

**ELECTRONIC MEDIA VIOLENCE AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY: A CASE
STUDY OF INMATES OF THE SENIOR CORRECTIONAL CENTRE, ACCRA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is the product of my own research undertaken at the School of Communication Studies, University Of Ghana, Legon. It was conducted under the supervision of Professor Kwasi Ansu- Kyeremeh. All references cited in this work have been duly acknowledged

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the memory of my late grandfather and role model, Mr. E.K Atsem for his invaluable contributions and support for my secondary education.

I also dedicate this work to my wife, Rita Nutakor-Atsem and my two daughters, Edudzi and Enyam for their prayers and support without which this work would not have been successful.

My uncle and mentor, Mr. G.A.D Atsem deserves a special mention for playing all the fatherly roles in my life.



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ABSTRACT

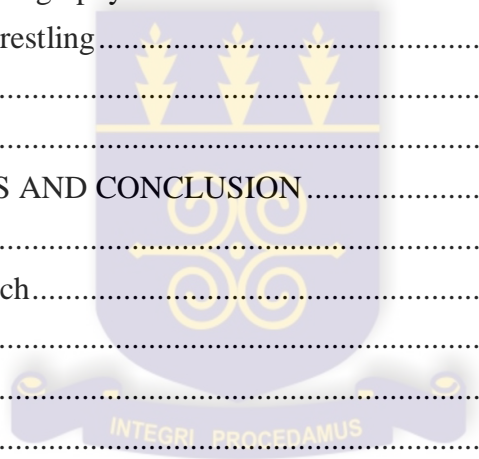
This study explored the perceived circumstances surrounding inmates of the Senior Correctional Centre's involvement in criminal acts, all a bid to find out these young offenders' thoughts about electronic media violence and their involvement in crime. The meanings which the inmates themselves made of their perceived risk factors were also of great interest. Using the social learning theory by Albert Bandura (1977) as the anchor of this study and guided by other studies on the subject of media violence, a semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data on the lived experiences of fifteen inmates at the Senior Correctional Centre with particular reference to electronic media violence. Through a critical analysis of the data collected, five main themes emerged as possible factors in delinquent behaviour: inadequate parental support and supervision, death of a parent and inadequate extended family support, deviant peer association, religiosity and morality as well as electronic media violence. Thus, one major finding of this study was that in conjunction with other factors, electronic media violence seemed to have contributed to violent behaviour among inmates of the Senior Correctional Centre, located in Accra.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Studies have revealed that a complex process is involved in the development of children's social and emotional capabilities. In order to participate effectively in their culture, children need to acquire the norms, rules and values that make it possible for them to form connections and function in families, peer groups and the society as a whole (Wilson, 2008). Wilson argues that children are socialised by parents, friends, teachers and siblings as well as the electronic media.

“Developmental psychologists and media scholars alike have argued that screen media play a crucial role in children's emotional development” (Wilson, 2008 : 89).

It has become a common sight to find children spend a large proportion of their time after school or during holidays or leisure times watching television or films (Okafor&Malizu, 2013). Okafor and Malizu (2013) contend that this indicates the extent to which the mass media has become a major agent of socialisation in today's world. What is more, most parents cannot afford to spend a portion of their time with their children, thereby making monitoring of what the children watch difficult.

Okafor and Malizu (2013) further argue that what parents even sometimes teach their children is often determined by the mass media. This clearly underscores the significance of the media in the socialisation process.

Recent studies have indicated that young children are vulnerable as they tend to believe what they see on television. They lack the ability to distinguish between facts, fiction and advertisements.

Some media scholars such as Berkowitz, Donnerstein, Huesmann and Wartella are also of the opinion that children who are exposed to media violence tend to have increased probability of aggression (Anderson, Caenagey and Eubanks, 2003).

1.1 Background

There have been concerns about an increasing rate of crime in recent times. In Ghana for instance, The Ghana Police Service recorded a total of 74,128 reported cases of major offences in 2005. From 2006 to 2014, the figure increased marginally to 80,436, 89,375, 87,255, 87,280, 83,885, 81,794, 80,657, 80,657, 84,562 and 82,111 respectively. In 2015, it decreased to 66,527 (Statistical & Information Technology Unit(SITU), CID, Ghana Police Service,2016). More worrying is the issues of increasing rate of criminal activities among juveniles and it is instructive to note that some of these major offences indicated in the Ghanaian context above, were perpetrated by juveniles.

.According to Bosiakoh and Andoh, (2010), Ghana has witnessed an upsurge in juvenile delinquency which many Ghanaians consider as a worrying development. The “Daily Graphic” newspaper of 28th October, 2013 reported the worrying trend of increasing rate of juveniles engaging in crime in the Nkoranza Municipality. The story which was attributed to the Nkoranza Municipal Police Commander, DSP Joseph Owusu, noted that there had been reported cases

involving some school children breaking into stores, kiosks and computer laboratories and making away with a number of goods from such places, Buodu, S.(October 28, 2013). Police lament involvement of juveniles in Crime. *Daily Graphic*, p.13. Again, 12 teenage suspected criminals, believed to be behind recent carjacking and robberies in the Ashanti region, were arrested by the Ashanti Regional Police command. Among the suspects was a 13-year old boy described as an errand boy of one of the most wanted criminals in the region.

Many analysts such as Ledingham, Ledingham and Richardson (2003) have attributed this development to a number of causes including the influence of mass media content. Some researchers such as Boxer (2009), Wilson (2008) and Anderson, Carnagey & Eubanks (2003) have therefore tried to establish a link between consumption of violent media content and juvenile delinquency or crime

1.2 Problem statement

The issue of juveniles engaging in criminal acts is becoming common in Ghana. The Department of Social Welfare's Annual Performance Report (2007) indicated that 276 cases of juvenile delinquency cases were dealt with in the year 2007 (Boakye, 2012). In 2010, an average daily lock-up of one hundred and fifteen male juveniles was recorded at the Senior Correctional Centre (formerly Ghana Borstal Institute), the only male juvenile reformatory centre in Ghana. This number increased marginally to one hundred and nineteen in 2011 and then reduced marginally again to 117 in 2012 2013 respectively (Ghana Prisons Service Annual Reports, 2010, 2011, 2012 & 2013).

Many studies have tried to discover the causes of juvenile delinquency and have found several factors to be responsible for it. One of the causes that came out quite clearly from studies conducted by researchers such as Wilson (2008) and Boxer (2009) was the effect of media violence. However, most of these studies have been on either Europe or America. The few works that have been done with respect to Ghana unfortunately did not even look at perceived media effects. This study sought to find out thoughts of some inmates of the Senior Correctional Centre in Accra on a link between media violence and juvenile delinquency in the Ghanaian context.

1.3 Objective of the study

This study sought to ascertain the perception of inmates of the Senior Correction Centre about their involvement in crime in relation to their exposure to electronic media violence.

1.4 Research questions

RQ1. What are inmates' perceptions of circumstances surrounding their involvement in delinquency?

RQ2. Do the circumstances indicate any electronic media experience?

RQ3. Does the electronic media experience indicate specific violent content?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study has provided knowledge on the indication of a link between perceived exposure to violent electronic media content and crime among juvenile offenders at the Senior Correctional Centre in Accra. The findings of this study will also serve as a guide to the authorities at the Senior Correctional Centre on treatment regimes for these young offenders.

1.6 Summary

This chapter established the background to this study, making a case for the conduct of the study as it spelt out its objective and underscored its significance to the relevant authorities. The chapter also listed the research questions to which the researcher sought to find answers.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework as well as the related works from the theoretical perspective within which the researcher explored the subject of electronic media violence and juvenile delinquency from the Ghanaian perspective.

2.1 Theoretical framework

Scientific theory can be defined as an organized set of hypotheses that allow a scientist to understand, explain and predict the variety of findings that studies produce (Shaw & Costanzo, 1982, in Anrson, et al., 2003). Theories are necessary for understanding and improving current research findings and predicting future directions. Kurt Lewin (1951, in Bushman & Anderso, 2001)) noted that ‘there is nothing so practical as a good theory’.

The effects of media violence on aggression can be understood through various well-developed theories that draw on several disciplines. Multiple disciplines are necessary for a complete understanding because there are multiple mechanisms underlying media violence effects (Gentile, Saleem & Anderson, 2007). Current models have been tested, refined and retested repeatedly over the years. The most thorough are versions of social cognitive and information processing models that focus on how people think, learn and come to behave in particular ways. People’s current behavioral tendencies result from past interactions with the social world. These social interactions may be real (e.g. parents, peers) or fictional (e.g. various forms of media). A few of relevant theories that underlie this study are discussed below:

2.1.2 Social Learning Theory

The major theory underlying this research is the social learning theory. Many researchers such as Bandura (1965) and Bandura, Ross & Ross (1963a) adopted the social learning theory in investigating the influence of violent media content on people. Proposed by Albert Bandura (1961), the social learning theory suggests that learning is done through observation. Observing and imitating other people's behavior is one of the most important sources involved in the development of a young child's motor and social skills. Similarly, children observe social interactions from numerous sources: parents, peers, older siblings and even fictional characters portrayed in the media. Children are more likely to imitate a behaviour that is followed by a reward than a behaviour followed by a punishment (Bandura, 1965; Bandura et al., 1963). Through his famous Bobo Doll experiment, Bandura (1961) established that children observed people around them behaving in various ways. Bandura (1986) in his study suggested that behaviour was learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. Children were surrounded by a lot of influential models such as parents, characters on children's television, friends and teachers at school.

2.1.3 Cultivation Theory

Supporting the social learning theory for this study is the cultivation theory. Developed by George Gerbner and his colleagues (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980), the theory postulates that long term television viewing has effects on people's perceptions, attitudes and values. The combined effect of massive television exposure by viewers over time subtly shapes the perception of social reality of individuals and, ultimately, for our society as a whole. Gerbner argues that the mass media cultivate attitudes and values which are already present in the culture.

Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli (1980) surveyed television viewers in sub urban neighbourhoods concerning their media usage and perceptions of danger in their neighbourhood. Results showed that among both low and high income groups, people who consistently view larger amount of television consider their own neighbourhoods to be more dangerous than people who view smaller amount of television. Another study by Gerbner and his associates has shown that heavy television viewers have stronger beliefs than light viewers and that more money needs to spent on fighting crime (Gerbner et al., 1982).

In respect of the social learning theory which is the theoretical anchor for this study, the interview questions sought to elicit responses relating to role models from whom the respondents might have adopted certain lifestyles. Regarding the supporting theory, the Cultivation theory, the interview questions sought to elicit answers from the subjects with respect to possible habits cultivated by virtue of watching television. The focus was to investigate if respondents probably came to believe the television version of reality the more they watched it.

