INVESTMENT-PREVENTION STRATEGIES TO ALLEVIATE JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

This study is intended to investigate and examine the risk and protective factors affecting juvenile delinquency for the purposes of early intervention and prevention. Since antisocial behaviour has its origins in child development, the present study places great emphasis on human development in context based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecology Systems Theory as its theoretical framework. The holistic qualitative approach was used on multiple case studies in order to trace the underlying causes of juvenile delinquent or non-delinquent behaviour. The respondents of this study comprised of six of my former students and six trainees from Sekolah Tunas Bakti, a rehabilitation institution for delinquent boys. After months of participant observation, interviews, stimulative-recall methodology, and document analysis, the findings of this study show that juvenile delinquency is the outcome of the various social processes in the environment and these include family relationships, school experiences, and peer associations. Parental divorce, family conflict, poor parenting, poverty, poor teacher-student relationship, academic failure, lack of commitment to school, association with deviant peers, and participation in antisocial activities have been found to be some of the most potential factors affecting the character and behavioural development of the children. The findings of this study suggest that school-based after-school programs and extracurricular activities are the most cost effective and easily accessible intervention programs to keep delinquency at bay. Although these programs are nothing new to our country's education system, there is still much room for improvement due to the inappropriate manner in which they are being carried out in the schools. These programs, if implemented successfully based on my suggestions, can have a lot to contribute towards the intervention and prevention of juvenile delinquent behaviour in Malaysia.

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ABSTRAK

Kajan ini bertujuan untuk menyelidik faktor-faktor risiko dan pelindung yang mempengaruhi tingkahlaku remaja untuk tujuan pencelahan. Oleh kerana tingkahlaku antisosial berpunca daripada perkembangan awal kanak-kanak, kajian ini memberikan penumpuan kepada perkembangan manusia berasaskan Teori Sistem Ekologi Bronfenbrenner yang juga merupakan kerangka teori bagi kajian ini. Pendekatan kualitatif holistik digunakan ke atas pelbagai kajian kes untuk mengenalpasti punca-punca tingkahlaku delinkuen/bukan delinkuen. Responden-responden kajian ini terdiri daripada enam orang bekas murid saya dan enam orang juvana dari Sekokah Tunas Bakti yang merupakan sebuah institusi pemulihan akhlak bagi budak-budak lelaki delinkuen. Setelah setahun menjalani pemerhatian, temubual, dan rangsangan ingat-kembali, dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa tingkahlaku delinkuen remaja berpunca daripada proses-proses sosial di alam persekitaran mereka dan ini termasuklah hubungan kekeluargaan, pengalaman persekolahan, dan hubungan rakan-sebaya. Perceraian, persengketaan keluarga, sifat keibubapaan yang negatif, kemiskinan, perhubungan negatif dengan guru, kegagalan akademik, kurang komitmen terhadap sekolah, pergaulan dengan rakan-rakan delinkuen, dan penglibatan dalam aktiviti-aktiviti antisosial adalah di antara faktor-faktor utama yang mempunyai kesan negatif terhadap perkembangan kanak-kanak. Pengkaji mengesyorkan bahawa program-program intervensi berasaskan sekolah merupakan program-program yang paling murah dan mudah dilaksanakan bagi tujuan pencelahan. Walaupun program-program ini sudah lama dilaksanakan, masih ada banyak lagi kelemahan yang harus diperbaiki sebab cara program-program ini dilaksanakan di sekolah masih kurang efektif. Program-program ini, jika dilaksanakan dengan berkesan mengikut cadangan-cadangan yang dikemukakan dalam tesis ini akan dapat memberikan sumbangan yang lebih besar terhadap pencelahan tingkahlahlaku kanak-kanak delinkuen di negara ini.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABM	-	Malay language practice subject
ASP	-	After-school programs
ATP	-	Adolescent Transitions Program
CC	-	Cyber Café
HBP	-	High blood pressure
KL	-	Kuala Lumpur
MC	-	Sick leave
NGO	-	Non Government Organization
PPSMI	-	The teaching of mathematics and science in English
SBA	-	School-based assessment
STB	-	Sekolah Tunas Bakti
SMKX	-	The school where I taught for 3½ years before I was transferred to SMKS
SMKS	-	The school where I taught for 9 months before I started working as a lecturer in a teachers' training institution
SRP	-	Lower Certificate of Education (Form Three Examination)
UPSR	-	Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (Year Six Examination)
SPM	-	Malaysia Certificate of Education (Form Five Examination)

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LIST OF MEANINGS OF THE SPECIAL TERMS USED

Form 1 – Form 5	-	Secondary school education
Giatmara	-	A vocational institution
Gotong-royong	-	Team work
He/His/Him	-	The words "He/His/Him" are used to indicate a gender-neutral meaning.
Jalan-jalan	-	Hanging around
Lantak	-	Could not be bothered
Lepak	-	Loafing
Maghrib	-	Dusk
Mat Rempit	-	An individual who goes around disturbing the public and taking part in immoral activities on his motorcycle
Kelab Pembimbing Rakan Sebaya	-	Peer Guidance Club
Pau	-	Ask for money
Rakan Muda	-	Youth Program
Rukun Negara	-	National Principles
Year 1 – Year 6	-	Primary school education

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Juvenile delinquency has always been one of the major problems plaguing humankind since the dawn of human civilization which many researchers as well as policy makers are trying to battle with (Regoli, Hewitt, & Delisi, 2008; Siegel, 2009). The first juvenile crime recorded in history was that of Cain, who slew his brother, Abel, out of envy and wrath (Genesis 4:8, The Authorized King James Version). Juvenile delinquency did not end there even though Cain and his descendants were said to have been seriously punished by God (Byron, 2011). This biblical event clearly marked the onset of juvenile delinquency that has continually plagued the human race for millenniums.

The seriousness of juvenile delinquency has not improved much over the centuries since children continue to commit crimes worldwide and juvenile delinquent behaviour is not the domain of children living in any particular country nor is it restricted to any race, sex, age, time, or location (Regoli et al., 2008). What is even worse is that the techniques of juvenile offending are getting more and more sophisticated with the passing of time resulting in more and more serious crimes committed by the juveniles. Needless to say, apart from the issue of moral degradation amongst the young offenders, nations that are plagued with juvenile crime also have to bear the escalating costs associated with it (Simões, Matos & Batista-Foguet, 2008). Juvenile delinquency is therefore a global issue and countries all over the world are taking affirmative steps to intervene with and reduce criminality amongst children who run the risk of antisocial behaviour (Ehiemua, 2014).

Juvenile delinquency was considered to be a serious problem in the Greek Empire between the sixth and third centuries B.C. (Regoli et al., 2008). The ancient Greek society was "said to have been filled with children who were psychopathic delinquents" and that

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"many Greek children were so bad that a law was passed specifically prohibiting them from beating up their parents" (Regoli et al., 2008, p.12). Some historians are of the opinion that the aggressiveness of ancient Greek juveniles was in part induced by the values of the larger society (Regoli et al., 2008). Those who read Greek literature would probably realize that many of its literary works are filled with "violent and destructive relations between children and adults" (Regoli et al., 2008, p.14). For instance, in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, Oedipus's father leaves him to die in the wilderness with his feet pinned together because it is prophesied that he would kill his father one day. However, he survives and grows up to kill his father and marry his mother (Kennedy & Gioia, 1995). Being "filled with stories of psychopathic gods and humans" (Regoli et al., 2008, p,12) in their minds at a tender age, it was no wonder why the children of ancient Greece could turn out to be so aggressive!

An interesting recount of juvenile delinquency can be found in Mary Perry's *Crime and Society in Early Modern Seville* which provides a vivid description of the unlawful behaviour of street children in Seville, Spain, between the 1500s and 1600s. During this early modern era:

> Prostitution also offered a livelihood for boys. Some became pimps for their sisters or girl friends, but others became prostitutes themselves. Some boys involved in homosexual acts in Seville were as young as eight years, but it is likely that the younger boys were victims rather than working prostitutes. Children growing up in the streets learned the tricks of gambling very early… They learned to mark cards with pin pricks, scratches, and watermarks.
>
> (as cited in Regoli et al., 2008, p.11)

In order to make a livelihood out of crime and delinquency without being harassed by those in the same niche, these neglected street children needed the protection and support of the underworld criminal organizations of Seville and had to share their profits with them in return (Regoli et al., 2008). Needless to say, the backup given to them by these organizations has given them the impetus to venture unflinchingly into various kinds of

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criminal activities and grew up into incorrigible criminals. This clearly accounts for the reason why the country was pervaded by crime and corruption during those days.

Similarly, juvenile crime and delinquency was a hot topic in Victorian Britain with its crime rate rising from 5000 per year in 1800 to 20000 per year in 1830. Between the years 1842 and 1877, 90 new prisons were built to accommodate these young offenders (The National Archives, n.d.). From Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* to Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and *Bleak House*, one can see the writers' concerns about the various aspects of juvenile crime that reflect vividly the reality of the Victorian underworld (Squires, 1938; Shore, 1999). Although the thieves in these novels are fictional, the humanization of these characters clearly depict the impoverished child criminals of the early nineteenth century in a vivid and realistic way.

The dawning of the 20th Century with its two great world wars led to an even greater rise of juvenile delinquents who were orphaned in these wars. By the year 1946, there were 13,000,000 juvenile orphans in Europe as a consequence of the two world wars and these young offenders had turned out to be dangerous to the safety and well-being of the general population (Macardle, 1949). In Germany, mentally and physically disabled juveniles were put to death under the Nazi Race Purification Program in order to prevent juvenile crime and protect the nationals of the country (Burleigh, 1997).

Prior to the end of the nineteenth century, children who committed crimes were tried in the same standard of criminal accountability as adults and if found guilty, were sentenced to death and hard labour or banished along with the adult criminals (Regoli et al., 2008; Schmalleger, 2009). Since children who had to serve their sentence behind bars were incarcerated in deplorable rat-infested prisons together with the incorrigible adult criminals, instead of being rehabilitated, they learned even more effective tactics of committing crimes (Roberts & Springer, 2007; White, Sowers, & Dulmus, 2008). The cruelty of the

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adult system was so shocking to the general public that the early juvenile court reformers were strongly against such a system and wanted something to be done to protect and rehabilitate the children and cure them of their antisocial behaviour (Siegel & Senna, 2000; Siegel, 2009; Reid, 2003; Regoli et al., 2008; Wilson, 2009).

Between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, dramatic changes occurred in relation to the treatment of juvenile offenders following the development of special juvenile courts with the first juvenile court being founded in Cook County (Chicago), Illinois, in 1899 (Regoli et al., 2008). In the same year, the Juvenile Court Act was enacted by the Illinois legislature which had since become the model for the juvenile justice system of other states and countries (Binder, Geis, & Bruce, 2000). Since the establishment of the juvenile justice system was intended "to prevent children from being treated as criminals" (Van Waters, 1927, as cited in McCord, Widom, & Crowell, 2001, p.157) and had its focus on rehabilitation instead of punishment, juvenile offenders were separated from the adult offenders and treated in a different and more humane way. With the establishment of the juvenile justice system, juvenile offenders are no longer sent to prisons but to rehabilitative schools for the purposes of correction and rehabilitation. They cannot be found guilty of a crime but are adjudicated delinquents. However, the more humane treatment given to the juvenile offenders is not without its serious long-term repercussions as more and more children are turning to crime and delinquency.

Regoli et al. (2008) define juvenile delinquent as "a child with a long and problematic history of involvement in crime" (p.31). According to Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, a child is defined as "every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier." Whilst the statutory age limit differs from country to country, in most

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countries the age limit is set at eighteen. In Malaysia, the Child Act 2001 defines a child as a person under the age of eighteen years and the minimum age of criminal responsibility is set at the age of ten. The Children and Young Persons (Employment) (Amendment) Act 2010, however, defines a child as a person who has not completed his fifteenth year of age and a young person as one who has not completed his eighteenth year of age. On the other hand, the Prison Act 1995 defines a juvenile or young offender as a prisoner who is under the age of 21 years. For the purposes of this study, the term *child* is taken to mean a juvenile or young human being below the legal age of eighteen in accordance with the Child Act 2001.

The word *juvenile* can also be taken to mean *adolescent* which indicates the period of transition from childhood into adulthood. The World Health Organization (1997) defines *adolescence* as the period of life between the ages of 10 and 19. This is an important phase of development during which an individual is undergoing dramatic physical, biological, emotional, cognitive, psychological and sociological changes in preparation for adulthood (Santrock, 2014). During this period of "storm and stress" (Hall, 1904), many children may experience behavioural difficulties and emotional turmoil that may cause them to be in conflict with their parents, teachers, peers, and society. Poor decision making, peer pressure, risk-taking, and lack of self-control are amongst some of the more common occurences at this stage of their lives, all of which could lead to antisocial behaviour. Their participation in antisocial behaviour or criminal activities is known as juvenile delinquency.

The term *juvenile* is derived from the Latin word *juvenis* which means a young person or youth whilst the term *delinquency* is derived from the Latin word *delinquer* which means to offend. Siegel and Worrall (2016) define juvenile delinquency as the "participation in illegal behaviour by a minor who falls under a statutory age limit" (p.584) whilst Shoemaker (2010) defines this social problem as "illegal acts, whether criminal or

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status, which are committed by youths under the age of 18" (p.3). As stated above, this age limit differs from country to country and in Malaysia it is set at eighteen. Hirschi (1969), however, states that "delinquency is defined by acts, the detection of which is thought to result in punishment of the person committing them by agents of the larger society" (p.47). Similarly, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) are of the opinion that delinquency "is behaviour that violates basic norms of the society, and, when officially known, it evokes a judgment by agents of criminal justice that such norms have been violated" (p.3). The behaviour can be a felony, misdemeanor or status offense (Smith & Hogan, 2015). A felony is a serious crime such as aggravated assault, rape, theft, burglary, robbery, handling stolen goods, drug trafficking, possession of firearms, arson, and homicide. A misdemeanor is a less serious crime such as petty theft, prostitution, simple assault, and vandalism. A status offense is illegal for minors only and these lesser delinquent acts include smoking, alcohol consumption, truancy, running away from home, and curfew violations.

There are thus two types of deviant behaviour, namely, formal and informal (Andersen & Taylor, 2011, p.144). Formal deviance involves the violation of some kind of law or penal code. This type of deviance can be anything ranging from theft to homicide and often results in criminal behaviour. Informal deviance, although not illegal in itself, refers to the violation of some kind of socially acceptable behaviour by doing something which the majority would not do such as picking one's nose in public, dying one's hair green, copying during an exam, and spitting on the sidewalk. Although these acts may seem to be rather offensive, the perpetrators of these acts are not punished. In actual fact, juvenile deviant behaviour can range from the less serious behaviours such as truancy, running away from home, driving a vehicle without license, persistent lying, and violating school rules to the more serious crimes such as robbery, rape, murder, drug trafficking, and possession of firearms. A juvenile who is convicted of an offense is known as a juvenile delinquent.

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Juvenile delinquency therefore refers to some kind of deviant behaviour which contradicts the norms and values of society or violates the criminal law.

Although juvenile delinquency is a global phenomenon, the definitions of juvenile delinquency not only vary from country to country but also from culture to culture. Malaysia is a multi-racial country with the Malays, Chinese, and Indians being the major races in this country. Each of these races has its own religion, values, culture, and tradition. Since Islam is the official religion of this country, juvenile delinquency may be taken to cover a broader perspective to include behaviours that are forbidden by the Islamic religion. Since Muslims are not only subjected to the civil law but also to the Syariah law as well, behaviours such as alcohol consumption, premarital sex, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, dressing up in an indecent manner, and not fasting during the fasting month can be tried in the Syariah Court if the perpetrators are Muslims. This would mean that apart from those defined by the civil law, Muslim children who violate the teachings of the Islamic religion may also be regarded as delinquents. However, other races in this country are not subjected to the Syariah law unless they have converted to Islam. This would mean that alcohol consumption, premarital cohabitation, giving birth out-of-wedlock, and dressing up sexily are acceptable behaviour to them as our Malaysian society is becoming more and more modernized. Since my study is based on juvenile delinquency in Malaysia, I will discuss the factors relating to this social phenomenon from the Malaysian perspective.

The turn into a new century has seen a tremendous increase in the juvenile population in Malaysia due to the high fertility rate. Based on the latest Population and Housing Census 2010 final report, Malaysia's population stood at 28.3 million at the end of 2010 compared to 23.3 million in 2000 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011). The present population of Malaysia can be described as "youthful" as 26.04% of the population is under the age of 15.

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Table 1.1

2010 Population and Housing Census

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Percent
0-14	4,006,867	3,792,117	7,798,984	26.04
15-64	10,629,973	9,871,011	20,500,984	68.46
65+	797,387	850,205	1,647,592	5.50

The Malaysian population has more than tripled since the formation of this country and has reached 31,410,040 people as of 12 July 2016 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016).

In Malaysia there is already a growing trend of juvenile involvement in antisocial activities and the increase in the adolescent population would also mean that there will be an inevitable increase in juvenile crime and delinquency. Even school children as young as 8 years old are already dabbling in some kind of criminal activities. The offenses committed by the juveniles include extortion, shoplifting, snatch thefts, house/shop breaking, stealing vehicles (such as cars, vans and motorcycles), assault, battery, rape, murder, drug-related crimes, armed and unarmed robbery. Many of them have also become members of notorious gangs and ended up as victims of rival gang clashes. Amongst the more recent juvenile crimes in this country include:

- a 15-year-old-boy who had allegedly raped his own mother at their family home in Cheras after watching pornographic materials on his handphone (Jastin, 2014);
- a gang of seven school dropouts, namely, *Gang Amir*, aged 15 to 18 who had committed 80 snatch thefts in the historic city of Malacca (Lai, 2014);
- two crime groups comprising students who were actively engaged in motorcycle thefts in the Klang Valley (Kumar, 2016);
- two teenagers, aged 14 and 15 years old, who were arrested for allegedly raping and attempting to rape a 13-year-old girl in an oil palm plantation (Nabila, 2016);
- a 17-year-old boy who was involved with a brazen armed robbery in Ara Damansara (Hani Shamira, 2016).
- three teengers who robbed a 24-hour convenience store (Zaidi, 2017).

Given the recent highly publicized crimes involving the juveniles, the juvenile crime situation in this country is indeed worrisome. One cannot deny the fact that there is obviously something going on in our society which triggers such occurences and these must

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be curbed before they go out of hand. Needless to say, the growing trends in juvenile delinquency would require immediate attention from the authorities concerned. If this situation is to prevail, many young lives would be ruined or wasted.

Despite the strict measures taken by the Malaysian Government and the millions of ringgit spent in the prevention of juvenile crime and delinquency, members of the public are living in fear of what the future would hold for this country particularly when police statistics show that there is indeed a rise in the rate of juvenile crime particularly in the past decade even though the overall crime index in the country has decreased. In 2006, 5,955 teenagers between the ages of 7 to 18 years old were arrested for various crimes and the number of cases increased to 6,763 in 2007 and 8809 in 2008. Even though the number of juvenile arrests dropped to 4,465 in 2010, it went up again to 5,547 in 2011.

Table 1.2

Number and Types of Juvenile Crime, 2006 – 2011

Types of Juvenile Crime	**2006**	**2007**	**2010**	**2011**
Property Crime	3,454	3,593	2,109	2,743
Offences against the Person	193	304	543	762
Minor Offences Act	89	184	47	79
Violating the Terms of Supervision	16	41	4	30
Drug Related Offences	718	810	1,104	1,096
Gambling	47	34	24	42
Firearms	98	112	40	72
Street Crimes	515	834	224	262
Running Away from Approved Institutions	45	14	1	3
Others	780	837	459	458
Total	**5,955**	**6,763**	**4,465**	**5,547**

Source: Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM), 2013
Note: There is no record of juvenile arrests for the years 2008 and 2009. The statistics for 2008 (8809 cases) is as cited in Rafedziawati, Rafedzi, Abrizah, Halida, & Baba, 2014)

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs Malaysia, although the number of juvenile arrests dropped to 3399 in 2012, this figure has more than doubled in a year and soared up to 8704 in 2013 (as cited in Mallow, 2015, p.261). The number of juvenile crimes

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continued to increase and reached 10,931 cases in the year 2014 based on the statistics that I obtained from the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM).

It should be noted that the figures presented above refer only to the reported cases. In actual fact, there were many cases that have gone unreported and therefore did not form a part of the statistics. Minor offenses committed by the juveniles are often settled in an informal way which does not normally lead to an arrest or prosecution. For instance, students who are caught stealing at the hypermarkets are normally not prosecuted. The authorities concerned would either call their parents and make them pay for the stolen items or inform the school principal so that disciplinary action can be taken against the child offenders. Moreover, there is an unknown number of offences that have never been discovered. Stealing wallets, shoes, school bags, pens, pencil cases, and books are common occurrences in Malaysian schools but the perpetrators normally get away scot free because they are never caught. Even if these offenders are caught, their cases are often settled by the discipline teachers without referring to the police.

"Victorian literature enthusiasts, and particularly students of Dickens and Twain, are aware that the social issues addressed by novelists of that era are virtually the same as those we confront today" (Googins, 1998, p.1). Since juveniles are responsible for a relatively large proportion of the total number of crimes committed, the prevalence of juvenile crime is an issue that concerns not only the policy makers, police, lawyers and law-abiding citizens but also those who are trying to find an explanation for their antisocial behaviour. Why is the juvenile crime rate increasing even though Malaysia is a stable and fast developing country? So far, there is still no satisfactory answer to this question. One of the most challenging issues confronting the researchers in this field is the prediction and explanation of juvenile delinquency. Although there are many risk factors at work, none of them can be regarded as the sole contributor of juvenile delinquent behaviour as,

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individually, each of these factors only has a minor role to play in the life of a child. However, the more risk factors a child is exposed to, the more likely he will become delinquent (Farrington, Ttofi, & Piquero, 2016). Much would depend on the frequency, duration, severity, and the type of risk factors involved and how these factors interact with each other as well as with the protective factors to bring about certain behavioural patterns. It should be noted that the patterns of delinquent behaviour is never the same throughout the history of humankind but is determined by the setting in which it occurs. It differs from one individual to another, from one culture to another, from time to time and from place to place. The factors affecting delinquent behaviour amongst adolescents as they are going through the transitory period of their lives from childhood to adulthood in this perplexing and disorderly world are indeed complicated and are examined in great depths in this study.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Questions

The rise of juvenile crime is one of the major problems confronting many countries today and Malaysia is no exception. Irrespective of where the crime is committed, the presence of a large number of at-risk children in this country who risk dropping out of school at an early age with the potential to indulge in a life of crime has always been the concern of society. Since our country's future prospects are dependent on the upbringing and development of our children of today, they should be our greatest concerns if we want to become a developed nation. However, although much has been done to protect the physical environment from technological damage, there are very few safeguards against the damage done to our social environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The problem of this thesis is the rise of juvenile crimes in Malaysia particularly during the past decade as more and more children are turning to crime. Given the severity of juvenile offending, it is therefore necessary to provide a more in-depth study of this widespread social phenomenon which I

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believe can be achieved by studying the interactions between the developing child and his ecological environment as clearly illustrated in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979, 1989, 1994, 2005).

Throughout the years, many hypotheses and theories have been used by criminologists to provide an explanation for juvenile delinquent behaviour. Although much research has been done in this subject area in the United States, Australia, and Great Britain, to date, the literature of Malaysian youth delinquents is rather scarce. Research in this field is still inadequate as the topics studied were either too narrow or the researchers concerned have failed to provide effective solutions that could deal with juvenile delinquent behaviour. Researchers in this field also have the tendency to focus on the statistical relationships between delinquency and the so called independent variables thus rendering their research in this field far from complete. Moreover, many researchers prefer to focus on only one so-called variable in their study on juvenile delinquency which is rather absurd if we look at it from the developmental perspective. Since child development is the outcome of the interactions between the child and the interconnected settings within his ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), looking at juvenile delinquency from any single aspect is likely to be futile. For instance, there is little which the findings of the mass media effect alone on delinquency could help to prevent delinquent behaviour as there are many routes to produce a delinquent child even if the mass media effect is barred. However, this approach has won favour amongst many of our local researchers and the libraries in many Malaysian universities seem to abound with such theses and dissertations (e.g. Halijah, 2000; Mohd Zaikham, 2005; Lee, 2010; Kalidass, 2003; Norlizah, 2009; Mariani, 1992). In actual fact, these so-called variables or risk factors cannot be studied in isolation as they are interrelated and as such there is no single route to delinquency.

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The relationships between the causal and preventive factors are not as clear cut as they seem to be and even "after years of research on childhood development we have few tools to distinguish between those children who will continue with their problem behaviours and those who will not" (Loeber & Farrington, 2000b, p.746). Since child development is affected by a number of interrelated factors within the various settings in his environment, it is therefore necessary to study these settings simultaneously in order to identify the causal/preventive factors of his behavioural outcomes and how these interact with one another to shape his fate and destiny. Studying the interconnectivity between the causal and preventive factors within the various settings that contain the child would certainly provide a more thorough analysis of juvenile delinquent behaviour than just looking into one particular factor or variable.

Research on juvenile delinquency has traditionally focused on the risk factors associated with it without paying much attention to the protective factors that could buffer against antisocial behaviour. Many researchers have overlooked the fact that resilient children may have the innate capacity to overcome the obstacles that come their way through self-efficacy, feelings of self-worth, academic aspirations, goal-orientation, positive future anticipations, great expectations, determination, strength of character, confidence, and self-reliance. Resilience is therefore an essential aspect of child development which has not only been omitted by many researchers in this field but also in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Engler, 2007). Bronfenbrenner's theory is therefore still far from perfect as "it does not have a way to explain how an individual brought up in a negative environment survives and becomes successful" (Christensen, 2010, p.121). It is hoped that this gap can be filled in this study.

The inclusion of resilience in this study helps to explain for the reason why "resilient children are better equipped to resist stress and adversity, cope with change and

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uncertainty, and to recover faster and more completed from traumatic event or episodes" (Newman & Blackburn, 2002, p.3). How they could do it is still a puzzling issue but understanding their strengths would enable the researcher to come out with meaningful intervention programs that could help to prevent the onset of delinquency and enhance positive child development. Juvenile delinquency is a serious problem in this country and I honestly believe that my study would not be complete without looking into both risk and protective factors as well as the possible solutions to this complex social phenomenon.

Since juvenile delinquency has its roots in the various social, economical, cultural, and environmental factors, the questions pertaining to this social phenomenon would demand challenging answers. Through the utilization of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model as my theoretical framework, the risk and protective factors within the microsystems that contain my respondents are explored in great depths in this study in order to provide challenging answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the risk and protective factors governing juvenile delinquent behaviour?
2. Why are some children more prone to delinquent behaviour whilst others are more resilient by nature?
3. How can the investment-prevention strategies be implemented to reduce and prevent juvenile delinquency in the future?

These are questions which not only need challenging answers but also practicable solutions. Apart from providing answers to these questions, I have also come out with the most cost-effective and practicable solutions that could help in the battle against juvenile delinquency. This is something which few researchers would do as most of them are only interested in the discovery of risk factors without doing anything to combat them. It is hoped that my study would not only bridge the knowledge gap in this field but also enable the authorities

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concerned to come out with more effective measures to overcome this chronic social problem based on my findings and suggestions for intervention and prevention.

1.3 The Purpose and Objectives of the Study

This study is carried out with the intention to seek a better clarification as to why some youths resort to delinquent behaviour whilst others do not and explicate the reasons of that conduct by exploring the interrelationships between their family background, school experiences, peer group influences, and the community so as to develop a theoretical concept of how these relationships operate. Correlate with this intention, its ultimate purpose is to provide a systematic understanding of the interactive processes between my respondents and their ecology through the identification of risk and protective factors affecting their behavioural outcomes. In this study, I will not only provide an understanding of "how illegal activities carve their niche within the larger system of activities" (Bean, 2003, p.322) but also how to prevent them through effective investment-prevention strategies based on my findings.

In a specifc manner, this study intends to :

1. identify the risk and protective factors relating to juvenile delinquent behaviour by exploring my respondents' family background, school experiences, peer associations and neighbourhood influences.
2. gain a systematic understanding as to why some youths resort to delinquent behaviour whilst others did not.
3. provide suggestions for a long-term solution to this chronic social problem through the implementation of appropriate investment-prevention strategies.

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It is hoped that my research would not only provide a deeper insight into the origins and causes of juvenile delinquent behaviour but also prevent them from taking root in our Malaysian society.

1.4 Scope of the Study

My study focuses on the interactions that my respondents have within the different settings of their ecological environment. It seeks to identify the risk and protective factors associated with juvenile delinquency and examine the interrelationships amongst these factors within the different settings (microsystems) that contain my respondents. Risk and protective factors can be found within the various ecological settings in which a child interacts with such as his family, school, peer group, and neighbourhood. Whether a child would become delinquent or not depends on the presence or absence of risk factors within these settings and to what extent these factors can affect him and whether their effects can be nullified by the protective factors (Jenson & Fraser, 2011). This study therefore places great emphasis on family background, school experiences, peer group influences, and the community since an investigation into the fundamental interactive processes within the major domains of the child's ecology would enable the researcher to discover new knowledge in relation to the causes and prevention of juvenile delinquent behaviour.

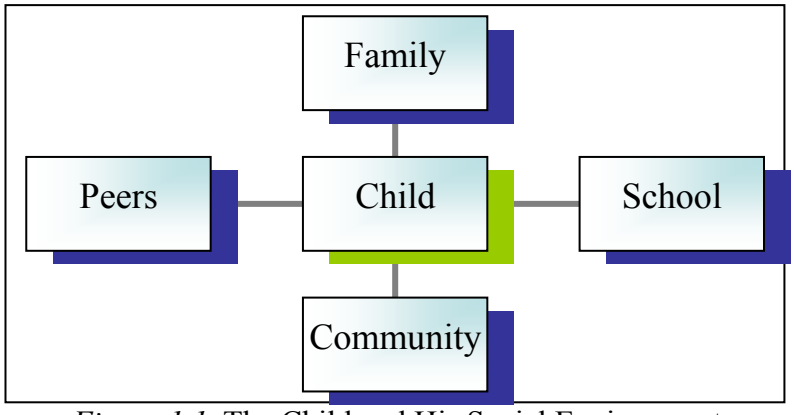

Figure 1.1. The Child and His Social Environment

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In order to address the issue of juvenile delinquency, it is necessary to make use of what is known about child development so as to enhance the understanding of the pathways leading to it (Mulvey, 2014). This idea is clearly emphasized in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory which asserts that child development involves:

> the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life span, between a growing human organism and the changing immediate environments in which he lives, as this process is affected by relations obtaining within and between these immediate settings, as well as the larger social contexts, both formal and informal, in which the settings are embedded.
>
> (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p.514)

Also known as the theory of human development, it is based on the assumption that "child development takes place through processes of progressively more complex interactions between an active child and the persons, objects and symbols in its immediate environment" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p.996) which is made up of "a series of nested and interconnected structures" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p.45) comprising five systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem.

The key to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is "that in order to understand human development, one must consider the entire ecological system in which growth occurs" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.37). This theory did not focus on any specific domain such as mass media or religion, but "on a scientific approach emphasizing the interrelationship of different processes and their contextual variation" (Darling, 2007, p. 203). Focusing on any specific domain would mean that it is impossible for the researcher to understand the interrelationships among the child's microsystems. Studying the child without understanding the interactions between him and his multiple settings would render it impossible to obtain the entire picture of the factors affecting his growth and development. Although it is beyond the scope of my study to delve into my respondents' entire ecology, my in-depth study of the major social processes within my respondents' microsystems simultaneously has made it possible for me to uncover the fundamental

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aspects of their developmental processes and hence a deep insight into the factors affecting their life trajectories. Needless to say, the rich and in-depth data generated has enabled me to provide complete and detailed answers to my research questions.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The children of today are the future leaders of tomorrow who would one day take over the vital roles and positions in the country (Kasser, 2011; Knijn & van Oorschot, 2008). However, it is only possible for them to do so if they grow up to become productive and responsible citizens of the country. Whether our youths would be able to contribute to the country in the future would depend on their social upbringing and development. Since the advancement of a nation depends on our future leaders, the Malaysian Government places great importance on educating our children and teaching them good moral values in order to prevent them from going astray. This is achieved not only through teaching moral education but also the incorporation of moral values in all aspects of teaching in the KSSR (Standard Curriculum Primary School) and KSSM (Standard Curriculum Secondary School) syllabus.

Despite the efforts put in by the Malaysian Government, the rate of juvenile crime is increasing every year because our knowledge and understanding concerning the causes for delinquent behaviour are either too vague or too superficial as this issue has not been given its due attention. Delinquent children not only encounter failure in their lives, but their antisocial behaviour also puts society at risk of crime and violence. This study is therefore of great significance as it seeks to prevent juvenile delinquent behaviour from taking root through the identification of risk and protective factors and recommendations for appropriate intervention strategies. In a way, the discovery of risk and protective factors

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also help to identify and hence enhance the role of the family, school, peers, and the community in the prevention and control of juvenile delinquent behaviour.

The findings that is generated from my study is therefore an original contribution to social science. It is an important research project as it not only deals with juvenile delinquency from the developmental perspective but also addresses this chronic social phenomenon by looking into possible prevention and intervention strategies. To date this kind of holistic analysis that comes with practicable solutions is still rare in the study of juvenile delinquent behaviour. Although previous researchers in this field have tried to identify the risk factors associated with juvenile delinquency, many of them have failed to go further than that (Halijah, 2000; Mohd Zaikham, 2005; Lee, 2010; Kalidass, 2003; Norlizah, 2009; Mariani, 1992). They probably did not realize that their study would be more meaningful if they could come out with some kind of solutions to overcome the problems created by the risk factors discovered in their studies.

What makes my study different from previous studies is that I not only seek to identify the risk and protective factors associated with juvenile delinquency but also go on further to suggest the most cost-effective investment-prevention strategies that are easily accessible by our Malaysian students. To date, the crime prevention programs that we have are rather weak since the mechanisms involved are insufficient to deal with the realities of the existing situation. The introduction of community programs such as *Rakan Muda* (Youth Friends Program) and *Karisma* (Charisma) to get the youths involved in prosocial activities does not carry much weight since many of our Malaysian children do not have knowledge of the existence of these programs as they do not have easy access to them. My suggestion for the implementation of school-based intervention programs is therefore the best possible suggestion as these are easily accessible by the students. Since children behaviour is reflective of their ecology, these prevention programs which are intended to

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tackle numerous environmental risk factors are of utmost importance for the proper upbringing and development of children. Given the current trends in juvenile offending in Malaysia, the importance of intervention programs focusing on the contextual factors of the children's lives cannot be ignored. It is hoped that the new knowledge gained in this study would not only be applicable to broader situations beyond the situations analyzed in this study but also enable policy makers to rethink the current situation of juvenile offending and take the necessary steps to overcome the issues relating to it in the future by taking into account the suggestions put forth by the researcher.

1.6 Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of seven chapters including the present chapter. Chapter 1 provides the research background of this study, its problem statement, research questions, purpose, scope, and significance. Chapter 2 focuses on the review of literature and discusses about the current research in juvenile delinquency in order to gain a deeper insight into the phenomenon under investigation as well as identifying the research gaps in this field. A detailed discussion of the risk and protective factors affecting children behaviour is presented in this chapter as these are what formed the basis of my investigation. Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical framework of this study which is based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. A detailed analysis of the five systems of development: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem are included in this chapter since understanding the nature of these systems can lead to a greater insight of the character and behavioural development of my respondents. The research methodologies used in the present study are accounted for in great depths in chapter 4 which specifies the research design, sampling procedure, data generation and data analysis processes applied in this study. Chapter 5 presents a discussion and analysis of the qualitative data generated in

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the present study to address the research questions aforementioned. Chapter 6 explores the possible intervention-prevention programs that could be implemented in Malaysian schools based on the findings presented in chapter 5. This thesis concludes with chapter 7 which provides a review and discussion of the major findings, the limitations of this study, policy implications, and recommended solutions with implications for future research.

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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Why do some children grow up to become criminals whilst others stay away from crime and grow up to become law-abiding citizens? Since juvenile crime and delinquency is a perplexing problem with no easy solution, the answer to this question may not be easy to come by and is not as clear cut as it seems to be. Suffice it to say that in order to gain a deeper insight into this widespread social phenomenon, one would need to look into both the causal as well as the preventive factors before arriving at any conclusions (Green, Gesten, Greenwald & Salcedo, 2008; Simões et al., 2008; Reingle, Jennings, & Maldonado-Molina, 2012). Also known as risk and protective factors, these can influence human behaviour through the interrelationships between an individual and his various environmental settings, social, cultural and subcultural contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979, 1989). Although protective factors are not studied as extensively as risk factors, nevertheless they are equally important in the study of juvenile delinquent behaviour as they can lessen the likelihood of negative behavioural outcomes. As a researcher, I believe in looking at both sides of the coin in the study of juvenile delinquency by investigating the opposing impacts which the risk and protective factors have on child development. Looking into the risk and protective factors is necessary before arriving at any conclusions since focusing on the risk factors alone without looking into the protective factors would render my study incomplete. This chapter therefore discusses the risk and protective factors from a range of perspectives so as to provide a detailed description of how children interact with their social environment and how these interactions could shape their life trajectories.

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2.2 Risk and Protective Factors

Risk factors can be defined as "individual or environment hazards that increase an individual's vulnerability to negative developmental outcomes" (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, Smith, & Tobin, 2003, p.56) "through increased vulnerability for normative transgression (e.g., low self-esteem); and through greater opportunity to engage in problem behaviour (e.g., membership in an antisocial peer group)" (Hawkins, McGuire, & Backman, 1999, p.71). They refer to "those characteristics, variables, or hazards that, if present for a given individual, make it more likely that this individual, rather than someone selected from the general population, will develop a disorder" (Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994, p.9). Although risk factors increase the likelihood of disruptive behaviour, it should be noted that they may not necessarily bring about such behaviour nor would they make it a certainty. Since many children who belong to the high risk group with multiple risk factors never actually become delinquents, one cannot say that there is a mandatory cause-effect relationship between the risk factors and behavioural problems. However, one cannot deny the fact that the more risk factors are present in one's life, the greater is the likelihood of crime and delinquency (Jenson & Fraser, 2011).

A risk factor approach assumes "that there are multiple, and often overlapping, risk factors in an individual's background that lead to adverse outcomes" (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, & Smith, 2003, p.56). As stated by Schorr and Schorr (1989):

> No one circumstance, no single event, is the cause of a rotten outcome. School failure, delinquency, teenage pregnancy – none is dependent on a single devastating risk factor… But each risk factor vanquished does enhance the odds of averting later serious damage.
>
> (p.32)

The risk factors are therefore not mutually exclusive but are dependent on each other to pave the way for delinquent behaviour and bring about the "rotten outcomes" (Schorr & Schorr, 1989, p.32) in children. Although there is no consensus as to which of these factors

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is the major contributing factor, the cumulative effects of these factors could provide a satisfactory account for the causes of juvenile delinquent behaviour.

Studies on risk factors have also prompted an investigation into the positive influences in one's life that may decrease or moderate the likelihood of adverse behaviour or eliminate this likelihood altogether (Vanderbilt-Adriance, & Shaw, 2008). Known as the protective factors, they can be defined as "personal, social and institutional resources that promote successful adolescent development or buffer risk factors that might otherwise compromise development" (Jessor, 1993, as cited in Markstrom, 2008, p.4) "through direct personal or social controls against its occurrence" (Hawkins, McGuire, & Backman, 1999, p.71). As noted by Pollard, Hawkins, and Arthur (1999), "protective factors are those factors that mediate or moderate the effect of exposure to risk factors, resulting in reduced incidence of problem behaviour" (p.146). These factors have a buffering effect on some children causing them to be more resistant to delinquent behaviour than others even though they are constantly exposed to a series of risk factors (Vanderbilt-Adriance & Shaw, 2008; Masten & Tellegen, 2012).

Studies have confirmed that there is an inverse relationship between the risk and protective factors, that is to say that the stronger the protective factors, the weaker the risk of behavioural problems and vice versa (Jessor, Van Den Bos, Vanderryn, Costa, & Turbin, 1995; Lee, Onifade, Teasley, & Noël, 2012). The interrelationships between the risk and protective factors would therefore either induce or suppress behavioural problems in children depending on which factors are more dominant. The outcomes differ from individual to individual depending on the number of risk and protective factors available and the extent of their contributions to the child's social environment. Good behaviour can be instilled by reducing the effects of risk factors or modifying the manner in which an

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individual responds to his negative life experiences through the enhancement of protective factors or positive life experiences.

It should be noted that the presence of protective factors cannot be regarded as the absence of risk but rather they can be viewed as "characteristics or conditions that interact with risk factors to reduce their influence on violent behaviour" (Office of the Surgeon General, 2001, as cited in Minor, 2010, p.25). For instance, single-parenthood is often regarded as a risk factor but the presence of supportive, loving and caring single-parents may reduce or prevent the onset of delinquent behaviour (Mack, Leiber, Featherstone, & Monserud, 2007). When an individual is capable of overcoming the effects which the risk factors have on him through the presence of protective factors, a gradual accumulation of strength, courage, and determination would build up in him that could bring about some positive outcomes in his life.

To say that protective factors will bring about good behavioural outcomes in children and risk factors will bring about rotten outcomes in them is a complete misnomer. Although poverty is a risk factor, it would be unfair to assume that all children from poor families would turn out to be criminals and that all children from affluent families would not participate in antisocial activities. In reality, the outcomes of these two sets of factors are not as clear-cut as they seem to be as much would depend on how these factors interact with each other within the child's social environment. All the risk and protective factors should therefore be studied hand in hand and not in isolation due to the complex interrelationships and interconnectivities amongst them. Without understanding the inextricable relationships between risk and protective factors, effective intervention and prevention of juvenile delinquent behaviour would be hard to come by.

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2.3 Family Risk and Protective Factors

In their Social Disorganization Theory, Shaw and McKay (1942) also emphasize on the significance of the family in the development of social values and norms. As the building blocks of society (Deacon, 2004), families are the primary socializing agents and most immediate social environment for the children. Understanding how the family functions can therefore get us to the core of juvenile delinquency (Petrosino, Derzon & Lavenberg, 2009; Fagan, Van Horn, Antaramian, & Hawkins, 2011; Siegel & Welsh, 2014).

Studies have indicated that family background and the delinquent behaviour of youths are interrelated (Beaver & Wright, 2007; Schonberg & Shaw, 2007; Kim, & Kim, 2008; Sells, Kristin, & Thomas, 2011; Gault-Sherman, 2012) and that those who lack parental care and concern during their early years have a greater tendency towards antisocial behaviour than those who are well taken care of by their parents (Baskin, & Sommers, 2011; Ryan, Williams, & Courtney, 2013). The fact that an individual's early childhood experiences are somewhat linked to his family clearly elucidates why "antisocial youths frequently come from families in which parents are unable to give love, set consistent limits, and provide the controls that allow children to develop the necessary personal tools to cope with the world" (Siegel & Senna, 2000, p.105). Adverse family experiences during childhood and adolescence such as parental neglect, rejection and maltreatment can bring about psychological, emotional, and behavioural problems in children (Kim & Kim, 2008; Vanassche, Sodermans, Matthijs, & Swicegood, 2014; Arditti, 2015), all of which can contribute greatly towards juvenile delinquent behaviour. In a way, it may also be true to say that "the exploitive, destructive behaviour of a youth may actually be a symbolic call for help" (Siegel & Senna, 2000, p.105) as it clearly portrays the negative effects of his early childhood experiences on his social, emotional, character, and behavioural development.

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Through healthy and nurturing family relationships, parents can build self-esteem, confidence, social competence, good mentality, virtue, righteousness, positive personality and character traits in their children (Youngblade, Theokas, Schulenberg, Curry, Chan-Huang, & Novak, 2007; Hair, Kaye, Day, & Orthner, 2009; Reingle, Jennings, & Maldonado-Molina, 2012) thus resulting in positive developmental outcomes. Resiliency, in times of crises, can be enhanced through the support of family members and a positive interaction pattern amongst them (Scott, Briskman, Woolgar, Humayun, & O'Connor, 2011; Haines & Case, 2005; Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2009; Ungar, 2016). Studies have indicated that healthy and nurturing family relationships can even atone for the inadequacies of a disadvantaged neighbourhood whilst the effects of negative family relationships can easily integrate with the adverse neighbourhood conditions to intensify delinquent behaviour (Schonberg & Shaw, 2007; Kennedy & Ceballo, 2013). This clearly explains why children from poor families who grow up in a warm and cohesive family environment can perform well in school and become successful in their lives (Orthner, Jones-Sanpei, & Williamson, 2004). However, the opposite seems to be true for those who lack nurturance at home as they may eventually end up in a life of crime (Hess & Drowns, 2010; Kuanling, Sorensen & Cunningham, 2008).

2.3.1 The Parenting Process

The children of today are learning to be future parents from their parents. As though by instinct, they like to model themselves after their primary caregivers, particularly their parents (Bandura, 1977), and are greatly affected by the manner in which they are being brought up (Kiriakidis, 2010). If their parents advocate positive parenting practices, the children would learn to become responsible parents themselves. On the contrary, if their parents are harsh, rejecting, punitive, unforgiving, violent, abusive, neglectful, and

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irresponsible, they will inherit these inadequate parenting practices from them and put these negative traits into practice when they become parents one day (Crighton & Towl, 2015). Like an inherited genetical trait, poor parenting practices can be transmitted from one generation to another and if rampantly adopted, can lead to the breakdown of society. Needless to say, many of our youths have gone astray today due to the reckless ways in which they are being brought up by their parents (Hoeve, Dubas, & Gerris, 2012).

Studies have shown that there is an inverse relation between the attachment to parents and delinquency (Hoeve, Dubas, Eichelsheim, van der Laan, Smeenk, & Gerris, 2009; Gault-Sherman, 2012). Having warm and affectionate parents who are concerned with their children's well-being can even enable the children to tide over the most unfavourable situations in their lives with resilience (Orthner, Jones-Sanpei, & Williamson, 2004). As such, the quality of parent-child relationship is an important predictor of future behaviour particularly during the early phases of child development (Gottfredson, 2006; Cauffman, Farruggia, & Goldweber, 2008; Keijsers, Branje, VanderValk, & Meeus, 2010; Dwairy, 2010; Leiber, Mack, & Featherstone, 2009; Scott, Briskman, Woolgar, Humayun, & O'Connor, 2011). Parent-child connectedness, parental concern, affection, and supervision are amongst some of the potential protective factors against juvenile misconduct (Carlo, McGinley, Hayes, Batenhorst, & Wilkinson, 2007; Leiber, Mack, & Featherstone, 2009; Johnson, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2011) as these could help to build resiliency and reduce the child's susceptibility to negative influences (Leiber, Mack, & Featherstone, 2009). The saying that "families that dine together stay together" does have its significance as it is a proven fact that children who come from close-knit families tend to have higher self-esteem, better sense of purpose and more positive views of life (Fulkerson, Story, Mellin, Leffert, Neumark-Sztainer, & French, 2006; Sen, 2010).

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On the other hand, the lack of parental attachment can result in dire consequences in the children's lives (Kenny, Blacker, & Allerton, 2014; De Vries, Hoeve, Stams, & Asscher, 2016; Sogar, 2017). "If there is a weak attachment between a parent and a child, it is probable that the parent has little interest in bringing up the child in an appropriate manner and, with little interest in their well-being, children may have little interest to please their parents" (Theobald, Farrington, & Piquero, 2013, p.45). Parents who have no knowledge of their children's whereabouts, activities, and associates often produce delinquent children (Smetana, 2008; Nilsson, 2016). Similarly, parents who are cold and indifferent towards their children and are seldom involved in their daily activities are actually encouraging bad behaviour (Beaver, K.M., & Wright, 2007; Ingram, Patchin, Huebner, McCluskey, & Bynum, 2007). Parental rejection and alienation can also be very devastating to the child as these are often associated with a number of externalizing behaviours. There is evidence that alienated children tend to be withdrawn, hostile and defiant and these characteristics can have serious repercussions that extend far into adulthood and old age (Kostić, Nešić, Stanković, Žikić, 2014). Needless to say, children who lack parental attachment do not have to please their parents or worry about what their parents think of them and are therefore more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour (Hirschi, 1969).

Parents can enhance the "conformity of youth by monitoring behaviour, applying consistent discipline, and developing parent-child attachments" (Mack et al., 2007, p.54). In the study conducted by Griffin, Botvin,Scheier, Diaz, and Miller (2000), it was found that "more parental monitoring was associated with less delinquency overall, as well as less drinking in boys" (p.174). One cannot deny the fact that the quality of supervision and parent-child interaction does have an essential role in the emotional, psychological, and

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behavioural development of children (Byrnes, Miller, Chen, & Grube, 2011; Fagan, Van Horn, Antaramian, & Hawkins, 2011). As noted by Smith and Stern (1997):

> We know that children who grow up in homes characterized by lack of warmth and support, whose parents lack behaviour management skills, and whose lives are characterized by conflict and maltreatment will more likely be delinquent, whereas a supportive family can protect children even in a very hostile and damaging external environment… Parental monitoring or supervision is the aspect of family management that is most consistently related to delinquency.
>
> (as cited in Patrick, 2005, p.232)

"Low levels of parental supervision, erratic, threatening, and harsh discipline, and weak parental attachment were strongly and directly related to delinquency" (Sampson & Laub, 1990, as cited in Popenoe, 1996, p.154). On the contrary, higher levels of parental attachment and monitoring have always been associated with reduced behavioural problems amongst adolescents (Roche, Ensminger, & Cherlin, 2007; Nelson, 2010).

One of the most effective parenting practices is parental presence (Milkie, Nomaguchi, & Denny, 2015) as studies have indicated that there is a positive correlation between the length of time mothers work away from home and the frequency of juvenile delinquent behaviour (Ruhm, 2008; Gennetian, Loopo, & London, 2008; Han, Miller, & Walgfogel, 2010). Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory clearly emphasizes on the importance of parent-child relationship and the time they spend together:

> The child attached to his parents may be less likely to get into situations in which delinquent acts are possible, simply because he spends more of his time in their presence.
>
> (p.88)

Parental presence requires at least one of the parents to be there with the children both before and after school. Being with the children means not just being present in the house but also tending to their needs such as preparing breakfast, lunch, and dinner for them, making their beds, mending their toys and clothes as well as helping them with their homework. Studies have shown that parental assistance with homework greatly enhances the children's academic achievement (Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008; van Voorhis,

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2011; Lowe & Dotterer, 2013). In the event that it is not possible for the mother to stay at home and tend to the needs of her children in this era of working mums, the presence of a significant adult in the family such as the grandmother is essential so that the children do not have to return to an empty home after school and spend the afternoons without supervision.

Another important aspect of parenting is that parents should be fair and consistent in disciplining their children so that they know what to expect. They should set clear rules, monitor behaviour, provide rewards for good behaviour and punishment for bad behaviour (Harris-McKoy & Cui, 2013). Failure to do so may cause fear, anxiety and aggression in children thus leading to confusion as it is difficult for them to predict their parents' reactions (Dwairy, 2008; Edwards, Dodge, Latendresse, Lansford, Bates, Pettit, et al., 2010). By turning a blind eye to bad behaviour when they are in a good mood and punishing the children severely for the same behaviour when they are in a bad mood, parents tend to confuse their children. In doing so, they are actually relaying the message to their children that rules and external standards of behaviour are not essential thus causing them to develop more accepting attitudes toward a multitude of antisocial behaviours (Halgunseth, Perkins, Lippold, & Nix, 2013). Parents should also be fair in dealing with their children as those who play favouritism would not only harm the less favoured children's self-concept but also make them more susceptible to delinquency and substance abuse. It is likely that adolescents who are given differential treatment by their parents recognize their disfavoured status and act out behaviourally or engage in substance abuse as means to cope with such feelings (Jensen & Whiteman, 2014).

Apart form inconsistent parenting and favouritism, parents who deal with their children in an overly harsh and unkind manner in the name of discipline often do more harm than good. Studies have shown that physical punishment does not deter bad behaviour

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but, on the contrary, has become an indicator of future delinquent behaviour (Baskin & Sommers, 2011; Mersky, Topitzes, & Reynolds, 2012; Durrant & Ensom, 2012). Parents who like to inflict physical punishment on their children such as caning, smacking, boxing, beating with a hard object, throwing things at them or throwing them out of the house have little to contribute in the proper upbringing of the children. Similarly, starving the children, locking them up in their room, depriving them of their pocket money, or mocking them in front of everyone when they make some minor mistakes certainly do not help in making good citizens out of them. Children subjected to abuse and maltreatment are at a greater risk of depression, aggressive behaviour, substance abuse, crime, and delinquency (Baldry, 2007; Lo & Cheng, 2007; Mersky, Topitzes, & Reynolds, 2012). Harsh and punitive discipline should be avoided as it often backfires to produce the opposite effect to what one anticipates (Baskin, & Sommers, 2011; Mersky, Topitzes, & Reynolds, 2012; Scolastica, Aloka, Gatumu, & Gitonga, 2015).

In a way, the parents' attitude towards crime may also have a role to play in the enhancement or prevention of crime (Walters, 2014). For instance, parents who assume that taking things belonging to another is nothing serious and always do so themselves are actually encouraging their children to steal. Those living in the low-cost flats would probably realize that they cannot put anything of value outside their flat because it could disappear within seconds as stealing has almost become a habit for some of the low-cost flats dwellers (Tan, 2016). I have seen a mother stealing a pair of slippers in front of her children whilst putting her finger on her lips gesturing them to keep quiet. Parents who steal in front of their children be it just a T-shirt, feather duster, broom or a pair of slippers and ask their children not to tell anyone about it even though these things do not cost much are actually setting a bad example for their children. Children who always see their parents taking their neighbours' things would assume that stealing is alright as long as they are not

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caught. Once this bad habit is adopted by the children as a social norm, they will cling to it all their lives.

Parents should also have some expectations for success from their children that the children are capable of achieving such as passing exams and completing school as these could enhance their children's academic and occupational outcomes (Beutel & Anderson, 2008; Flouri & Hawkes, 2008; Zhang, Haddad, Torres, & Chen, 2011). Poor parents can therefore compensate for their lack of financial resources "by demonstrating more optimistic expectations for their children, which can serve to increase children's own expectations, and eventual school attainment" (Zhang, 2012, pp. 4-5). However, they should know their children's capabilities and not make them attempt the impossible.

