

CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

Questionnaire was administered to the detainees in an approved school to investigate the correlates of delinquency. For comparisons, the same questionnaire was sent to sixteen of their non-delinquent siblings, while visits were made to four families. These subjects were also compared to students in a normal day school. Interpretation of the data obtained is presented in the following sections.

6.1 DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR OF DELINQUENT SUBJECTS

Analysis of their self-reported deviant behaviour reveals a wide range of frequently committed offences among the delinquent subjects. The self-reported deviant behaviour when rank ordered according to its frequency among delinquent subjects, shows that the more serious the offence, the lower the frequency of the offence.

Smoking is most common among delinquent subjects with 79.4 per cent reported having smoked many times. It is a major disciplinary problem in schools and is ranked at the top. Smoking is one of the outlets from frustrations or an escapism. Although not permitted in school, smoking is still acceptable in society. This contradiction often confuse school children. Some of these youngsters smoked out of rebellion, just to go against the establishment. Increasingly society is against smoking because of health reasons and health authorities try to educate the public against smoking

through various campaigns. Authorities also fear that smoking will graduate to drug use.

Traffic Offences are ranked second and fourth on the list of offences committed by the delinquent subjects. According to a police officer during a school seminar on juvenile delinquency, driving without a valid license and driving vehicles that are not insured are the common traffic offences committed by adolescents. Among the delinquent subjects, 73 per cent reported driving without a license many times. Most youths yearn for the speed and mobility offered by the motor vehicles. Those who drive without the necessary documents are either below the required age limit, lack the economic means to acquire the documents or simply do not see the need for such papers.

Truancy, often the prologue to delinquency, is ranked third. This offense causes much embarrassment to school heads who are required to bail out school children picked up by police patrols during school hours.

In the rank order, petty thefts (5th, 6th and 7th) follow the traffic offences. The thefts could be due to lack of finances or they could be acts of defiance or just for the fun of it, as in vandalism that is at the eighth placing. Liquor offences (8th and 11th) are more frequent than drug offences (17th and 18th). Defying parents and Running Away from Home follow suit (19th and 20th). Theft of vehicles is less frequent than petty thefts because it is more difficult to carry out (21th and 22th). Robbery ranks 23th. It is a more daring act compared to Burglary (11th) or housebreaking because it involves a direct

confrontation with the victim, with or without weapons. Arson (24th) or fire setting is vindictive in nature while Car Theft (25th) requires more elaborate planning and involves greater risk. Attempted Murder, while the most serious offence, is reported by only one subject and is therefore at the bottom of the list of offences.

6.2 MOTIVATION FOR DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR

Analysis of the motives for deviant behaviour shows that 55.6 per cent of delinquent subjects chose lack of finances as indicated by the statement *I had no money*, as their motive for their offences. It is chosen by the largest number of the subjects. This seems logical as both smoking and drug abuse, common offences among them, requires money. *I just wanted to have fun* was checked by 54.0 per cent of the subjects and is the second highest number of respondents. These two data suggest that, apart from lack of finances, youngsters' deviant behaviour was the result of boredom. Deviant behaviour which can get the adrenalin flowing, was perceived as a form of play.

In order to explain why these students are bored in school, their participation in school activities were examined. Appendix E shows that these adolescents had limited involvement in extra-curricular activities in schools with 65.1 per cent not being involved in any form of extra-curricular activities. Thus these students lacked beneficial activities to develop and hold their interests. The extra-curricular activities in schools may lack variety or those available did not appeal to them.

Data in Appendix E also indicate that 49.2 per cent were not given any sort of responsible posts while in schools. These students were not given a role to play in their schooling process. Activities organized and supervised by the teachers in schools are better means to guide them through adolescence compared to those carried out by their peer-groups. This is because such programmes have proper agendas and supposedly insulate adolescents from deviant behaviour as they acquire skills or develop their innate abilities.

6.3 COPING BEHAVIOUR OF ADOLESCENTS

The two most frequently used coping behaviours reported by the delinquent subjects were *Joke and Try to be Funny*, and *Do Strenuous Physical Activity*. The coping behaviour *Joke and Try to be Funny* was always used by 47.6 per cent of them while 40.3 per cent always used the coping behaviour *Do Strenuous Physical Activity*. Both of these coping behaviours had been identified as avoidance-focused mode of coping. Problem-focused coping behaviours like *Organise My Life And What I Have To Do* was always used by a lesser percentage, that is, 38 per cent of them. Instead of actively finding solutions to their problems, as in problem-focused coping, delinquent subjects were more likely to cope by disengaging themselves mentally and physically from problem situations.