2.1.4 Cognitive-Neoassociation Theory

Numerous aversive effects such as frustration, provocation, loud noises, uncomfortable temperatures, and unpleasant odours lead to negative affect and subsequently to aggression (Berkowitz, 1989, 1993). For example, hot temperatures increase irritability and, under the right conditions, aggressive behaviour (Anderson, Anderson, Dorr, DeNeve & Flanagan, 2000). Through frequent associations, negative affect becomes linked to a variety of thoughts, memories, expressive motor reactions and psychological responses. Anderson et al.,(2003) argue that these responses are then automatically activated when negative affect is present in

future circumstances and give rise to two immediate and simultaneous tendencies: fight or flight. The fight associations result in beginning stages of feeling of anger, whereas the flight associations give rise to beginning stages of feeling of fear. The tendency that is the stronger of the two is most likely to determine the individual's behavior in the present situation. Through classical conditioning, cues present in the current aversive event are likely to become associated with the experiences (e.g. thoughts, emotions, memories, and reactions). It is argued that similar cues in the future, even under different circumstances are likely to trigger similar reactions and responses.

2.1.5 General Aggression Model (GAM)

The General Aggression Model (GAM) is a relatively new theory that integrates concepts and ideas from earlier models (Carnagey & Anderson, 2003, Anderson et al., 2007) GAM describes a cyclical pattern of interactions between a person and their environment. The model is particularly useful in understanding how individuals and situational variables affect a person's appraisal of a situation and eventually affect the behaviour exhibited in response to that appraisal. Input factors (personal and situational) are thought to influence an individual's present internal state, which consists of cognition, affect, and arousal. Each of these three routes can be influenced by input variables and can also influence one another. The present internal state then influences one's decision making process leading subsequently to either a thoughtful or an impulsive action. Impulsive actions and behaviours could be a result of immediate and spontaneous appraisals that are made without much thought and awareness. Thoughtful actions and behaviours, on the other hand, would be a result of searching for relevant information to re-evaluate the current circumstance, but this occurs only when given enough time and motivation

to reevaluate immediate appraisals. This however, does not mean that thoughtful actions and behaviours will always be non-aggressive and impulsive actions will always be aggressive. Both impulsive and thoughtful actions and behaviours can be either aggressive or non-aggressive.

It must be noted that the general aggression model is not designed as a media violence theory, but rather as a broad theory of human aggression designed to explain the likelihood of aggressive response in the short term and the development of aggressive personality in the long run. Thus, it can be used to understand all the variables that increase aggression, including exposure to violent media content. Theoretically, violent media can affect all three components of internal state. According to Bushman and Anderson (2001), playing violent video games can temporarily increase aggressive thoughts, affect and arousal. They contend that in the long run, repeated exposure to violent media can reduce violent arousal to subsequent depictions of violence, increase aggressive thought patterns and beliefs in the efficacy of aggression, and increase hostile interpretations of ambiguous events. In sum, the general aggressive model can be used to explain a wide variety of effects seen in the media violence literature including both short and long term effects on aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behaviours; on emotional desensitisation to violence and subsequent declines in prosocial behaviour, and on changes in the social environment that occur as the developing child becomes more habitually aggressive.

2.1.6 General Theory of Crime

According to the general theory of crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990, in Boakye, 2012), juvenile delinquents have a common behavioural pattern regarding self-control. By self-control, Gottfredson and Hirschi meant the degree to which an individual is ‘vulnerable to the

temptations of the moment' (p.87). Gottfredson and Hirschi identified self-control as an important developmental ability which allows children to inhibit unacceptable behaviours. They also noted that juvenile delinquents are children who have low self-control as compared to their non delinquent counterparts. This low self-control compromises their ability to desist from deviant activities.

2.1.7 Differential Oppression Theory

The differential oppression theory (Regoli & Heweitt, 2006, in Boakye, 2012) postulates that parents and influential figures occupy a position in the family which affords them the opportunity to maintain order in the home in ways that tend to be oppressive to children. This implies that parents influence the choice of peers for their children, food, clothing and the type of movies they should watch. On the other hand, children occupy a social position with limited resources that can equip them to negotiate for changes in their involvement, thereby rendering them powerless and submissive to authority. The theory also suggests that the form of oppression to which children are subjected range from a demand to obey rules designed to meet adults' convenience through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. In reaction to these maltreatments, children are compelled to put up problem behaviours such as substance abuse, stealing and sexual offenses (Regoli & Heweitt, 2006). Thus, delinquency according to this theory is an adoptive strategy by children suppressed by their parents and caregivers.

2.1.8 Labeling Theory of Delinquency

The labeling theory which is often associated with the works of Becker (1963, in Boakye, 2012) holds that society sets aside certain acts as unacceptable and people who exhibit such behaviours

are labeled delinquents. The theory further suggests that the reaction society develops towards delinquency has a repercussion on the behaviours of juvenile delinquents (Putwain & Sammons, 2002; Shoemaker, 2009, in Aderson, et al., 2003). Based upon this delinquency label that society tags people with, society then mets out treatment to such people in a manner that is consistent with the delinquency label (Putwain & Sammons, 2002; Shoemaker, 2009). Shoemaker (2009) argues that people who receive the tag of delinquency eventually come to adapt to it as part of their self image and this affects their subsequent behaviours.

2.2 Conceptual review

Before proceeding, it is important to define two key terms: media violence and juvenile delinquency. Different people used different definitions of these terms at different times. For this study, the adopted definition of media violence is visual portrayals of acts of physical aggression by one human against another. It is worthy of note that this definition has evolved as theories about media effects have evolved and represents an attempt to describe the kind of violent media presentation that is most likely to teach the viewer to be more violent.

Juvenile delinquency is a construct which has its origin in the legal circles (Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2007, in Boakye, 2012). Admittedly, juvenile delinquency does not lend itself easily to definition. This is because what is deemed as a delinquent behaviour in one social context may be the norm in another, making it difficult to have a universally accepted definition (Iobidze, 2009; Weinberg, 1964, cited in Boakye, 2012). Divers disciplines have interest in the welfare of delinquents and therefore often end up tackling it from different perspectives, which further complicates the acceptance of a common definition. The defense for children

international (2007, in Boakye, 2007) refers to juvenile delinquency as the “behaviour of a child or adolescent in actual or perceived conflict with the law, or engaged in ‘anti-social’ behaviour” (p.27). The juvenile justice Act, 2003 (Act 653) of Ghana defines a juvenile delinquent as “a person under eighteen years who is in conflict with the law” (p. 4). For the purposes of this study, juvenile delinquency will be defined as any act or conduct for which juveniles could be confined at a reformation centre under the laws of Ghana. These include murder, armed robbery, stealing, rape, defilement, stealing, assault, unlawful entry, and causing harm. A few works with regards to the concept of juvenile delinquency are reviewed below:

2.2.1 Juvenile delinquency in Ghana

Boakye (2012) studied the lived experiences of young offenders in Accra and found that the various circumstances that had the propensity to increase adolescents’ involvement in juvenile delinquency included the functioning of the nuclear family, inadequate extended family support, and deviant peer influence, apathy in school and substance use.

Boakye (2012) in his study used the semi-structured interview where six inmates at the Senior Correctional Centre were interviewed on their lived experiences. The inmates were interviewed to enable the researcher get an understanding of the circumstances that might have accounted for their involvement in delinquent behaviours. They were asked questions bordering on the following:

- ❖ Offense committed or delinquent behaviour arrested for
- ❖ The situation or circumstances that got one involved in the delinquent behaviour
- ❖ How the learning process for this delinquent behaviour was

- ❖ What was achieved as a result of engaging in the delinquent behaviour

Similarly, Bosiakoh and Andoh (2010) in their study on the differential association theory and juvenile delinquency in Ghana's capital city, Accra, reported an upsurge in juvenile delinquency which many Ghanaians consider as a worrying development.

2.2.2 Economic hardships and delinquency

Burrell and Roosa (2009, cited in Boakye, 2012) examined the link between mothers' perceived economic hardship and adolescents' problem behaviours. One hundred and eighty-nine adolescents as well as their mothers were recruited to participate in the study. The participants were interviewed in their various homes. The mothers reported on their economic hardship and depressive moments while the adolescents reported on their delinquent peers. Additionally, reports on parental monitoring and problem behavioural symptoms were also noted from the adolescents and their mothers. The data was analysed and the results indicated that mothers' perceived economic hardship and their adolescent children's problem behaviours were mediated by family stress and adolescents' social contextual process.

Besides, Burrell and Roosa (2009)'s study found mothers' depression to be negatively related to parental monitoring which explains the children's connection to deviant peers and subsequent involvement in delinquency.

Hunte (2006, in Boakye, 2012) examined the link between socioeconomic disadvantage and behavioural outcomes, the lived experiences of 12 socioeconomic disadvantaged youths aged

between 15-19 years were explored in central Trinidad. Six of the participants were inmates in a youth correctional centre while the remaining 6 had never been involved in delinquency and were excelling in academic and social lives. The 12 participants were interviewed to verify why in the same socioeconomic disadvantaged environment, some became involved in delinquency while the others did not. The finding of this study was that, the differences in the youth's behaviour could be traced to the attachment of the youths to an available identity figure. The delinquents were observed to be lacking emotional and physical bonding to their father figures in their families which made them to go out in search of one. The new father figures they found in their neighbourhoods happened to be their peers who were predominantly noted for bandits and drug dealers. Conversely, the non-delinquent youths had a strong attachment to their parents especially their mothers. Their mothers were noted to be loving and supportive while periodically monitoring their peer relations and other lifestyle.

2.3 Related works

2.3.1 Media violence and violent behaviour

Boxer (2009) noted that even though a relationship between media violence and violent behaviour has been acknowledged for over 40 years, much of the research on the subject was usually carried out in laboratory settings rather than in the fields. Boxer (2009) argued that there was very little emphasis on the links between media violence and actual engagement in violent or anti-social behaviour. Boxer (2009) further argued that many of the studies failed to sufficiently address such other influences as exposure to violent behaviour at school or in the community, psychopathic tendencies and other emotional problems. Boxer (2009) and his team therefore set out to collect data on several risk factors for aggression, and to examine whether

media violence has an impact on behaviour even in the presence of those other influences. Boxer (2009) and his research team in their study, conducted extensive interviews where each subject was asked about their favourite television programmes, movies, video and computer games, both as a child and as an adolescent. The subjects were interviewed to determine whether or not they had engaged in antisocial behaviours such as throwing rocks or using a weapon.

