CHAPTER FIVE

HOME VISITS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

A cross-sectional research design which involves data collection followed by statistical analysis would not adequately describes the socialization process of which delinquency is a part of and not merely an outcome. Statistical analysis of the data collected only provide information of averages which one know did not give an accurate or complete picture because individual differences exist among the delinquents. The dynamics of the process and the interplay of factors relating to the process will also be lost.

Four homes belonging to delinquent subjects with different offences used as their reason for referral, were visited to provide qualitative data that can help us understand their deviant behaviour. During the visits made to their homes, interviews were carried out with their family members. School records were also obtained from their former schools to supplement the qualitative data obtained from home visits.

5.1 OBJECTIVES OF HOME VISITS

1. To observe the subjects' home environment first hand.

2. To interview the subjects' parents and siblings. This additional data would add greater depth to the researcher's knowledge of the etiological factors of delinquency obtained from the subjects through the questionnaire.

3. To reconstruct the events leading to the offence which they were referred by the Juvenile Court.
5.2 **FURTHER DATA**

A  Name : Rothmans (Case 02)

Date of visit : 23 October 1998

Age : 18 (in 1998)

Position in family : Fifth

Number of siblings : 10

Physical attributes :
- Weight : 58 kg (in 1998)
- Height : 160 cm (in 1998)

Former School : Sekolah Kebangsaan Paya Bemban, Jalan Hospital, 15200 Kota Bharu.

Father’s occupation : Driver

Mother’s occupation : Restaurant helper

Vocational aspiration : Business

Juvenile Court Referral: Assault
Voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means. Section 324 of the Penal Code (Act 574), Legal Research Board (1998)

Date of offence : 28 January 1996

Home Conditions

The house address that Rothmans wrote in the questionnaire was difficult to locate. The house was only found with the help of several youngsters who were managing a burger stall by the roadside. Two teenage sisters were at home at that time and they informed the researcher that their mother would be returning only at night as she was working in a restaurant. According to them, their father seldom came home as he had four wives. An
appointment was made to see their mother at seven o'clock that night. The researcher brought some biscuits and tins of condensed milk for the family to show goodwill. When the researcher arrived to keep her appointment, the narrow alleys leading to the house were pitch-black. The wooden house was dimly lit by a single light bulb.

Data from Questionnaire

In his responses to the questionnaire, the subject reported perceiving higher maternal support than paternal support. He indicated that his mother usually understood him, but his father seldom. Although he never felt unwanted by his parents, he never talked to his parents about what bothered him either. His mother was unable to help him with his schoolwork while his father seldom did so. Examination of his responses to the items on parental educations showed that his mother went to primary while his father, lower secondary. He preferred to be more often with his father than with his mother. Both his parents however always enquired about his daily activities.

In his responses to the items on peer-group support, he indicated that getting good grades in school was important to his friends. However, he admitted that more than six of his friends had been in trouble with the law. He reported spending 3-4 hours daily with his friends after school hours and usually followed his friends even when he knew that they were heading for trouble. He however strongly disagreed that delinquency was normal among adolescents.
From his responses to the questionnaire, his concepts of self appeared to be good. He considered himself to be just as intelligent as the others of his age. He was very satisfied with his physical appearance and that others usually listened when he talked.

As regards to coping behaviours, he always employed Plan What He Has to Do, Joke and Try to Be Funny, Try to Make His Own Decision. His moral development was found to be at Stage Three. He would steal the drug if he were in Heinz’s position.

He confessed to frequent thefts, assaults, status offences and public offences. The reasons he gave for deviant behaviour were that he was bored, he was forced to, he was provoked, he lost his head, because others always said that he was bad, he hated his victim, it was in anger and he was insulted.

