelled from their homes thereby forcing them to go on

to the streets, which sometimes compels them to join bad gangs and eventually become delinquents.

Besides, the prevention of re-offending among juveniles could prove pivotal in mitigating crime rate among juveniles. In Nigeria, studies on the effectiveness of rehabilitation facilities among juveniles have highlighted the inefficiency with regard to rehabilitating juvenile offenders (Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria, 2003). Whilst rehabilitation of juveniles in correctional homes have been recommended, studies have reported poor experiences of juveniles who go through rehabilitation in correctional homes (Constitutional Rights Project, 2003; Greve, 2001).

The purpose of an institutional sentence for a juvenile is to provide him or her with a conducive environment for effective rehabilitation. Therefore, ineffective and inadequate rehabilitation programmes, coupled with poor experiences, could give rise to re-offending among juveniles after discharge. This may affect any quest to mitigate juvenile delinquency. It is against this backdrop that the study sought to investigate the experiences of juvenile delinquents at the Akure Correctional Home in Ondo State, Nigeria.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

There has been limited research into the day-to-day lives and experiences of juvenile delinquents in correctional homes. Most of what we know about the experiences of juvenile delinquents in correctional homes are made available by NGOs and National Human Rights Institutions (Ayete-Nyampong, 2012). This is obviously in the face of the increase in juvenile offences and incarceration in Nigeria (Atilola, 2013; Atilola, Omigbodun, and Bella-Awusah, 2014; Muhammed, Salawu, Adekeye, Ayinla, and Adeoye, 2009). The increase is due to certain

predisposing factors and challenges faced in running correctional homes in developing countries, such as Nigeria.

Furthermore, correctional homes in Nigeria have struggled to live up to expectations due to the resolving issue of overcrowding and inadequate medical services, recreation, staffing and programming to rehabilitate juvenile delinquents (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005; Makinde, 2007). For instance, the provision of psychotherapy for convicted juveniles is hardly actualized as therapy centers are unavailable in most parts of the country (Nkereuwem, Lasisi & Ekpenyong, 2012).

The juvenile justice system of Nigeria was built on the basis of preventing juvenile delinquency through effective rehabilitation and based on professional interventions and humane treatment of juveniles. One may wonder what sort of activities are done to curb the increasing rate of juveniles who are incarcerated in correctional homes and the experiences of those who are in the process of reformation in order to reduce recidivism. Nevertheless, most juvenile delinquents after discharge continue with their delinquent acts and are likely to be arrested for criminal offences in adulthood if proper rehabilitation and reformation does not take place.

Studies have been carried out around juvenile delinquency centers to determine the nature of offences committed by the delinquents. Such studies pay little attention to the challenges and experiences of juveniles in the correctional homes. For instance, Alemika and Chukwuma, (2001) conducted a study which showed that 63.2% of juvenile delinquents engaged in property offences, 20.6% in moral and status offences, 13.3% in personal offences and 2.9% in public order offences. This is in line with the studies of Nwanna and Akpan (2003) which concentrated on factors contributing to juvenile delinquency and the perennial effects such as lack of parental control, truancy, robbery, public demonstration/riot, drug pushing/ addiction, and murder.

A major consideration of this study was that, other studies on juvenile delinquency have not focused much on the experiences of juveniles in various rehabilitation facilities and how the facilities impact the rehabilitation process of juveniles. As a result, the current study contributes to filling this gap by investigating the experiences of juveniles in the Akure Correctional Home. In addition, the study investigated the predisposing factors to juvenile delinquency, and explored the various preventive measures needed to mitigate the factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency.

### **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out the predisposing factors of juvenile delinquency in Akure-Ondo State.
2. To find out the challenges involved in rehabilitating juvenile delinquents at the Akure Correctional Home.
3. To explore preventive measures for juvenile delinquency at the Akure – Ondo State.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What are the factors contributing to juvenile delinquency?
2. What are the challenges affecting the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents at the Akure correctional homes?
3. What are some of the preventive measures of juvenile delinquency?

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study results will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the experiences of juvenile delinquents in correctional homes, provide evidence-based information for Social Workers. In addition to this is that it will served as reference documents for advocating and awareness creation on the stigmatization and stereotyping against convicted juveniles who are serving their sentences in correction homes.

Moreover, the outcome of this study will stimulate ideas in academia so that further research can be conducted to advance knowledge in the field of the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, the study may provide insight to the public on the need to treat juvenile delinquents with respect and dignity. Besides, policy makers will be helped through the recommendations emerging from the study in addressing the gap existing in the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents. This will, no doubt, produce long lasting and complete behavioural change that can be visibly realized among the delinquents once they are reintegrated into their families and communities.

### **1.5 Definition of Terms**

The concept of a child being a juvenile delinquent evades universally accepted definitions. These concepts have been interpreted and differently used depending on the subjective perception of scholars in reference to different occasions and contexts. Confronted with these realities, this study has narrowly explained and contextualized the usage of both concepts, for the purposes of clarity, better understanding and avoidance of doubts.

**Juvenile:** Any persons below the age of eighteen (Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989; Article 1).

**Delinquent:** An individual who demonstrates a predisposition to commit and perpetuate unlawful conducts.

**Delinquency:** Conducts considered to be morally unacceptable among children.

**Juvenile delinquent:** Persons below age eighteen whose conducts are considered to be morally unacceptable in society.

**Correctional Home:** refers to a reformatory home that provides statutory care and supervision to young offenders as ordered by the courts. Juvenile Justice Act, 2003 (ACT 653). This is a home where juvenile delinquents are taken for psychotherapy, guidance and for pro-social behaviour in order to overcome their antisocial characteristics.

**Rehabilitation:** Rehabilitation can be described as correction, intervention, treatment, development and transformation of offenders (Edgar & Newell, 2006). It is a process of positive change which means it is not a one-off event in the life of juvenile delinquents to prepare them for reintegration (Cilliers & Kriel, 2008).

## 1.6 Organization of the study

The study is structured in five chapters. Chapter one (1) is the background of the study, statement of the problem, study objectives, research questions and also outlines the significance of the study. Chapter two (2) discusses literature that exists on the topic. It reviews literature on the predisposing factors of juvenile delinquency, challenges of rehabilitating juvenile delinquents and preventive measures to undertake the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents. The experiences of the juvenile delinquents and the theoretical framework were discussed in this chapter.

Chapter three (3) which covers the research methodology, entails the strategies and procedures that were used to obtain the data needed for the study. It discusses the research design that was adopted for the study. It also provides information on the population that was studied; data; sampling strategy; sample size; and collection technique, among others. The procedures for handling and analyzing data, as well as some ethical issues that were considered in the study have also been explained. Chapter four (4) presents the findings that have been made from the

analyzed data and the discussion. Finally, Chapter five (5) contains the summary, conclusions and suggests remedies by way of recommendation.





## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

The chapter reviews literature related to the topic under study. Accordingly, literature is reviewed under the following themes; factors contributing to juvenile delinquency, challenges of rehabilitating juvenile delinquents, and preventive measure of juvenile delinquency.

#### 2.1 Factors Contributing to Juvenile Delinquency

A number of reasons have been advanced by various scholars in an attempt to explain the factors contributing to juvenile delinquency. Juvenile delinquency is like other social problems. A wide range of factors influence juveniles' choice of delinquency and the perpetuation of delinquency. The most important of these are discussed below.

Factors contributing to juvenile delinquency are replete in the position of several scholars. Juvenile delinquency could result from maltreatment experienced by a child (Ryan and Testa, 2005; Stewart, Dennson, and Waterson, 2002); race (Testa and Poertner, 2003); neighbourhood ethnic heterogeneity and structural disorganization that could result from broken home and limited resources (Huang and Ryan, 2014); families with criminal records (Farrington, Jolliffe, Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, and Kalb, 2001); individual factors and academic difficulties (Boakye, 2013); behaviour of role models and cognitive and academic limitations (Thornberry, Huizinga, and Loeber, 2004); psychiatric disorders such as psychosis and neurosis (Teplin, Abram, McClelland, Mericle, Dulcan, and Washburn, 2002) and school drop out that results from grade retention (Henry, Knight and Thornberry, 2012).

### **2.1.1 Family Dysfunction and Peer Pressure**

The literature on the predisposing factors of juvenile delinquency seems to arrive at family dysfunction and peer influence as the major contributing factors to juvenile delinquency (Boakye, 2013). Therefore, this section reviews empirical research reports on how family dysfunction and peer influence lead to juvenile delinquency.

A research conducted by Ryan and Testa (2005) on child maltreatment and juvenile delinquency reports that children who experience maltreatment from their parents or care-givers are at increasing risk of becoming delinquent. Similarly a study conducted in Australia by Stewart, Dennson, and Waterson (2002) on factors that contribute to child delinquency. Stewart, Dennson, and Waterson (2002) specifically revealed that physical and emotional abuse are the major contributing factors to juvenile delinquency. Similarly, Widom and Brandford (2002), found that children who were neglected and physically abused are more likely to commit crime and more seriously, they were twice more likely to be arrested and convicted as adults.

Further, scholars have reported that negative association by a juvenile and peer influence, psychological and behavioural challenges, impulsivity, neglect by parents and negative attachment, gender, age, income level and socioeconomic status of parents are strong antecedents to juvenile delinquency (Thornberry et al., 2004). Also, children are likely to develop aggression and delinquency behaviour when they experience parental divorce, separation, and most detrimentally, when they come from unstable and dysfunctional families (Robert and Nicole, 1994). This suggests that divorce compels children to remain under the supervision of one parent, hence denies children the opportunity to be taken care of by both parents. This affects parenting, given that parenting is the collective responsibility of mother and father. Other studies have shown that low bonding in school, academic disorders, childhood aggression, and antisocial

peer group affiliation are contributing factors to juvenile delinquency (Nagin and Trembly, 2001). Ebuehi and Omogbemi (2011); Nyamoko and Songole (2014) also concluded from their study on juvenile delinquency that poor parental supervision, poverty and peer pressure are strong determinants of delinquency among juveniles.

The above research findings have been supported by Cheung and Park (2016) on effects of single parenting on children education in Hung Kong. Cheung and Park reported that children from single parent families performed significantly poorly at school, which has negative effects on children's behaviour. Similarly, Ang, Huan, Chan, Cheong, and Leaw (2015) stated that poor educational performance increases school children's risk of joining gangs, which in turn leads them to delinquent activities.

Also, children who come from disadvantaged families most often stand a higher risk of becoming delinquent. A study conducted by Kofler-Westergren, Klopff, and Mitterauer (2010) reported negative family experiences such as single parenting as a contributing factor to juvenile delinquency. Specifically, Kofler-Westergren, Klopff, and Mitterauer sampled 75 juveniles comprising of 61 males and 14 females to investigate risk factors for juvenile delinquency within the family structure. The study linked the cause of juvenile delinquency to detrimental family characteristics such as single parenting. Accordingly, the authors established that two out of three juvenile offenders had experienced single parenting, where they were living with their mothers alone. Also, one out of four children had a drug abusive father. The study further established that poor family conditions resulted in children exhibiting conduct disorders, led to their committing further offences.

Gender also plays a major role in predicting delinquency. A study conducted by Steffensmeier, Schwartz, and Roche (2013) in the United States revealed that females are less likely to engage

in juvenile delinquency compared to the males. Mack and Leiber (2005) supported the above findings by reporting that males are more likely to be involved in delinquent behaviour as compared to their female counterparts.

In line with this, Rebellon, Manasse, Agnew, Van Gundy, and Cohen (2016), explained in their study on the relationship between gender and delinquency that females are less likely to engage in delinquent acts because females report a significantly higher level of anticipated guilt for delinquency. This suggests that female's level of guilt feeling after committing an offence is somewhat higher than that of their male counterparts. Another study by Akers (2009) reported that males are more exposed to delinquent role models and often come into contact with criminal activities due to their assigned roles.

A multivariate analysis by Ryan and Testa (2005) revealed that the race of a person could be a determining factor of juvenile delinquency. They supported this by reporting in their findings that African Americans are more likely to engage in delinquent acts than European Americans. Another study by Huang and Ryan (2014) on delinquency explained that African Americans stand a high risk of becoming delinquent due to neighbourhood variables such as living in a heterogeneous environment, violence-prone communities, social disorganization and exposure to structural barriers.

Findings from a longitudinal study conducted in the United States by Green, Gesten, Greenwald, and Salcedo (2008) grouped the causes of juvenile delinquency into biological or birth related risk factors, family factors and individual risk factors. Specifically, the study reported birth related factors such as conduct disorders, prenatal cigarette smoking, and birth weight. The study put more emphasis on cigarette smoking by mothers during pregnancy as the major birth related factor that could contribute to delinquency. Also, among the family related risk factors identified

by the study were low level maternal education, and unstable marital status. In addition, the individual risk factor identified by the researcher was poor academic performance at the early stage of education.

Furthermore, a study conducted in Ghana by Boakye (2013) on juvenile delinquency reported countless factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency. The study used a random sample technique to collect data from 264 boys in three correctional facilities. Boakye reported individual factors (academic difficulties, and low religiosity on the part of children) as the major contributors to juvenile delinquency in Ghana. Also, the study established that parental socio-economic status (low income household), maltreatment, poor parental conflict, divorce and negative influence from peers could give rise to juvenile delinquency.