Results also show that they were least likely to cope by seeking out parental support. The coping behaviour *Talk to Parents about What Bothers me* was never used by 41.3 per cent of them. Several factors could have led to such state of affairs. The parents were financially poor and had low

purchasing power. Consequently, they were not able to cater to their children's material needs such as branded items. The parents themselves had very little education. They were unable to help their children with their schoolwork. In many cases, parents were not available to listen to their children's problems because they were not at home. Such low parental support is especially true for large families, stepfamilies and single parent or working mothers. Communication that is vital in the family is lacking together with parental attention in such homes. When parents fail to talk and listen to their children, these adolescents will turn to their peers for comfort and attention in times of trouble.

6.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OFFENCES

The relationships among the offences for all the five categories were examined to understand deviant behaviour among adolescents. Relationships involving the category on substance use category have the highest correlations.

a. Relationship among the offences under Drug and Liquor Law Violations, and Crimes against Property

From a total of 36 correlations obtained in Table 4.6, 33 or 91.7 per cent of the correlations were moderate while three or 8.3 per cent were low. The relationship between property crimes and drug offences suggests that those who were involved with theft and burglary were also involved in substance abuse. The relationship might be due to the necessity or need for money to purchase drugs and alcohol. Since they were adolescents without

earning power, they might be forced to steal to get money to support their substance use. Delinquent subjects under the influence of drugs and alcohol were also more likely to commit other property crimes including vandalism and even arson.

Two of the low correlations involved Theft of Articles Valued Less Than RM10, an act that can be described as mischievous among adolescents rather than a significant source of income.

b. Relationship among offences under Drug and Liquor Law Violations, and Status Offences

From a total of 20 correlations obtained in Table 4.11, 16 or 80.0 per cent of the correlations were moderate while only four or 20.0 per cent were low. Moderate correlations were for status offences such as Smoking, Truancy, Defying Other Adults, and Running Away from Home.

Smoking had often been associated with substance abuse. In fact, some considered smoking itself as substance abuse. Truancy, often the result of association with delinquent peers, leads to experimentation with drugs and liquor. This in turn, provoked the ire of well-meaning neighbours and the teachers in schools. They retaliated with Defying Other Adults. They ran away from home when their family could no longer support their substance abuse which is a financial burden. The subjects however, would never admit to Defying Parents because it is tantamount to being *anak derhaka* (prodigal child), which is sinful. This account for the low correlations with Defying Parents.

c. Relationships among offences under Drug and Liquor Law Violations, and Offences against the Public Order

Results in Table 4.13 show that 15 out of a total of 20 correlations, or 75.0 per cent were moderate correlations while 5 or 25 per cent low correlations. Relationships between substance use and offences such as weapon carrying, gambling and sexual offences were moderate. Weapon carrying for extortion purposes can be monetary sources to pay for their substance use. Gambling maybe another attempt to secure more money for buying drugs and liquor. When their cravings for drugs and liquor are strong enough, some may even exchange sexual favours for money. Correlations between substance use and traffic offences were lower.

6.5 CORRELATES OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR

The correlations obtained were low because these were the responses of the delinquent subjects and not those of a normal distribution. However, some correlations are higher than the others and the direction of the correlations provide valuable information with regard to the personal and social resources under study.

6.5.1 Perceived Parental Support

Negative correlations obtained between deviant behaviour and perceived parental support show that as perceived parental support increases deviant behaviour among delinquent subjects decreases. The negative values indicate the importance of seeking and having parental support in reducing

deviant behaviour. Results also hinted at the different roles played by Mother and Father in parental support.

Both the items *Mother is Understanding* and *Talk to Mother about What Bothers You* had higher correlations with more of the offences than *Father is Understanding* and *Talk to Father about What Bothers You*.

Children regardless of gender often go to mother with their problems because in parenting, mother often plays the nurturing role. Mothers are often more accessible than fathers who are out working or have many families to attend to.

However, items *Feel wanted by Father*, *Do Things Together with Father* and *Father Enquires about Daily Activities* had higher correlations items *Feel wanted by Mother*, *Do Things Together with Mother* and *Mother Enquires about Daily Activities*. The results suggest that the delinquent subjects who are boys needed to identify with a male role model.