School

Examining his responses on school experiences, he claimed his academic achievement was within the 65-80 per cent range and he represented his school in both football and handball. He professed to be a school prefect and a class monitor. He liked school a lot and seldom gave the teachers trouble. In spite of all that, he admitted skipping school often without legitimate excuse. Report from his former school, Sekolah Kebangsaan Paya Bemban, where he had his primary education for the period 1987 to 1992, showed no major offences. He committed minor offences like truancy and was late for school several times. His attendance for the year 1992 was
169/196. His academic records as shown in Table 5.1 indicated a general decline over the years. He dropped out of school in Form One.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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</table>

Chronology of Events

As forewarned by the pegawai akhlak (probation officer), the mother could see no fault in her son. According to her, he was popular among his friends in the neighbourhood and she proudly announced that he was very independent and worked his way through several odd jobs. He was even able to buy a bicycle on his own even while he was still in school. After dropping out of school, he did odd jobs and was even able to give her money from time to time. It was only when he was working in Kuala Lumpur that he was involved in a fight and stabbed a boy, causing a one-inch-deep wound. The mother knew nothing about the incident until the Kota Bharu probation officer managed to locate her house; by then, her son was already detained in the approved school for boys in Jerantut, Pahang.

Siblings

His immediate brother whom the researcher had chosen for comparison was away working in Johore Bahru when the researcher visited the subject’s home. According to the mother this sibling has been questioned.
by the police on several occasions for suspicion of drug addiction. She steadfastly defended his innocence but he would be hauled up for questioning with every occurrence of theft or burglary in the neighbourhood. Once, when his friends were involved in a burglary, he was detained together with them for a period of ten days. On the advice of her neighbours, she sold off her bits of jewelry to enable her to send him away to Singapore, where he managed to find work. He had set up a restaurant in Johore with the help of a few friends.

The interview was interrupted several times by the squabbles of her three younger girls aged less than ten, playing nearby. These children were left on their own when she was at work. She was full of praise for her former neighbours, an Indian couple, who would bring her children to see a doctor whenever they were injured in her absence. On her way out, the researcher met the teenage daughter who was on her way home, accompanied by a boyfriend.

Discussion

The family was somehow caught in a vicious circle of circumstances. Neglected by the father, the mother had to go out and work until night. The children lacked parental supervision although their good neighbours helped out in times of emergency. The mother was proud of the subject’s independence but was unaware of his frequent involvement in various offences. He dropped out of school after frequent truancy coupled with a continuous decline of academic achievement from Year 1 to Year 6.

B Name : Adnan (Case 06)

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Date of visit : 23 Nov 1998

Age : 18 (in 1998)

Position in family : Fifth

Number of siblings : 10

Physical attributes : Weight : 50 kg (in 1998)
                   : Height : 155 cm (in 1998)

Former school : Sekolah Menengah Putera, Kompleks Sekolah-Sekolah, 15300 Kota Bharu.

Father’s occupation : Trishaw Paddler

Mother’s occupation : Homemaker

Juvenile Court Referral : Burglary
                      : Lurking house-trespass or house breaking by night in order to commit an offence punishable with imprisonment. 
                      : Section 457 of the Penal Code Act 574), Legal Research Board (1998)

Date of Offence : 16 October 1996

Home Conditions

The wooden house was on high stilts and a trishaw was parked beneath it. The abode was sparsely furnished but clean inside. The mother who was at home with three small boys was cordial and pleasant. She informed the researcher of her son’s pending release on the 15 Nov 1998 from a letter from the approved school. She had to go down to the approved school to bring him back. But it would not be possible for her to make the trip to Jerantut because she had no one to take care of the younger children and lack of finances. The father, a trishaw paddler, could not take a few days off from work as he would
lose his daily earnings. The researcher promised to inform the probation officer in Kota Bharu of her problem getting to Jerantut.

The researcher telephoned the probation officer in Kota Bharu when she got home. He promised to look into the case. He also informed the researcher that the authorities in the approved school had released a batch of detainees a few days earlier. Probably the detainee, being a male, would be allowed to go home on his own.

His mother explained that the subject had been released from the approved school when the researcher made a second visit several months later to confirm the name of his former school. On his release, he set up a roadside stall with his friends, but their business venture failed. She was not too sure of his present whereabouts and could not afford to keep track of him because she had to take care of her many younger children.