## **2.2 Challenges in Rehabilitating Juvenile Delinquents**

The juvenile and criminal justice system across the globe recommends that juvenile offenders be diverted instead of letting them mingle with criminals (CRC, 1989: article .37 (c); Muncie J., 2008). The reason behind this stems from believe that an effective and conducive environment for offender rehabilitation could prove vital when separate cases of juvenile delinquencies are approached differently. However, recent developments in the United States suggest that there are certain contradictions to this effect. This is evident from a study conducted in the United States by Woolard, Odgers, Lanza-Kaduce, and Daglis (2005), who established that the changing concept of juvenile offender sentencing that allows juveniles to mingle with adult criminals has created countless problems in juvenile rehabilitation. Specifically, the study pointed out that the practice poses challenges to the juvenile's safety and for the management and rehabilitation of juveniles within adult prisons. The above research findings pose a major challenge to the

rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. This is because, traditionally, juveniles are diverted or separated from adult criminals as a means to prevent further compromise in the character of the juvenile delinquents. The notion is that juvenile offenders are not yet criminals, which make them stand a higher chance of resisting when tailored-fit interventions given to them.

Scholars in the area of juvenile justice prevention have advocated through recommendations that, the treatment of juvenile offenders should target changing their criminogenic thinking (Draper, Errington, Omar, and Makhita, 2013; Wilson, Bouffard, and Mackenzie, 2005). However, Lambie and Randell (2013) revealed that incarceration of juvenile offenders affects their rehabilitation process. The authors explained that incarceration fails to meet the developmental needs of an offender. Also, they established that it fails to target the criminogenic needs of juveniles, which affects their rehabilitation and reformation processes. Additionally, the study revealed that, instead of solving the criminogenic behaviour of the offender it rather leads to the development of negative behavioural and mental health problems after discharge. This is likely to affect the offender's reintegration and could lead to the commission of future offences.

Moreover, studies conducted in Nigeria have reported that workshops at various correctional homes are faced with the problem of insufficient serviceable equipment and the available equipment is outmoded and could not be used because of poor maintenance and under-funding (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2001). The above research findings have been supported by a recent study in Nigeria by Ikoh (2011). The researcher assessed the failure of the Nigeria Correctional Homes to rehabilitate offenders. The findings of the study revealed that the condition of correctional homes in Nigeria is in a deplorable state. Consequently, inmates were at the risk of contracting myriad diseases, which result from poor sanitation, malnutrition, insufficient rehabilitation equipment, no recreation, absence of welfare facilities, poor shelter and clothing,

and insufficient correctional staff. These are challenges that hinder effective rehabilitation of the inmate.

Besides, results from a survey in the Kenyan Juvenile Rehabilitation Schools by Onyango (2013), reported countless challenges that hamper effective rehabilitation among juvenile delinquents in Kenya. Accordingly, it was revealed in the study that despite efforts by the government and other stakeholders to rehabilitate juvenile delinquents, rehabilitation of juveniles has been affected negatively by the deplorable conditions of the centres. This implies that rehabilitation of juveniles would be affected if it is undertaken in poor environmental conditions.

In addition, Mugerwa (2010) explored challenges associated with rehabilitating juvenile delinquents in Uganda correctional homes between 1997 and 2007. Mugerwa reported that the correctional homes are faced with insufficient funding, which results from delay in disbursement of funds allocated to the correctional home by the state. Other challenges of rehabilitating juveniles identified in the study were poor and insufficient food, overcrowding, where juveniles were sleeping with more than 10 inmates in a relatively small room, and training programmes are very traditional.

### **2.2.1 Experience of Juvenile Delinquents**

A sound and proper experiences coupled with a tailored-fit rehabilitation interventions would enhance juvenile offender rehabilitation and vice versa. However, scholars in juvenile justice system have established that managing juvenile justice effectively in various correctional homes across the globe has been problematic (Levitt, 2010). This section therefore reviews literature on the experiences of juvenile delinquents.

The United Nations (1985), mandates member countries to ensure the wellbeing, care, protection, education and rehabilitation or vocational training of juveniles sentenced to correctional homes. This pronouncement by the United Nations seems not to have been realized since a significant number of juveniles are being maltreated in various correctional homes (Kiessel and Wurger, 2002). Kiessel and Wurger (2002) further established in their study on juveniles in South Africa that incarcerated juveniles go through all forms of victimizations, including physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional abuse.

It is important to note that juvenile delinquents at correctional homes come with an array of problems, such as sexual harassment, neglect, broken homes, and many more, that have caused them to commit delinquent acts (Mincey, Maldonado, Lacey, and Thompson, 2008). According to Holman and Zeidenberg, (2006), the isolation of juvenile delinquents from families and communities may increase symptoms of anxiety and depression. This is also supported by White, Shi, Hirschfield, Eun-Young, and Loeber, (2010), who stated that there is a high rate of depressive indicators and behavioural disorders related to juvenile delinquents in correctional homes compared to juvenile that are not delinquents. Similarly, Corneau and Lanctot (2004) affirmed that some convicted juvenile delinquents experience mood disorders including depression and anxiety while in correction homes. The reason is that the conditions of many correctional homes are not welcoming and friendly to juvenile delinquency.

Furthermore, scholars have lamented the scanty research regarding the experiences of juveniles in correctional homes. Nevertheless, research has reported negative experiences of juveniles in correctional homes. For example, Levitt (2010) in his study on juveniles in the United States reported that juveniles go through countless victimizations, including physical and sexual abuses in correctional homes. A similar study by Davidson-Arad, Benbenishty, and Golan (2009) of

juvenile correctional facilities at Israel established that juveniles in correctional homes experience abuse from colleagues and correctional staff. This is confirmed by research conducted in Nigeria by Awopetu and Igbo (2015) who reported that there is an increase in the reporting of aggressive behaviours among inmates in correctional homes across Nigeria.

According to Ayete-Nyampong (2012), children in conflict with the law when detained suffer triple vulnerability: as children, as criminals or deviants and as detainees compared to the vulnerability of children who are victims of abuse such as rape, defilement, and child trafficking. This is supported by a very touching and shocking incident that was reported on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, 2001 by the Guardian Newspaper in Nigeria. The report revealed that “police in the capital city, Lagos, had arrested a four-year-old boy for breaking the windscreen of a neighbour’s car. The law enforcers not only kept the infant in the police station for two days, but also forced him to do manual labour” (The Guardian, 2001).

Furthermore, Lee (2002) revealed that the police were somewhat harsh in their encounters with youth suspected of delinquency. Thus, police officers’ attitudes toward delinquent children are intimidating, authoritative and rigid, on juveniles. Accordingly, juveniles have developed negative perceptions of the police due to the poor encounters they have had with them and they label the police as bad persons. This implies that, to a large extent, most juvenile delinquents experience negative treatment from the police and other security officers.

### **2.3 Preventive Measure of Juvenile Delinquency**

The cost involve in rehabilitating juvenile offenders is very high (Pardini, 2016), therefore any effort to mitigate the occurrences of juvenile delinquency could prove vital to juveniles, their families and the state. The upsurge in the number of juvenile offences in the past decade

warrants the need to design effective interventions that would make juveniles desist from repeating their offending behaviour (Efta-Breitbach and Freeman, 2004). Different interventions for mitigating juvenile delinquency have been suggested by scholars. Some have reported psychological intervention based on cognitive therapy (Draper et al., 2013; Moster, Wnuk, andJeglic, 2008; Pardin, 2016), as an effective way of reducing juvenile delinquency. Additionally, other scholars have reported the involvement of family or parents of juvenile delinquents in reducing juvenile delinquency (Luchenbill and Yeager, 2009; Mulvey, Schubert, andGarbin, 2014). Similarly, the use of restorative justice, where community participation is needed to decide collectively on what intervention they would deem effective in mitigating juvenile delinquency (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994). Therefore, this section reviews literature on how cognitive-psychological therapists, family and community involvement (restorative justice) can help lessen juvenile delinquency.

### **2.3.1 Psychological and Cognitive Therapists in Mitigating Juvenile Delinquency**

Pardin (2016), findings on strategies for preventing juvenile delinquency revealed that well-defined treatment protocols that focus on therapeutic approaches designed by a professional are very effective in mitigating juvenile delinquency. Also, sports and recreational activities have been highlighted as an important mechanism for preventing reoffending among juvenile delinquents. Sport and physical activity programmes provide an effective vehicle through which personal and social development in young people can be positively affected. For example, Draper et al. (2013) explored the benefits of sports in the rehabilitation of young sexual offenders and their findings indicated that the sport programme was effective and helped prevent recidivism and reoffending among inmates after discharge.

The availability and accuracy of information is an essential component of the treatment process for juvenile delinquents. (Coleman and Ganong, 1988; Pehrsson and McMillen, 2006). Madukoma and Haliso (2011) investigating the bibliotherapeutic role of information on juvenile in the remand home at Abeokuta in Ogun State, Nigeria found that information reduces uncertainty and changes the knowledge state of the inmates. With the positive attitude the inmate developed through bibliotherapy; the self-esteem is enhanced and juvenile became more adjustable and prepared to face their problems.

However, the traditional punitive correctional treatment of offenders at all levels, particularly, juveniles, has come under intense scrutiny. Scholars such as Draper et al. (2013) and Tate, Reppucci, and Mulvey,(1995); have established that punitive correctional treatment does offenders more harm than good and gives rise to recidivism among juvenile offenders. Their reports have seriously influenced recent trends toward more punitive approaches to juvenile crime such as incarceration, institutionalization and stiffening penalties for juvenile offenders. This suggests that punitive measures prevent an individual offender from committing offence for a short period (when incarcerated) and do not focus on reforming inmates. It has been reported in current studies that juvenile correctional facilities should employ psychological methods that will work on the cognitive capacity of juveniles (MacKenzie, Stevens, and Swart, 2005; Moster et al., 2008).

Burraston, Bahr, and Charrington (2014). The study combined cognitive behavioural training and automated phone calls as a rehabilitation method in reducing reoffending among juvenile delinquents. The researchers measured recidivism on whether participants were rearrested following a year of release. The study revealed that participants who answered their calls often (at least half) were less likely to engage in other offences and get re-incarcerated. This is

supported by a similar study by Burraston, Cherrington and Bahr (2012) who established that, effective use of cognitive behavioural therapy that comprises of six 90-minutes training sessions followed by automated phone calls after a year of discharge could reduce juvenile reoffending by 51%.

Wilson et al. (2005) reported that cognitive behavioural therapists have proved effective in solving juvenile delinquency and reoffending. Specifically, the study emphasized that programmes that focus on improving the cognitive skills of offenders and cognitive restructuring and emphasize moral teaching and reasoning of offenders have proven to be effective in measuring effectiveness of cognitive behavioural.

Furthermore, Jewell, Malone, Rose, Sturgeon, and Owens (2015) stated that, juveniles who take their cognitive behavioural treatment seriously are able to desist from criminal activities. Pearson, Lipton, Cleland, and Yee (2002) also noted that, cognitive behavioural therapy is very effective in offender rehabilitation due to its ability to develop strategies that target criminal thinking by the individual offender. This suggests that criminal activities emanate from the individual offender's mind, therefore a therapeutic intervention that seeks to change criminal thinking and pattern would prove to be effective.

Significantly, cognitive behavioural therapy can be used in both institutional and community settings (Landenberger and Lipsey, 2005). The authors revealed that offenders who were able to complete their treatment had a 25% lower rate of reoffending. Subsequently, the authors focused on past studies that implemented best practices of cognitive behavioural treatment programs. This time the overall effectiveness increased to a 50% decrease in reoffending. This implies that the effective implementation of cognitive behavioural treatment programmes could mitigate juvenile delinquency.

The pattern of individual thinking is a strong determinant of one's behaviour. As a result, studies have focused on the thinking pattern of individual offenders and how best they can shape their thinking to appreciate the laws of the land. For instance, Bogestad, Kettler, and Hagan (2010) established that there is a significant improvement in the thinking pattern of the juveniles after completing behavioural intervention programmes. This suggests that cognitive intervention programmes are very effective in working on the thinking pattern of juveniles and help reduce the thinking disorders or distortions that result in their delinquent behaviour.

A similar study by McGlynn, Hahn, and Hagan (2012) of some selected juvenile correctional centres in Wisconsin used the 'How I Think' Questionnaire as a measure of change. After using the 'How I Think' Questionnaire to measure the cognitive distortions that are associated with the pattern of delinquent thinking and behaviour, the study found a positive improvement in offenders' behaviour. Accordingly, there was a change in the cognitive distortion pattern of offenders who participated in the programme.

Finally, Clinkinbeard and Murray (2011) evidenced that young inmates consider that socio-educational intervention programmes and workshops are important for their reintegration into society and allow them to see a more optimistic future. This is also supported by (Conlon et al., 2008) findings which show that educational attainment is a significant factor reducing recidivism. Vocational programmes can be something that changes these offenders' lives once they come out of the correctional homes (Ameen and Lee, 2012). This builds an easier transitioning for juvenile delinquents back into society, knowing that they can live positively they are less likely to commit a delinquent act.