2.3.2 Family Structure

Juveniles who pose the greatest threat to society are those who grow up in broken families (Skardhamar, 2009). In her book entitled *It Takes a Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us,* Hillary Clinton (1996) states that children living in single-parent families or step-parent families are more likely to develop emotional and behavioural problems than children from intact families. "In general, children whose parents divorce have moderately poor outcomes (i.e., emotional well-being, a variety of conduct related difficulties, academic achievement, physical health, teen-age childbearing, and labor force participation) than children living in continuously intact two-parent families" (Videon, 2002, p.489). There is also a greater likelihood for children from broken homes to engage in delinquent behaviour compared to those living with their biological parents (Videon, 2002; Hilton & Desrochers, 2002; Skardhamar, 2009).

"One of the main concerns of a divorced home is that the family structure has been broken" (Glaeser, 2014, p.1). With the rising divorce rates in the recent decades, the change

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in family structure "has emerged as one of the most important areas of inquiry for understanding delinquency, especially among younger adolescents" (Booth, Farrell, & Varano, 2008, p.428) because of the devastating effects it has on child development (Amato & Cheadle, 2008). Studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between parental divorce and delinquency due to the changes in the life course of the family (Brooks, 2011; Burt, Barnes, McGue, & Iacono, 2008). The broken family is believed to be less effective in the upbringing of children (Skardhamar, 2009; Ojo, 2012) "because of lack of proper role models, failure to control the child, and insufficient paternal or maternal love" (Wilkinson, 1974, as cited in Sheehan, 2010, p.16).

In Malaysia, the divorce rate has more than doubled since the year 2004 with 56,760 divorces being recorded in 2012 (which means that a couple is getting divorced every ten minutes) with the divorce rates amongst Muslims making up about 84.1% of the total number of divorces in Malaysia. Based on the latest statistics from the Islamic Development Department (JAKIM), there were 20,916 divorces amongst Muslim couples in 2004 compared to 47,740 in 2012 and 49,311 in 2013 (Boo, 2014). With the 1994 amendments to the Islamic Family Law, more men are now unilaterally divorcing their wives without just cause and possibly without their knowledge. As for the non-Muslim couples, the divorce rate increased by 2.7 times from 3,291 cases in 2004 to 9,020 cases in 2012 (Boo, 2014). Needless to say, "such family measures as the percentage of the population divorced, the percentage of the households headed by women, and the percentage of unattached individuals in the community are among the most powerful predictors of crime rates" (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990, as cited in Popenoe, 2009, p.62). With the increase in the divorce rate in this new millennium, the parent-child relationship is being put to the test. As the number of households with both biological parents has declined dramatically, there is also a decline in the quality of family life in this country since divorce

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can lead to loss of time with each parent, economic insecurity, decreased social and psychological maturation, loss of religious faith and practice, loss of cognitive and academic stimulation, premature sexual activity, decline in physical health, and higher risk of emotional distress (Anderson, 2014). Needless to say, these negative parental divorce experiences are directly associated with the rise of juvenile delinquency (Burt, Barnes, McGue, & Iacono, 2008).

Although divorce and separation are common phenomena in our society today, they can still be very devastating to all those involved (Amato & Cheadle, 2008). The children, especially, are most seriously affected as they try to endure the intense pain and anger when their parents divorce. Some may put up a courageous front and pretend that it does not matter whilst others may suffer from depression, anxiety, and sleepless nights. Whatever the situation may be, the aftermath of divorce would linger on in their lives long after they have grown up. Although many children from divorced families are doing well and do not show any signs of emotional or behavioural distress, one cannot discount the fact that children of divorced parents are at a higher risk of behavioural problems compared to children from intact families (McIntosh & Deacon-Wood, 2003; Amato, 2010). This is because divorce does have serious repercussions on "children's hearts, minds, and souls" which "ranges from mild to severe, from seemimgly small to observably significant, and from short-term to long-term" (Fagan & Churchill, 2012, p.2).

Basically, the stressors that could account for the adverse effects of divorce on the children can be divided into six broad categories that can be viewed from six different perspectives. These include (a) absence of the noncustodial parent, (b) parental adjustment after divorce, (c) interparental conflict, (d) economic hardship, (e) stressful life changes, and (f) remarriage and reparenting (Amato, 1993; Kelly & Emery, 2003). A combination of these six perspectives is therefore necessary to account fully for the outcomes of divorce as

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much would depend on the number, type, severity and duration of the stressors involved and these differ from situation to situation.

The noncustodial parental absence perspective refers to the time spent between the noncustodial parents and their children. This perspective recognizes the importance of two-parent households in providing a stable family life for the children (Amato, 1993; Kelly & Emery, 2003). The presence of two parents in the household would mean that there is more supervision, emotional support, and financial stability for the children. On the other hand, children with divorced parents would find that they have lost the love, nurturance, guidance, emotional support and disciplinary influence of that parent which cannot be replaced. Parents are important role models in the social development of children and since children like to model themselves after their biological parents, losing a parent would also mean that they have lost a proper role model (Amato, 1993; Thompson & Barker, 2008).

Children who are used to living with both parents would also suffer emotionally when the noncustodial parent is not around as much as he/she used to be following the divorce (Kelly & Emery, 2003). Studies have indicated that the children of divorce normally assume that the most heartbreaking consequence of divorce is the loss of contact with the noncustodial parent particularly if they are very close to this parent (Kelly & Emery, 2003). According to Kelly and Emery (2003), about 18–25% of the children normally do not have contact with the noncustodial parents 2-3 years following the divorce and that about 18-25% of mothers do not like the children to keep in touch with their fathers. With the passage of time, the quantity and quality of time spent with the noncustodial parent (normally the father) would diminish (Amato & Booth, 1996).

` Although most single mothers are given the custody of their children, studies have indicated that children want to spend more time with their fathers (Kelly & Emery, 2003). Fathers "are expected to give their children guidance, instruction, encouragement, care, and

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love. In giving these things, men bring to their children something quite different from what mothers bring. The unique contribution of fathers, in turn, are strongly related to successful child outcomes" (Popenoe, 2009, p.142). Studies have indicated that children with fathers who are involved in their lives are more confident, have higher self-esteem, more sociable, exhibit better self-control, are more competent, and have greater life satisfaction (Kume, 2015). "More optimistically, father involvement may protect against adverse outcomes later in life" (Scourfield, Cheung, & Macdonald, 2014, p.40). On the contrary, father absence makes the sons more aggressive and irresponsible whilst the daughters are more likely to engage in premarital sexual behaviour (McLanahan, Tach, & Schneider, 2013; Ellis, Bates, Dodge, & Woodward, 2003; Mendie, Harden, Turkheimer, Van Hulle, D'Onofrio, Brooks-Gunn, Rodgers, Emery, & Lahey, 2009; La Guarda, Nelson, & Lertora, 2014).

According to Mitchell and King (2009), "there is near uniform agreement among family scholars that children with nonresident fathers tend to be worse off with respect to behavioural problems and school achievement than children who reside with both biological parents" (p.650). "Violent misbehaviour in the school were 11 times as likely not to live with their fathers and 6 times as likely to have parents who were not married" (Sheline, Skipper, & Broadhead, 1994, p.662). As stated by Biller (1993):

> Males who are father deprived early in life are likely to engage later in rigidly over-compensatory masculine behaviours. The incidence of crimes against property and people, including child abuse and family violence, is relatively high in societies where the rearing of young children is considered to be an exclusively female endeavor.
>
> (p.1)

Even though there are many intervention programs aimed at reducing the risk of delinquent behaviour amongst children from single-mother families, none of these can be more effective than having one's biological father around because "children need their fathers" (p.11).

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In low income families, father absence "can lead boys to seek patterns of masculinity in delinquent groups of peers" as substitutes for the family and this could "contribute to the acquisition of such attributes as cruelty, strength, excitability and anxiety" (World Youth Report, 2003, p.195). As stated by President George W. Bush (2001):

> We know that children who grow up with absent-fathers can suffer lasting damage. They are more likely to end up in poverty or drop out of school, become addicted to drugs, have a child out of wedlock, or end up in prison. Fatherlessness is not the only cause of these things, but our nation must recognize it is an important factor.
>
> (as cited in Jackson, Turner, & Battle, 2015, p.38)

Needless to say, school failure, low self-esteem, relationship problems, sexual identity confusion, depression, psychiatric problems, substance abuse, and delinquency are but some of the norms in fatherless homes (Amato & Keith, 1991; Biller, 1993; Neher & Short, 1998; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999; Jeynes, 2007; Strohschein, 2005; Lansford, 2009; Mitchell & King, 2009). Sad to say, "the decline of fatherhood is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation" (Blankenhorn, 1996, as cited in Hoston, 2016, p.48) as the fatherlessness situation is becoming increasingly obvious in our Malaysian society.

The parental adjustment perspective focuses on the psychological state of the parents following a divorce (Amato, 1993). Divorce is a traumatic experience as it has the potential to interfere with parenting responsibilities and duties and a period of less effective parenting is inevitable after divorce (Sigal, Sandler, Wolchik, & Braver, 2011). According to Kitson and Morgan (1990), divorce is one of the most stressful occurrences in life and adjustment difficulties are natural consequences following a divorce since most parents suffer from adjustment problems. Fear, anger, anxiety, hatred, depression, self-doubt, and poor health are amongst some of the more common occurrences that continue to prevail in the aftermath of divorce thus making the divorce more difficult to bear (Lorenz, Wickrama, Conger, & Elder, Jr., 2006). The "experience of divorce itself may result in stress and lower

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levels of emotional well-being which, in turn, are associated with lower parental engagement and less effective parenting" (Raymo, Park, Iwasawa, & Zhou, 2014, p.846) particularly for those who are not ready to confront the pain of rejection and separation. Divorce can therefore affect children's behaviour by affecting parental behaviour (Mabuza, Thwala, & Okeke, 2014). Being preoccupied with their own emotions and burdened with the stressful demands of single-parenting, many single-parents tend to overlook the essential parenting skills that are required of them and hence neglecting their children's social and emotional needs (Kelly & Emery, 2003).

Studies have indicated that "single-parenting has negative effects on the psychosocial development of children" (Mabuza, Thwala, & Okeke, 2014) and this clearly explains why children from divorce families tend to "score lower on a variety of emotional, behavioural, social, health, and academic outcomes" compared to children from intact families (Amato, 2010, p.653). Due to the stressors of single parenthood, many single-parents have lesser expectations for their children and less time to supervise them as they find it difficult "to prioritize their children's needs above other life demands' (Mack, Leiber, Featherstone, & Monserud, 2007, p.53). The many responsibilities of raising a family demand a lot of their time, effort and energy. Besides working at a job**,** the single-parents have to do the washing, cooking, shopping as well as parenting. There is also the need to provide education, recreation, health care, supervision and emotional support for their children. Needless to say, their stressful life situation often makes them less sensitive towards the needs of their children.

The interparental conflict perspective refers to the marital discord between the parents before and after the divorce and the negative effects that it has on the children. According to Amato (1993), pre-divorce conflict can be worse than the separation itself as the parents continue to vent out their frustration towards each other in hatred and anger.

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"Having fathers who undermine their wives, who fight with the family, and who are aggressive provide models of antisocial behaviour" (McCord, 2007, p.104). The same applies to having mothers who quarrel or even fight with their husbands due to pre-divorce blues. Hostility between the parents can be very stressful to the children as it causes them to live in fear, anxiety, anger and hatred thus making them more aggressive. Some may even blame themselves for their parents' conflicting relationship as they are trying to cope with the situation (Fear, Champion, Reeslund, Forehand et al., 2009). Although divorce and separation help to protect the children from their parents' conflicting relationship, in a way it also exposes them to intense interparental conflict during the transitory period prior to the divorce and even after the divorce (Amato & Cheadle, 2008; McIntosh, Burke, Dour, & Gridley, 2009). Parental conflict (even in intact families) has been proven to be detrimental to the children involved (Amato & Cheadle, 2008; Musick & Meier, 2010; Vanassche, Sodermans, Matthijs, & Swicegood, 2014).

The economic hardship perspective focuses on the reduction or loss of financial resources and decline in the standard of living for the single-parent families after the divorce (Amato 1993; Kelly & Emery, 2003; Aassve, Betti, Mazzuco, & Mencarini, 2007). Separation and divorce brings about financial and economic changes and this is particularly true for the single-mother families since women are more likely to experience financial difficulties after a divorce (Christopher, England, Smeeding, & Phillips, 2002; Kulik & Heine-Cohen, 2011; Caragata & Alcalde, 2014). "While some women successfully compensate for lost spousal earnings through child support, welfare, combining households, and increasing labor supply, others are markedly unsuccessful" (Ananat & Michaels, 2008, p.611). The reduction of financial resources would also mean a reduction in the children's access to computers, internet, proper nourishment, books, tuition,

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guitar/piano lessons, ballet classes, trips abroad, educational toys, and a quality education all of which can be very disappointing to the children.

Furthermore, single-parents who are suffering from financial stress often have to move to neighbourhoods with poor housing conditions characterized by the prevalence crime and delinquency (Wolfinger, 2005). Since they cannot afford to pay for the high rental in a more decent area, they have to accept the poor living conditions in a less desirable neighbourhood. Living in undesirable conditions may help to reduce the rental on one hand but enhances the children's behavioural problems on the other as they have every opportunity to mingle with troubled peers in the neighbourhood thus increasing their chances of participating in antisocial activities. According to Kelly and Emery (2003), poor single mothers move house 75% more often during the first six years after a divorce compared to an average mother. Shuffling the children from one residential area to another would make it more difficult for them to have a stable home environment as it takes time to build up new relationships each time they move into a new neighbourhood. Studies have indicated that children who are often uprooted are in a more disadvantageous position compared to those who grow up in a stable home environment as an unstable home environment can have adverse effects on the children's developmental outcomes (Amato & Booth, 1994; Ou, 2005; Fomby & Cherlin, 2007).

The stressful life changes following a divorce often cause the divorced parents to suffer emotional, psychological, physical, and financial problems and these can be detrimental to their health and well-being (Trotter, 2009). They may resort to alcoholism and even suicide (Trotter, 2009) as a way out of the painful realities of divorce which can be very devastating to the children especially if their parents have not informed them adequately about the divorce. In actual fact, divorce may be more stressful to the children than the parents as children from divorced families have a higher tendency to suffer from

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stress and depression compared to the children from intact families (Oldehinkel, Omel, Veenstra, DeWinter, & Verhulst, 2008; Marshall & Henderson, 2014). Pre-divorce blues such as violence, conflict, and parental neglect can create a lot of negative emotions in the children. Similarly, post-divorce blues such as moving houses, changing schools, and hence losing their old friends and neighbours can also be very stressful to the children.

The situation in divorced families normally worsens if the parents remarry and the children have to stay with their stepparents and possibly step-siblings. Kelly and Emery (2003) are of the opinion that remarriage and reparenting can be very stressful for the children especially when their parents remarry all too soon after the divorce. There is evidence that "living in a stepfamily does not benefit youth, and can in some ways disadvantage them, even compared to their peers in single-mother families" (Tillman, 2007, p.383). As with divorce, children in stepfamily homes are twice likely to have psychological, behavioural, social, and academic problems than children in nondivorced families (Kelly & Emery, 2003). Being remarried, their biological parents are always too busy with their new families to give them the affection and supervision that they need. Since remarriages when children from a prior relationship are present are more prone to divorce than childless remarriages, marital conflict is often inevitable in stepfamilies (Coleman & Ganong, 1987). Although there are stepparents who treat their stepchildren as their own biological children, the "Cinderella effect" is not uncommon in many stepfamilies where the stepchildren are being abused and victimized (Daly & Wilson, 2007; Fehlbaum, 2010; Zarina, 2015). In extreme cases, heated arguments and even fights may ensue which may turn out to be fatal (Heide, 1993). Violence between the stepparents and the stepchildren is nothing new as it poses the greatest risk amongst step-parent families (Daly & Wilson, 1988). Although many children who grow up in stepfamilies are living a normal and successful life, considerable research has indicated that, on average,

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stepchildren growing up in stepfamilies have worse outcomes than children from two-biological-parent homes (Lamanna, Riedman, & Stewart, 2015).

The least that parents who are on the verge of separation/divorce can do is to avoid conflict as it can be very stressful and devastating to the children (Kristjansson, Sigfusdottir, Allegrante, & Helgason, 2009). Whatever the situation may be, concern for the children should be the greatest concern for the divorced couple and they should maintain good parent-child relationship, supervision and monitoring of behaviour even though they are no longer staying together. Shared parenting is probably the best way out for the parents and their children in the event of a divorce if the parents were able to develop high quality coparenting relationships (Markham, Ganong, & Coleman, 2007; Hardesty, Crossman, Khaw, & Raffaelli, 2016). Building a new relationship based on honour and respect and staying as friends is the best thing that the divorced couple can do for the proper upbringing of their children. Children tend to have fears and feelings of insecurity when their parents divorce that make it difficult for them to cope with life. Knowing that both their parents still care for them and would make every effort to provide for them even though they are going separate ways can be a very effective protective factor for the children in the event that they cannot have both parents with them.

2.3.3 Family Size

Studies have shown that there is a direct causal link between having a large number of children in the family and juvenile delinquency (Fischer, 1984; Crighton & Towl, 2015). In a Cambridge study, it was found that "if a boy had four or more siblings by his tenth birthday, this doubled his risk of being convicted as a juvenile" (Crighton & Towl, 2015, p.170). "As family size increases, the likelihood of delinquency increases" (Hirschi, 1969, p.239) and the reasons for this relationship are very obvious. When there are too many

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mouths to feed in a poverty-stricken family, persistent household food insecurity often results in hunger, malnutrition, poor health, chronic illness, and stunted growth which may hamper the children's involvement in daily activities in school and social interaction with their peers (Armstrong-Mensah, 2017). Household food insecurity also "puts children at a greater risk for emotional problems, truancy, school tardiness, and behavioural issues manifested in the form of aggression, anxiety, bullying, fighting, hyperactivity, mood swings, stealing, and vandalism" (Armstrong-Mensah, 2017, p.90). Food insecure households can therefore interfere with the healthy growth and development of children and enhance their misbehaviours (Jackson & Vaughn, 2016).

In large families, it is also not uncommon for the older siblings to be delegated the responsibility to look after their younger siblings even though they themselves need to be disciplined and supervised because their parents cannot afford to look after so many children (Ardelt & Day, 2002). Since "older deviant siblings had the strongest effect on adolescent deviance" (Ardelt & Day, 2002, p.310), these bad role models can have negative influences on their younger siblings.

With the presence of so many children in the household, overcrowding is inevitable especially for the poverty-stricken families and this can be very frustrating for the children (Solari & Mare, 2012). This is particularly true for those staying in the low-cost flats. Given that a typical low-cost flat has only two small bedrooms, the boys would normally sleep in the living room (according to my former students) which is not much bigger than the bedroom (based on what I saw during my visit to the low-cost flats) and those with many siblings would not even have enough space to stretch their legs when they sleep. Living in a low-cost flat with so many siblings where the level of noise is unbearable (Amran, 2014) would mean that home is no longer a pleasant place and the children would have to look for alternative places to go in order to avoid the discomforts of family life. Needless to say,

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children who try to avoid staying at home are often found wandering the streets and being in places where they are not supposed to be such as the internet cafés, snooker centres or shopping malls where they while away their time without any particular aim. Being in such places would only expose them to the possibilities of crime and delinquency as it is inevitable for them to mingle with antisocial friends under such circumstances.

It seems that Darwin's theory of the *Survival of the Fittest* applies equally well to such families as it is not uncommon for the children to compete for physical (e.g., space, food, toys, clothes, books, TV channels) and psychological (e.g., attention, affection, interaction) resources in overcrowded homes (Fischer, 1984). This can easily lead to academic failure, tension between the siblings, emotional stress, health, psychological, and behavioural problems (Goux & Maurin, 2005; Solari & Mare, 2012; Crighton & Towl, 2015). Since a child's intellectual development is a function of the intellectual environment provided by the family, this clearly explains why children from larger families growing up in a less enriched environment tend to perform less well on measures on ability (Polit, 1982).

Poverty and family size have always been an interrelated issue as it is not uncommon for low-income couples in developing nations to have more children than well-off couples (Tray, 1983). Given the disadvantages of having a big family when the family income is low, family planning is therefore an effective protective factor against juvenile delinquency as it "plays a pivotal role in population growth, poverty reduction, and human development" (Allen, 2007, p. 999). Studies have shown that children with fewer siblings tend to perform better in school and are therefore more successful in their lives (Chinyoka & Naidu, 2014). Having fewer siblings would bring about improvements in parental involvement which could enhance the social functioning and behaviour of the children. Needless to say, having fewer children in the family would mean that each of them is given

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more parental attention and support, more access to the basic amenities of life, better educational facilities, nutrition and healthcare.

2.3.4 Socioeconomic Status

Poverty and low socioeconomic status in childhood are powerful risk factors and have always been associated with substance abuse, crime, and delinquency (Galloway & Skardhamar, 2010; Bjerk, 2007; D'Onofrio, Goodnight, Van Hulle, Rodgers, Rathouz, Waldman, & Lahey, 2009). The saying that "the rich get richer and the poor get prison" (Reiman & Leighton, 2013) does have some truth in it as one cannot deny the painful truth that the moment a child is born into a poor family, he may have to face a bleak future ahead. In the process of struggling for existence, some may thrive well but many of them would end up being victims of fate and circumstances. According to Schorr and Schorr (1989), "risk factors leading to later damage occur more frequently among children in families that are poor and still more frequently among families that are persistently poor and live in areas of concentrated poverty" (p.29). Much would depend on the occupational status, education level, and income of the parents as these are the factors which determine if a family has attained an acceptable standard of living. Children tend to fare badly in life if their parents have a low education level and/or low occupational status or are unemployed. Needless to say, poverty can lead to severe financial constraints, family stress and hardship, strained parent-child relationships, family conflict and even parental divorce (Oreopoulos, Page, & Stevens, 2008; Kalil & Wightman, 2011). Given these crime enhancing factors, any child can easily be tempted to commit a crime.

Disadvantaged youths are often stigmatized by society and once labelled a delinquent, "the stigma of the criminal status may increase the probability that the individual becomes involved in deviant social groups" (Bernburg, Krohn, & Rivera, 2006,

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p.67). According to the World Youth Report (2003), this "act of labeling may lead to the self-adoption of a delinquent image, which later results in delinquent activity" (p.196). The saying 'once a delinquent always a delinquent' is a self-fulfilling prophecy as children adjudicated delinquents are more likely to offend in retaliation to their negative labelling experiences (Chiricos, Barrick, & Bales, 2007; Lopes, Krohn, Lizotte, Schmidt, Vásquez, & Bernburg, 2012). Once branded a delinquent, the lower-class children would be denied the chances of accessing decent employment thus paving the way for their failures in life. Since there are so many barriers preventing them from achieving their goals and purposes in life, they do not have much to lose irrespective of whether they are delinquent or not. Given this kind of unfair stigmatization by society, it is no wonder why some of them have chosen to retaliate in an inhuman way as indicated in the many snatch theft incidents in this country that have resulted in severe injury or death.

Poverty can also have a direct effect on family relationships (Mistry, Vandewater, Houston, & McLoyd, 2002). Poor parents are often being denied the chance of caring and providing supervision for their children as they have to work for longer hours to earn a pittance (Han, Miller, & Waldfogel, 2010). The responsibility to provide for the family and to meet the needs of all family members from the economic point of view can cause excessive pressure on them (Banovcinova, Levicka, & Veres, 2014). Further, children can be very demanding nowadays and it is not unusual for them to have a penchant for the latest trends and collectables due to peer pressure in school (Waterflow, 2012). They would be very disappointed if their parents could not afford to buy them the things that they want. The parents' inability to provide for their children's material needs often establishes a sense of dissatisfaction and insecurity in the children which may result in family conflicts. Financial constraints not only lead to restricted access to material sources (food, toys, books, mobile phones, computers, clothes, etc.) but also immaterial sources as well (for

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instance in the area of education, in the access to information, in possibilities of development of one's experiences and skills, etc.) thus creating a lot of stressful situations within the family (Banovcinova, Levicka, & Veres, 2014). Given such circumstances, the impoverished children would normally turn to their own peer groups for support and help. Under the influences of their peers, they may resort to criminal activities such as burglary, theft, or robbery in order to get the things that they want (Tong, 2014).

One cannot deny the fact that "family stress caused by problems with the fulfillment of the family economic function, affects the way parents fulfill their parental role" (Banovcinova, Levicka, & Veres, 2014, p.148). "Economic strains such as not having enough money to pay the bills and lacking basic necessities contribute to psychological problems in parents" (Wadsworth, Raviv, Compas, & Connor-Smith, 2005, p.284). This clearly explains why some parents who encounter serious financial problems also tend to have poor family management skills (Mistry, Vandewater, Houston, & McLoyd, 2002). Being financially insecure themselves, it is not easy for them to cope with the many responsibilities of parenthood and this is clearly manifested in the careless way in which they bring up their children (Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010). Family conflict, increased irritability, poor supervision, harsh discipline and erratic punishment are but some of the more common problems in families threatened with financial crisis (Guajardo, Snyder, & Petersen, 2009). Needless to say, poverty-related stress is "a constant source of frustration and demoralization" (Wadsworth, Raviv, Compas, & Connor-Smith, 2005, p.283) that can play havoc with child upbringing and development as it can result in poor family functioning (Wadsworth, Raviv, Reinhard, Wolff, Santiago, & Einhorn, 2008; Guajardo, Snyder, & Petersen, 2009). This is not to say that poor children cannot or do not become healthy, happy, productive adults but poverty would make the barriers in their lives more difficult to surmount (Leach, 1995).

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2.4 School Risk and Protective Factors

The school is one of the major socializing institutions during the children's most formative years and plays a very cucial role in integrating them into society. It is a place where the children spend a significant period of their lives:

> For almost a dozen years during a formative period of their development children spend almost as much of their waking life at school as at home. Altogether this works out at some *15,000* hours (from the age of five until school leaving) during which schools and teachers may have an impact on the development of the children in their care.
>
> (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, & Smith, 1982, p.1)

"As one of the most proximal and potentially powerful settings for influencing children and youth" (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012, p.366), "our schools are potentially one of our best weapons in the fight against delinquency" (Tunley, 1962, p.130). However, given the fact that school occupies a strategic position in the life of our children, the school is also "significantly associated with adolescent delinquent behaviour" (Bao, Li, Zhang, & Wang, 2015, p.81). As what Negley Teeters (1896-1971), a renowned criminologist and Professor Emeritus of Temple University said, "if you ask me, the crux of our delinquency is not the parents; it's the schools" (as cited in Tunley, 1962, p.119).

Caldwell, Sturges, and Silver (2007) are of the opinion that the emotional and affective domains of the students are in some way affected by their school environment. A positive school environment not only enhances the students' social and academic competencies but also protect them against a whole host of environmental risk factors. (Youngblade et al., 2007; Stuhlman & Pianta, 2009). Studies have indicated that the effects of a positive school environment can be so great that they can even have moderating effects on family risk factors (O'Malley, Voight, Renshaw, & Eklund, 2015). "By improving the relationship among school members, the collaboration and participation of these members, and the agreement on common goals and norms, schools could increase students'

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attachment to school, commitment to education, and belief in school rules and norms" (Payne, Gottfredson, & Gottfredson, 2003, p.773).

According to Hirschi's Social Control Theory (1969), a child's commitment to school is inversely proportional to his social bonds in school. Social bonding in school refers to the attachment to teachers, association with peers, involvement in school activities and belief in the legitimacy of school rules. Aligned with the Social Control Theory, high academic achievement, strong bonding with teachers, peer acceptance, and positive school engagement are associated with greater commitment to school and lesser commitment to delinquent behaviour (Hirschi, 1969). The risk and protective factors associated with the school environment are discussed below.

2.4.1 Educational Attainment

Studies have shown that the students' failure in school is directly related to delinquent behaviour (Gyansah, Soku, & Esilfie, 2015). Since they spend most of their early years of life in school, "children with low academic performance, low commitment to school, and low educational aspirations during the elementary and middle school grades are at a higher risk for child delinquency than are other children" (Herrenkohl, Hawkins, Chung, Hill, & Battin-Pearson, 2001, p.223). According to McEvoy and Welker (2000):

> … research generally suggests that an individual's antisocial conduct is at least partially an outcome of poor academic performance, and often it is. It is equally likely that, for many students, poor academic performance is an outcome of their disruptive behaviour.
>
> (p. 131)

As there is a very close relationship between delinquency and poor educational attainment, it may not be easy to decide which one comes first. Irrespective of whether delinquency leads to poor academic performance or poor academic performance leads to delinquency, it is an obvious fact that poor school grades are one of the strongest predictors of juvenile delinquency (Gyansah, Soku, & Esilfie, 2015). One cannot deny the fact that:

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> Offenders do not do well in school. They do not like school. They tend to be truant and to drop out at an early age. As a result every 'school' variable correlates strongly with crime and delinquency.
>
> (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990, p.162)

Poor grades can also lead to aggressive behaviour and aggressive students are more likely to experience conflict with their teachers (Doumen, Verschueren, Buyse, Germeijs, Luyckx, & Soenens, 2008) which would eventually enhance their decision to drop out of school (Henry, Knight, & Thornberry, 2012). On the other hand, students who feel engaged, committed, and respected would want to keep up their good image and enhance their status in school (Hirschi, 1969).

Strain theorists argue that students with low academic abilities and perform poorly in school are more inclined towards crime and delinquency (Cohen, 1966; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Merton, 1968). Poor academic performance can lead to frustration (Islam, Islam, & Hoque, 2014) and frustrated students have the tendency to create problems in school. This was clearly exemplified by my former students who used to vent their feelings of frustration by fighting with their schoolmates, disrupting classroom activities and vandalizing school properties to express dissatisfaction with their school life. They were also truant and enjoyed idling away their time with children like themselves in the neighbourhood thus further exposing themselves to antisocial activities. Academic incompetence can therefore lead to hostility towards school life, rejection of school authority, truancy, and delinquency. There is thus a chain of events that links poor academic achievement with antisocial behaviour.

Since academic success can be a very effective protective factor against delinquency, teachers should not only teach effectively and efficiently but also have some expectations for their students' academic achievement and set some distinct rules for good behaviour that their students are expected to conform with (Gregory & Huang, 2013). As stated by the Social Control Theory, students who know that their teachers have some

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expectations for them tend to perform better than those whose teachers do not expect anything from them (Hirschi, 1969). Similarly, consistent acknowledgement and recognition for excellent performance can motivate the students to succeed. Since one of the most crucial aspects of human life is the need for self-worth, teachers' motivation can evoke the students' desire to achieve academic success and outperform their peers in school (You, Dang, & Lim, 2016).

2.4.2 Teacher-Student Relationship

Attachment to other caregivers such as the teachers in the school microsystem is fundamental to the cognitive, social, and emotional development of the children (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). As primary agents of the educational process, "teachers' ability to engage with children in a sensitive, responsive manner and to provide a positive classroom emotional climate are crucial" (Stuhlman & Pianta, 2009, p.324). Positive teacher-student relationships enable the students to explore the school microsystem confidently knowing that they can always resort to their teachers for assistance in times of stress (Martin & Dowson, 2009) thus making them feel secure and comfortable when confronted with the challenges of school life (Rimm-Kaufman, 2010). Like the quality of parent-child relationship, teacher-student relationship has also become a major predictor of delinquent behaviour.

Since teachers play an essential role in the lives of their students throughout their formal schooling years (Baker, Grant, & Morlock, 2008), "students' relationships and interactions with teachers either produce or inhibit developmental change" (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012, p.366). Studies have indicated that students who enjoy a positive relationship with their teachers tend to have higher school engagement (Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008; Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012), higher self-esteem

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(Wentzel, 2003), are better motivated (Crosnoe, Johnson, & Glen, 2004, Eamon, 2005; Sciarra & Seirup, 2008; Fan & Williams, 2010; Wooley, Kol, & Bowen, 2009), and hence perform more satisfactorily in school (Hirschi, 1969; Crosnoe et al., 2004; Eamon, 2005). They also have better emotional, social, moral, character, and behavioural development (Orth, Robins, & Widaman, 2012; Kuperminc, Leadbeater, & Blatt, 2001; Merritt, Wanless, Rimm-Kaufman, Cameron, & Peugh, 2012).

Studies have shown that positive teacher–student relationship not only helps to reduce the dropout rates amongst the students (Henry, Knight, & Thornberry, 2012; Wentzel, 2002 & 2003) but is also "an important protective factor of alleviating the negative consequences of parental maltreatment" (Back & Lee, 2015, p.51) and insulating the students against a negative school environment and unsafe neighbourhoods (Steinberg, Allensworth, & Johnson, 2011). There is evidence that students from low income families who enjoy a positive relationship with their teachers tend to perform better academically and have better social-emotional adjustment (Murray & Malmgren, 2005).

The contrary seems to be true "in the absence of warm, supportive relations between teachers and students (Bartollas, 1990, p.299). as "schools tend to have more problems when teachers lack genuine interests in students" (Bartollas, 1990, p.299). Children who are in conflict with their teachers often find it difficult to integrate themselves into the school environment (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012). The feelings of hostility that come with their conflicting relationship with their teachers often act as obstacles that prevent their commitment to school. Conflicting relationships with the teachers may also lead to peer rejection (Mercer & DeRosier, 2009). Classroom relationships, particularly those between peers, are essential for the development of social skills and positive academic achievement (Stuhlman & Pianta, 2009). Positive peer interactions can enhance the children's social communication and problem solving skills that may benefit them for a lifetime (Bulotsky-

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Shearer, Bell, & Dominguez, 2012). There is also evidence that peer interaction is necessary for optimum learning in the classroom (Linton, Farmer, & Peterson, 2014). Peer rejection can therefore result in many long-term effects such as depression, academic failure and discipline problems (Silk, Siegle, Lee, Nelson, Stroud, & Dahl, 2014; Kupersmidt & DeRosier, 2004).

In a way, the teachers perceptions and attitude towards their students can also have a tremendous impact on their performance in school (Hafen, Ruzek, Gregory, Allen, & Mikami, 2015; Murray & Zvoch, 2011). Their negative views and implicit biases can have a devastating effect on the students self-esteem which may in turn cause them to fare badly in their studies and this is particularly true for the low achievers. The connection between negative teacher attitude and low educational achievement is clearly emphasized by Davidson and Lang (1960):

> It is therefore likely that a lower class child, especially if he is not doing well at school, will have a negative perception of his teacher's feelings towards him. These negative perceptions will in turn tend to lower his efforts to achieve in school and/or increase the probability that he will aggravate the negative attitude of his teachers towards him, which in turn will affect his self-confidence and so on.
>
> (p.114)

For instance, a teacher who tells the slow learners that it does not matter what they do in class as long as they do not make noise as she does not expect anything from them (as characterized by some of the Malaysian teachers) is doing more harm than good. In doing so, she is indirectly undermining her students' learning abilities which may result in school failure since the students' academic performance is greatly influenced by their teachers' expectations for them (Sciarra & Ambrosino, 2011; Gregory & Huang, 2013). Similarly teachers who call their students names (such as pig or idiot) or treat them disrecpectfully would not make better persons out of their students. This kind of attitude may backfire when their students take revenge on them by scratching their cars or removing the tyres. In extreme cases, they may even be beaten up by their students!

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Harsh disciplinary actions carried out by the teachers can also have adverse consequences on the children (Monahan, VanDerhei, Bechtold, & Cauffman, 2014). Harsh disciplinary actions such as caning, hitting with a shoe, and running round the field under the hot sun not only force them to resort to truancy as a means of escape from the harsh realities of school life but also make them more rebellious towards their teachers as clearly exemplified by the respondents of this study. Although suspension and/or expulsion are common disciplinary actions taken by the school authorities, these disciplinary methods can have serious long-term effects on children (Kupchik & Catlaw, 2014). In the study conducted by Bilchik (1999), it was shown that boys who were suspended from school committed more delinquent acts compared to those who stayed in school. "Exclusion from the classroom, for even a few days, disrupts a child's education and may escalate misbehaviour by removing the child from a structured environment and giving him or her increased time and opportunity to get into trouble" (Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010, p.78). Delinquent children do not like school and instead of feeling remorseful for being suspended or expelled from school, most of them are only too glad that they can stay away from school and hang around with their friends. Should they wish to go back to school again, they can always apply to go to a school where their delinquent friends are and have fun (according to my former students)! Disciplinary actions should therefore be carried out within the school in a rational manner so as not to provide opportunities that could enhance delinquent behaviour. As stated by Williams and McShane (2015):

> All that extends beyond this, is abuse, not justice. Observe that by justice I understand nothing more than that bond which is necessary to keep the interest of individuals united, without which men would return to their original state of barbarity. All punishment which exceed the necessity of preserving this bond are in their nature unjust.
>
> (p.11)

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For the purposes of delinquency prevention and control, whatever form of punishment imposed on the students should be carried out in such a way as to foster school bonding and not to destroy it.

2.4.3 Commitment to Conventional Goals

Children who lack commitment to school are more likely to drift into delinquency (Liljeberg, Eklund, Fritz, & Klinteberg, 2011) whilst the opposite seems to be true for those who are more connected to the school (Bernard, & Slade, 2009; Hart & Mueller, 2013; Wang, Brinkworth, & Eccles, 2013). Schools, therefore, play a fundamental role in instilling social control over the students by inculcating in them good moral values while they are away from home (Gottfredson, 2001; Hirschi, 1969; Sampson & Laub, 1993). "Through the school and classroom management policies and practices that they adopt, and the instructional methods and curriculums that teachers choose to use in the classroom, schools can promote or inhibit offending behaviour among students" (Burns et al., 2003, p.8).

Studies have indicated that school commitment, which refers to the students' positive attitude towards school and active involvement and participation in school activities, can help to reduce or prevent delinquency (Sciarra & Seirup, 2008; Faulkner, Adlaf, Irving, Allison, & Dwyer, 2009; Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011; Reingle, Jennings, & Maldonado-Molina, 2012). "Commitment refers to the extent to which individuals have built up an investment in conventionality or a 'stake in conformity' that would be jeopardized or lost by engaging in law violation or other forms of deviance" (Akers & Sellers, 2012, p.87). When considering their course of action, a student "must consider the costs of deviant behaviour, the risk he runs of losing the investment he has made in

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conventional behaviour" (Hirschi, 1969, p.22). Hindelang (1973) truly corroborated this idea when he says:

> … those who have a stake in school performance – an investment which delinquent behaviour may jeopardize and with which delinquent behaviour may be incompatible – are, as control theory postulates, less inclined to engage in delinquent activities.
>
> (p.471)

Commitment to conventional goals such as the aspiration to achieve educational expectations greatly enhances the students' academic outcomes thus making school life more meaningful to them (Stewart, 2008). Students who are respected by their peers and favoured by their teachers would want to maintain their position and keep up their good image and would therefore not risk losing their investment in conventionality. This helps to prevent them from breaking the rules of society.

Involvement in conventional activities such as taking part in extracurricular activities, particularly during the unsupervised hours before and after school, can be a very effective strategy in keeping delinquency at bay (Logan & Scarborough, 2008; Molinuevo, Bonillo, Pardo, Doval, & Torrubia, 2010; Ludden, 2011; Camacho & Fuligni, 2015; Boer, 2017). Active participation in extracurricular activities keeps students busy and occupied thus preventing them from being addicted to loafing or other unproductive activities such as theft, alcoholism, and drug use. Student participation in extracurricular activities has been greatly advocated by the Education Ministry particularly in the past two decades with "the intention to inculcate, foster, and cultivate a sense of belonging among students, and to be disciplined, responsible, self-reliant and acquire skill in one chosen field" (Education Act 1996, as cited in Zalina, Norihan, & Nooraini, 2013, p.438). However, there is still no consensus as to whether participation in extracurricular activities could enhance good behaviour amongst Malaysian students since "many teachers have less understanding of their responsibilities… and consider extracurricular activities to be a waste of time and not beneficial" (Zalina, Norihan, & Nooraini, 2013, p.439). In order to ensure that these

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activities would have a greater role to play in the positive development of Malaysian students, the Education Ministry should take more effective measures to make certain that "teachers who handle these events know their duties well and perform the task with enthusiasm, honesty, and dedication" in accordance with the Cabinet Committee Report 1979 (Zalina, Norihan, & Nooraini, 2013, p.438).

2.5 Peer Risk and Protective Factors

Apart from his parents, friends are amongst the most important people in a child's life (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006) and play an essential role in shaping his character, behaviour, attitude, and beliefs (Kindermann & Gest, 2009: Kindermann & Skinner, 2012). They provide solace, acceptance, recognition, support, and a sense of belonging for those who lack these important assets in life. Close friends can help an individual to tide over the most trying and painful moments of his life (Rubin, Bukowski, Parker, 2006). Hartup and Stevens (1997) define friendship as "the strong, positive affective bonds that exist between two persons that are intended to facilitate the accomplishment of socioemotional goals" (as cited in Bukowski, Motzoi, & Meyer, 2009, p.218). Given the importance of friends, it is no wonder why children need to have their own peer groups.

Peer groups are normally made up of members of the same sex through which the children learn new social skills (Martin, Kornienko, Schaefer, Hanish et al., 2013; Golshirazian, Dhillion, Maltz, Payne, & Rabow, 2015). Each peer group has its own values and patterns of behaviour which the group members must comply with if they wish to seek peer approval (Golshirazian et al., 2015). Since adolescents tend to spend more time with their peers than their family members, the nature and quality of peer associations have become important determinants of behaviour (Kliewer & Murrelle, 2007; Tomé, Gaspar de Matos, Simões, Camacho, & AlvesDiniz, 2012). Needless to say, association with peers can

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both perpetuate and prevent deviant behaviour depending on the nature and quality of friendships within these peer groups (Ellis & Zarbatany, 2007; Kreager, Rulison, & Moody, 2011; Keijsers, Branje, Hawk, Schwartz, Frijns, Koot, van Lier, & Meeus, 2012). Adolescents may also be indirectly influenced by their friends of friends who influence them indirectly through their own connections by way of the exosystem effects (Brown & Dietz, 2009; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

One of the strongest predictors for juvenile delinquency is associating with antisocial peers (Kindermann, 2007; Verroneau & Dishion, 2010; Lonardo, Giordano, Longmore, & Manning, 2009; Moreira & Mirón, 2013) and that the frequency of delinquent activities is related to the number of friends who are delinquent (McGloin & Kirk, 2010; Weerman, 2011). This is because "interaction with deviant peers results in cognitive changes that make offending more attractive" (Hochstetler, Heith, & Matt, 2002, p.559). As proposed by Akers's Social Learning Theory which has its roots in Sutherland's Differential Association Theory and Bandura's Social Learning Theory (behavioural psychology), delinquency is largely a group phenomenon and within these delinquent groups, the members learn the techniques, drives, attitudes and motives required to commit a crime (Akers, 2009). These groups are often well-known for their "high levels of social cohesiveness, hierarchical organization, and a certain code of behaviour based on the rejection of adult values and experience" (World Youth Report, 2003, p.191). Adolescents with constant exposure to "definitions favorable to law violation in early life on a relatively frequent basis over a long period of time and from sources they like or respect" (Agnew & Cullen, 2003, p.125) are at a higher risk for crime and delinquency.

Studies have shown that "juvenile gang members consider their group a family" (World Youth Report, 2003, p.197). Since most delinquent activities are committed with peers and most delinquents have delinquent peers, peer group influences have thus become

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one of the most important predictors of delinquent behaviour (Ladd, Herald-Brown, & Kochel, 2009; Keijsers, Branje, VanderValk & Meeus, 2010; Vitulano, Fite, & Rathert, 2010). "Factors such as peer delinquent behaviour, peer approval of delinquent behaviour, attachment or allegiance to peers, time spent with peers, and peer pressure for deviance have all been associated with adolescent antisocial behaviour" (McCord, Widom, & Crowell, 2001, p.80). Smoking, substance abuse, stealing, house/shop breaking, and mugging are not uncommon amongst members of delinquent peer groups as they have to conform to bad behaviour in order to obtain social acceptance (Seddig, 2013; Rulison, Kreager, & Osgood, 2014). These delinquent peer groups may even have greater importance than their family or school as it is within these peer groups that they find a true sense of belonging and the freedom to do the things that they are prohibited to do at home and in school. Worse comes to worst, these delinquent peer groups may even form a symbiosis with other adult groups and participate in "adult organized crime" (World Youth Report, 2003, p.192).

The associated protective factor is to give the children the opportunities to attain social acceptance and recognition in a legitimate way (Barry, 2006). Children who associate with prosocial peers who disapprove of antisocial behaviour are less likely to have behavioural problems (Elliot, 1994). This is because those who enjoy the company of prosocial peers would have to conform to good behaviour themselves in order to attract friends of a similar nature. Since prosocial peers would only participate in constructive activities and do not take drugs or get involved in antisocial activities such as burglary, robbery, and gang fights, association with prosocial peers helps to keep these antisocial activities at bay. Through their association with prosocial peers and participation in constructive activities such as recreational camping, religious services, leadership training, and service-learning, they would be able to attain greater improvements in civic

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responsibility, interpersonal skills, practical skills, and academic development (Hebert & Hauf, 2015). Active participation in these activities would also mean that they would have very little time left for antisocial activities.

2.6 Community Risk and Protective Factors

The word *community* refers to residential areas of varying sizes and for some these residential areas "may be a few blocks; for others it may be an entire neighbourhood or even the city at large. For some, community is about territory; for others it is about social interaction or both place and interaction" (Beesley, 2010, p.273). Although the community is an important background for interaction and social development, "only in the 1990's have the longitudinal researchers begun to pay sufficient attention to neighbourhood and community factors" (Farrington, 2000, p.5). Ecological explanations of crime have clearly indicated that criminal behaviours are in some way influenced by the social settings within the community (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Communities that are characterised by structural adversities such as poverty, unemployment, high mobility, and drug problems are more likely to produce high criminality amongst its residents compared to structurally rich communities (Offer & Schneider, 2007; Coffe & Geys, 2007; Martinez Jr, Rosenfield, & Mares, 2008; Grunwald, Lockwood, Harris, & Mennis, 2010).

Studies have indicated that the characteristics within the community can have a tremendous impact on the behavioural outcomes of children to such an extent that they could alter or moderate the effects of parenting (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Hay, Fortson, Hollist, Altheimer, & Schaible, 2007). Much would depend on its composition, location, the kind of social activities that are taking place there and the capability and willingness of the community to regulate and enact control over the behaviour of its residents (Chung & Steinberg, 2009; Triplett, Sun, & Gainey, 2005). "Community contexts that generate a lot

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of temptations and/or provocations with low levels of social controls may be viewed as risk communities, while community contexts that create low levels of temptation and/or provocation and high levels of social controls may be viewed as protective communities" (Wikström & Loeber, 2000, p.1114). The community can therefore enhance or prohibit criminal behaviour depending on the quality of its members and the social processes that are going on in it. These are in turn are "affected by the nonresidential activities (commerce, entertainment, industry, etc.) located in the community and the kind of visitors to the area they attract" (Wikström & Loeber, 2000, p.1113).

2.6.1 Community Social Disorganization

Faris (1955) defines social disorganization as "the weakening or destruction of the relationships which hold together a social organization" (p.81). He is of the opinion that, "crime rate is a reflection of the degree of disorganization of the control mechanisms in a society" (p.81). The relationship between social disorganization and crime was clearly emphasized by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling in their Broken Windows Theory which was published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1982 (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). The title of this article is derived from the following example:

> A piece of property is abandoned, weeds grow up, a window is smashed. Adults stop scolding rowdy children; the children emboldened, become more rowdy. Families move out, unattached adults move in. Teenagers gather in front of the corner store. The merchant asks them to move; they refuse. Fights occurs. Litter accumulates. People start drinking in front of the grocery; in time, an inebriate slumps to the sidewalk, and is allowed to sleep it off. Pedestrians are approached by the panhandlers.
>
> (p.31)

The rationale behind this theory is that untended behaviour can lead to the breakdown of community controls and play havoc with the lives of its members. Signs of social (such as drug addiction/trafficking, intoxication, violence, theft, robbery, and murder) and physical disorder (such as broken windows, abandoned houses, graffiti and uncollected garbage) in a

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community may undermine social control and attract more serious disorders and illegal activities. When criminal activities are rampant within any given community, the structure of the community also changes to fit into the situation. Fearing for the safety of their lives, law-abiding citizens who cannot fit into the norms of a disintegrated community would move out only to be replaced by more antisocial and uncivilized people. With the passage of time, the community concerned would turn into a den of vice, which if left unchecked, would have grave repercussions on the neighbouring communities and society as a whole (Wilson & Kelling, 1982).

A successful strategy for the prevention of social disorganization is to resolve the problem before it goes out of hand through community involvement (Smith, Faulk, & Sizer, 2013). Social Disorganization Theory holds that social cohesion, which refers to the community's willingness to work together for the common good, can help in the protection against crime and delinquency through proper social control (Shaw & McKay, 1942). For instance, if the community is able to supervise and control its adolescents from participating in antisocial activities, it is most unlikely that they would get the chance to do so irrespective of how desperate they are. As what Hirschi (1969) says, "If the family is in a community in which there is no pattern of theft, the children do not steal, no matter how much neglected or how unhappy they may be at home" (p.98). Such an ideal situation seldom exists in reality particularly when our Malaysian society is not an affluent society but if all the members within a community could work together for the common good, their prevention efforts would turn out to be more fruitful (Hull, Kilbourne, Reece, & Husaini, 2008). Studies have shown that "even with significant neighbourhood disorder, social connectedness with neighbours remains a significant predictor of neighbourhood satisfaction" (Dassapoulos, Batson, Futrell, & Brents, 2012, p.571). If the communities are able to improve on or strengthen the existing protective factors by getting the children

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involved in various religious and social activities, it is most likely that their involvement in antisocial behaviour could be prevented or reduced (Siti Hajar & Abdul Hadi, 2009, p.169). Since one of the major predictors of social control in a community is the level of control by the community over adolescent groups, social bonding between the police and the community they serve through community policing can also enhance the community's ability to supervise its adolescents and put them under control (Odabaşi, 2014, p.1149).

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2.7 Concluding Summary

This chapter provides a discussion on how children interact with the risk and protective factors within their social environment as they are undergoing the process of development and how these interactions would ultimately shape their life trajectories. The literature presented in this chapter highlights the risk and protective factors which can be found within the family, school, peer groups, and community settings that contain the developing child. The family factors discussed are the parenting process, family structure, family size, and socioeconomic status. These were followed by a discussion of the school factors which include educational attainment, teacher-student relationship, and commitment to conventional goals. Next, the peer factors are discussed with emphasis given to peer associations and participation in peer associated activities. Lastly, the community factors which focus on the characteristics within the community and how these could lead to social disorganization are presented. Since each of these risk and protective factors does not exist in isolation but interact with each other to pave the way for delinquent or non-delinquent behaviour within the child's social environment, this chapter has taken into consideration all the major settings in which growth and development takes place. The interactive processes within these settings as well as the interconnectedness amongst these settings are

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further discussed in the following chapter with reference to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as my theoretical framework.

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CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework of my study which is developed from Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979, 2006). In his ecological model of human development, Bronfenbrenner combines the various aspects of sociology and developmental psychology which clearly explains for "the complex inter-relationship between the individual and society" (Christensen, 2010, p.119). This model not only provides an insight into the interactive processes within the various settings of the environment but also indicates how the interconnectedness amongst these settings could affect human development. It is therefore a very useful tool for examining the factors affecting juvenile delinquent behaviour particularly for children who are deemed to be at risk of crime and delinquency. Since human development is "not limited by any single setting; it accords equal importance to relations between settings" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.284), in order to understand human development, one must consider all the settings in which growth and development takes place. My theoretical framework therefore incorporates and highlights the complex interactive processes that are taking place in the various settings of the human ecology so as to provide for a more thorough description of the risk and protective factors affecting juvenile delinquency. Understanding "how all the factors are related to each other and impact on the development cycle" (Christensen, 2010, p.120) would enable the researcher to get to the root causes of crime and delinquency.

Resilience, however, is a dimension that has been left out in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as his theory "virtually describes only the negative effects of how an individual will develop if exposed to adversity and travesty. The theory is lacking as it does not have a way to explain how an individual brought up in a negative

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environment survives and becomes successful" (Christensen, 2010, p.121). Whatever that is lacking in this theory is supplemented in this study so as to provide for a more complete description and understanding of the causes and prevention of juvenile delinquency.

A discussion of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory also led the researcher to a more thorough investigation of the factors affecting crime and delinquency through a masterful incorporation and integration of some of the most influential theories of human development into Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. These include the Object Relations Theory, Sutherland's Differential Association Theory, Bandura's Social Learning Theory, Hirschi's Social Control Theory, Merton's Strain Theory, and Shaw and McKay's Social Disorganization Theory (all of which constitute an integral part of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model). The central reason for the incorporation of these theories into Bronfenbrenner's ecological model is because child development is a complex phenomenon which cannot be adequately explained by one theory (Siegel, 2009; Siegel & Senna, 2000; Regoli et al., 2008; Akers & Sellers, 2009; Bernard, Snipes, & Gerould, 2009). Further, these theories are very similar to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as they also provide a framework for understanding human behaviour and development even though each of them only focuses on certain aspects of human development. However, the cumulative effect of these theories, when incorporated into Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, would help to provide for a more thorough review of literature as well as a more in-depth description, analysis and discussion of my findings.

3.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

The term *ecology* comes from the Greek word *oikos* which means house or environment and *logos* which means knowledge. This term often reminds us of the interrelationships between animals and plants in the physical ecosystems such as the forests and rivers as it

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refers to "the study of organism-environment interrelatedness" (Tudge, Shanahan, & Valsiner, 1997, p.73). However, the term *ecology* has also been coined by Bronfenbrenner to describe human development in the natural environment. From Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective, the environment "encompasses any event or condition outside the organism that is presumed to influence, or be influenced by, the person's development" (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983, p. 359).

Bronfenbrenner derived his ecological concepts of human development from his experiences growing up on a natural landscape in Upstate New York. According to him, "my father would alert my unobservant eyes to the workings of nature by pointing to the functional interdependence between living organisms and their surroundings" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.xii). Through his study of human lives in their natural environmental settings, he came to the realization that "the process and product of making human beings clearly varied by place and time" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.xiii) as it is "affected by the relations between those settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.21).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines human development as "the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives" (p.21). Human development, from the perspective of his ecological model "involves a change during the life course in enduring patterns of behaviour or perception resulting from the interplay between the evolving biological characteristics of the person and the features of the environment in which that person lives" (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983, p.359). Bronfenbrenner (2005) describes human development as taking place within "a series of nested and interconnected structures" (p.45) like a set of Russian dolls with the smallest one (the family) at its core. In other words, human development can be interpreted as taking

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place within a context (e.g. the family) which is contained/embedded within other contexts (e.g. the community). With the child at the centre, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model is made up of a series of concentric circles where the various contexts are embedded and set within an overarching system of time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986).