**Data from Questionnaire**

From his responses in the questionnaire, the subject claimed he had received high parental support and gave the highest score for all aspects of perceived parental support. He even checked that his parents would help him with his schoolwork although he indicated in the same questionnaire that they had only primary education.

He reported that his friends placed much importance on getting good grades in school. However, at the same time, he checked in the questionnaire that more than six of them had been in trouble with the law and he spent more than five hours with them after school in a day. Although he sometimes
knowingly followed friends who were heading towards trouble, he disagreed that delinquency was normal among adolescents.

With regard to his concepts of self, he felt he has lower intelligence compared to the others who are of his age. He was however satisfied with his looks and he believed the others sometimes listened when he talked. He did not know what to put down as his vocational aspiration. The coping behaviours he employed most frequently were *Joke and Try to Be Funny* and *Do Strenuous Physical Activity*. His moral development was at Stage Three. He said he would not steal the drug if he were in Heinz’s position although he admitted to frequent thefts, burglary, vandalism, assaults, truancy, substance use and public offences. The motives behind his deviant behaviours were that *He Just Wanted to Have Fun* and *Others Always Say that I am Bad*.

School

He indicated that his average marks during school assessments were within the range of 65 to 80%. He did not play any games nor participated in any extra-curricular activities while in school. Neither did he hold any responsible positions. However he claimed to enjoyed school a lot and seldom gave his teachers problems. He admitted that he sometimes played truant but his mother said she knew nothing about his truancy until she received a warning letter from his school. She assumed that he went to school everyday because he left home in the morning in his school uniform and returned home only in the afternoon.
Report from his former school showed that his secondary education was only from 1 December 1993 to 24 May 1994. His attendance for that short period of schooling was 69/112. This record indicated that he dropped out of secondary school after a short period of schooling.

Chronology of Events

His juvenile court referral was for burglary. According to his mother, her son and his group of friends decided to steal some food and drinks from a shop late one night. He was not successful in his break-in attempt. One of his friends managed to break in and stole food and drinks valued at about RM57.00. Although her son was not charged, she was advised to send him to an approved school for his own good. She did not know if he had committed any other offences before this attempted break-in. She hoped that when he was released, he could get himself a job to keep him away from further mischief. Since he liked repairing bicycles, she thought it would be good if he were taught mechanical skills. Instead, he was given agricultural tasks in the approved school. The researcher assured her that agricultural skills were just as useful.

Siblings

The mother believed she did not show any favouritism to her children. However, she observed that the detainee had a ‘harder’ character compared to the sibling chosen as comparison. This sibling was at work during the time of our visit. He too dropped out of school and did odd jobs in a construction site. According to the mother, the sibling was gentle and quiet in comparison.
In the questionnaire that was sent earlier, the sibling reported that he received high parental support. He did not have any friends that had been in trouble with the law and would spend only between one to two hours in a day with friends after school. He would never knowingly follow friends who were heading towards trouble and he disagreed that delinquency is normal among adolescents. He liked school a lot, never gave the teachers a lot of trouble nor played truant. Like the subject, he hardly participated in extra-curricular activities in school.

With regard to his concepts of self, he felt he was as intelligent as the others of his age. He was satisfied with his looks and others usually listened to him. He aspired to do business in the future. His coping behaviors were *Talk to Friends about How You Feel and Pray to God*. His moral development was at Stage Three. He would not steal the drug if he were in Heinz’s position.

**Discussion**

Although the family was poor, the house was clean and the children were dressed in clean clothing. Both the subject and his non-delinquent sibling reported high parental support. The mother who was not working outside the home could be the reason.