### **2.3.2 Family Involvement and Restorative Justice in Mitigating Juvenile Delinquency**

Scholars in the area of child delinquency have highlighted the effectiveness of involving parents in the rehabilitation and reformation process of a juvenile. Mulvey et al. (2014) established that parental involvement in treating juveniles ensures that all members of the community participate in the rehabilitation processes, which has proven very effective. Luchenbill and Yeager (2009) agreed with Mulyey et al and stated that a lot of interventions aimed at rehabilitating and reforming juveniles have failed due to lack of parental involvement. They recommended that juvenile justice insist on parental involvement when giving out disposals such as diversion, placement, and probation.

The fact that poor parenting and poor performances at school have proven to be strong determinants of juvenile delinquency has prompted scholars to conduct studies on how best effective parenting could help mitigate juvenile delinquency. Lee, Onifade, Teasley, and Noel (2012) revealed that while poor parenting is a major risk factor to juvenile delinquency, parental monitoring and teacher attachment are very effective in preventing juvenile offences from happening in the first place. This implies that a child who develops a strong attachment with parents and teachers is at a lower risk of engaging in delinquent behaviour.

Scott, Tepas, Frykberg, Taylor, and Plotkin (2002) added that interventions that employ a real world exposure, involving parents, peers, and community members and with intensive follow-up have proven effective. The study further suggested the need for courts to involve parents and community members in their sentencing decisions.

In addition, Research has shown that many juvenile delinquents come from families where there are many siblings and each child does not get adequate attention (Ellis, 1988). The quality of the

relationships that bind parents and adolescents remains the first dimension in every family. This provides an important protection against involvement in antisocial behaviour (Fosco, Stormshak, Dishion and Winter, 2012; Petrosino, Derzon, and Lavenberg, 2009). According to Mincey et al. (2008), supportive families help the former offender overcome difficult experiences while going through the rehabilitation process and reduce the stress of separation from the family. This prepare the inmate (juvenile delinquent) to re-enter the community after release.

Furthermore, restorative justice is regarded as an alternative mode of criminal justice. Restorative justice is a concept that attempts to restructure the way in which crime is seen and, as a result, the way in which justice is done to prevent its reoccurrences. According to Simon Robins (2009), restorative justice has gained a significant profile through a transitional justice process in African countries, making reference to Uganda as a case study. A restorative paradigm puts the victim at the centre of any process, rather than as witness or spectator, as in a purely punitive approach: restorative justice is often presented as an alternative to retributive justice. It involves a process whereby all the parties with a stake in a specific offence come together and collectively decide how best to deal with the repercussion of the crime and its consequences for the future.

Bazemore and Umbreit (1994) in the United States assessed the effectiveness of four restorative conferencing models in solving and mitigating issues regarding juvenile offence. The four restorative conferencing models were:

Firstly, victim-offender mediation involves mediation ordered by the court between offender and victim regarding the cause of a crime and reaching a consensus on providing services to settle losses. It is guided by a professional mediator. Secondly, community reparation board consists of a board set up by the court in the community to educate offenders on the consequences of their

actions and propose sanctions to the offender in the community. Thirdly, family group conferencing consists of a meeting between families and friends of both victim and offender to discuss the impact of crime on the victim. It ends with a signed agreement on what is expected of the offender in future. Lastly, circle sentencing has to do with a decision hearing circle on a sentencing plan for the offender after hearing cases of both parties, with a follow up to monitor the progress of the offender.

All the above conferencing models consider and reflect on the needs of all parties who were involved in the act directly or indirectly (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994). The needs of the victims, offenders, families and the community are taken into consideration to prevent future offence and deter others from engaging in such an act or other unlawful acts. Bazemore and Umbreit (1994) further said these collective conferencing methods have proved effective in practice and have helped mitigate juvenile delinquency especially by reducing recidivism.

Besides, research conducted in Nigeria by Ikoh (2011) recommended, based on finding from the study, that the justice system of Nigeria should make use of non-custodial sentencing such as probation, parole, restitution, fines, and restorative justice.

## **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

### **The Structural Functionalist Theory**

The major proponents of the functionalism theory are Talcott Parson (1951), and Robert Merton (1968). The proponents view society as a system of interconnected parts that work together to maintain social balance or equilibrium (The Functionalist Perspective, 2015). Accordingly, effective functioning of the state institutions would ensure a state of orderliness and solidarity. However, a breakdown of any of the institutions may impact on other institutions, which will eventually affect the overall functioning of society resulting in disequilibrium in the society.

According to functionalism, social institutions have a unique function to perform in order to sustain other social institutions (Susser, 1992).

For instance, the family as an institution of society is tasked with the responsibility of teaching its members the rules and norms of the land through socialization. Also, the family is supposed to provide for the basic needs of its members such as shelter and clothing. It is assumed a failure on the part of the family to provide its members with basic needs would have an adverse effect on other institutions such as education. Inadequate provision of basic needs by the family to a child could affect the child's academic performance which may result in school dropout or truancy.

Furthermore, structural functionalism helps put the juvenile correctional centre and the criminal justice system into the perspective as interconnected parts. This implies that there is need for various departments and personnel in the correctional homes (rehabilitants, and staff) and juvenile justice system (family tribunal and juvenile courts) need to function effectively to ensure effective juvenile offender rehabilitation and a state of equilibrium. Thus, the structural functionalist theory enhanced the understanding of how effective juvenile offender rehabilitation processes could help mitigate juvenile delinquency.

Further, the application of this theory to the study enhances the understating of the functions of the various organs responsible for the establishment and administration of the Correctional Home in Akure. Also, the functionalist theory shows how failure between or among them leads to maladministration of the homes.

Besides, the study adopts the structural functionalist theory to understand how a breakdown of the family structure could give rise to juvenile delinquency.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methods that were used to collect and analyse data for the study. Accordingly, the chapter covers the research design, target population, study population, sampling technique, sample size, sources of data, methods of data collection, data handling and analysis, and ethical considerations.

#### 3.1 Research Design

The study employed a qualitative design, it was considered appropriate for the study because it gave the researcher the opportunity to interview participants who have experienced the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2013). It gave participants the room to narrate and express their life experiences to help the researcher answer the research questions and address the study objectives (Ruane, 2005). Also, qualitative design helped the researcher explore participants' different perceptions and understanding of the problem under study (Ziebland and McPherson, 2006). This helped the researcher understand the phenomenon under study from the participants' perspective.

#### 3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Akure Juvenile Correctional Home, Ondo State, Nigeria. Akure is a city in south western Nigeria. It is one of the most important cities of Nigeria and the capital of Ondo State. It covers a total surface area of 15,500 km<sup>2</sup>. The city has a population of 588,000, as of 2006. The people are predominantly of the Yoruba ethnic group but with appreciable influx of migrants who have settled in the city.

The juvenile correctional home located in Akure, Ondo state, Nigeria, was established in the 1980s as a section of juvenile correction home that was already functional in Oyo State. Subsequently, the Ondo state government embarked on upgrading of the home which was officially opened in 1991 by then military governor of Ondo state, Capt. Sunday S. Olukoya. Since its inception, the correctional home has been at its responsibility of rehabilitating juveniles that are involved in one form of offence or the other though not without challenges.

### **3.3 Target Population**

The study targeted juvenile delinquents and rehabilitation officers at the Akure correctional home, Ondo State, Nigeria. According to Lavrakas, (2008), the target population of a study is the entire set of subjects or population for which the study is to be used to make inferences. In addition, the target group defines those units to which the findings of a study are meant to apply (Lavrakas, 2008).

### **3.4 Study Population**

Specifically, the study collected data from children (those who have been sentenced to serve a term at the juvenile correctional centre) at the Akure Juvenile correctional home. The criterion for selection was that, the juvenile must have been serving a term of sentence at the home and must have been at the home for one month or more at the time of data collection. Also, a juvenile must be 17 years or below. Inmates who were awaiting trial at the home were not included in this study. Also, rehabilitation officers must have worked at the correctional home for one or more years at the time of data collection before consideration for participation.

### **3.5 Sampling Techniques**

The study employed a purposive sampling technique in the selection of the participants. Purposive sampling is more appropriate for qualitative study as it allows the researcher to sample participants who are more knowledgeable about the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013). Also, purposive sampling allowed the researcher to collect data from participants who fulfilled the inclusion criterion set for recruitment of participants for the study. Before the commencement of the interviews, the consent of the juveniles were obtained through their parents/ guardians as well as through the officials at the correctional home.

### **3.6 Sample size**

The sample size of any study is the number of participants that will partake in the study. According to Patton (2002), there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will give credibility, and what can be done within the available time and resources. In line with this, the study sampled 20 participants from the study population. 15 out of the 20 participants were juveniles in the correctional home, four (4) were rehabilitation officers, and the remaining one (1) was from the department of social welfare, Akure, Ondo State.

### **3.7 Sources of Information**

Data for the study were collected from a primary source. Primary data refer to data generated through direct interaction with the informants or subjects of the study in the course of the fieldwork. This basically relied on qualitative methods of data collection such as interviews, and direct observation of activities in the home. Besides, peer reviewed journals, books, and internet sources were used to reviews literature and complemented the primary data.

### **3.8 Methods of Data Collection**

Individual in-depth interviews constituted the data collection method used for this study. This allowed the researcher to ask open ended questions that required follow-up questions. Also, it gave the interviewees enough time to build their points and establish their points as they experienced the problem under study. Interviews were conducted with the help of an interview guide that was prepared by the researcher under the supervision of his supervisors. The interview guide was in three forms (one for juveniles, rehabilitation officers and one for the department of social welfare officer). Interviews with participants were held at the premises of the correctional centre while that of the social welfare officer was done at the department of social welfare and each interview lasted between 50 and 60 minutes. The interview schedule was designed in English but the interviews were conducted in both Pidgin and English based on the language proficiency of participants. Besides, the researcher took observational notes as he closely observed the activities at the correctional centre.

### **3.9 Data Handling and analysis**

Data analysis is a process that involves making sense out of the raw data gathered from the field, preparing it for analysis, understanding the data, representing the data and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data (Creswell, 2009). With regards to data handling; audio taped and field note information from the field derived from the interviews were transferred to a computer and played back for easy transcription. In this regard, six basic steps proposed by Creswell (2009) for analysing qualitative data were followed. These were:

1. Transcribing interviews and arranging them into different types depending on the source of information.

2. Reading through all the data, thus obtaining sense and reflecting on their overall meaning.
3. Coding which involves taking transcript data, segmenting sentences into categories and labelling those categories with a term.
4. Using the coding to develop a number of themes. These themes are the ones which will appear as the major findings and are used to create headings in the findings section of the study.
5. Interrelating themes.
6. Comparison of the findings with information from other literature.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher took all necessary steps to ensure that all procedures involving ethics in research are observed. In line with this, the following ethical considerations will be considered:

**Informed consent:** Participants in the study did so based on their own willingness. In addition to this, the participants were free to opt out of the study at any time they felt like doing so.

**Child assent:** The Correctional Home's consent was sought before interviewing the children.

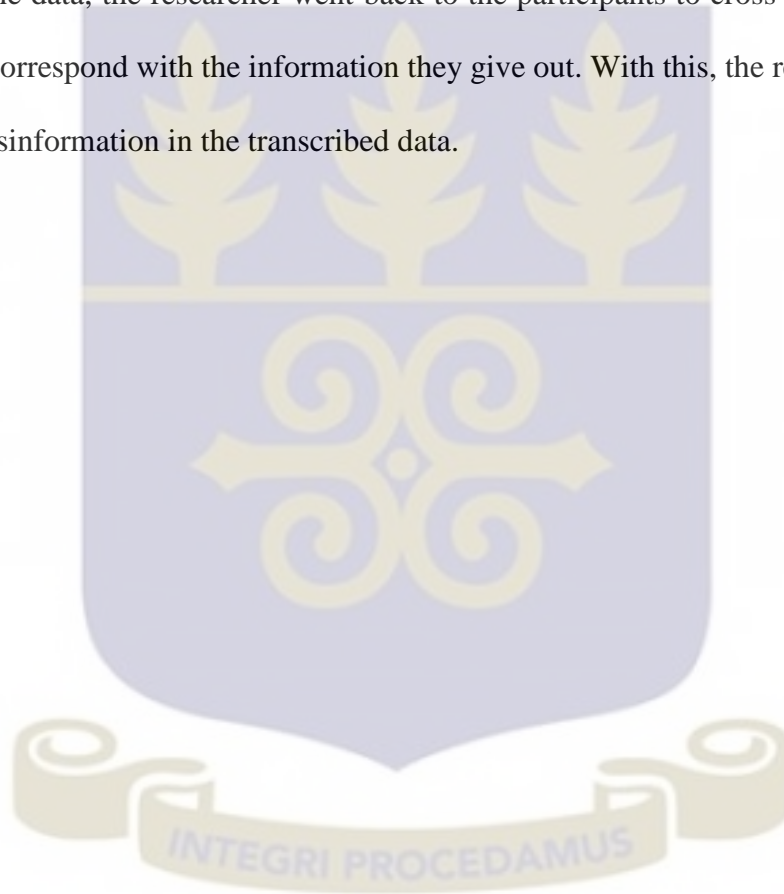
**Confidentiality:** The principle of confidentiality was considered an important issue in this research. Information retrieved from the participants was kept confidential. Three ways through which I did this was that, firstly interviews were conducted at a time and place of convenience. Secondly, audio taped information was locked with a password to avoid second party access. Thirdly, the research made use of pseudonyms or anonymity to hide the identity of the participants during data presentation and analysis.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is defined as the verbatim copying, near-verbatim copying, or paraphrasing portions of another person's published document without proper acknowledgement

(Boisvert and Irwin, 2006). All relevant journal articles and books from which secondary information was drawn were properly cited. In respect to this, the researcher made use of in-text citations and references in the study to avoid any form of plagiarism.