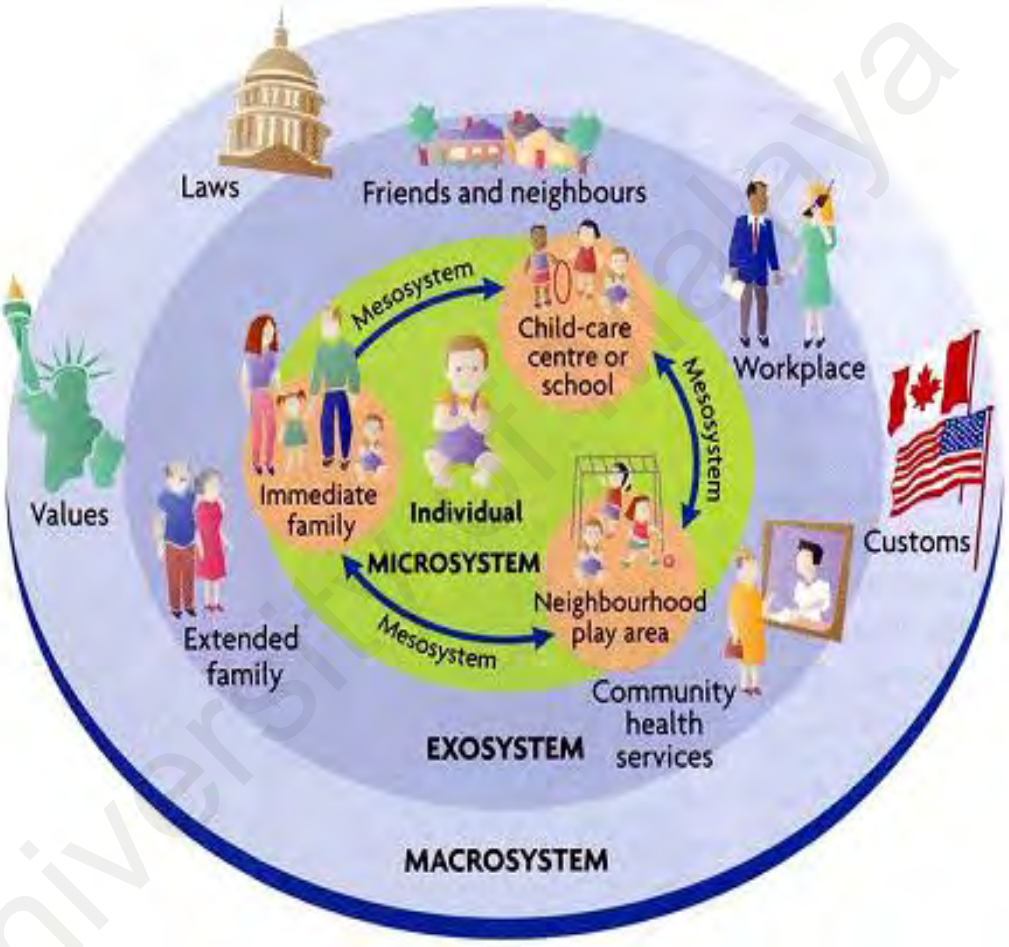

Figure 3.1. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Berk & Roberts, 2009, p.28)

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model is therefore child-centred as it captures the entire picture of human development with reference to the child's experiences on each level of development.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) "definition of developmental ecology is not limited by any single setting; it accords equal importance to relations between settings and to the large contexts in which the settings are embedded" (p.284). His ecological model "has proven to

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be beneficial in providing an insight into all the factors that play a role in the growth and development of individuals" (Christensen, 2010, pp.119-120). Child development is affected by many factors starting from the home environment and extending gradually to the school setting, the community, and society with its traditions, cultural values, and laws. Healthy settings will enhance learning and development but the contrary seems to be true for inhibiting settings. Every change that takes place in the course of an individual's life is the outcome of his interactions with his environment. "The relationship between the developing individual and the changing environmental system" (Vander Zanden, Crandell, & Crandell, 2007, pp.53-54) is therefore an effective tool to explain how crime and delinquency can turn out to be the consequences of "social change that occurs along with environmental change" (Vadackumchery, 2002, p.246).

The child's interactions with his environment, also known as proximal processes, are the primary factors that influence his development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) describe proximal processes as "progressively more complex reciprocal interactions between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment" (p. 797). These proximal processes refer to the child's day-to-day reciprocal interactions with his environment (such as communicating with his family members, attending kindergarten, participating in classroom activities, association with peers, chatting at Facebook, and surfing the internet) in which he is constantly influencing and/or is being influenced by the environmental factors around him. They also include "solo activities with objects and symbols" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p.814). To be effective, these interactions must occur "on fairly regular basis over extended periods of time" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p.796). Proximal processes are therefore equivalent to the "primary engines of development" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p.801) as they not only enable the child to

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develop the necessary survival skills (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) but also shape his character and behavioural outcomes as he learns to make sense of his environment and understand his role in it (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009).

Since child development is the outcome of multiple proximal processes within the natural environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998), studying the child in his natural environment and analyzing the kind of relationships that he builds within his various settings are of utmost importance for the purposes of identifying the risk and protective factors that affect his developmental process (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). From Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective, this natural environment is made up of five major systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Brofenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Berk, 2007; Christensen, 2010). Within each of these settings, an individual is endowed with a specific role or niche and therefore has to play multiple roles at the same time. For example, he can play the role of his parents' child at home (microsystem), of a student who is trying to balance his duties at home and school (mesosystem), of a latchkey child with parents who are always busy at work (exosystem), and of a citizen of Malaysia residing in the state of Pahang (macrosystem) in the second decade of the twenty-first century (chronosystem) simultaneously. These systems are discussed in greater depths below.

3.2.1 The Microsystem

A microsystem is defined as "a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p.148). It has direct contact with the child and comprises of the interactions that the child has in his most

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immediate settings (Berk, 2000) such as his family, close relatives, peer groups, sports groups, neighbours, daycare centre, kindergarten, school, and religious institution. The interactions that the child has in his most immediate settings will ultimately determine how he develops and grows depending "on the content and structure of the microsystem" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.39).

One cannot deny the fact that parent-child relationship is the most salient feacture in a child's microsystem since children tend to form a close relationship with their primary caregivers, particularly their parents, during the early years of their lives (Bowlby, 1969). According to the Object Relations Theory, the children's early experiences with their primary caregivers, particularly their parents, have strong influences on their socio-cognitive and emotional development which can extend far into adulthood (Fairbairn, 1962; Kernberg, 1985, 2004). Nurturing and supportive relationships in their early years would enable them to develop a positive personality and enhance their social relationships with the people around them as they grow up (Holmes, 2000; Swick, 2004; Hoeve, Stams, Put, Dubas, Laan, & Gerris, 2012). On the contrary, individuals who lack a nurturing relationship in their early years may encounter problems in developing healthy emotions and forming meaningful social relationships later in life (Brodie, 2007; Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2010). Known as "affectionless psychopathy", this condition may result in later criminal behaviour (Bowlby, 1951, 1969). Since the unmet emotional needs in the early years of life can persist far into adulthood, this clearly explains why it is not uncommon for children who have experienced family violence, maltreatment, and parental rejection to be at an increased risk of crime and delinquency (Dutton, Starzomski, & Ryan, 1996; Ou & Reynolds, 2010; Theobald, Farrington, & Piquero, 2013; Hoskins, 2014).

Social control theorists are of the opinion that the quality of parent-child relationship "serves as an indirect form of parental control because stronger attachment

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predicts stronger internalization of parental moral codes which remain operative even when parents are not present" (Kenny, Blacker, & Allerton, 2014, p.441). A strong parent-child relationship can therefore promote proper socialization and conformity to conventional society thus preventing the child from indulging in delinquent behaviour. Delinquent acts result when this relationship is weakened or broken as there are no more constraints on his behaviour (Fearon, Bakermans-Kranenburg, van Ijzendoorn, Lapsley, & Roisman, 2010). Although parents have an influence on their children, their children may in turn exert their influence on them since they are not merely passive recipients but are also actively contributing to the construction of their environment. This is what Bronfenbrenner called the bidirectional influence as an individual's interactions with the people in his environment will also affect how they respond to him (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Every child has a number of microsystems in which he interacts personally with and is affected directly by them. As a child grows up, he will encounter lots of microsystems that will contribute to his development and experiences. For instance, a child staying with his family who is sent to the nursery/kindergarten whilst his parents are at work is actually dealing with two microsystems with a different role in each. If he is hospitalized, the hospital where he seeks treatment is another microsystem where he plays the role of a patient. He may enjoy playing football on the neighbourhood field with his neighbours' children which is yet another microsystem. When he goes to a cyber café, again he is dealing with another microsystem. Whenever the child is transferred to a new school or moves into a new neighbourhood, he would encounter many new microsystems that could shape his life for the better or worse. Within each of these microsystems, he develops new roles and forms new relationships as he goes through his series of ecological transitions from his home environment to more and more distant environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005; White & Klein, 2008).

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As the number of microsystems increases, a developing child is exposed to various kinds of experiences as he learns to socialize, form special relationships with others, participate in activities, and encounter successes and failures as part of his developmental process (Pratt, Cullen, Sellers, Winfree, Madensen, Daigle, Fearn, & Gau, 2010). The interactions that he has within these settings can have a profound impact on his character and behavioural development depending on the quality of the social processes involved (Dishion & Patterson, 2006). If he has more contacts supporting criminal conduct than opposing it, he is more likely to be deviant than those who have more positive than negative associations (Sutherland, 1947). As indicated by Edwin H. Sutherland (1947) in his Differential Association Theory, criminal behaviour is not innate but is learned like any other behaviour through a "training process" within intimate groups as it is through the interaction with others that an individual learns the "techniques" of committing crimes and "definitions" (motives, drives, rationalizations, attitudes) favourable and unfavourable towards violations of the law. Since learning is accomplished through imitation (Bandura, 1977), the observed behaviour is likely to be imitated when one "perceives more favourable than unfavourable consequences to violating the law" (Siegel, 2009, p.204). "Contacts made early in life have a greater and more far reaching influence than those developed later on and this clearly explains why "the influence of a father, mother, or trusted friend far outweighs the effect of more socially distant figures" (Siegel, 2009, p.204). And of course "frequent contacts have greater effect than rare and haphazard contacts" (Siegel, 2009, p.204).

Ecological transitions or changes in the role or setting of the developing child may result in changes in the behavioural expectations for the child. As he undergoes a series of ecological transitions, his "position in the ecological environment is altered as the result of a change in role, setting, or both" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.26). However, how successful

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these transitions may turn out to be is largely dependent on how well his various microsystems (mainly the family, school, and community) interact with one another to bring out the best possible outcomes in him (Pianta, La Paro, Payne, & Bradley, 2002; Bryan & Henry, 2008, 2012). Microsystems can either enrich or impoverish each other depending on the quality of relationships amongst them. For instance, fostering positive family-school connections would enable a child to make successful transitions from home to school.

Microsystems change as the circumstances in the child's life continue to change. Some of these microsystems such as the family or school may have a lasting impact on the child whilst others such as his catechism classes, sports clubs, and youth camps may only be ephemeral. However, all these microsystems will contribute towards his developmental and socialization processes. One cannot deny the fact that this level of development has the greatest impact on the child as it has the earliest influences on him particularly at a time when he is most vulnerable to the characteristics of his environment. The social relationships formed at this level of development can therefore enhance or inhibit his next level of development depending on the quality of these relationships.

3.2.2 The Mesosystem

The mesosystem is the second stage of development which "comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.40) and refers to situations where the microsystems come together and interact with each other to bring forth new experiences for the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Lightfoot, Cole, & Cole, 2012). Also known as "a system of microsystems" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.40), the mesosystem is defined as "the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively

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participates (such as, for a child, the relations among home, school, and neighbourhod peer group; for an adult, among family, work, and social life)" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.25), in other words, it bridges the gap between the various microsystems. Positive interactions amongst these microsystems could enhance positive adolescent developmental outcomes as studies have indicated that the greater the number of positive linkages amongst them, the higher the level of prosocial outcomes in adolescent behaviour (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Coffe & Geys, 2007; Lohman, Kaura, & Newman, 2007; Anderson, Sabatelli, & Kosutic, 2007).

Child development is known to be defective if there is "a lack both of a common focus and of coordination between social systems at the micro-level of immediate settings (home, school, peer group) and in the dynamic mesosystem relations between these settings (family and school, family and peer group, school and peer group)" (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000, p.120). Perhaps the greatest example of the mesosystem is the family-school connection. As stated by Stein (2009):

> …the schools, through no fault of their own were turning into a major breeding ground of alienation, vandalism, and violence in American society. I pointed out how the growing separation between home, school, workplace, and community was creating a situation where children were being deprived of close contact not only with parents, but with adults in general, and I underscored the awesome consequences of this fact for a species like ours."
>
> (p.25)

Frequent and strong linkages between the children's family and school can enhance the children's ecological transition from home to school but the absence of these linkages can prevent their smooth transition which may be manifested in the form of academic failure, truancy, and other forms of behavioural problems (De Goede, Branje, Delsing, & Meeus, 2009).

The role of the school as one of the major agents of socializations can be undermined by several other factors that are unrelated to the school (Yeung, Linver, &

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Brooks-Gunn, 2002). These factors "may come from homes where the degree of environmental disorganization is such that any sort of serious intellectual pursuit is a near impossibility" (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1990, p.152). "Success in school depends greatly on whether parents have the capacity to provide their children with 'starting' opportunities (including the resources to buy books and manuals and pay for studies)" (World Youth Report, 2003, p.195). If the parents are poor, their children may have to grow up in a noisy and overcrowded environment which makes it difficult for them to focus on their studies. Further, the luxury of reference books and tuition classes that have become almost indispensable in the lives of today's children would only remain an illusion for the poor children. "Whatever the reasons may be, a disadvantaged child enters school ill-equipped to succeed, begins to experience failure, becomes frustrated and angry, and often drops out as soon as possible. Usually before dropping out, the child begins to engage in delinquent conduct" (Bartol & Bartol 1989, p.254). Needless to say, having teachers who lack interest in their students and parents who have no idea what their children are doing in school would only aggravate the situation.

Studies have indicated that schools which provide opportunities for family involvement have reported a lower incidence of disciplinary problems, improved student attendance (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005; El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Kirkhaug, Drugli, Klöckner, & Mørch, 2013), and better grades (Schnell, Fibbi, Crul, Montero-Sieburth, 2015; Jeynes, 2007). Parents who play an active role in their children's education through their participation in school activities (such as attending meetings and watching their children's badminton or soccer matches) could enhance their commitment to school (Hirschi, 1969, Sheldon & Epstein, 2005; Hill, Castellino, Lansford, Nowlin, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 2004; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Children tend to have higher academic aspirations and expectations if their families are actively involved in their

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education (Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005) so as not to risk losing their investment in conventionality (Hirschi, 1969).

As a child grows older, his social circle also increases in complexity and extends beyond the school to include more microsystems and hence mesosystems as he may be introduced to wider social networks through his existing associations. These social networks can reinforce new values that may be positive or negative by nature depending on the child's associations. Microsystems working congruently can enhance positive child development whilst the opposite seems to be true if they contradict each other (De Goede, Branje, Delsing & Meeus, 2009). For instance, if the parents and peers agree that smoking is bad for health, the child is more unlikely to smoke. However, the opposite seems to be true if these microsystems do not agree with each other or are congruent in a negative way (Vink, Willemson & Boomsma, 2003). In the aforementioned example, if his parents and peers agree that smoking has no negative health effects or have different opinions about smoking, there is a greater likelihood that the child may end up as a smoker.

3.2.3. The Exosystem

Beyond the child's microsystems and mesosystems lie the exosystem which influences child development to a greater or lesser degree in circumstances where the child has no control. The exosystem, which contains the micro and meso systems, is made up of the "social structures, both formal and informal, that do not themselves contain the developing person but impinge upon or encompass the immediate settings in which that person is found, and thereby influence, delimit, or even determine what goes on there" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p.515). In other words, it consists of the "linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the

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immediate setting in which the developing person lives (e.g., for a child, the relation between the home and the parent's workplace; for a parent, the relation between the school and the neighbouthood peer group)" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.40). Like the microsystems and mesosystems, the exosystem effect on the child may be short term (parental unemployment) or long term (growing up with a mother who is a sex worker).

Although the exosystem effect does not directly affect the child nor does he have any direct influences on it or participates in it, it can have a profound impact on him through other people in his life. For instance, the home is a setting that contains the developing child whilst the parents' work environment is a setting that does not contain him but which can affect him as it can determine the kind of life that his parents can afford to give him. If his parents get a promotion and hence better financial security for the family, the child gets a nice bedroom, new toys, books, clothes, computer, and even a new smart phone. However, he may not get to spend as much time with them as he used to as they may have to work longer hours. If his parents are so busy that they have no time to look into his needs thus leaving him entirely in the care of their maid, he may keep bad company due to lack of supervision. On the other hand, if his parents are to lose their jobs, he may no longer be able to enjoy the luxuries that he used to have and may have to go to school hungry or move into a low-cost flat. He may also be burdened with more responsibilities as he may have to quit school to help raise his younger siblings. This may in turn affect his career prospects and life opportunities. Studies have indicated that economic stress in the family can also jeopardise family relationships (Conger, Wallace, Sun, Simons, McLoyd, & Brody, 2002) causing members of a family to be at odds with each other quarrelling over money matters.

One of the best examples of the exosystem effect is clearly exhibited in the lives of children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Children with low-income or jobless

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parents are very much restricted in their opportunities to become successful in life (Merton, 1968). What is even worse is that they may have to leave school to help support the family should circusmtances demand it. However, leaving school at an early age would also mean that they may end up making fast money in an illegal manner thus further perpetuating their at-risk behaviour. Merton (1968) describes this situation precisely in his Strain Theory which stated that there is no equal opportunity for success as members of the lower classes are at a more disadvantageous position compared to the more privileged members of society. According to him:

> Several researchers have shown that specialized areas of vice and crime constitute a 'normal' response to a situation where the cultural emphasis upon pecuniary success has been absorbed, but when there is little access to conventional and legitimate means for becoming successful. The occupational opportunities of people in these areas are largely confined to manual labor and the lesser white collar jobs. Given the American stigmatization of manual labor which has been found to hold rather uniformly in the social classes, and the absence of realistic opportunities for advancement beyond this level, the result is a marked tendency toward deviant behaviour.
>
> (p.199)

Basically this would mean that although society inspires every one of its members to attain success, wealth and social position, it is only possible for the privileged few to achieve their "ambition" (p.200). Individuals with early success in life could therefore easily increase their future success without much effort whilst those without early success would have to work hard to survive (Merton, 1973). Citing a verse from the Bible, Merton calls it the Matthew Effect:

> For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that little which he had.
>
> (p.445)

When children from lower socioeconomic classes find that they have little or no opportunity of attaining wealth and social position in a legitimate way, they would turn to illegitimate ways in order to get what they want (Merton, 1938, 1968; Cloward & Ohlin,

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1960). This helps to explain why crime and delinquency are more common amongst children from impoverished families as the poor is more likely to offend out of necessity.

3.2.4 The Macrosystem

The macrosystem is the largest context of the environment comprising of the most remote set of events or occurrences in a child's life that would nevertheless affect his developmental process to a greater or lesser extent. It is defined as "the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture or subculture, with particular reference to the belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, life-styles, opportunity structures, hazards, and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.40). In other words, it refers to the overall ideology and organization patterns characteristic of a given society or social group. Bronfenbrenner (2005) portrays the macrosystem as a "societal blue-print for a particular culture or subculture" (p.81).

The macrosystem which "describes the overall societal culture in which individuals live" (Christensen, 2010, p.118) is the most abstract and complicated amongst Bronfenbrenner's five systems of development. These "cultural contexts include developing and industrialised countries, socioeconomic status, poverty, and ethnicity" (Christensen, 2010, p.118), the boundary of which is "defined by national and cultural borders, laws, and rules" (Christensen, 2010, p.118). Children growing up in different societies or cultural contexts would see and interpret things differently based on their personal experiences due to the different ways in which they are being raised. Even amongst members of the same ethnic group, the way they perceive the world may also differ depending on their race, gender, socioeconomic status, religious, geographic and cultural backgrounds.

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Since the macrosystem also "includes social organisation" (Ballam, 2013, p.20), I would provide an example of the macrosysem effect on human development based on Shaw and McKay's Social Disorganization Theory. In their study on male criminals in Chicago between the late 1920s and mid-1960s, Shaw and McKay "collected extensive crime data, including the records of almost twenty-five thousand alleged delinquents brought before the Juvenile Court of Cook County from 1900 to 1933 (Siegel & Senna, 2000, p.135). Although the cultural and social conditions in America have undergone a lot of changes since the formulation of Shaw and McKay's Social Disorganization Theory, the most important elements of their findings are still applicable in today's society. These important elements can be summarized as follows:

- Crime rates are sensitive to the destructive social forces operating in low-class urban neighbourhoods.
- Environmental factors, rather than individual differences, are the root cause of crime. Personal abnormality or inferiority has little to do with crime rates.
- Crime is a constant fixture in poverty areas regardless of racial and/or ethnic makeup.
- Neighbourhood disintegration and the corresponding erosion of social control are the primary causes of criminal behaviour; community values, norms, and cohesiveness affect individual behaviour choices.

(Siegel, 2009, p.169)

Shaw and McKay's findings clearly depict that "crime-producing factors were inherent in the social and economic fabric of the community and constituted a normal reaction to living in a disorganized area" (Reid, 2003, p.121). When the normal sources of social control such as "the family, school, personal ties, interest of the business community, law enforcement, and social service agencies" (Siegel, 2009, p.168) deteriorate, the entire neighbourhood becomes weaken and disorganized. These undesirable norms and values may even be transmitted from one generation to the next like an inherited trait by "a process referred to as cultural transmission" (Siegel & Senna, 2000, p.136) thus further perpetuating the effects of social disintegration within the community. To make matters worse, the effects of social disintegration within any community is not confined within that community alone but can

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spread easily to adjacent communities like a contagious disease due to the consequences of mobility.

In a disorganized community, "delinquency is a powerful competing way of life compared to conventional traditions and institutions" (Shaw & McKay, 1942, p.66). This is because a high-crime community is "unable to provide essential services to its residents, such as education, health care, and proper housing" (Siegel, 2009, p.167) or help them to "realize their legitimate goals nor able to control the behaviour of those who embrace illegal activities for personal gain" (Siegel & Senna, 2000, p.137). Living under such strained circumstances leaves its residents without a choice as "their illegal behaviour was merely a way of achieving excitement, social success, and financial gain when all other avenues seemed to be closed" (Siegel & Senna, 2000, p.138). When a community is notoriously known for its high crime and/or delinquency rate, this situation would continue to prevail for years and, as proven by Shaw and McKay (1942), nothing could be done to alleviate the situation. Even though its inhabitants may change with time as people tend to move in and out of a community all the time, one cannot rule out the fact that only those with similar backgrounds would dare to move in thus perpetuating the situation. Once the entire societal culture has disintegrated, crime and delinquency would be the order of the day.

3.2.5 The Chronosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1986) proposed a fifth component to his ecological model, namely, the chronosystem in order to explore the developmental changes in a child's settings during certain points in time over the course of his life. The chronosystem, which is time related, "encompasses change or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person but also of the environment in which that person lives" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.40). It

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"involves temporal changes in ecological systems or within individuals, producing new conditions that affect development" (Berns, 2016, p.28). The changes in the chronosystem "occur within multiple ecological contexts, and these contexts include all the original levels of Bronfenbrenner's (1986) nested systems: microsystems, exosystems, macrosystems, and mesosystems" (Hoffman & Kruczek, 2011). These include "changes over the life course in family structure, socioeconomic status, employment, place of residence, or the degree of hecticness and ability in everyday life" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.40).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1986), the chronosystem is characterized by its normative and non-normative events. "These life events not only directly influence the person but also indirectly influence her or him via the effect they have on family processes and the community in which the events occur" (Hoffman & Kruczek, 2011, p.7). Normative events refer to the anticipating moments in life that every individual has to go through such as birth, transition into school, puberty, graduation from school/university, joining the workforce, marriage, retirement, aging, illness and death. Since normative events are molded by the socio-cultural contexts of the developing child and occur at certain points in time, they are affected by his age, race, sex, ethnicity, religious beliefs, social and physical settings. Non-normative events, however, appear unexpectedly and often at times when the child is unprepared for them. These unpredictable life course events include parental divorce, birth of a sibling with genetic anomaly, parental unemployment, premature death of a family member, migration, hurricanes, earthquakes, wars, and political upheavals. Since the child is unprepared for events that drastically affect his life course, he may consider them to be threatening and may have difficulties coping with them.

Changes in the course of a child's life would also mean that he must think about the ways to cope with them. For instance, children whose parents have divorced may find it difficult to cope with the situation initially but would soon get accustomed to it with the

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passage of time and move on with life. Similarly, children who have migrated to another country with their family would have to learn to adapt to the social customs and traditions of a new culture so that they could survive the change and interact within this new setting.

One of the best examples of a chronosystem is exhibited in the change in life course of the children growing up during The Great Depression which was characterized by widespread family disorganization in the American society (macrosystem). In the study conducted by Elder (1974) and his colleagues (Elder & Hareven, 1993; Elder & Shanahan, 2006), it was found that many American children who grew up during those hard times were seriously affected by their parents' socioeconomic status due to the prevalence of unemployment/ underemployment (exosystem). "In an era when a father's pride and self-respect depended on his traditional role as the family's breadwinner" (Freedman, 2005, p.4), the decline of the fatherhood status has caused many of those fathers affected to resort to drinking or just being a nuisance at home. In extreme cases, they even left their families, never to return home again. Economic deprivation in the family (microsystem) has also caused the children to suffer from malnutrition and emotional distress that have contributed greatly towards their poor performance in school (mesosystem). The boys, especially, expressed a stronger identification with the peer group and participated more in outside jobs (Berns, 2016). Not wanting to burden their families, many of the affected children even ran away from home to look for means of survival on the railroads. Also known as boxcar kids, they risked their lives jumping onto moving trains in the hope to find some food and a place to stay overnight (Freedman, 2005). Thus one can see how the temporal changes in the ecological system can change the course of the children's lives by changing their macrosystems, exosystems, mesosystems, and microsystems.

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3.3 Concluding Summary

My theoretical framework incorporates and highlights Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as it enables me to gain a deeper insight into the environmental influences that shaped the developmental experiences of my respondents within their various settings in a vivid and realistic way. Bronfenbrenner divided these settings or environment into five levels of development: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The microsystem has direct contact with the child and comprises of the interactions that he has in his most immediate settings (Berk, 2000). This level of development has the greatest impact on child development as it is closest to the child and has the earliest influences on him. The mesosystem comprises of the interactions between two or more microsystems containing the developing child. These interactions have a direct impact on the child through his socialization processes at this level of development. The exosystem encompasses linkages and processes taking place between two or more microsystems, at least one of which does not contain the developing child, but nonetheless have an impact on him (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Although it does not have a direct influence on the child, it does affect him through other people in his life. The macrosystem refers to the overall ideology and organization patterns characteristic of a given society or social group. Also known as a societal blue-print for a particular culture or subculture, it affects the values and beliefs adopted by the developing child as these are formed through his interactions with his social environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The chronosystem, which is time related, refers to the events that transpire in one's life. These include normative events (occurring at specific times in life and are common to most people belonging to the same age group) or non-normative events (unexpected occurrences). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, when used in conjunction with the Object Relations Theory, Sutherland's Differential Association Theory, Bandura's Social Learning

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Theory, Hirschi's Social Control Theory, Merton's Strain Theory, and Shaw and McKay's Social Disorganization Theory, has provided me with a complete research framework for understanding human behaviour and development. Needless to say, this research framework has not only enabled me to generate fruitful and meaningful data but also provided me with a more thorough review of literature as well as an in-depth description, analysis and discussion of my findings. The data generation methods that have provided me with the tools to obtain fruitful and meaningful data are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the technical aspects of my research and provides an overview of the research methodology adopted in this study. Section 4.1 presents an introduction of the present chapter. Section 4.2 emphasizes on the significance of the qualitative approach and the reasons why I have adopted this approach in my study. Section 4.3 brings forth a discussion of the case study design and the significance of the multiple (or collective) case study design in the current study. Section 4.4 provides an explanation of the sampling procedure whilst section 4.5 gives a description of my study sample through the use of ecomaps. Section 4.6 introduces the data generation procedures used in this study, namely, interviews, observation, stimulative-recall methodology, document analysis, and secondary data. This is followed by section 4.7 which explicates the details of my data analysis and interpretation techniques. Subsequent sections portray the reliability and validity of my research findings, the pilot test that I have carried out and the ethical issues involved in my data generation process.

4.2 Research Approach

The qualitative approach is chosen for the purposes of this study instead of the quantitative approach because I prefer to capitalize "on ordinary ways of getting acquainted with things" (Stake, 1995, p.49) and report my findings in the natural language instead of assigning numbers to the data generated and equating reality to figures. As a researcher who is concerned with the realities of the world, my intention is to "understand the social process than obtaining a representative sample" (Henn, Weinstein, & Foard, 2009, p.176)

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as it has never been my intention to make generalizations out of this study. Further, since quantitative research tends to focus on component parts emphasizing on one or several so-called variables, it is difficult to apply to the present study which is orientated towards a holistic description and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Juvenile delinquency is a dynamic phenomenon and cannot be equated with the statistical relationships between deviant behaviour and the so-called variables. Figures and reality are two different things altogether since there are many aspects of human life that cannot be observed directly nor can they be explained fully with the use of statistics, inventories or questionnaires.

As this study seeks to understand the social reality of my respondents, qualitative data provides me with a rich source of first hand information that comes from the words and voices of my respondents and "words, especially organized into incidents or stories, have a concrete, vivid, meaningful flavour that often proves far more convincing… than pages of summarized numbers" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.1). In a way, qualitative research is also comparable to the musical genre of jazz (Oldfather & West, 1994):

> Those who experience jazz firsthand (as players or members of a live audience) are those most deeply affected. Similarly, those who participate directly in qualitative research, who are physically, intellectually, and emotionally present in the research context, and who hear the interplay of voices for themselves are those for whom the understandings are most vivid and meaningful.
>
> (p.23)

Through direct participation and personal involvement with the lives of my respondents, I was able to delve into their inner thoughts and understand their attitudes, character, intentions, temperament, personality, emotions, viewpoints, and feelings, all of which cannot be interpreted by statistics. These can only be interpreted meaningfully if I know my respondents well and become a part of their world just as they have become a part of mine.

As the "primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 1998, p.7), it is my intention to "understand a phenomenon, uncover the meaning a situation has for

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those involved or delineate process (how things happen)" (Merriam, 2002, p.11) through the worldviews of my respondents. The search for meaning and understanding has given me a deeper insight into how they "make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 1998, p.6). The way they talked about their lives, the language they used, their perceptions of the world and their interactions with their environment are all meaningful information in context as these have enabled me to give a more realistic account of their experiences, all of which cannot be interpreted with the use of statistics. As what Rossman and Rallis (1998) say, "there are few truths that constitute universal knowledge, rather, there are multiple perspectives about the world" (p.29). The multiple perspectives put forth my respondents have provided me not only with multiple realities of their world that are richly descriptive by nature but also answers to the many questions which cannot be answered with the use of statistics.

4.3 The Case Study Design

Case study research involves an exploration "of a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes" (Creswell, 2007, p.73). This kind of in-depth inquiry provides the researcher "with an input of real world data from which concepts can be formed and propositions and theory can be tried" (Gummesson, 2003, p.488). It is effective when "opportunity to learn is of primary importance" (Stake, 1994, p.234) as it provides an intensive and systematic way of analyzing a phenomenon. The case study approach is used in this study to examine both the context, interactions, and experiences of my respondents and "to try to figure out why a certain situation prevails" (Baker, 1994, p.300) using "whichever research strategies are

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necessary to address the problem at hand" (Baker, 1994, p.300). This approach is chosen as it is not my intention to discover a universal truth but only present an in-depth discussion and draw conclusions about my respondents' real life experiences by evaluating them in their natural environment.

Since my research focuses on understanding the phenomenon from the perspectives of my respondents and the reality of their world in a natural setting, the multiple (or collective case) study approach is well-suited to answer my research questions meaningfully. Collective case studies involve the:

> study [of] a number of cases in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition… [who] are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases.
>
> (Stake, 2000, p.437)

They are used in this study to predict "(a) similar results (a literal replication) or (b) predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication)" (Yin, 2003, p.47). Although "the evidence created from this type of study is considered robust and reliable, but it can also be extremely time consuming and expensive to conduct" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p.550). Nevertheless the rich, meaningful, and robust data generated in this study really worth all my time, effort, and money spent on each and every case.

Assuming that every case under investigation is special in its own way, I entered into every case free from any form of bias or prejudice and with a sincere and genuine interest in the lives of my respondents. I have made it known to them that I was interested in them "for both their uniqueness and commonality" (Stake, 1995, p.1) and that I would be a good listener to their stories and share their life experiences as their trusted friend. Putting aside my own presumptions, I looked into the "human side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals" (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005, p.1) and tried to ascertain both the

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tangible and intangible factors that may be significant to my study. Needless to say, my respondents' active contributions during each and every data generation activity throughout the duration of my case study research have resulted in the production of a multitude of new information and hence new avenues of inquiry.

4.4 Sampling Procedure

Sampling is "the selection of research participants from an entire population, and involves decisions about which people, settings, events, and behaviours, and/or social processes to observe" (Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006, p.49). The purpose of sampling in this study is to select participants that could represent the targeted populations under study and who are "likely to be information rich because they may reveal major system weaknesses that become targets of opportunity for program or system improvement" (Patton, 2015, p.281). Contrary to quantitative researchers who often resort to random sampling for the purposes of generalizations, I have chosen the purposeful or criteria-based sampling strategy for the purposes of generating meaningful answers for my research questions. Random sampling which refers to the selection of respondents at random for the purposes of generalization to a larger population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Babbie, 1999) is unsuitable in the present study as my intention is to generate in-depth information and colourful data based on the real life experiences of my respondents. Purposive sampling, on the other hand, seems to be a much more reliable sampling procedure for the purposes of this study as my focus is on a relatively small number of respondents who are chosen purposefully.

4.4.1 Purposive Sampling

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Also known as judgmental sampling, purposive sampling is a kind of non-probability sampling that is "based on a specific purpose rather than randomly" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p.713). Purposive (or purposeful) sampling is used in this study for the selection of information-rich cases to be studied intensively to discover the complicated nature of human behaviour. This method of sampling is most suited for this study as it is my intention to discover, understand, and gain insight of the cases at hand and therefore need to select a sample from which I can learn the most (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As it is not possible to study the entire population of students and juvenile delinquents, a purposive sample is selected to accurately represent the populations under study so that my study objectives could be met. As what Patton says (2015):

> The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations.
>
> (p.264)

In this study, every respondent is chosen on the basis of my own knowledge of the populations, its elements, and the nature of my research aims (Babbie, 1990, 1999) in order to achieve an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and obtain colourful answers to my research questions.

There are numerous kinds of purposive sampling designs and these include the extreme/deviant case sampling which focuses on cases that are outstanding or unusual; maximum variation sampling which enables the researcher to look at the phenomenon from all possible angles and dimensions; homogeneous sampling for the purposes of reducing variation, simplifying analysis, and facilitating group interviews; critical case sampling where a selected number of important cases are examined; and typical case sampling to highlight what is normal and average in a given phenomenon (Creswell, 2008, pp.215-216). The purpose of purposive sampling therefore differs depending on the kind of sampling

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technique used. In this study, I have chosen the maximum variation sampling strategy as my purpose is to provide a thorough analysis of the phenomenon under study from all possible perspectives that are available to me.

4.4.1.1 Maximum Variation Sampling

Also known as *heterogeneous sampling* or *purposeful maximal sampling*, the maximum variation sampling strategy is based on the selection of a wide range of variations or cases that differ as much as possible from each other which includes both extreme and typical cases thus enabling the researcher to look at the phenomenon from all available angles. Using this procedure of sampling, I deliberately include a wide range of information-rich cases decorated with colourful backgrounds "that show different perspectives on the problem, process, or event I want to portray, but I may also select ordinary cases, accessible cases, or unusual cases" (Creswell, 2007, p.75) as I think fit so as to provide a more diverse and thorough understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. These variations enable the researcher to generate data that are representative of the entire population as it includes almost everybody. The maximum variation sampling technique is therefore a special kind of purposive sampling (purposive sampling is normally not representative) as it can be as representative as a random sample (Creswell, 2008).

It should be noted that even a random sample may not be as representative as it is supposed to be and this is particularly true when the sample size is small. The advantage of the maximum sampling variation strategy is that it yields "(1) high-quality, detailed descriptions of each case, which are useful for documenting uniqueness, and (2) important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity" (Patton, 2002, p.235). Having a wide range of variations would ensure a higher extent of representativeness amongst the student and juvenile populations which can

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be very effective in uncovering the central themes that cut across the diverse variations in these populations.

4.5 The Study Sample

To make my study interesting and meaningful, I have deliberately chosen those who were willing to talk and share their life experiences with me. My respondents include 6 delinquent boys (4 Malay boys, 1 Chinese boy, and 1 Indian boy) from Sekolah Tunas Bakti (STB) and 6 of my former students (3 Malay boys, 1 Chinese boy, and 2 Indian boys) all of whom were between the ages of 13-17. Out of these 6 delinquent boys from STB, one of them has been thrown out of the house by his father, two of them are from single-parent families, and 3 of them are from intact families. All of them are exhibiting some kind of antisocial behaviour and come from poverty-stricken families that are struggling hard to make ends meet. As for my 6 student respondents, one of them has been abandoned by his mother who is now remarried and residing in Indonesia, one is without a father whilst the rest of them come from intact families. They are all resilient children who are developing normally without any signs of antisocial behaviour despite their less well-to-do backgrounds.

My respondents from STB were chosen based on two criteria, namely trainees between the ages of 13-17 who had just entered the institution. Why were new trainees preferred? That was because I might need to refer to them from time to time throughout my study and it would be very problematical for me should they leave the institution before I have completed my study. And of course the institution has taken many things into consideration before allowing them to participate in my data generation program. For instance, those who were likely to run away or create problems were not allowed to take part. Using the maximum sampling variation strategy, I have chosen a sample of thirteen

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respondents from a population of 99 trainees to participate in my data generation program. After the transcription of my data, my choice has finally narrowed down to six whom I believed could provide the most colourful answers to my research questions.

Why STB and not elsewhere? “In qualitative research, we identify our participants and sites based on places and people that can best help us understand our central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2008, p.213). The trainees at this institution are well-behaved despite their sordid past and are easy to get acquainted with. Gaining access to the institution is not a problem as permission is always granted by the Social Welfare Department. Further, the staff is always friendly and helpful. The trainees come from different backgrounds and are of different races thus providing a variety of situations for deviant behaviour that could enrich my study. The fact that the institution is solely for boys does not pose any problems for the investigations since crime does not discriminate between the sexes as research has shown “that the delinquent behaviour of males and females is more similar than assumed” (Cernkovich, 1979, p.131). Further, boys are normally less emotional than girls and are more willing to talk about their lives.

As for my student respondents, I have already chosen and started observing 16 of my potential respondents (from a population of around 1000 students) since the commencement of my Ph.D. program in 2012 but my choice of respondents has finally narrowed down to six whom I believed could provide me with the most fruitful answers to my research questions. Why did I choose my former students who are leading a healthy lifestyle to be the subjects of my study as well instead of just focusing solely on the juvenile offenders? I found my students very unique because they are children from less well-to-do families who do not want to become juvenile delinquents even though there is every reason for them to do so. All of them are well-behaved children and have never had any discipline problems in school. Most of them do not stay near their school but do not

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mind the inconvenience that travelling gives them just because they do not want to go to the "gangster school" near their low-cost flats as they do not want to become gangsters like their neighbours. Being close to my students also facilitates my role as a participant observer cum confidante which could help a great deal in generating meaningful data about the protective factors at work in their lives as my research would not be complete without looking into both risk and protective factors.

Why did I focus on twelve respondents only and not more than that? In order to gain a deeper insight into the hearts, minds and souls of my respondents, it is better to be more focused through the selection of smaller, highly targeted samples. This study does have its advantage in that it provides real life data from a small number of respondents who are carefully selected for the purposes of a detailed analysis so as to yield the best possible results. The outcome of the research is rich, thick, comprehensive, thorough, and in-depth data laden with insight which cannot be attained through quantitative methods even though a much bigger sample is used in quantitative studies. In Table 4.1 below, I have presented the socio-demographic profiles of my 12 respondents whilst the eco-maps that provide a more thorough description of their backgrounds can be found in Figures 4.1 to 4.12.

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Table 4.1

Profiles of My Respondents

Name	Gender	Age	Race/Religion	Crime Committed	Education Level	Work Experience/s	Parents' Marital Status	Parental Occupation
Ariffin	Male	13	Malay / Islam	Theft	Form 1	____	Separated	Mother – hawker / part-time tailor.
Ah Fook	Male	15	Chinese / Buddhist	Assault/Wounding	Form 1	Waiter, storekeeper & repairing motorcycles	Married	Father – fishmonger Mother – housewife
Loga	Male	15	Indian / Hindu	Motorcycle Theft	Year 6	Car workshop & gambling shop	Divorced	Mother – cleaner
Irwan	Male	17	Malay / Islam	Shopbreaking	Form 5	Fed cows in the village	Married	Father – cabler Mother – sales assistant
Zulkifli	Male	16	Malay / Islam	Motorcycle Theft	Form 1	General worker, security guard & hawker	Married	Father – taxi driver Mother – housewife
Syazwan	Male	15	Malay / Islam	Shopbreaking/Robbery	Form 3	Lorry attendant	Married	Father – selling chicken Mother – hawker
Ali	Male	14	Malay / Islam	____	Form 2	____	Divorced	Grandmother – cleaner
Kartik	Male	17	Indian / Christian	____	Form 5	____	Married	Father – carpenter Mother – housewife
Ah Meng	Male	13	Chinese / Buddhist	____	Form 1	____	Married	Father – lorry driver Mother – clerk
Ramu	Male	15	Indian / Hindu	____	Form 3	____	Married	Father – making gold items Mother – housewife
Rashid	Male	14	Malay / Islam	____	Form 2	____	Widowed	Mother – clerk
Azman	Male	16	Malay / Islam	____	Form 4	____	Married	Father – personal driver Mother - hawker

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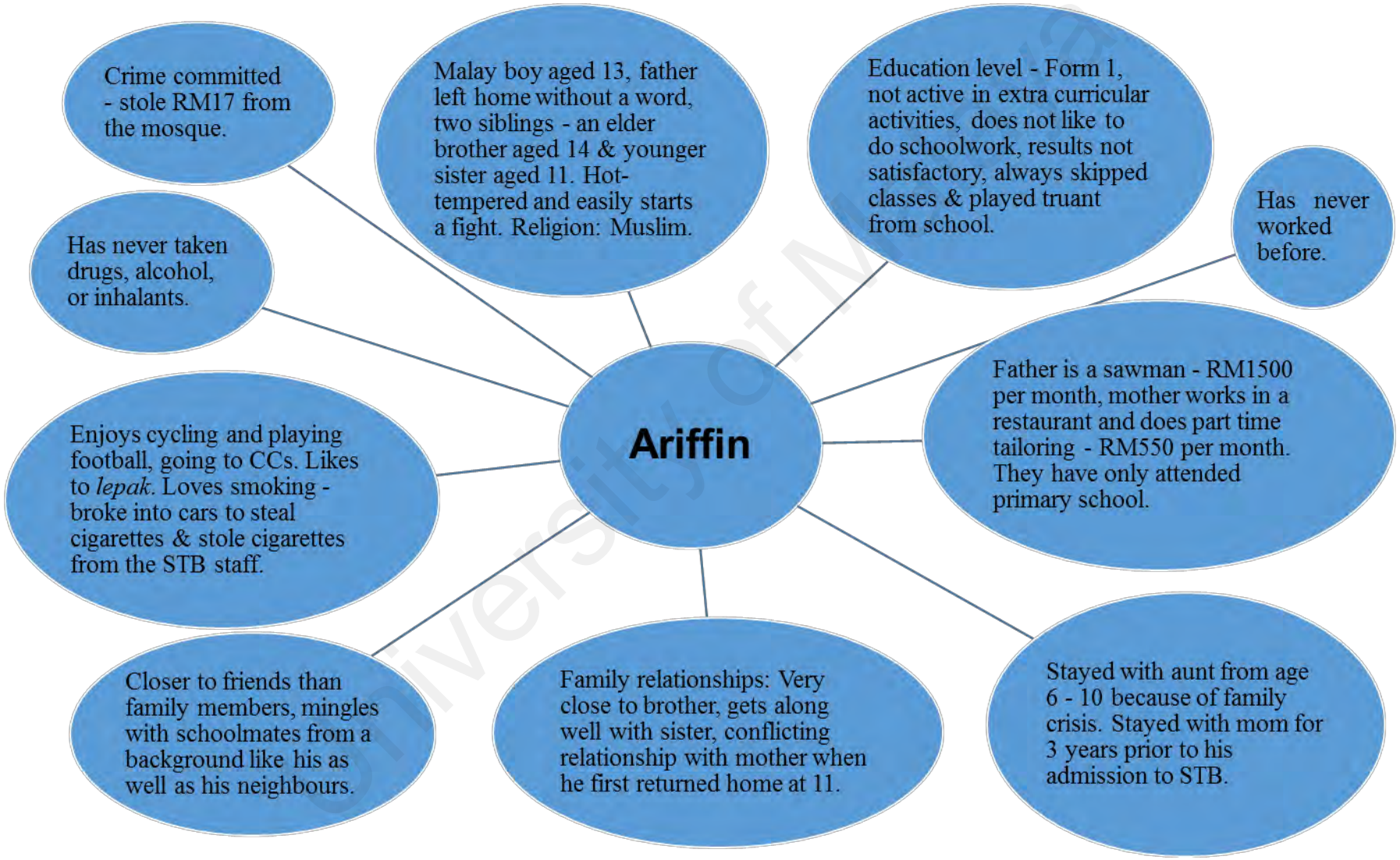