Items *Father can Help with Schoolwork* and *Father's Educational Level* also had higher correlations than items *Mother Can Help with Schoolwork* and *Mother's Educational Level*. The difference is understandable because man as heads of the families are usually better educated than their spouses.

6.5.2 Peer-group Support

Items measuring peer-group support had higher correlations with the offences compared to items measuring parental support. Hence, peer-group

variables were more important than parental support among the delinquent subjects.

Follow Friends with Plans for Deviant Activities had the highest correlations with the offences. It correlated moderately with 22 of the 26 offences, with correlation coefficients from 0.35 to 0.58. Delinquent subjects may have committed offences as a result of peer pressure and their desire for peer approval.

Low correlations were obtained with offences that were either least among them such as Car Theft and Attempted Murder, or very common such as Driving Without a License and Other Traffic Offences. Correlation coefficients were from 0.15 to 0.29.

Time Spent with Friends After School Hours correlated moderately with 20 of the 26 offences. Correlation coefficients were from 0.30 to 0.51. Results suggested that frequency of contact with peers played a vital role in delinquency.

Low correlations of 0.01 to 0.29 were obtained with Arson, Car Theft and Attempted Murder. These offences were least common among them and were ranked 24th, 25th and 26th respectively based on frequency of offending. Low correlations were also obtained with offences Defying Parents, Driving without License and Other Traffic Offences. Conflict between adolescents and parents is a common trait among adolescent while a driving without license common practice among them. In fact, Driving without a License was ranked second in frequency while Other Traffic Offences, fourth.

The item *Number of Delinquent Peers* correlated positively with all the offences. The correlations were moderate for 16 of the 26 offences studied. They were Theft of Articles valued between RM10-RM50, Theft of Articles valued more than RM50, Bicycle Theft, Motor Cycle Theft, Burglary, Robbery, Assault, Truancy, Defying Other Adults, Selling and Taking Drugs, Buying and Taking Liquor, Possession of Dangerous Weapons, Gambling, Sexual Offences. The correlation coefficients were between 0.32 and 0.48. These findings showed positive association between number of delinquent peers and offences. This association however could either mean that deviant individuals seek out delinquent peers, or that delinquent peers led to deviant behaviour.

The item *Importance of Getting Good Grades in School among Peers* had negative correlation coefficients with the offences. This show that those who had the support of peers who placed more importance on academic achievement, committed fewer offences. We often term them conventional peers. This item however, correlated moderately with only seven of the offences. The offences that correlated moderately with this item were Theft of Articles valued between RM10-RM50, Bicycle Theft, Robbery, Truancy, Running Away from Home, and Buying and Taking Liquor. The correlation coefficients were from -0.30 to -0.40. The other 19 correlations were low. Although delinquent subjects claim that their peers placed much importance on good grades, efforts put into securing them are still questionable.

The correlations were low between the belief *Delinquency is Normal Among Adolescents* and deviant behaviour. Correlation coefficients were between -0.01 to 0.26. Although delinquent subjects reported a high involvement in delinquent activities, they knew that such activities were wrong. In fact, more than half of the delinquent subjects, 53.9 per cent, disagreed that *Delinquency is Normal Among Adolescents* (Appendix E). Peer influence however, override moral beliefs and had a stronger influence on their actual behaviour.

6.5.3 School Experiences

Among their school experiences, higher correlations were obtained with *Gave Teachers Problems* and *Played Truant*. Both correlated positively with most of the offences. The active growing minds of adolescents need the opportunities to be mentally involved. An idle mind is liken to a “devil’s workshop”. The adolescents who have difficulty in understanding their teachers and schoolwork would probably give their teachers in class a hard time by creating distractions or trying to have fun in class to relieve themselves of the boredom. Alternatively, they withdraw from the boring and unproductive school activities (from their perceptive) by trying and seeking excitement outside the school. Data in Appendix E shows that 38.1 per cent of the delinquent subjects often gave teachers problems while 42.9 per cent played truant.

School Enjoyment was a factor that correlated negatively with frequency of offending. This results suggests that deviant behaviour increased

with decreasing school enjoyment. Although the data in Appendix E shows that 80.9 per cent of the delinquent subjects acknowledged the importance of academic achievement, as many as 44.4 per cent either enjoyed schooling only a little or detested it all together. They did not enjoy school because they found the subjects difficult and frequently failed in school.