### **3.11 Credibility and Trustworthiness**

In order to ensure the credibility of the study, the researcher adopted member checking. After the transcription of the data, the researcher went back to the participants to cross check whether the transcribed data correspond with the information they give out. With this, the researcher was able to rectify all misinformation in the transcribed data.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the raw data that was collected from participants in a meaningful manner. Data has been presented under themes as they address the objectives of the study. The first section of the chapter presents the demographic information of participants, followed by factors contributing to juvenile delinquency at the Akure Juvenile correctional home, challenges in rehabilitating juveniles at the Akure Juvenile correctional home, preventive measures of juvenile delinquency, and discussion of the findings.

#### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Out of the 20 participants, 15 were males and the remaining 5 were females. Males outnumbered their female counterparts because the females at the correctional home during data collection were few in number as compared to the males. Specifically, out of the 15 juveniles that were interviewed, 13 were male and two were female.

The age range of the juveniles delinquents were between 14 and 17 years. This is in line with the inclusion criterion set for the study. The age range of the rehabilitation officers and the social worker was between 28 and 46. Furthermore, the educational background of the rehabilitation officers included post-secondary diplomas and certificates while the participant from the department of social welfare had a master's degree in social work.

Of the 15 juveniles that were interviewed, only seven were students at the time of their sentencing. The other eight were engaged in various apprenticeships such as barbering, bricklaying, and welding etc.

Again, out of the 15 juveniles that were interviewed, nine came from a single parent household where they had lived with their mothers since birth. On the other hand, four of the juveniles were living with both parents, whilst two of the juveniles were neglected and living with none of their parents at the time of their sentencing. Five of the participants stated that they were sentenced to remain in the home because of theft, six were involved in cultism and as a result got engaged in social vices, and one participant stated that he was charged with murder. Also, two juveniles had been involved in a rape case and one said he had engaged in conspiracy.

#### **4.2 Factors Contributing to Juvenile Delinquency at the Akure Juvenile Correctional Home**

Findings from the study revealed that juvenile delinquency is not a chance occurrence, but has countless causes leading to it. Among the factors that were identified during data collection were peer pressure, poverty, and neglect by parents or caregivers. These factors were recurring and almost every participant including the key informants gave an account of how the above factors led to their juvenile delinquency. It must be noted that, in this study, the root of all factors that contributed to juvenile delinquency had to do with family malfunction and peer pressure.

Accordingly, the study has grouped factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency into two categories, namely family malfunction and peer pressure.

##### **4.2.1 Family malfunction as a predisposing Contributor to Juvenile Delinquency**

Malfunctions or dysfunctions in families were implicated as among the factors that lead to juvenile delinquencies. The causes and consequences of these include but not limited to poverty, single parenting, and neglect, pushes children from their homes to join their peers who lure them into activities that lead them into crime. When interviewed, the juvenile delinquents as well as the rehabilitation officers explained how poor parenting could lead to juvenile delinquency.

Participants explained poor parenting to include irresponsible child care by parents showing no concern about the wellbeing of their children. Below are excerpts of what participants had to say:

*I would say the main cause of delinquency is parents' inability to take good care of these children. Children need parents and other people around to guide them, tell them what they are doing is right or wrong and prepare them to become good people when they grow up. When all these are lacking it is very likely they will become delinquent* (Rehabilitation Officer 4).

*When you look carefully, children who come here are mostly those who are not taken care of properly by their parents or caregivers. Children who are taken care of are unlikely to engage in delinquent acts* (Rehabilitation Officer, 1).

The juveniles gave their account, which affirms that the predisposing factors that led to their delinquent acts were as a result of poor parenting by parents and caregivers.

*My aunt does not care about what happens to me; I am left to feed on my own. As a result I am always on the streets doing whatever possible to make ends meet. I was forced to steal because I realized it was the only means to survive* (Tobi, Fieldwork, 2015).

*I was living with my parents but they travel a lot and leave me and my little sister behind. When they are gone I take care of my sister and myself. My friends who were already into cultism came home and I followed them wherever they went. I became part of the group and did*

*everything they did, which is the reason why I am here (Temi, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*I live with my mother but she sells at the market. When I finish school I normally don't come home early because there is nobody to meet at home (Olamide, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Most often, children who were not well taken care of by their parents or caregivers experienced neglect. As a result, their daily activities were not supervised or directed. This affected the children's development and led them to accept social vices. This is what participants had to say:

*Hmm! I must say the majority of these children are neglected by either their parents or caregivers. Some parents are irresponsible and this must be said with no fear. They wouldn't care where their children are and what is happening to them or what they are doing (Rehabilitation Officer, 3).*

*I must say some parents are very heartless (excuse my word). Some parents have not been here since their children were brought here. This tells you how they were living with them before they were brought here (Rehabilitation Officer, 1).*

A juvenile delinquent narrated his lived experience to complement what the officers had asserted regarding neglect:

*Staying with my father has not been an easy life for me, he beats me all the time. Any slightest mistake I make he bounces on me and I usually ask myself this question; whether he is my real father? But nevertheless, I*

*would love to see him I don't think that will happen* (Ahmed, Fieldwork, 2015).

Children are supposed to be effectively socialized by their parents and caregivers in order for them to accept the norms and traditions of the society in which they live. Inadequate or poor socialization offered by parents or caregivers affects children's development and eventually leads to then becoming juvenile delinquents. This is possible because children may not be aware of what constitutes right or wrong:

*I would say some children, especially the majority of the children we have here, were not given proper socialization by their parents. It would surprise you to see how they behave, they are completely ignorant about what is right and what is wrong. What we do in the children's correctional home is to take time to socialize them and teach them about what is right and what is wrong* (Rehabilitation Officer, 2).

*Their parents or caregivers did not take much time to teach them basic things when they were growing up. They spent little or no time with some of these children, which is the very reason why they behave as they do and come to this place* (Social Welfare Officer).

Single parenting was identified among the leading predisposing factors to family malfunction. Parenting is the responsibility of two individuals (mother and father). It is assumed that effective parenting is one that is collectively done by both parents. Leaving the responsibility of parenting to one person (mother or father) could be very detrimental to the effective development of the child. Accordingly, participants established that single parenting is among the factors that

contribute to juvenile delinquency among juveniles at the Correctional Centre. Below are excerpts of what participants had to say regarding the detrimental conditions that single parenting could put children in.

*I live with my mother and since I was born I have not gotten the chance to see my father. Everything about me is done by my mother who is now ill. I must confess there are things I do, which I may not have done if my father was around* (Femi, Fieldwork, 2015).

The statement above by the juvenile confirms that children who have only one parent do not experience complete parenting, and it has adverse effects on their behaviour. Consequently, the gradual collapse of the extended family system in Nigeria has made the issue of single parenting very significant as it could affect children in the household negatively.

*I think now each individual is very concerned about his immediate family, which was not the case in the past. This has made the issue of single parenting well felt because if your single mother cannot take good care of you or you are neglected the only way to survive is to find your own way, which may result in delinquency* (Rehabilitation Officer, 1).

It is important to note that out of the 15 juveniles that were interviewed, only three were living with both parents. The remaining 12 were either coming from a single parent household or living with no parent or caregiver. It can be assumed that collective parental attention with regard to child care and upbringing is effective in mitigating juvenile delinquency. If it was otherwise, it would increase the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency.

*Parenting by one person will not be effective. Because whilst one is soft the other must be hard to ensure balance. Children of today are very stubborn so if you don't keep an eye on them and punish them when they misbehave they wouldn't know the wrong in what they do (Rehabilitation Officer, 3).*

*From what I have observed, parenting is difficult even when it is done by both parents. So you can imagine how it will be with one parent around doing what the man or the woman is supposed to do. Even if you are able to do it, you may get fed up along the line (Rehabilitation Officer, 2).*

A social welfare officer gave his assertion on what constitutes juvenile delinquency. According to him:

*A good number of children that are delinquents are from broken homes. Once the two parents are not present in the family to guide the child, the child can easily deviate from the usual norms of society. The mother is there to give the child emotional support, while the father is there to give the physical side of the moral training to the child. The father is supposed to discipline the child. If the father is absent, and care is not taken the child becomes in disciplined, maladjusted and uncontrollable. It is the same that happens when the mother is not there to play her role. Children make use of moments that their parents are not around to make time with friends who are likely to expose them to social vices (Social Welfare Officer).*

Besides, a juvenile delinquent narrated her story regarding how her father had disowned her and pronounced a curse on her:

*My mother and father separated and both of them wanted custody of me.*

*My uncle and other family members insisted that I stay with my mother.*

*Based on this my father has refused to send money for my upkeep and he even laid curses on me that I will suffer and die under my mother's roof*

(Bimbo, Fieldwork, 2015).

Family malfunction as a contributor to juvenile delinquency was caused mostly by the socio-economic status of a household. In this regard, it is viewed that households with a low income level are likely to experience some family challenges, which eventually lead to family malfunction. Children from low level income households most often have to assume some roles which are traditionally supposed to be performed by adults. Activities such as working on the streets and other dangerous places expose children to all kinds of delinquent activities. Below are what participants had to say about this:

*I would say the major cause of delinquency is poverty. All that I have been saying since is as a result of poverty. To me poverty is the major cause of delinquency* (Rehabilitation Officer, 3).

*Some parents of these children are poor. They have to send these children to sell on the streets to support home and this is where they learn their delinquent activities* (Rehabilitation Officer, 1).

*Poverty is another cause why children are delinquent. Some parents are too poor to provide adequate needs for their children such as school fees,*

*shelter and food. This results in making the children go hustling in any means to feed and take care of themselves. In the process of doing so, they get mixed up with other elements from outside their home. Another thing is parents who are unable to cater for their children's needs finds it difficult to control them (Social Welfare Officer)*

Responses from some of the juveniles that were interviewed confirmed the assertions made above by the rehabilitation officers:

*I live with my mother and step father but I sell on the streets to support home and it is on the streets where I met my friends who introduced me to cultism (Tope, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Moreover, child maltreatment was identified in this study as a predisposing factor to juvenile delinquency. Children who experience maltreatment are likely to leave home and join friends who may influence them with bad behaviour:

*I would say children who are maltreated at their homes are likely to be delinquents. On one hand it makes them hard and fearless. They can do anything for survival and on the other hand they are likely to feel more comfortable with friends than being at home, which can affect their development negatively (Social Welfare Officer).*

A juvenile narrated his story regarding how he ended up in the Correctional Centre due to maltreatment by a caregiver.

*I was staying with my auntie who was maltreating me. I got so bitter and longing to go back to my family in Calabar because I felt so much pain*

*due to the way they were maltreating me. I refused to do any of the house chores. This prompted my auntie to lynch and torture me. In an attempt to defend myself I pushed her and her head crushed on a gas cylinder and she was unable to rise again. I went closer to her and realized she was not moving. I run away from the house to one of my relative's house in Akure. I didn't tell him (my relative) what has happened, it was in the morning that they traced me to my uncle's place with a policemen to arrest me for murder (Bola, Fieldwork, 2015)*

The narrative by the juvenile above shows that sometimes excessive maltreatment of a child could result in the child making haste decisions, which may turn to be delinquent.