Figure 4.1. Ariffin's Eco-Map

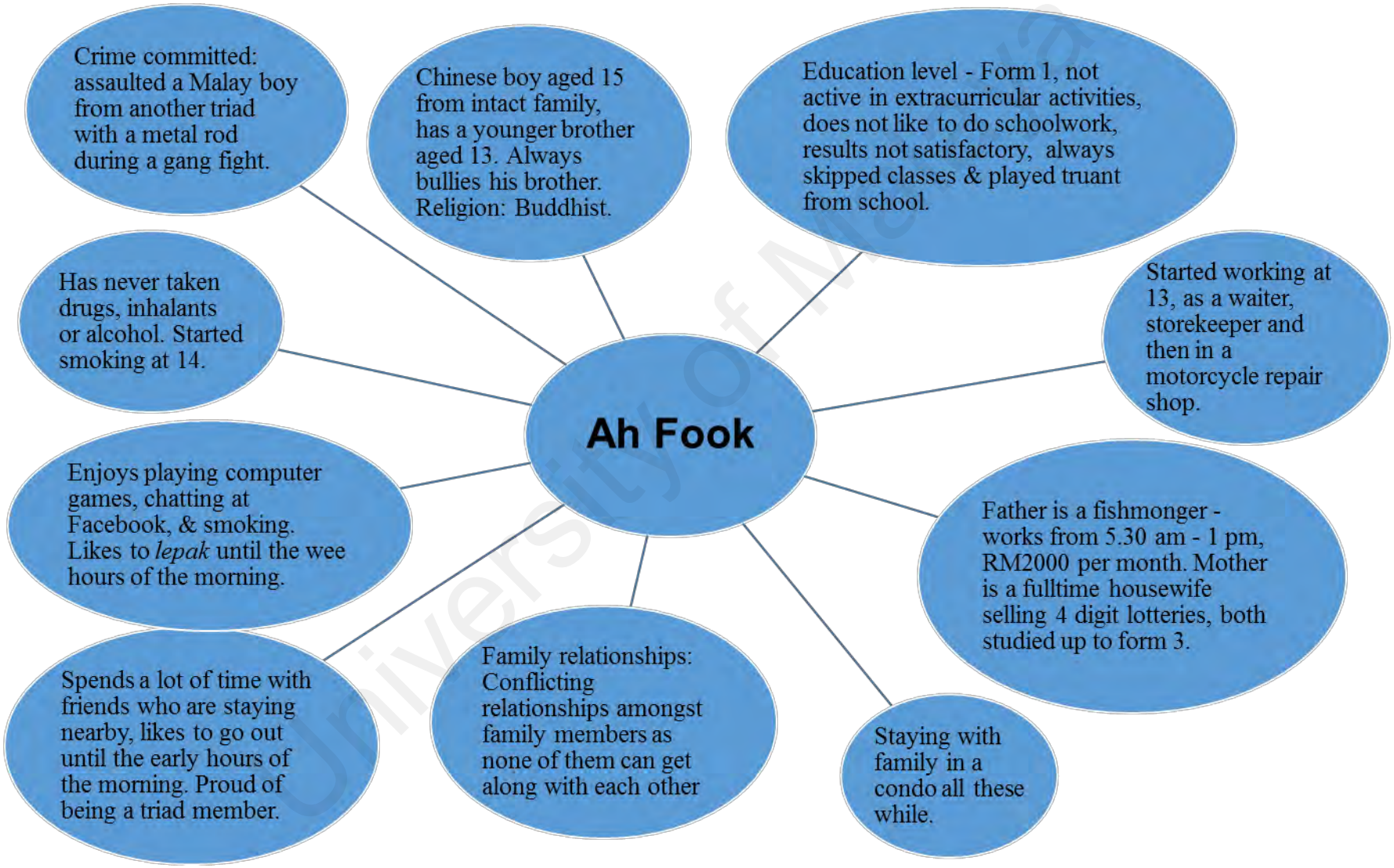

Figure 4.2. Ah Fook's Eco-Map

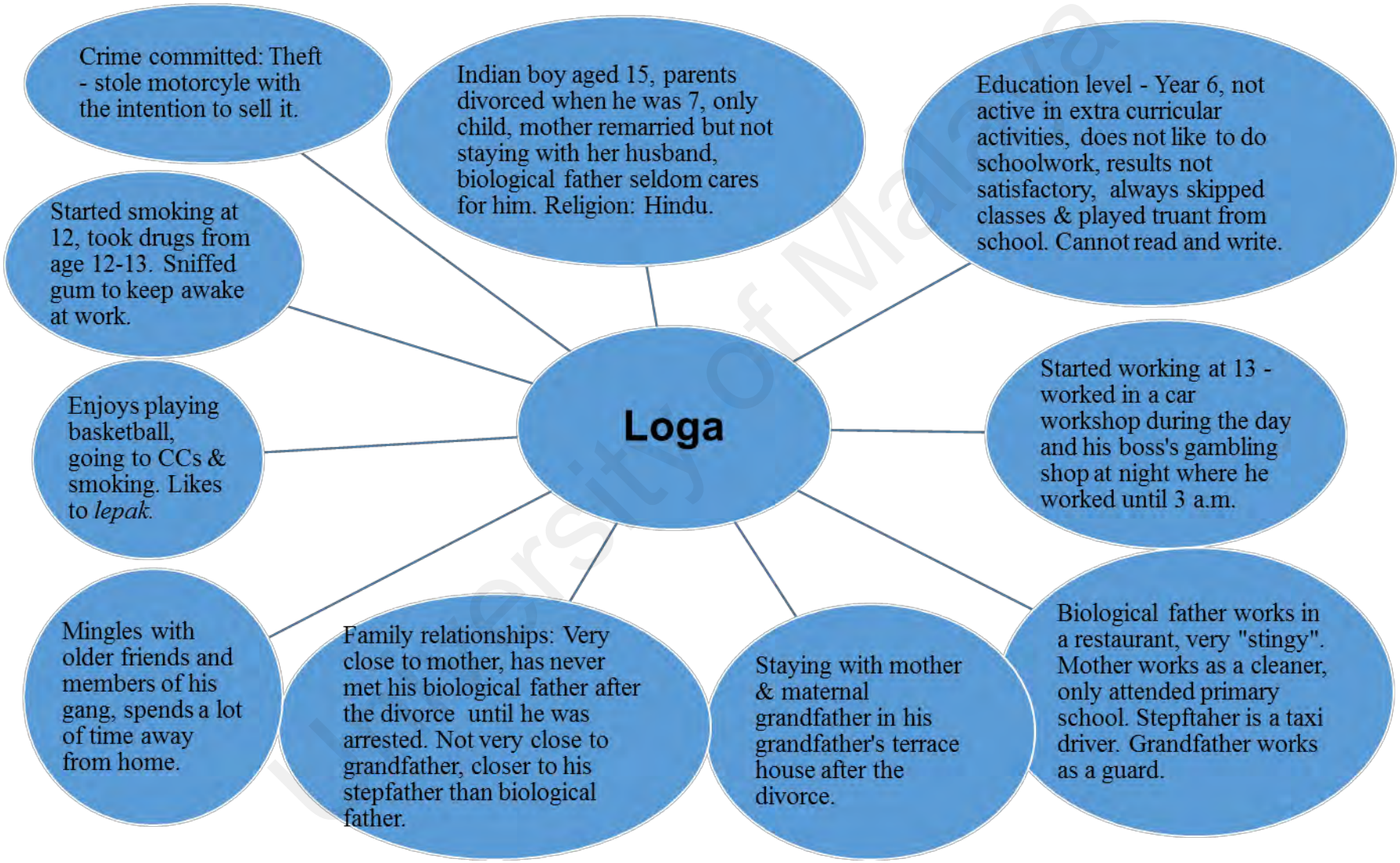

Figure 4.3. Loga's Eco-Map

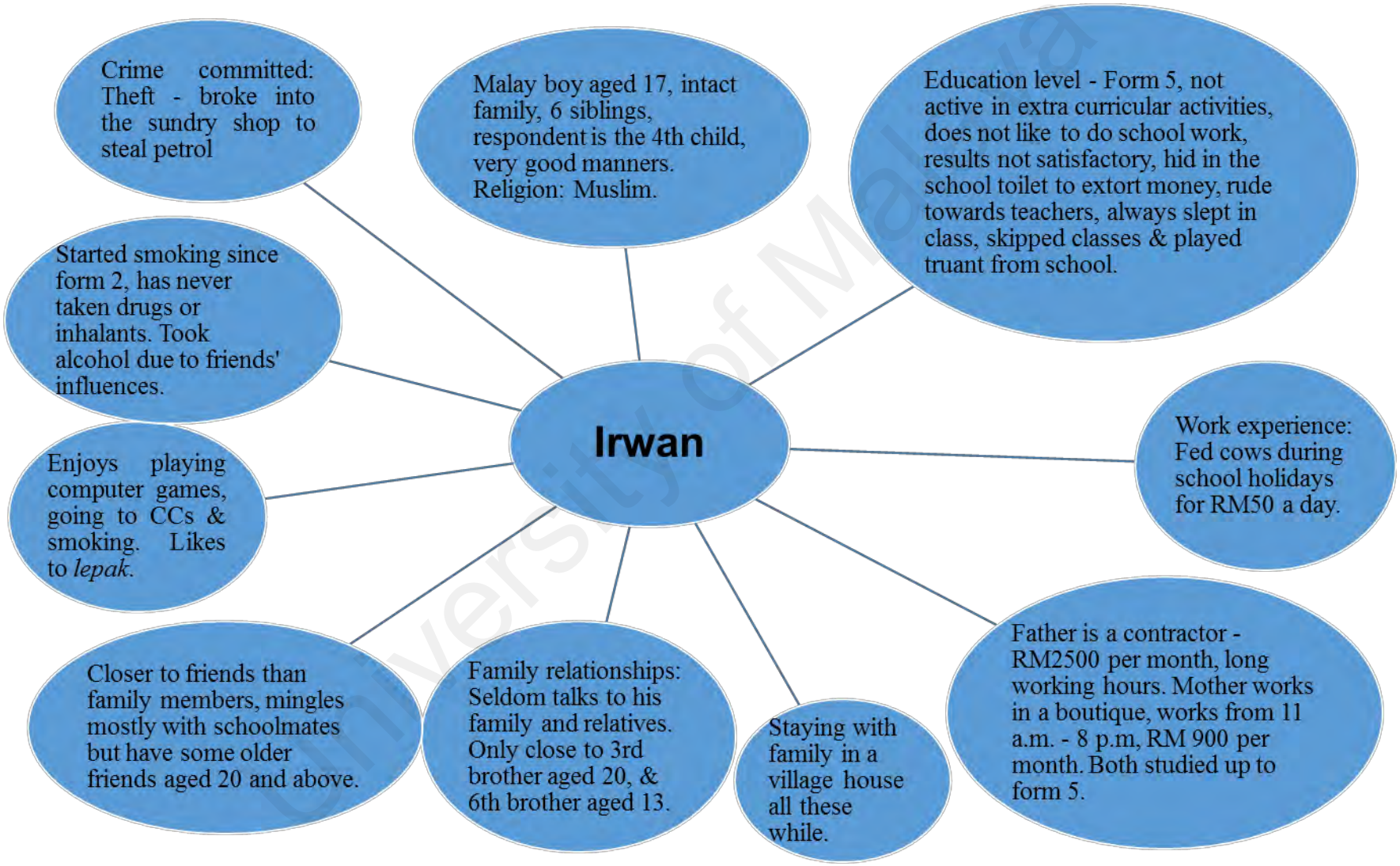

Figure 4.4. Irwan's Eco-Map

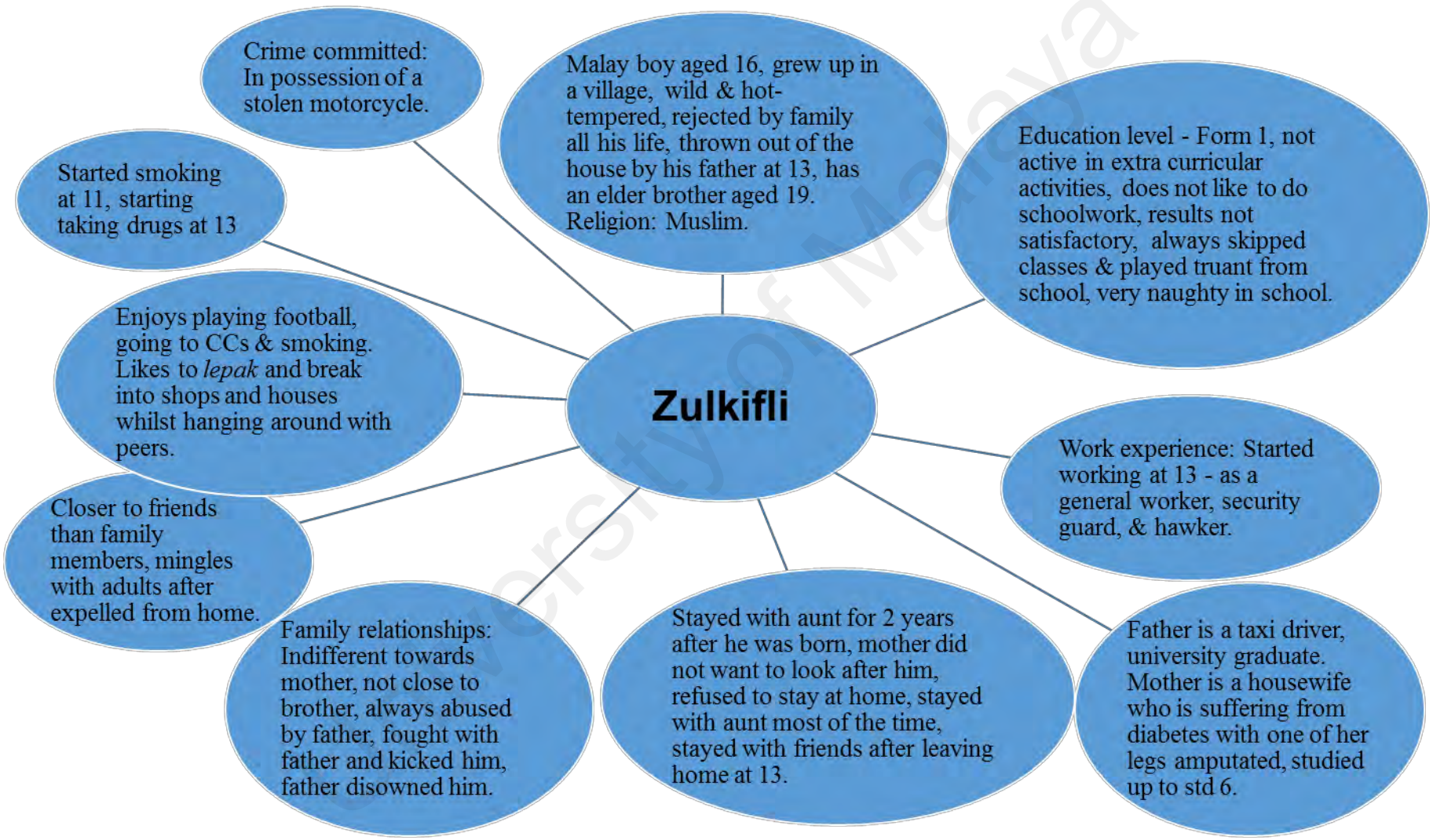

Figure 4.5. Zulkifli's Eco-Map

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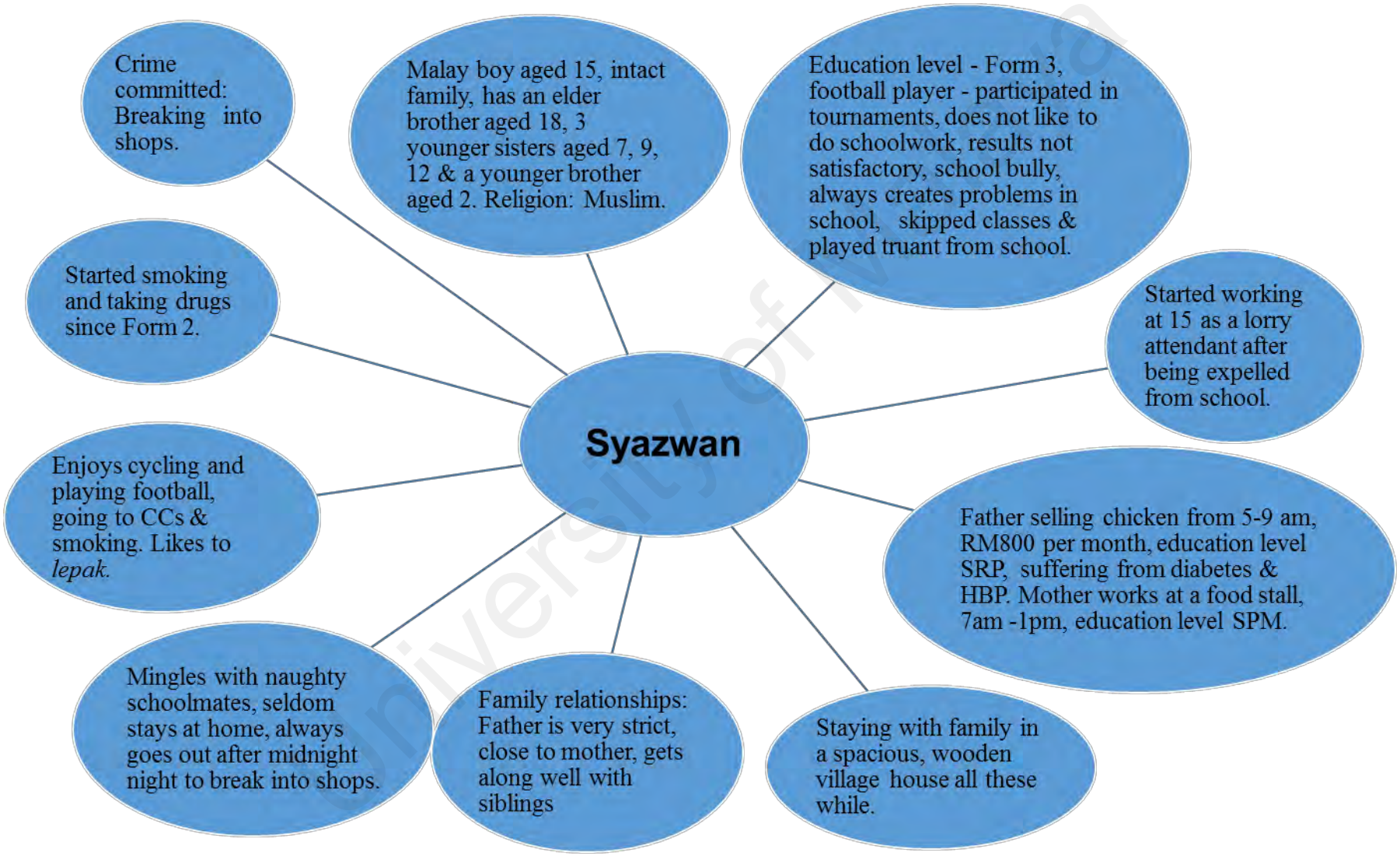

Figure 4.6. Syazwan's Eco-Map

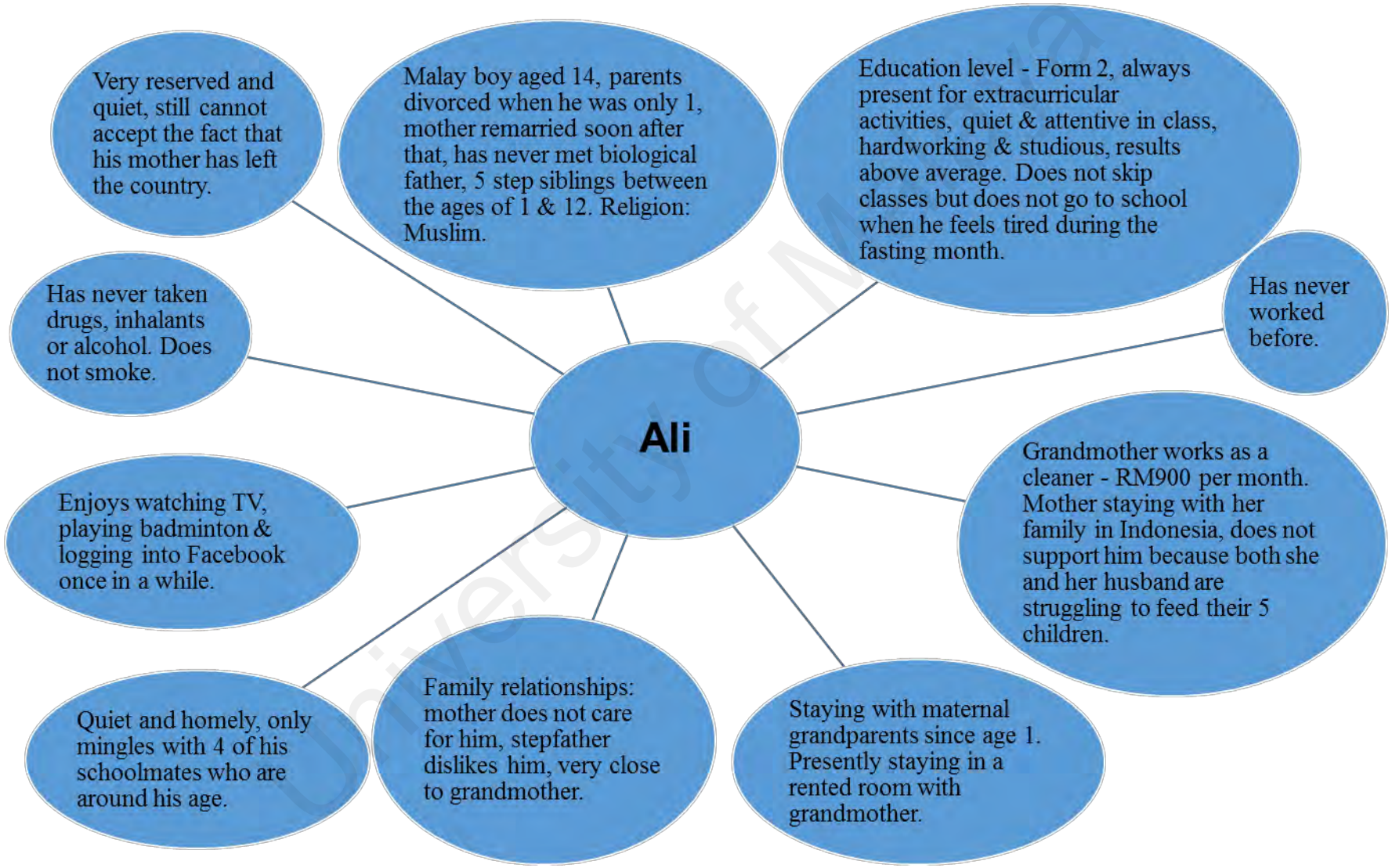

Figure 4.7. Ali's Eco-Map

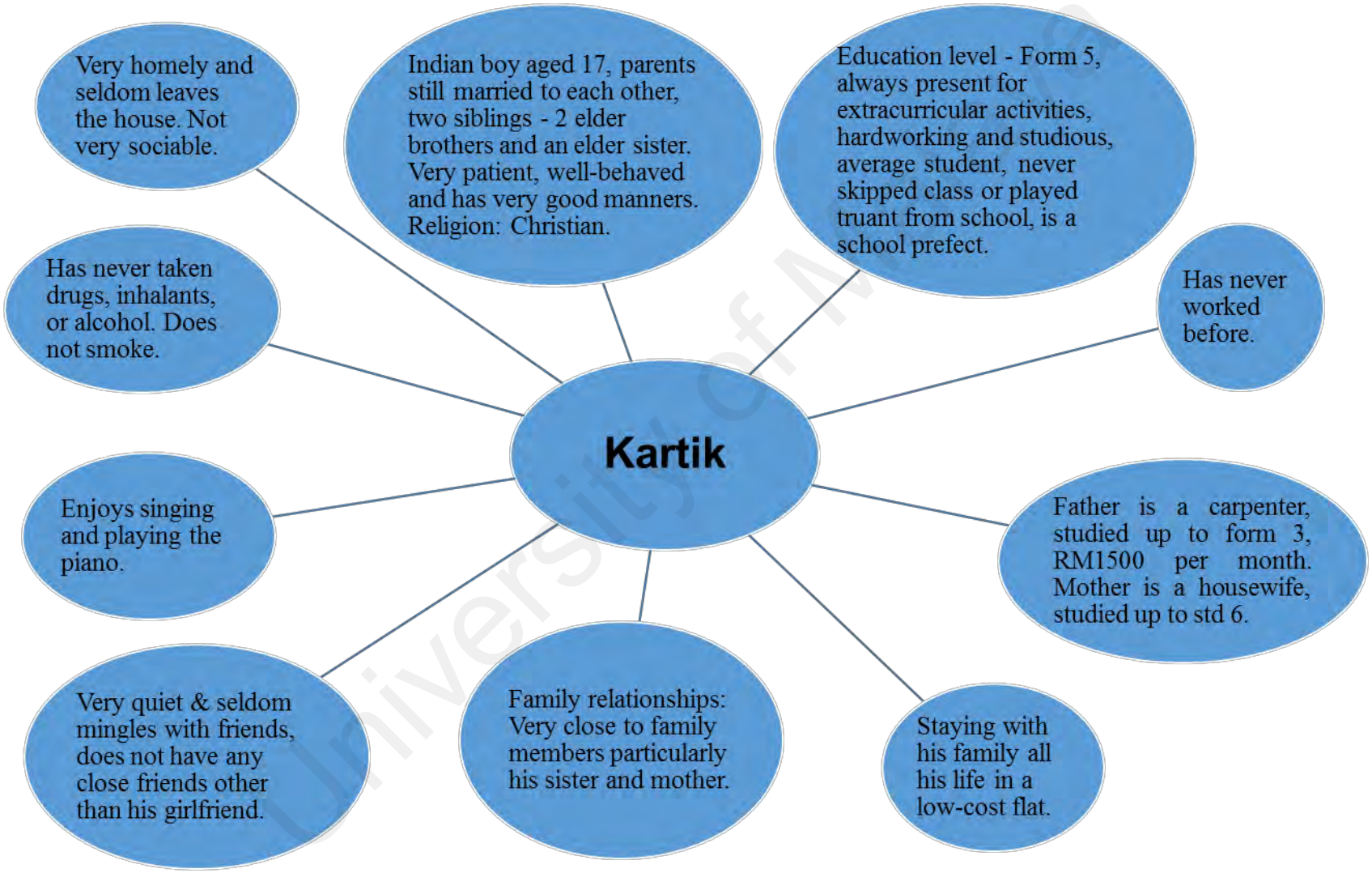

Figure 4.8. Kartik's Eco-Map

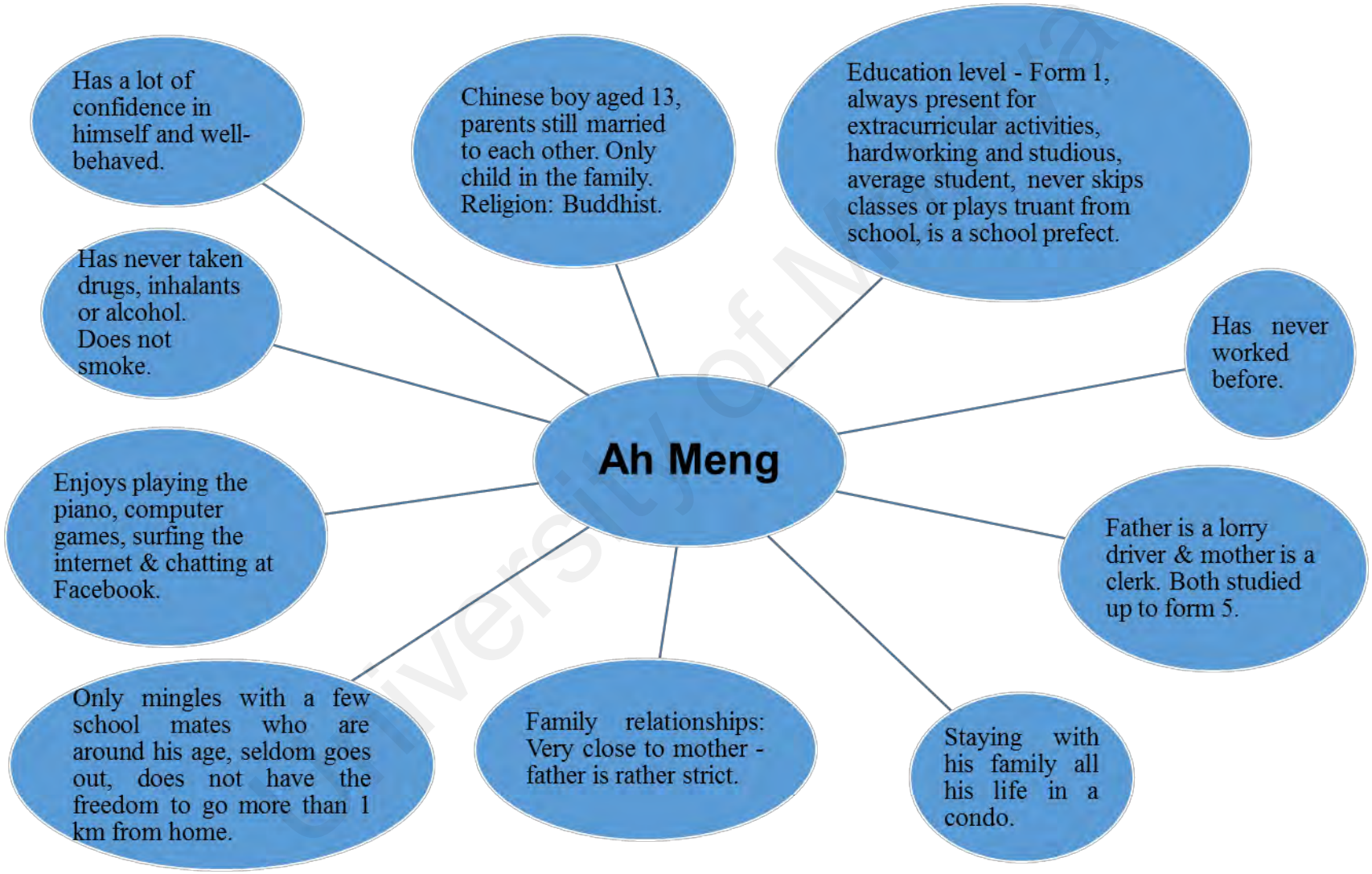

Figure 4.9. Ah Meng's Eco-Map

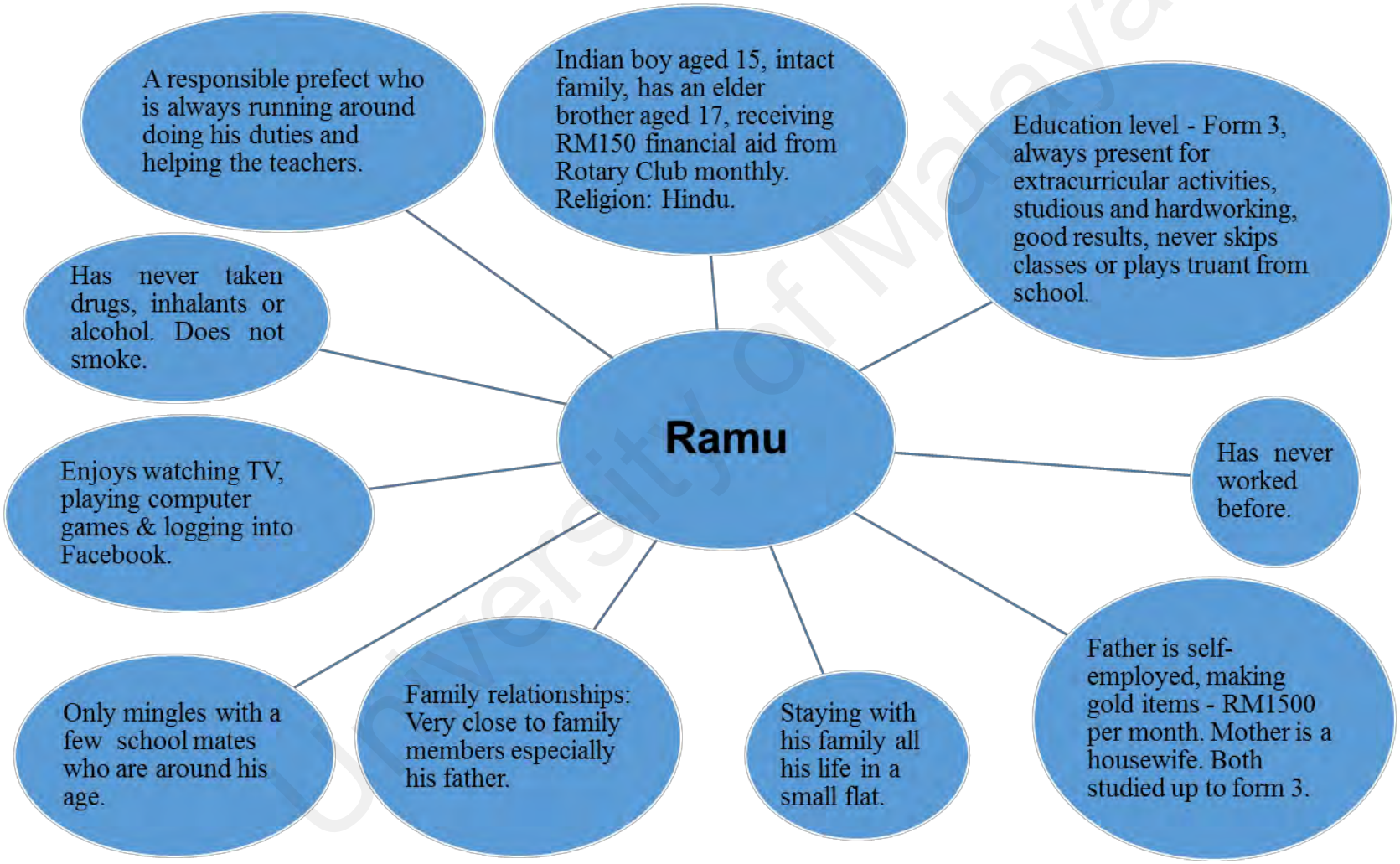

Figure 4.10. Ramu's Eco-Map

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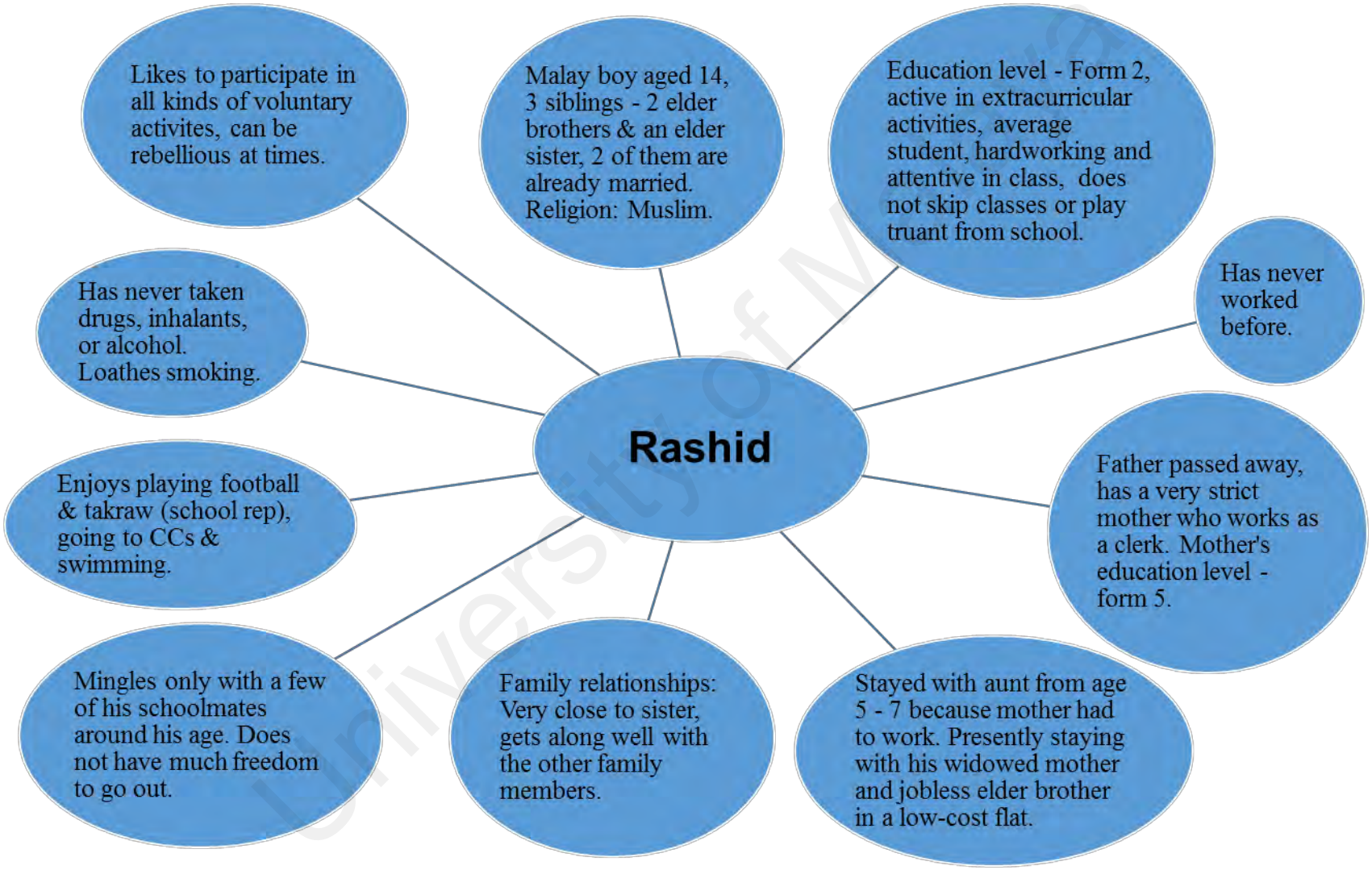

Figure 4.11. Rashid's Eco-Map

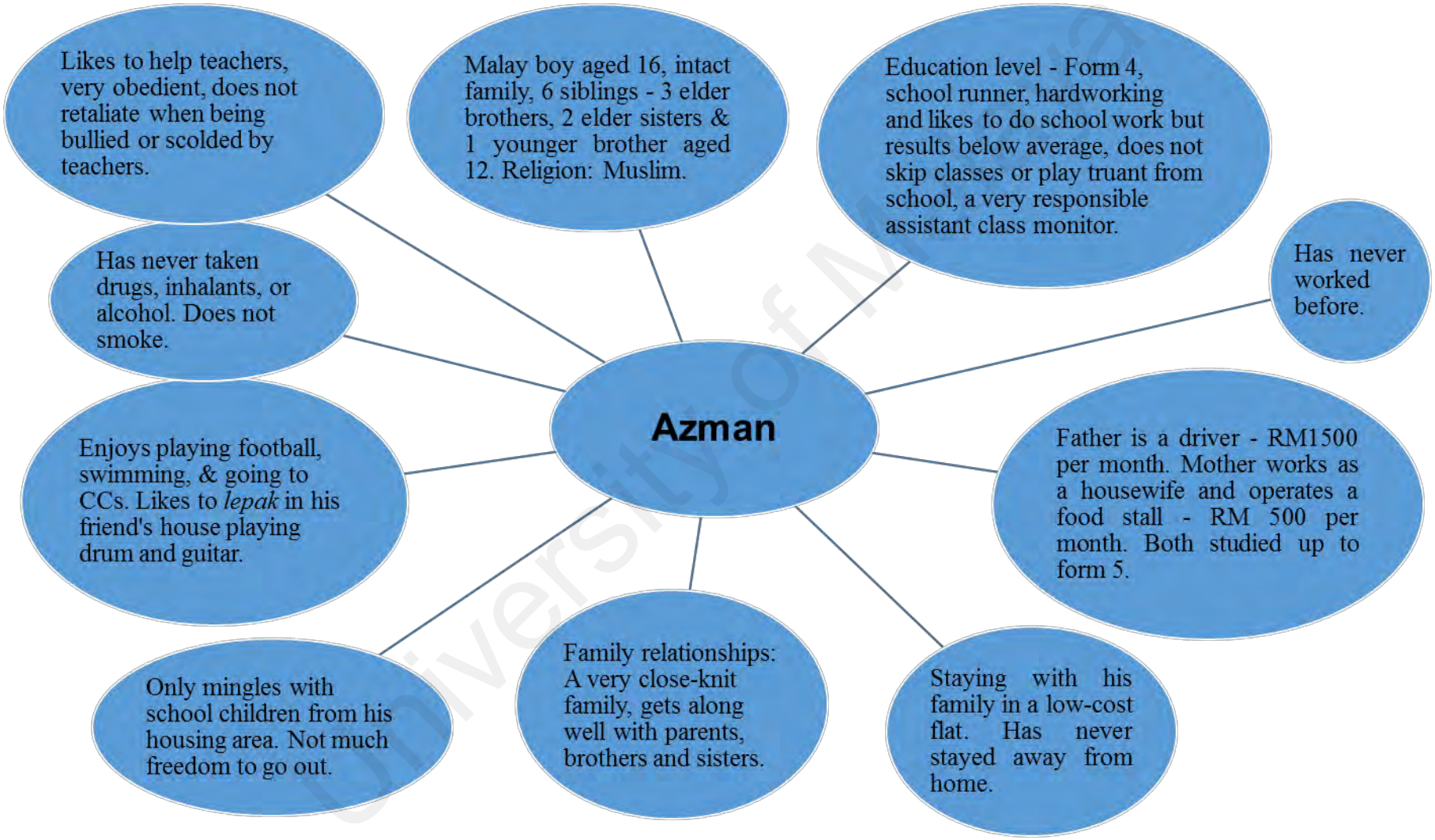

Figure 4.12. Azman's Eco-Map

4.6 Data Generation

The term *data generation* is preferred here instead of data collection since the data required cannot simply be collected, plucked or harvested anywhere but are originated from the interactions between the researcher and her respondents and are actually created/generated by them (Gummesson, 2003). My data generation methods include:

a. in-depth structured/semi-structured/open-ended interviews with the respondents. Every session of the interview was audio-taped and transcribed verbatim;
b. stimulative-recall methodology where my respondents are stimulated to write/talk about their life experiences, expectations, fears, hopes, worries and disappointments in a language that they are comfortable with;
c. conducting direct observation on my respondents as a participant observer;
d. document analysis; and
e. secondary data

The use of multiple data sources in data generation greatly enhances the trustworthiness and accuracy of my study through the process of triangulation. Many sources of data are "better in a study than a single source because multiple sources lead to a further understanding of the phenomena" under investigation (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998, p.104). These methods of data generation are explained in greater depths below.

4.6.1 Interviewing

An interview can be defined as a method of data generation in which an interviewer (a researcher) asks the interviewee (a respondent) a set of questions (Babbie, 2004). "The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind. We interview people to find out from them those things we can't observe" (Patton, 1990, p.278). "I interview because I am interested in other people's stories… Telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process. When people tell stories, they select details of their experience from their stream of consciousness" (Seidman, 2006, p.7). Since interviewing is a natural form of communication that "provides access to the context of people's behaviour" (Seidman, 2006, p.10), it gives me the opportunity to understand the meaning my

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respondents make of their experiences and how it affects the way they carry out their experiences (Seidman, 2006, p.10).

The one-on-one interview technique (Creswell, 2008, p.226) was chosen by the researcher because of the sensitive nature of the interviews as there might be some confidential information which the respondents did not wish to disclose to others. In order to elicit as much meaningful data as I could from my respondents during the interviews and ensured that my research questions were adequately answered, I tried to make my respondents as conversational as possible and even shared information about myself with them so as to establish good rapport with them and encourage them to talk more about themselves. I also listened attentively, empathetically, and actively to them whilst at the same time paying attention to their body language such as pauses, facial expressions, and gestures. Whatever confusion or ambiguity that may arise regarding my respondents' background and life experiences was also clarified during the interviews (Babbie, 2004).

The methods of interviewing used in this study include in-depth, structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews with my respondents (Fontana & Frey, 2008). The in-depth interviews have resulted in a considerable amount of valuable data that flowed from the free communication process between the researcher and her respondents. Although semi-structured interviews "involve the implementation of a number of predetermined questions and/or special topics" (Berg, 2001, p.70), this method of interviewing has provided some form of flexibility for the researcher to reframe and/or reorder the questions based on her respondents' responses in order to elicit more information from them. On the whole, I found the unstructured interviews particularly useful for the revelation of social reality and generation of unanticipated answers as my respondents were able to reflect freely on the questions. This type of interview not only made the respondents more focused on the topic of discussion but has also brought forth

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more reflections and hence more information from them. In allowing their voices to be heard through their points of view also enabled me to "see how their individual experience interacts with powerful social and organizational forces that pervade the context in which they live" (Seidman, 2006, p.130) thus providing me with a clearer and detailed picture of their real life experiences.

"Asking questions and getting answers is a much harder task than it may seem at first" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p.645) and to facilitate the interview process, I made use of the interview protocol. For the purposes of this study, my interview protocol "contains instructions for the process of the interview, the questions to be asked, and space to take notes of responses from the interviewee" (Creswell, 2008, p.229). It also contains guidelines for the interview to remind me what to do during an interview whilst at the same time allowing room for creativity and flexibility so that the cases under investigation can be fully analyzed and documented. The interview protocol has therefore enabled me to generate richer and more detailed information, probe for more clues and resolve any doubts that may arise in relation to my respondents' background and the realities of their world.

Apart from the scheduled interview, "those interviewed are free to expand on the topic as they see fit" (Bless, Higson-Smith, & Kagee, 2006, p.116) whilst at the same time I would not hesitate to "formulate other questions as judged appropriate for a given situation" (p.116). "In qualitative interviewing, you change the questions you ask depending on what you learned or failed to learn" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p.145). For instance, whilst generating information about my respondents' classroom activities, I had to shift my focus from these activities and asked them what they used to do in a "no teacher" classroom when they told me that their teachers had the habit of not entering class during lessons. Under such circumstances, I also had to find out how they felt when there was nothing to do in class and the extent to which they were affected by the no teacher lessons.

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This helped to provide additional information about their classroom experiences that may have an effect on their academic and behavioural outcomes.

The multiple-interview approach was adopted in my study as it enabled me to develop a stronger relationship with my respondents thus eliciting more meaning-laden information from them. The interviews were divided into 3 sessions in accordance with Seidman's (2006) in-depth phenomenological interviewing method. The first interview focused on my respondents' background so as to make them tell me as much as they could about themselves. The second interview focused on the details of their life experiences whilst the third interview focused on the meaning they attached to these experiences. I find that multiple interviews are more practicable than single interviews because it gives me the opportunity to clarify whatever confusion that may arise in earlier interviews. Since prolonged interviews could easily lead to boredom and make the respondents less cooperative, the interviews did not exceed 30 minutes per session following Kvale's suggestion (1996). To avoid putting the respondents in a stressful situation, the interviews were conducted in an informal conversational manner in a quiet room or comfortable place.

In trying to gain a more thorough understanding of my respondents' lived world, it was necessary to analyze their actual words in detail. All the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim in full length so that I could capture every word (including pauses, stammers, and repetitions) that came from the voices of my respondents. Notes and reflections were also jotted down during the interviews for the purposes of accuracy and transcription but these were limited so that I could focus on my respondents and their answers to my questions. For those interviews that were originally conducted in Malay or Chinese, every attempt has been made by the researcher to translate it into English without losing its originality. The detailed transcription was intended to provide a precise record of the interviews for the purposes of analyses and interpretations.

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Am I getting the real story from my respondents? When there is mutual trust and respect between the researcher and her respondents, the latter are more likely to tell their life story openly and honestly. Instead of approaching my respondents as a researcher, I became their teacher, counsellor, and confidante, someone whom "the respondents will feel most comfortable with, the kind of person the respondents would most enjoy talking to" (Babbie, 1999, p.243) and would like to have as a close friend for a lifetime. Every attempt has been made to convince my respondents that I was always on their side as this would make them feel safe to bare their souls and entrust their life experiences to me. I have also taken careful consideration of their thoughts and feelings throughout the interviews so as not to distraught them. Prior to the interviews, I spent a lot of time getting acquainted with them (whilst at the same time observing them) as this would help to facilitate my data generation process. I did not begin with my interviews until I have developed a trust relationship with them and ensured that they were willing to share their life experiences with me since many children tend to feel uncomfortable talking about their life experiences to a stranger and may end up giving untrue statements.

Even though the respondents from STB are not my own students, this did not deter them from building up a trust relationship with me through my regular visits to the institution and the programs that I organized for them. "Of course, as any good anthropologist will tell you the admonishment that 'they' will not talk to 'you' represents a naïve understanding of people" (Waldram, 2009, p.5). All my respondents from STB were very cooperative and seemed to be bursting with information all the time. Some of them even kept talking nonstop just to make me stay longer each time I told them I had to leave. They are all very close to me and still keep in touch with me after their release from the institution. I find them very easy to get along with as they have very good manners and really know how to respect their elders. Needless to say, "once trust has been established,

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prison inmates prove anxious to talk… They narrate their stories at will, including detailed description of their offenses" (Waldram, 2009, p.5). Although getting to know them took a lot of time, effort, and money, the information-rich data generated from this study certainly worth all the time, effort, and money spent on them.

As for my own students respondents, there was no need for me to take time to get acquainted with them since I know them very well and the six that I have chosen are actually very close to me all these years. As their English teacher, I have been observing them continuously over a period of 1-4 years. Needless to say, my close relationship with my respondents has enabled them to tell the stories of their lives with unusual openness thus giving me lots of priceless information that could help to explain for their actions and behaviour. However, being close to my respondents also gives rise to the issue of subjectivity that may affect my interpretations for this research. To avoid this pitfall, I have formulated my interview questions in a perfectly neutral manner so as not to give hints to my respondents of what I wanted to hear. I have also given them the freedom to express their ideas, thoughts, feelings, and emotions through unstructured interviews and stimulative-recall methodology.

4.6.2 Stimulative-Recall Methodology

Stimulative-recall methodology is an introspective research method which was originated by Bloom (1954) to study the recall reliability of the students in the ESL classroom. Although it is often used in investigating classroom practices, particularly second language acquisition, this method has been successfully used as one of my data generation methods after some extensive modifications were made to its original design. The aim of this informal data generation method was to gain a deeper insight into the inner feelings and hidden thoughts of my respondents so as to bring to light their fears, hopes, desires,

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worries, intentions, values, beliefs, and emotions. It delved into their subconscious mind by inviting them to recall upon their past experiences (when prompted by some kind of audio or video cues) and write or talk about the meaning which these experiences had for them. What was so unique with this method of data generation was that it had the capacity to reveal the hidden personality and secrets of the respondents that were not easily discernible through direct observation and interview.

In this study, stimulative-recall methodology was used to facilitate my respondents' conversations about their past experiences. It was intended to make them recall certain experiences in their lives and talk about their feelings and thoughts associated with these experiences. This was achieved by using audio/video cues to trigger memories and responses from them. For instance, when the respondents were shown a scene from P. Ramlee's movie entitled *Masam Masam Manis* (Sour Sour Sweet) about a teacher who slept in class, they were automatically triggered to recall their classroom experiences. The respondents were then given the time to reflect on these experiences and write their hearts out in a little diary provided by the researcher. The freewriting technique was adopted so that the respondents could write as much as they liked, in whatever way they liked, and in any language they were comfortable with. The absence of restraint on their thoughts enabled them to relate their experiences freely thus putting forth lots of meaningful data which could not be easily discoverable by other data generation methods. For those who lacked writing skills, this freewriting technique was substituted by the *freetalking* technique so that the respondents could talk their hearts out instead. The trainees at STB might not be able to write complete sentences but their one word responses and drawings did help me to gain a deeper insight into their life experiences which they elaborated extensively when I asked them to describe the meaning behind these single words and pictures during the interviews. This clearly shows that freetalking can be just as effective as freewriting. Apart

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from the audio/visual cues, conversational cues were just as effective in extracting information from my respondents. All I had to do was to say something that triggered the memories of some of their life experiences and lots of interesting information would flow from the conversations.

4.6.3 Direct Observation

In addition to interviews and stimulative-recall methodology, further qualitative data was generated through participant observation. As a participant observer, I had "a unique opportunity to observe and/or participate and analyze a phenomenon otherwise at least partially inaccessible to scientific investigation" (Yin, 2003, p.106). However, being a participant observer could be very challenging at times as I had to observe and interview the respondents, analyze the relevant documents, keep records whilst at the same time participating in the activities in the school/institution and share the lives of the staff and the students. As a covert participant observer, I also found myself to be in a dilemma. On one hand, I was "more likely to capture what is really happening" (Patton, 1987, p.76) whilst on the other I could not help feeling that I was being "morally obnoxious" (Patton, 1987, p.77). However, I was left without a choice because if the data was generated overtly, people tend to act unnaturally (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p.409) and it would not be possible for me to obtain "data that are strong on reality" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.405). Whatever the situation may be, covert participation observation enabled the researcher to obtain direct information from her respondents and hence "the generation of 'thick descriptions', particularly of social processes and interaction, which lend themselves to accurate explanation and interpretation of events rather than relying on the researcher's own inferences" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.405).

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After every observation, I would immediately "record ideas, strategies, reflections, and hunches, as well as note patterns that emerge. These were field notes – the written account of what the researcher heard, saw, experienced, and thought in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, pp.110-111). For the purposes of recording, an observational protocol was "used for taking field notes during an observation" (Creswell, 2008, p. 235). My observational protocol was divided into two sections, namely, the descriptive section and the reflective section. In the descriptive section, I summarized the flow of activities in chronological order whilst the reflective section was "a section for notes about the process, reflections on activities, and summary conclusions about activities for later theme development" (Creswell, 2008, p.138). There was also a small space for a visual sketch of the setting should circumstances demand it. "Through the exercise of writing up my field notes, with attention to 'who' the speakers and actors were, I became aware of the nature of certain social relationships and their positional arrangements" (Hobbs & Wright, 2006, p.56) within my respondents' social environment all of which could deepen my knowledge and understanding of the themes developed in this study.

4.6.4 Document Analysis

"Documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.119). These are not affected by the presence or absence of the researcher but nevertheless "can be be used in the same manner as data from interviews or observations" (Merriam, 1998, p.126). The purpose of document analysis in this study was to clarify and substantiate the statements made by my respondents so as to provide a thick description of each and every case under investigation. The school records pertaining to my respondents such as their

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personal files, report cards, result slips, exercise books, attendance records, suspension/expulsion records, behaviour reports and the Aplikasi Pangkalan Data Murid (student data system) were included in this study as this kind of information could be very helpful in providing more extensive data for the purposes of data analysis and interpretation. In addition, their Facebook posts, emails, SMSes, Whatsapp/Telegram messages, and diaries were also used in this study because the wealth of information contained within these documents could provide further information about their life experiences and interactions within their social environment. All these documents were "easily accessible, free, and contain information that would take an investigator enormous time and effort to gather otherwise" (Merriam, 1998, p.125).

4.6.5 Secondary Data

Secondary data is the data that has been collected previously by someone other than the researcher and is readily available from many other sources. Apart from providing me with additional information to enrich my study, this kind of data also helped to save a lot of my time, money, and effort. The sources of secondary data used in this study include newspaper articles, journals, libraries, books, internet research, the statistics of juvenile crime provided by the Malaysian Police Force, the divorce statistics, and population statistics provided by the Department of Statistics, Malaysia.

4.7 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is the "process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the masses data collected" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p.135) that requires a lot of creativity and sense making "in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories, and regularities" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.461). "A good qualitative

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analysis uncovers new ideas and themes that could provide a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. No formula exists for that transformation. Guidance, yes. But no recipe. Direction can and will be offered, but the final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when – and if – arrived at" (Patton, 2002, p.432).

In this study, thematic analysis was adopted for the purposes of "identifying themes or patterns" (Lapadat, 2010, p.296) that emerge from the data. In order to do so, the researcher had to prepare and organize "the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion" (Creswell, 2007, p.148) through the process of decontextualizing and recontextualizing (Stewart, 1998, p.53). In the decontextualizing processs, the researcher stripped the textual segments from the data sources where they were coded. A textual segment is "a segment of text that is comprehensible by itself and contains one idea, episode, or piece of information" (Tesch, 1990, p.116). In other words, it is a segment of text that retains its full contextual meaning when cut off from the data sources (Tesch, 1990). Codes are "tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.56). Coding was carried out by allocating the textual segments (words or phrases, written or spoken, mentioned by my respondents) into the relevant categories or groups for later analysis, comparison, and discussion. The derivation of meaning from textual segments that are sorted into categories or groups is known as recontextualizing. Recontextualizing enabled the researcher to understand the phenomenon better through the categories of themes. These were carried out manually with the use of the computer through the cut and paste method. The researcher therefore played an essential role as the main instrument in data analysis as she was the mastermind behind it. Even though this procedure was rather

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time consuming, it has given me a lot of satisfaction for being directly involved in it particularly when I saw the themes emerging one after another.

The "purpose of social science is to understand social reality as different people see it and to demonstrate how their views shape the action which they take within that reality" (Tomlinson, 2004, p.80). Since "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (Merriam, 1998, p.6), it is "not an objective entity; rather, there are multiple interpretations of reality" (Merriam, 1998, p.22). For the purposes of "explanation, clarification and demystification" (Tomlinson, 2004, p.80) of the data generated in this study:

> The researcher brings a construction of reality to the research situation, which interacts with other people's constructions or interpretations of the phenomenon being studied. The final product of this type of study is yet another interpretation by the researcher of others' views filtered through her own.
>
> (Merriam, 1998, p.22)

As what Greenfield (1984) says, "we can do nothing to validate our perceptions of reality other than to describe it as we see it and to argue for the truth of our description" (p.142) in the hope that "people can learn from the cases either for themselves or to apply to a population of cases" (Creswell, 2007, p.163). To ensure data accuracy and integrity, I put aside my emotions and made my analyses and interpretations as meaningful as possible from my respondents' point of view.

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4.8 Reliability and Validity

Good quality research enables us to "understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing" (Eisner, 1991, as cited in de Guzman, Das, & Das, 2014, p.166). "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Brown & Baker, 2007, p.72). The answer to this question is greatly influenced by the trustworthiness of the

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process and the credibility, dependability, and accuracy of the data that flows from it. According to Seale (1999), the "trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability" (as cited in Klenke, 2008, p.39).

4.8.1 Reliability

"Reliability is concerned with the question of the extent to which one's findings will be found again. That is, if the inquiry is replicated, would the findings be the same?" (Merriam, 1995, p.55). According to Creswell (2008):

> Reliability means that scores from an instrument are stable and consistent. Scores should be nearly the same when researchers administer the instrument multiple times at different times. Also, scores need to be consistent. When an individual answers certain questions one way, the individual should consistently answer closely related questions in the same way.
>
> (Creswell, 2008, p.169)

This is to say that the more often the findings are replicated, the more reliable the data would be. Although this may be true for quantitative studies, it is difficult to achieve in qualitative studies where consistency is not a rule to be followed as there is no such thing "as a single, immutable reality waiting to be observed or measured" (Merriam, 1995, p.54). Many people may be experiencing the same phenomenon but "this does not necessarily mean that they are more reliable than that of a single individual" (Merriam, 1995, p.56). As a qualitative researcher, what I am concerned with "is not whether the results of one study are the same as the results of a second or third study, but whether the results of a study are consistent with the data collected" (Merriam, 1995, p.56) as my intention is "to describe and explain the world as those in the world experience it" (Merriam, 1998, p.205).

4.8.2 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which "the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are" (Reddy & Acharyulu, 2008,

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p.204). There are two different dimensions of validity, namely internal validity and external validity (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Internal validity refers to "how research findings match reality" (Merriam, 1998, p.201). Reality, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) puts it, is "a multiple set of mental constructions made by humans" (p.295). External validity or generalizability, however, refers to "the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied to other situations" (Merriam, 1995, p.57). The validity of a qualitative research can be judged with reference to Maxwell's (1992) five categories of validity, namely descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, generalizability, and evaluative validity (pp.284-285).

Descriptive validity refers to how accurate the researcher is in understanding, accounting, and reporting what has been said or done by the respondents and she is not making up the things she saw or heard (Maxwell, 1992, p.285). To avoid the pitfalls that threaten this form of validity and ensure that the data generated was accurate, I have resorted to multiple methods of data generation, obtained data from various sources, prolonged my data generation period, and written detailed field notes immediately after every observation. I have also recorded and transcribed my interviews verbatim accurately (without omitting any words) as soon as I could in a detailed manner by taking into account the expressions, gestures, and tone of my respondents' voices in my transcriptions. This is because "a verbatim interview transcript might be descriptively invalid in omitting features of the informant's speech, such as stress and pitch, that are essential to the understanding of the interview" (Maxwell, 1992, p.287).

Interpretive validity refers to the capability of the researcher in deriving meaning from the data generated. It is "inherently a matter of inference from the words and actions of participants in situations studied" (Maxwell, 1992, p.290). "The main threat to valid interpretation is imposing one's own framework or meaning, rather than understanding the

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perspectives of the people studied and the meanings they attach to their words and actions" (Maxwell, 1996, p.89). To avoid this threat, unstructured questions that enabled my respondents to elaborate on the answers were therefore preferred to semi-structured or structured questions so that they could express themselves freely. Leading questions were avoided altogether as I did not want to impose my views on them. Further, the use of the stimulative-recall technique greatly enhanced the perspectives of my respondents. For the purposes of a valid interpretation, I listened to the audio recordings of the interviews, read my field notes, and my respondents' diaries carefully over and over again so as to obtain a more thorough understanding of their experiences as well as identifying the issues that recur. To avoid bias, I looked into each and every case under investigation from the perpectives of my respondents based on the meaning they attached to their experiences and presented my findings accordingly even if it these did not fit into my theoretical framework.