Sports involvement however, correlated positively with frequency of offending. Sports involvement might have helped open up their social contacts and widen their social circle to those beyond their schoolmates. Activities outside the school became more interesting to them and increase their alienation from school. Peer-groups formed outside school increased their involvement in norm-violating behaviour. Within these groups they no longer need to adhere to school rules that they find restrictive and often stifled their styles in their efforts to conform.

Participation in extra-curricular activities correlated negatively with frequency of offending, implying that increased participation in extra-curricular activities under adults' supervision in schools can help reduce deviant behaviour.

6.5.4 Concepts of Self

Most of the items measuring concepts of self correlated negatively with the offences although the relationships were low, ranging from 0.0 to 0.22. The negative correlations suggest that those with higher concepts of self committed fewer offences. This is in accordance with the findings by Levy (2001) that delinquent behaviour is associated with negative self-concept.

Higher correlation values obtained with *Perceived Intelligence* suggest that deviant behaviour are attempts to redeem their low self-concepts resulting from frequent academic failures in the classrooms.

6.5.5 Coping Behaviours

Among the coping behaviours studied, *Get Angry and Yell at People*, and *Joke and Try to be Funny* had higher correlations with the offences. *Get Angry and Yell at People* correlated moderately with eleven of the 26 offences with correlation coefficients from 0.30 to 0.41. This coping behaviour had been identified as emotion-focused and included elements of aggression and distraction. *Joke and Try to be Funny* correlated moderately with eight of the 26 offences with magnitude 0.31 to 0.43. This coping behaviour had been identified as avoidance-focused and involved withdrawal. Both emotion-focused and avoidance-focused modes of coping are attempts to regulate their internal emotional conflict rather than active efforts to solve the problems at hand. The positive correlations indicate that such behaviour were maladaptive because increasing their usage was associated with increased deviant behaviour. Deviant Behaviour could be a maladaptive reaction to strain.

On the other hand, *Talk to Parents About It* and *Pray to God* correlated negatively with the offences. The negative correlations suggested that seeking parental and spiritual support during troubled times were more adaptive forms of coping behaviours. Those who had their parents' support and a strong faith in God, were more stable emotionally and responded better to their problems.

Correlations were higher between Pray to God and liquor offences (0.27 and 0.28) because drinking liquor is prohibited by their religion, *Islam*.

6.5.6 Moral Development

All the three items measuring moral development correlated negatively with frequency of offending for all the offences. The direction of the relationship suggested that deviant behaviour was associated with low moral development although the correlation values were low with values from -0.3 to 0.17. Smoking which was the most common offence among the delinquent subjects, had a moderate correlation value of -0.3 with moral development. Smoking is often seen as the first sign of defiance among school children.

6.6 PREDICTORS OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR

Multiple stepwise regressions showed that among the correlates of deviant behaviour, the three peer-group variables together accounted for 40 per cent of the variation in deviant behaviour of the delinquent subjects. They include their willingness to follow friends with plans for deviant activities, the number of delinquent peers they associated with and the time spent with peers after school hours. This is in accordance with the study by Elliot, Huizinga and Ageton (1985), that the adolescent peer-group is the primary deviant learning context. The peer-group constituted a subculture where behaviours endorsed by the group form the norm although they may be against the law. The other predictor of delinquency besides their attachment and commitment to a delinquent peer-group, is lack of finances. Together, they accounted for 44 per cent of the total variation in deviant behaviour among the delinquent

subjects, an addition of 4 per cent. Although none of the parental support items were found to be predictors, dysfunctional families and parental neglect may have served to drive them away earlier and increase their dependence on these peer-groups.

6.7 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DELINQUENT SUBJECTS AND CONTROLS

a. Perceived Parental Support

Using t-tests, the results indicated that controls perceived significantly more maternal acceptance measured by the item *Feel wanted by Mother*. In parenting, mother often plays the nurturing role. Children regardless of gender would generally go to mother for love and sympathy. Delinquent subjects when neglected by mother might look for ways to fulfill the unmet needs.