The research team after analysing their findings by integrating “violent media exposure scores into cumulative risk totals” found that high violent risk scores : mean for Media Violence Risk(MVR) composite - 0.50, mean for Other Risks(OR) composite -1.58 and the mean for the total Risk (TR) composite - 2.07 were significantly predictive of violence and general aggression. Boxer (2009) noted that even in conjunction with other factors, media violence did enhance violent behaviour and that on average, adolescents who were not exposed to violent media were not as prone to violent behaviour.

Sexualized violence in the media has been linked to increases in violence towards women, rape myth acceptance and misogynistic attitudes. The presentation of violence and explicit sexual stimuli seem to have addictive effect (Comstock & Scharrer, 2003, in Anderson, et al., 2003). Pornographic material containing violence has been found to have a greater impact on subsequent aggression than nonviolent sexual stimuli. For example in one experimental study, male university students watched either a movie portraying sex and violence, a nonviolent sex film or a movie that was neither violent nor sexual and were then given an opportunity to retaliate to a woman who had angered them earlier, by giving her electronic shocks (Donnerstein & Berkowitz, 1981). The men who had viewed the violent sex film punished the women more

severely than did their counterparts who had watched either the neutral film or the nonviolent sex movie.

2.3.2 Video games and juvenile delinquency

The Subcommittee on Youth violence of the Advisory Committee to the Social Behavioural and Economic Sciences Directorate, National Foundation of the United States (2013), investigated the effect of video games on juveniles. The subcommittee undertook a comprehensive review of over 381 effects from studies involving more than 130,000 participants worldwide. The committee reported that violent video games increased aggressive thoughts, angry feeling and psychological arousal such as heart rate and blood pressure as well as aggressive behaviour. The committee also discovered that violent games decreased helping behaviour and feeling of empathy for others. Besides, a meta-analysis of 26 studies involving 13,661 participants found that also significantly linked to violent behavior such as punching, beating or choking others is exposure to violent media. Calvert and Tan (1994, in Anderson, et al., 2003) randomly assigned male and female undergraduates to a condition in which they either played or watched the violent virtual reality game ‘Dactyl Nightmare’ or engaged in movements similar to those of ‘Dactyl Nightmare’. Postgame aggressive thoughts were assessed with a thought-listing procedure. The result was that participants who had played the violent game generated significantly more aggressive thoughts than those who had simply mimicked its movements. Kirsh (1998, in Anderson et al., 2003) found that 3rd and 4th grade children assigned to play a violent video game gave more hostile interpretations for a subsequent ambiguous provocation story than did children assigned to play a nonviolent game. Anderson and Dill (2000) conducted two studies of video game violence effects, one correlational and the other experimental. In study 1, they measured both the amount of exposure to video game violence and the amount of time

participants had played video games, prior to the study regardless of content. These video game measures as well as several individual difference measures were used as predictors of self-reported aggressive behaviour and delinquency. A college student population was used, partly because the students were old enough for long-term effects of playing violent video games to have had a measurable impact on real-world aggression. In study 2, the team randomly assigned participants to play either a violent or nonviolent video game; the two games were matched (by means of pretesting) on several key dimensions. Subsequently, the participants played a competitive reaction time game in which they could punish their opponent by delivering a noxious blast of white noise. This constituted their laboratory measure of aggression. They assessed the effects of the video games on both hostile thoughts and hostile feelings to see whether either (or both) served as mediators of violent video game effects on aggressive behaviour. The research demonstrated that in both the correlational investigation using self-reports of real-world aggressive behaviours and the experimental investigation using a standard, objective laboratory measure of aggression, violent video game play was positively related to increases in aggression. In the laboratory, college students who played a violent video game behaved more aggressively towards an opponent than did students who played a nonviolent video game. Outside the laboratory, students who reported playing more violent video games over a period of years also engaged in more aggressive behaviour in their real life.

Irwin and Gross (1995, in Anderson & Dill, 2000) assessed physical aggression (e.g. hitting, shoving, pinching, pulling at clothes or hair, and kicking) between boys who had just played either a violent or non-violent video game. They found that those who had played the violent video game were more physically aggressive towards peers.

Several randomized experiments have tested the effects of video games specifically selected to differ in violent content but not in arousal or affective properties. For instance Anderson, et al., tested the effects of 10 video games on physiological arousal and several affect-relevant dimensions, including frustration, difficulty, and enjoyment (experiment 1), and then selected two games that were similar on these measures but differ in violent content. In two subsequent experiments, the violent game significantly increased aggressive behaviour relative to the non-violent game ($r_s = .25$ and $.19$), indicating that the effects of violent video games on aggression are independent of the games' effects on arousal or affect. Ihori, Sakamoto, Kobayashi, and Kimura (2003), studied Japanese 5th and 6th graders at two points in time separated by 4 to 5 months, measuring overall video-game exposure rather than exposure to violent video games. They found that amount of exposure to video games was positively (significantly) related to later levels of violent physical behaviour after controlling for earlier violent behaviour.

Anderson, et al., (2000) noted that though the number of studies investigating the impact of video games is small relative to studies on television and film violence, there are sufficient studies with sufficient consistency to draw some conclusions. The studies clearly offer support for a connection between playing violent video games and increased likelihood of engaging in aggression.

2.3.3 Violent musical content, movies and juvenile delinquency

Anderson, Carnagey and Eubanks (2003) conducted a study involving college students and discovered that songs with violent lyrics had the tendency of increasing aggression related

thoughts and emotions and that this effect was directly related to the violent content of the lyrics. Five experiments examined effects of songs with violent lyrics on aggressive thoughts and hostile feelings. Anderson et al.,(2000) observed that Experiments 1, 3, 4 and 5 demonstrated that college students who heard a violent song felt more hostile than those who heard a similar but nonviolent song. Experiments 2-5 demonstrated a similar increase in aggressive thoughts. The research team noted that these effects replicated across songs and song types (e.g. rock, humorous and non-humorous). Experiments 3-5 also demonstrated that trait hostility was positively related to state hostility but did not moderate the song lyric effects. Using the General Aggression Model, the team sampled 75 and 70 female and male participants respectively. After reading and signing consent forms, participants were informed that they would be filling out questionnaires, listening to a song, and doing some computer tasks. They also learned that towards the end of the experiment they would fill out a questionnaire that would ask questions mainly about the song they listened to previously. This instruction was included to ensure that the participants did indeed listen to the lyrics. Following that, participants completed an adaptation of the Caprara Irritability Scale (Caprara et al., 1985, in Anderson, et al., 2008). The adaptation (Anderson, 1997; Dill et al., 1997) involved reverse scoring and using 10 ‘friendly’ filter items, along with the original 20 ‘irritable’ items. The focus of this study was on precursors to aggression as outlined by the General Aggression Model (GAM). GAM illustrates how exposure to media violence can produce short-term and long-term increases in aggressive behaviour. The team found that in both contexts, violent lyrics were most likely to operate through both the affect and cognition routes, influencing appraisals of the situation and emotional state and eventually the behavioural decision.

Several studies suggest a connection between the kind of music youths listen to and whether their behaviours and attitudes are maladaptive. For example Rubin, West and Mitchell (2001, in Gentile, Saleem & Anderson, 2007) found that college students who preferred rap and heavy metal music reported more hostile attitudes than students who favoured other genres of music. Heavy metal listeners held more negative attitudes towards women, whereas rap music fans were more distrustful. Similarly, Took and Weiss (1994, in Anderson, Berkowitz, Donnerstein, Huesmann, Johnson, Linz, Malamuth and Wartella, 2000) found a correlation between preference for rap music and heavy metal music and low- average academic performance, behaviour problems in school, drug use, arrests, and sexual activity.

Anderson, et al., (2000) set out to review of a number of relevant studies on media violence and discovered that experimental studies provide substantial evidence that watching violent music videos creates attitudes and beliefs that are relatively accepting of violence in young viewers, at least in the short term. They also noted that cross-sectional studies also link violent music videos to more long-term maladaptive attitudes and beliefs in youth, but provide no direct evidence on the reasons for this connection.

2.3.4 Television violence and juvenile delinquency

Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski and Eron(1992) in their study on longitudinal relations between children's exposure to television violence and their aggressive and violent behaviour in young adulthood, found that there were correlations between childhood TV-violence viewing and adult composite aggression. Averages of children's scores over a 2-year period were found to provide more accurate single estimates of their TV viewing habits and aggressive behaviours

during that early period. Huesmann and Eron (1986) also found that Children who watched many hours of violence on television when they were in elementary school also had the tendency to show a higher level of aggressive behaviour when they became teenagers. Huesmann and Eron (1986) observed some youngsters into adulthood and discovered that the ones who had watched television violence when they were eight years old stood a high risk of being arrested and prosecuted for criminal acts in their adulthood. They went on to suggest though that being aggressive as a child did not predict watching more violent television as a teenager, indicating that TV watching may more often be a cause rather than a consequence of aggressive behaviour. Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski and Eron (2003) analysed data collected by interviewing the subjects at least twice in their lives – first in their classrooms when they were children and later when they became adolescents. Measures from peer-nomination, where participants were asked to nominate three peers who knew them best, were also obtained about observed behaviours. Parents of most of the children were interviewed once during the period, and data on intellectual ability of the children obtained from their school records. Almost 15 years later, the researchers through searches of public driver's license and criminal justice records obtained archival data on 450, representing 81% of the original 557 participants.

At the time of the follow-up interview, the participants ranged between 20 and 25 years in age, with a mean age of 22 years. The participants were again asked to nominate three persons who knew them best and the person with the highest rating or closest among them to the subject (for example, spouse) was contacted and interviewed and the participants re-interviewed. The respondents sat alone at computers in a room to complete the questionnaire in relation to their involvement in anti-social behaviours.

2.3.5 Professional wrestling

Strand (2002) conducted research to determine the perception of children on professional wrestling and to determine if watching professional wrestling with an adult influences children the same way as watching without an adult.

On the question of children's perceptions about how real professional wrestling was, thirty-six percent of the females surveyed reported that professional wrestling was very fake. Forty-two percent reported that it was somewhat fake, and 12% reported that it was somewhat real. Forty-six percent of the males surveyed reported that it was very fake, 33% reported that it was somewhat fake, and 16.5% reported it as being somewhat real. Of the children who watched professional wrestling for more than eight hours per week, two of three males reported it was "somewhat" or "very real", and one male reported it as being "very fake". The only female who watched professional wrestling more than eight hours per week reported it was "somewhat fake."

On the question of whether children think wrestling influences their behaviour, 46% of males surveyed reported that professional wrestling influences their behaviour in a negative way. Twenty-three percent reported that it does not influence them either negatively or positively. Forty-two of females who completed the survey reported that watching professional wrestling does not influence their behaviour at all. Fifty percent of the males surveyed reported that they feel the same after watching professional wrestling, and 20% reported feeling very aggressive after watching professional wrestling. Seventy-five percent of females surveyed reported feeling the same after watching professional wrestling and 15% reported that they feel a little bit aggressive after watching professional wrestling.