Theoretical validity "goes beyond concrete description and interpretation and explicitly addresses the theoretical constructions that the researcher brings to, or develops during the study" (Maxwell, 1992, p.291). Although my theoretical framework is based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as it could explain how the characteristics of a child's social environment could influence his growth and development, I would not force the data to fit into this theory or ignore any part of the data that does not fit into this theory. Through the process of theoretical triangulation, the incorporation of the Object Relations Theory, Sutherland's Differential Association Theory, Bandura's Social Learning Theory, Hirschi's Social Control Theory, Merton's Strain Theory, and Shaw and Mckay's Social Disorganization Theory into Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, it is hoped that this stronger theoretical design would result in a better understanding of my respondents' social reality and hence achieve greater theoretical validity.

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Generalizability refers to "the extent to which one can extend the account of a particular situation or population to other persons, times, or settings than those directly studied" (Maxwell, 1992, p.293). However, it should be noted that "qualitative studies are usually not designed to allow systematic generalizations to some wider population" (Maxwell, 1992, p,293). In qualitative research, "a single case or small nonrandom sample is selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many" (Merriam, 1998, p.208). Since it has never been my intention to "draw correct inferences from the sample data to other persons, settings, and past and future situations" (Creswell, 2008, p.310), suffice it to say that my findings must be consistent with the data generated.

Evaluative validity refers to whether the researcher is able to describe and interpret the data generated without being judgmental. In order to be non-judgmental, critical, disapproving, deprecating, disparaging, condemnatory, and censorious remarks were avoided altogether in analyzing and interpreting the data generated in this study.

4.9 Pilot Test

"A pilot test of a questionnaire or interview survey is a procedure in which a researcher makes changes in an instrument based on feedback from a small number of individuals who complete and evaluate the instrument" (Creswell, 2008, p.402). Prior to the commencement of my data generation process, a pilot test was conducted on six of my former students between the ages of 13-17. Three of them were above average students who were very well-behaved whilst the other three were below average students who had the habit of disrupting classroom activities and skipping classes. All of them came from very challenging backgrounds. Their feedbacks enabled me to revise and improve on my interview questions and stimulative-recall activities, making these instruments more

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realistic for children of their age. This pilot group, however, was excluded from participating in the actual data generation process.

4.10 Ethical Issues in Data Generation

Given the fact that "qualitative studies often contain rich descriptions of study participants, confidentiality breaches via deductive disclosure" (Kaiser, 2009, p.1632) have always been a concern to me. In order to preserve the confidentiality and anonymity of my respondents and the people associated with them, pseudonyms were used. I have also assured my respondents that their anonymity would be well-preserved unless they suggested otherwise. Where necessary, the details of the data were modified so that the identities of my respondents and records about them would remain strictly confidential and secure. However, their geographical locations are not altered as these could help to explain for the neighbourhood effects on my respondents which are in contradiction with certain aspects of Shaw and McKay's Social Disorganization Theory.

All my respondents and their parents/guardians were required to complete an informed consent form before I actually began with my data generation process. I have explained the clauses in the consent forms in detail and conveyed to them the purpose of my study and what it would involve, the nature of the interviews and stimulative-recall activities, how many sessions these would take, the length of time for each session, and how the data generated would be used. I have also made it clear to my respondents that their participation in my data generation program was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw anytime if they did not wish to proceed.

"Participants give a great deal when they choose to participate in qualitative research projects, often revealing intimate details and experiences of their lives" (Creswell, 2008, p.239). I was really touched by my respondents' willingness and sincerity in sharing

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their life experiences with me and tried my best to reward them in whatever way I could. Since I could not give any money to my respondents in STB, I have rewarded them by celebrating Chinese New Year, Eid Al Fitr, Christmas as well as their birthdays with them, each time bringing along some foods (such as cakes, cookies, dates, fruits, and crackers) and presents (such as T-shirts and books) for them. As for my student respondents, apart from the money and presents that I have given them, I have also taken them out for meals at Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonalds.

4.11 Concluding Summary

The qualitative case study approach was adopted in this study as I intended to focus "on ordinary ways of getting acquainted with things" (Stake, 1995, p.49) and present my findings in the natural language through the worldviews of my respondents. This approach has enabled me to capture a rich source of firsthand information that came from the words and voices of my respondents. My respondents include four Malay boys, one Chinese boy, and one Indian boy from Sekolah Tunas Bakti (STB) and three Malay boys, one Chinese boy, and two Indian boys of SMKX between the ages of 13-17. The data generation methods used in this study include interviews, stimulative-recall methodology, observations, field notes, document analysis, and secondary data. For the purposes of data analysis, the data generated was categorized by similar themes through the process of decontextualizing and recontextualizing (Lapadat, 2010; Stewart, 1998). The themes that emerged were represented in figures, tables and an in-depth discussion of the risk and protective factors affecting the behavioural outcomes of my respondents.

My "systematic inquiry into social phenomena in natural settings" (Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hayes, Wadhwa, & Varpio, 2015, p.669) has enabled me to gain a thorough and deep understanding of the real-life situations of my respondents. On the

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whole, my data generation program has not only completed successfully but also brought me closer to my respondents. We have since become lifetime friends and I am proud to have the privilege to be involved in their lives long after my data generation process has completed. Nothing can be more meaningful to me than watching them grow up happily and healthily each day. The findings generated from the interactions between the researcher and her respondents are analysed and discussed in detail in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes and reviews my findings based on my respondents' real life experiences and extends these findings to existing literature associated with juvenile delinquent behaviour. It portrays the diversity of their backgrounds and how their subjective worlds have structured their fate and destiny and contributed towards their actions and behaviours. The data generated was obtained by direct contact with my respondents through conversations, observations, diary entries, phone calls, SMSes, Whatsapp, Facebook chats, and document analysis. The common themes that flowed from the data generated as well as the theories and concepts related to the findings were examined and analyzed in detail in order to answer my first two research questions proposed earlier in the first chapter of this thesis:

1. What are the risk and protective factors governing juvenile delinquent behaviour?
2. Why are some children more prone to delinquent behaviour whilst others are more resilient by nature?

Evaluations of my respondents' life experiences have indicated that their family background, school experiences, and peer groups are the most promising potential factors affecting their developmental outcomes as the major themes that emerged from the data generated are closely associated with the family, school, and peers. These are indicated in table 5.1 below:

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Table 5.1

Factors Affecting Juvenile Delinquency

FACTORS	THEMES	RESPONDENTS											
		Ariffin	**Ah Fook**	**Loga**	**Irwan**	**Syazwan**	**Zulkifli**	**Ali**	**Azman**	**Kartik**	**Rashid**	**Ramu**	**Ah Meng**
Family	Single-Mother Families	√		√				√			√		
	Parental Conflict	√	√	√									
	Ineffective Parenting	√	√	√	√	√	√						
	Poverty	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
	Large Family Size				√	√			√				
	Family Criminality	√		√									
	Child Abuse and Neglect						√						
	Lack of Communication		√		√		√						
School	Negative Teacher Attitude	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√		
	Failure in School	√	√	√	√	√	√		√				
	Ineffective Teaching Strategies	√	√	√	√	√	√						√
	Neglectful Teachers	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√		√
	Harsh / Irrational School Discipline	√	√	√	√	√	√				√		
	Truancy	√	√	√	√	√	√	√					
Peers	Association with Deviant Peers	√	√	√	√	√	√						
	The *Lepak* Culture	√	√	√	√	√	√						
	Triad / Gang	√	√	√	√		√		√				

Below is a discussion of the major themes that evolved from my findings that help to explain for the choices that my respondents made in their lives as I understood them from their discourses. These themes are grouped into four categories, namely, 1) Family and Delinquency; 2) School and Delinquency; 3) Peers and Delinquency; and 4) Community and Delinquency

5.2 Family and Delinquency

My study has indicated that the quality of family life that a child experiences during his early years has a great impact on his developmental pathway and its influences can extend far into adulthood (Mack, Leiber, Featherstone, & Monserud, 2007; Vanassche, Sodermans, Matthijs, & Swicegood, 2014). As the most important institution affecting the child's upbringing, developmental and cognitive processes (Dishion & Patterson, 2006; Youngblade, Theokas, Schulenberg, Curry, Chan-Huang, & Novak, 2007), whatever that is

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going on in the family is directly related to his future criminal or noncriminal behaviour (Beaver & Wright, 2007; Schonberg & Shaw, 2007; Grunwald, Lockwood, Harris, & Mennis, 2010; Fagan, Van Horn, Antaramian, & Hawkins, 2011; Sells, Kristin, & Thomas, 2011).

Based on my findings, the major causes of delinquency that are family-related are separation/divorce, family conflict, poor parenting, poverty, large family size, family criminality, lack of parent-child communication, child abuse and neglect. These family risk factors can be very devastating to child development thus causing some children to be more vulnerable to antisocial behaviour. The stressful situations that they create in the family greatly interfere with the parents' ability to bring up their children in the proper way (Galloway & Skardhamar, 2010; Burt, Barnes, McGue, & Iacono, 2008; Kelly & Emery, 2003). On the other hand, children growing up in a pleasant home environment are less likely to have behavioural problems (Hoeve, Stams, Put, Dubas, Laan, & Gerris, 2012). They also tend to have better emotional health, higher levels of self-esteem, more self-control, and greater educational attainment, (Barnard, 2004; Mũniz, Silver, & Stein, 2014; Yong & Warner, 2015) and fare better in life compared to those who are being deprived of a proper family life. The family risk and protective factors are discussed below.

5.2.1 Divorce / Separation

With an increasing number of children living in single parent and stepparent families in the present era, the traditional two-parent (one male, one female) family setting is severely eroded and this can have adverse effects on child rearing. Since single parent families are usually headed by mothers, it is generally assumed that father absence is not as serious as mother absence, and that most children in single-mother families can do quite well. However, lacking a father in the home does have serious repercussions on the children as

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one cannot deny the fact that children in single-mother households are more likely to exhibit delinquent behaviour and participate in antisocial activities (Mack & Leiber, 2005; Yarber & Sharp, 2010; McLanahan, Tach, & Schneider, 2013). This is clearly exemplified in the lives of two of my respondents, Loga and Ariffin.

Loga's parents divorced when he was seven and his father only came back into his life recently when he was admitted to STB. No doubt he has a loving mother but there was little that she could do to put him on the right track simply because he did not listen to her. Even though Loga's mother did advise him not to spend his school hours at the cyber cafés and not to smoke, her advice has fallen on deaf ears. She had to give in to her son's whims and fancies in the end because she could not control him. According to Loga, "she said it was alright for me to go to CC (cyber café) as long as I did not go elsewhere" (Loga/Juv/06/Fam) even though she had forbidden him to go earlier. She has also accepted the fact that her son is a smoker when she said, "…smoking is ok as long as you don't take drugs" (Loga/Juv/01-02/Fam) although she objected to it at first. When she finally discovered that her son was taking drugs, she kept one eye closed and allowed him to do so behind her back. Although she did ask him to quit the habit, she could not do anything to stop him. Loga only kicked the drug habit after he was admitted to STB. Knowing that Loga was doing badly in school, she did not do anything on her part to encourage him to study. She did not even stop him when he decided to leave school and was not interested in his UPSR results until years later as indicated in the conversation below:

Interviewer : How were your results during your school days?
Loga : Normallah… like 2Ds, E like that ahh.
Interviewer : Did your mother scold you when you got bad results?
Loga : My mother knows that I cannot study.
Interviewer : How were your UPSR results?
Loga : Haven't seen yet.
Interviewer : Why you still have not seen your results?
Loga : No money to pay school fees… that day my mother went to take my results… they said they have already thrown the results away…

(Loga/Juv/05-06/Fam)

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It seemed that Loga's mother did not mind him getting bad results because she has given in to the fact that he could not study. Thus one can see that there was little which she could do to put him on the right track because she has little, if any, authority over him. Having an inconsistent rule-setter who easily condones antisocial behaviour as a mother, Loga is free to do things his way.

Like Loga's mother, Ariffin's mother also has little authority over her sons who dared to answer back whenever she scolded them:

Interviewer : Why did you always talk back to your mother according to your conduct report?
Ariffin : My brother influenced me…. I saw him talking back to my mother… I also followed.

(Ariffin/Juv/03/Fam)

Although she did scold them and beat them when they misbehaved, they were not afraid of her. All she could do was to tell her brother about her sons' unruly behaviour so that he could punish them for her. However, when she resorted to someone else to discipline her sons for her, she was actually implying that she could not control them. According to Ariffin, she was not a fierce mother and one of the reasons why her sons liked to stay with her was that they were free to go out and hang around with friends whenever they felt like it. When they were staying with their aunt, they were not given this freedom as their aunt used to cane them whenever they went out. The only thing they were not happy with when staying with their mother was their relatives on their father's side had since stopped giving them pocket money! Just like Loga's mother, Ariffin's mother could not do much to put her sons on the right track because they did not listen to her. Thus one can see that lack of paternal engagement does, in some way, have a negative impact in the developmental outcomes of children, particularly the sons (Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, & Bremberg, 2008; Leidy, Schofield, & Parke, 2013).

One cannot deny the fact that fathers are unique and irreplaceable in the children's lives. "Unique means that they provide something different from mothers; they are not just

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mommy substitutes. Irreplaceable means that when they are absent, people suffer" (Horn & Sylvester, 2002, p.11). Fatherhood cannot be replaced by grandparents, uncles, aunts, and other family members. For instance, even though Ariffin's mother may seek the help of her brother to discipline her sons from time to time, there is not much that he could do to help them because he is not their father. Placing them with their aunt did not help much either even though it did help to ease her financial burden temporarily particularly at the time she was having problems with her husband when they were on the verge of separation. It was while staying with their aunt that Ariffin's brother taught him to steal from their relatives! Similarly, there was not much that Loga's grandfather or even stepfather could do for him or he would not have ended up in the institution. Sad to say, his grandfather seemed to have a very little role to play in his life. When asked about his relationship with his grandfather, this was what Loga said:

> I feel not so ok. During my school days… when I was in Year 5… my mother had no money… I asked money from him… he gave me 10 sen per day. Could not buy anything. I kept the money. I went home to eat in the afternoon.
>
> (Loga/Juv/02/Fam)

Loga seldom talks to his grandfather who is totally oblivious of his daily activities. Although his stepfather is very generous to him, he still cannot replace his father. Apart from giving him money (not more than RM90 per month), he did not do anything to stop him from taking drugs or selling stolen motorcycles. One cannot deny the fact that stepparenting is harder than parenting as children are more forgiving toward a parent than a stepparent (MacDonald & DeMaris, 1996; Cronin & Mandich, 2015). Many stepparents have chosen not to misstep for fear of making the wrong move that would cause the stepchildren to hold a grudge against them, In a way, this also helps to explain why Loga's stepfather did not go to the extent of disciplining him even though he may seem to be very generous to his stepson. Even a mother's loving touch cannot make up for the absent daddy (as clearly exemplified in the lives of Loga and Ariffin) as parenting cannot be complete

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without a father. The presence of a strong male figure in the family is therefore of utmost importance in constructing the lives of the children. In order to bring up a well-rounded child, a combination of both the father and mother's parenting styles is necessary.

Children with absent daddies often feel that something is amiss in their lives no matter how well their mother may try to take care of them as clearly indicated in my conversation with Rashid:

Interviewer : Are you happy with your life now?
Rashid : No
Interviewer : Why not?
Rashid : Er… no father (saddened expression)
Interviewer : Do you think that a father is important?
Rashid : Important
Interviewer : Why is he important?
Rashid : Because… others have fathers… I don't have.
(Rashid/Stu/05-06/Fam)

This conversation clearly shows that Rashid is not happy with his life because he does not have a father. He is lucky in a sense that he has a mother who knows very well how to deal with him and put him under control. However, it is not so easy to find a woman with such strong character like Rashid's mother. Children with mothers who are suffering from divorce-related stress and thus have lower levels of emotional well-being (Raymo, Park, Iwasawa, & Zhou, 2014, p.846) tend to look for the strong daddy figure elsewhere which may turn out to be disastrous for them as exemplified by Ariffin. In his attempt to look for a father figure, he has turned to his shiftless adult male neighbours who had bad influences over him. Lacking a father in his life, these shiftless adult males have become his role model and since they like to steal and while away their time doing nothing, Ariffin has adopted this habit from them. The same applies to Loga who turned to his gang members (notoriously known as Gang 36) because they offered him security and support as his mother could not provide him with the protection that he needed. As what Loga says, "If… there is a fight or anything, they will help me" (Loga/Juv/13/Pee). Whenever he is bullied by others, he has no father to turn to for help and his gang is his only refuge.

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On the contrary, children with fathers who are highly involved in their lives are less likely to engage in antisocial behaviour. Ramu, for instance, has a father who is highly involved in his life and according to him, it is his love for his father that makes him want to do well in life even though they are struggling in the midst of poverty:

Interviewer : How do you go to school?
Ramu : My father send me to school.
Interviewer : How about your brother? Surely your father cannot take the two of you on his bike at one go!
Ramu : He run two times… he send my brother first… and then he send me.
Interviewer : That's really tough on him. It's quite a distance from Pudu to Brickfields.
Ramu : Since we have missed our car… we are riding motorbike up and down.
Interviewer : How do you and your brother go home after school? Does your father come to fetch the both you one by one again?
Ramu : Yah
Interviewer : You have a very good father. You must really study hard and repay his kindness one day.
Ramu : That's the only purpose me and my brother never do like other child… do bad things… we are always think of our father. He's struggling… helping for us all the time. He's such a very good father… good husband to my mom… he's a very good guy… he's very friendly… anything we talk to him, he can able to overcome the problem.

(Ramu/Stu/03-04/Fam)

Ramu is extremely proud of his father and the thought of his father always puts a smile on his face. In actual fact, he is closer to his father than his mother because, according to him, his mother cannot keep secrets. Since boys who enjoy a positive relationship with their fathers are less likely to smoke, drink alcohol, or take drugs, and achieve better grades than those without a father (Carlson, 2006; Tinkew & Moore, 2006; Cooksey & Fondell, 1996), this clearly explains why Ramu is not interested to associate with the *Mat Rempits* in his housing area, does not smoke, drink, or take alcohol, and is one of the best students in school. Paternal affection and involvement can therefore act as a buffer against juvenile delinquent behaviour irrespective of the family's financial situation and neighbourhood circumstances.

Although the presence of a strong father figure in the family is an effective buffer against juvenile delinquent behaviour, it does seem unfair to say that all fatherless children would eventually end up being juvenile delinquents. Much would also depend on how they

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are being brought up by their mother. Rashid, for instance, does not have much opportunity to participate in antisocial activities as he has a very strict mother who is checking on him all the time. Like Ariffin, Rashid likes to hang around with friends and talk back whenever his mother scolds him. However, his mother has made it very clear to him that she is taking control over him and he must obey her. Even during his outing with friends, he has to return home the moment he gets a call from his mother:

> My mother asked… where are you? If I were outside… I had to go home fast… I did not want my mother to worry about me.
>
> (Rashid/Stu/04/Fam)

Rashid's mother has even gone to the extent of forbidding him to go out and he has to obey her because she means what she says and will not tolerate any form of disobedience:

> …like I cannot go anywhere already now… only stay at home.
>
> (Rashid/Stu/04/Fam)

Unlike Ariffin and Loga's mother, there is something in Rashid's mother that gives her authority over her son and makes him willing to obey her. In fatherless families, the presence of a strong mother figure can therefore be a very effective buffer against juvenile delinquent behaviour.

Even in high-risk families in which the parents have delegated the care and nurturing of their children to alternative caregivers after remarrying, it is not impossible for these children to grow up into loving, caring, confident, capable, and morally good adults depending on the way they are being brought up (Sheridan, Haight, & Cleeland, 2011; Wan, 2016). These alternative caregivers include grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and even pastors. There is evidence that children who are cared for by their grandparents and maintain strong emotional ties with them are more likely to bounce back from the adverse effects of parental divorce (Downie, Hay, Horner, Wichmann, & Hislop, 2010; Ruiz & Silverstein, 2007). This is clearly proven in the life of Ali, who was abandoned by his mother after his father divorced her when he was only one-year-old. He was since placed

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under the care of his maternal grandparents. This non-normative event does have an impact on his personality even though he is able to carry himself very well and appears to be emotionally stable:

> My mother returned to Indonesia with my step father and step siblings when I was 10 years old. I didn't know how to describe my feelings at that time but I did feel angry, sad, and lost. Before they left me, I was like the other children, liked to play, talked, and joked at home. But after they left me, I became very quiet, shy, and seldom joke except in school. I have many personalities… at home I have a different personality… in school I am another person. I like to talk and joke a lot in school. I always hear that "those who seem to be happy and like to joke are actually lonely people." To me me, those words are true.
>
> (Ali/Stu/Diary/Fam)

However, the love and care provided by his grandparents have enabled him to tide over the painful moments of his life and live with dignity and confidence. Ali loves his grandmother very much and considers her to be a fantastic woman:

> My grandmother is the only one who cares for me. I consider her to be a fantastic woman who is brave enough to face all the difficulties and challenges in life. I hope that she will live a long life and see how I become successful one day.
>
> (Ali/Stu/Diary/Fam)

Although his grandfather has already passed away, he still misses him a lot and is greatly saddened over his demise. Now, at the age of 14, Ali is a very ambitious boy who is doing very well in school and does not show any signs of antisocial behaviour. He even wants to prove to his mother that he could be successful one day:

Interviewer : Did you say anything when your mother left you and returned to Indonesia?
Ali : Yes… at that time… I was like… say… don't know how to say… (almost cried).
Interviewer : Did you scold her?
Ali : Yes… I wanted to follow her… I cried (deeply saddened).
Interviewer : What lesson did you learn from this parting experience?
Ali : Want to show her… like… want to become a successful person… a great man.

(Ali/Stu/07/Fam)

He has made it very clear in his diary that he did not hold any grudges against his mother and hoped that he could reunite with his family one day:

> I hope that I can be a successful person one day and reunite with my step siblings and mother. I want to live in a big house with them. This is because I want to feel the joy of family life after not having a family for such a long time. I want them to live a comfortable life and also I want to feel happy like how other people feel when

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> they are with their happy family. Sometimes I feel sad and envious when I see my friends posting their family photos at Facebook showing that they are enjoying a holiday with their family, joking, and are happy. I also want to take good care of my mother even though she abandoned me. I want to see my mother happy with me because according to the teachings of Islam, heaven is under the feet of our mother. I will never forget my grandmother's kindness as it is she who brought me up and cared for me.
>
> (Ali/Stu/Diary/Fam)

Needless to say, his connectedness and bonding with his grandmother has given him a sense of caring and self-worth which enables him to be optimistic with his life. In a way, this study also shows that grandparents do play a "significant role in the care of their young grandchildren" (Fergusson, Maughan, & Golding, 2008, p.161) particularly in divorced familes.

5.2.2 Marital Conflict

Apart from the divorce itself, marital conflict prior to the divorce can also have serious repercussions on the children's social, emotional and psychological well-being (Amato, 1993; Kelly & Emery, 2003) and are therefore important predictors of juvenile delinquent behaviour (Siegel & Welsh, 2014). Children whose parents are always quarrelling tend to take refuge on the streets as a means of escape from their turbulent family life and the more time they spend on the streets, the more likely they will engage in antisocial behaviour. This is clearly exemplified by Ariffin who has since developed the habit of *jalan-jalan* (roaming the streets) as the conflicting relationship between his parents made it impossible for him to stay at home. His father always quarrelled with his mother over money matters before he disappeared:

Interviewer : How was your parents' relationship?
Ariffin : Not close. Father did not come home.
Interviewer : When your father was still staying with your mother, how was their relationship?
Ariffin : They always quarrelled
Interviewer : What did they quarrel about?
Ariffin : Money… he gave very little money… RM50… RM100 per month. My mother said it wasn't enough for her to buy food.
Interviewer : How much did your mother ask for?

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Ariffin : Two hundred.
Interviewer : What did your father say?
Ariffin : No money… had to pay electricity and water bills.
Interviewer : How did you feel when your parents quarrelled?
Ariffin : Angry

(Ariffin/Juv/05-06/Fam)

Because of his parent's conflicting relationship that has been going on for years, Ariffin was placed under the care of his aunt until he was eleven. When he returned home, the conflict continued and that was one reason why he did not like to stay at home. After roaming the streets for some time, he became so used to it that it was difficult to make him stay at home.

Parental conflict may also cause fear, anxiety, and helplessness in the children as they see their parents battling each other. Children's emotional reactivity to conflict often makes them fear for their own safety as well as the safety of one of the parents (particularly the mother who is the weaker sex) when they feel that there is the possibility of imminent harm and may even try to defuse the situation (Navsaria, Gilbert, Lenze, & Whalen, 2017). According to Loga, he was scared when he saw his parents quarrelled (prior to their divorce) and even cried at times. He even wanted to beat up his father:

Interviewer : How was your parents' relationship?
Loga : My mother and my father always quarrel, quarrel, quarrel.
Interviewer : Were you scared when they quarrelled?
Loga : When I was young, I was scared… after growing up I don't feel scared anymore.
Interviewer : What did you do when your parents quarrelled?
Loga : I kept quiet… at that time I was still very young.
Interviewer : Did you cry?
Loga : Yes… sometimes.
Interviewer : How did you feel?
Loga : I felt like beating up my father.

(Loga/Juv/04-05/Fam)

Loga has always believed that his father was the culprit who caused them to suffer and was very protective of his mother. The conflicting relationship between his parents has created a lasting impact in his life as he has still not forgiven his father now.

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Irrespective of whether the couple is going to divorce or not, unresolved conflict between parents who are hostile towards each other can put the children at risk of crime and delinquency particularly if it occurs frequently and intensely (Amato, 2005; Musick & Meier, 2010). Although it is not uncommon for two parents to have different ideas and opinions, these differences can be resolved if they can communicate respectfully with each other instead of shouting, blaming, criticizing, mocking, battering, or assaulting each other. What really destroys the children emotionally is the chronic and ongoing conflict between their parents as these angry confrontations tend to create a chaotic family environment that is unsafe, insecure, and threatening for the child. The parenting style of "don't do as I do but do as I say" may have a negative impact on the children through the process of observational learning with the parents as their negative role models (Bandura, 1977). The conflicting relationship between Ah Fook's parents is a very good example of observational learning. However, contrary to most family situations where the culprits are the fathers, in Ah Fook's case, his mother is the aggressive partner:

> Once they fought with a pair of scissors… my father asked my mother to buy medicine for high blood pressure but my mother did not have enough money… only RM12… my mother did not bring enough money. My mother asked for money from my father but my father did not give her… he asked her to pay first. My mother had already told him many times that she did not have enough money but my father did not listen. My mother was very angry and she stabbed my father on his chest with the scissors.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/04/Fam)

Since children learn how to get along with others from how their parents get along with each other, this clearly explains why Ah Fook has resorted to solving problems in an aggressive manner such as inflicting harm on others having learned that aggression pays off. Although Ah Fook's parents did not want their son to do wrong, they have proven to be bad role models themselves thus bringing out the worst in him. Their low marital quality coupled with their bad relationships with their son have weakened whatever form of

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effective parenting that they intend to carry out hence creating a negative impact on him (Hair, Moore, Hadley, Kaye, Day, & Orthner, 2009).

On the contrary, children who grow up in harmonious families are more disciplined, tend to perform better in school and fare better in life as indicated in the lives of my student respondents. The term *harmonious* does not mean that their parents do not quarrel at all. Squabbling is common among couples and will not result in grave consequences as long as it does not turn out to be violent or aggressive. Although Ramu's parents do quarrel over minor things, they would quickly reconcile with each other after that:

> … they quarrel for… what you call that… for the things at home. My father asked me to clear the things but my mom… she like sentimental… over sentimental… she like… small I got wear my shirts all… when I baby… she just keep the shirt all that (laughing)… but later on they will be ok… not that bad.
>
> (Ramu/Stu/05/Fam)

Kartik's father may be irrational at times trying to show his superiority over his wife but he is not an aggressive partner. Since Kartik's mother is a soft-spoken woman who never retaliates against her husband, they always ended up reconciling with each other:

> My parents… yes… my mom and dad always quarrel. They have argument… certain stuff like… my mom just make a certain mistake or little bit mistake… my dad will quarrel on it. Most of the time my dad will be picking on my mom. My mom didn't want to fight back my father. She's like… very offensive… very easily get bullied by my father. Sometimes he scold my mom for no reason… that's the time I back up my mom.
>
> (Kartik/Stu/03/Fam)

Nevertheless, Kartik's father is a responsible man who tries his best to provide for his family despite their poverty-stricken condition. According to Kartik:

> All of us are very close… we usually talk sometime about family time… sometime there's good thing to talk… sometime there's funny thing to talk. My family… I love my family the most. The most thing I love in the world is my family… my parents… brothers and sisters.
>
> (Kartik/Stu/04/Fam)

Family harmony is an indication that the family members are united which is crucial for the social stability of children. Needless to say, growing up in a harmonious family

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environment has provided Kartik with the means to face the challenges of life with dignity and confidence.

5.2.3 Ineffective Parenting Practices

The growing up process is full of challenges and children need their parents' affection, guidance, support, and supervision to help them adapt to the inevitable changes in life. Lack of parental support, discipline, affection and supervision can have grave repercussions on child development (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Burke, Pardini, & Loeber, 2008) as these are important child-rearing factors that will ultimately determine the behavioural outcomes of children (Apel & Kaukinen, 2008). One cannot deny the fact that "discipline, supervision, and affection tend to be missing in the homes of delinquents, that the behaviour of the parents is often poor" (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990, p.97). This view precisely accounts for the lives of my respondents from STB since all of them come from families that lack behaviour management skills. Sad to say, their parents are unable to give them the proper guidance, support, and supervision that they need in their growing up process as none of them seems to know what proper parenting means. Although there is no doubt that they have tried to supervise and discipline their children in one way or another, their ineffective parenting practices have contributed negatively towards their children's life trajectories.

It should be noted that parental affection and supervision do not mean simply allowing the child to do whatever he wants just because he insists on doing things his way. This is one aspect of parenting that the parents of my respondents from STB have failed to take into consideration. Two of my respondents from STB, Loga and Ariffin, who come from single-mother families, are good examples of children who lack proper parental supervision. Although there is no doubt that their mothers love them very much, lack of

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parental supervision and poor disciplinary practices have inadvertently reinforced their delinquent behaviour. This is already discussed in section 5.2.1 and would not be reiterated here.

Although over-permissiveness can enhance delinquent behaviour, having over-strict parents who often inflict irrational physical harm on their children would not deter such behaviour either. Syazwan, for instance, has a very strict father who always beat him with whatever he could find (such as his belt) and punish him without really looking into his problems whenever he does anything wrong:

> Because things that I did not do, he said I did like… that motor… I didn't put it in the house, but he said I did… after that… I was caught… he accused me of stealing it. After that I was released… mother bailed me… after that my father scold, scold, scold… I did not want to listen to him… quarrelled with him (as if he was going to cry).
>
> (Syazwan/Juv/02/Fam)

However, his father's strictness did not help him much either as he has ended up doing things behind his father's back. He even fought with his father in his attempt to look for some justice for himself:

Interviewer : Do you fight with your father?
Syazwan : Once in a while.
Interviewer : Why did you fight with your father?
Syazwan : Because he beat me for the things I did not do.
Interviewer : What did your father do when you fought with him?
Syazwan : He asked me to leave the house.
Interviewer : Where did you go after that?
Syazwan : Stayed with friends.

(Syazwan/Juv/02/Fam)

Syazwan's father may be extremely strict with him, but his method of disciplining his son by accusing him of doing the things that he did not do, beating him, and asking him to leave the house only served to intensify his antisocial behaviour. The feelings of animosity between them not only made Syazwan more rebellious towards his father but also rendered whatever forms of communication between them almost impossible. Further, when he chased his son out of the house, he was actually giving him the Godsend opportunity to stay with his delinquent peers and participate in their antisocial activities.

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The same applies to Zulkifli's father, who, apart from thrashing his son up, hitting his head with a chair, chasing him out of the house, and disowning him over his notorious stealing habit, did not do much to teach him good moral values. As for Ah Fook, his mother would hit his head "with the sharp edge of the hammer, not the round edge" (AhFook/Juv/02/Fam) whilst his father used to cane him until he bled and the scars were still visible when he showed them to me (AhFook/Juv/04/Fam). Since children with harsh and aggressive parents often seek refuge in their delinquent peer groups, this would mean that their chances of involvement in crime and delinquency are greatly enhanced (Dishion, Patterson, Stoolmiller, & Skinner, 1991, Deutsch, Crockett, Wolff, & Russell, 2012). Although this may not be their sole reason for their involvement in crime and delinquency, one cannot deny the fact that harsh and irrational parenting such as "punitiveness, strong parental control, and coercive control – the use of scolding, unfair rules, and punishments that restrict the adolescent–increase delinquency, especially for males" (Gullotta, Adams, & Montemayor, 1998, p. 59).

An important aspect of parenting is parental monitoring or supervision which is only possible if the parents have knowledge of their children's whereabouts and daily activities because "discipline and reinforcement cannot be applied to behaviours of which parents are not aware" (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984, p.1301). Although many parents may dislike the idea of their children spending most of their time away from home, they are sometimes left without a choice but to allow them to roam the streets because they simply cannot keep their children at home particularly for those who are too busy struggling to make ends meet.

Irwan and Ah Fook, for instance, have parents who are left without a choice but to allow them to spend as much time as they want outside the house to look for mischief. According to Irwan, "When I come home from school, there is no one at home because my

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parents and sister are working. So… I can be considered as quite free" (Irwan/Juv/03/Fam). After roaming the streets with his peers for some time, it is difficult to make him stay at home. Although Irwan's parents had initially forbidden him to go out with friends, they ended up submitting to his whims and fancies because he is very good at making excuses for himself:

> Initially my parents did ask… after that each time I came back I had many excuses …I said that my petrol had finished, or the tyre had punctured… everyday I said the same things until my mother did not ask anymore… just let me go out (laughing). If she did not let me go out at 5 p.m.…. I would go out at 1 a.m.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/03/Fam)

Thus one can see that Irwan's parents have not really taken the trouble to stop him from going out even though they do not like it. Similarly, Ah Fook's mother scolds him with 4 letter words whenever he comes home at 3 or 4 a.m. because she does not like him to come home in the early hours of the morning and he often ends up quarrelling with her:

Interviewer : Do you quarrel with your mother?
Ah Fook : When I went out at night until 3 or 4 a.m. I sleep in the same room with my mother because my father smokes a lot.
Interviewer : How did you quarrel with her?
Ah Fook : She scolded me with four letter words. I answered her back.

(AhFook/Juv/02/Fam)

It seems that apart from scolding him with four letter words, his mother did nothing further to curb his late night activities as he still insisted to go out until the early hours of the morning to look for mischief. Irwan and Ah Fook's parents are truly good examples of parents who did not really take the initiative to stop their children from spending too much time away from home. By allowing their children to roam the streets until the early hours of the morning would also mean that whatever form of monitoring or disciplinary action they take is likely to end in futility. This clearly explains why both Irwan and Ah Fook were apprehended by the police in the early hours of the morning for shop-breaking and wounding in a gang fight.

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Children tend to tell their parents about the good things that they do but keep quiet about their bad behaviour. Parents should therefore take heed of tell tale signs exhibited in their children's behavioural changes and intervene whenever they suspect that something is wrong with their children (Ingram, Patchin, Huebner, McCluskey, & Bynum, 2007; Warr, 2005). Sad to say, there are many parents who are are totally oblivious to their children's daily activities. Syazwan, for instance, left his house every day after midnight to rob and break into shops but it seemed that his parents had no idea what he was doing after midnight. They did not even know that he was not at home on the assumption that he locked himself in his bedroom:

Interviewer : Where did you normally go to steal?
Syazwan : Stole at… sundry shops, boutiques, buildings… like… handphones, bags
Interviewer : How did you get inside?
Syazwan : Through the roof or pane.
Interviewer : What time did you normally go out to steal?
Syazwan : At 1, 2, 3 a.m.
Interviewer : Did your mother allow you to go out at that time?
Syazwan : She did not know.
Interviewer : She didn't know that you didn't come home or you went out after she slept?
Syazwan : No, like… I sometimes went home according to my mood.
Interviewer : You mean that your mother did not know when you came home?
Syazwan : She didn't know.
Interviewer : So… she didn't ask you where you have been?
Syazwan : She did ask but the door was locked. My mother thought that I was in the room.
Interviewer : How did you go out?
Syazwan : Through the door.
Interviewer : Which door?
Syazwan : Front door.
Interviewer : Oh, you locked your bedroom door, then you went out?
Syazwan : Ahh

(Syazwan/Juv/09-10/Fam)

The question which arises here is how come they had no knowledge of Syazwan's drug problem and robbery/burglary cases until he was apprehended by the police? Or were they merely keeping one closed because they did not know how to deal with their son's behaviour? Even a cat can smell a rat if they are living under the same roof! This clearly is an indication of bad parenting on their part.

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Ah Fook's parents are not in a much better position than Syazwan's parents as their reckless disregard for his behaviour has provided him with too much freedom to do things his way. To say that they had "no knowledge" of their son's mischief is rather misleading as they have refused to acknowledge the kind of mischief that he was involved in after work every night. The night Ah Fook was apprehended by the police, he told his mother that he wanted to help a friend but in actual fact he was actually going out for a gang fight:

Interviewer : Do your parents know where you are when you are not at home?
Ah Fook : Sometimes they know, sometimes they don't. Sometimes I lie to them. The night I was arrested I told her I was going out to help a friend.
(AhFook/Juv/05/Fam)

Any parent in their right senses would not allow their 15 year-old child to leave the house so abruptly in the early hours of the morning without good reasons but Ah Fook's mother did not stop him from going out even though she did not like it. The findings of this study therefore clearly show that the parents of my respondents' from STB do share something in common, in the sense that they were totally oblivious to their sons' activities until they were apprehended by the police.

Contrary to children whose parents do not know where they are or what they are doing, those with parents who are more involved in their lives tend to have higher self-esteem, better self-control, and more likely to perform better in school as exemplified by Rashid, Ramu, Ah Meng, Kartik, and Azman. Even though Azman may not be very bright, he has a lot of confidence in himself and carries himself well. As the assistant class monitor, he is always running around helping the teachers and even tries his best to keep his class quiet when his classmates make a lot of noise particularly when there is no teacher in the classroom. One cannot deny the fact that good parenting styles have a lot to contribute towards the positive outcomes in a child's life even under the most stressful circumstances. Needless to say, effective discipline and supervision can only become a

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reality if the parents really take the initiative to know more about their children's daily activities.

Azman, for instance, likes to visit the cyber café near his house and even lied to his parents about it as stated in his diary:

> I always lied to my family especially my mother, I told her I wanted to play football but I went to the cyber café. I have also lied to my father because I wanted to go to the cyber café.
>
> (Azman/Stu/Diary/Fam)

His parents, however, are quite reluctant to let him go out and do not take his words at face value. They even take the trouble to go to the cyber café near their house to take him home whenever he goes there without their permission. According to Azman:

> …they took the telephone number of the cyber café… after that they called… asked whether my son was there… sometimes if I were there… they would come and take me home.
>
> (Azman/Stu/04/Fam)

Similarly, Ah Meng's mother would start to panic and search for him everywhere if he does not come home by 7.30 p.m. As for Ramu, there is a tacit agreement between him and his parents (particularly his father) that they must be informed of his whereabouts. His father would call him from time to time to ensure that he is safe. Even whilst I was interviewing him in one of the Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets, his father still called to check on him even though he knew that his son was with me (as I had to go to his house to fetch him). As what Ramu said, "he'll always call me and ask me… are you safe there?" (Ramu/Stu/12/Fam). The same applies to Kartik who must bring his friends home to show his father before he can go out with them:

> Because we have a rule in my house. If I want to go out also it has to be a very reasonable answer. If it's like going out to movies with friends… if I want to go out, I must bring my friend to my house and show him to my father because my father wants to know who is the friend I am going with because he is afraid... who knows whether he is a bad person or good person… so he won't knows… ahh…that's why.
>
> (Kartik/Stu/04/Pee)

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That was why I had to meet Kartik's father personally to get his permission to take him out for my data generation activities. Rashid's mother, however, checks on him all the time and even went to the extent of taking leave from her employer to find out who were the friends that her son brought home upon discovery that he had a smoker friend:

> After that my mother stayed at home… took leave to see who was coming to my house… whether he comes to smoke. After that… she scolded me… after that I did not make friends with the smoker anymore.
>
> (Rashid/Stu/10/Pee)

She even set a rule that he must return home before *maghrib* (dusk) and failure to do so would mean that he would be punished:

Interviewer : Does your mother beat you?
Rashid : Er… yes… sometimes
Interviewer : Why did she beat you?
Rashid : Er… I did not listen to her
Interviewer : Why didn't you listen to her?
Rashid : Er… like I came home late… it was almost evening... going to be maghrib already… ahh… just arrived home.

(Rashid/Stu/03/Fam)

Like all the other children of his age, Rashid also likes to go out with his friends but this is a luxury that his mother would not allow him. When I went to his house for the first time, he offered to meet me at KL Sentral to take me to his house but his mother did not allow him to go out. I had to go to his house to explain to her and get her permission before she allowed him to go out with me.

If Rashid's mother could take leave to check on him and his friends, Azman's parents could go to the cyber café to take him home, Ah Meng's mother could search for him everywhere if he is not at home by 7.30 p.m., Ramu's father is so concerned of his whereabouts, and Kartik's father must see his son's friends before allowing him to go out with them, how come Syazwan's parents had no knowledge that their son had the habit of breaking into shops after midnight? How come Loga's mother had no idea that her son was a motorcycle thief? How come Irwan and Ah Fook's parents had no idea that their sons were up to some kind of mischief in the early hours of the morning? Or were they merely

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keeping one eye closed to their sons' antisocial activities? These are very clear examples of bad parenting on their part.

Hirschi (1969) maintains that parental attachment and supervision are of utmost importance in controlling delinquent behaviour and ensuring conformity to society's norms and values. According to him, if the child could not be bothered about what his parents think of him or how they would react to his behaviour, then their control over him is greatly diminished. If the parents are not concerned about their child, he does not have to obey them nor live up to their expectations or at least he would feel that he has no moral obligation to do so. Having lost this aspect of self-control, he is free to do as he wishes regardless of whether the action is right or wrong. Such a child can turn out to be rather "impulsive, insensitive, physical (as opposed to mental), risk-taking, short-sighted, and non-verbal, and he will tend therefore to engage in criminal and analogous acts" (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990, p.90). These descriptions clearly explains for Zulkifli's personality, character, and behaviour. As stated in his diary:

> When I was a baby, my family did not look after me. The one who looked after me was my aunt. My father did not like me and I *gaduh* (quarrelled) with him every day until I became bad. I liked to go out at night. I also came home at 4.00 a.m. Sometimes I did not come home because I followed my friends.
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/Dia/Fam)

Having parents who are totally indifferent towards him and being rejected by his family all his life, he probably feels that he does not have to live up to their expectations and is free to do as he wishes. Having lost this aspect of moral obligations towards his family, he even dared to chase his brother with a chopping knife with the intention of killing him at the tender age of 10:

> Once… when my parents were not at home, I chased him (my brother) with a chopping knife.
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/02/Fam)

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Luckily his aunt managed to stop him when his brother ran over to her house next door. His hatred towards his brother stemmed from and was greatly intensified by his father's unfair treatment towards him:

> The hatred is there. Like there is no father's love… whatever I wanted he did not want to give me but whatever my brother asked for was given to him.
> (Zulkifli/Juv/03/Fam)

Being battered as a child, Zulkifli's feelings of resentment towards his father were so intense that he even went to the extent of boxing his father in self-defence:

> That day, I came back… I happened to meet him. I turned… I called my father… when I got off my motor, my father boxed me. I boxed him back.
> (Zulkifli/Juv/04/Fam)

Once he does not have to live up to his parents' expectations, he is free to do whatever pleases him. This clearly explains for his aggressiveness, short-sightedness, and risk-taking behaviour. According to his contemporaries at STB, he is also non-verbal by nature and likes to keep everything to himself and as such it is very difficult to predict what he has in mind. However, he can also be very talkative at times and does not mind pouring out his heart to people whom he feels that he can trust which explains why the interviews with him were always exploding with information. As what he said after one of the interviews when I was about to leave STB, "I have a lot to talk but Miss does not let me talk." In a way, this also indicated that he was actually yearning for some caring interactions with an adult.

5.2.4 Poverty

Socioeconomic status has always been used as a means to provide for an explanation for juvenile delinquent behaviour (Bjerk, 2007; Leiber, Mack, & Featherstone, 2009). Earlier studies of the relationship between socioeconomic status and juvenile delinquency have shown that it is mostly a low social class problem (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Since poverty often leads to stressful living conditions that are favourable for antisocial activities, it is

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indirectly related to juvenile delinquency as it provides opportunities for crime and deviance (Prochnow & DeFronzo, 1997).

Children from low incomes families often do not have enough pocket money for their daily expenses. They need money to top up their mobile phones. They need money when they hang around with their friends. They need money to pay for food. Syazwan, for instance, told me that he needed money to buy branded clothes which his parents could not afford to buy for him. Similarly, Loga, Ariffin, Irwan, and Zulkifli need money to buy cigarettes, to go to cyber cafés and snooker centres. Stealing is their only way to make money when their parents cannot afford to give them the money that they need. Loga, Syazwan, and Zulkifli who were involved in drugs also needed money to live up to this habit and had no choice but to make money by illegitimate means.

Merton's Strain Theory which emphasizes that children from the lower socioeconomic classes have a greater tendency towards delinquency (Merton, 1968) clearly explains for the situation of my respondents. According to Merton (1968), although society places great emphasis on success, it does not emphasize on the socially approved means of attaining it and the consequences of poverty have driven many poor children to attain success at any cost irrespective of whether the right and proper means are employed. This is clearly exemplified in the lives of all my respondents from STB since all of them are encountering some kind of financial problems. In order to live up to the expectations of society, illegality was the only way out for them given their dire financial circumstances. Irwan, for instance, claimed that:

> My pocket money is actually not enough. I need to pay RM2 for petrol when I go to school. My father only gave me RM2. That was why I did not eat in school. That was why I sat in the toilet to ask for money from other students.
> (Irwan/Juv/03-04/Sch)

In order to increase his pocket money, he would sometimes loiter around Bukit Bintang area to ask for RM1 from passers-by:

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Irwan : I don't rob the passers-by. I like *pau*… asked for money from them.
Interviewer : How did you *pau*?
Irwan : Like… I said… brother, do you have money? RM1, brother. If he has the money, he would give.

(Irwan/Juv/13/Pee)

Irwan's family may not be so poor as to lack the basic necessities of life but still there is not enough money to go around for the children.

Syazwan is in a similar position to Irwan. With RM1 per day for his pocket money, he has to look for other ways to make money:

Interviewer : Why did you beat your school mates?
Syazwan : Asked for money… they did not want to give me.
Interviewer : Why did you ask them to give you money?
Syazwan : I wanted to hang around with friends at night
Interviewer : How much did you ask from them?
Syazwan : RM5 only
Interviewer : Did you always ask for money from the same people?
Syazwan : Those… like… whoever I like and always ask.
Interviewer : Did anyone of them give you money?
Syazwan : Yes
Interviewer : Why did they give you?
Syazwan : They were afraid that I would beat them up.

(Syazwan/Juv/06/Sch)

Surviving with just RM1 per day is indeed a great joke especially when the cost of living has gone up. In order to live up to the expectations of society and pursue his simple dream (to have money to top up his mobile phone, buy branded clothes, and pay for his meals when he hangs around with his peers), Syazwan had to extort money from his schoolmates, rob the villagers, and break into shops after midnight.

If poverty could have such drastic effects on children, then it is most likely that children from poverty-stricken single-mother families are more likely to fare worse in life (Burrell, & Roosa, 2008). In actual fact, it is not just the divorce itself but rather the mother's education level and income that affect the well-being of the children (Kulik & Heine-Cohen, 2011). This is because many single mothers lack the necessary qualifications and skills thus rendering it difficult for them to secure proper employment. Loga's mother, for instance, has only attended primary school and apart from doing manual work, there is

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not much that she can do. Like Irwan and Syazwan, Loga also extorted money from his schoolmates to increase his pocket money . In fact, he even went to the extent of robbing his schoolmate's packet drink:

Interviewer : Apart from asking for money, what else did you do in school?
Loga : (laughing) Robbed drinks…. He was buying drinks… I took the drinks ahh. He fought me, I fought him ahh. When I beat him, he went to report to the headmaster.

(Loga/Juv/08/Sch)

As a cleaner, Loga's mother cannot earn much and that was why Loga had to stop schooling at the age of twelve. Being the only child in his family, he wanted to ease his mother's financial burden and help to provide for his family:

> Last time my mother was a Tamil dance teacher. Last time she had students to teach. But now all the students have become teachers. My mother could not find students to teach. My mother could not even find a cleaner's job. At that time, my mother could not find any job. When I saw my mother's situation, I did not want to study anymore when I was in Form 1. After that, I stopped schooling…
>
> (Loga/Juv/09/Fam)

At the age of thirteen, he had to work two jobs. He worked in a motor shop from 9.00 a.m to 6 p.m. and in a gambling shop operated by the same boss from 6.00 p.m to 3.00 a.m. but was only paid RM1000 per month despite his long hours of service. To prevent sleepiness at work, he had to take drugs and later on sniffed gum when he did not have enough money to pay for drugs. Even though he worked so hard, there was little that he could do to improve his life with such a meagre income. That was why he had to resort to selling stolen motorcycles to increase his earnings. Maternal job loss can therefore have serious repercussions on children behaviour (Hill, Morris, Castells, & Walker, 2011; Kalil & Wightman, 2011) particularly when the mother is the sole breadwinner of the family.

Based on my observations and conversations with Loga, I know that he is a very thoughtful child who cares a lot about his family's financial situation. When he said, "I do all work… I want to make money" (Loga/Juv/02/Fam), this statement does have a significant meaning behind it as it clearly shows that he is willing to do anything as long as

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he can make money. He even attended a sewing course organized by Giatmara (an institution that provides vocational training) whilst he was at STB because he wanted to learn a new trade and make money even though the other inmates laughed at him for doing a woman's job (as none of them wanted to attend this course). I could still remember how proud and happy he was when he told me that he could make a lot of extra income in the future through sewing. As a young child, he could not differentiate between the legitimate and illegitimate means of making money and that was why he made a mistake in life.

Ariffin's mother is not in a much better position than Loga's mother as she only managed to study up to Standard 5. She has to work two jobs to earn a pittance of RM250 per month by tailoring and another RM300 by helping out at the food stall. With RM300 spent on rent every month, it is not possible for her family to survive without the charity of her relatives:

> My father's brothers and sisters help us a bit. They give us foods like rice, onions… They also give us pocket money.
>
> (Ariffin/Juv/02/Fam)

Being overburdened by the many responsibilities of raising a family after her husband left her, her children have to be contented with a lower standard of living than what they were formerly accustomed to. Needless to say, the changes in household economics following a divorce can have a direct impact on parenting performance and hence the kind of life to be adopted by the children (Hawkins, 2010). For Ariffin, this lower standard of living would mean that he has to steal in order to get the things that he wants as his mother is too poor to buy him anything.

Although Ariffin did not extort money from his friends, he would not forego any opportunity to make money whenever circumstances allowed him. According to him, he would go to the classrooms during assembly to steal whatever he could find in the school bags in order to supplement his pocket money (Ariffin/Juv/10/Sch). Although Ariffin did

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not drop out of school to find a job, he is constantly worrying about his family's financial situation. Both he and his brother were admitted to the same institution for stealing RM17 from the mosque. With their father gone and their mother struggling to make ends meet, the fear of having no money to meet their daily needs was what caused them to steal. Having no money is the bitterest experience in Ariffin's life as indicated in his diary entry:

> The saddest experience in my life is about my family. Father does not come home. My family is very sad because we have no money. Mother had to beg for money from our relatives.
>
> (Ariffin/Juv/Diary/Fam)

The interview with Ariffin clearly supports this view as it substantiates the fact that his greatest fear is his family's financial situation:

Interviewer : What do you worry most in your life?
Ariffin : Family… not enough money.
Interviewer : You mean your mother always does not have enough money?
Ariffin : (nodded his head)
Interviewer : Do you feel happy or not?
Ariffin : No
Interviewer : Why not?
Ariffin : No money
Interviewer : If you are given a choice, what kind of family do you want?
Ariffin : Rich

(Ariffin/Juv/06/Fam)

Ariffin resorted to stealing as the RM1 pocket money provided by his mother each day was just too little for him. In order to save up the money to buy the things he wanted, he did not eat anything during recess:

Interviewer : How much pocket money did your mother give you?
Ariffin : RM1 per day.
Interviewer : What did you buy with the money?
Ariffin : Did not buy anything. Saved up… when I've saved up a lot of money… went to town.
Interviewer : What did you do in town?
Ariffin : Bought all sorts of things.
Interviewer : You didn't eat anything during recess?
Ariffin : (shook his head)
Interviewer : What did you do during recess?
Ariffin : Smoking cigarettes.
Interviewer : Did you have money to buy cigarettes?
Ariffin : My friends gave me.

(Ariffin/Juv/03/Fam)

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However, the amount of money which he could save up was too little and he had to resort to stealing. Although Ariffin had the habit of stealing anything he could lay his hands on, he did not enjoy it one bit. As stated in his diary, Ariffin considered stealing to be a painful experience but had to do so because he had no money.

For many single mothers, receiving child support is an uphill task since many divorced men are often too reluctant to support their children from a former marriage. The pain of begging for child support and the humiliation they have to endure in the process often cause the single mothers to give up the idea altogether and take on the full responsibility to support their children. This is clearly exemplified by Ariffin's father who has disappeared completely without a word and cannot be found. Although his wife and children looked for him everywhere, there was no news about him at all. Ariffin's father did not like the idea of giving money to his mother even before he left his family:

> When he had money in his pocket, he asked me to keep quiet and not to tell mother.
>
> (Ariffin/Juv/05/Fam)

Now that he has left his family, it seems that his responsibility as a father is over and it is for his wife and children to learn how to survive on their own:

> Mother said father didn't give her any money at all. He didn't even call her.
>
> (Ariffin/Juv/04/Fam)

The same applies to Loga as his father has never visited him and his mother since the divorce and they are left alone to fend for themselves:

> Interviewer : How is your relationship with your father?
> Loga : I feel he is not ok with me since I was young. From I was young until I have grown up, he did not come to see me. When I was young, he never thought of me. After I have become like this then only he thinks of me ahh… then only he comes… I don't like that ahh… I don't want to follow him ahh.
>
> (Loga/Juv/03/Fam)

Loga also thinks that his father is a bit stingy where money is concerned. The word *stingy* in this respect means that his father is rather reluctant to give him money. That was why he

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had to learn to be independent at such a young age and of course being independent would also mean that he had to make money illegally.