Results also show that controls confided more in their parents compared to the delinquent subjects. For both the items *Talk to Mother about what bothers me* and *Talk to Father about what bothers me*, the differences were significant at the 0.05 level. This shows the importance of effective communication between parents and children in avoiding deviant behaviour. Parents need to talk to their children and to display a willingness to listen to their problems because children, especially adolescents, need to have someone they can talk to about their problems.

In this study, controls scored significantly higher for items *Do things together with Father* and *Father enquires about daily activities*. *Do things together with Father* means to relate to, to have fun with and to enjoy the

companionship of the father. *Father enquires about daily activities* indicated that fathers showed interest and concern. Such enquiries could indicate they were being monitored and under more paternal supervision. Results of the study by Marinal Hussin (1998) indicated that the fathers of her delinquent subjects were too busy, absent or uninterested in upbringing their sons. Instead, mothers were entrusted to discipline, guide and supervise their sons' activities. When a male role model is lacking at home, the delinquent boys turn to their peers or even those older for role models.

b. **Peer-group Support**

Results from t-tests showed that controls belong to peer-groups that consisted of significantly fewer delinquents and thus, less deviant. Their peers placed more importance on getting good grades in school. Analysis also showed that delinquent subjects spent significantly more time together with their friends after school hours. Going out with friends must be more attractive than staying at home with their families.

Delinquent subjects were more likely to go along with the group's plan for deviant activities compared to the controls. The difference is significant at the level of 0.05. The delinquent subjects were under less parental surveillance and supervision as indicated by items *Mother Enquires About Daily Activities* and *Father Enquires About Daily Activities*.

Significantly more of the delinquent subjects believed that delinquency is normal among adolescents. This could be the result of their association

with more delinquent peers. Collective response to problem situations among peers became the norm.

c. School Experiences

Results show that delinquent subjects are more involved in sports activities compared to their controls and the difference is significant at the level of 0.05. Students who are weak in their studies but with good psychomotor skills turn to sports to redeem their self-esteem. Sports activities however were often not just restricted to schools but could be carried out anytime and anywhere outside the formal school programmes.

Results also show that controls enjoyed schooling more than delinquent subjects. Understandably, delinquent subjects gave the teachers more problems and played truant more often in school. All the three differences between the delinquent subjects and controls are significant at the level of 0.05.

d. Concepts of Self

Results show that controls had higher concepts of self when compared to the delinquent subjects. They viewed themselves to be of higher intelligence and were more satisfied with their looks. Both differences are significant at the level of 0.05. Low perception of intelligence among delinquent subjects could be the result of their history of academic failures. Frequent failures are bad for their self-esteem and they usually redeem them with behaviours that were seen as bold and against the establishment because a bad identity is better than having none.

Results however did not show significant difference in perceived peer acceptance between delinquent subjects and their controls. This is because the delinquent subjects and their controls were equally acceptable by their peers in their respective peer-groups.

e. **Coping Behaviours**

Results showed that certain coping behaviours were employed more often by delinquent subjects than the controls. The differences were significant at the 0.05 level for items *Get Angry and Yell at People*, *Complain to Friends and Family*, *Cry Alone*, *Joke and Try to be Funny*, *Sleep a Lot*, *Say the Problem is not Important* and *Do Strenuous Physical Activity*. The differences were significant at the level of 0.05.

The coping behaviours *Get Angry and Yell at People*, *Complain to Friends and Family* and *Cry Alone* had been identified as emotion-focused coping. *Joke and Try to be Funny*, *Sleep a Lot*, *Say the Problem is not Important* and *Do Strenuous Physical Activity* were classified as avoidance-focused coping. Both modes of coping were less effective because they were often self-defeating. Yelling for instance would turn away others who might otherwise offer help. Emotion-focused coping were merely attempts at making them feel good that is, palliative in nature rather than efforts to solve the problems at hand and were often reactive bursts of emotions rather than calculated steps that were responsive in nature, Kohn (1996).

Controls, on the other hand, were more likely to use *Talk to Parents about what Bothers me* and *Pray to God* as their coping behaviours. The

differences between delinquent subjects and the controls for both these coping behaviours were significant at the level of 0.05. Results suggest that seeking parental and spiritual support were more effective forms of coping behaviour. Confiding in parents often helped because adults are able to view their problems from a wider perspective and are at a better position to advise them. Sharing their problems by talking to parents also helped release pent up feelings. They are also indicators of better parent-child relations. Individuals who are God-fearing are less likely to take risks or do anything that is not approved by society.