On the question of whether children think that professional wrestling should be watched with an adult, 63% of males who completed the survey said that they did not need to watch professional wrestling with an adult. Sixty-three percent of them reported that their parents did not care if they watched professional wrestling. Sixty-six percent of males reported that they watched professional wrestling 0% of the time with an adult. Fifty-one percent of females surveyed underscored the need to watch professional wrestling with an adult figure. Fifty-seven percent of females surveyed reported that their parents did not care if they watched professional wrestling and 69% of the females reported they watched professional wrestling 0% of the time with an adult. Of the children who watched at least four hours per week, only one out of 11 said it should be watched with an adult. Twenty out of 28 children who stated professional wrestling should be watched with an adult watched 0% hours of wrestling.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that apart from Bosiakoh and Andoh (2010) and Boakye (2012) whose works were on Ghana, all other studies on the subject of juvenile delinquency have largely been on Europe, America or Asia. Moreover, the above mentioned works basically aimed at looking at general causes of juvenile delinquency in Ghana. Thus the studies failed to consider the possibility of the consumption of violent media content and its influence on juveniles. My focus in this study therefore was to determine if there would be any indications of perceived media effects with respect to the offenses that brought the juvenile offenders into custody at the Senior Correctional Centre, under the administration of the Ghana Prisons Service.

2.4 Summary

This chapter presents the theoretical framework as well as the relevant literature reviewed to enable the researcher conduct a useful study. The literature touched on pertinent issues such as juvenile delinquency in Ghana, video games and juvenile delinquency, economic hardship and delinquency, violent musical content, movies and delinquency, professional wrestling and television violence and juvenile delinquency.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the method adopted in terms of the general approach to the study, procedure for data collection and sampling. It also describes the study sites, sample size and the data collection instruments. The method and techniques adopted were informed by other studies on related subject-matter.

A number of laboratory and field experiments over the past half-century have examined whether exposure to violent behaviour on film or television tends to increase aggression-related variables in the short term. (Bushman & Huesmann, 2001; Huesmann, Moise, & Podolski, 1997). An example of this experiment involved randomly assigning children to play a violent or non-violent video game that had been previously rated as equal on many dimensions, such as how fun, frustrating or boring they were (Anderson et al., 2007). In this experiment, children played their assigned game for 20 minutes, and then were given opportunities to punish another child. Children who played the violent game gave much more harmful punishments. The consistent finding from experiments where youth are randomly assigned to watch violent scenes is that youth subsequently display more aggressive behaviour, aggressive thoughts, or aggressive emotions than those in the nonviolent media condition.

The current research was designed qualitatively where the emphasis was on the depth rather than the breadth of the issue under investigation. Since the informants for this study were to be

requested to answer questions in relation to their delinquent behaviours, qualitative interviews were deemed most appropriate as they provided an atmosphere of confidentiality.

Qualitative interviews are generally attempts to understand the world from the point of view of the subjects (Patton, 2002, cited in Oduro, 2011). According to Wimmer and Dominick (2003), qualitative interviews provide a wealth of detail, which are more accurate especially on sensitive issues. Like Boakye (2012), this study adopted the semi-structured interview method. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of inquiry in which pre-determined questions are effectively combined with a set of open questions (questions that have the potential of prompting further discussion). It thus affords the interviewer the opportunity to further explore particular themes or answers. Unlike the structured interview, the semi-structured interview, does not limit the respondents to a set of pre-determined answers. It also allows the interviewees to discuss or raise issues that may not have been considered by the researcher. The adoption of the semi-structured interview method was informed by the fact that the informants of this study were largely adolescents with little or no education at all. The Semi-structured interview method therefore guided the conduct of the interview in a manner that was aimed at soliciting the appropriate responses.

3.2 Study site

The informants for this study were selected from the Senior Correctional Centre in Accra. The Senior Correctional Centre is an all male facility. The Centre admits young offenders below the age of 18 who are tried and found guilty of all manner of criminal offences. The young offenders are kept in the correctional facility for a minimum period of three months and a maximum of

three years. Administratively, the facility is managed by the Ghana Prisons Service. The Service manages the Centre in such a way that, much emphasis is laid on education and vocational training. The inmates are taught and prepared to sit for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Unlike the adult prisons, inmates of the correctional facility are released from custody after serving their sentence with no criminal record. As a way of helping the young offenders to keep away from delinquent behaviour and adopt socially acceptable modes of behaviour, the Centre is guided by three main ideals: reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration back into society. Religious leaders, psychologists, counsellors, teachers and other specialists are involved in ensuring that the adolescents are reformed before they are released into the larger society again.

3.3 Population and sample size

There were 106 inmates at the Senior Correctional Centre at the time of collecting these data. Following permission granted by the Controller-General of the Ghana Prisons Service (Appendix F), an initial screening of twenty-five inmates was conducted after which fifteen of them were selected for this study. The selection of the 15 inmates was informed by the fact that the researcher was more interested in inmates who were being held for major offences such as murder, manslaughter, robbery, rape, defilement and narcotic offences rather than misdemeanor. Visits to the Centre made it possible for the researcher to have preliminary discussions with the authorities in charge of the facility about the exercise and to also solicit their support. An informal interaction session was then organised with some selected inmates who were determined based on their records available at the Centre (detention order, social inquiry report and prisons from 2 small). This session afforded the researcher the opportunity to have a fair idea

of the kind of informants that would be dealt with. Issues such as the language to be adopted for the interview, the appropriate location for the interview, possible challenges that might emerge in the course of the exercise were sorted out at this stage which facilitated a smooth and reliable exercise.

3.4 Sampling technique and procedure

Purposive sampling technique was adopted for this study. The choice of this technique was informed by the fact that the informants earmarked for the study might have to depend on their memories prior to their arrest, and therefore it was advisable to use inmates who had been in custody for not more than one year so as to ensure that they still had fairly fresh memories of issues prior to their arrest. Besides, the researcher intended to focus on inmates who committed specific major offenses such as murder, armed robbery, rape and defilement.

Consent forms were made available for the Officer-in-Charge of the Correctional facility and the participants to sign to indicate their approval for the selected inmates to be part of the interview (appendixes B and C). Participants were also assured of their freedom to participate in the exercise. The support of counsellors at the Centre was sought in readiness for any serious emotional challenge such as breaking down in uncontrollable tears, which participants might suffer in the course of the interview. One informant broke down in the course of the interview when he was asking God for forgiveness for his crime that brought him to the correctional facility. The researcher however, managed to calm him down and offered him a handkerchief to wipe his tears. The researcher then called in the centre's counselor, Supt. Contance Dokumah, who managed to bring him back to normalcy for the continuation of the interview.

3.5 Interview procedure

The interview was conducted in the library of the Correctional Centre. The informants were interviewed face-to-face, one after the other. The whole exercise started by checking background noise, setting up the tape recorder and the interviewer introducing himself to the interviewee. This familiarisation process was aimed at helping both the interviewer and the interviewee to settle down for the exercise. The purpose of the interview, why the interviewee was chosen and the expected duration of the interview were all explained by the researcher. Before the start of each interview, the interviewer and the interviewee agreed on the language in which the interview was to be conducted.

The semi-structured interview was used as a guiding tool for the interview during which follow-up questions were asked. The basis for the use of the semi-structured interview finds expression in its flexibility in inducing and incorporating answers for the structured interview questions and significant information that may emerge during the interview (Willig, 2008, as cited in Boakye 2012). The entire interview was recorded and notes taken during the interview. Note pads were distributed to the interviewees to jot down anything that might have been missed during the interview which they might recollect afterwards. These note pads were collected later but no useful notes were made by the interviewees.

In accordance with the member-checking principle in qualitative research, the researcher however, went back to seek some clarifications from some of the interviewees on certain pertinent issues that shed more light on certain aspects of the interviews.

3.6 Data collection instruments

As discussed earlier, semi-structured interview was used to gather data for this study. Other materials included tape recorder, note pads, pens and pencils. Both the researcher and the informants had the opportunity of asking further questions when the need arose. In view of this therefore, only a few key questions were listed to guide the interviewer (See appendix A).

3.7 Transcription and data analysis

Transcription and interpretation of data are considered as essential requirements that qualitative studies are expected to meet in order to obtain rich outcome in the process of analysing the data (Atkison, 1998, cited in Boakye 2012). In line with this, the recorded interview of each informant was played and transcribed word for word. In the case where the interview was obtained in a language other than English, it was first translated into English and then transcribed. The transcripts were critically studied with the view to identifying themes, patterns and concepts as they emerged in the course of the analysis as captured in chapter 4 below.

3.8 Summary

Drawing on how other researchers went about investigating similar subjects, this chapter outlines the methodology adopted for the current study. It also describes the general approach to the study, data collection, sampling technique and procedure as well as the study sites, sample size, interview procedure and the data collection instrument.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents analysis of the data collected from the study site as indicated in chapter three. The data, essentially, are transcribed interview responses obtained from 15 inmates of the Senior Correctional Centre, presented in a narrative form (see Appendix D). The main findings are organized under subheadings from the research questions and presented around the main themes that emerged from a critical analysis of the data.

4.2 Main Findings

As indicated in chapter one, this study set out to find out the perception of inmates of the Senior Correctional Centre of possible implications of their involvement in delinquency. The study also set out to find out whether the perceived circumstances indicate any electronic media experience and whether their media experience could have had any specific violent content. These data were collected to help understand the meaning the inmates made of the circumstances that possibly pushed or pulled them into delinquency.

4.2.0 Inmates' Perception of circumstances surrounding their Involvement in Delinquency

The informants perceived several factors as being responsible for their involvement in crime. These included inadequate parental support and supervision, death of a parent and inadequate extended family support, deviant peer association and electronic media violence

4.2.1 Inadequate parental support and supervision

Parents have the responsibility of providing the basic necessities of life for their children including food. It could be inferred from the informants' narratives that some of them lacked this parental support. This was manifested in the narratives of informant #1 when he said: "sometimes, I steal because of hunger".

The above quote points to inadequate parental support. If the parents were alive to their responsibility in terms of providing food for their ward, the young boy might not have gone into stealing for survival.

Inadequate parental supervision also came up as a possible factor responsible for the inmates' involvement in crime. Children need to acquire the norms, rules and values that make it possible for them to function properly in the society (Wilson, 2008). Children may not be able to achieve this, if parental care and supervision are absent. Inadequate parental supervision seems to have paved the way for some of the informants to either get into or reinforce delinquent acts. This was expressed in the narrative of informant #2:

"My father is a driver and is almost always not at home so I am able to do anything I want to do including watching bad movies".