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Number of siblings : 4
Physical attributes : Weight : 46 kg (in 1998)
                      Height : 155 cm (in 1998)
Former School : Sekolah Menengah Putera
                 Kompleks Sekolah-Sekolah 15300 Kota Bharu.
Father's occupation : Machine operator
Mother's occupation : Fruit seller
Vocational aspiration : Mechanic
Juvenile court referral : Sexual Offences
                        Assault or use of criminal force to a person with intent to outrage modesty.
                        Section 354 of the Penal Code (Act 574), Legal Research Board (1998)
Date of Offence : 28 March 1996
Home Conditions

Everyone in the family was at home because the researcher was able to make an appointment earlier by phone. This facility was lacking in the other three cases. The subject was the second child among four siblings. The subject had an elder brother, a younger sister and a young brother. The neighbours who directed the researcher to the house said that his father was not a local Malay but was from the neighbouring country, Thailand. The semi-detached brick house was presentable and the children were well dressed. The father operated the machine that reclaimed sand from the riverbed. His work site was at Pengkalan Kubur, a town located near the Malaysian-Thai border. Owing to the long distances involved, he was usually at home only during the weekends.

Data from Questionnaire

His responses to the questionnaire indicated that he received higher maternal than paternal support. He described his mother as always understanding but not his father. He sometimes talked to his mother about what bothered him but never to his father. His mother always enquired about his daily activities but his father seldom did so. However, he always liked to be together with both his parents. He claimed that both his parents had secondary education and always helped him with his schoolwork.

He reported that his peers placed much importance on academic achievement, and that none of his peers had been hauled up by the police. He spent more than 5 hours in a day with them after school and would always
follow friends who were obviously heading towards trouble. He even agreed that delinquency was normal among adolescents. With regard to his concepts of self, he felt less intelligent than others of his age. However, he was very satisfied with his looks and believed that others sometimes listened when he talked.

The coping behaviour he employed most was *Sleep a Lot*. His moral development was at Stage Three. He would steal the drug if he were in Heinz’s position. His frequent offences were vandalism, assaults, smoking, substance use, traffic and sexual offences. His motives for deviant behaviour included wanting to have fun, losing his head, the others always said that he was bad, he was insulted and in retaliation.

**School**

His average marks during school assessments were within the range of 50-65 per cent. He played football in school and even claimed to be a school perfect. He said he liked school a lot but admitted he always gave his teachers a lot of problems and always played truant. School records of his academic achievement indicated all E’s for his PMR (Lower Secondary Assessment) except for the subject Living Skills which he obtained a D. Living Skills is one of the subjects that require less reading and more hands-on work. Hence, this school subject is probably more appealing and easier to the less academically-inclined students. He left school after Form Three.

**Chronology of Events**
According to his mother, he was an obedient boy and helped her set up the fruit stall at the wet market every morning and helped her packed up again during the evenings. She was always worried about his friends, especially those who were older than him. As they loitered at shopping malls, she was fearful of them stealing or getting involved in drugs. The bus station was another of their favourite hang-out they befriended young, naive girls from the kampungs (villages) who ventured into town to look for fun.

His mother explained that she was urged by her two older boys to rent a rumah rakit (house on a raft) at the edge of the nearby river. As they complained that their previous house was cramp, she complied with their request, particularly in view of the low rental of RM 20 per month. She was not aware that by allowing them some privacy, she would be providing them with a hide-out for their future sexual offences. On that fateful day, two adult friends of the subjects brought a couple of young girls to the raft house. These two men had earlier bailed out the two girls who were caught shoplifting at a shopping mall and had befriended them. Being four o’clock in the afternoon, his elder brother was out working. After the sexual romp, the three males refused to pay the girls as agreed. The two girls left in anger and lodged a police report with the help of a friend. The police came to the house the next day and their enquiries led to the arrest of one of the two men. He was a married man and his case was still pending. The police were unable to trace the other man. The subject was sent to the Jerantut Approved School for boys.
The mother observed that he was not too happy at the approved school but she noticed some improvements in his behaviour when he came home during school breaks. He avoided late nights and would be home by seven in the evenings at the latest.

**Siblings**

When comparing the two siblings that are close in age, the subject was described as being more vocal and quick to take up challenges. He was also quite artistic and good with his hands. His elder brother, who was chosen as the non-delinquent sibling for comparison in the study, was quiet and was working as a welder. This brother did not receive the questionnaire sent earlier because the family had moved house.