In addition, some participants established that children whose parents abuse each other and quarrel most often are likely to be delinquent:

*To me another factor that leads to children being delinquent is conflict among parents. Children from such homes are likely to copy this act and may abuse their friends just as their parents do (Rehabilitation Officer, 3).*

He continued by stating that:

*Broken homes and polygamy are major causes of delinquency. All these factors tend to prevent parents from giving their children much attention. Also, juvenile delinquency can be caused in monogamous families due to conflicts among the families. Most families who are in conflict with one*

*another find it difficult to get time for their children (Rehabilitation Officer, 4).*

#### **4.2.2 Peer Influence as a Predisposing Factor to Juvenile Delinquency**

Most often, children get involved in delinquent acts and behaviours in their adolescent ages. For example, the juveniles that were interviewed were between the ages of 14 to 17. Children at this stage are most often easily influenced by their peers. It is at this stage that parents are supposed to keep an eye on their children to ensure they are protected from bad company. However, due to family malfunction, most children at this stage tend to spend much time with their friends. Those who are unlucky to be in the company of bad friends are likely to become delinquents. In this study, almost all the children that were interviewed attributed their delinquent behaviour to friend(s) or bad companions. Juveniles who participated in this study at one point in their delinquent activities were convinced or influenced by a friend. Below is an excerpt of what participants had to say:

*Like I said before, I am here because of defilement and I did this with my friends. We are a group of four and we forced our female classmate to have sex with us. We took her to an uncompleted building and did that to her (Ola, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*I defiled a lady in my area with the help of my friends. One of my friends had his own room so we lured her there and they tied her up for me to do what I did to her. I wish I did not do that, I have always regretted doing that, if you can help me out of here I will be glad (Akin, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*I grew up in a community where every guy wanted to show their powers and I have friends who were also willing to do everything to be popular in the community. As you can see I have pierced one of my ears, and until I came here I always had an ear ring on (Tope, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Another major factor that featured prominently as one of the causes of juvenile delinquency is cultism. The informants interviewed in this regard were of the view that the situation is such that it has become difficult for an average boy to operate freely in the neighbourhood without any affiliation to a particular cult group. Therefore, in order to overcome this seeming shortcoming, many of the boys took to joining cult groups that promise to offer them some kind of protection and self esteem. The picture is such that most of the juveniles who were into cultism claimed that they were lured into it by their friends. In the words of one of them:

*It is my friend who convinced me to join the cult. I had been in this group for two years when I and my three other friends were arrested by an anti-cultist group in our area (Kunle, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*My friend told me good things about the cult and I got interested and joined them. At my area I was so powerful and fearful. I was involved in every bad activity that went on at my area but now I have changed and I will not do those things when I am discharged (Tobi, Fieldwork, 2015).*

In addition to the cultism groups that some juveniles were lured into by their friends, some juveniles also stated they were stealing in gangs they were recruited into through their association with peers:

*I was caught stealing lady's footwear in one of the shops at the market at midnight together with my friends. We were a gang of four and I was the youngest. I am most often sent by the oldest among us who happened to be the leader of the gang to the market to steal. When I was arrested, I was forced by the police to give the location of my friends, which I did (Ahmed, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*I will blame myself for everything that is happening to me here. I joined a bad group and learnt their ways of behaving, which has cost me more dearly than them. I find myself here and they are in their homes. They made me feel I can do everything regardless of the consequences (Kunle, Fieldwork, 2015)*

Besides, another participant narrated how he became the victim of peer influence:

*I had this friend who offloads goods at the market. I don't know his house but we often meet at the market whenever I close from school and also sometimes we meet in the night. He made me start enjoying moving at night and breaking into people's properties because after every operation we get money to do whatever we want to do. When we are hungry in the night we break into restaurants to eat some of the food that is left over (Taiwo, Fieldwork, 2015).*

#### **4.3 Challenges in Rehabilitating Juveniles at the Akure Juvenile Correctional Home**

Juveniles were sentenced to the Akure Juvenile Correctional Home to be rehabilitated, re-socialized, and reintegrated into the mainstream society. The expectation, going by the name of

the centre, correctional home, is that juveniles will come back from the Correctional Home to their respective communities reformed and sociable. However, there are certain hindrances to the effective delivery of quality rehabilitation services at the Akure Juvenile Correctional Home. The study found that inmates and rehabilitation officers go through difficult experiences and challenges that affect effective rehabilitation and reformation. This section presents data on challenges and experiences faced by rehabilitation officers and inmates at the Akure Correctional Home that hinder effective rehabilitation and reformation.

#### **4.3.1 Challenges in Rehabilitation at Akure Correctional Home**

Challenges to rehabilitation included inadequate rehabilitation facilities, unfriendly relationship between juveniles and staff, and inaccessible healthcare. These were major impediments that prevented effective rehabilitation at the correctional home.

*To be honest with you there are a lot of challenges facing this Centre, which I must admit affects the rehabilitation process. We are doing our best but you get fed up sometimes when there is limited resources to rehabilitate juveniles (Rehabilitation Officer, 1).*

*The staff here are very few and the majority of us live very far from the correctional home. We have to take two to three buses before getting to the home. They need us always, we should monitor them all the time because they are capable of anything. They fight among themselves and this requires our presence all the time (Rehabilitation Officer, 3).*

To buttress the assertion above by the officer, the researcher observed that there was only one officer who stayed at the place all day. Most of the officers live outside the Correctional Home,

but they often come late to work. Due to the poor supervision at the Home, some of the juveniles fight among themselves:

*Fighting is common in the home. This mostly happens in the night when the staff have gone to their various homes. We don't communicate these events to the staff even when the staff notice some bruises on the persons that were involved in the fighting, we lie to them even when they press hard to know (Femi, Fieldwork, 2015).*

This suggests that the juveniles are very united and understand themselves more than they understand the rehabilitation officers. This could affect any effort the officers make to rehabilitate these juveniles. In addition, the researcher observed that in the Correction Home, the juveniles have their own leader (senior). The leader is regarded by the other juveniles as superior and one they should listen to. This was confirmed at a point during the interviews:

*We settle our own issues in the cells and our leader always punishes anyone who is judged guilty when there is a fight (Akin, Fieldwork, 2015).*

In addition, the findings indicated that resources are scanty at the Correctional Centre. Some of the juveniles could learn a trade before they are discharged but due to inadequate resources they were always locked-up at the Centre.

*Hmm! my major concern is resources; many resources that would be useful in their rehabilitation are lacking and if we do not have the resources, how do we help them? So though we are trying I know our*

*effort is not complete and we are not to be blamed because we are doing all we can (Social Welfare Officer).*

*This facility lacks a lot of resources. To me the home should have its own school but we do not have. Sometimes I ask myself whether we are helping these children or are we wasting their time and compounding their problems (Rehabilitation Officer, 4).*

The problem of inadequate resources and facilities was emphasized when most of the juveniles indicated they are not learning any trade or schooling:

*Since I came here I have not been introduced to any apprenticeship or schooling. I am not even aware that they should have something like that here. What the officers do is to give us food, instruct you to go and take our bath and also brush your teeth if one has not done that in the morning (Bimbo, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*I remember when I came here they asked me if I was a student or not and I answered I am not a student. The officers asked if I would go to school or would I learn a trade and I answered I wanted to be a tailor. They told me they did not have a workshop for that profession here. As we speak I am not learning any trade (Taiwo, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Nutritious and sufficient food is needed to enhance effective cooperation. It is believed that effective learning or behaviour must be complemented with satisfaction of both the teacher and student. Malnutrition and insufficient food were among the challenges of effective rehabilitation

at the Akure Juvenile Correctional Home. Participants lamented about the conditions of food at the Correctional Centre.

*The food we eat here is not good at all; there is nothing in the food. In my house I eat good food, and take a nice shower. In this place, the food is not good and it is a one way meal. Almost every day we eat beans and you have no option but to eat because you will get food nowhere to eat (Bimbo, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*The food we eat here is not sufficient. Ever since I came here I have not been satisfied with the food they give us; it is too small, if they can increase it for us (Musa, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Another juvenile made an interesting statement:

*The food they cook for us is not good and we cannot complain about it. For example, tomorrow's beans are already on the fire today, when they finish preparing it, they keep it for the next day and serve it to us. The quantity of the rice we eat for lunch is very small. One hardly gets satisfied from it (Seun, Fieldwork, 2015).*

A Rehabilitation Officer gave her assertion about the condition of food at the Correctional Home by attributing the insufficiency of food to limited government budget allocated to the Correction Centre:

*We provide them with three square meals every day. Even though it is not sufficient we are doing our best from the little assigned to us by the*

*state. Whilst we are fighting for an increment we expect them to cope with what we are providing for now* (Rehabilitation Officer, 2)

Despite the insufficient quantity of food and poor quality, some juveniles accused the officers of smuggling food and other gifts received from the community which are meant for them. This was a major concern because the juveniles in the home believed the gifts are supposed to complement the food and other equipment that are provided by the government:

*Many a time people bring gifts like food stuffs, clothes, and washing materials, but we often don't get these materials or items. They are mostly used and taken by the staff members* (Akin, Fieldwork, 2015).

Moreover, the health conditions at the Correctional Centre were not satisfactory as indicated by some participants:

*For me I am not satisfied with the health conditions, it is very bad when you fall sick; getting access to first aid is very difficult. The officers sometimes have to rush to town to get us medicine when one of us falls sick* (Musa, Fieldwork, 2015).

*When I came first into the home, I fell sick, which was due to the conditions of the home. The food was what made me fall sick because I was not used to such kinds of meals. I was given paracetamol by our cook and she told me to go and have enough rest* (Bimbo, Fieldwork, 2015).

Medical conditions at the correctional home were very poor and it affected rehabilitation. There is no nurse or doctor or any other health official at the Correctional Centre. Juveniles praise some staff at the Home who take them to the hospital when they are sick or give them first aid.

*I have fallen sick many times since I came here and all the time it is the staff who give me medicine and make sure I get well (Ahmed, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*The net that is supposed to prevent mosquitoes from entering where we sleep has been destroyed and it has not been repaired since I came to this place. Because of this there are lots of mosquitoes in the rooms and some of my colleagues always contract malaria (Musa, Fieldwork, 2015).*

In addition, the Rehabilitation officers supported the assertion by the juveniles that there is no nurse or doctor to cater to them when they are sick:

*We do not have a nurse here, we are our own nurses and doctors. When one of us or a juvenile is sick we give them first aid and those sickness, which are severe we send them to the military hospital (Rehabilitation Officer, 2).*

Furthermore, the relationship between juveniles and rehabilitation officers is said to be vital in enhancing effective and successful rehabilitation. Discouragingly, almost all the juveniles interviewed rated that there is no cordial relationship between them and the workers at the Correctional Home.

*My relationship with my mother and siblings was more cordial than what I have here with the officers. At home I can ask my mother for anything*

*but it is not the same here. They are sometimes harsh on us. For example when I first came here so I can't go near them even as at now (sic) (Ade, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*To me they are not open and for that matter it always difficult for us to share any information with them. The little thing you do here attracts severe punishment and it is not good for our relationship with them (Bimbo, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*My relationship with them is not that bad but it is not as good as the one I was having at home (Olamide, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Due to the seemingly hostile relationship between the juveniles and rehabilitation officers, some juveniles revealed that they were more comfortable sharing information with their fellow inmates than with the officers. This could be detrimental to the reformation of the juveniles because they are likely to be poorly advised by their colleagues, which could lead to negative peer influence in the Correctional Centre.

*The staff don't play with us, they are only there to unlock us when it's time for meals, work and when churches are around. After they have done all this they wait to lock us back in our cells. I will say my relationship with colleague inmates has been very good, we talk to each other and play in the cells together (Bimbo, Fieldwork, 2015)*

Even though some participants praised their relationship at home, most of the juveniles established that they did not receive regular visits since they were admitted into the Correctional

Home. Although parents or guardians or family members are not rehabilitation officers, it is assumed that their advice during visits could complement the advice of rehabilitation officers.

*Me for instance I have never received a visitor, being a family member or a friend. I am here on my own and do not know where I will go from here* (Ola, Fieldwork, 2015).

*My auntie has come here once; that was in the early days when I was sent here. Since then no one has come here and it makes me feel sad at times* (Bola, Fieldwork, 2015).

The issue of visits became an important discussion during the interviews, with a rehabilitation officer giving her assertion about how the majority of the juveniles do not receive visitors, even though she later acknowledged a few have been receiving visitors:

*It is very difficult....they even find it difficult to visit their children in the home. "They are not coming". We had a boy last time who escaped from the home and his parents never came to ask after him. But some of the parents often come with prepared foods and foodstuffs and also some money for their children* (Rehabilitation Officer, 1).

Rehabilitation at the Akure Juvenile Correctional Home seems to be a myth. Some participants indicated that they have not been involved in any rehabilitation activities whatsoever since they came. This raised a lot of concerns because the primary motive of the Correctional Home is to rehabilitate delinquents. In a situation where the juveniles are not rehabilitated, they may return to their communities unreformed and more likely to commit future offences. Below are extracts of what participants had to say about this:

*They don't teach us anything here! When I was brought here, I was told that I would be taught how to be a good girl and not to follow bad companions or friends. But is it a different experience ever since I came here, they have taught me nothing (Bimbo, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*No I don't! Nobody has ever called us to teach us. I don't know for others but for me this is how it has been. The staff do not call us to talk to us in a group nor in a one on one talk. We previously had a staff member who talked and advised us on a daily basis. But since he was transferred, none of the staff are doing it. The church is the only group that comes around to talk to us; they minister God's word and advise us to do good. (Tobi, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Some juveniles stated that the only reformation they get from the Correctional Home is when the churches come and preach to them about making good decisions while in the home and when discharged:

*The only advice we get is from the churches who come here to preach to us and pray and share God's words with us (Femi, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Staff at the Correction Home lamented the delay in disbursement of the budget allocated to the Home. It was revealed that they depend heavily on external donations before they can provide certain basic needs to the juveniles.