By bad movies, the informant meant movies containing erotic scenes. This laxity in parental control and supervision is corroborated by informant #15:

"I started stealing at the age of 8. Yes, I was staying with my mother but because I was stubborn I left home to go and stay with a friend. Yes, my friend was also into stealing".

The above quotes demonstrate that the parents took their eyes off their children, thereby enabling the children to turn to delinquency as a way of life.

4.2.2 Death of a parent and inadequate extended family support

The Ghanaian society is noted for its communal living where extended family members step in to support children who have lost their parents or whose parents are incapable of taking care of them (Nukunya,2003; Abotchie,2008, cited in Boakye, 2012). The narratives reveal some inconsistency with this because unlike many teenagers that are supported by their parents in terms of provision of food, shelter, financial, emotional and moral support, informants without parents seemed to lack these benefits. Informant #11 put it this way: “I started stealing when my mother died. I was then 8 years old. My father was then living in La Cote d’Ivoire but he is also now deceased”.

The above quote seems to indicate that the informant’s mother was the bread winner of the family and her demise might have brought untold hardship in the life of the informant. One would expect that as a communal society, other extended family members would have come in to take care of the young boy. Informant # 1 corroborated this when he said: “sometimes I steal because of hunger. I was staying with my grandmother who could barely provide for my needs”. Their confession to having taken to stealing to survive is indicative of lack of this extended family support.

The above findings are consistent with the literature as shown in Boakye (2012), who in his study on the lived experiences of young offenders in Accra found that the circumstances that

have the tended to increase teenagers' involvement in juvenile delinquency included inadequate parental support, inadequate extended family support and deviant peer influence.

4.2.3 Deviant Peer Association

Association with deviant peers emerged as one of the factors that seemed to explain the informants' involvement in delinquency. From the narratives of some of the informants, their involvement in delinquent acts could be traced to the kind of peers they came into contact with. As informant #10 put it: "As for my stealing habit, I would say that it is my friend who taught me". In the case of informant #11, it could be inferred from his narrative that his deviant peer took advantage of his lack of parental support to lure him into stealing by first of all supporting him: "It was my friend who bought the motor bike for me. I get enough from the motor riding business but my friend insists we should steal".

This implies that the informant was compelled by the friend to engage in stealing. He was probably afraid that his friend could take the motor bike which was his source of livelihood from him if he refused to yield to his demands. Informant #15's submission pointed to the fact that his delinquent behaviour was reinforced by his deviant peer. "...I left home to go and stay with a friend. Yes, my friend was also into stealing". In other words, if the friend the informant left home to stay with was morally upright, the friend probably could have had a positive impact on him by discouraging him from stealing.

4.2.4 Religiosity and morality

Religiosity and morality emerged as a theme in the narratives of the informants as far as their involvement in delinquent acts was concerned. This is categorized into the two subthemes- religious protection and remorse.

4.2.5 Religion as reinforcement to delinquency

Religious support and protection emerged as a subtheme which reinforced the informants' involvement in delinquency. The narratives indicate that the informants usually sought protection from some religious leaders before embarking on their stealing escapades. This was conveyed by informant #11: "we have a spiritual father we usually consult before we go on our operations".

4.2.6 Remorse and forgiveness

Remorse and forgiveness emerged as a subtheme as some of the informants upon introspection came to the realization that they did not know what they were doing and asked God for forgiveness. This was expressed in informant # 8's narrative:

"so I am pleading with God to forgive me because it is in the bible that thou shall not kill. He should forgive me because I don't know what I was doing. He should forgive and give me a new beginning. Once the person died through my fighting with him it means I have killed him. God should forgive me for that sin I have committed".

The above quote was delivered amidst tears. This shows how remorseful the informant was. The 'expression forgive me' appeared four times in the above quote, signifying the importance the informant attached to the request he was placing before God through the interview.

4.3 Violence in Electronic media:

As indicated by the research questions, this study set out to find out whether inmates' perception of circumstances that pushed or pulled them into crime indicate any electronic media experience and whether the factors indicate any specific violent content. The data pointed to some electronic media violence which is discussed in subthemes as below:

4.3.1 Gaming as a precursor to delinquency

Gaming surfaced as one factor that seemed to have induced some informants into delinquency. Unlike in the reviewed literature where it was reported that violent video games increased aggressive thoughts, angry feeling and aggressive behavior (The Subcommittee On Youth Violence of the Advisory Committee To The Social Behavioural And Economic Sciences Directorate, National Foundation of The United States, 2013), the informant in this case rather got addicted to gaming and needed money to be able to play the game and therefore had to resort to stealing. This was expressed by informant #14:

“ what led me into stealing was that there was a game called jackpot and if you want to play it you have to pay money... my first attempt outside, I went to steal a mobile phone which I sold and used the money to go and play jackpot”.

4.3.2 Violence in war films

One major theme that emerged from the narratives of the informants was violence in war films. Action or war films came up as a possible source of influence. The attraction of my informants to action movies was manifested in their love for the latter. As informant # 5 put it “I like actions

and if I am watching a film that doesn't contain actions I stop watching." This shows the strength of the attraction action films have for the informants.

Majority of the informants liked action or war films. With the exception of informant # 8, all the other 14 informants said they liked action films. It could also be inferred from the narratives that the possibility of an influence of war or action films is not lost on the informants. "I believe those movies have influenced my involvement in mobile phone snatching" said informant "#6".

"Sometimes when I watch such movies I feel like practising them. In fact, if I say I don't feel like practising them I am telling lies". "I like practising actions that I watch in movies so if I get into a fight with a friend I try to use the techniques I have watched in the films" Confessed informant #5.

As informant "#4" put it:

"I enjoy watching those small boys playing their wicked parts. Yes, I would not hesitate to retaliate in same measure to anyone who plays wicked to me. I feel very happy anytime I watch those wicked movies".

These narratives of the informants are indicative of the fact that the informants were prone to imitating what they watched in films. This finding is consistent with the position of the main theory of this study, the social learning theory. Bandura (1986) suggested that behaviour was learned through observational learning and that children were surrounded by influential models including characters on television. The above quotes from the narratives of the informants suggest some form of observational learning.

4.3.3 Action Movies as reinforcement to delinquency

It also emerged from the narratives that the informants believed they could learn from movies and intentionally watched them in order to acquire some skills. This is evident in informant #10's narratives when he said "Action movies teach you how to fight and win" and in the words of informant #4 "I study the way and manner in which they shoot very much". In the words of informant # 10: "As I started enjoying it, then I was watching movies that could help me learn more tactics".

"When I am watching those movies my intention is to study the way they do it so as to use it to boost my performance. One thing I have learnt in a movie is how to stand on each other's shoulders to scale walls" informant # 15 submitted.

The above quotes from the informants' narratives pointed to the fact that they were already into delinquent acts but used the 'acquired lessons' from their electronic media experience to reinforce their delinquent behaviour. It could also be inferred from the narratives of the informants that exposure to action movies appeared to have had the tendency to increase aggressive behaviour. This was manifested in the narrative of informant #6. The informant enjoys watching action movies and the influence of action movies on his behaviour could be deduced from his narrative: "My favourite TV programmes are action movies. I am action boy and I like fighting".

The narrative also pointed to manifestation of aggression by the informant: "I have once attacked a man in an attempt to snatch his mobile phone". He also manifested this aggression when he was about to be arrested by the police: "I hit one of the policemen and he fell down". His

confession to the influence of action movies regarding his aggressive behaviour is worth noting: “I believe those movies might have influenced my involvement in mobile phone snatching”. The issue of confession to the influence of movies is corroborated by informant # 13:

“Yes, I have watched movies containing rape. Yes, I watched films that contain scenes pertaining to stealing. An example is commando. Yes, I would say I have been influenced by such movies into stealing and armed robbery”.

This finding is in line with the literature as found in the work of Anderson, Carnagey and Eukbanks (2003) which suggested that media violence had the tendency of increasing aggressive and violent behaviour.

4.3.4 Erotic films and pornography

Informants made references to pornographic materials and erotic films. Possible influence of erotic electronic media content was mentioned by informant# 1

“I left for home and went to bed but later when I recollected the way I saw them sleeping it dawned on me that I should go and rape their daughter. I had earlier that night watched an erotic movie”.

By the informants’ experiences, watching an erotic content could influence them. It seems that even though informant #1 was arrested for stealing, his arrest actually came as a result of his intention to go and rape the daughter of the family from whom he had earlier stolen that night. It could also be that the informant’s decision to rape could be traced to his exposure to an erotic content. As he put it: “I had earlier that night watched an erotic movie”.

From the narratives, some of the informants were conscious of the possible effects of exposure to pornographic material. In the words of informant# 6: “Usually, before I watch a pornographic movie, I have a girl beside me and any time I watch alone it worries me a lot”. The above quote demonstrates that the informant was aware of the consequences of watching a pornographic material and therefore would always try to have a girl beside him before watching. The idea that the informants were not oblivious to the influence of the electronic media content they consumed was corroborated by informant #12 in his admission: “Some of the movies influence us. Yes, that one is true. I would say that my going into that defilement was influenced by movies”.

The reason for informants’ favourite characters is worth noting. The narratives pointed to the fact that some informants liked movie characters because of the roles they played. They seemed to associate the roles to the personality of the characters. As informant # 13 put it “...my favourite actor is Majeed. I like the way he is able to woo girls. Yes, I have two girlfriends”. This implies that the informant identified with the movie actor because of his perceived ability of the actor to woo girls. No wonder at his young age of 16, he confessed having two girlfriends.

This finding is consistent with findings in the reviewed literature as found in the works of Donnerstein and Berkowitz (1981), where pornographic material containing violence has been found to have a greater impact on subsequent aggression than nonviolent sexual stimuli.

4.3.5 Video games and wrestling

Another theme that emerged quite significantly from the narratives of the informants is the attraction of video games and wrestling. A good number of the informants admitted having played various video games and also watched wrestling. While only 3 out of the 15 informants

interviewed, said they have never played a video game, only one indicated his displeasure for wrestling. The narratives also seemed to suggest that the informants might have been influenced in some ways through watching of professional wrestling. This was expressed in the narratives of informants# 5. “Yes, I enjoy watching wrestling. Yes, I think it is real and I try to copy their skills”. Informant # 6 put it this way: “Yes, I enjoy watching wrestling because I like fighting. I have been learning their tactics anytime I am watching”.