The researcher went through the questionnaire items with him. At the beginning he was rather cautious with his responses and avoided choosing responses at the two extremes. He indicated that his parents sometimes understood him and that he sometimes felt unwanted by them. He sometimes talked to his parents about what bothered him. According to him, his parents were never able to help him with his schoolwork because they had only primary education.

Like the subject, he always liked to be together with his parents who always enquired about his daily activities.

With regard to his peer-group, getting good grades in school was very important to his friends and that none of them had been in trouble with the law. He only spent one to two hours with friends after school each day. He
would never knowingly followed friends who were heading towards trouble but he agreed that delinquency was normal among adolescents.

His average marks in school assessments were often within the 50-65% range. He neither held any responsible posts in school nor participated in any form of extra-curricular activities. He enjoyed schooling only a little but he seldom gave the teachers trouble or played truant.

He felt more intelligent than the others who were of his age. He was very satisfied with his looks and that the others usually listened when he talked. His coping behaviours were Plan What to Do, Talk to Friends About How He Feel, Try to Make His Own Decision and Pray to God. His moral reasoning was at Stage 5. He would steal the drug if he were in Heinz’s position.

Discussion

The delinquent subject was described as adventurous, daring and quick to take up challenges. Away from his parental supervision, he was easily led astray by his adult friends who were more experienced. His non-delinquent sibling had his work to occupy himself and he had a different set of peers. His non-delinquent sibling contradicted the subject’s claim that both his parents completed secondary education and always helped him with his schoolwork.

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Number of siblings : 8

Physical attributes :
  Weight : 55 kg (in 1998)
  Height : 159 cm (in 1998)

Former School : Sekolah Kebangsaan Seribong
                16150 Kota Bharu.

Father's occupation : Labourer

Mother's occupation : Homemaker

Vocational aspiration : Set up an eating place

Juvenile court referral :
  Burglary
  Lurking house-trespass or house breaking in
  order to commit an offence punishable with
  imprisonment.
  Section 454 of the Penal Code, Legal Research
  Board (1998)

Date of Offence : 27 September 1995

Home Conditions

After coming to the end of a narrow and winding road, we had to walk
along muddy tracks. The family was watching a Hindi film when we arrived at
the wooden house. An Indian movie was on the television that Friday
afternoon. The father of the subject looked anxious when he saw strangers.
The researcher introduced herself as a teacher and handed over her buah
langan (gifts) of biscuits and tins of condensed milk as tokens of goodwill.
The researcher was surprised to see the delinquent subject. Unknown to the
researcher, the subject had been released and was at home. He had just been
released together with some of the other Kelantanese boys. He could still
remember the researcher's visit to the approved school. His mother laid out a
mat on the bare wooden floor so that we could all sit down and talk. There were no tables or chairs in sight in the hall.

Data from Questionnaire

In the questionnaire, he described both his parents as understanding and he never felt unwanted by them. Despite that he never talked to his mother about his problems and seldom to his father. His mother, who had only primary education, did not help him in his schoolwork although his father usually did. His father was stated as having upper secondary education. He seldom liked to be together with his parents and they never enquired about his daily activities.

With regard to his peer-group, getting good grades in school was not important to them. Three to four of them had been in trouble with the law and he spent more than five hours in a day with friends after school. He always followed friends who were heading towards trouble but he strongly disagreed that delinquency was normal among adolescents. With regards to his concepts of self, he felt he was just as intelligent as others his age. He was very satisfied with his looks and believed that the others sometimes listened when he talked.

The coping behaviours he employed frequently were Plan What to Do, Joke and Try to Be Funny and Try to Make His Own Decision. His moral development was at Stage Three and he would steal the drug if he were in Heinz's position. From his list of self-reported deviant behaviour, he admitted of often committing a wide range of offences.

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School

His responses in the questionnaire stated that his average marks during school assessments were often within the 65-80 per cent range. He represented his school in several games and was a school prefect as well as a class monitor. His other extra-curricular activities were singing, sajak (poem recital) and dikir barat (local group singing). He claimed he liked school a lot and seldom gave the teachers problems but nevertheless he always played truant.