*My main concern has to do with the delay in the funds that are allocated to the home. In this country, disbursement of funds to appropriate institutions has been a major problem (Rehabilitation Officer, 1).*

Just like the delay in disbursement of funds, participants also spoke bitterly about the delay in officers' salaries:

*Our salaries do not come on time, which is very bad. Also, our pay is very small and the government must do something about it (Rehabilitation Officer, 4).*

*There is not much money for the upkeep of the home. We (staff members) have not been paid for the past two months by the government. The last salary I received was in October 2015. If not for the sake of my husband who is working, I would find it difficult to provide for myself and the rest of the family (Rehabilitation Officer, 2).*

Working at the Correctional Centre seems very tedious. The environment is not conducive for effective delivery of services and to receive little salary, which does not come on time, can be demotivating to workers. One of the staff at the Home summarized the challenges that have been facing them and how these challenges affect the rehabilitation processes of juveniles:

*Generally, the challenges we have been facing are; the structures and equipment are outdated and insufficient, limited money to take proper care of the inmates, the rooms of the inmates are in a deplorable state which need urgent renovation but due to financial constraints the inmates are still in them, which is dangerous to their health. We do not have any health worker in the home and the first aid kit is almost empty of drugs. Almost all the roofs are leaking. These problems restrain us from giving the children proper rehabilitation (Rehabilitation Officer, 1).*

#### 4.3.2 Experiences of Juvenile Delinquents at the Akure Juvenile Correctional Home

Juvenile delinquents, like any other human beings, deserve fair treatment from both the public and security personnel as well as rehabilitation officers. It is assumed that the nature of a juvenile's experience is likely to determine the successes of rehabilitation. In this study, participants reported negative experiences from colleague inmates and rehabilitation officers. Juveniles go through physical, emotional, and psychological abuse. During arrest, they are maltreated by the police; after they are sentenced to the correctional homes, they experience all forms of abuse from rehabilitation officers and other inmates. The excerpts below captures some of the responses by the study participants:

*Since I got to this place the officers especially have been very hard on me and my other colleagues . . . their actions do not make me feel comfortable at all (Bola, Fieldwork, 2015).*

The response above by the juvenile was supported by an officer who stated that corporal punishment such as beating or lashing, was the means to welcome new inmates into the Rehabilitation Centre. This implies that juveniles go through severe physical abuse in their early days of stay at the Akure Correctional Home. Some officers in responding to the means of welcoming juveniles into the home had this to say:

*Ever since I arrived here we welcome a new convict with flogging. It has been a while now since I flogged any of the inmates in the home. I can't remember the last time I flogged or touched any inmates in the home. I only shout at them when they misbehave (Rehabilitation Officer, 2).*

According to one officer, whipping the juveniles during their early days of arrival is part of the correctional measures used by the Home. This suggests that officers and the Akure Correctional Home resort to corporal punishment as part of their reformation interventions. This reflects in the responses below:

*Flogging is part of the correctional measure in the home. They are very stubborn and beating them makes them think and stop their bad behaviour (Rehabilitation Officer, 2).*

*Flogging is one of the treatments or punishments we give to the inmates when they arrive first to the home. It is the normal thing here, because we want them to change. We want this place to pass through them. So that they will know that this home is not a good place for them....It is a hard and severe place to be (Rehabilitation Officer, 3).*

Whilst the officers were optimistic that lashing children was an effective mechanism to prevent juveniles from misbehaving, some juveniles thought otherwise. To them, they had become aware that the least thing they do will attract beating and therefore, they always had to be on the alert to endure the beatings inflicted on them by the officers:

*They will only give you five to ten lashes that is what they always do even when what you did was not that severe to attract such punishment (Ola, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*To me flogging has become part of me. I don't care whether they beat me or not. What I care about is to finish serving my term and get out of this place (Musa, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*When I came I was properly beaten by the inmates as a sign of welcoming into the home. The staff that were on duty were those that told them to beat me and I never understood why they beat me. They only said that it is part of the correctional measures at the home (Femi, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Interestingly, the nature of punishment at the Home has helped instill in the juvenile delinquents not to attempt escaping:

*I have never thought of escaping from the home, because I witnessed one of the boys that was caught after escaping, what they did to him was pathetic, he was beaten proper and naked, everybody in the home was looking at him and it served as a warning for everyone in the home (Seun, Fieldwork, 2015).*

After reporting physical abuse from the rehabilitation officers, some juveniles were quick to highlight various abuse they received from their fellow juveniles:

*When I came at first, I was often beaten by those who came before me. This has been there since, whenever a new person comes everybody wants to show that person he is the boss and begin to do all manner of things to them. These are hardly communicated to the officers (Tobi, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*When I came into the home, the staff did not beat me or say any bad thing to me, it was when I was taken to the cell that the older inmates began to beat me up (Temi, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*I was thoroughly beaten by one of the staff because of the nature of the delinquency that brought me here, you can see that all over my back, I even bled. I felt very sad and will never forget that day, I am not happy here because this place does not look like my home (Bimbo, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Inhumanly, some juveniles revealed that they were beaten till they incurred wounds on their skin, all in the name of teaching them a lesson:

*The treatment here is very harsh I must admit. One day I and other inmates refused to perform our daily duties, we were given a portion to weed and we didn't. The next morning one of the staff called us and asked us to remove our cloths and lie down naked on the ground. We were thoroughly beaten and abused with a cane that resulted in injuries and wounds all over our bodies. Afterwards, they took us back to our cells and we were given no treatment (Tope, Fieldwork, 2015)*

Besides, juveniles were abused verbally by rehabilitation officers. Derogatory words were directed to juveniles when they misbehaved.

*Some of the staff insult us with the little thing you do. They say a lot of negative things about us. One annoying thing is that some of the staff call us all sort of names (Tobi, Fieldwork, 2015).*

A juvenile revealed that some of the staff at the home call them by the crime they committed. These serve as a prejudice or labelling where juveniles are made to feel horrible at the Correctional Centre, which may have negative effects on their rehabilitation and development.

*I have not been called by my name since I came here. They call me by the crime I committed, I tried to prevent them from calling me with that name but they wouldn't stop and I have accepted it, all my colleagues call me by that name (Femi, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*I am always not happy whenever the staff members shout at me and call me all sorts of bad names especially, that I am a disgraceful cultist (Ade, Fieldwork, 2015).*

A juvenile commented on the issue of overcrowding and indicated how they suffer from skin rashes and other infections. This negatively affects every effort the rehabilitation officers are making to reform inmates.

*We are too many and the rooms are too small to contain us.... Currently, we are about 22 in the room and we contract diseases easily. Personally, I have been suffering from skin rashes at my genital for a while now.... We would be glad if something can be done about it (Musa, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*Both children who are in conflict with the law and children beyond parental control are cramped together in cells with no adequate accommodation facilities.....We sleep in double decker beds with no mattresses and pillows provided; not all of us are fortunate to be provided with beds. The unlucky ones are made to sleep on the dirty, bare floor... (Bola, Fieldwork, 2015)*

A statement by one of the rehabilitation officers was in support of the above:

*I think overcrowding is a major problem that we are trying to solve.....*

*The inmates are many but we are doing our best to accommodate them*

(Rehabilitation Officer, 3).

Furthermore, some juveniles revealed that the amount of work they do at the Correctional Home daily is very tiresome and stressful:

*Every morning a big portion is given to me to sweep and the washing of the clothes of some of the children with mental illness and these are a really demanding and difficult task for me in the correctional home (Bimbo, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*Being the oldest among my colleagues, the officers always worry me with washing their cars and helping them in other stuff at their various apartments, which is very demanding and stressful for me (Kunle, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Also, some participants revealed that they do not have any leisure time whatsoever:

*We are denied of play, no time to play in the home. We are just working almost all the time we are not in the cells (Olamide, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*We barely get time to play. This is a place where we can play football and do other things to entertain ourselves, but we do not get the time to, and since one of our colleague escaped they have become even harsher on us (Musa, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*The only game we sometimes engage in is playing ludo, chess and draughts. Any game outside the cell is not possible because the staff are*

*afraid that we will escape whilst playing or if we are given the chance to play outside on the football pitch (Tobi, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Due to the hardship juveniles go through daily, some participants refused to describe the Home as a Rehabilitation Home but a place where juveniles are sent to be taken through hardship:

*I will say this place is where children who have misbehaved are taken care of in a harder manner. I am saying this because we are often beaten in order to learn from our mistakes or bad behaviour (Seun, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*This place is not a good place, no good food, there is no programme that rehabilitates us. What the officers do is to lock us up and give us food; there is no time to play, we are either in the cells or outside working or fellowshipping with the churches that come here (Femi, Fieldwork, 2015).*

#### **4.4 Preventive Measure to Juvenile Delinquency at the Akure Correctional Home**

Looking at the damaging effects of juvenile delinquency on national development, there is the need to identify factors that would mitigate the phenomenon of juvenile delinquencies. Understanding of these factors will, no doubt, enable better management of the juveniles in the home in Akure and by extension to other juvenile homes. The imperativeness of this stems from the fact that experiences in juvenile home in Akure show that the necessary measures are lacking to the extent that the juveniles are aware of the gaps created by these. Be this as it may, the interviews with the juveniles at the home revealed some measures that would help mitigate as well as provide the needed platform in this regard. Observation of experiences at the home

showed that there is much need for drastic government support and interventions in the provision of rehabilitation facilities and personnel that will help and enable effective rehabilitation programme. The consequence is that this will help in the prevention of future involvement in crime. The involvement of trained rehabilitators will not only engage the juveniles but will equally help in educating parents on effective means of socialization of their children to be law abiding. Below are some captions indicating responses by the study participants:

*I would suggest socialization as the best way to prevent delinquency; one thing is if children are well socialized by their parents it will be very difficult for a friend to lure them to delinquency, socialization should be taken seriously (Rehabilitation Officer, 3).*

*I think children should be trained while at home. Parents should teach them what will take them to places like this and why they should be obedient and associate with good companions. For all you know most of the children here are here because of bad associations (Rehabilitation Officer, 1).*

Furthermore, the issue of time was raised by most of the rehabilitation officers that were interviewed as a major contributor to prevent children from becoming delinquents. According to some of the participants, spending quality time with children was an effective means to shape the behaviour of children to the preferred behaviour of parents and caregivers. Below are what participants had to say about this:

*I think also that parents should have time for their children, time to listen to what children are going through. Delinquency has become common of*

*late due to parents' inability to find time for their children. They are always rushing for work, they think about their work more than they think about the future of their children (Rehabilitation Officer, 4).*

*You see some of the children that are sentenced or sent to the children's correctional home are from rich homes, it is not only the poor that have their children there. What I have observed is some rich parents do not make time for their children and this leads to delinquency. I think if parents can get time for children it will stop this (Social Welfare Officer).*

An assertion by a juvenile at the Correctional Home affirmed how effective time could be pivotal in reducing juvenile delinquency:

*I remember when I was sentenced to this place and my mom was crying, one of the workers at the court told my mom not to cry and that if she had trained me well I wouldn't have ended up here. I have spent most of my time with my friends more than with my mother (Bimbo, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Furthermore, some participants were quick to highlight that a support from the government to poor parents to cater for their children would be helpful to reduce juvenile delinquencies.

*The government should come in and support parents who are very poor to cater for their children. I believe this would reduce juvenile delinquency. I am saying this because a lot of children are not in school because of poverty. These children are very vulnerable to become*

*delinquent, but if they are taken care of by the government I believe it will reduce delinquency (Social Welfare Officer).*

*The government and other authorities should put measures in place to get parents to be responsible and perform their duties as parents. I mean irresponsible parents should be charged and prosecuted to get other parents to be responsible. Some people are just there to give birth and don't care about anything after giving birth, such people should be responsible for their actions (Rehabilitation Officer, 4).*

Moreover, some participants suggested that there should be awareness at schools on what constitutes juvenile delinquency.

*I think delinquency can be prevented if students are taught what constitutes delinquent behaviour and the consequences it has on children like us (Kunle, Fieldwork, 2015).*

Education should be directed not only to children, but to parents and guardians as well. Poor upbringing is considered detrimental to the children's development and has been deemed as one of the main causes of juvenile delinquency. Therefore, education that is directed to parents on how to train and bring up children would prove pivotal in reducing juvenile delinquency. Below are what participants had to say about this:

*It is time we need to educate the public on how the world is turning to be these days and tell parents to train their children well. Children of today are exposed to a lot of things and their parents should be there to explain certain things to them. If very complicated things are explained to*

*children by their peers it could lead to delinquency (Social Welfare Officer).*

*There should be awareness at churches and media telling people about the effect of broken homes and separated families on the lives of children. I think the number of broken home and separations in marriages reflects the number of children who become delinquent. If this is controlled the number of these children here will be reduced. Parents should take care of their children and know the type of people their children befriend or associate with (Rehabilitation Officer, 2).*

Some participants believed that juvenile delinquency can only be mitigated if we get parents doing what is expected of them and making parents the focal point in the effort to improve the matter:

*There is need to speak to parents. The parents remain the focal points in addressing juvenile delinquency. Parents should be able to correct and talk to their children so that they will become responsible. "Charity begins at home" many parents encourage their children when they are doing bad things (Rehabilitation Officer, 4).*

*I think we can do everything we can here but getting parents to act responsibly would help everything that we are doing here. Prevention starts from them and ends with them, so we should make sure we get them to be responsible (Rehabilitation Officer, 2).*

*The parents and care givers are not helping anything we are doing here. They leave everything on us, meanwhile their support could prove effective in what we are doing here. The few that come over are doing a great job. You see they make the children know that they are still there for them and this alone can help reform them (Rehabilitation Officer, 3).*

*Most parents do not visit their children who are in the correctional home. This is a clear indication that they have disowned them. The danger is when they go home they would not be welcomed and this could lead to further delinquent acts. If they show care here and when they are with them at home it would help reduce juvenile delinquency (Social Welfare Officer).*

In addition, the issue of effective rehabilitation was raised as a means to prevent juvenile delinquency, especially re-offending. When juvenile delinquents are rehabilitated effectively, they are likely to be discharged to their communities, reformed. Juveniles, irrespective of the nature of their offences, are sentenced to juvenile Correction Homes. The assumption is that they are still in their developmental stages and that effective treatment would help change them and re-socialize them to become responsible citizens in the future. This makes effective treatment intervention very significant in reducing juvenile delinquency. Accordingly, participants were optimistic that if they are provided with sophisticated equipment and up to date training, they can perform to the best of their ability to change juvenile offenders for good. This is what participants had to say about this:

*I believe we can also help reduce juvenile delinquency by giving the juveniles here good training. Because when they go to their homes and*

*continue their juvenile activities then we are increasing delinquency rather than reducing it. So, if government supports us and we do our jobs well delinquency will be reduced (Rehabilitation Officer, 3).*

*To me we can help reduce delinquency if we are provided with the needed resources to perform our duties. The environment we are trying to change the children in is not that conducive. Even though we are giving our all, it is not enough. The children we have here are very stubborn no matter what we do to them. I think if we are given better resources we can do better than what we are currently doing (Social Welfare Officer).*

Besides, some of the officers complained about lack of training for them and understaffing, which has impacted negatively on the quality of service that render. According to them:

*Ever since I started this work, there has been no training for us. The world is changing and there are modern ways of doing things. Taking us to training would equip us with new and better ideas to work with, which would help reform these children for good (Rehabilitation Officer, 4).*

*I think the staff here are very few. We should have some new staff who can help in the counselling and reformation process for the juveniles we have here. One thing I have realized is the children or centre need more staff so they can take them through counselling and training, which I believe can help (Rehabilitation Officer, 3).*

Some of the juveniles complained about how physical abuse from the officers as a result of corporal punishment has not been an effective treatment intervention and why it should be stopped. Punishment only instills fear in the juveniles and tends to be a form of counter effective reformation. Therefore, in this regard, what needed to be done is to expose the juveniles to general consequences of involvement in crimes as this will deter them from engaging in crime:

*We are being beaten almost every day. This puts fear in us but does not help us change, it only make us strong as it hardens us to be able to go through anything (Ola, Fieldwork, 2015).*

*Why is it that some participants you have included and others not, can it be uniform? Remove the field work and leave just the names*

#### **4.5 Discussion of the Findings**

This section discusses the findings of the study and identifies the extent to which the findings were supported or not supported by the reviewed literature. Specifically, the discussion looks at how the objectives of this study were addressed in the findings and how consistent or inconsistent the findings were with previous literature. Further, the section discusses how the findings of the study were consistent with the theory (Structural Functionalist Theory) that underpinned the study.

##### **4.5.1 Predisposing Factors of Juvenile Delinquency**

The study reported many factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency at the Akure Correctional Homes. In line with the findings of English et al. (2002); Ryan and Testa (2005); Stewert et al. (2002), child maltreatment is a predisposing factor to juvenile delinquency. The present study reported that family maltreatment is a causal factor to juvenile delinquency.

Children who are maltreated tend to become aggressive and in their aggressiveness may act in a deviant manner (Nagin & Trembly, 2001). It was found in this study that through maltreatment, one juvenile's reaction to the perpetrator resulted in death. Also, children who witness domestic abuse are likely to become delinquents as they may internalize the abuse and exhibit it in the future. Besides, children who are maltreated and witness family conflicts are likely to become delinquent and most likely criminals in their adult age (Boakye, 2013; English et al., 2002).

Neglect by parents was a major factor that contributed to juvenile delinquency in the present study. This finding was consistent with Thornberry et al. (2004), who established in their study that child neglect was harmful to the child's growth and could lead to deviant behavior. Also, poor parental supervision that was reported by Ebuehi and Omogbemi (2011); Nyamoko and Songole (2014) as a contributor to juvenile delinquency was reported also in the present study. In addition, poor parental supervision coupled with neglect are likely to compel children to join bad companions who could lure them into delinquent activities.

Accordingly, the study found that peer influence was among the leading predisposing factors of juvenile delinquency at the Akure Correctional Home. Similar findings were noted by Boakye (2013); Nyamoko and Songole (2014). They asserted that negative peer influence was a major cause of juvenile delinquency. In addition, poverty, single parenting, and other family disadvantages were reported as contributors to juvenile delinquency by Kofler-Westergren et al. (2010). This is consistent with the findings of this study.

Nevertheless, race as a predisposing factor to juvenile delinquency reported by Ryan and Testa (2005) was not found in the current study. This was because of the setting of the study. The Ryan and Testa (2005) study was conducted in the United States where there are people of different races. The current study was conducted at the Akure Correctional Home, where almost all the

juveniles that were interviewed were coming from one ethnic group. Besides, low religiosity and individual factors reported by Boakye (2013) as predisposing factors to juvenile delinquency were not found in the present study.

#### **4.5.2 Challenges and Experiences of Juveniles**

The level and degree of maltreatment meted out to the children in the home is quite significant in respect to the expected experiences at the Correctional Home. The treatments range from mode and type of feeding to the nature of torture that are administered on the children at various points of encounter. Usually, when a child is brought to the centre, he or she is thoroughly beaten with whips until the person carrying out the beating is tired or to the point when the victim is motionless on the floor. The beating is usually done by any of the officials, or the most senior among the inmates of the centre. Common evidence of this is the scars that the inflicted wounds left on the bodies of the children. In addition to the physical scars, there is also the likely psychological scars that are inflicted on the psyche of the victims. The impact of this is that the victims expressed the shock of the experience in their narration of what they went through in the course of the interview. Another aspect of this treatment is that the victims find it difficult to eat for days after the beating as the level of the pain would not allow them to eat. In addition to the injuries sustained at the point of beating, on entering the home, the children also sustain different degrees of injuries from fighting among themselves or beating in the sleeping apartment by the most senior in the group. The kind of respect given to the seniors in the home by their fellows gives them the chance to unleash terror on their juniors, especially when the junior refuses to adhere to the instructions of the senior. Some of the likely instructions include washing of plates and clothes, cutting of finger nails as well as parting with one's ration of food or part of it.

Sometimes, also, the senior may request that a junior give him money or any other item that he has. If the junior does not have the money or the item, he would have to pledge to provide the required request when next he is visited from outside by his people. Failure to heed to this would lead to beating at the command of the senior that placed the request.

In spite of the obvious nature of the injuries sustained in the course of the beating following failure to meet the demands of the senior, (resulting from the failure to provide for the senior,) the victims do not disclose what happened or the source of the injury to the officials as this could incur further beating. Feeding is also part of the problem that victims face in the home. Participants complained about the condition of the food; they eat almost the same type of food each day. This is evident in the appearances of the children as they look very much malnourished. In any case, in the opinion of the officials at the home, the food given to the children is what the state government could afford for their upkeep. Another reason why they do not feed the children well is so that they will not forget the reason why they are in the home. Again, the perceived ill-treatment of the children is reflected in the conditions under which they sleep. About half of the children in the home sleep on the bare floor, on mats, or tattered mattresses. The mattresses and the iron beds are ridden with bed bugs which the children say do not allow them to sleep well at night. They are also troubled by noise, mosquitos, and insect bites. Here again, the officials are of the view that provisions of comfort for the children would defeat the aim of bringing them to the home. However, in spite of the above-mentioned perceptions, the likelihood is that this treatment impacts negatively on the children as they are likely to look at things from a negative perspective. When this becomes the case, they will be hardened and highly resistant to efforts advanced for their rehabilitation.

Furthermore, it is assumed that an effective rehabilitation of delinquent inmates will be possible when rehabilitation officers and other correction staff operate in an environment with the necessary means. Nevertheless, rehabilitation officers in the Akure Correctional Home were faced with myriad challenges, including insufficient resources (human, infrastructure, and financial). Similar findings were reported by Alemika and Chukwuma (2001); Ikoh (2011) whose respective research findings mentioned poor conditions in various Correctional Homes in Nigeria. Poor conditions in the Correctional Home are considered detrimental to every effort to rehabilitate offenders. As a result, juveniles were likely to finish their court sentence without going through any rehabilitation. This would lead to the situation where juveniles would go back to their communities unreformed and likely to continue their delinquent behaviour.

In line with the findings by Lee (2002), children who were in conflict with the law experienced countless negative experiences in their encounter with the officers. Children were harassed, maltreated and physically abused by rehabilitation officers. The study has also reported that some inmates in the Akure Correctional Home were subjected to physical and verbal abuse by fellow inmates. This happened when new inmates were abused by old inmates in the rehabilitation yard. These findings from this study are in line with the findings by Awopetu and Igbo (2015) who established that aggressive behaviour among inmates in Nigeria has been increasing for the past decades.

In addition to that, the study found that juveniles experience overcrowding and poor ventilation as one of the worst features in the Correctional Home. This results in juveniles suffering from skin rashes and other infections which are detrimental to their health and lives. These findings confirm studies such as those of Alemika and Chukwuma (2001); Lee (2002); Ikoh (2011),

which indicated that children who were in conflict with the law experienced countless negative experiences in Correctional Homes.

#### **4.5.3 Mitigating Juvenile Delinquency**

In preventing the incidence of juvenile delinquency, the study reported that, based on the findings, there is need for parental involvement in the rehabilitating processes. These findings are similar to a research report by Bazemore and Umbreit (1994); Luchenbill and Yeager (2009). Participants of the study suggested that parents should visit their children who were undergoing rehabilitation. Also, government interventions were sought after in the study. The government is expected to disburse the budget allocation to the Centre on time and provide the Centre with additional and qualified staff as well as sophisticated equipment to enhance effective rehabilitation. Again, the study established that juvenile delinquency can be prevented if we get parents to perform their duties effectively. Parents were supposed to make time for their children and make sure they were well socialized. Parents should be concerned about the associations their children engaged in, so as to be able to identify the likelihood of peer influence and act faster to prevent such associations.

Also, punitive offender treatment as identified by Draper et al. (2013) as inappropriate treatment of juveniles was similar to the findings of the current study. In this, the use of flogging as a form of treatment only toughened juveniles instead of reforming them. Effective treatment intervention implemented by qualified and experienced correctional staff was considered an effective method of treating juveniles.

#### **4.6 How the Findings Addressed the Structural Functionalist Theory**

This study employed a qualitative research design to investigate the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents at the Akure Correctional Home, Ondo State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to discover the predisposing factors of juvenile delinquency, experiences of juvenile delinquents, challenges in rehabilitating juveniles, and preventive measures of juveniles delinquency. The study has reported countless factors leading to delinquency at the Akure Correctional Home. The most recurring factor identified by participants of the study was family malfunction and peer pressure. In this study, family malfunction had to do with the breakdown of the family structure through factors such as broken homes, single parenting, poverty, maltreatment, family conflicts, and poor upbringing, leading to child neglect, coupled with deficiency in socialization. These factors confirmed the basis of the structural functionalist theory, which posits that a breakdown of any of the institutions in society could lead to a state of disequilibrium, which would result in malfunctions. Accordingly, children became deviant as a result of breakdown in the family structure.

In addition, the study reported that rehabilitation at Akure Correctional Home was inadequately conducted. Factors leading to the inadequate rehabilitation were insufficient rehabilitation personnel, inadequate infrastructure, inconsistency in disbursement of funds allocated to the Correctional Home, and poor relationships between the Home and the external environment, and particularly with parents of the juveniles. Relating this to the structural functionalist theory, it is assumed that the Akure Correctional Home is an institution of the state that ensures that juveniles in conflict with the law of the land are reformed. Nevertheless, the Correctional Home can perform its functions effectively only when each department and stakeholder delivers its functions. In the case of the Akure Correctional Home, various stakeholders such as the

government, family of juveniles and the home itself were in a state of disequilibrium. As a result, the rehabilitation of juveniles was negatively affected.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The first section of the chapter summarizes the findings of the study, the second section draws conclusions based on the findings and suggests recommendations. Lastly, this chapter indicates the limitations of the study.

#### 5.2 Summary of the Findings

The experiences of juveniles at the Akure Correctional Home and preventive factors of juvenile delinquencies have been explored in this study. Juvenile delinquency is a detrimental phenomenon, and much attention should be directed towards mitigating it. Juvenile delinquency directly affects the children involved, and directly or indirectly affects their families, their communities and the state at large. Also, the state directs many resources in treating juvenile offenders, hence the need to find mitigating factors to prevent it in the first place.

The study has reported countless findings on the predisposing factors to juvenile delinquency, challenges faced during rehabilitation, experiences of juvenile delinquents, and preventive measures of juvenile delinquency. The study found that juvenile delinquency is caused by two major factors: family malfunction and peer influence. In this study, dysfunction in the family as an institution comes in many forms to affect the behaviour of children, and it eventually results in juvenile delinquency. These factors directly or indirectly push children from their homes to join peers where they are likely to begin their delinquent activities. In this regard, the increasing rate of juvenile delinquency was as a result of the breakdown of the family as an institution. The family as a basic unit of the state needs to function at its best to ensure equilibrium and balance

in the state. Accordingly, malfunction or breakdown of the family affects every aspect of society. In addition, children who have been neglected or are victims of poor parenting, tend to develop attachment to their peers. As a result, they are more likely to take the advice given to them by their friends than by their parents. It is assumed that peer advice may not enhance or positively shape children's behaviour as that of their parents and caregivers might do. Peer advice lures children into delinquent behaviour, thereby increasing delinquency among children.