4.4 Summary

This chapter presents the analysis of the data gathered and the findings obtained from 15 semi-structured interviews. The findings were categorized into themes that emerged from critical analysis of the data from the perspective of the informants. The factors that seemed to have either pushed or pulled the informants into crime include inadequate parental support, inadequate support from the extended family, deviant peer association, religiosity and morality and electronic media violence.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

With regard to perception of the informants as to the circumstances that might have led them into crime, inadequate parental support and supervision, death of a parent and inadequate extended family support, deviant peer association, religious protection and electronic media violence were identified.

Some informants perceived that if their parents were capable of providing their needs, they might not have gone into delinquent acts and found themselves in conflict with the law. For instance, informant #1 perceived that his grandmother's inability to adequately provide for his need had compelled him to go into stealing "because of hunger". Laxity in parental control and supervision was also recognized as one of the circumstances that paved the way for some of the informants to see delinquency as a way of life. The narratives of informants #2 and #14 are both indicative of lack of parental supervision.

The African extended family system that was hitherto considered to be exemplary seemed to have become less effective. Africa and for that matter, Ghana, was noted for practicing a very effective extended family system where a child belonged to the whole community. The death of a parent or inability of biological parents to cater for their children would not be expected to leave the latter with no choice than to resort to stealing for survival as was the case of informants #s 11 and 1. This finding is consistent with the reviewed literature as discovered in the works of Boakye (2010), where a respondent had to, in the absence of the mother, resort to stealing to survive.

Associating with deviant peers also seemed to have explained some informants' involvement in delinquency. Some informants perceived that they got involved in crime as a result of the friends they came into contact with. Some of these friends who they saw to be in a position to support them either ended up leading them into social vices or reinforcing their delinquent behaviour (informants#10 and 11).

Some informants' delinquent behavior can be traced to some religious beliefs. Some of the informants seemed to have believed in some religious protection for their delinquent acts. They would therefore seek this kind of protection for their nefarious acts with the confidence that with the religious protection, they would never get caught or nothing would ever happen to them. This belief might therefore have been a big booster for their delinquent activities (informant #11).

The remorse shown by some of the informants was noteworthy. Upon sober reflection, some of the informants came to the realization that they had wronged God and were very remorseful. They however had the hope that God could forgive them and therefore asked for His divine mercy and forgiveness (informant # 8).

Regarding the question whether the informants' perceived risk factors indicate any electronic media experience and whether the electronic media experience indicates any specific violent content, the data seemed to suggest the existence of some electronic media violence.

Electronic media influence as it emerged from the data can be grouped into such subthemes as gaming as a precursor to delinquency, violence in action or war films, action movies as

reinforcement to delinquency, erotic films and pornography and aggression in video games and professional wrestling.

The data seemed to suggest that some informants got into delinquency as a result of addiction to games. As one of the informants pointed out, he had to steal to be able to get money so he could play his favourite game, jackpot. Informant # 14 was very unequivocal in his conviction about what was at the root of his involvement in stealing: He further confirmed this assertion when he intimated that he used the proceeds from his first stealing attempt outside to play “jackpot”, his favourite game. From the above submission, the informant did not steal the mobile phone because he needed it but rather that he needed money to enable him play his game and saw stealing the mobile as the only way to achieve this.

Majority of the informants indicated their interest in action movies. Only one out of the 15 informants indicated that he did not like action/war films. The account given by some of the informants pointed to addiction as they would not even feel hungry when watching action movies. The perception of the informants with regard to possible influence of action movies is instructive. Some informants indicated their vulnerability to the influence of action movies. While informant # 6 acknowledged the influence of action movies on his habit of mobile phone snatching, informant # 5 admitted how prone he was to imitating actions in war films. Informant # 4's confession to enjoying wicked acts in movies and his confessed penchant for retaliation suggests a possible influence of action movies on his behavior. The admission of possible impact of watching professional wrestling on informants #5 and #6 is instructive.

Pornographic materials and erotic films also seemed to have induced some informants into delinquency. Some of the informants intimated that they got into sexual offenses as a result of their exposure to erotic movies and pornographic content (informants # 1, 6 and 12).

In conclusion, suffice it to say that the results of this study revealed that, juvenile delinquency in Ghana cannot be limited to any single theoretical framework or causative factor. Several circumstances account for the involvement of juveniles in delinquency. Some of these circumstances as discovered in this study include inadequate parental support and supervision, deviant peer association, death of a parent, inadequate extended family support and electronic media violence. The risk factors of delinquency were explained within the context of the underlying theories and reviewed literature for the study.

5.1 Limitations

One major limitation of this study is the fact that the findings are based on institutionalised juvenile offenders. This is because the study made use of informants who were already involved in delinquency and were kept in a correctional facility. It is therefore not clear if the same or similar results would be obtained if non-institutionalised and non-delinquent juveniles were used.

5.2 Need For Future Research

As indicated above, the current study made use of male institutionalised offenders. It will be interesting for future research to include female offenders to see if same or similar results will be obtained. Future research can also include delinquent children who are involved in such delinquent acts as alcoholism and truancy that do not border on crime.

5.3 Conclusion

The objective of this study as indicated in chapter one was to find out the thoughts of inmates of the Senior Correctional Centre on electronic media violence and their involvement in juvenile delinquency. Self-meaning making on the part of the inmates themselves in respect of their perceived risk factors were of great interest. Based on the results of the study, it is concluded that electronic media violence may not be ignored in any critical analysis on the subject of juvenile delinquency in Ghana. The significance of the perceived influence of action movies, war films, erotic movies, and pornographic materials in the lives of the informants cannot be over-emphasised. Consistent with the findings in the reviewed literature as found in the works of Boxer (2009), this study also found that even in conjunction with other factors, electronic media violence seemed to have (in the narratives of the informants) contributed to violent behaviour among inmates of the Senior Correctional Centre in Accra.

The theoretical basis of this study, the social learning theory which suggests that learning occurs through observation and that children observe and learn from influential models such as parents, friends, teachers and characters on children's television is supported by the findings. The findings suggest that the informants perceived that their involvement in delinquency could be traced partly to their association with deviant peers as well as exposure to electronic media violence.

5.4 Recommendations

Recent studies have found that the harmful effects of exposure to media violence can be reduced if parents monitor and guide their children's media exposure and discuss their interpretation of

media violence with the children. For example, one study found that when parents speak negatively about television violence or restrict the viewing of violent television content, children place less importance on violent programmes and have less aggressive attitudes. However, if parents watch television with their children and say nothing about the violent content, children report higher than normal aggressive attitudes (Nathason, 1999, in Andeson, et al., 2000). In Ghana it has been observed that even though some television programmings provide for parental guidance by marking the programmes PG, meaning Parental Guidance or 18+, meaning that such programmes are not suitable for children below the age of 18 to watch, very little or no guidance is provided by most parents. Parents are however, encouraged to offer their children guidance as this will go a long way to mitigate the effect of violent media on their children. Programme producers are also encouraged to take the timings of programmes with violent content into serious cognizance as this may naturally reduce children's exposure to such content. It is also recommended that staff of the Senior Correctional Centre consistently provide monitoring and guidance to the inmates under their care, with respect to exposure to violent media content.

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APPENDIX A

Interview guide

Interview questions shall include the following:

RQ1. What inmates' perceptions of the circumstances surrounding their involvement in delinquency?

Engagement questions:

1. What offense brought you into custody?
2. How many times were you involved in that offense prior to your arrest?
3. Where and with whom were you staying?
4. Can you tell me about some of the closest friends you used to hang out with?
5. Can you describe some the things you and your friends used to spend most of the time doing?
6. What do you think made you commit the offense?

RQ2: Do the circumstances indicate any electronic media experience?

Exploration questions

7. What is your favourite television programme?
8. What is your favourite movie?
9. How often did you watch your favourite programme?
10. How often did you play your favourite game?
11. How did you feel any time you watched your favourite character?
12. What is your favourite video game?
13. Who is your favourite character in the chosen programme? Why?

RQ3. Does the electronic media experience indicate specific violent content?

14. Have you watched this programme? (wrestle mania, etc)
15. Have you watched this movie? (a. naked weapon, b. Aki and Pawpaw, c. Baby police, d. Tom & Jerry etc.) Have you played this video game before? (to be determined by researcher)
16. Have you played this video game before? (Mortal kombat, vice city, total overdose, grand theft. Doom etc.)
17. How did it make you feel?
18. How did it make you feel?

Exit question:

19. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about yourself?

APPENDIX B

Consent Form for Interviewee

I certify that the purpose of the study has been thoroughly explained to me in a language I understand to my satisfaction and I have received a copy of the consent form. I understand that any information obtained from me for this research will be kept confidential. To further ensure my privacy, I have the option of using a pseudonym. I understand that participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse participation at anytime in course of the interview.

I agree to participate in this study.

.....

Signature of interviewee

.....

Date

APPENDIX C

Consent Form for Officer -In-Charge

I certify that the purpose of the study has been thoroughly explained to me in a language I understand to my satisfaction and I have received a copy of the consent form. I understand that any information obtained from the inmate for this research will be kept confidential. To further ensure his/her privacy, s/he has the option of using a pseudonym. I understand that participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse participation at anytime in course of the interview.

I consent to the study.

.....

Signature of Officer-In-Charge

.....

Date

APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW RESPONSES OF INMATES OF THE SENIOR CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

INMATE #1 (Translated from Twi)

My favourite TV programmes are films, especially war films and armed robbers' movies. I have also played a number of video games such as Nikai races, Mario and soccer. My favourite actors are Kweku Manu and Agya Koo in Ghanaian films and Commando in war films. I like Commando because of the way he fights. I feel happy any time I watch such movies. Sometimes I pay to watch at video centres. I started watching such movies at the age of 7; that is I have watched for more than 10 years now. It is only when I don't have money that I don't watch but once I have money I watch. I feel very happy when I watch my favourite characters. Sometimes, I even feel like going into acting but because I didn't go to school, I know I cannot have the opportunity to act in the foreign movies but if I get the opportunity, I can act in Ghanaian movies.

Yes, I have fought before and was severely beaten. So sometimes when I watch fight movies I try to learn some tactics to be able to fight better in the future. There are also some scenes pertaining to stealing in some of the movies and I can say I have learnt some of their techniques. Yes, I have scaled walls so many times on my stealing escapades. I have also broken into people's houses several times. I can say I have learnt some of my techniques from the movies I have watched.