No significant difference was found for the coping behaviour, *Talk to Friends about how I feel* was found between delinquent subjects and controls. It is a coping behaviour common among adolescents regardless of their deviancy.

f. Moral Development

Controls scored higher compared to delinquent for all the three items measuring their stage of moral reasoning. The differences were significant at the level of 0.05. Earlier correlational results showed that low moral development was associated with deviant behaviour. But similar to the study by Windmiller, Lambert and Turiel (1980), the relationship was not clear-cut. Low correlation values suggest that further studies need to be carried out to investigate their relationship.

6.8 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DELINQUENT SUBJECTS AND NON-DELINQUENT SIBLINGS

Only ten pairs of siblings were available for comparison. These two groups of subjects were expected to have more similarities between them than any other form of controls. However, in spite of their close genetic makeup and being brought up in the same household and neighbourhood, several differences between them were found to be significant at the level of 0.05. The differences were with respect to their peer-groups, school experiences and moral development.

Although they were siblings, they had different peer-groups. Delinquent subjects had a significantly greater number of delinquent peers. These findings were in accordance to the Differential Association Theory by Sutherland. According to this theory, delinquency is learnt in group-interactions. Delinquent behaviours, that were encouraged and rewarded by the group, were reinforced.

Delinquent subjects spent significantly more time together with peers after school hours compared to their non-delinquent siblings. Frequency of contact with peers is thus an important factor in delinquency because peer influence increases with the time together. Delinquent subjects were also significantly more willing to follow friends with plans for deviant activities. This results either indicated their greater tolerance for delinquency or that they had a greater need for group acceptance and thus more vulnerable to peer-pressure.

In school, delinquent subjects gave their teachers significantly more problems and played truant significantly more often than their non-delinquent siblings. Delinquent subjects thus displayed significantly more problem behaviours in class.

Non-delinquent siblings scored significantly higher than the delinquent subjects on two of the three items measuring moral reasoning. They were *Evaluate Heinz's decision to Steal* and *Give Situation When Stealing is Acceptable*. Non-delinquent siblings had reasoned at higher stages of moral development and that could have helped them restrain from deviant behaviour.

Apart from those stated above, delinquent subjects were not significantly different from their non-delinquent siblings in all the other aspects. Delinquent subjects did not differ significantly from their non-delinquent siblings in perceived parental support. Apparently their parents were not biased nor showed favouritism towards their children. There were no significant differences in peer-group variables *Importance of Getting Good Grades in School* and *Delinquency is Normal Among Adolescents* either. The delinquent subjects and their non-delinquent siblings did not differ in the importance placed on good grades and their belief with respect to delinquency.

There were no significant differences in their school experiences such as *Academic Achievement*, *Sports Involvement*, *Responsible Posts Held*, and *Co-Curricular Activities*. Both the delinquent subjects and their non-delinquent siblings had not experienced a meaningful schooling process

because they lacked opportunities to participate actively nor taste success in school.

Delinquent subjects and their non-delinquent siblings did not differ significantly in their concepts of self and coping behaviours. The sample of delinquent subjects and their non-delinquent siblings compared was too small to obtain conclusive findings. A bigger sample should be used in further studies for such comparisons. Studies on twins would be even more conclusive.

6.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This study is interested in just one element of the general syndrome of deviant behaviour, that is offences committed by the subjects.
2. The subjects used in this study consisted only of Malay boys from an approved school and all are from low socioeconomic status. The delinquent subjects are not representative of all delinquents because there are also delinquent girls, and delinquency is found among all races shown by Table 6.1 and Table 6.2 in Appendix G. Further studies should include delinquent girls from Sekolah Tunas Bakti (P). However, by selecting the subjects only from approved schools, delinquents from affluent families who could afford legal aid and those who had avoided detention will not included in the sample.
3. The coping styles were limited by the choices given and might not have encompassed all the coping strategies of the subjects. Further studies should include observations of how they coped with a problem which would be more accurate than the self-report provided.
4. The study did not investigate domain specific strategies. The subjects could vary their coping behaviour according to the kind of problem they are confronted with. For example, when they had problems with their studies they might want to consult their teachers but the situation will be different when it involves the opposite sex.

5. There was no attempt to relate the social and personal resources with the different types of motives for delinquency.
6. Motivations for deviant behaviour were not exhaustive because the subjects were given a limited choice and they lack the ability to express themselves in writing.