Out of my six respondents in STB, Zulkifli has the worst fate. Growing up in poverty, he was expelled from his village home at the age of thirteen and had to stay with his antisocial friends in Kuala Lumpur who had a history of vandalism and robbery:

> Like the bus-stop, hall… after that like the roads… they poured paint. But they did not do this in the village. They only did it in KL. If we do this in the village, the villagers must suspect us… because there are not many people in the village.
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/11/Pee)

> Like my grown-up friends… they did not rob in the village. They have motorcycles… came to KL and robbed.
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/09/Pee)

At the age of thirteen, he had to eke out an existence working as a labourer, security guard, mechanic, and even hawker. Like Loga, he was also being exploited by his employer who took unfair advantage of his situation. As a security guard, he had to work 24 hours a day to earn a pittance of RM1000 a month since he was too young to qualify for any kind of allowance. To keep himself awake for 24 hours a day, he had since become a heavy smoker and drug addict. To support his drug habit, he needed extra income and like Loga, he resorted to stealing motorcycles.

Ah Fook is the only one among my respondents in STB who does not steal. He does not like to steal because he knows it is not right to do so. When asked whether he and his friends have ever stolen anything or not, he seemed to be very much offended and said, "My friends are not like that" (AhFook/Juv/09/Pee). Being frugal in his expenditure, what he earns is enough to meet his daily needs even though he has to be extremely careful in spending each and every ringgit. However, being frugal also has its disadvantages as it causes him to feel bitter about his life:

> There are many things that I want but my family cannot give me. Want to buy a computer also cannot. When I was in Year 2, I had a computer. I had to pay half from my angpow money and gambled during Chinese New Year to get the money. My mother said you want anything, you must pay yourself. I won't pay for you

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> (crying). My mother has no money. When my father bought the house he asked my mother to pay RM10000. She had to borrow money from her sister. She hasn't returned the money to her sister yet. My father owes the bank money, about RM6000 because he couldn't pay for the house installments. I had to pay for the maintenance fees of RM150 per month since I was in Remove Class. I gave my mother RM400 and my grandmother RM100 a month. I only earned RM1000 per month (crying).
>
> (AhFook/Juv/03/Fam)

When I asked him if there was anything he was not satisfied with his family, he looked very sad and this was how he responded:

> Money matters – I stay in a condo. After 20 years, we are still paying for it. I have to pay for it too. We quarrel because of that. I don't like to study because I have to make money to support my family. My mother cannot work. Her leg joints are painful. I had to come out to work quickly. Never think of anything. Quickly learnt a skill and got a job. I seldom play with the computer because electricity is expensive.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/05/Fam)

Ah Fook's greatest worry in life is not having money and he seems to be very sad each time he talks about his family's financial situation. Poverty can therefore make the children feel miserable and discontented with their lives because they cannot afford to have what others have even though they are willing to work hard for it. At the age of thirteen, instead of going to school, Ah Fook worked part time in a bakery and spent his school hours at the shopping complexes looking for ways to make some money:

> I've got reason. I wanted to make money. I went *fishing* at Mutiara Kompleks and made a lot of money. I won many tokens that could be exchanged for money at the counter. My parents know that I don't like to study. They know that I like to make money.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/08/Sch)

The financial distress that he was going through made him feel that making money seemed to be a wiser choice compared to education. Taking advantage of his teachers' suggestion that he should stay away from school for some time to reflect on his behaviour, he decided to stop schooling altogether (at the age of thirteen) and worked full time to help support his family.

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Although my student respondents have never participated in any kind of illegal activities despite their less well-to-do backgrounds, they do encounter a lot of hardship due to their lack of financial resources as the conversations below clearly show:

Interviewer : How many As did you get for your Form 3 Examination?
Azman : I don't know… I haven't got my results yet.
Interviewer : Why didn't you take your results? The results were out a long time ago.
Azman : Er… because I haven't paid my school fees yet (saddened expression)
Interviewer : Does you family have financial problems?
Azman : Er… yes… er… like sometimes my father has no money… my mother also the same… sometimes my mother buys things from the shop… to sell again… my father sells medicine… like thatlah.

(Azman/Stu/06/Fam)

Interviewer : What is your grandmother's income per month?
Ali : RM900
Interviewer : Do you think that this is enough for your family expenses?
Ali : Er… not enough.
Interviewer : Why not enough?
Ali : Room rental… RM300… after that water bill… electricity bill…

(Ali/Stu/02/Fam)

Interviewer : Do you have any worries about your family?
Ramu : Er… so far… yes (emphatically)… their finance. I saw them very hard for their finance because he have told to you that… once his boss was bankrupt… he also stepped out… he so struggle for since that day.

(Ramu/Stu/06/Sch)

Interviewer : Do you worry about your family or not?
Kartik : Yes, sometimes… most probably my family's health issue, my hardship and my brother's work sometimes.
Interviewer : When you talk about hardship, do you mean financial hardship?
Kartik : Yes, financial hardship.

(Kartik/Stu/06/Fam)

They have to be extremely frugal in their expenditure because they do not have extra money to spend. Ali is the poorest amongst them with a family income of RM900 per month minus RM300 for rent but he does not steal because he seldom spends money:

Interviewer : How much pocket money does your grandmother give you every day?
Ali : Sometimes… she gives me every week… ahh… sometimes RM10… RM15.
Interviewer : Does it include transport?
Ali : Yes.
Interviewer : Is the money enough for you?
Ali : For me it's enough… enough to eat… I seldom spend.

(Ali/Stu/03/Fam)

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After paying for transport, there is not much money left for him to buy food but for Ali, this is not a problem as he is easily contented with life and seldom spends money. Rashid, on the other hand, has to be contented with the old shoes given by his relatives:

Interviewer : Apart from your family members, are you close with your relatives?
Rashid : Er… yes… close… with my cousins from my father's side… Angah, Along... sometimes they ask me to go out with them… if my shoes are almost worn out… after that their old shoes… they gave me.
(Rashid/Stu/04/Fam)

However, poverty also gives them the will power to succeed so as to improve their lives and achieve a better future:

> The reason why I am so eager to study was because I was living in a life that is not… how to say… not proper life… so I don't want to let my family down also… I want to prove to them that I can be a better child to them… a better student for my teacher and also my friends.
> (Kartik/Stu/03/Sch)

Much also depends on their parents' high hopes and strong expectations for them as these are very relevant to helping their children to succeed:

> My family is hoping me to be a successful person in my life and this makes me to focus on studies and be an achieve person.
> (Ramu/Stu/Diary/Fam)

> My dad wants me to success in life. My mom wants me to have a better life so that we won't feel hardship like before.
> (Kartik/Stu/09/Fam)

Further, being poor may not necessarily mean that they are unhappy depending on how they look at their lives:

Interviewer : What is the happiest thing in your life?
Azman : Ahh… like... what is this… like when my parents give me money… I am happylah… living together with my parents… I feel happylah (smiled).
(Azman/Stu/06/Fam)

Interviewer : Are you happy staying with your grandmother?
Ali : Happylah also.
Interviewer : What do you mean by 'happylah also'?
Ali : Comfortable with my grandmother.
(Ali/Stu/03/Fam)

Interviewer : What is your ambition?
Ramu : To be a gold businessman
Interviewer : Why do you want to be a gold businessman?
Ramu : This is because of my dad… since small I am seeing him (nostalgic)…

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> Always like he went to work and back… I feel very happy when small (smiled)… so I also thought want to be like that but I still don't know what's my real… but actually I am aiming for gold smith… gold business
> (Ramu/Stu/12/Fam)

In actual fact, it has never occurred to me that my student respondents have such serious financial problems as they look confident and are able to carry themselves very well in school. Thus one can see that although poverty is one of the greatest risk factors, it may not necessarily be disastrous depending on one's upbringing and outlook on life.

5.2.5 Large Family Size

The more siblings an individual has, the more likely he is to be delinquent as studies have indicated that children with four or more siblings have a higher rate of delinquency compared to those with fewer siblings (Crighton & Towl, 2015). The reason for this is very obvious since the amount of time which the parents can spare to supervise and discipline their children diminishes with each additional family member (Fischer, 1984). Having too many mouths to feed, especially for those who belong to the low income group, would also mean that the family income is diluted and hence insufficient to meet the needs of every child in the family (Polit, 1982).

Irwan, for instance, has six siblings, an elder sister, two elder brothers, and three younger brothers between the ages of 6 and 23. With so many children to support, even a total family income of RM3400 per month is not sufficient to meet their daily needs as the cost of living is going up. Although his elder sister is helping out a bit, they still do not have enough money to go around:

> We sometimes have financial problems… like when we want to go for a holiday… we quarrel a bit. Sometimes there are too many of us needing money because I have six siblings… sometimes my sister's salary comes out a bit late… and we need money… to pay for Astro, after that we have to pay for my brothers' school fees… I have two younger brothers studying in boarding schools…
> (Irwan/Juv/05/Fam)

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Irwan had initially wanted to study in a vocational school so that he could get away from his delinquent friends but since there was not enough money for that, he had to give up this dream and had since lost interest in his studies:

Interviewer : According to your conduct report, your sister said that you wanted to study in a vocational school. Why did you want to study in a vocational school?
Irwan : I wanted to study in a vocational school because I wanted to get away from my friends near my area…. because the longer I be with them… maybe I'll become worse.
Interviewer : Why didn't you go to the vocational school then?
Irwan : At that time I wanted to go to a vocational school but there were some problems
Interviewer : What problems?
Irwan : Financial problems… worried that there wasn't enough money for everyone.
Interviewer : Is it true that you changed because you did not get the chance to study in a vocational school as what your sister said in your conduct report?
Irwan : After I couldn't get there, I felt lazy to study.
Interviewer : Now that you are away from your friends, can you focus on your studies?
Irwan : Ahh, can… I can only focus after coming to the new school.

(Irwan/Juv/15/Fam)

Irwan wanted to focus on his studies and get good grades for the SPM. Knowing that his friends would laugh at him for being so studious, he had to stay away from them. As his parents did not have the money to send him to a vocational school, he had no choice but to put up with his delinquent friends. Mingling with his delinquent friends near his housing area only provided him with more opportunities to participate in antisocial activities as it was not easy for him to run away from them if he had to meet them every day.

If RM3400 per month is not enough for Irwan's family, then Syazwan's family is even poorer. With a family income of less than RM2000 per month and six children between the ages of 2 to 18 to support, they have to forgo many luxuries in life. That was the reason why Syazwan has resorted to extorting money from his school mates and burglary to supplement his pocket money. Thus one can see that having too many children when the family income is low can have serious repercussions on the children as they have to look for other means of making money when the pocket money given by their parents is not enough.

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On the other hand, "there is growing evidence that even when the social class of families is accounted for, children from smaller families fare better on many measures of development than those from large families" (Polit, 1982, p.19). Ah Meng, for instance, may not come from a wealthy family (his father is a lorry driver and his mother is a clerk) but his parents are able to provide him with a better life compared to his contemporaries with more siblings. Being the only child in the family, he is also well loved by his parents and this clearly explains for his positive self-image and confidence. Although he is only an average student, he carries himself like an important person and is always running around the school doing things for the teachers. The findings of this study clearly show that "children from small families have a better developmental prognosis than children with many siblings" (Polit, 1982, p.1) as they are in a much more advantageous position than those with many siblings. A multidisciplinary explanation for the findings on family size suggests that family resources become diluted as family size increases thus resulting in various developmental deficits that could have a substantial impact on the quality of a country's citizenry (Polit, 1982, p.1). Being the only child in the family, Ah Meng's parents can still afford to provide adequately for him without having to lower their quality of life even though they are not rich.

5.2.6 Family Criminality

The saying that crime runs in the family (Dugdale, 1887; Bijleveld & Wijkman, 2009; Frisell, Lichtenstein, & Langstrom, 2011; Besemer, 2014) is nothing new. One cannot deny the fact that "the influence of another convicted member of the family is at least as great as that as any of the other adverse factors that have been studied" (Ferguson, 1952, p.67). This clearly explains why children with criminal or antisocial parents and siblings have the tendency to exhibit delinquent or antisocial behaviours at some time in their lives

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(Farrington, Jolliffe, Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Kalb, 2001; Murray, 2007; Van de Rakt, Nieuwbeerta, & Apel, 2009; Thornberry, Freeman-Gallant, & Lovegrove, 2009). Since the father is the pillar of support of the family, it is no wonder why children with convicted fathers are more likely to be convicted too because children, particularly the sons, like to emulate their father (Thornberry, Freeman-Gallant, Lizotte, Krohn, & Smith, 2003; Auty, Farrington, & Coid, 2015). Ariffin, for instance, has a father who is a chronic gambler and was convicted for his involvement in drugs:

Interviewer : Do you know why your father doesn't want to come home?
Ariffin : Because of debt. He borrowed money.
Interviewer : Why did he borrow money?
Ariffin : Created problems.
Interviewer : What problems?
Ariffin : Gambling
Interviewer : Did you father have any police cases?
Ariffin : Yes
Interviewer : What police case?
Ariffin : Drugs
Interviewer : Did he take drugs?
Ariffin : For a long time already.
Interviewer : Did he go to jail?
Ariffin : Lockup
Interviewer : For how long?
Ariffin : 3 months

(Ariffin/Juv/04-05/Fam)

Similarly, both Loga's father and grandfather were convicted for money laundering. Loga's father also had a case of carrying prostitutes in his car:

> My mother said that he had a case of carrying prostitutes in his car. After that, both my father and his father… they took some death people's finger prints to the bank. They bought 3, 4 houses. My father's father was a policeman… after that the police found out what he had done… after that they sacked my father's father.
>
> (Loga/Juv/04/Fam)

Since children are constantly learning from their parents, what their parents do would eventually have a direct or indirect impact on them. Having a criminal father would also mean that there is the possibility that the children would follow after his footsteps without realizing it (Thornberry, Freeman-Gallant, Lizotte, Krohn, & Smith, 2003; Auty, Farrington, & Coid, 2015).

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On the contrary, none of my student respondents have family members who are convicted for a crime nor do they have the habit of dabbling in crime. Being brought up by parents who place great emphasis on proper behaviour, even things like skipping classes, smoking, drinking, or the *Mat Rempits* seem to be rather offensive to them:

> I saw it… in front of my eyes… students hiding at the back of the teacher's car… they ponteng kelas… I say, "What are you guys doing here? Boleh balik kelas tak sekarang?" They say… boleh, boleh. I don't know why they like to ponteng kelas… maybe the teacher is not strict… the teacher like… playing with them because some teachers like this.
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/03/Sch)

> When my duties in the toilet, I saw people smoking in the toilet… because they look like gangster so I not dare to talk… I just keep spying them only. I have no reason that why they all like to smoking because smoking effect on our hearts… it also may effect our health.
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/02/Sch)

> Since the new flat come there our area also is quite bad already because at night… the sounds of motorbike… Mat Rempit… all happen down there. Night time, they just rides the escalator… doing naughty things down there. Sometimes they drink a lot of alcohol… and then they fight.
>
> (Ramu/Stu/11/Com)

Needless to say, parents who are good role models themselves and are positively involved in their children's lives through positive parenting practices such as proper monitoring and discipline are more likely to bring up proper children even amongst low income families (Holtrop, Smith, & Scott, 2014).

5.2.7 Child Abuse and Maltreatment

"Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power" (World Health Organization, 1999, as cited in Hirschy & Wilkinson, 2010, p.2). This form of childhood victimization is a powerful predictor of juvenile delinquency (Espelage, Low, Rao, Hong,

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& Little, 2014; Grunwald, Lockwood, Harris, & Mennis, 2010; Knox, Burkhart, & Khuder, 2011; Mersky, Topitzes, & Reynolds, 2012; Ryan, Williams, & Courtney, 2013) since children who are subjected to abuse and maltreatment are more likely to offend and be convicted for their crimes at some time in their lives and are less likely to graduate from high school (Crooks, Scott, Wolfe, Chiodo, & Killip, 2007; Lansford, Miller-Johnson, Berlin, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 2007; Fang, Brown, Florence, & Mercy, 2012; Lee, Guterman, & Lee, 2008; Lee, Bellamy, & Guterman, 2009; Guterman, Lee, Lee, Waldfogel, & Rathouz, 2009). Children with abusive parents are also at a higher risk of offending because family violence can produce "negative impacts on the emotional development of a child; leads to truancy and disruptive behaviour in school; encourage run away from home and generates so much pain that the child sometimes views alcohol and drugs as needed escapes" from the painful realities of life (Bartolas, 1990, p.277). This was exactly what happened to Zulkifli:

Interviewer : In your diary, you wrote that you took drugs at the age of 13 because your father did not like you. What is the relationship between drugs and your father?
Zulkifli : Because of tension… I was scared to think of my father and mother… because of misunderstanding… sometimes he scolded me… sometimes he boxed me… he did many things to me… that was why I took drugs (saddened expression).
(Zulkifli/Juv/12/Fam)

Interviewer : According to what you have written in your diary, you felt that you have been *tersisih* (excluded) from your family. What did you mean by *excluded*?
Zulkifli : Excluded… like… he did not think of me… like… I wasn't there for him. After that… like… felt like… there was no love… parental love… like… whatever I did was all wrong (rather emotional).
(Zulkifli/Juv/05/Fam)

Even though not all battered children would eventually become delinquents, abuse, neglect, and maltreatment do enhance the risk of delinquent behaviour in one way or another (Hazen, Connelly, Roesch, Hough, & Landsverk, 2009; Leslie, James, Monn, Kauten, Zhang, & Aarons, 2010; Williams, Van Dorn, Bright, Jonson-Reid, & Nebbitt, 2010; Baskin & Sommers, 2011).

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Children like to emulate their parents and having abusive parents would also mean that they can easily adopt their parents' abusive behaviour through imitation, modelling, and reinforcement (Akers, 1985, 2009). When children learn a set of definitions favourable to the use of aggressive behaviour, they would exhibit a range of aggressiveness such as losing one's temper easily, bullying, vandalism, discipline problems, physical violence, and extortion (Akers, 1985, 2009; Baskin, & Sommers, 2011). This was clearly exemplified in the life of Zulkifli. According to him:

> My character becomes like this because of my parents. They have given me a lot of tension. I stayed with my aunt… then I saw my friends staying with their parents. Feel like… I see them… they have father and mother to look after them. I do not have father… I feel sad ahh. I stayed with my aunt… no doubt there is someone to look after me but I feel that she is not my real mother.
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/09/Fam)

Zulkifli has always assumed that his father was the cause for his antisocial behaviours. Even though his aunt loves him like her own child, he still feels that something is amissed as she is not his biological mother. Deep in his heart, he still yearns for parental affection and envies his friends who are staying with their parents.

When I asked him how his father used to treat him, he could not help looking angry, hopeless, and sad when he said:

> Like an animal. Sometimes when he had tension… he released his grudges on his son… on melah. He beat me… sometimes with wood… sometimes with his fists… he beat wherever he wanted… it did not matter where. I pretended that I did not mind… used to it already.
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/02-03/Fam)

His father's aggressiveness towards him has made it impossible for him to stay at home. That was also one reason why he dared not go home and preferred to stay with his aunt next door:

Interviewer : According to your conduct report, you always stayed with your aunt and refused to go home. Why didn't you go home?

Zulkifli : My father always whacked me… he beat me all over the body… he played favourites… always compared me with my brother (greatly angered).

(Zulkifli/Juv/05/Fam)

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When I asked him whether his father has ever wounded him seriously before, his eyes showed so much pain and anger when he said:

> Yes… until I had to be hospitalized. He hit my head with the chair because I went to my aunt's house. My father did not like me to go to my aunt's house. He made a lot of noise… after that… he just quarrelled with my mother. That was why he had tension, he hit my head with the chair. Don't know whether he did it on purpose or it was mere accident. See… this is the scar (showed me the scar on his head).
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/03/Fam)

Needless to say, his father's hostile and cruel treatment of him only served to increase the tensions between them.

It seems that the years of abuse and neglect have taken its toll on Zulkifli's developmental process (Bottoms, 2009) and this clearly explains why he is so aggressive, likes to steal and vandalize, has a lot of discipline problems, is a big bully, and is truant (Horwitz, Widom, McLaughlin, & White, 2001; Lang, Klinteberg, & Alm, 2002). Violence begets violence and it seems that Zulkifli has learnt to treat his father in the same way that his father has treated him:

> That day, I came back… I happened to meet him. I turned… I called my father… when I got off my motor, my father boxed me. I boxed him back.
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/04/Fam)

Since parental abuse and maltreatment can reduce the children's attachment to their parents, it is no wonder why Zulkifli has reacted in such a violent manner towards his father. Thus one can see that the child who rejects his parent because his parent had earlier rejected him may also have the deliberate intent to injure his parent.

Zulkifli's father did not only abuse and neglect him but has also rejected him all his life which culminated in his act of throwing his son out of the house:

> My father told me not to return home again… he assumed that I am dead.
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/04/Fam)

When I asked him why his father made such a drastic decision to throw him out of the house, this was what Zulkifli said:

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> Because… he believed what people said… like, my father's friend said I'm bad… after that took drugs, after that one more… because… like… liked to disturb people, create problems… he said lots of things. After that I returned home from my friend's house… my father said he wanted to throw me out of the house… my fatelah (heavy tone, rather emotional)
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/04/Fam)

Instead of trying to help his thirteen-year-old son turn over a new leaf, Zulkifli's father has chosen to disown him. In trying to struggle for survival in the heart of the city of Kuala Lumpur, Zulkifli had to fend for himself like an adult and the rest is history.

5.2.8 Lack of Communication

Effective functioning of the family requires a two-way communication and mutual trust and respect between the parents and their children. Proper communication between parents and their children in the form of problem discussion, needs expression, and information sharing are essential for optimal family functioning and the healthy growth and development of the children (Hart, Olsen, Robinson, & Mandleco, 1997; Caprara, Scabini, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Regalia, & Bandura, 1998; Clark & Shields, 1997; Katz & Gottman, 1993; Shek, 2000; Davalos, Chavez, & Guardiola, 2005). Needless to say, children who are able to practice open communication with their parents are healthier, happier, and more contented with their lives (Jackson, Bijstra, Oostra, & Bosma, 1998). On the contrary, lack of communication between parents and their children can lead to depression, negative family relationships, poor school performance, and behavioural problems (Davalos, Chavez, & Guardiola, 2005).

Irwan, for instance, feels inhibited with his family members and finds it difficult to communicate with them. He is quite reluctant to discuss important issues with them and prefers to stay in his room and keeps quiet whenever he is at home:

> I am very quiet at home… I seldom stay at home. I am always hanging around with friends now. If I have any problems, I never tell my family members. Most of them, I'll keep in my heart or tell my friends.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/04/Pee)

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> I am used to going out and hanging around with my friends. I don't communicate much with my family… I am closer to my friends.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/04/Pee)

He feels ashamed whenever he talks about his problems to his family members thus making it impossible for them to understand him:

> Like… if I want to talk to my family members about my problems, I feel ashamed. Because I am used to my friends, so I don't feel ashamed with my friends. I feel more ashamed talking to my family than to my friends.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/05/Pee)

However, it is the other way round whenever he is with his friends as he is the one who is doing all the planning and talking until his friends cannot get the chance to talk:

> I don't like to talk much at home. With friends, I am the one who does all the talking… I talk until they cannot talk. I am the one who talk.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/05/Pee)

Although his parents are very concerned about him, the lack of communication between Irwan and his parents has rendered them unable to understand his feelings, needs and desires. Since they are also very busy with their work, they have to leave him alone to carry on with his own life on the assumption that he knows what to do. And with the freedom given to him comes the many delinquent activities such as truancy, burglary, theft, extortion, and even alcoholism, which is strictly forbidden by his religion.

Ah Fook is in a similar position to Irwan because his family members are at odds with each other and therefore have problems in communication:

Interviewer : Whom do you share your problems with?
Ah Fook : Friends. No use talking to my mother. I said this and she said that. She always says the opposite.
Interviewer : What about your father?
Ah Fook : I can't talk to my father. He is full of wind in his head. Whenever I talk to him, he barks like a dog.
Interviewer : What about your grandmother? Can you talk to her?
Ah Fook : Very seldom. We only talk about animals. When I was young, yes, but as I grow older, she is getting old and has no time for us. I have to take care of myself. To make it simple, I don't know if my family members understand me or not. When I was young, I liked to be alone and did things alone.
Interviewer : What about your brother?
Ah Fook : Seldom… we are not compatible.
Interviewer : Which family member is closest to you?
Ah Fook : Nobody. According to the fortune teller our *eight characters* are not compatible.

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> I can only communicate with my friends-those who understand me.
> (AhFook/Juv/02/Fam)

The *eight characters* is an essential component of Chinese fortune telling which refers to the year, month, day, and hour of birth in the Chinese traditional solar calendar. The Chinese believe that people whose eight characters are incompatible are most unlikely to get along well with each other. The lack of communication between Ah Fook and his family members has therefore caused him to turn to his friends who are also his triad members for support, help and consolation:

> I can only communicate with my friends-those who understand me. No use talking to my mother. I said this and she said that. She always says the opposite. I can't talk to my father.
> (AhFook/Juv/04/Fam)

Since his triad members are so important to him, he cannot not help feeling that he has the obligation to do anything for them including risking his life to defend them should circumstances demand it and was arrested in a gang fight as he was trying to stand out for his triad members. As what Ah Fook said, "If my family members understand me, I won't become like this" (AhFook/Juv/03/Fam).

5.3 School and Delinquency

Since children spend most of their waking hours in school, their degree of attachment and commitment to school does have a great impact on their behavioural development (Sampson & Laub, 1993). Previous studies have shown that students with poor school bonding tend to have more behavioural problems (Maddox & Prinz, 2003; Payne, 2008) as corroborated by the findings of this study. My study has indicated that school factors such as teacher-student relationships, academic achievement, teaching strategies, teacher attitudes and practices, school attendance, and disciplinary actions have each got an essential role to play in the lives of my respondents as they can serve to strengthen or

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weaken their attachment and commitment to school. Each of these themes is discussed in greater depths below.

5.3.1 Teacher-Student Relationships

The ecological transition from the family microsystem into the school microsystem is one of the most significant events in a child's life. Forming secure and healthy relationships with other caregivers such as teachers is a significant developmental process that is fundamental to the child's cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioural outcomes. Since teachers play an important role in their students academic and social development throughout their school years (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Baker, Grant, & Morlock, 2008), positive teacher-student relationships not only enable the students to grow and develop in a safe and secure learning environment but also enhance their social and academic skills (Baker, Grant, & Morlock, 2008; Cataldi, Laird, & KewallRamani, 2009; O'Connor, Dearing, & Collins, 2011).

Sad to say, all my respondents from STB are naughty and poor underachievers who have never found favour with their teachers. Syazwan, for instance, has never been any teacher's favourite as his teachers liked to find fault with him and even his friends were not spared. Knowing very well that he would be punished regardless of whether he has done anything wrong or not, he does not care what his teachers think of him anymore. He did not even try to clear his name when his teachers accused him of doing things that he did not do:

Interviewer : According to what you have written in your diary, your relationship with your teachers has *hancur* (broken down). What do you mean by broken down?
Syazwan : Don't like.
Interviewer : Don't like who?
Syazwan : Teachers
Interviewer : Why don't you like them?
Syazwan : Like… whatever I do is all wrong. Because I've made a mistake once… got suspended from school… they don't like me
Interviewer : What have they done to you?
Syazwan : Very often… although I kept quiet… they punished me. The person next to me made noise, my friends and I got punished (greatly angered).

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Interviewer : Did you try to explain to them?
Syazwan : (shook his head)
Interviewer : If the teachers punish you…
Syazwan : Just keep quiet. No use explaining to them because they won't listen. Let it be…. (in a hopeless state of disappointment).

(Syazwan/Juv/06-07/Sch)

The phrase "let it be" means that he could not be bothered what his teachers think of him anymore. "The less a boy cares about what teachers think of him, the more likely he is to have committed delinquent acts" (Hirschi, 1969, p.121). This is an aspect of student behaviour that some teachers fail to understand. Syazwan may be a trouble-maker in school but accusing him of doing the things that he did not do and punishing him irrationally did not make him a better person.

Loga is not in a much better position than Syazwan as his teachers also liked to pick on him because he was notoriously known for his mischiefs:

> … everyone in my class got very little work to do… I got a lot. I finished some, they gave me more. I did some, they added more ahh.
>
> (Loga/Juv/07/Sch)

His teachers had probably failed to realize that punishing him by giving him more schoolwork than other students would not change his behaviour. They would have done him a better favour if they had taken the trouble to teach him how to read and spell. He ended up doing nothing because he is a slow learner who cannot read or write and it was certainly beyond his ability to do so many exercises within a short period of time. However, when he ended up not doing anything, he was punished again:

> They asked me to lie down… like the prison style. They caned anywhere they liked. After that, I took my bag and walked off. I said to them, you caned anywhere you liked, I go anywhere I like. I walked to the back of the school, jumped over the gate and went to CC.
>
> (Loga/Juv/07/Sch)

As Loga was notoriously known in school, none of his teachers liked him and they even labelled him "stupid". Since he could not get any help from his teachers and was always being punished in school, school life was meaningless to him. Instead of building up a trust

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relationship with his teachers, Loga considered his teachers to be his enemies and even took revenge on them by scratching their cars:

Interviewer : What do you mean by enemies. Who are they?
Loga : Some are my schoolmates… some of them are my teachers (laughing). I scratched their cars with a stone… after that they called my mother… asked her to pay for the damage caused.

(Loga/Juv/09/Sch)

Needless to say, positive teacher-student bonding was impossible under such strained circumstances and the sharing of negative feelings between Loga and his teachers not only made him more rebellious but also further enhanced his antisocial behaviour.

One cannot deny the fact that children from the lower socioeconomic classes are often perceived as "simply slow, dull, and intellectually inferior" (Haskell & Yablonsky, 1978, pp.472-473) by their teachers. As the saying goes, "expect failure from the children and the children will give you failure" (Haskell & Yablonsky, 1978, p.473) and this self-fulfilling prophecy is often manifested in the students' negative behavioural and academic outcomes in response to their teachers' negative perceptions of them (Nurmi, 2012). Ariffin, for instance, was very attentive whenever I gave him English lessons. He even managed to scrape through the Form 2 English midyear and final exam papers that I set for my students after not going to school for some time since his arrest. He is a very active student who likes to answer questions asked by the teacher and smiled sweetly whenever I praised him for giving a correct answer. He even tried to compete with others to give the highest number of correct answers. But according to him, his teachers said that he was stupid and even called him "pig" (a very sensitive word for the Muslims). This insulting word, had in some way, affected his level of confidence and that was why he felt ashamed to ask questions in the classroom and preferred to keep quiet even though he did not understand his lessons. Instead of desiring for success in learning, he started thinking of going out with his friends and his mind drifted away from the classroom to the outside world. As what Hirschi says, "if one desires success and is continually frustrated in his

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attempts to reach this goal, then he is more likely to turn to crime than is the person who does not care for success" (Hirschi, 1969, p.125). Did Ariffin care for success? If he did not, he would not be reading the books that I gave him in preparation for school after leaving the institution. I can still remember his radiant smile when he saw the textbooks that I brought for him.

Zulkifli, on the other hand, could not take the word "stupid" as calmly as Ariffin did and retaliated by damaging his teachers' cars:

Interviewer : How was your relationship with your teachers in school?
Zulkifli : Not ok…
Interviewer : Why not ok?
Zulkifli : Like I always played truant from school… they didn't like me… they insulted me… like stupidlah… not cleverlah.
Interviewer : Did they always insult you?
Zulkifli : Always.
Interviewer : What did you do when they insult you?
Zulkifli : I pretended that I did not bother.
Interviewer : Did you take revenge?
Zulkifli : In a quiet manner… I destroyed their cars (laughed).

(Zulkifli/Juv/07/Sch)

Irwan, however, did not go to the extent of damaging his teachers' cars but he did answer back when the teachers scolded him and this clearly explains for the *biadap terhadap guru* (literally means showing disrespect towards the teachers) remark in his conduct report. As stated in his conduct report, Irwan has very good manners and this is something I totally agree with. Long after my data generation program has completed, he still calls me "teacher" and treats me with respect even though I have only given him a few English lessons in STB. In a way, his keenness to learn during those few lessons was a clear indication that he desired to do well in the SPM Examination. But, according to him:

> Teacher said she is lazy to teach me. She said if I want to study, study. If I don't want to study, I can go to sleep, don't disturb others.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/09/Sch)

With the official permission given by his teacher, it was no wonder why he has developed the habit of sleeping in class and hence ended up with bad results. This clearly shows that teachers' expectations can affect student performance.

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Teachers should learn how to interact with different students based on their unique personality instead of calling them names or insulting them. Their relationship with their students, irrespective of whether it is positively or negatively orientated, would somehow affect their developmental outcomes. Their negative attitude and perceptions towards their students can have a devastating effect on them and may sometimes create a lasting impact in their lives. The rude and insulting words uttered by the teachers would dwell in the minds of their students for a life time, long after the teachers themselves have forgotten what they said:

Interviewer : Can you recall if any of the teachers have treated you badly before?
Kartik : Ah, yes. There is one or two... certain teacher. When they pick on me, they go at me. One was Teacher Kogila… she didn't like me a lot… because it's not right for a teacher to call a student stupid, dumb, idiot… she's been calling me that since I was with her studying in history class. She's been saying that… are you stupid… don't understand what I teach… she has been calling me that. Where were you… why not paying attention… but actually I was paying attention (looked very hurt and distressed). And also there is also certain teachers like Danesh also… he's been bullying me also but I didn't complain because I didn't want to make an issue of that. He's been calling me certain names I don't like. He's been calling me names… calling my health issue also… and when I have fits I admit to him because I was one of the members for prefect so I told him I have health issue… fits… epilepsy… I told him that. He ridiculed me and he said, "Oh, epilepsy… the fits with contractions" (demonstrated to me what Mr Danesh did - twitching his face and neck). He was laughing at me… I just keep quiet.
Interviewer : How did you feel then?
Kartik : I was feeling very bad because all this time it was hurting very much. I was hurt but nobody knows how I feel… how I cried a lot… nobody sees. Even now also I am still in that situation also (deeply saddened).
Interviewer : What situation?
Kartik : Feeling hurt inside.
Interviewer : How do you intend to get over it?
Kartik : To me, to get over it… to be myself and cherish the friends who are precious to me and really understand me.

(Kartik/Stu/07-08/Sch)

Although Kartik is already in Form 5, what happened to him in Form 1 and Form 2 (Teacher Kogila taught in the afternoon session) is still clearly engraved on his mind. However, unlike Loga and Zulkifli, Kartik is not the kind of student who would damage his teachers' cars:

Interviewer : Do you bear any grudges against them?
Kartik : Ah, no. My sister… they've been advising me to talk back to the teachers like

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that but I didn't do it even though how bad they treat me also. I still respect them because they are teachers in the school and I don't want to… like cause any problems. I am not a person who have grudges against teachers… make them hate me… even though how bad they treat me so I don't actually bother.

Interviewer : Have you ever thought of taking revenge on them?

Kartik : No, I have no heart to revenge people… even though I don't like the person… they are my enemy… I just don't have the heart to scold them. I just be polite.

(Kartik/Stu/07-08/Sch)

Although deeply hurt inside, he did not skip his history classes nor did he give up his position as a prefect because he did not want to disappoint his parents. Nevertheless, a lot of courage, patience, and self-control were required for him to survive this kind of strained relationship with his teachers:

Interviewer : How do you intend to get over it?

Kartik : To me, to get over it… to be myself and cherish the friends who are precious to me and really understand me.

Interviewer : How did you manage to do it?

Kartik : It was quite hurting but I tried to manage it by keeping the pressure in and taking the anger out because I don't have anger of people also... not much. The people I hate… the people I like also… I don't put a grudge on them

Interviewer : How could you be so patient?

Kartik : Most of the time at home I am always patient. I have no troubles in arguing with people. That's why.

(Kartik/Stu/07-08/Sch)

Azman, on the other hand, did not seem to take it seriously when his teacher called him "stupid, moron, or pig" and he even laughed it out when he told me about it. Rashid, on the other hand, was not as patient as Kartik or Azman when Teacher Kogila called him "pig" and flung his books onto the floor as he retaliated by answering her back. Although the students' reactions to their teachers' rudeness differs from one individual to another, one cannot deny the fact that the teachers' negative attitudes do affect them emotionally and psychologically.

In a way, it may also be true to say that the students' attitude towards learning is affected by their relationship with their teachers. There is evidence that positive teacher-student interpersonal relationships can have a lot to contribute towards the students' academic achievements (Fan, 2010) and Ah Fook is a very clear example of this. He once told me that he has got the highest marks in ABM when he was in remove class because the

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teacher was nice to him and he liked her very much (AhFook/Juv/07/Sch). Ah Fook may not be interested in his studies but when motivated by the teacher, he would try his best to pass his exam and achieve his target grade:

> I've got 2Cs in Maths and Science. I prefer science. My maths teacher challenged me. She said that she would give me RM10 if I could get a C for Maths. I practised my Maths so hard everyday and got a C. I had to go after her for 2 years before she finally gave me the RM10.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/06/Sch)

The RM10 incentive from Ah Fook's teacher may not be much but it means a lot to him as it clearly shows how important a teacher's motivation could be.

5.3.2 Academic Failure

Hirschi (1969) emphasizes that "students with little academic competence and students who perform poorly are more likely to commit delinquent acts" (p.120). One cannot deny the fact that antisocial behaviour amongst juveniles is largely influenced by their academic performance (Ojo, 2012). Needless to say, students "who do badly in school reduce their interest in school (they may of course come to hate it) and are thus free to this extent to commit delinquent acts" (Hirschi, 1969, p.123). Since an individual's academic performance is closely associated with his chances of success, future income, and well being (Battle & Lewis, 2002), it is therefore necessary to find out what enhances or hinders my respondents' educational achievement.

Loga, for instance, is unable to read or write and was labelled "stupid" by his teachers. His bad school experiences coupled with his mother's lack of emphasis on the importance of education and inability to support him through school have killed whatever interest he had in his studies during his primary school years and this clearly explains for his poor results. Knowing that he could not do well in school because of his illiteracy, dropping out of school was his only alternative. At a very young age he has already made

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up his mind to quit school in the belief that if he wanted to make a lot of money, he must work hard for it:

> Since last time I saw people work… if I work hard I can get a lot of money. I see it that way ahh. If I don't work hard I don't get money. If I work hard then only I can get money.
>
> (Loga/Juv/09/Sch)

However, dropping out of school at the age of thirteen also put him in a vulnerable position as he was easily influenced by his peers to participate in antisocial activities and thus ended up in STB not long after that.

Ah Fook is in a similar situation as he had to help support his family by doing part-time work at the age of 13. Since his parents could not afford to send him for tuition classes and his teachers were only too glad to get rid of him, he ended up learning nothing in school. According to him, it was better for him to find a job since staying in school was a waste of time because of his low literacy level:

> No matter how hard I study, my brain cannot absorb it. It's like forcing a piece of thick wood into a small hole. Impossible, isn't it? Unless they (my parents) put the dictionary inside my brain. What do they think I am? Robot ah? If I don't study, I can still learn a skill and become a boss. Those who study in the university can only earn RM2000-RM3000 per month.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/06/Sch)

However, dropping out of school at thirteen did not help him much either as it only provided him with more opportunities to associate with antisocial friends and like Loga, he also ended up in STB not long after he left school.

The fate of Zulkifli did not differ much from that of Loga or Ah Fook as he also lacked the necessary resources and academic support that could help him to meet the learning standards in school. Being rejected by his parents all his life and brought up by his aunt who placed no emphasis on education, he has developed very little interest in his studies. Since many of his teachers did not like to enter class, he decided not to waste his time in school and look for a job. To quote what his aunt said:

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> … sometimes even those who studied in the university could not find a job. Those who did not study in the university… who studied in a primary school… could find a job. The only thing is… you must work hard to make money.
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/07/Sch)

Holding on to the advice given by his aunt, the rest is history. Like Loga and Ah Fook, he was also apprehended by the police and sent to STB.

Syazwan, Ariffin, and Irwan are average students but they also share the same fate with Loga, Ah Fook, and Zulkifli as they are poor children who lack academic support from their family and school. School punishments as well as their conflicting relationships with their teachers have made it difficult for them to integrate into the school environment. Syazwan also had problems catching up with his studies as his teachers had the habit of not entering class. Since there was no one to help them in their studies, their academic performance continued to deteriorate as they drifted further and further into delinquency with their peers until they finally ended up in STB. The fate of Loga, Ah Fook, Zulkifli, Syazwan, Ariffin, and Irwan therefore clearly indicates that failure in school and delinquency are somehow interrelated.

However, it does seem unfair to say that all underachievers are delinquents as Azman has clearly proven that this statement may not always be true. Although he is not very bright (below average), he tries his best to finish all the schoolwork given by his teachers and studies for 2 hours per day. He is also very attentive in class and likes to help his teachers to carry things. As what he has written in his diary:

> I always go to school and I have never played truant from school. I like to help my teachers to carry books and boxes if the things are heavy. I love my school very much
>
> (Azman/Stu/Diary/Sch)

In a way, his cheerfulness not only reflects his positive attitude towards school life but also his positive family relationships:

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> My family, I love my family very much. My parents always take me to watch movies. I went with my family to Pangkor. When we arrived there, I felt very happy.
>
> (Azman/Stu/Diary/Fam)

It seems that parental love, support and concern have in some way contributed positively to his commitment to school. Even though his results are below average, he is studying hard because his parents have very high expectations for him:

Interviewer : Did your parents say how many As they want from you?
Azman : Yes… like 8As, 9As like that… then they will be happy.
(Azman/Stu/05/Fam)

Even though Azman is only in form 4, he is already worrying about his SPM (Form Five) examination and is already studying very hard for it:

> I am worried about SPM. SPM is the exam which determines the future to become what and can enter university. I should study hard.
>
> (Azman/Stu/Diary/Sch)

The same applies to Kartik whose parents have high hopes for his future even though he is only an average student:

Interviewer : How many As do your parents expect you to get for your SPM?
Kartik : My dad is hoping me to get As but then my result is like sometimes stable… sometimes not stable… sometimes oklah.
Interviewer : What do they want you to do in life?
Kartik : My dad wants me to success in life. My mom wants me to have a better life so that we won't feel hardship like before.
Interviewer : What are your plans for the future?
Kartik : For my plans for the future I might continue studying and become a teacher… English teacher… because my sister also advising melah. Even now I am still confidentlah… I hope maybe canlah. That will base on my result.
(Kartik/Stu/09/Fam)

Although his SPM results are rather disappointing and he can no longer cling to his dream of becoming an English teacher, he is still confident that he would achieve something in life. With the love and support of his family members, he has other plans for his future and is now working very hard even though he does not earn much. He is also taking up a part-time course after work in the hope that he would find better employment in the future. Through the inspirational words that he posted on his Facebook, one can see that he has got over his failure and is moving on in life confidently.

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5.3.3 Ineffective Teaching Strategies

One cannot deny the fact that the students' academic failure may in some way due to the ineffective teaching strategies in school. Despite the efforts of the Malaysian Education Ministry to improve the education system in this country, the chalk-and-talk method is still rampantly used in Malaysian schools today. Teaching aids are only used sparingly during teaching practice when the trainee teachers' supervisors come to observe them. Since the chalk-and-talk method has been used for decades and has successfully churned out many high achievers, it is still acceptable to Malaysian students. Further, it may not be as disastrous as the "copying" method that some Malaysian teachers are using. One way of killing the students' interest in learning is to make them copy notes throughout the lesson without any explanations. Copying notes for hours is something which Ah Fook really hates to do:

> They shouldn't give us things that we don't like to do like just copying from the whiteboard… not just one but two whiteboards. And they wanted it fast. They started copying at 5.30 p.m. and wanted us to finish copying by 6.00 p.m. How could we finish? They copied direct from the book. Copying a little bit from the whiteboard is ok for us but certainly not so much and so fast too!
>
> (AhFook/Juv/07/Sch)

Ah Fook was already on the verge of quitting school and this copying method has clearly proven to him that his decision to quit school might not be wrong. Although Ariffin did not really detest the idea of copying notes, it was still meaningless to make him copy notes without knowing what he was copying:

Interviewer : How did your teachers teach?
Ariffin : They gave us lots of notes to copy… I borrowed my friend's book… went home… to copy.
Interviewer : Copying only? Did they explain or not?
Ariffin : No
Interviewer : Did you understand what you copied?
Ariffin : No

(Ariffin/Juv/10/Sch)

For the underachievers like Ah Fook and Ariffin, this is one way of killing their interest to learn altogether. Needless to say, when their interest to learn is gone, their commitment to

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school also declines. The same applies to Irwan who played truant from school because he did not like the teachers who made him copy lots of notes:

Interviewer : In your diary you said that you played truant from school because you did not like your teachers. What kind of teachers you dislike?
Irwan : I don't like teachers who are fierce… after that I don't like teachers who give lots of school work… making me copy lots of notes. I prefer simple notes, mind maps, exercises…

(Irwan/Juv/08/Sch)

Even a hardworking student finds the copying method disappointing and difficult to endure as he feels that it is an indication that his teachers are not interested to teach:

> Some teachers… they are very… like lazy… like *lantak* only… like *lantak* teach us… like simply teach us like that… so like during the visual arts period… we just like… Mrs Laili she just give us a bunch of notes… very, very long notes… she hold the book and she read out so fast and we can't even follow up. I just feel like… why don't we just like cut a little bit sentence so that it will be shorter a bit? But no… she give the long, long notes in the book. We forced to simply write… you know… and our notebook is almost like we are just like scramble everything like that (disgusted). Just notes all the time… after that like… after they give you the notes… like just… like another 20 minutes like that… they just give a free time for us to chatlah.
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/04/Sch)

Although the teacher gave him 20 minutes to chat with his friends while waiting for the bell to ring, Ah Meng was not the least happy with the "chatting activity" because he felt bored doing nothing in class:

Interviewer : So I suppose all of you must be very happylah since the teacher allowed you to chat for 20 minutes.
Ah Meng : Yah, but although we are happy… when teacher interview me this actually what I am very feel is I unsatisfied with the lessons. I dissatisfied with the teacher because they only say *lantaklah*… they just simply give us the notes… at the same time it's just like you do what you want and this is the part like the boring is coming back.
Interviewer : So when the other students were chit-chatting, did you chat with them?
Ah Meng : Yes… I have nothing else to do (restless tone).

(AhMeng/Stu/04/Sch)

What was even more disappointing for Ah Meng was the teacher did not give much explanation about the lesson in the hope that the notes would do the job:

Interviewer : Did you understand the notes that you copied?
Ah Meng : A little bit yes… most of it no… she should also explain to us
Interviewer : You mean she didn't explain to you?

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Ah Meng : Even if she explain the notes also she also like simply explain only… we couldn't understand at all, you know. During the exam, I just simply answer only because I don't understand. I don't even know what to draw. I failed.

(AhMeng/Stu/05/Sch)

Instead of spending hours copying notes, the teachers can just photocopy the notes and distribute them to the students as this helps to save time. One cannot deny the fact that copying notes is just one easy way of filling up the time particularly when the teacher does not feel like teaching or is unprepared for the lesson.

Apart from copying notes, the teaching strategies employed by some of the teachers may sometimes be so boring and meaningless that the students feel that they are not learning anything at all:

> We did not understand what the teachers were talking about. They forced us to memorize things… we couldn't remember. They asked us to repeat after them. There was this English teacher who couldn't pronounce correctly. She punished us when we couldn't read. We quarrelled with her. I like English. I always got the highest marks in English in primary school and secondary school. She asked us to memorize more than 10 pages. How to memorize so many pages? She asked us to read out the words and say the meaning in Malay. I knew the meaning of the words in English but couldn't say them out in Malay. The English and Bahasa teachers asked us to memorize the whole essay and caned us when we couldn't do that.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/06/Sch)

The teaching method presented by Ah Fook is a very common practice in many Malaysian schools. However, making the students read out the English words and translating them into Malay would eventually destroy their confidence to speak English. Similarly, forcing the students to memorize the essays from the books also has it defects as it inhibits the students' ability to think creatively. Even though the students could write out the essay without any mistakes after memorizing it thus making it easier for the teachers to mark compared to the ones written by the students themselves, they would have problems in writing essays in an examination.

Further, having teachers who lack knowledge in the subjects that they are teaching can have serious consequences as this not only causes the students to lose interest in their studies but also their respect and confidence in their teachers:

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> There was this English teacher who was supposed to be teaching English but she spoke in Malay most of the time. We were confused. She couldn't teach or even pronounce the words properly… like shit. The students didn't understand her. We ignored her. She was very fierce. I told her, "Teacher, what are you teaching? Like shit." She said, "Say one more time." I told her, "You teach like shit. We don't understand what you teach. You better go home, fat pig"(laughing).
>
> (AhFook/Juv/07/Sch)

Teaching English in Malay, Chinese, or Tamil is something which should be avoided at all costs but sad to say, there are many English teachers who are teaching this way. Although the Education Ministry has already sent many of them for courses, much would still depend on the teachers themselves because nothing can be done if they do not want to improve their proficiency in the language. The failure of the Teaching and Learning of Science and Mathematics in English (PPSMI) is a very good indication of the teachers' reluctance to improve their proficiency in English despite all the incentives, facilities, and courses provided for them (Asri, Ahmad, & Shamsaadal, 2010). In order to teach effectively, teachers should continue to improve themselves throughout their lives instead of going on teaching without any improvements at all even though they lack knowledge and proficiency in the subjects they teach.

What is even more discouraging for the students is some teachers not only teach in a careless and unsystematic way but also have the habit of not marking exercise books:

> Interviewer : How are your English lessons?
> Ah Meng : Terrible and horrible, not fun, very noisy, unfocusing and very much unchallenging… we have to learn all by ourselves and because of that my English result is falling.
> Interviewer : What did Teacher Yusri do during his lessons?
> Ah Meng : Teacher Yusri just keep calling us to take out our textbook… very near to the exam time you know and he still calling us to take out our English textbook and please flip to page 186. In my heart what I say that this English textbook in the exam is nothing (angry and disappointed).
> Interviewer : Did he give you any exercises to do?
> Ah Meng : Yes, he did but the exercises is like fill in the correct answers like in the textbook and most of all nobody tick the work. So the first time I thought like ok I will did it… so the next day when Teacher Yusri ask that did you do your homework, I was the only one say yes… the others say… silence.
> Interviewer : Did Teacher Yusri give you any essays to write?
> Ah Meng : No essay. So I have no choice… I forced to read novels book. That's only the only the way to improve our grammar.
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/05-06/Sch)

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Students who know that their teachers have the habit of not marking exercise books would not do the schoolwork given by these teachers. Ah Meng is an exception because according to him:

> Exercises are to make sure that we remember the thing. This is why I do. And I feel like… it's bad not to do… my parents will scold me if they know I don't do.
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/07/Sch)

Simple exercises like filling in the blanks facilitates the teachers to mark but without the essay writing component, students would never be able to master the writing skill and would have problems writing essays in an exam. Sad to say, Ah Meng's Malay Language teacher is also using the same teaching strategy:

> Interviewer : What about Bahasa Melayu? Do you have any problems with your lessons?
> Ah Meng : Bahasa… Mr Fahmi who taught us… but he also same like Puan Laili… *lantak* Like give us a very easy homework that everybody can do it… even a remove class can do it (sounded annoyed).
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/06/Sch)

Needless to say, this kind of teaching strategy does have its contributions to the poor writing skills amongst many Malaysian students (Mah & Khor, 2015).

Another meaningless teaching strategy is to make the students do their corrections ten, twenty, thirty times or more if they fail an exam. Even a good student could not help feeling that his teacher was being irrational when she punished him this way:

> At the same time, whoever fails the exam, they have to do correction for 10 times. One question… 10 times. Is this teacher have a mentally problem? Wasting paper only (furious and disgusted)!
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/05/Sch)

Teachers are not trained this way in the teachers' training institutes/universities and the fact that many of them are still using the obsolete methods used by their predecessors in the 1970s clearly shows that something needs to be done by the Education Ministry to ensure that our teachers are really teaching effectively and efficiently based on what they have been trained to do.

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Similarly, teachers who are unable to finish the syllabus on time and leave it to the students to study on their own can make learning very stressful for the students. This is clearly exemplified by Ah Meng's history teacher:

Interviewer : What are the other subjects that you are having problems with?
Ah Meng : History… the history teacher, Puan Fatin… she teach very slow like Unit 6 about the downfall of Malacca… it like take months to learn it. I don't want very slow, I don't want very fast, I just want a moderate level.
Interviewer : Did you manage to finish the syllabus or not?
Ah Meng : No, we forced to learn it all by our own self because in during October that time she was pregnant so she has to take MC. At the same time (sighed)… cannot already lah. This is a threatlah… we have no choice… we have to learn all by ourselves.

(AhMeng/Stu/07/Sch)

Not many students can have the initiative to study on their own and this is particularly true for the slow learners who may find the subject threatening. They may end up losing interest in the subject altogether.

5.3.4 Neglectful Teachers

Having teachers who try to avoid teaching or carrying out minimal teaching in the classroom is just as unacceptable as the ineffective teaching strategies discussed above. The fact that some teachers may just spend the whole lesson talking over the phone without teaching anything at all is nothing new:

Interviewer : What did you mean by "I don't like teacher making noise in the class" according to what you have written in your diary?
Ah Fook : Teacher making noise refers to the teacher talking over the phone in class. She didn't want to teach us, that was why she spent the whole period talking over the phone. She could talk for 3 periods – one period 45 minutes, three periods 135 minutes. The teachers are not really teaching. I think they are very irritating.
Interviewer : What did you do when your teacher was talking over the phone?
Ah Fook : Play, sleep and chat.
Interviewer : Why didn't you ask them to teach?
Ah Fook : They gave reasons that they are very tired, no mood, sick… Oh, if the teacher told us that she was sick, we were very excited. But wonder why she had the energy to talk so loudly over the phone like thunder. How strange! She scolded us and asked us to keep quiet because she wanted to chat over the phone but in less than 10 seconds we started to make noise gain. She went out to talk and we played football in the class when she went out.
Interviewer : How did you play football in class?
Ah Fook : We filled up the mineral water bottle with water and kicked it like a ball.