Chronology of Events

According to his father, the subject had a gambling problem. When he was in debt, he broke into a neighbouring house and stole a gold bracelet valued at RM 550. He sold it cheaply to Yusof whose dubious character was well known among the villagers. When the theft was reported to the police, he was tracked down as the person to have committed the offence. His parents were then advised by the authorities to send him to an approved school to rehabilitate him.
The eldest brother was the only one in the family who was dressed very neatly with his hair combed in place. He held a regular paying job as carpenter. He said he had advised the subject to try and complete his studies, at least until Form Three. With this qualification he would be eligible to apply to be a soldier. With his physique, he would certainly stand a good chance of being selected. Instead of listening to his brother’s advice, he often played truant and took up odd jobs such as harvesting *duku* fruits in the neighbourhood for immediate payments. He dropped out from school before completing his Form Three.

The younger brother who was closer in age to our subject was taken for comparison. He could not put on his shirt because his whole body was covered with fresh bruises sustained from a recent motor cycle accident. He did not receive the questionnaire that was sent earlier to him. The researcher went through the questionnaire items with him.

He felt that his parents always understood him and he never felt unwanted by them. Nevertheless he seldom talked to his parents about his problems. His parents were never able to help him with his schoolwork because both had only primary education. He always liked to be together with his parents and his parents had always enquired about his daily activities.

As for his peer-group support, getting good grades in school was important to his friends. None of them had been in trouble with the law. He spent two to three hours a day with his friends after school and he would never
knowingly followed his friends who were heading towards trouble. He strongly disagreed that delinquency was normal among adolescents.

His average marks during school assessments were often in the 65-80% range. He did not participate in any forms of extra-curricular activities nor held any responsible posts while in school. He did not enjoy school but never gave the teachers trouble nor played truant.

With regard to his concepts of self, he felt he was just as intelligent as others of his age. He was satisfied with his looks. The others usually listened when he talked. His frequent coping behaviours were *Talk to Parents about It* and *Pray to God*. His moral development was Stage 2 and he would not steal the drug if he were in Heinz’s position.

Discussion

There were several contradictions in the subject’s responses and those of his siblings to the questionnaire. The subject claimed that his father had upper secondary education and usually helped him in his schoolwork but his sibling responded that his father had only primary school education and was never able to help him with his schoolwork. His sibling could be telling the truth considering that the father did not had a regular paying job. He chopped down trees in the neighbourhood when the need arises and was paid for it. He also planted rice but it was only sufficient for the family’s consumption.

Although the subject’s sibling indicated that he seldom *Talk To His Parents About What Bothers Him*, yet one of the coping behaviour he said he used most frequently was *Talk to Parents About It*. 

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5.3 CONCLUSION

1. All the cases studied were from low socioeconomic status. Apart from the television set that was the centerpiece of their living room, there were no writing tables or chairs. There were no reading or writing materials in sight. Home conditions were not conducive to studying and did not support school's efforts to promote learning.

2. Their parents were not able to help them with their schoolwork because they only had primary education or no education themselves. Delinquency, truancy and dropout were natural responses to frequent school failure although the subjects were aware of the importance of education.

3. Rokmal, sought immediate monetary awards by doing odd jobs instead of deferred gratification by attending school.

4. The particulars of subjects from the approved school showed the existence of stepfamilies. In stepfamilies, the mother remarried after the failure of her first marriage. The stepfather came ready with his own set of children from his previous marriage. Parental attention was divided between half sisters and half brothers.

5. The parents had to work hard to eke out a living and were often not around to supervise their daily activities. In the case of Ayob and Rokmal, exposure to delinquency was through the presence of adult criminal-role models.

6. Most of the families in this study are large and had more than ten children. Parental attention and support is lacking especially among adolescents because mothers often attend to younger ones. Parents realized that something
was amiss only when they started receiving disciplinary letters from the school or when their children were arrested.