6.10 SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERVENTIONS

Interventions should aim at increasing resilience among adolescents by ensuring them resources such as high parental support, healthy peer-group support, school success, high concepts of self, adaptive coping behaviours and high moral reasoning because findings indicated that these resources helped adolescents abstained from delinquency.

1. Acknowledge Good Parenting

Results show that parental support was a negative correlate of deviant behaviour. Delinquent subjects also perceived less parental support compared to the controls. Examples of good parenting should be highlighted by the mass media. Parents with successful children should share their views and parenting practices with others through interviews on radio and video clips on television. These model parents should be from varied backgrounds, socio-economic as well as rural and urban. Dr. Ling Liong Sik, the president of a political party in Malaysia had urged parents to spend "One Hour A Day" with their children in his campaign to fight social ills.

2. Organized Groups

In this study, peer-group variables were found to be the best predictors of deviant behaviour. Activities under adequate supervision by well-meaning

adults and Non-governmental Organizations should replace the aimless activities of peer-groups formed by adolescents themselves. These well-intended organizations can help them develop hobbies and interests while shielding them against delinquency. Activities could include excursions to forest reserves and camping out for those who are more interested in the outdoors.

3. Remedial Classes by Volunteers

School records revealed a history of academic failures among the four delinquent subjects chosen for the home visits. Studies at a corrective school for boys conducted by psychiatrist Dr Norhayati Ali showed that 39 per cent of 83 juvenile delinquents had difficulty in reading (Star, 2000). Weak students should be given remedial classes to help stamp out persistent failures in the classrooms. Apart from schools, mosques can help organize classes such as those carried out by the Buddhist temples in Tumpat, Kelantan, for the poor *kampung* (village) children within its vicinity. The mosque committee can organize similar classes either before or after the Friday prayers because Friday is not a schooling day in Kelantan. Teachers in the neighbourhood can volunteer to take turns at teaching these children. Social programmes in the United States seek to improve children's comprehension ability to curb juvenile delinquency. One such programme that works well is Success For All, which emphasizes individual tutoring to improve the reading skills of disadvantaged children in the early grades (Wagner, 1999). A similar

programme, Reading One-to-One is for the higher grades in the elementary schools.

4. Effective Moral Education

Data showed that moral reasoning was a negative correlate of deviant behaviour although their correlation values were low. Effective teachers should understand that Moral Education is not merely imparting moral knowledge to students, because data showed that the delinquent subjects knew delinquent acts are bad. They need to internalize the moral reasoning and to behave in accordance to them. Teachers could create moral conflicts to help students develop empathy and ascend to higher stages of moral development. Moral dilemmas can be introduced in the classrooms either through story telling or video viewing. Talks by ex-convicts who are remorseful and have repented would make them aware of the consequences of deviant behaviour.

5. An Accommodating School Curriculum

Participation in extra-curricular activities is a negative correlate of deviant behaviour. The delinquent subjects neither had the opportunities to be office-bearers nor participated actively in extra-curricular activities while in school. School activities should be varied and cater to a wider spectrum of abilities and interests. Santrock (1996) proposed that schools be sites of seven-day-a-week, twenty four-hour-a-day activities that are interesting, exciting, educational and fulfilling to students. These programmes should encourage skill building and enhance their self-esteem. These programmes should also involve children and adults of all ages and connected to the world of work

which involve business, community leaders, police, artists, dancers and sports enthusiasts.

Vocational and agricultural activities should be introduced to supplement the normal academic mainstream. For example, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Kadok in Kelantan had introduced food catering as an elective subject among the weaker students. By varying the curriculum, every student is able to expand his/her talent and contribute to the school in one way or another. A student might be weak in his studies but he may work wonders with his hands; he could produce masterpieces of woodcarvings or giant blooms of orchids. Every child has a role to play and get awarded for his ability thus increasing his attachment to the school. This will help prevent academically weak students from dropping out of schools at an early age.

6. Parental Involvement

Interviews with parents of delinquent subjects showed that they were not aware of their children's poor school attendance until it was too late. Parents should be kept informed of their children's wrongdoings in school and any disciplinary actions taken on them. Letters sent by school would be of no use to illiterate parents. There were incidences of delinquent children intercepting the letters sent to their parents by school. A more effective way would be to have visits made by school counselors although it would be time consuming. To build up the rapport between parents and school, parents should be invited for school functions more often. Parents should be invited during religious

events such as the cooking of *asura* and *sembahyang hajat* carried out before major examinations.