(AhFook/Juv/07/Sch)

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Teachers cannot expect the students to sit quietly while they are chatting with friends over the phone. When students have nothing to do in class, they may resort to some kind of mischief to fill up their time. Unlike my student respondents who would study on their own and form their own study groups, Ah Fook would do no such thing. Children, particularly the low achievers, would prefer to have fun when the teachers make learning impossible for them.

It is also not uncommon for the teachers to lose their temper in front of their students when they have family problems:

Interviewer : Do you think that your teachers' teaching methods are ok or not?
Loga : Not ok ahh. They scolded me for everything. When they had family tension, they brought it to school… like they have family problems… they bring to school. They are tension ahh… I asked them properly… ahh they scolded me back (sounded angry).

(Loga/Juv/08/Sch)

Teachers who lose their temper and scold their students irrationally when plagued by family problems are not only setting a bad example to the students but also tarnishing their own image. In a way, they are also destroying their students' interest in learning and commitment to school.

To make matters worse, some teachers do not even enter class thus depriving the students of their right to acquire knowledge (Abd Manaf, 2001). This was also one of the reasons why Zulkifli decided to stop schooling. According to his humorous statement about his teachers:

> My father asked me why I wanted to quit school? I told him that my school mates played around like kindergarten kids… teachers acted rough… sometimes they entered class but I did not enter. Sometimes I entered class but they did not enter. Sometimes both of us did not enter class. It is better for me to stop schooling, I said.
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/06/Sch)

On the other hand, Zulkifli was happy with the no teacher classroom situation as he could hang around in the backyard of the school with his schoolmates to look for mischief. Ariffin, however, would enjoy himself loitering around the school when there was no

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teacher in the classroom. He would sometimes smoke in empty classrooms with his schoolmates. As for Ah Fook, he was particularly happy when his teachers did not enter class as indicated in the following statement:

> Some of them didn't enter class. We were most happy when the teachers didn't enter class. We could make a lot of noise banging on the tables and chairs and throwing things around. We made a ball from mineral water bottle and kicked it around. We pushed all the tables to the middle of the class.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/07/Sch)

Some teachers may just enter class for a little while and then disappear for the rest of the lesson leaving the students on their own:

Interviewer : Can you give one example of how your teachers taught ineffectively?
Syazwan : Like… when teacher was teaching… like… gave work after that left the class.
Interviewer : How long did he/she leave the class?
Syazwan : Sometimes until after the lesson was over.
Interviewer : What did you do when there was no teacher in the class?
Syazwan : Played… all of us played in class.

(Syazwan/05/Juv/Sch)

Interviewer : What kind of school experience that you dislike most?
Loga : Don't like kids who played a lot in class.
Interviewer : Why did they play a lot in class?
Loga : Because there was no teacher ahh.
Interviewer : You mean the teacher was always not there?
Loga : Sometimes always, sometimes not so always ahh. Teacher came, he/she said wait awhile he/she wanted to go and take some books… just disappeared… the bell rang ahh… until recess.

(Loga/Juv/09/Sch)

Whatever the situation may be, the no-teacher classroom can be dangerous to the students as those who play rough may even cause injuries to others. Students tend to create havoc when there is no teacher in the classroom and may even end up fighting with each other. They may also take this golden opportunity to skip classes and break into empty classrooms to steal whatever they can find in the school bags. Sometimes the no-teacher classroom can be so noisy that it is impossible for the students in the nearby classrooms to focus on their studies.

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Teachers who have the habit of not entering their own classes are also most unlikely to go to class if they are given a relief period. This was what happened in SMKX not long after I left as there was no one to relieve me of my classes:

> The first week that the English teacher is not around they say who will take over our class. At the same time, the class is as noisy as in the market… even I also can't control it. They were noisy and I have no choice and I kept asking the discipline teachers what to do. At the same time Mrs Hong is very busy and then Teacher Thiru always like to talk with Indian girls. Teacher Thiru said write the names that the students is noisy then after the English lesson then pass up the paper to him but the discipline teachers did not do anything… so like just wasting my ink, my paper writing that's all.
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/05/Sch)

Discipline teachers are given fewer periods compared to other teachers and they do not have to be class teachers (thus greatly reducing their workload) so that they can focus on the schools' disciplinary matters. If the discipline teachers can say that they are very busy and refuse to look into the disciplinary matters of the school when they are given ample time to do so, what would become of our students?

5.3.5 Harsh and Irrational School Discipline

A negative school environment where the teachers often punish the students irrationally, inconsistently and unscrupulously may do more harm than good (Monahan, VanDerhei, Bechtold, & Cauffman, 2014). The strict disciplinary measures taken by the teachers such as caning, slapping, or making the students run round the field under the hot sun would not deter the students from engaging in antisocial behaviour. On the contrary, "reacting forcefully to disruptive behaviour will often interfere with our ability to get to the heart of the child's message. Worse yet, such misapplications of power and control will usually prompt more misbehaviour" (Appelstein, 1998, p.22). "When punishment is inappropriately applied, several negative consequences can occur, such as producing unwanted emotional reactions, aggression, or withdrawal – or an increase in the behaviour

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that is punished" (Gendreau, 1996, p.129) as clearly proven in the lives of my respondents from STB.

All my respondents from STB agreed that the strict disciplinary measures in school such as caning are not only ineffective but also made them behave even worse than before:

> I am used to being caned… I don't feel anything.
> (Ariffin/Juv/11/Sch)

> Influenced again… even worse… before they caned my buttocks, I skipped classes… after they caned my buttocks, I played truant from school.
> (Ariffin/Juv/11/Sch)

> They caned me I did again… they caned me I did again.
> (Loga/Juv/08/Sch)

> I became worse… the more they beat me, the worse I become (laughing).
> (Syazwan/Juv/06/Sch)

> Got caned on the buttocks and hands. When they caned my hands, I laughed ha, ha, ha (laughing). When I laughed, I didn't feel the pain. The more I laughed, the more they cane. Let them cane until they were satisfied… my hands had no feel… the skin of my hands is very thick.
> (AhFook/Juv/08/Sch)

> If caning can make me a better person, I won't be here. They punished me I did again… they punished me I did again. After some time they got tired of doing it.
> (Zulkifli/Juv/08/Sch)

Ariffin considered caning to be a painful school experience for him and even intended to beat up his teacher's son in order to take revenge but ended up quarrelling with him because he did not get the chance to lay his hands on him. Like Ariffin, Zulkifli also took revenge on teachers who punished him:

Interviewer : How did your teachers normally punish you in school?
Zulkifli : Caned, stood under the hot sun, sat outside the class, ran round the field… stood on a chair, after that I had to clean up the whole school… all the toilets I had to clean… after that I had to clean up the staffroom. I had to wash my teachers' cars.
Interviewer : How long did you stand under the sun?
Zulkifli : 2 hours… that's normallah.
Interviewer : Did you take revenge?
Zulkifli : I scratched his/her car… and pulled out the tyres.
(Zulkifli/Juv/07/Sch)

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Similarly, Loga had the habit of scratching his teachers' cars with a stone after being punished even though he did not pull out the tyres particularly when he felt that his teachers had punished him unjustly.

Teachers who abuse the powers given to them in the name of discipline may even cause physical injuries to the students:

Interviewer : How did your teacher punish you when you did not do your homework?
Loga : Caned 30 times. Buttocks 20 times, hands 10.
Interviewer : Were your buttocks and hands swollen?
Loga : Little bit.
Interviewer : How old were you then?
Loga : Std 5. Last time she caned here (showed me his wrist) … blood clots. She caned. My mother went to school to report. She talked to the teacher. You don't cane him. Not your child, someone else's child. She said I didn't do schoolwork . Everything I said … everything she (the teacher) *petak*.
Interviewer : What is *petak*?
Loga : Answered back. I tried to discipline him… I wanted to teach him (mimicking his teacher's voice). If you want to teach him, you can talk to him… don't cane. How is it now? I want to make a report (mimicking his mother's voice). No need to report… no need to do anything (mimicking his teacher's voice).

(Loga/Juv/07/Sch)

Caning a Year 5 student 30 times on the buttocks and hands until they were swollen with blood clots on the wrists just because he did not do his schoolwork was not only grossly irrational, but also unlawful and the teacher concerned can be prosecuted in court. Loga's teacher was lucky as his mother did not lodge a police report. However, one cannot deny the fact that this kind of disciplinary action did have a negative impact on him as it caused him to feel unsafe and insecure in school. According to Loga, "I put cloth under my pants… so that it won't hurt so much" (Loga/Juv/08/Sch). Fearing that he would be injured by his teachers, he had to come out with this idea in order to protect himself.

There have also been instances where the discipline teachers simply caned the students without any justifying reasons:

Interviewer : Have you ever been caned by the discipline teachers before?
Rashid : Ahh… yes… only once
Interviewer : Why did he/she cane you?
Rashid : Because… I did not queue up... not that I did not queue up… I queued up but like I went out of the line ahh.

(Rashid/Stu/07/Sch)

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Rashid is an obedient student who has never thought about seeking revenge against the teachers even though he did harbour some feelings of resentment for being caned without any justifying reasons. Punitive punishment is therefore not the solution to the disciplinary problems in school as it not only causes the students to backfire (Sampson & Laub, 1993) but also destroys their interest in learning and commitment to school thus overriding its deterrent effect.

Similarly, suspension and expulsion are not the solution to juvenile delinquent behaviour. School suspension and expulsion are often used to handle school fights, bullying, truancy, theft, smoking, and classroom disruptions. However, these forms of punishment tend to have a negative impact on the students as they are not only ineffective but often lead to or encourage more serious offending as the students would have more time to participate in delinquent activities due to lack of supervision and control (Bilchik, 1999; Hemphill, Kotevski, Herrenkohl, Smith, Toumbourou, & Catalano, 2013; Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010). When children are given a lot of free time without proper monitoring and supervision, they may take take this golden opportunity to participate in some kind of antisocial activities because they have nothing else to do. This was what happened to Syazwan who was caught shopbreaking after he was expelled from school. Since the school plays an important role in the prevention and control of delinquency through its many programs (Gottfredson, 2001), students are only able to benefit from these programs if they are present in school. Sad to say, those who really need intervention are often denied the opportunity to participate in these programs after being suspended or expelled from school. Since the purpose of suspension and expulsion is to deter students from engaging in future misbehaviour, it is necessary for the school authorities to reconsider whether these methods of punishment are practicable.

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5.3.6 Truancy

The word *truancy* may have different meanings to different people as there is no standardized definition for truancy. It originated from the 12th Century old French word *trougant* meaning beggar, vagabond, or rogue whilst the Welsh used the word to mean wretch or wretched (Shute & Cooper, 2015). Stoll (1990) defines truancy as "an absence from school for no legitimate reason" (as cited in Amuso, 2007, p.17). However, the extent of absence may range from milder cases such as skipping classes to more serious ones such as absences of several days or even weeks or months. Chronic truancy is often a precursor to delinquent behaviour and more serious offending in adulthood (Mueller & Stoddard, 2006; Zhang, Katsiyannis, Barrett, & Wilson, 2007; Croll, Attwood, & Fuller, 2010; Monahan, VanDerhei, Bechtold, & Cauffman, 2014). Students do not play truant from school without reasons as truancy may also signify that the students involved are in trouble and in need of help.

Poor teacher-student relationship and school punishment can in some way induce chronic absenteeism amongst the students (Attwood & Croll, 2006; Croll, Attwood, & Fuller, 2010; Gonzales, Richards, & Seeley, 2002). This is clearly exhibited in the lives of my respondents from STB since all of them were not on good terms with some of their teachers and always got punished in school. Truancy was therefore one way of escape for them as it was easier for them not to go to school than to confront the teachers whom they were in conflict with and endured all kinds of punishment.

Syazwan, for instance, played truant from school because apart from being punished and scolded by his teachers, there was nothing else for him to do in school:

> Went to school… didn't do anything… got punished… scolded...
> (Syazwan/Juv/05/Sch)

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He even called his teachers "pig" (Syazwan/Juv/07/Sch) because he did not like the way he was being treated by his teachers. Zulkifli was in a similar position as he was always scolded by his teachers regardless of whether he was right or wrong:

> Sometimes I didn't do my school work… sometimes I did my school work but they (the teachers) scolded me even though I did my school work.
> (Zulkifi/Juv/07/Sch)

Since many of his teachers did not like to enter class, he decided not to waste his time in school. As for Loga, he would take his bag and rush out of school immediately to go to the cyber café after being caned by his teachers. Being a slow learner who was always punished by his teachers, school life did not mean anything to him. Continuous punishment by the teachers had also caused Ariffin to play truant from school for months before he was admitted to STB for theft. Ariffin had initially skipped classes but after being caned by his teachers, he decided to play truant from school altogether. Ah Fook, however, played truant from school because he felt that it was better for him to make money instead of wasting his time in school as he was notoriously known by his teachers. Following his teachers' suggestion that he should stay away from school for some time to reflect on his behaviour, he decided to quit school altogether as he was not learning anything in school. Irwan, on the other hand, played truant from school not only because he disliked his teachers and the way they conducted the lessons (as stated in his diary) but also under the influence of his peers.

As a risk factor for juvenile delinquent behaviour, truancy is often related to a whole host of antisocial behaviours such as dropping out of school, suicide, premature sexual activity, alcohol abuse, drug-related problems, vandalism, theft, burglary, robbery, and even murder (Chang & Romero, 2008; Henry & Huizinga, 2007). These activities are detrimental not only to the habitual truants themselves but also to the public interest. Students who spend their time hanging around with peers instead of going to school may also end up participating in all kinds of antisocial activities. The negative consequences of

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loafing are discussed in section 5.4.2 and will not be reiterated here. Since students who play truant from school tend to stay out late as they need not get up early in the morning, their late night activities can turn out to be one of the major causes of their criminal activities as exemplified by Irwan, Syazwan, and Zulkifli who used to break into shops after midnight. Syazwan and his classmates also had the habit of robbing passers-by in the darkness of the night. Although Ah Fook does not have the habit of breaking into shops or robbing anyone in the darkness of the night, his late night activities may sometimes involve gang clashes as he travels from one place to another with his gang members in the middle of the night looking for mischief. As for Loga, the darkness of the night provides him with the perfect opportunity to steal motorcycles.

Skipping classes is perhaps the mildest of all truancy activities as the students are still in school. However, students who skip classes may sometimes participate in some kind of mischief in school which may have negative consequences not only to themselves but to other students as well. According to Irwan, he and his schoolmates would sometimes skip classes and hang around somewhere near the hall:

Interviewer : According to your report card, I could see that lately your results are not very satisfactory. Why did you get such bad results?
Irwan : Because I played truant from school many times… after that even if I went to school also I skipped classes… hanging around near the hall with my friends… 21 of them…

(Irwan/Juv/10/Sch)

Apart from whiling away his time with his classmates near the hall, Irwan would sometimes hide in the school toilet to extort money from his schoolmates in order to increase his pocket money. Like Irwan, Syazwan also liked to extort money from his schoolmates and would beat them up if they refused to give him money. Ariffin and his schoolmates, however, liked to smoke in empty classrooms. As for Zulkifli and his friends, they would hang around at the backyard of the school or extort money from their schoolmates if they could find easy targets. Loga, on the other hand, would sit in the

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canteen and pretend to be sick each time he was caught. Like Irwan, Syazwan, and Zulkifli, he also had the habit of looking for easy targets in school and extort money from them. The experiences of my respondents therefore clearly show that students who play truant from school would also skip classes as well when they are in school.

Whatever the situation may be, habitual truants would not only lag behind in their lessons but may also drop out of school eventually since dropping out is always easier than going back to school. This clearly explains why Syazwan, Zulkifli, Loga, and Ah Fook have eventually dropped out of school. However, dropping out of school would also mean that they are "they are more likely to gravitate toward unstructured socializing with peers" and put themselves "at greater risk of involvement in future criminal acts and substance use" (Sweeten, Bushway, & Paternoster, 2009, p.59). Sad to say, not long after they dropped out of school, they were apprehended by the police for their criminal activities and ended up in STB.

5.4 Peer Influences

Adolescents who are neglected by their families and/or experience failure in school often feel that they do not belong anywhere and the only way for them to gain recognition is to form their own peer groups and conform to the behaviour of their peers irrespective of whether they are good or bad thus further refining their antisocial behaviour and attitudes (Henggeler, 1989). Similarly, those who do not like to be disciplined or supervised would prefer to spend time with their peers in order to free themselves from the contraints imposed on them by their school and family where the positions of authority are dominated by adults (Kendall, 2016). Peer groups can provide status and acceptance (Prinstein & Dodge, 2008) but can also sometimes lead to risk taking behaviour (Henrich, Brookmeyer, Shrier, & Shahar, 2006). Since delinquent children can only mingle with children of their

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kind, the delinquent groups formed may do more harm than good as it is within these groups that they learn the art of crime:

> The likelihood of a youth becoming delinquent is determined by his or her interactions with both conventional and criminal associations. If a child has more contacts supporting criminal conducts than opposing it, he or she will become more likely to commit a crime.
>
> (Regoli et al., 2008, p.191)

Mingling with antisocial peers and participating in their antisocial activities would enable these proximal processes to shape their views towards those adopted by their peers (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Kindermann, 2007, 2008; Kindermann & Gest, 2009).

5.4.1 Association with Deviant Peers

Since peer groups constitute an integral part of child development, associations with deviant peers can have adverse effects on children due to peer pressure and peer conformity (Studer, Baggio, Deline, N'Goran, Henchov, Mohler-Kuo, Daeppen, & Gmel, 2014). Peer pressure refers to the pressure to participate in certain activities by others whilst peer conformity refers to how far an individual is willing to adopt the actions sanctioned by their peers. Through peer associations, those who mingle with deviant peers are more likely to develop antisocial behaviour compared to those who mingle only with prosocial peers (Ladd, Herald-Brown, & Kochel, 2009; Keijsers, Branje, Van der Valk & Meeus, 2010; Veronneau & Dishion, 2010). This clearly explains why association with deviant peers often lead to risk-taking behaviours (Santor, Messervey, & Kusumakar, 2000).

Since all my respondents from STB can only mingle with delinquent children like themselves, it is no wonder why they are more prone to delinquent behaviour compared to children who mingle only with prosocial peers. Irwan, for instance, can only mingle with delinquent children like himself (schoolmates from the opposite village) because he cannot come to terms with his prosocial friends:

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> There are good students but I just cannot mix with them. Like cannot be in one head with them.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/07/Pee)

He started to skip classes and play truant from school when he was in Form 3 due to his involvement with antisocial peers. When asked why he did not play truant from school earlier, this was what he said:

> Because when I was in Form 2, I did not have many friends so I dared not do wrong. After that, when I was in Form 3, I had many friends, all of them were bad… so I wanted to be more stubborn than them… like I wanted to show them that I was more heroic than them.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/08/Pee)

According to Irwan, "I liked to skip classes and play truant from school because my friends were a bit stubborn and so I followed them" (Irwan/Juv/08/Pee). The influence of his friends has also caused him to "smoke… go out… come home late at night" (Irwan/Juv/12/Pee). Knowing that his peers sanctioned bad behaviour, Irwan tried to prove to them that he could be worse than them so as to be their hero. His association with deviant peers seemed to have taken its toll on him as his inability to focus on his studies was also due to the fact that he wanted to prove that he was one of them:

Interviewer : Why couldn't you sit still and study properly?
Irwan : Like… I could not focus.
Interviewer : What were you thinking of?
Irwan : (laughing) Not because I was thinking of anything… just because my friends were all very stubborn. I wanted to be one of them. I also could not focus… If I were to focus on my studies… they would say… You want to study? Want to pretend to be good?

(Irwan/Juv/07/Pee)

Peer associations can therefore promote or undermine academic achievement depending on the norms and values adopted by the peer groups (Stewart, 2008).

According to Irwan's conduct report, he had the habit of going to the classrooms to steal during school assembly. When asked why he wanted to steal, this was what he said:

> Initially, I had no intention to check the bags. After that my friends said check the bags to see if there was anything valuable inside. We found a handphone and topup. We found RM50… I did not take the RM50. I only took RM2. I took the

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> phone… I used it… after that if I did not want it anymore, I would give it away. It is still at home.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/14/Pee)

In order to enhance his position and gain acceptance in his peer group, Irwan has given in to peer pressure and ended up stealing from other students' bags when there was no one in the classrooms. His peers not only encouraged him to skip classes, play truant from school, smoke, go out late at night, and steal but also drink alcohol which is strictly forbidden by his religion. Being challenged by his peers, he was left without a choice and had to oblige them for fear of offending them:

> Ahh… At that time I had no intention to drink… because at that time we were hanging around…with people who were older than me… with my friends… my friends at Bukit Bintang… the punk kids. While we were hanging around… they drank wine in a cup… we like drank from a cup… in turns. They passed, passed, passed… after that they passed the cup to me. I was afraid to refuse them because if I refuse to drink… they might beat me up or do something to me.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/14/Pee)

Irwan also broke into the village shops with his peers because he found it almost impossible to resist them and had to conform to the beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, and norms of his peer group. After his prolonged associations with deviant peers, he has since developed a penchant for shopbreaking.

Similarly, Loga has been influenced by his friends to participate in various kinds of antisocial activities. He played truant from school and took drugs because his friends invited him to do so:

> I followed my friends… they invited me… so I followed them to play truant from school… went to CC. I followed them… they said jump over the gate and go… I jumped over the gate and go ahh.
>
> (Loga/Juv/06/Pee)

> My friends… when I started… my friends taught me… until I couldn't stop. Took drugs, took drugs, took drugs… took drugs at work… took drugs after work… took drugs at home. I wanted to buy drugs, my mother did not allow me… I fought with my mother until the mirror broke… threw things around.
>
> (Loga/Juv/13/Pee)

He also found it hard to defy his friend's wishes when he was invited to steal motorcycles even though he has earlier made up his mind not to steal motorcycles again:

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> My friend came to look for me at my workplace. He invited me to steal… I startlah… after that I was interested to steal motorcycles, lazy to work… went to steal motorcycles with him… after that got caught.
>
> (Loga/Juv/10/Pee)

Loga has stopped stealing motorcycles since he started working but when he met an old friend cum former crime partner who kept pestering and encouraging him to steal motorcycles, he gave in to temptation and indulged in theft again.

To escape harsh discipline both at home where his father never had a good word for him and school where he was notoriously known by his teachers, Syazwan has chosen to spend most of his time with his delinquent peers. And of course spending time with his delinquent peers would also mean that he has become one of them. Like Irwan and Loga, he was doing exactly what his peers were doing.:

> Invited me to go to snooker, CC… began to change there… wanted to get drugs… after that they taught me… to take drugs. After that I wanted to get money… did all sorts of things… robbed, broke into shops.
>
> (Syazwan/Juv/08/Pee)

Syazwan broke into shops with four of his classmates after midnight and this has become one of their routine activities until they were arrested by the police. When I asked him what made him feel dissatisfied with his friends, Syazwan said:

> Because… they taught me to take drugs… they taught me to steal.
>
> (Syazwan/Juv/10/Pee)

On the other hand, he loves his friends because they looked after him and were very concerned of him:

> Like… watching out… like some friends didn't allow us to take drugs… we took quietly.
>
> (Syazwan/Juv/10/Pee)

Here one can see that Syazwan is contradicting himself. On one hand he loves his friends but on the other, he is dissatisfied with them because they taught him to take drugs and steal even though he conformed willingly to these behaviours.

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As for Ariffin, the advice and encouragement that he got from his peers were none other than smoking, playing truant from school, and stealing:

> My friends in school… they invited me to smoke, play truant from school, steal… money from my schoolmates' bags… went to class… dug into bags… there were 7, 8 of us.
>
> (Ariffin/Juv/10/Sch)

Through constant association with deviant peers, he has incorporated the art of stealing into his life unbeknowingly. He was the one who suggested to his brother that they should steal from the mosque on the day they were apprehended by the police. It seemed that stealing has become a habit for him as he even resorted to stealing cigarettes from the staff of STB as a consequence of which he was incarcerated for another 3 months. The same applied to Zulkifli and Irwan as they did not only conform to the negative behaviours of their peers but also gave suggestions to break into shops and houses after having learned the art of crime from their peers. Here one can see that as the children mingle with their peers, their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes towards life also change to suit the needs and aspirations of their peer groups thus resulting in more refined antisocial behaviour. My findings has therefore clearly indicated that imitation and reinforcement of behaviour through negative peer associations can have a lot to contribute towards delinquent behaviour (Akers, 1985).

On the contrary, those who associate with prosocial peers are more likely to portray good behaviour as exemplified by my student respondents. In actual fact, all my student respondents have something in common - they have very few friends, seldom go out, do not go too far away from home, do not go out at night, and mingle only with prosocial peers who do not participate in antisocial activities. Ramu, for instance, would not go further than NU Sentral (near his school) with his friends while waiting for his father to fetch him after school:

> We have went to NU Sentral… Brickfields KFC… and surrounding… I think so that's all. We go and see the prices of things… go and see the shoes… something like just… during our free time… we have informed to our parents

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> that we went there so after we have our meals… while waiting for our parents… we just walk about.
>
> (Ramu/Stu/09-10/Pee)

Instead of planning how to break into shops, Ramu and his friends enjoy doing window shopping without any bad intentions. Similarly, Rashid also likes to go to NU Sentral to do window shopping with his friends whenever he feels bored. He would sometimes play football or go for a swim in the neighbourhood:

> When I feel bored… I'll call Hidayat… go to NU Sentral… just look around to see if there's anything… after that I'll go home. Sometimes I'll play football or go for a swim at Vista Angkasa. Ahh… that's all.
>
> (Rashid/Stu/05/Fam)

However, the idea of participating in antisocial activities has never crossed his mind because none of his friends is involved in these activities. As for Ah Meng, since his parents did not allow him to go to Mid Valley Megamall anymore after the robbery incident which happened some time ago, he has to be contented with just going to NU Sentral near his house:

Interviewer : Do your parents allow you to go to Mid-Valley?
Ah Meng : First and second time, yes, but the third time no because during the second time trip there was happening a thief cases in the Mid Valley.
Interviewer : So your parents don't let you go anymorelah?
Ah Meng : Yah
Interviewer : So do you have any place to go now?
Ah Meng : Yes, NU Sentral… that is only the nearest shopping mall

(AhMeng/Stu/10/Pee)

Azman, however, would play football or musical instruments (drum and guitar) at his friend's house when he feels bored. Sometimes, he would help his mother at her foodstall. Kartik and Ali, however, are very homely by nature and prefer to stay at home most of the time thus leaving them with very little opportunity to mingle with deviant peers and participate in antisocial activities:

Interviewer : What do you do most of the time?
Kartik : Most of the time I'll be at home. I'll be using my laptop. Sometimes my sister will take me out for movies.
Interviewer : Do you go out by yourself?
Kartik : I don't go out most of the time
Interviewer : You must be a very homely person.

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Kartik : Ah, yes.
Interviewer : Why are you so homely?
Kartik : Er… because I don't like to go out really because not very close to people… that's most probably. Even in school also if I have a group discussion also… they want to choose a group also… all of them will think twice before picking me to enter the group.

(Kartik/Stu/04/Pee)

Interviewer : Why do you always stay at home?
Ali : Because I feel peaceful
Interviewer : Why don't you like to go out?
Ali : I don't know (laughing)… since my mother went back to Indonesia… I like to stay at home.

(Ali/Stu/04/Pee)

Thus one can see that children who only mingle with prosocial peers and do not have much opportunity to go out nor very far to go simply do not get the chance to get involved in antisocial activities.

5.4.2 The *Lepak* (Loafing) Culture

Most young people enjoy spending time with their peers as it is only then that they can have the freedom to do whatever they wish to do and indulge in activities that are forbidden at home or school such as smoking, drinking alcohol, and visiting the cyber cafés (Becker & Curry, 2014; Simons-Morton & Farhat, 2010). This is what gives rise to the *Lepak* or Loafing Culture which is a common phenomenon amongst many Malaysian children. Loafing is defined by *The American Heritage Dictionary* as "to pass time at leisure; idle" (p.1054). However, the term *lepak* in the present study does not mean just idling or loitering around at leisure since it has a deeper meaning beyond that. It also means going around and looking for some kind of mischief. Crime and delinquency are not uncommon amongst the *lepak* candidates as they have the tendency to come up with all sorts of innovative ideas to perform some kind of antisocial activities in their attempt to look for excitement whilst loitering around with peers.

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Irwan and his friends, for example, had no intention to break into shops when they decided to *lepak* but the intention to do so suddenly came into their minds whilst they were hanging around:

> … just hanging around at night… suddenly felt that we could break into shops… just like that. After that, if someone said that… the others also supported him… which shop… which shop… they asked.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/12/Pee)

According to Irwan, sometimes they did not break into shops for money but just for the fun of it as they wanted to enjoy themselves:

> I broke into shops only… ordinary sundry shops… I only took cigarettes and black garbage bags… after that I took fire crackers and drinks. I broke into that shop twice. I did not take any money. I took a toy gun to shoot. At that time, I was bored and wanted to feel happy (laughing).
>
> (Irwan/Juv/11/Pee)

At other times, they may just gather together in one place all ready for gang fights whenever their service is needed:

Irwan : Loitered around at one place…. like housing area… that was the place we used to loiter around… like one place where we gathered together… if there are people asking for help… we would all go.
Interviewer : What kind of help?
Irwan : (laughing) Sometimes there may be fights going on…

(Irwan/Juv/11/Pee)

Irwan's "punk" friends also have the habit to *lepak* at Bukit Bintang Plaza and this was what they used to do whilst loitering around:

> Ahh… like they saw a handphone or bag… came from behind… just took… and ran. All these happened near Bukit Bintang.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/12/Pee)

In a way, Irwan's statement also helps to explain why Bukit Bintang has now become one of Kuala Lumpur's top three snatch theft hotspots (Zahratulhayat, 2016).

The same applies to Zulkifli and his friends as all sorts of mischievous ideas would automatically creep into their heads while they were hanging around:

> We did what we liked. Saw a house, entered… like feeling bored… went in to watch TV. We treated the house as our own… cooked in the house… ate…

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> what was in the fridge we finished them up… what we wanted, we took. After that, we messed up the house.
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/08/Pee)

> I like to take things that don't worth much like ball, video games, books, comics, shoes… My shoes were worn out right, I saw new shoes… I tooklah. I like to steal… what I like.
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/08/Pee)

> Shop-breaking. I stole like… in this shop, like grocery shop, the shop was already closed at 12, right?… I broke into the shop. Usually I took biscuits, crackers, took drinks. There was once, right… I hated the owner of that shop… I broke into his shop, took everything… did not leave anything behind… I took all (laughing). All the cigarettes I took. Felt enjoyable… because my hatred was gone. Not me alone… with kids… 7 of them.
>
> (Zulkifli/Juv/08/Pee)

What Zulkifli meant by *kids* is school children of his age or to be more exact, his schoolmates. Theft is therefore a natural activity that comes naturally into the minds of the *lepak* candidates whilst they are hanging around and enjoying themselves in the company of their peers. According to Zulkifli, the village shops and houses were not difficult to break in but he preferred to break in through the back door since not many people could see him there (Zulkifli/Juv/09/Pee).

As for Loga, *lepak* involves more than just looking out for motorcycles to steal as he may also come across customers who would like to buy his stolen motorcycles:

> I did not look for customers. He wanted it. I rode only. I was hanging around…- He said he wanted this motor… so I sold it to him. I did not bring it to other place to sell. I brought it along to hang around with my members… he said he wanted the motor… so I sold it to him.
>
> (Loga/Juv/10/Pee)

Loafing, therefore, helped to enhance Loga's "business" as he did not have to look for motorcycle buyers because he could easily bump into them whilst he was hanging around.

This is not to say that prosocial children do not like to hang around with their friends since all children like to enjoy some carefree moments with their friends away from home. The only difference is they do not participate in antisocial activities whilst hanging around with friends as indicated in the conversations below:

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> Er… Mid Valley. This is always the place that we go… always (emphatically)… because Mid-Valley is so big. We just stay here… we don't want to go anywhere else… if we go anywhere else, we don't know how to go… we don't know which bus are we going to take. We always meet up at the barber shop there and then we always go to the Jusco and the arcade area and sometimes we also go to Starbucks and sometimes we also go to the Gardens and we also go for the 3D movies.
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/09/Pee)

> Sometimes when I feel bored... ahh… I go to CC… sometimes. Sometimes I play football or go for a swim… at the swimming pool near Vista Angkasa. Sometimes I go to KL Sentral to sit for awhile… to take in some fresh air… that's all.
>
> (Rashid/Stu/09/Pee)

Going for a meal or a movie or perhaps doing window shopping is normal for school children as long as they do not do take the opportunity to engage in antisocial behaviour. As for Kartik, he is a very homely boy who only goes out with his girlfriend once in awhile. Similarly, Ali is also a very homely boy who stays at home most of the time even though he does go out once in a while with his schoolmates:

> Amongst the activities that I do with my friends are jogging in the Lake Gardens and meeting up at NU Sentral to buy books during the school holidays. During the school session, we would go to the school library to do revision and schoolwork after school. At that time, we would discuss about the lessons that we don't understand and share our ideas.
>
> (Ali/Stu/Dia/Sch)

Azman may not be as homely as Kartik or Ali but he does nothing more than going to Mid Valley Megamall with his friends for a meal or a movie once in awhile and spending some time in his friend's house to play musical instruments. Since my student respondents do not have much opportunity to mingle with antisocial peers and look for mischief, their chances of participating in antisocial activities are nil.

5.4.3 Triad /Gangsterism

Triad or gang memberships are normally characterised by their routine involvement in criminal activities, clashes, high truancy and dropout rates all of which have serious repercussions on the social-emotional development of children (Theriot & Parker, 2008; Olate, Salas-Wright, & Vaughn, 2012). Lack of protection, support, supervision, and the

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need to belong somewhere and accepted by peers may encourage triad or gang membership due to the children's unmet social and emotional needs (Howell, 2012: Tobin, 2008). As stated by the Organization of America (2007):

> Arising out of extreme poverty, exclusion, and a lack of opportunities, gangs try to gain their rights and meet their needs by organizing themselves without supervision and developing their own rules, and by securing for themselves a territory and a set of symbols that gives meaning to their membership in the group. (p.5)

Since adolescents from low income families are often being deprived of the opportunity to be successful in school, they have to improve their status through membership in a triad or gang as it is only in these groups that equal opportunities are given to all (Baird, 2012).

The triad membership is most clearly exemplified by Ah Fook as the main reason why he joined the triad was because he wanted to improve his status. Ah Fook always talks about his triad membership proudly because this is what gives him status, authority over others, and the feeling of self-importance. When asked what position he held in his triad, he could not help feeling proud of himself when he said, "I have the authority to slap those gang members who do wrong" (AhFook/Juv/12/Pee). Perhaps his greatest mistake lies in the fact that he wants to be a brave and respectable triad member:

> When my triad members put up a fight with another triad, I will be the first one to go out and fight. I can get a promotion after that. In fact, I have already been promoted one level.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/12/Pee)

In order to attain a higher status in his triad, he has to stand up for his triad members whenever they need him and fight for them if necessary. That was what landed him in STB:

> My childhood friend's brother offended some Malay boys. He asked me to bring along my metal rod – the one given to me when I joined the triad. When I arrived there, his brother was fighting. He asked me to fight the Malay boys. I pitied him. His teeth were bleeding. I hit the Malay boy with my metal rod. We ran away after the Malay guys fled. The Malay guy reported to the police. The police went to my friend's house. He was very childish. When questioned by the police, he pushed everything to me. I was told to go to the police station. I was the only one made responsible for the fight. He betrayed me. I will chop him into 18 pieces after I leave this place.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/11/Pee)

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Ah Fook has never shown any remorse for his crime as he still believes that he has performed a heroic action. When I asked him what actually made him so fearless and willingly risked his life to fight for his triad members, this was what Ah Fook said:

> If we die for the gang, we would be given a grand burial. All the members will burn joss sticks for us. On the banner will be written the reason why we die. The day when we die will be remembered forever by the gang members who will visit our graves on the same day every year as a sign of respect for us.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/12/Pee)

It seems that Ah Fook is willing to die for his triad members as long as he could die a glorious death because status is so important to him. Ah Fook even compares his triad membership to buying insurance as the triad members will help each other whenever any one of them is in trouble:

> I don't want people to bully me. Many people in my area joined triads. It is like buying insurance. RM24 for a lifetime. We also had to go through a prayer ceremony to be sworn in as members of the triad. When I am in trouble they will help me - they will beat up the people who bully me.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/12/Pee)

> Before I joined the triad, I saw my schoolmates showing off because they have joined the triad. Initially I did not want to join the triad because I thought I could protect myself but later on I found that it wasn't possible for me to do so. I really needed the help of the triad members. That was why I joined the triad myself. We have already sworn that we would fight and help each other without fear. I am now recruiting more members for the triad.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/12/Pee)

These conversations clearly indicate that Ah Fook is a faithful, loyal and courageous triad member. According to him, he would never give up his triad membership.

Like Ah Fook, Loga is also a triad member as he belongs to the notorious *Gang 36*, one of the most feared secret societies in Malaysia. The reasons why he joined this gang is very similar to Ah Fook's reasons. He needs protection and his gang members are the only people whom he could resort to for help whenever he is in trouble:

Interviewer : Do you join any gangs?
Loga : Yes, Gang 36. I followed my friends…
Interviewer : Why did you join this gang?
Loga : Like… if there is a fight or what, they will help me.
Interviewer : Do you have to pay any fees?
Loga : No

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Interviewer : What are the activities of this gang?
Loga : The activities… if there's a fight or what… they will help.
(Loga/Juv/13/Pee)

Although Loga was quite reluctant to elaborate on the illegal activities of his gang, it is a well-known fact that Gang 36 is one of the biggest organized crime groups in this country (Farik & Natasha, 2017; Fong & Faisal, 2017).

Even though Ariffin and his brother are not triad members, they also have their own close-knit group of friends who will help them in times of need:

Interviewer : Do you fight with your schoolmates?
Ariffin : Yes
Interviewer : How did you fight with them?
Ariffin : Beat… box each other also… when he was not satisfied he called his brother… he wanted to fight outside. He brought along many members. That was why I also invited my members to come along.
(Ariffin/Juv/08/Pee)

The sames applies to Irwan and his friends who would gather together in one place in preparation for gang fights whenever circumstances demand it. Having a close-knit group of friends gives them security as they can always back each other up, particularly in a fight.

My student respondents, however, do not join secret societies or crime gangs as they do not participate in gang fights and hence do not need backups. However, it should be noted that not all gang memberships are bad. Azman, for instance, is a member of the *Sky Football Gang* and the activities of this gang are none other than playing football every Friday!

5.5 Community and Delinquency

Although Bronfenbrenner (1977) had originally suggested that communities have an exosystem function, one cannot deny the fact that communities can also function as microsystems since children have direct contact with their community on a regular basis. It is within their community that they attend school, interact with their peers and participate in the various activities available to them. The community effects on the children is thus

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dependent on the kind of relationships and activities that are going on in it since the shared norms, values, and practices found in the community can have a lot to contribute towards their developmental outcomes (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). In other words, the characteristics of the community can influence child development through the dissemination of values and beliefs that lead to certain behavioural outcomes. The community, therefore, "has an important influence on the alternatives the individual perceives and the choices he or she makes" (Wikström & Loeber, 2000, p.1114).

My study clearly shows that the community factors that have had a profound effect in the lives of my respondents are the community social processes as these are the factors that shaped their ideologies, beliefs, attitudes, values, morality, and hence their character and behavioural outcomes. Delinquency arises when the major social processes in the community are interrupted causing the norms for acceptable behaviour to be eroded thus making deviant behaviour more acceptable to its members (Shaw & McKay, 1942; Wilson & Kelling, 1982). In order to understand how the community's social processes can be interrupted by the factors found within the community itself, it is necessary to delve deep into my respondents' family background, school experiences, and peer group affiliations as these are what constitute their major social processes.

The major breakthrough in my study lies in the fact that delinquent behaviour need not necessarily be the consequences of impoverished neighbourhoods or urbanization even though these factors can put children at risk for crime and delinquency. For instance, all my student respondents grew up in the heart of the city of Kuala Lumpur, in areas known for their high crime rate, but they do not exhibit any signs of antisocial behaviour. Four of them grew up in impoverished neighbourhoods (low-cost flats) well-known for their high crime rates but they are not affected by the characteristics of their neighbourhood. Neighbourhood disadvantage and urbanization have therefore failed to exert their negative

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effects on them. However, two of my respondents from STB, namely Loga and Ah Fook, who grew up in the more affluent housing areas in Kuala Lumpur, have been arrested for theft and gang fights respectively. On the other hand, the village communities where the three trainees of STB come from are not crime-laden communities as these are merely working class communities that are typical of our Malaysian villages. Nor is the small town where Ariffin comes from a crime-laden area as it is only a small and peaceful town inhabited by middle-income families. It is therefore a complete misnomer to say that crime is the consequence of urbanization as the small towns and village communities are not crime free either. Much would depend on the kind of social processes that are going on in the communities and what these social processes would eventually lead to.

My study has also indicated that the infrastructure of the community has little influence, if any, on my respondents since the facilities found in their neighbourhood do not seem to have much effect on them. Ah Fook, for instance, has never been to the library near his house because he does not like to read. The only places that really interest him are the coffee shops nearby since he likes to spend a lot of time bragging with his friends. As for Loga, he is only interested in the cyber cafés near his house despite the massive development in his housing area. Similarly, all the development around KL Sentral does not mean anything to Ah Meng because the only place that his mother allows him to go is NU Sentral:

Interviewer : What kind of facilities do you have in your area?
Ah Meng : Nothing much
Interviewer : Are there any places that you feel worth going to apart from NU Sentral?
Ah Meng : No.

(AhMeng/Stu/11/Com)

It seems that he does not know much about the interesting places in his residential area as he is not allowed to go out most of the time. Since he spends all his time with his computer, particularly with his Facebook, the cyber world seems to be more real to him than his

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neighbourhood. Like Ah Meng, Kartik and Ali are homely children and it seems that whatever that is going on in their surrounding environment does not mean anything to them either. Neither do they know much about the facilities that they have in their neighbourhood. Despite the massive development that is going on in Kartik's residential area, he could only tell me about Mid Valley which is not so near to his house:

Interviewer : What are the places that you often go to in your housing area?
Kartik : Ah… my housing area the places that I go to is Mid Valleylah.
Interviewer : But Mid Valley is quite far from your housing area.
Kartik : There are buses going Mid Valley.

(Kartik/Stu/13/Com)

Azman, who lives nearby, also seems to be rather unfamiliar with his neighbourhood:

Interviewer : What are the interesting places that you often go to in your housing area?
Azman : Er... nothing much. Only the cyber café.

(Azman/Stu/11/Com)

Like Kartik and Azman, Ali does not seem to know anything about his neighbourhood either even though it is a very well-developed area with lots of facilities as the only place that he visits not so frequently is the cyber café near his house where he sometimes goes to download some assignments given by his teachers via VLE Frog. Since Ali cannot afford to have a computer at home, his only companion is the television. Ramu is luckier than Ali as he can afford to have a computer:

Interviewer : What kind of facilities do you have in your area?
Ramu : No… nothing much… because down there, there's a store… just went there… buy anything and comes back… so nothing much there. The only entertainment for us in my home is my TV and internet.

(Ramu/Stu/11/Com)

Although Ramu is staying in a very well-developed area with lots of facilities, it seems that there is nothing in it that could interest him as he seldom goes out.

As for the village kids like Irwan, Syazwan, and Zulkifli, it seems that they are only familiar with the river near their house where they can while away their time with their friends as well as the shops and houses that they could break in. And of course they would not hesitate to go to the cyber cafés in the nearest town since these are indispensable in

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their lives. Syazwan and his classmates even went to the nearest town in the early hours of the morning to break into shops. However, the well-equipped library in this town has never attracted their attention because books do not interest them. Thus one can see that whatever form of development that is going on in my respondents' neighbourhood does not mean anything to them unless they have an interest in it.

Children who want excitement do not mind travelling far and wide for it if what they want cannot be found within their immediate neighbourhood. Irwan, for instance, used to travel all the way from Seremban to Kuala Lumpur to meet his punk friends at Bukit Bintang Plaza just to have some fun:

> They would gather together at Bukit Bintang… many of them… social… sometimes they would disturb people.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/12/Pee)

Thus one can see that there is nothing which could restrain Irwan's movements and behaviour if he intends to look for mischief elsewhere. Much would depend on what he likes to do with his friends, where he likes to go, and whether he is given the freedom to do so by his parents. Similarly, Ah Fook used to "fly everywhere on his motorcycle to look for mischief" (AhFook/Juv/10/Pee) in the early hours of the morning and even travelled as far as Genting Highlands and Kajang with his friends:

> Interviewer : Did you go out until very late at night?
> Ah Fook : 1.00 or 2.00 a.m. Sometimes 3.00-4.00 a.m. There were times when I went to Genting Highlands and arrived home at 3.00-4.00 a.m. When I am tired of Genting Highlands, I go to Kajang to visit friends.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/10-11/Pee)

The word *mischief* put forth by Ah Fook can also be interpreted to mean gang fights as it is something which he is always proud of. Needless to say, "the later children stay out at night without supervision the more likely they are to associate with a community's worst-behaved, least-supervised kids. And the more time children spend with these kids, the more likely they are to emotionally bond with them and take on their characteristics, values, and behaviour patterns" (Bodenhamer, 1995, p.156).

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On the other hand, Ramu, who is living in an area plagued by *Mat Rempits*, does not want to follow their trend and even considers their actions to be abhorable:

Interviewer : What are the interesting places that you can go to in your housing area?
Ramu : Not that interesting places because since the new flat come there our area also is quite bad already because at night… the sounds of motorbike… Mat Rempit… All happen down there.
Interviewer : What do the Mat Rempits do?
Ramu : Night time, they just rides the escalator… doing naughty things down there. Sometimes they drink a lot of alcohol… and then they fight… because there's a lot of Myanmars and Malays
Interviewer : Do you go out at night?
Ramu : I just stay at home. If I went anywhere also I will be with my father.
Interviewer : Is it very noisy in your area?
Ramu : Sometimes night got motorbike sounds… fighting sounds.

(Ramu/Stu/12/Com)

For a studious boy like Ramu, going out late at night, drinking alcohol, and fighting are behaviours that he cannot tolerate. Like Ramu, Ali also dislikes the idea of going out at night:

Interviewer : Why don't you go out at night?
Ali : Because… don't like to go out at night… like not used to it… I don't want to.

(Ali/Stu/12/Pee)

In actual fact, all my student respondents are homely children who are not used to going out after dusk and therefore do not have much opportunity to mingle with antisocial friends.

My study also indicates that my respondents'neighbours do not seem to have any role to play in their lives. Zulkifli, for instance, does not even know who his neighbours are. Loga, however, does not mingle with his neighbours because they are all Chinese:

Interviewer : Do you go out with your neighbour's children?
Loga : All Chinese. My area all Chinese
Interviewer : Do you know what they are doing for a living?
Loga : Not confirm ahh.
Interviewer : You don't mingle with them?
Loga : No

(Loga/Juv/12/Com)

Kartik, on the other hand, does not like to mingle with his neighbours as he feels that these low-cost flat dwellers are not respectable people:

Interviewer : Do you know your neighbours?
Kartik : My neighbours are not much because we don't usually talk… most of us are at home… we don't stay out.

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Interviewer : Can you get along with your neighbours?
Kartik : Certain neighbours I know… certain not much. I don't go out much… I'll be at home because I don't want to get mixed up with people because some of them may be like… how to say it… not good type of peoplelah. I don't want to get mixed up much. My housing area is usually quite noisy sometimes… sometimes there's fight and stuff like that.

(Kartik/Stu/12/Com)

As for Ah Meng, his neighbours could not even be bothered to call the police even though they knew that someone was breaking into his house:

Interviewer : Did you tell your neighbours to look after your house when there's no one at home?
Ah Meng :They don't tell us much… but they heard the sound only.
Interviewer : Did they call the police when they heard the sound of someone breaking into your house?
Ah Meng : No
Interviewer : Do you know what your neighbours are doing for a living?
Ah Meng : Not sure.
Interviewer : What do you think of your neighbours?
Ah Meng : If there are more Chinese then I think it will be very good.

(AhMeng/Stu/11/Com)

Ah Meng's neighbours are the typical neighbours that we come across in our every day lives and it was nothing unusual for them to keep quiet when they saw their neighbour's house broken into. Ali's neighbours are not any better than Ah Meng's neighbours as they do not seem to know each other:

Interviewer : Do you go out for walks with the kids in your housing area?
Ali : Haven't seen them before.
Interviewer : Haven't seen them? You mean you don't know your neighbours?
Ali : No… they seldom come out of their house.
Interviewer : Do you know the neighbour staying downstairs?
Ali : No, I don't.
Interviewer : No wonderlah. When I asked him where your flat was just now, he kept quiet and shut the door.
Ali : (laughing)

(Ali/Stu/13/Com)

Ah Fook is luckier than the others as his neighbours even advised him not to smoke or come home late:

> But they did advise me not to smoke. I told them I feel bored when I don't smoke. Smoking is like medicine to me. They also asked me not to come home late. I did not listen to them. When I was tired of going to Genting Highlands, I visited my friend in Kajang. Let them say whatever they want… it doesn't concern me.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/9/Com)

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They are concerned of him because they are his mother's good friends. However, their advice has fallen on deaf ears since Ah Fook had no intention to listen to them. The same applies to Irwan whose neighbours are his grandmother and uncle:

Interviewer : Are you close with your neighbours?
Irwan : My neighbours are my grandmother and uncle. Cannot get too close with them or they will *merepek* (babble endlessly).

(Irwan/Juv/15/Com)

It seems that Irwan does not like the idea of having nosy neighbours around particularly when his neighbours are his grandmother and uncle because they like to nag at him and give him long-winded advice which he did not like to hear.

Azman's relationship with his neighbours seems to be the worst one as his family would sometimes quarrel with their neighbours:

Interviewer : How is your parents' relationship with your neighbours?
Azman : Not parallel… like thatlah.
Interviewer : You mean they are not ok with each other?
Azman : No
Interviewer : Did your parents quarrel with the neighbours?
Azman : Yes
Interviewer : Why did they quarrel?
Azman : Because… like… it's their business… I don't really know
Interviewer : Did you see them quarreling?
Azman : Yes

(Azman/Stu/11-12/Com)

Like his parents, Azman is not close to his neighbours and this is clearly indicated in the following conversation:

Interviewer : What kind of things do you normally talk about with your neighbours?
Azman : Talk about like… how are you like thatlah.
Interviewer : Have they ever given you any advice?
Azman : Like don't break their flower pots… ahh… like thatlah.
Interviewer : Do you always break their flower pots?
Azman : No… I did not mean to (laughing).
Interviewer : What about your neighbours' children? Can you get along well with them?
Azman : Ahh… oklah… sometimes they are like *kurang ajar* (very rude)… like I'm grown up already and they are younger than me, right… they said all sorts of things ahh… said like stupid like that

(Azman/Stu/12/Com)

The same applies to Ramu who does not know his neighbours well apart from the superficial greetings that they have for each other:

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Interviewer : Do you know the neighbours staying in your block of flats?
Ramu : I know a few
Interviewer : Are you close to them?
Ramu : Not that close. Everyone see me they talk like hi, how are you… how's your dad… that's all.
Interviewer : Do you know what they are doing for a living… their occupation?
Ramu : Usually… no.

(Ramu/Stu/11/Com)

Thus one can see that the lives of my respondents are not affected by their neighbours in one way or another as their relationships with their neighbours tend to be superficial. Ariffin is the only exception as he spends a lot of his time hanging around with his neighbours and taking part in their antisocial activities as they could fit into each other's lives.

Juvenile delinquency is therefore the outcome of multiple social processes working together in the community namely the family, school, and peer group. Within these microsystems are the social processes that could transmit both positive and negative values to my respondents. Weak neighbourhood social organization is indirectly related to delinquency through its associations with parenting behaviour, school management, and peer associations (Chung & Steinberg, 2009) as much would depend on the nature of these processes. Needless to say, the transmission of negative values in the community can lead to social disorganization, "the inability of a community to realize the common values of its residents and maintain effective social controls" (Kubrin & Wo, 2016, p.122). It should be noted that community social disorganization is "not an ethnic or racial culture, a class culture, or a slum culture that harbours delinquent values; it is a community that cannot supply a structure through which common values can be realized and common problems solved" (Kornhauser, 1978, p.63). In a way, it may also be true to say that community social disorganization is a depiction of the quality of family life, school experiences, and levels of peer associations within the community (Brisman 2012; Mulvey, Steinberg, Piquero, Besana et al., 2010; Vitulano, Fite, & Rathert, 2010). Low levels of community

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social organization are indirectly related to high levels of juvenile delinquency with the family, school, and peer associations as the mediating factors between them (Hay, Fortson, Hollist, Altheimer, & Schaible, 2007). Community characteristics may change according to the kind of family environment, school atmosphere, and peer characteristics that dominate the neighbourhood as much would depend on how these three microsystems operate together to exert their mediating effects through the transmission of community norms and values. The effects of the family, school, and peer groups as the mediator of community norms and values are examined in detail in the following sections.

5.5.1 The Family as the Mediator of Community Factors

The family is the child's most immediate microsystem and constitutes the most basic units of a community. As an important mediator of community factors, the family influences the norms of the macrosystem through the socialization processes that are going on in it. "While the family cannot totally control outside influences upon its members, it can have significant impact in shaping the extent to which the child will be exposed to other major agents of socialization" (Bynum & Thompson, 1989, p.223). Positive family socialization processes such as good parenting styles, parental affection, and supervision are able to protect children from the negative influences of the environment even though they may be living in the most disrupted and deprived neighbourhoods (Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2009; Scott, Briskman, Woolgar, Humayun, & O'Connor, 2011). On the contrary, negative family socialization processes such as ineffective parenting, conflict, and violence in the family would only enhance the risk of delinquent behaviour irrespective of how well-developed or advanced the communities may be (Sells, Kristin, & Thomas, 2011; Reingle, Jennings, & Maldonado-Molina, 2012).