Yes, I like wrestling and my favourite characters are John Cena and Undertaker. I like them because of the way they fight. They are very good and they always beat their opponents. Yes, I

have also watched movies in which there are erotic scenes. It was even after watching one such movie that on my return I went to steal and was arrested leading to my coming into custody here. I was going to steal provisions from a store but when I got there I saw the man and the wife and daughter fast asleep. I saw the man's pair of shorts he had removed before going to bed and when I searched I saw GHC150 and I took it. I also took his mobile phone. I left for home and slept but later when I recollected the way I saw them sleeping it dawned on me that I should go and rape the daughter. I had earlier that night watched an erotic movie. Unfortunately when I got there I don't know what happened, I tripped and my sleepers made noise and woke the man up. The movie that night is called spectacles. It's a foreign war movie but contains erotic scenes. Yes, I have also played a number of video games such as mortal combat, total overdose, doom and others. Sometimes I steal because of hunger.

INMATE #2(Translated from Twi)

My favourite stations are UTV and Viasat 1 because they show a lot of season films. They are basically about love stories. I also like action films. I like action films because of the way the main character eventually wins the fight. I feel happy when that eventual win comes. I have also played video games such as mortal combat, virtua cop and road rush. My favourite characters in action movies are Van Damme and Rambo.

I am custody for defilement. I was in a relationship with the girl (name withheld) who got pregnant and claimed I was responsible. Meanwhile I had quit the relationship a few months earlier. I started watching love films at the age of 12. My father is a driver and is almost always not at home so I am able to watch anything I want to watch. Yes, anytime I watch, I feel like

practising what I watch. I used to watch the season films every day but the war films not every day. Yes, I used to play video games when I was at the JHS and I had a desktop computer .I feel happy to watch my favourite characters. Yes, I have watched wrestle mania several times and I feel happy when my favourite wrestler wins. My favourite wrestler is John Cena. Yes, I have watched Baby Police, Tom and Jerry but I like only the fun those two little boys create and not the wicked part they play.

INMATE #3 (Translated from Twi)

My favouriteTV station is UTV. Wrestling is my favourite programme. I watch wrestling for entertainment purposes. I watch it when I am not feeling happy. My favorite films are war films and Ghanaian films. I feel happy for instance when Blowman’s mother is taken hostage and he goes to rescue her. As for video games I don’t like them. Myfavourite Ghanaian actors are Lil Wayne and Agya Koo and the foreign ones are Donnie Yen and Van Damme

I have been brought into custody for attempting to steal. I have been arrested on my second attempt. My first attempt, I succeeded in stealing a mobile phone. I was going to buy something in a store and I saw the phone and took it. I started watching movies at the age of 8 and I could watch 4 times in a week. Yes, I have ever watched a war film in which there was a scene involving stealing. My favourite wrestlers are John Cena and Undertaker. I like Aki and Pawpaw films very much.

INMATE #4(Translated from Twi)

My favorite TV programmes are action movies. Yes, I have played video games before. I have played soccer, god of war, mortal combat, and Rambo race. I started watching films at the age of

about 14. My favourite character in Ghanaian movies is Lil Wayne and in action films, I like Commando. I like Commando because of the way he is able to scatter things and kill people. I feel good when I see him scattering things like that. My desire has been to become a soldier that's why I like such action movies. I study the way and manner in which they shoot very much. I have been brought into custody for stealing. I have stolen on several occasions. I have been arrested on three occasions but my father used to settle the case amicably and got me freed. But this time he said he was fed up with me.

Yes, I had video games at home that I used to play. Commando is my role model. I have watched several movies with scenes of stealing. Examples are Pastor Atta Ayi and some Nigerian movies that I don't readily recall. I was arrested for stealing provisions but I had actually gone to the store purposely to steal money but the money I found was too small so I decided to rather steal provisions to sell so I could get more money. After I had finished collecting the item I went for a taxi to convey them. Unfortunately, the taxi was being driven by a police man. It was 4 o'clock at dawn so he became suspicious and began to question me and suspected I might have stolen the items. He asked me to tell him the truth and when I hesitated he gave me a few slaps and I had to confess that I had stolen them.

Yes, I like watching wrestle mania. My favourite wrestler is Undertaker. Yes, I think it is real. I have watched Baby Police and Tom and Jerry. I enjoy watching those small boys playing their wicked parts. Yes, I would not hesitate to retaliate in same measure to anyone who plays wicked to me. I feel very happy anytime I watch those wicked movies.

INMATE # 5(Translated from Twi)

My favourite TV programmes are cartoons and adventure films. I started watching such films at the age of about five. I used to watch at home and sometimes I would go to video centre to watch movies. My favourite movie characters are Rambo, Commando, Jackie Chan and Jet Lee. In terms of cartoons I like skubi du, Tom and Jerry and the Lion King. Yes, some of the movies I have watched contain scenes of stealing for example B 13 contains scenes of stealing. I feel good any time I watch such movies. Sometimes, when I watch such movies I feel like practising them. In fact, if I say I don't like practising them I am telling lies. When I am watching or playing a video game, I don't even feel hungry. Yes, I have watched wrestle mania but I don't like it as much as war films. I like actions and if I am watching a film that doesn't contain actions I stop watching. I like practising actions that I watch in movies so if I get into a fight with a friend I try to use the techniques I have watched in the films. I feel better when I watch movies. Yes, I enjoy watching wrestling. Yes, I think it is real and I try to copy their skills.

I am in custody for stealing. I stole a flat screen TV, DVD player, standing fan. I had finished collecting the items but I forgot the remote control of the DVD player which I was going back for and unfortunately the woman came and screamed: Thief! Thief! This resulted in my arrest.

INMATE # 6 (Translated from Twi)

My favourite TV programmes are action movies. I am an action boy and I like fighting. My mum even used to say fighting would send me to prison one day. It's surprising that's rather not what has brought me into custody. No matter your age, I know how to beat you when we meet. I can say I have learnt some of the tactics from the movies I have watched. My favourite video games

are CJ and soccer. My favourite movie characters are Jackie Chan, Black Scorpion. I like the way they fight and their fastness.

I am in custody for defilement. I have once attacked a man in an attempt to snatch his mobile phone. Unbeknown to me he had a jack knife on him. As I attacked him, he was going to stab me but I was smarter and held his hand and slapped him. I thought that case would have brought me into custody. I have engaged in this kind of mobile snatching about three times. I feel very excited when I am watching my favourite movies to the extent that I don't feel like eating when I am watching. I believe those movies have influenced my involvement in mobile phone snatching.

I also like erotic films and I like girls. I have watched pornographic movies on several occasions. Usually, before I watch a pornographic movie, I have a girl beside me and any time I watch alone it worries me a lot. As for the defilement case that brought me into custody, the girl was my girlfriend but her parents had earlier warned us to stop. The day the case even happened I was watching a pornographic movie with her when the father and the mother came with the police to arrest me. I hit one of the policemen and he fell down but the other one also hit me and I fell down and they arrested me. Yes, I enjoy watching wrestling because I like fighting. I have been learning their tactics anytime I am watching.

INMATE # 7(Translated from Twi)

My favourite TV programmes are Ghanaian movies and action films. I am in custody for defilement. The girl was my girlfriend. The girl got pregnant and stole the mother's money to

abort it and almost died as a result. No, I don't like watching sexy films but I have once watched a pornographic material on a friend's mobile phone before. Yes, I have watched wrestling several times. My favourite wrestler is John Cena. Yes, I have watched war films such as Naked weapon, Baby police and Tom and Jerry. As for video games I like playing only soccer.

INMATE # 8

My favourite TV station is Adom TV and my favourite programmes are mostly Ghanaian movies. I like Ghanaian movies because of the stories they act. Sometimes, somebody acts as if he is a poor man but in the end he will gain success. That makes me like them. And also I understand them better than the foreign ones. No, I don't like war films.

Yes, I have played a video game before and that was soccer. My favourite movie character is Agya Koo. I like him because any part he is given he plays it really well. The way he speaks and the way he acts, that makes me like him.

I am in custody for manslaughter. I was in SS at Cape Coast and we went on vacation and I went to my hometown Breman Asikuma. Some guy suspected me that I had killed his puppy. Meanwhile, I had no idea about that. So one Friday, I was walking in the street when he rushed on me and asked me to pay for the puppy he said I had killed. Immediately I wanted to talk he slapped me and that made too angry. So we started fighting, not knowing he had a knife on him and he stabbed me with it and I managed to hold his hand. So we were struggling over the knife and there was a big gutter there so we both fell in the gutter. I was able to handle the knife better

than him so when we fell in the gutter the knife stabbed him in the armpit and we were both bleeding. His head also hit the gutter.

My friends rushed me home. Before I realized I was in the hospital. I woke up after three days and was told the other boy was also in the hospital. I was okay and they brought me home. Five days later, his family people came to inform my parents that the boy couldn't survive. So my family members rushed me to the police station to report the case and I was arrested. The case was tried at the juvenile court. I was initially charged for murder but my lawyer pleaded for manslaughter.

Yes, I have been quarrelling with friends but that was on the only time I had a real fight. I used to get into little fights with my younger brother but as for street fight, no. Meanwhile, before I went for the vacation a pastor met me and told me that they had planned for me in the village so I shouldn't go but that time I don't believe in such things, I mean prophesies so I didn't listen. I went to the village and they called me that my uncles were coming and so I should come and clean the house but upon all that I didn't listen. I was there enjoying in the village. I had more friends in the village than where I was schooling so I was more comfortable in the village. I think what pastor told me was true but I didn't listen. So I am pleading with God that he should forgive me because it is in the Bible that thou should not kill. He should forgive me because at that time I don't know what I was doing. He should forgive me and give me a new beginning. Once the person died through my fighting with him it means I have killed him. God should forgive me for that sin I have committed.

INMATE # 9 (Translated from Twi)

I like movies and my favourite movies are war films. I used to buy the CD to watch. I like war films because of the way they fight and throw blows. My favourite character in war films is Van Damme. I like him because he is very strong. I feel happy when I watch war films. No, I have never gotten into any serious fight. I don't like fighting. I only study the techniques they use in fighting.

I am in custody for stealing. I was going to steal money from a provisions store. No, I don't watch wrestling. I don't like wrestling. Yes, I have watched Baby police and Tom and Jerry but I don't like them.

INMATE # 10(Translated from Twi)

I like watching action movies and my favourite station is UTV. I like UTV because they show a lot of action movies. Action movies teach you how to fight and win. I used to rent movies to watch, usually Nigerian movies. Yes, I have played video games before and my favourite video game is mortal combat. My favourite movie characters are Rambo and Jackie Chan.

I am in custody for stealing. Somebody sent me to go and steal a mobile phone and bring to her. She is my friend. She is older than me. She is 19 years old and I am 12 years old. The first one I was successful. I wasn't caught. At night around 11pm or midnight I went to break into the same store again. That night I got about 15 phones. It is a phone shop. This time I went to give them to a guy to sell for me. The boy sold the phones but gave me nothing so I went again, this time I went for an mp3. In the process, a friend came to meet me and joined me. He later sent me to go

and buy food for him. This delayed us and the shop owners came to meet us. I have been involved in stealing for over ten times. I started stealing at the age of 11. I usually steal money, mobile phones and laptops.