Similar to this is that family malfunction caused by factors such as single parenting is another major factor contributing to juvenile delinquency. Children from single parent households are faced with deficiencies in proper parental supervision, and experience neglect. As a result, they are likely to form associations with bad gangs, which may lead them into delinquent activities. Also, parents' inability to take proper care of their children was a contributing factor in delinquency. Other factors identified in the study as a malfunctioning of the family were, poverty, poor socialization, and lack of sufficient time spent on children. The study found that children from disadvantaged homes were often neglected by their parents, which affects their moral development thereby leaving them vulnerable to a delinquent lifestyle. Furthermore, the study reported child maltreatment and family conflict as predisposing factors to juvenile delinquency. According to the findings of the current study, children who experience maltreatment and witness family conflicts are likely to become aggressive and leave home, which could expose them to countless delinquent activities.

Moreover, the study reported peer influence as a contributing factor to juvenile delinquency. Almost all the key informants as well as the children indicated peer influence as a predisposing factor to juvenile delinquency. The findings of the study indicated that children are likely to join and act according to the advice of their peers when they are from a malfunctioning home. Some

children are completely neglected by parents, while others are given little attention by their parents and caregivers. According to this study, these children are likely to be in the association of bad gangs and eventually become delinquents.

The findings of the study revealed a lot of challenges confronting rehabilitation at the Akure Juvenile Correctional Home. Among those challenges are inadequate resources and equipment, insufficient and qualified staff to rehabilitate inmates, inadequate rehabilitation facilities such as entrepreneur programmes that will equip the juveniles for survival outside the home, inaccessibility to health care service, and poor relationships between juveniles and rehabilitation officers.

It was obvious from the study that lack of visitation by the parents of the juveniles has negative effects on them. It is in this regard that the juveniles made it known that this has negative psychological impacts on them, as it makes them feel abandoned. This was collaborated by the staff of the home who maintained that as children, the juveniles are affected by such perceived abandonment. Also, poor supervision on the part of rehabilitation officers was a major hindrance to rehabilitation as juveniles were mostly left on their own. Nutrition and sufficient food was also a challenge at the Centre. Again, the study found that there were delays in disbursement of funds by the government and delays in salaries and remunerations for staff. Thus, the juveniles were denied any form of rehabilitation or reformation programme at Akure Correction Home.

In the Correctional Home, juveniles were subjected to beating and other forms of abuse and hardships by the officers. This abusive and inhumane treatment was considered a form of reformation treatment for juveniles. In addition, juveniles experienced labeling and stigmatization. Some of the juveniles were called by the offence that brought them to the Correction Home and were subjected to derogatory comments uttered by officers. In addition,

the study reported that juveniles were made to perform all sorts of manual labor including washing dirty clothes and weeding almost every day. Nevertheless, the study reported countless interventions that could help mitigate juvenile delinquency.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The primary motive of the Akure Correctional Home is to house juveniles and employ various interventions to improve their criminogenic behaviour. This is done with the motive of saving these teenagers from becoming criminals when they reach adulthood. In the juvenile justice system, juveniles are considered to be in their developmental stage. They are perceived to be feeble minded and easily lured into delinquent behaviour by their peers or any other person. Therefore, a tailored fit intervention on changing their behaviour has been highlighted and implemented by state parties. However, any intervention that does not focus on reforming and rehabilitating the children would mean that there would be no improvement in behaviour.

Knowing the predisposing factors and challenges associated with rehabilitating juvenile delinquents helped prepare the grounds for suggesting mitigating measures of juvenile delinquency. The experiences at the Remand Home are such that leave indelible marks on the psyche of the victims. The impact or effect is such that makes the victim think that he or she has been condemned. By extension, this kind of mindset leads to a situation where the main objective for the establishment of the institution is challenged. The challenge is basically in respect to qualitative rehabilitation that will ensure a change of attitude on the side of the victims. The neglect of the home, which is responsible for the lack of necessary amenities at the centre make it difficult for both the inmates and the officials to carry out their expected responsibilities. It is our opinion that a situation such as this will eventually bring out the worse in the victims, and this will be against the aim of the establishment of the home. Again, this will

also provide exploitative opportunity for the officials who will thereby be forced to look at the victims or the children in the home as problems. Another aspect of this is that lack of monitoring of the children by the officials regarding the social contacts within the home leaves the weaker ones more vulnerable. This is because, those who are so entrenched in juvenile delinquencies usually expose those who are not so exposed to delinquent behaviour before coming to the home. These situations in the home have degenerated to the extent that one would be forced to suggest that either the government decides to re- focus their plans for the home or close it entirely. As it is at the moment, it does not have any focus.

#### **5.4 Policy Implications of the study**

- The researcher seeks to publish the findings of the study in academic journals to enhance easy access by policy makers and the general public. This would ensure that policies on juvenile delinquency and related issues focus on mitigating the challenges faced in rehabilitating juvenile delinquents in various Correctional Homes across Nigeria.

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

- a. There is need to educate and create awareness on the need for parents to pay close attention to the upbringing of their children could prove important in reducing juvenile delinquency. Education and sensitization programs directed to the public, particularly parents, would mitigate juvenile delinquency in diverse ways:
- b. Parents should be aware of the people their children are friends with and advise the children on what kind of company is good and vice versa.
- c. Parents should spend a reasonable amount of time with their children. This would create an environment where children will confide in their parents or caregivers

and have enough trust to share any confronting issues with them. Also, a reasonable time spent with children would help parents monitor any behavioral changes and prevent it from escalating to delinquent behaviour.

- d. Single parents should be aware of the task of combining their parenting, housekeeping and working roles and strategize to get the best behaviour out of their children.
- The government of Nigeria should provide the Akure Correctional Home with the needed resources. The findings of the study revealed a resource constraint among the major hindrances to rehabilitate at the Akure Correctional Home. It is believed that providing the Home with the needed resources (such as funds and equipment), which would be managed and executed by rehabilitation experts, will improve rehabilitation at the Akure Correctional Home.
  - The government should disburse funds allocated to the Home and pay remuneration and salaries of rehabilitation officers on time. This would create a satisfactory working environment and motivate officers to give their all in rehabilitating and reforming inmates.
  - Punitive method of rehabilitation by the correctional officers should be replaced by a more advanced and efficient method of rehabilitation. The study has suggested cognitive behavioral therapy as a rehabilitation and juvenile treatment alternative. This treatment, if adopted, would aid officers' work on changing the criminogenic behaviour of juveniles rather than targeting the criminogenic person. Such acts subject juveniles to torture and abuse.

- Lack of proper monitoring of activities affects the management of the Home, therefore, mechanisms for occasional monitoring of the activities in the Home should be established.
- Police, prison services and other relevant agencies should be educated on the need to treat offenders at all levels with respect and dignity during and after arrest.

### **Recommendations for Social Work Practice**

- Social workers should advocate for better policies in the context of juvenile justice. Advocacy should be directed at promoting effective juvenile treatment interventions that would help various Correctional Homes achieve their objectives of rehabilitating, reforming, and re-socializing juveniles.
- Also, social workers should advocate for humane treatments of juveniles who are in conflict with the laws of the land.
- Social workers should effectively perform their roles as brokers, and unite juveniles who are about to be discharged from the Correctional Home, to institutions that provide care and protection for children.
- It is important that social workers be effectively trained as to enable them to be productive in their carrier. This will certainly have positive impact on the juveniles in the home.

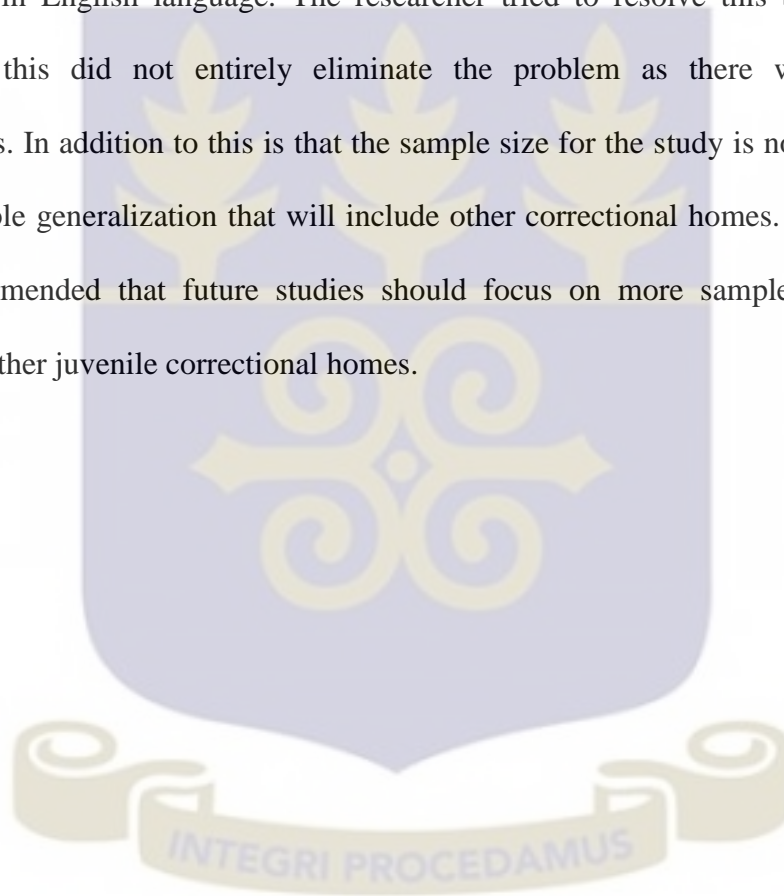
### **Recommendations for Social Work Education**

- Social work students and social science students should research more into juvenile delinquency and the experiences of juvenile delinquents in correctional homes and make appropriate recommendations to inform policy makers especially the Juvenile Justice

Reforms to protect the rights of children who are in conflict with the law and to mitigate recidivism.

### **5.6 Limitations of the Study**

Language was part of the problems that threatened the quality of the research especially in the area of data gathering. This is because most of the juvenile interviewees could not express themselves well in English language. The researcher tried to resolve this by making use of interpreters but this did not entirely eliminate the problem as there were instances of misinterpretations. In addition to this is that the sample size for the study is not much enough to make a appreciable generalization that will include other correctional homes. To this effect, the study has recommended that future studies should focus on more sample size and extend investigation to other juvenile correctional homes.



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## APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Interview Guide for Inmates in the correctional home

I am a student in social work conducting research on the topic “Exploring the experiences of juvenile delinquents in Akure correctional home, Ondo State, Nigeria”. I would be pleased if you could respond to the questions by sparing some minutes of your time. Any information given will be treated as confidential and used for only the intended purpose.

#### **Background Information**

- Age
- Sex
- Educational level
- Family
- Friendship (peer pressure)

#### **Reasons of delinquency among juveniles**

- Why did you engage in juvenile delinquent activities?
- What factors lead you to juvenile delinquency?

#### **Challenges of rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents**

- How do you see the conditions of this correctional home?
- Do you have access to rehabilitation programmes?
- What are the challenges you encounter at the correctional home?
- Can you tell me your experience of the juvenile correctional home?
- How is your relationship with your parents or guardians since you came into the home?
- Do you have a good relationship with staff members in the correctional home?

- Are you satisfied with the health conditions in the home?

### **Preventive measures for juvenile delinquency**

- What can be done to prevent juvenile delinquency?
- What lessons have you learnt at the home?

### **Interview Guide for Rehabilitation Officers in the juvenile correctional home**

I am a Student in social work conducting research on the topic “Exploring the experiences of juvenile delinquents in Akure correctional home, Ondo State, Nigeria”. I would be pleased if you could respond to the questions by spending minutes of your time. Any information given will be treated as confidential and used for only the intended purpose.

### **Background Information**

- Sex
- Level of education
- Position held in the correctional home
- Number of years in service

### **Reasons of delinquency among juveniles**

- What’s your view about juvenile delinquents?
- According to you what factors lead to juvenile delinquency?

### **Challenges of rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents**

- How would you rate the condition in the correctional home?
- Are the rehabilitation programmes really available to juvenile delinquents?
- What’s the impact of the correctional home on juvenile delinquents?

- What are the challenges the staff members face in rehabilitating and reforming offenders?
- How or what means do you use to welcome the children in the home?
- How are the children treated when they are sick?
- Does the home get Support from the inmate's families?
- Are there Supports from government and other NGOs?
- How is the relationship between staff members and inmates in the correctional home?
- How do you help persons with disabilities in the home?
- What are the conditions for children brought in by parents and those who were arrested by the law enforcement agents?
- Do parents who bring their children to the home pay?
- Who determines when they are to leave the home?

#### **Preventive measures for juvenile delinquency**

- What can be done to prevent or reduce juvenile delinquency?

#### **Interview Guide for department of social welfare in Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria**

I am a Student in social work conducting research on the topic “Exploring the experiences of juvenile delinquents in Akure correctional home, Ondo State, Nigeria”. I would be pleased if you could respond to the questions by spending minutes of your time. Any information given will be treated as confidential and used for only the intended purpose.

#### **Background Information**

- Sex
- Age
- Level of education

- Marital status
- Position held in the department of social work
- Number of years in service

### **Reasons of delinquency among juveniles**

- What's your view about juvenile delinquency?
- What factors lead to juvenile delinquency?

### **Challenges of rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents**

- What is the condition of the correctional homes?
- What challenges are faced by the department in rehabilitating and reforming offenders?
- Do you have support from government and NGOs?
- What are persons with disabilities doing in the home?
- Do parents who bring their children to the home pay?

### **Preventive measures for juvenile delinquency**

- What can be done to prevent or reduce juvenile delinquency?
- What is the government doing to prevent or reduce juvenile delinquency?