If possible, parents should contribute their expertise to the school through Parents-Teachers Associations. A contractor, in between projects, had asked his workers to help set up the *Taman Sains* (Science Garden) in Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Pintu Geng. A father who was an ex-state volleyball player had helped train the school volleyball team. Such undertakings are rare in schools and should be encouraged but the data in this study show that parents of the delinquent subjects could hardly make both ends meet.

7. Police as Role Models

Delinquent subjects chose *I just wanted to have fun* as their motive for deviant behaviour besides lack of finances. Besides school activities, police officers could organize programmes similar to PAL (Police Athletic League) found in many parts of the United States. PAL is a recreation-oriented juvenile crime prevention programme that relies heavily upon athletics and recreational activities to develop bonding between the police officers and the kid on the street. Such programmes target at risk youth in high crime neighbourhoods by providing them with focus and direction as well as help establish positive relationships among youth, the police and the community. They provide alternative to "hanging out" on the street, gangs and drugs.

8. Responsible Reporting from the Media

The media often scandalize events of deviant behaviour among adolescents. It can give rise to the “copy cat syndrome” as in the recent, consecutive cases of arsons in the Malaysian schools. Schools are asked not to highlight the problems of gangsters in schools to avoid similar occurrence.

6.11 CONCLUSION

Peer-group variables such as *Time Spent with Friends after School Hours*, *Number of Delinquent Peers* and *Follow Friends with Plans for Deviant Activities* are the best predictors of delinquency. However, parental support helps buffer adolescents against delinquency. Parents screen out deviant behaviour directly by spending time together with their children. Parents provide support by giving them their attention and through constant surveillance and supervision. Parental support works indirectly when their psychological presence was able to deter adolescents from deviant behaviour. The values, advice and cautions imparted by the parents were heeded even in their absence because their children had internalized them through constant repetitions and modeling. Findings from this study suggest that paternal role model was of more importance to the delinquent boys than maternal role model. Although the delinquent boys confide in mothers with their problems as indicated by item *Talk to Mother About their Problems*, they need to *Do Things Together with Father* and fathers likewise, need to be concerned as indicated by *Father Enquires About Daily Activities*. Adolescent boys needed to identify with a male role model during their growing-up years. Adolescents often turn to their peers for advice and counseling when parental support is lacking.

Data indicates that adolescents with conventional peers were less involved in deviant activities. Conventional students were more involved in

school activities and academic pursuits that kept them occupied besides allowing them to develop their potentials. They had little time left for deviant activities.

Besides lack of finances, a high percentage of the delinquent subjects cited boredom as their excuse for deviant behaviour. Generally, weak students are neither chosen to participate in extra-curricular activities where they get to represent the school nor entrusted with responsible posts. Their school experiences were characterized by frequent failures, followed by teachers' reprimands. Problem behaviours in the classroom and truancy were the natural consequences of their boredom. Their parents with little education were not able to help them with their learning difficulties. Home conditions without study tables, chairs and reading materials were not conducive for learning either. Peer influence, peer pressure and boredom were factors that propelled them to go along with the group's plans for deviant activities.

Individual differences existed among the adolescents. Subjected to similar strain, different adolescents coped differently. Delinquent subjects in this study tend to cope using emotion-focused and avoidance-focused coping behaviours unlike their controls. Both modes of coping are found to be positive correlates of deviant behaviour. Delinquency could be the result of their ineffective coping behaviour because both these modes of coping are often self-defeating.

Concepts of self are negative correlates of deviant behaviour. Controls in this study have significantly higher concepts of self. Thus, they are not so

easily influenced by others, succumbed to peer-pressure and are less likely to follow the crowd.

Moral development is another negative correlate of deviant behaviour. Individuals who are at higher stages of moral development are less likely to violate set norms. Controls are at significantly higher stages of moral development compared to the delinquent subjects.

In conclusion, strain felt by adolescents need not necessarily lead to deviant behaviour. The personal resources that adolescents are equipped with and the social resources made available to them by their families, peer-groups and schools helped screen them from delinquency. Delinquents on the other hand, lacked the social and personal resources that could help them abstain from deviant behaviour.