I could watch movies every day. As for video games, as soon as I got up from bed, I would go to the video centre to play. I feel cool anytime I watch my favourite characters. I usually watch Jackie Chan's tactics to be able to beat my opponents. As for my stealing habit, I would say it is my friend who taught me. As I started enjoying it, then I was watching movies that could help me learn more tactics. Yes, I have watched wrestle mania before but I don't have a favourite. Yes, I have watched Tom and Jerry cartoons. My favourite video game is mortal combat. When you watch some of the movies, they give you so many ideas.

INMATE # 11 (Translated from Ewe)

Yes, I like watching TV and my favourite TV station is UTV because they like showing movies. I like Ghanaian- Nigerian movies. My favourite actors and actresses are Van Vicker, Jackie Appiah and Mercy Johnson. I like them because they like playing romantic parts. I had two girl friends. I used to give them money and also buy clothes and other things for them. I used to ride "okada" (motor).

I am in custody for stealing. We went to break into somebody's store. We were four in number and two of us were arrested. I can't remember the number of times I had been involved in stealing. I started stealing when my mother died. I was then 8 years old. My father was then

living in La Cote d'Ivoire but he is also now deceased. It was a friend who bought the motor bike for me. I get enough from the motor riding business but my seniors insist we should steal.

I usually watch films in the evenings. Yes, I have watched films containing scenes of stealing. An example is labista. When I watch I try to study the techniques to enhance my performance, for instance how to observe someone to see what they have and inform your colleagues. The last attempt that resulted in our arrest, we stole GHC 3,600 and some laptops. It is our senior man who keeps the money. We sometimes carry guns and cutlasses. No, we don't kill; we only inflict cutlass wounds on them. Yes, sometimes we gang rape our victims. Sometimes, you are forced to do it and if you refuse, you can be attacked by other group members. We have a spiritual father we usually consult before we go on our operations.

No, I have never played a video game before. When I watch my favourite characters I wish to become like them. I learnt a lot of good things from films. Stealing is the only bad thing I learnt from films. Yes, I like wrestling and my favourite wrestlers are John Cena and Undertaker. Yes, I like watching war films because I like the way they shoot. Yes, I have watched Baby Police and Tom and Jerry. Yes, I feel happy when I watch my favourite characters. Yes, I try to learn stealing techniques from the characters who steal.

INMATE # 12

Yes, I like watching TV and my favourite station is UTV. My favourite programme is season movies like 'what life took from me.' It is about love. I have learnt from that movie that money

cannot buy love. I like action movies but not as much as the romantic ones. I was born in Christian Refugee Camp in Nzema. My favourite characters are those who act good parts.

I am here for defilement. No, she was not my girlfriend. That day I didn't go to school. Then I went to a nearby school. I saw one of the girls in that school. She was very attractive. I proposed love to her and she agreed and I was very happy. Later, I invited her home and she came. We kissed and I got excited and then she now said no. Meanwhile, I was already in the mood so I forced her. Actually, I didn't beat her; I only pushed her onto the bed. A day later, her school teachers came for me and took me to the police station.

I used to watch films only during weekends because my uncle regulated my watching. But he usually goes out on trek sometimes for about a month. Yes, I have watched pornographic material on a friend's mobile phone. Some of the movies influence us. Yes, that one is true. I would say that my going into that defilement was influenced by movies. Some of my colleagues even go for medicine to enable them rob people. They get all that from movies. Yes, I like wrestling and my favourite wrestlers are John Cena, Undertaker, Batista, etc. I even have a lot of the CDS at home. Me, I don't have strength so I just watch for fun.

INMATE # 13(Translated from Twi)

I like Ghanaian Nigerian movies and my favourite actor is Majeed. I like the way he is able to woo girls. Yes, I have two girlfriends. I am in custody for stealing. Apart from stealing I have also been involved in rape. That day, I attended a friend's birthday party and got heavily drunk. She was sleeping when I started sleeping with her and when she woke up she screamed thief! Thief!

I have been involved in stealing on several occasions. I started stealing at the age of 8. I belong to a gang. We steal money, phones and laptops. Yes, I have been involved in breaking into stores and making away with assorted items. Yes, I used knives but my colleagues used guns. Yes, I have been involved in armed robbery. We were six in number who planned to go to Kumasi to rob. We set off from Accra around 11 pm. We went to rob a white man and a woman in a hotel. We made away with money and laptops. We usually had some medicine we normally wrap in a handkerchief; if we sprinkle it in your face you can't see anything again. Yes, sometimes, we rape our victims during our operations. Yes, I have watched movies containing rape. Yes, I have watched films that contain scenes pertaining stealing. An example is Commando. Yes, I would say I have been influenced by such movies into stealing and armed robbery.

Yes, I like wrestling and my favourite wrestlers are John Cena and Undertaker. Yes, I have played video games and my favourite ones are Mortal combat and Grand theft.

INMATE # 14(Translated from Twi)

My favourite TV station stations are UTV and crystal TV. I like crystal TV because they like playing hipop and hip life music. I like hipop because the music is usually composed to protest against something or somebody. My favourite films are season movies. I like season movies because they sometimes contain fights. Yes, I like fighting. Yes, I have fought a couple of times. I beat some of my opponents and some also beat me. My favourite actors are Lil Wayne, Aki and Pawpaw and Jango. I like Aki and Pawpaw because they are fast. For instance, if they are going to steal they are fast in doing so.

I am in custody for stealing. Yes, I have ever used Aki and Pawpaw's style to steal before. I have been involved in stealing on several occasions. Ooh it would be more than 20 times. I usually steal mobile phones, laptops money. When I steal I sell the items. Yes, I have watched films with scenes of stealing and armed robbery. My gang, we usually do not use guns but we use knives. We carry knives because sometimes we need to threaten our victims and sometimes they may want to attack us.

I am now 17 years old. I got involved in stealing at the age of 6. My first attempt was at home. I stole my mother's money. She used to sell so when she came back from the market, I knew where she used to keep the money so I time her and steal some. Yes, if I asked her for money she would give me but she wouldn't give me the amount I needed. I used to play video games with the stolen money. Yes, I like playing video games and I have played a lot of them. Ooh I have played mortal combat, God of war, batman and grand theft, motor races and car races. Yes, my mother could later on discover the theft but when she asked I would deny having stolen it.

Yes, I had a lot of girlfriends, about ten. Yes, I have learnt some techniques of stealing in some movies. Yes, I have watched wrestling several times and my favourite wrestlers are John Cena and Triple H. I like John Cena because he is able to take on even three wrestlers at the same time.

Yes, I have watched Baby Police. I like Baby Police because of how the small boys were able to outwit the police. What led me into stealing was that there is a game called jackpot and if you want to play you pay money. I started going out to steal at the age of about 8. My first attempt

outside, I went to steal a mobile phone which I sold and used the money to go and play jackpot. Yes, I can say I learnt something in movies to enhance my stealing habit.

INMATE # 15 (Translated from Twi)

My favourite TV programme was a movie on TV3. I liked it because it was full of stealing. By then I was also into stealing and I liked the way the characters would sit down and plan before going out to steal. I can't remember the number of times I had been involved in stealing. As for me I could steal this morning and in the evening I would steal again. I could steal anything at all. I started stealing at the age of 8. Yes, I was staying with my mother but because I was stubborn I left home to go and stay with a friend. Yes, my friend was also into stealing.

Yes, I like action movies. Yes, I started stealing before watching the movie I talked about. I mean the one on TV3. I was using the money I got from stealing to 'boil'. No, I never had a girlfriend. If I sleep with one girl today, tomorrow I will go in for another one. I started following girls at the age of 10. Yes, I was going to school but I didn't like the school so I stopped. I used to watch movies every evening. My favourite movies are armed robbers' movies. Yes, I was involved in armed robbery. I used to carry an axe. No, I have never been involved in rape. It is a silly act. If you engage in that you will easily be caught. There is one character called Jango in a Nigerian movie. He is thick and tall. I like him because of the way he robs. He is good at it. When I am watching those movies my intention is to study the way they do it so as to use it to boost my performance. One thing I have learnt in a movie is how to stand on each other's shoulders to scale walls.

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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P. O. Box LG 53
Legon, Accra

My Ref. No. SCS/GA.15

Your Ref. No.

July 3, 2014

The Controller-General
Ghana Prisons Service
P. O. Box 129
Accra

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION
MR. COURAGE ATSEM

This is to introduce to you the above-mentioned Master of Arts in Communication Studies student of this School, who is currently carrying out a research on the topic: *"Electronic Media Violence and Juvenile Delinquency: A Case Study of Inmates of the Senior Correctional Centre and Remand Homes in Ghana"*.

I would therefore be grateful if he could be assisted to gather the necessary data from the Correctional Centre for this all-important exercise.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Margaret I. Amoakohene
Ag. Director

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In case of reply the number and date of this letter should be quoted



HEADQUARTERS
The Ghana Prisons Service
P. O. BOX 129, ACCRA
GHANA WEST AFRICA
TEL: 760093/760094
Fax: 233-302-772865

Email: info@ghanaprison.gov.gh

Your Ref. No.....

My Ref. No.: OC/1082/V.19/2014 / 9634

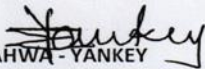
Date: 28.....July, 2014.

RE: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION
MR. COURAGE ATSEM

Your Ref. No. SCS/GA. 15 of 3rd July, 2014

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter quoted above.

2. This is to inform you that, permission has been given to the above-named Master of Arts in Communication Studies Student at School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana to collect data at the **Senior Correctional Centre** for his dissertation on the topic: "**Electronic Media Violence and Juvenile Delinquency: A Case Study of Inmates of the Senior Correctional Centre and Remand Homes in Ghana**".
3. He would be required to report to the **Officer-In-Charge** at the Centre for guidance and directives prior to the commencement of his research.
4. He would also be expected to submit a copy of his research work to this office as it will help the Service in its effort to improve on the conditions of the Service.
5. Accept for compliance.


M. AHWA - YANKEY
DEPUTY CONTROLLER OF PRISONS/ HRD
For: CONTROLLER-GENERAL OF PRISONS

DR. MARGARET I. AMOAKOHENE (AG. DIRECTOR)
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
P. O. BOX LG 53
LEGON-ACCRA

cc:

1. Mr. Courage Atsem
2. The Officer-In-Charge
Senior Correctional Centre
Accra