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Since families are the major sources of social control, structurally disadvantageous communities with a high percentage of divorced families, poor families, unemployed/uneducated families, and families with criminal backgrounds are likely to have a higher rate of crime and delinquency (Chung & Steinberg, 2009; Shaw & McKay, 1942; 1972). Social Disorganization Theory argues that these neighbourhoods facilitate offending due to a lack of social capital and collective supervision (Rekker, Pardini, Keijsers, Branje, Loeber, & Meeus, 2015). The concentration of single-parent families in a community would mean that there is a reduction in the community's social control since divorced households tend to be poorer and have less supervision on the children (Kulik & Heine-Cohen, 2011; Ezawa, 2016; Lamanna, Riedmann, & Stewart, 2015). Having too many poor families in the neighbourhood would mean that crime and delinquency are more prevalent as the poor is more likely to offend out of necessity (Galloway & Skardhamar, 2010; Leiber, Mack, & Featherstone, 2009; Reiman & Leighton, 2013). Similarly, the presence of a large number of unemployed/uneducated families and families with criminal backgrounds would also mean that the crime rate is likely to be high (Speziale, 2014; Eriksson, Hjalmarsson, & Lindquist, 2016). "Living in a neighbourhood where there are high levels of poverty and crime increases the risk of involvement in serious crime for all children growing up there" (McCord, Widom, & Crowell, 2001, p.89) through the social processes operating within and amongst the families. Thus one can see how "the causal link through the family-related factors helps to establish social disorganization as an explanation of the effects of its precursors on crime" (Siu, 2007, p.48).

In a study conducted by Dawson-McClure, Calzada, Huang, Kamboukos et al. (2015), it was shown that minority children living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods were at a higher risk for school dropout, delinquency, and poor health. Since families that are in dire financial needs will often have to put up with a less pleasant environment, it is an

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inevitable fact that as they are coping with toxicity (Wang, Deveaux, Li, Marshall, Chen, & Stanton, 2014) the children would participate in the negative social processes found within their neighbourhood which would have a negative impact on them particularly if the social processes within these families are weak. This clearly indicates how "community poverty amplifies the effects of family poverty, such that family poverty's effect becomes greater when community poverty also is high" (Hay, Fortson, Hollist, Altheimer, & Schaible, 2007, p.593). The cumulative effect of negative social processes within individual families would, in the course of time, lead to the breakdown of social control and turn the community into a den of vice.

5.5.2 The School as the Mediator of Community Factors

School factors such as ineffective teaching strategies, poor academic outcomes, negative teacher-student relationship, neglectful teachers, harsh disciplinary actions, and truancy are crucial mediators of community factors that could lead to social disorganization. Much would depend on the extent of these negative occurrences in the course of the children's school life and how frequent these occurrences are in the schools within a given community. Poorly organized schools tend to produce generations of school failures, gangsters, triad members, and university graduates who cannot compete globally and the widespread occurrences of this kind of schools would not only bring about a reduction in the quality of education but also enhance the occurrences of crime and deliqnuency. It should be noted that students who are used to their teachers' rudeness, neglectful attitude, harsh disciplinary actions, and ineffective teaching methods may also emulate their teachers and teach ineffectively should they become teachers one day and hence this cycle is repeated from generation to generation. If these negative teaching practices are rampantly adopted, no one would question their effectiveness anymore on the assumption that these

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are the norms and practices of the schools. Shaw and McKay's (1942) Social Disorganization Theory therefore applies equally well to the school microsystem since schools have a strong community role.

In a way, the kind of students found in a school also depicts the kind of people that reside in the community as most parents prefer to send their children to nearby schools. Poorly funded schools monopolized by students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can easily turn into a breeding ground of vice by bringing together the most notorious students in the community. Schools with lots of gangsters would attract even more gangsters and law-abiding students who do not want to be involved with vice would transfer to other schools. Fearing for their safety, teachers would not dare to do anything to these gangster students and may not even enter class to teach in order to avoid trouble. Finally, the school may just end up being a gangster school with minimal teaching and learning activities. The school which Ah Fook attended was a very good example of how a gangster school could emerge. According to Ah Fook, it is the second worst school in his area where the students started joining triads during their primary school days:

Interviewer : Which gang did you join?
Ah Fook : 246… a kind of *kongsi gelap* (secret society).
Interviewer : Where do your triad members come from?
Ah Fook : From the primary Chinese school where I studied.
Interviewer : Then they must all be very young.
Ah Fook : They joined the triad at 13 but now some of them are already 50-60 years old.
Interviewer : What benefits can you get from this triad?
Ah Fook : If I need money, they can lend me. I can borrow money from them as long as I return the money. If I got bullied, they would help me. They would try to sort things out first. If they couldn't reach an agreement, they would call their members to come out and start a fight.
Interviewer : Do all your friends join triads?
Ah Fook : Most of them do. There are some who are from another triad.

(AhFook/Juv/12/Pee)

Thus one can see how a school can play its role in producing generations of triad members. Having teachers who did not want to teach them properly and refused to enter class has thus caused the situation of the school to deteriorate even further. School disorganization is

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therefore a stimulus for more serious deviant behaviour as it serves to enhance the students' non-conformist to authority. Since the school has an important communal role to play, the breakdown of the school as a communal institution is also a clear reflection of the level of organization of the community where it belongs.

5.5.3 Peer Affiliations as the Mediator of Community Factors

In their Social Disorganization Theory which developed from their research on the high crime rates in Chicago, Shaw and McKay (1942) also attempt to explain for the criminal activities in this area with reference to the peer group effect:

> … the delinquent behaviour of youth living in disorganized areas developed in stages. Such behaviours were hypothesized to first occur within the context of the neighbourhood peer group. If the local peer culture supported the continuation of such behaviours, a youth would move from experimenting to systematically committing a variety of antisocial behaviours. As these behaviours increased in severity, a youth would label himself as a "deviant" relative to the norms of society . In the final stage of development, the now-deviant youth would eventually become a "professional" criminal.
>
> (Eddy & Gribskov, 1998, p. 21-22)

Mingling with deviant peers poses a serious risk to the children as they would gradually learn to adhere to the negative behavioural patterns of their peers through the cultural transmission and contextualization of deviant values (Sutherland, 1947; Vito, & Maahs, 2012). Since child behaviour is affected by the norms and values of the peer groups, constant exposure to delinquent activities, particularly at an early age, can easily bring about a rationalization of these antisocial traditions (Hochstetler & Copes, 2012). In the process of peer socialization, giving in to temptation is a natural reaction as it takes a lot of will power to swim against the tide and resist the lure of evil.

In a way, Shaw and McKay's (1942) Social Disorganization Theory precisely explains for the delinquent behaviour of my respondents from STB since all of them mingle with children like themselves within their social environment. Irwan, for instance, can only

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mingle with children of his kind who come from families that bear a lot of similarities to his family.

Interviewer : Why did your friends invite you to play truant from school, smoke, and break into shops?
Irwan : Because my character is the same as theirs. Sometimes I was the one who invited them.
Interviewer : Why is your character like this?
Irwan : (laughing) I don't know.
Interviewer : Do your friends have more freedom than you?
Irwan : Same like me…. even if we don't go home also no one cares.

(Irwan/Juv/11/Pee)

It should be noted that Irwan's family is a typical middle-income intact Malaysian family (which represents the majority of our population) with both parents working hard to provide for the family. In this typical Malaysian family, one can see clearly the exosystem effect on Irwan whose working parents find it difficult to exert control and supervision over him even though they do care for him. When children like him (who lack parental control and supervision) get together, there is always the risk of antisocial behaviour as each of them is exerting his own negative influences over the others:

Interviewer : Have your friends influenced you or were you the one who influenced them?
Irwan : Most of my friends influenced me. If like temperament and all that, I mostly followed my friends but if like doing all these things… I was the one who gave them the idea.
Interviewer : What kind of things?
Irwan : Loafing or… stealing petrol.
Interviewer : What about breaking into shops? Was it your idea?
Irwan : I also don't know who said he wanted to break into shops and things like that… like… we did it together… like… wanted to enjoy.

(Irwan/Juv/12/Pee)

Birds of a feather flock together and this clearly explains for Irwan's choice of friends:

Interviewer : Are all your friends like that? Can't you look for friends who want to study?
Irwan : There are some good ones but I just cannot be with them. Like cannot be in the same head with them.
Interviewer : So you can only be in the same head with those who don't want to study?
Irwan : (laughing) That's why when I felt like studying… my friends said… you want to pretend to be good and study… ahhh… after that I could not focus on my studies anymore.

(Irwan/Juv/07/Pee)

Like Irwan, Syazwan, Ariffin, Zulkifli, Loga, Ah Fook, also mingle with delinquent children like themselves and participate actively in all kinds of antisocial activities with

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their peers. With the unanimous support and encouragement that these delinquent children have for their peers each time they venture into some kind of criminal activity, it is not surprising if they eventually end up being professional criminals given the negative influences that they have for each other:

Interviewer : Who came out with the idea to steal? You or your friends?
Zulkifli : Sometimes it was my idea… sometimes it was theirs.
Interviewer : Which of your friends have the greatest influence over you?
Zulkifli : None of them. For me, they are all the same. They did not influence me. I am also… like no good… they are also like that.

(Zulkifli/Juv/08/Pee)

Sad to say, this kind of situation is not uncommon in our Malaysian society today irrespective of race, culture, or location. If a community is dominated by this kind of peer groups, it is most likely that crime and delinquency would seep into the entire "societal culture in which individuals live" (Christensen, 2010, p.118) and these criminal traditions may perpetuate from one generation to another (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Also known as the macrosystem effect (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), this kind of "societal blue-print" (p.81) may cause many of the rules governing human behaviour to lose their significance and when this happens, community disintegration begins to take hold.

5.6 Concluding Summary

My findings clearly show that delinquent or non-delinquent behaviour is the outcome of the interrelationships amongst family factors, school factors and peer factors as these are the mediators of community factors that would ultimately shape the children's life trajectories. One cannot deny the fact that children who lack guidance, nurturance and supervision are more likely to perform badly in school and mingle with antisocial peers. Needless to say, their association with deviant peers would also lead to their involvement in crime and delinquency. However, the contrary seems to be true for children with parents who are concerned with their well-being as they are more likely to do well academically and less

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likely to mingle with antisocial peers. Based on these findings, it is an obvious fact that lack of proper supervision and control could enhance the susceptibility of children to crime and delinquency and make them more vulnerable to negative outside influences. The prevention of crime and delinquency should therefore involve strategies that could shelter children from the harmful effects of their social environment whilst at the same providing them with ample opportunity to participate in constructive and meaningful activities during the unsupervised moments of their lives. Also known as the investment-prevention strategies for early prevention and control, these are discussed in great depths in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER 6: INVESTMENT-PREVENTION STRATEGIES

6.1 Introduction

My study has indicated that children from adverse family backgrounds who lack nurturance, proper supervision, and commitment to school are at a greater risk of crime and delinquency particularly if they are free to mingle with deviant peers. This is clearly exbihited in the lives of my respondents from STB who are given the absolute freedom to grow up and develop according to their whims and fancies. On the contrary, children with parents/caregivers who are very much involved in their lives, who seldom go out, and mingle only with prosocial peers are left with very little room for antisocial behaviour as exemplified by my student respondents. Even though they come from less well-to-do backgrounds, they do not exhibit any form of antisocial behaviour because every move they make is being carefully monitored by their parents/caregivers. For the purposes of crime prevention and control, children need proper supervision and monitoring so that they can be sheltered from the negative effects of their social environment. To those who lack proper parental supervision and monitoring, this can be made up for through their participation in constructive and meaningful activities during their out of school hours when their parents are busy at work. This chapter therefore seeks to answer my third research question proposed earlier in the first chapter of this thesis:

> How can the appropriate intervention-prevention programs be implemented to reduce and prevent juvenile delinquency in the future?

Needless to say, the implementation of effective investment-prevention programs is a must in our present day society in order to protect children from the adverse influences of their social environment by reducing the number of their unsupervised hours and increasing the number of their supervised hours.

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Children are continuously undergoing change in their ecological relationships and failure to enhance their positive behaviour or prevent their at-risk behaviour can have grave consequences. One cannot deny the fact that:

> All adolescents, in all economic and social circumstances, need generous amounts of help, instruction, discipline, support, and caring as they make their way from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood. Such assistance comes from many sources: solid families, good schools, supportive and safe neighbourhoods, and a surrounding culture that emphasizes constructive lives and respectful relationships.
>
> (Eccles & Gootman, 2002, p.19)

Studies have indicated that latchkey children often have behavioural problems, low academic efficacy, high levels of depression, low self-esteem, and are less well-adjusted compared to their peers (Venter & Rambau, 2011). This is because school-age children tend to spend a large proportion of their unsupervised hours engaging in some form of discretionary activities with their peers (Gottfredson, Cross, Wilson, Rorie, & Connell, 2010; Lee & Vandell, 2015). Irrespective of whether they live in the cities or rural areas, temptations are always present. The unsupervised hours before and after school can therefore put children in a very vulnerable position making them more susceptible to the risk of crime and delinquency (Weerman, Bernasco, Bruinsma, & Pauwels, 2013).

Learning has no boundary and it does not stop when the school bell rings to dismiss the students for the day. It is a continuous process that goes on throughout the day irrespective of whether the students are in the classroom or not. Sad to say, this is not the case in most Malaysian schools. Many Malaysian schools dismiss their students in early afternoon and although they are supposed to be involved in extracurricular activities, many of them ended up on the streets, in the shopping malls, and cyber cafés probably because the manner in which these activities are being carried out in some schools does not encourage student participation. It was indeed an eyesore to see my own students from SMKS (as young as 13) distributing cigarettes on the pedestrian bridge over the main road (between the school and the shopping mall), hanging around on the streets asking for RM1

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from passers-by (including me), and sitting in pairs in the shopping malls in the afternoons! Under such circumstances, it is not surprising if they are to get involved in some kind of undesirable behaviour during these unsupervised hours whilst at the same time they may also end up being victims of violence as a consequence of their risky behaviour (Sickmund & Puzzanchera, 2014).

Since change is an inevitable part of life, teachers as well as the school authorities concerned should sing a different song (Murphy & Duncan, 1997) when it comes to educating the students. If changing the behaviour of the parents and students no longer works, perhaps it is time to change the schools instead through proper implementation of crime/delinquency prevention programs to meet the needs of students. Early prevention that pays attention to the problems faced by students is likely to reduce not only the incidence of crime but also other "problem behaviours correlated with crime, such as drinking, drug use, school failure, and unemployment" (Piquero, Farrington, & Blumstein, 2007, p.208).

6.2 The Investment-Prevention Approach

Crime prevention is a rather vague concept as "there is no universally accepted definition of this term, nor is there any concensus as to the scope and boundaries of the crime prevention field" (Schneider, 2010, p.3). The definition of crime prevention can come in various forms and differs from situation to situation and study to study. Van Dijk and De Waard (1991) defines crime prevention as "the total of all private initiatives and state policies, other than the enforcement of criminal law, aimed at the reduction of damage caused by acts defined as criminal by the state" (p.483). Similarly, Ekblom (2005) is of the opinion that, "crime prevention is intervention in the causes of criminal and disorderly events to reduce the risks of their occurrence and/or the potential seriousness of their consequences" (p.28). Lab (2004), however, defines crime prevention as "any action designed to reduce the actual

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level of crime and/or perceived fear of crime" (p.23). Whatever the definitions may be, Schneider (2010) is of the opinion that the meaning *prevent* cannot run too far away from its dictionary meaning. In this study, crime prevention is defined as "to keep from happening, make impossible by prior action, or hinder" (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1988, p.1067) and is "limited to actions intended to prevent the onset of criminal activity in individuals" (Tolan, 2002, p.109). For the purposes of early intervention and prevention, it should be noted that the meaning of crime prevention is "not only to combat the negatives or risks involved but to enhance the positives and opportunities for child development by maximizing protective factors and processes" (Frost & Parton, 2009, p.20). Crime prevention can therefore be summed up as an investment in future outcomes by influencing the current behaviour and attitude of at-risk children through some kind of prior action so as to reduce or prevent their future antisocial behaviour.

"Adult antisocial behaviour virtually required childhood antisocial behaviour" (Robins, 1978, as cited in Thornberry & Krohn, 2005, p.183). Previous studies have indicated that juvenile delinquents have the tendency to commit further deviant behaviour as adults thus having more problems in adulthood than non-delinquents (Loeber & Farrington, 1998). Many serious and persistent criminals started their career well before their teens as studies have shown that the origins of persistent, long-term and serious deviant behaviour can be seen in the disruptive behaviour of toddlers as early as the age of 2 to 3 years old (Keenan, 2001; Loeber & Farrington, 2000a). The onset of delinquent behaviour at this stage of life such as lying, smoking, fighting, bullying, vandalizing, stealing, and playing truant from school can, with the passage of time, develop into more serious criminal behaviour if nothing is done to curb these initial stages of juvenile misconduct. Since crime often has its origins in the deviant behaviour of young children, intervention at an early age would not only help to reduce the juvenile crime rate in this

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country but also the costs incurred in juvenile justice (Haydon, 2014; Minh, Matheson, Daoud, Wright, Pedersen, Borenstein, & O'Campo, 2013).

The concept of early investment and prevention is nothing new and can be found in various fields ranging from health care to road safety and crime prevention. For instance, regular dental and medical checkups help to avoid expensive transplants and medication. Wearing a seat belt helps to lessen the effects of the harm caused in the event of an accident. Similarly, addressing the origins of delinquent behaviour amongst at-risk children is certainly more effective in crime prevention than teaching them good moral values in prison. Nevertheless, General Colin Powell is right when he says that:

> We either get back to the task of building our children the way we know how, or we're going to keep building jails in America. And it is time to stop building jails in America, and get back to the business of building our children.
> (as cited in Cassel, 2001, p. 422)

This is particularly true not only for the situation in America but also for the situation in Malaysia as well. Building more jails and passing harsher laws are not the solution to this chronic social problem. "Reacting forcefully to disruptive behaviour will often interfere with our ability to get to the heart of the child's message. Worse yet, such misapplications of power and control will usually prompt more misbehaviour" (Applestein, 1998, p.22). Arrest, conviction, and punishment have proven to be ineffective in crime prevention or at the most only marginally effective (Gatti, Tremblay, & Vitaro, 2009). Perhaps it is time we do something to build our children instead of wasting money in building more jails to accommodate them. It is too costly to wait for the crimes to be committed and then only do something about them. Through early investment and prevention, "the effects of successful experiences early in childhood snowballed to generate further success in school and other social contexts" (Zigler, Taussig, & Black, 1992, p.1002).

The transitory period from adolescence into adulthood often exposes the children to some kind of risky behaviour particularly during the non-school hours in the absence of

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proper supervision and control. Children who are left unattended on a regular basis are more likely to misbehave as studies have shown that the frequency of juvenile crime reaches its peak during the after school hours (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Weissman, 2001; Sickmund & Puzzanchera, 2014; Na, Lee, Hong, Oh., Bahn, Ha, Shin, Song, Park, Yoo, Kim, & Kyung, 2014). For the purposes of intervention and prevention, children need safe, stable places where they can go and constructive activities to do during the non-school hours. They need high quality academic instruction, personal attention, caring relationships with adults, peer support, and opportunities to participate and contribute within the community (Hall, Yohalem, Tolman, & Wilson, 2003). After-school supervision is therefore critical for the safety and well-being of children.

Based on the current economic situation of our country, the most cost-effective investment-prevention approach for our at-risk students is a quality school-based after-school program (ASP) that could target the root causes of delinquency. School-based after-school programs offer a safe environment for the students particularly during the after-school hours when they are most unlikely to have adult supervision. Studies have shown "that school interventions that change the social context of schools and the school experiences of children can reduce and prevent the delinquent behaviour of children" (Burns, Howell, Wiig, Augimeri, Welsh, Loeber, & Petechuk, 2003, p.6). Successful implementation of school-based ASPs is therefore a good investment in crime prevention as it not only helps to reduce costs but is also easily accessible to the students. Needless to say, many school-based interventions have already been proven to be effective in the prevention of antisocial behaviour, substance abuse, truancy, and bullying (Taheri & Welsh, 2015; Kremer, Maynard, Polanin, Vaughn, & Sartesch, 2015).

Early childhood intervention should be based on the three traditions of "school-age child care, youth development, and school-based after school programs" which place great

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emphasis on "safety, positive youth development, and academic enrichment and support" (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008, p.2). Many school intervention programs that focus on "social competence promotion curriculums; conflict resolution and violence prevention curriculums; bullying prevention efforts; and multicomponent classroom-based programs that help teachers and parents manage, socialize, and educate students and improve their cognitive, social, and emotional competencies" (Burns et al., 2003, p.6) have greatly influenced children behaviour and yielded positive results in their lives. By enhancing prosocial activities through education and/or other programs in school, these intervention programs can go a long way towards the reinforcement of prosocial behaviours and deterrence of antisocial behaviours.

Since different people commit crimes for different reasons, account should be taken of those differences in any investment-prevention strategy. Many previous preventive measures have failed due to lack of understanding of the (1) risk and protective factors in the targeted population, (2) mechanisms for behavioural change, and (3) developmental pathways that lead to the outcomes that they intended to prevent or promote (Mackey & Levan, 2013). Careful consideration should therefore be given to these conditions and the effects which they have on the behaviour of children before the implementation of any kind of intervention-prevention programs (Cross, Gottfredson, Wilson, Rorie, & Connell, 2010).

6.3 Investment-Prevention Programs

Based on the empirical evidence presented in the previous chapter, I would like to propose selected programs that can be implementated successfully in Malaysian schools with the cooperation of teachers. Since these programs are intended to take effect in the schools and can best be carried out during the after school hours, they are referred to as school-based after-school programs.

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6.3.1 School Based After-School Programs

The term *after-school programs* (ASPs) is used to describe the types of activities available to the students during the non-school hours, the aims of which are to provide the students with a safe and enriching environment where they can spend their time meaningfully (Apsler, 2009; Mahoney, Parente, & Zigler, 2009). It refers to an array of safe, properly structured, and well implemented programs that can provide the students from kindergarten to secondary school with a variety of properly supervised activities beyond school hours that are intended to enhance learning and development (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008; Balsano, Phelps, Theokas, Lerner, & Lerner, 2009). This term is often used interchangeably with the terms *out-of-school-time*, *expanded learning opportunities*, and *school-age care* (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008).

ASPs can be very effective strategies to keep the children safe and occupied whilst their parents are at work. This is particularly necessary in our Malaysian society where many of the parents have to work for long hours and are thus in need of some kind of childcare programs that are safe and enriching for their children. Since the need for alternative child care is on the rise due to the increased number of working mothers, many parents are looking for programs that could enhance their children's academic performance and well-being whilst at the same time keeping them away from mischief when they are at work. Needless to say, they would not hesitate to allow their children to participate in these programs in school even though they may not like the idea of sending their children elsewhere. Children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, need these academic and developmental programs more than those who come from more advantageous backgrounds since their parents cannot afford to pay for programs that can stimulate their intellectual and social development.

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ASPs can be carried out both before and after school, during weekends, and school holidays. These programs include "academic enrichment, tutoring, mentoring, homework help, arts (i.e. music, theatre, and drama), technology, science, reading, math, civic engagement and involvement, and activities to support and promote healthy social/emotional development" (Little et al., 2008, p.2). Through these activities, students are able to receive personal attention from their teachers, take up new areas of interests, receive free tuition, have better commitment to school, develop stronger ties with their peers, participate in meaningful activities, and have higher self-confidence and self-esteem whilst staying away from crime and delinquency (Wade, 2015; Gottfredson, Cross, Wilson, Rorie, & Connell, 2010). At the same time, they are also protected from bullying, violence, harassment, rape and accidents in a safe school environment. ASPs can therefore provide them with a multitude of activities to keep them occupied whilst at the same time keeping them out of mischief and creating a positive social environment for the cultivation of good moral values and habits.

Studies have indicated that students who participated actively in after-school programs fared better academically and are less likely to participate in antisocial behaviour compared to those who do not or rarely attend such programs (Mahoney, Lord, & Carryl, 2005; Pierce, Hamm, & Vandell, 1999; Larson, 2000). These include more positive attitudes toward school life, higher educational aspirations, better school attendance, less dropout/truancy rate, and improved homework quality/completion (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008; Park, Lin, Liu, & Tabb, 2015; Gottfredson, Gerstenblith, Soulé, Womer, & Lu, 2004; Wade, 2015). Students who participated in quality ASPs also tend to have better socioemotional outcomes/ relationships with others, improved social/communication skills, lower levels of depression and anxiety, increased self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008; Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, & Martin-

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Glenn, 2006; Arbreton, Sheldon, Bradshaw, Goldsmith, Jucovy, & Pepper, 2008; Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, & Zarrett, 2009). Thus one can see that ASPs not only serve as a preventive measure againt crime and delinquency but also benefit the children in a myriad of ways.

There is evidence that the most effective ASPs are those that place great emphasis on the youth development approach (Gottfredson et al., 2004). As defined by the National Collaboration for Youth Members of the United States of America (1998), the youth development approach "is a process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically and cognitively competent" (as cited in Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010, p.19). Youth development programs enable the students to meet their emotional and social needs whilst at the same time inculcating in them the skills necessary for a successful transition from adolescence into adulthood (Morrissey & Werner-Wilson, 2005). Quality ASPs which emphasize on the positive youth development approach can therefore be very effective in enhancing the academic and social development of the students.

Positive child development encompasses five important elements all of which should be taken into consideration in the designation of ASPs (Morrissey & Werner-Wilson, 2005; Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010):

1. academic and social competence;
2. self-esteem
3. family, school, peers, and community connectedness
4. prosocial behaviour
5. caring and compassion

This idea can be successfully integrated into the ASPs, particularly through the uniform groups. For instance, students who participate as volunteers in their scouting or girl-guide activities may need to attain a certain level of proficiency in their spoken English and

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Malay Language for the purposes of communication and this would motivate them to improve their proficiency in these languages. Participation in these activities also helps to boost their self-esteem and enhance their connectivity with their teachers, peers, and other members of the community. In their attempt to connect with others, they would gradually adopt a caring and compassionate attitude towards all those they come into contact with. Being entrusted with responsibilities that give them a sense of importance, they would continue to exhibit good behaviour so as not to lose their investment in conventional behaviour (Hirschi, 1969; Wood, Larson, & Brown, 2009). The incorporation of these five elements into the ASPs can therefore be very effective strategies to enhance character building.

Why are school-based ASPs preferred to the non school-based ASPs? Studies have indicated that "spending unstructured leisure time with peers and participating in non-school sports and non-school clubs were associated with higher levels of community violence exposure" (Kennedy & Ceballo, 2013, p.663). Schools are the safest places for the students to spend their after-school hours productively and meaningfully. Apart from its cost-effectiveness, school-based ASPs provide a variety of academic, social, and recreational activities that can enhance student development whilst at the same time sheltering them from the adverse effects of the neighbourhood at a time when they are most vulnerable to outside influences. There is evidence that students who participated in school-based ASPs tend to perform better academically and have better social adjustment (O'Hare, 2014; Kremer, Maynard, Polanin, Vaughn, & Sarteschi, 2015). They also fared better than those who participated in programs outside of school (Baker, Rieg, & Clendaniel, 2006).

Schools have great potentials to prevent crime and delinquency through its youth development and skill-building programs and what is even more encouraging is that these programs can be carried out with minimal funding under the supervision of the school

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teachers. Since teachers often "have little direct contact with the families of their students, with their neighbourhoods, or community traditions" (Lee & Hawkins, 2008, p.53), they have very little knowledge about their students' lives outside of school. School-based ASPs that are being carried out by the teachers themselves enable the teachers to understand more about their students' background and lifestyle and hence play a more important role in their lives. This is also one way of providing the teachers with the opportunities for professional development so that they can have greater expertise in dealing with their students. Prevention and control should therefore begin in school as teachers are still the most powerful mentors for their students.

One cannot deny the fact that school-based ASPs can have a greater impact on the students if they are being carried out by the teachers themselves. Studies have indicated that "the quality of the student-teacher relationship is a causal link in the generation of adolescent delinquent behaviour and hence a promising starting point for crime prevention measures" (Theimann, 2016, p. 67). Feelings of warmth and mutual respect between the teachers and students can be inculcated through their involvement in the ASPs and this can go a long way towards enhancing positive child development. An important aspect of ASPs is teachers should recognize the potential of their students and have some positive expectations about their abilities. Positive teacher expectations combined with the opportunities to meet those expectations can lead to increased motivation, engagement, and better performance (Grogan, Henrich, & Malikina, 2014; Sciarra & Ambrosino, 2011). By working closely with the NGOs and the agencies that are running the ASPs, teachers can maximize the learning and developmental resources for the students through goal-orientated activities.

"As one of the primary agents of socialization during adolescence, schools have become an important place for crime prevention" (Theimann, 2016, p.67). Given the

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strategic position of the schools in crime prevention, fostering behavioural change through school-based intervention programs can be a very effective strategy in the prevention and control of antisocial behaviour amongst students. In actual fact, many of the core intervention programs (such as tutoring programs, mentoring programs, truancy programs, peer programs, and service-learning programs) have already been assimilated into our present education system in accordance with the educational philosophy of this country which emphasizes on the development of the whole child. For instance, the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America Mentoring Program and the Teen Outreach Program (TOP) which place great emphasis on social development programs and service learning are nothing new to our school curriculum. The same applies to Project PATHE (Positive Action through Holistic Education) and the Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP) as these programs are intended to improve the school environment and enhance student commitment through extracurricular activities, counselling, tutoring, mentoring, and service-learning.

However, although the demand for ASPs is on the rise, there is no firmly established system to regulate or carry out these programs effectively in Malaysian schools. What really needs to be done is to improve on what we already have so that our schools can provide students with ample opportunities to learn and develop in a safe and well-protected environment instead of going all the way out to look for new programs to start afresh with. In expanding my findings to improve on the school-based after-school programs in this country, it is hoped that better services and support can be given to Malaysian students so as to assist them to achieve more fruitful lives. These are discussed in detail below under six categories, namely, tutoring programs, mentoring programs, truancy programs, peer programs, service-learning programs, and extracurricular activities.

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6.3.1.1 Tutoring Programs

Slavin, Karweit, and Madden (1989) are of the opinion that "the meaning of the term 'at-risk' is never very precise, and varies considerably in practice. One possible definition is that students who are at-risk are those who, on the basis of several risk factors, are unlikely to graduate from high school" (as cited in O'Dowd, 2005, pp.21-22). In the Malaysian context, at-risk students are those students from adverse family backgrounds with behavioural problems and who would probably not be able to complete their education. These students are often slow learners who lack academic support and are lagging far behind their classmates. Their academic incompetence and problem behaviour often bring them punishments in school thus rendering school life meaningless and unrewarding for them. Under such circumstances, they may start playing truant from school and even drop out of school before completing their education. Many of these school dropouts would just end up making a pittance out of some kind of cheap labour. Needless to say, leaving school at such a young age would only encourage more serious delinquent behaviour.

Since academic failure often marks the onset of delinquent behaviour and future serious offending, school interventions should focus on ways to improve the students' academic performance and prevent them from dropping out of school. Studies have indicated that programs that emphasize on the academic component not only enhance the students' academic achievement but have been proven to be effective in reducing delinquency (Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp et al., 2006; Kremer, Maynard, Polanin, Vaughn, & Sartesch, 2015) through an improvement in their educational experiences. Needless to say, after-school tutoring programs can be an effective supplement to classroom teaching by reaching out to the slow learners who are unable to understand their lessons but dare not ask questions in class:

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Interviewer : Did you ask your teachers when you did not understand your lessons?
Ariffin : No
Interviewer : Why didn't you ask them?
Ariffin : Like… felt ashamed
Interviewer : Why did you feel ashame?
Ariffin : Afraid that they would scold me.

(Ariffin/Juv/09-10/Sch)

Students who have problems with their studies would end up performing badly in school and eventually drift into delinquency (Gyansah, Soku, & Esilfie, 2015). In giving them more personal attention through tutoring programs, teachers can help to improve their academic performance and hence prevent the onset of delinquency.

"Schools must deal with the reality that different children do learn at different speeds and can handle subjects in varying degrees of depth" (Bennett, Finn, & Cribb, 1999, as cited in Schiro, 2013, p.48). After-school tutoring programs in the form of homework assistance and tuition can help to complement the teaching and learning activities that the students participate during the day by emphasizing on the subjects which they have difficulty in understanding. Studies on the effective teaching and learning approaches had proven that active student participation with the opportunities to learn with understanding and acquire a deep foundation of factual knowledge (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000) are of great academic advantage to the children. The fact that these tutoring programs can help to narrow the gap between the low and high achievers is supported by decades of research as the more time the students spend on academic activities, the better their academic outcomes would be (Hock, Pulvers, Deshler, Schumaker, 2001). The Boys and Girls Club Education Enhancement Project, for instance, has clearly shown the importance of providing homework assistance to the students. A slightly higher percentage of the participants of this project finished their homework and they also had higher grades in science, history, spelling, reading, and social studies compared to the non-participants (Arbreton, Bradshaw, Sheldon, & Pepper, 2005).

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"Academic subjects taught during the after-school period require qualified, preferably certified, instructors familiar with and who can be held accountable for student outcomes" (Fashola, 2002, p.60) as there is evidence that volunteers who lack the necessary teaching skills could do little to enhance the students' academic success (Fashola, 2002). It seems therefore that the school teachers are still the best tutors for the students. One program which has clearly proven its effectiveness is the Oakridge After-School Program, an after-school tutoring program which is both initiated and carried out by the teachers of an elementary school with the purpose of providing tutoring and homework assistance for any student who requests for it (Vandell & Shumow, 1999). The program is carried out four times a week for two hours after school with two-thirds of the school's teachers participating in it. The teachers are actively engaged with the students and remain in their classrooms until 5.30 p.m. "working on homework and supplemental assignments" (p.72). Once in a week, the local police volunteers would conduct games such as soccer, basketball, or baseball for the students in the playground or gym.

If the Oakridge After-School program is to be effectively replicated in Malaysian schools, first of all, a change in teacher attitude is necessary as many Malaysian teachers (particularly those teaching in one-session schools) may find this program unwelcoming as this would mean that they have to spend longer hours in school. Currently, teachers from one-session schools can normally go home at around 1.00 p.m. to 1.40 p.m (depending on the schools) whilst those teaching in two-session schools can normally go home at around 1.50 p.m. or 2.30 p.m. Staying back until 5.30 p.m. for 4 days a week would, no doubt, create a lot of dissatisfaction amongst the teachers. However, this problem can be overcome if all teachers are required to conform to normal working hours instead of working half day. Working from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. everyday just like all the other civil servants would also mean that there would be no more reasons for their dissatisfaction.

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Another problem with our tutoring programs lies in the fact that they are not completely free in many Malaysian schools. For instance, in the Chinese primary schools, students are required to pay tuition fees to the parent-teacher association of their respective schools if they wish to join these programs. The fees paid are then given to the teachers based on the number of hours that they conduct the tutoring programs. Although this practice can generate a lot of extra income for the teachers, the purpose of having these tutoring programs is somehow defeated because students from lower socioeconomic classes who cannot afford to pay tuition fees are exempted from these programs provided they have a valid and sufficient reason for not attending even though they are the ones who really need to be tutored. Since the tutoring programs in the Chinese primary schools are conducted every day, during the weekends and school holidays, students who do not participate in these programs would miss out on a lot of things in school. To be effective, these tutoring programs should be conducted free of charge so that all Malaysian students are given equal opportunities to a good-quality education.

Although the *Skim Baucer Tuisyen* (Tuition Voucher Scheme) has been implemented since the year 2004, it is almost unheard of in many Malaysian schools. Under this tuition scheme, the Years 4, 5, and 6 primary school students from poor families who are weak in their studies are given free tuiton for the Malay Language, English Language, Mathematics, and Science subjects. However, the Government's noble intention to pay an allowance to the teachers who participated in this tuition program seemed to benefit only a minority of the students. The *Skim Baucer Tuisyen* has since been abolished in the year 2011 and following its abolition, the best alternative is to have free tuition for all students particularly those who really need academic support but cannot afford it.

To further enhance the effectiveness of tutoring programs, the school administrators of every school should take the necessary steps to ensure that the development,

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management, and teaching of the tutoring programs would facilitate effective learning. For instance, teaching English in the mother tongue with a few English words here and there should be avoided altogether as it inhibits the students from speaking English effectively. This method of teaching English is not uncommon amongst teachers who lack proficiency in the language particularly when it is acceptable to many Malaysian students who prefer to learn English in their mother tongue. Sad to say, it is nothing unusual for teachers who lack proficiency in English to teach English tuition classes as what is happening in some of the Chinese primary schools. I could still remember that when I was a teacher in a Chinese primary school, my colleagues used to ask me to teach them to pronounce certain words in the texts a few minutes before they started the English tuition classes. This situation can be rectified if the school administrators are to ensure that the teachers are really qualified to teach the subjects that they are given for the tutoring programs.

To be effective, tutoring programs should be conducted every day, during weekends, and also school holidays like what is going on in the Chinese primary schools. However, although tutoring programs are being conducted in many schools throughout Malaysia, these programs are not as frequent as those in the Chinese primary schools. In my former school, SMKX, for example, we used to have free tutoring programs three or four times throughout the semester for form 1 and form 2 students. Student participation was very poor because the manner in which these programs were conducted did not encourage student participation. Due to poor student participation, these tutoring programs had since been abolished. This clearly explains why the students prefer to study on their own, form study groups or ask their friends when they do not understand their lessons:

Interviewer : What do you do if you don't understand your lessons?
Ali : Read books on my own at home… ahh… ask my friends in school.
(Ali/Stu/08/Sch)

Interviewer : What do you do if you don't understand your lessons?
Ah Meng : I ask my friend.
Interviewer : Do you ask the teachers or not?

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Ah Meng : I don't ask teachers.
Interviewer : Why not?
Ah Meng : Because if you wait the teacher to teach you… because teacher is a very slow… teacher teach also very slow… Why you want to wait? Why don't you take action? At least go and get some revision book… then you open up and read it all (enthusiastically).
Interviewer : Can you manage to study on your own?
Ah Meng : Can. We also study in group.

(AhMeng/Stu/08/Sch)

However, not many students would take the initiative to study on their own, ask their friends, or form study groups and this is particularly true of at-risk students.

Tutoring programs should also be available to all students instead of targeting only those students in examination classes who can afford to pay tuition fees. Apart from the Chinese primary schools, there are certain schools in Malaysia where the teachers only collect fees from the students who are sitting for some major examinations for the after-school tutoring programs. Some teachers in Kuala Lipis, for instance, charge the Year 6 students RM40 per month for the UPSR tuition fees. On the other hand, some schools in Kuala Lumpur only charge the students RM250 per year for the UPSR tuition fees. However, these after-school tutoring programs are not available for Year 1 to Year 5 students since they are not sitting for any major examinations. Since education is an on-going process, it should not be given strong emphasis only during the students' final school year as those who lack academic support may find it difficult to catch up in class. Further, not every student can participate in the after-school tutoring programs because the tuition fees are imposing an unnecessary burden on poor parents.

Whatever the situation may be, proper implementation of the tutoring programs is still the best solution to the problems that our students are facing in their studies since most parents cannot afford to pay for the expensive tutoring programs conducted by private tutors or tuition centres. Tutoring programs can best be carried out three times per week, two on weekdays and one on Saturdays for two hours per session (2.00 - 4.00 p.m. for the morning session and 10.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. for the afternoon session on weekdays and

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8.00 a.m. - 12.00 noon on Saturdays) with emphasis given to the core subjects such as the Malay Language, English Language, science, and mathematics. This is because Wednesdays, also known as *extracurricular activity days* are meant for the club/society and uniform group meetings (alternately), one weekday is meant for sports and games and another weekday is intended for house practice. However, once the sports is over, there would no more house practices and the students can come for tutoring programs instead. Tutoring programs can also be carried out during school holidays as this is the best time for students to catch up with their studies. In the Chinese primary schools, tutoring programs are normally held from 8.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon during the school holidays and this is something other schools should emulate but of course without burdening the students financially. Instead of making the students pay for the tutoring programs, teachers should be given marks based on the frequency of the tutoring programs that they have conducted. The assessment of their performance is certainly more reliable this way. Since different schools charge different rates for their tutoring programs, the manner in which these programs are implemented need to be standardized so that all students, particularly those from adverse family backgrounds who lack exposure to literacy materials, would receive adequate academic help and support.

6.3.1.2 Mentoring Programs

Mentoring is defined by the MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership (2005) as "a structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee (p.9)." Mentors are good listeners who are always ready to counsel and provide friendship for their mentees. At-risk children who are going through some harsh and challenging moments in their lives would need a good mentor who

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can provide them with a nurturing relationship. Developing a supportive relationship with a caring adult that is built on trust can help these children to develop a more positive self-esteem and live with a better sense of purpose. Mentoring programs are increasingly playing a promising role in the promotion of positive youth development and prevention of delinquency (Grills, 2010; DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011) even though their effectiveness differs from program to program and from individual to individual (DuBois, Neville, Parra, & Pugh-Lilly, 2002). "In all these approaches, the common component involves empowering a caring adult to take the responsibility for giving support and acting as an advocate for one or more high-risk children" (Dryfoos, 1992, p.130).

Since children like to emulate their favourite role models or people who have an influence over them in their everyday lives, mentoring programs can have an essential role to play in shaping the behavioural outcomes of children. There is evidence that mentoring programs that connect at-risk children with positive adult role models can help in the prevention and/or reduction of antisocial behaviour (Bryan & Henry 2008, 2012). Increase exposure to positive role models enables the children to develop better social and self-management skills in addition to better character and personality development, all of which can lead to better developmental outcomes.

A very good example of an effective mentoring program is the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America Mentoring Program which is designed to enhance emotional support, social skills, academic performance, and behavioural outcomes based on the trust relationship between the mentor and mentee (Park, Yoon, & Crosby, 2016; Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2011) The big brothers and sisters would bring along their "little brothers and sisters" with them for a variety of social activities such as going to a movie, reading in the library, homework assistance, watching a football match, visiting the

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museum, shopping, eating out, volunteering, or just hanging out and sharing opinions, ideas and thoughts. "Such activities enhance communication skills, develop relationship skills, and support positive decision making" (Beach, 2014, p.19) and these can bring about positive changes and better improvements in the children's character and behavioural outcomes.

Similarly, the programs of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) are carried out in such a way as to help the children attain a better future by promoting their academic success, character development, decision-making, behavioural and social skills through a long term one-on-one mentoring relationship that is built on trust (Fredricks, Hackett, & Bregman, 2010). The 4H Youth Development & Mentoring Program is another program which offers opportunities for positive youth development, career development, meaningful leadership roles, computer technology, agriculture, innovative partnership, and service-learning through the connection with a caring adult (Astroth, 2014).

Although the Education Ministry of Malaysia has recently come out with a Mentor-Mentee Program, its effectiveness is still yet to be seen. Also known as the "Caring Teachers Program", its objective is to enhance the students' personality development under the loving care of the teachers. Although this program is laudable in itself as its purpose is to ensure that the well-being of every child matters to the teachers, its effectiveness is still questionable due to the manner and frequency in which it is being carried out. The program is normally carried out during the assembly period on the last Monday or Friday of a month and lasts for 30-35 minutes in two-session schools and 40 minutes in one-session schools. However, it is not uncommon for this program to be cancelled and replaced by other activities such as spring cleaning, classroom decoration, farewell ceremonies, talks, exams, and other school functions thus leaving very little time for it to be carried out effectively.

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Given the ineffective manner in which the Mentor-Mentee Program is going on in the schools, it is advisable to conduct this program as an ASP as this would mean that more time can be given to it instead of limiting it to 30-40 minutes per month. Since many teachers lack experience in mentoring and would have problems conducting the program given the longer sessions, schools can carry out this program in collaboration with the NGOs that can provide volunteers to help and guide the teachers so as to enable them to carry out this program more effectively. One such NGO is Persatuan Al-Hunafa which purpose is to nurture and guide the students towards a better condition of living through its Titian Samara Program. Since the major idea of mentoring programs is to connect the child to a caring adult, the most cost-effective and practicable way to put this idea into practice in Malaysian schools is by incorporating the Titian Samara Program into the Mentor-Mentee Program. The incorporation of the Titian Samara program into the Mentor-Mentee Program should not be a problem as the team of volunteers from Persatuan Al-Hunafa are always available to train and work with the teachers so as to enable them to carry out the Mentor-Mentee Program more effectively and professionally. Should circumstances demand it, teachers can also be sent for courses organized by the volunteers of Persatuan Al-Hunafa so as to enhance their professionalism in the art of mentoring. Apart from improving their professionalism, teachers can also learn the art of caring, an essential element of the Mentor-Mentee Program.

Why is Persatuan Al-Hunafa's Titian Samara Program recommended here? Through its collaboration with 5 schools in Klang for 8 years (2008-2016) involving 400 students, this program was able to bring about positive changes in the students' overall improvement through team work, service-learning, problem solving and higher order thinking skills. Their attendance and grades have also improved up to 80% and 52% respectively (Chandran, 2016). Since this project has its focus on the 2R, namely respect

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and responsibility, it is consistent with the Rukun Negara and is suitable for Malaysian schools. Although this program is particularly useful for students who are deemed to be at-risk, students who are not at-risk, however, can also participate as the objective of this program is to guide students towards a caring society through the practice of love, care, and compassion in every aspect of human life.

6.3.1.3 Truancy Programs

Truancy has always been a serious problem in many Malaysian schools since many Malaysian students have the habit of staying away from school during school hours without good reasons. Once they get used to playing truant from school and find it enjoyable, they will continue to do so again and again:

> I only played truant in secondary school. I never played truant in primary school. I played truant mostly in Form 1. One god sister asked me to play truant. After playing truant once, I found it very enjoyable so I played truant again and again. I played truant for one month. The guard couldn't be bothered when he saw me walking out of the school.
>
> (AhFook/Juv/08-09/Sch)

Students who are not in school during school hours risk antisocial behaviour particularly when they mingle with truant children like themselves during those unsupervised hours:

Interviewer : According to your school report, out of 75 school days, you only came for 25 days. You didn't even come for the extracurricular activities. Where did you go?

Ariffin : Followed my friends… went loafing... went to snooker.

(Ariffin/Juv/09/Sch)

Hanging around with friends and being in places where they are not supposed to be would only make them more vulnerable to crime and delinquency. Since truancy is consistently linked to academic failure, dropping out of school (Alexander, Entwisle, & Horsey, 1997), unemployment, and criminality (Rouse, 2007), interventions targeting this negative social phenomenon should seek to prevent these negative outcomes by re-engaging the students in their school setting (Fredricks. Blumenfield, & Paris, 2004). The purpose of truancy

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programs is to ensure that every student stays in school and stays away from trouble whilst at the same time receiving an adequate education. To enhance the effectiveness of these programs, schools can collaborate with parents as well as the justice system for better prevention and control (White, Fyfe, Campbell, & Goldkamp, 2001; Wright, McMahon, Daly, & Haney, 2012).

One such truancy program that has proven for its effectiveness is the ACT (Abolish Chronic Truancy) Now Program. The purpose of this program is to make the habitually truant students in Arizona return to school and this is achieved through the cooperation of schools, law enforcers, and parents (Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent, 2001). Attendance clerks in the participating schools monitor the students' attendance closely and would send a letter to the parents upon the students' first unexcused absence. In this letter, parents are made aware of their children's unexcused absence and that their children's attendance record would be sent to the Pima County Attorney's Office (PCAO) after their third unexcused absence. Parents are also informed that they themselves stand the possibility of prosecution if they fail to take any action. Upon the students' third unexcused absence, their attendance record, personal data, and any other background information would be sent to the Center for Juvenile Alternatives (CJA) with an affidavit certifying the unexcused absences so as to obviate the necessity of having school officials to testify in court. Upon referral of the case, parents are informed that they may be liable for misdemeanor whilst their child may have to file a truancy petition in a juvenile court. However, the parents are offered the opportunity to participate in a deferred prosecution diversion program that "provide access to counselling, parenting skills classes, and support groups for youth and parents" (Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent, 2001, p.4). The case is dismissed upon successful completion of the program and compliance with the terms of the diversion agreement. On the other hand,

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parents who refuse to take any actions after being notified of their children's unexcused absences would be prosecuted.

A milder program which has proven its effectiveness in the prevention of truancy is the Truant Recovery Program (White, Fyfe, Campbell, & Goldkamp, 2001), which is both a school-based cognitive education program as well as a family-based prevention program. In this program, at-risk children are provided with the necessary life skills whilst their families are provided with the assistance that they need in order to bring about the required attitudinal and behavioural changes in their children that could help to deter future truancy. This program also gives the local police the authority to make contact with children who play truant from school during school hours be it on the streets, internet cafés or snooker centres and return them to their parents or school.

In the aforementioned truancy programs, one can see that a two-way communication between the settings in which children and their parents participate such as the home and school (mesosystem) can work wonders in the prevention of truancy (Fagan, 2013; Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent, 2001; White, Fyfe, Campbell, & Goldkamp, 2001). As such, the researcher strongly recommends that parents should be made accountable for their children's chronic truancy as this can go a long way to curb this negative social phenomenon. This is because many Malaysian parents either have no idea that their children are playing truant from school behind their backs or they do not care whether their children attend school or not as long as their children do not give them any problems:

Interviewer : Did your mother know that you played truant from school?
Loga : When I was in std 6, my mother saw me going to the CC when she was walking half way to the shop ahh. Near my school… the CC there. When I went back to the school to change back into my uniform ahh… my mother came. I did not realize that. Ala… don't come back to school and change into your uniform ahh… I already know, she said.
Interviewer : Did your mother scold you for playing truant from school?
Loga : She said it was alright for me to go to CC as long as I did not go elsewhere.
(Loga/Juv/06/Sch)

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Even good students play truant from school particularly when their parents or caregivers do not consider this to be a serious issue:

Ali : During the fasting month I always play truant from school.
Interviewer : Why do you play truant school?
Ali : Tired
Interviewer : Where do you normally go when you play truant school?
Ali : Just stay at home (laughing).
Interviewer : Does your grandmother know about this?
Ali : Yes

(Ali/Stu/09/Sch)

Most of the children who play truant from school do so with the knowledge of their parents who do not mind them taking a day or two off from school (Sheppard, 2010). That was why many of the parents scolded me when I called to inform them about their children's unexcused absences saying that they knew about it and that it did not matter as their children were only resting at home. However, the thought that they have to go for a truancy diversion program or may even be prosecuted if their children play truant from school would certainly make the parents pay more attention to their children's school attendance.

Since prosecuting the parents for their children's truant behaviour would create havoc amongst Malaysian parents who are not used to being treated in such an insulting manner, the Truant Recovery Program is a more suitable program to be replicated here with some modifications to suit the Malaysian way of life. In Malaysian schools, class teachers are supposed to keep a record of their students' attendance and upon their students' tenth unexcused absence (intermittently), they should send a warning letter to their parents to notify them. If their parents did not take any action, the teachers would send a second and third warning letter to the parents after the 20^{th} and 40^{th} unexcused absences respectively. If the parents do not take any action after their children's 60^{th} unexcused absence, their children would be expelled from school. However, if the students absent themselves continuously from school, the first warning letter can be issued after three days followed by the second warning letter seven days later and the third warning letter after another seven

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days. Fourteen days after the issuance of the third warning letter, the students concerned can be expelled from school if they still do not show up.

Table 6.1

The Issuance of Warning Letters

Warning Letter	Intermittent Absence	Continuous Absence
First Warning Letter	on the tenth day	on the third day
Second Warning Letter	10 days after first warning letter	7 days after first warning letter
Third Warning Letter	20 days after second warning letter	7 days after second warning letter
Expulsion from School	20 days after third warning letter	14 days after third warning letter
Total	60 days	31 days

Once the students are expelled from school, the parents can easily apply to the state education department to put their children back in school and this is probably one reason why these warning letters do not have much weight. And of course one cannot imagine what the students would do during their sixty days or thirty-one days of unexcused absences without supervision. To make matters worse, some class teachers do not issue any warning letters to the parents at all even though their students have been absent for months.

Since many parents do not mind their children's truancy habits, getting them involved in the truancy program is probably one of the most effective ways to combat truancy. As such, the researcher suggests that class teachers should send a warning letter to the parents upon their children's third unexcused absence and if the parents do not take any action and continue to allow their children to play truant from school, the school counsellor should contact them and make them come to school to attend a parenting program in which they are provided with the necessary assistance that they need in order to keep their children in school. At the same time, their children should be sent for counselling so as to bring about some behavioural and attitudinal changes in them. Teachers who do not issue warning letters to the parents at the appropriate time should be made responsible to the State Education Department for their failure to act. Schools can also seek the help of the local police to take the students who play truant from school during school hours back to school where disciplinary actions can be taken against them. What I mean by disciplinary

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action is not caning as this method of discipline has proven to be ineffective. A more meaningful way of disciplining the students is to make them participate in some kind of service-learning program for 2 weeks after school such as being in charge of the schools' cleanliness or repainting wall murals. The thought of being caught by the police is a disgrace to many Malaysian children and as such they would think twice before they play truant from school. However, although the *Rakan COP* (Community Orientated Policing) Program has been in operation for some time, the purpose of which is to promote better cooperation between the police and the community and better crime prevention, police involvement in the schools is an extremely rare event indeed. Perhaps it is time for the police to work together more effectively with the schools to solve the problems in relation to juvenile crime and delinquency.

School authorities should also take stricter measures to keep the students in school. This can be achieved if all possible exits in the school are properly guarded. Security guards should not be stationed at the school entrance alone as they should also take the trouble to patrol the school from time to time in order to prevent the students from sneaking out. Teachers ought to be more alert instead of keeping one eye closed to the possibility of truancy amongst their students. They must take action whenever they see their students loitering around the school or sitting in the canteen without good reasons during school hours instead of just ignoring them since skipping classes is often the precursor to more serious truancy problems. However, although they are supposed to take attendance every lesson, sad to say, some of them would simply fill up the attendance form without taking the trouble to find out who are those students present on a particular day but are not in the class. This clearly explains why the respondents of this study could hang around in school and/or sneak out of school so easily without being discovered! Teachers should also inform the parents concerned if their children are absent from school without reasonable excuse.

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Since many Malaysian parents have no knowledge of their children's habitual truancy, it is advisable for teachers to set up a WhatsApp group to maintain consistent communication with the parents and keep them informed of their children's behaviour.

6.3.1.4 Peer Programs

Since adolescents tend to spend the greater part of their time with their peers often in settings that are without adult supervision (Kennedy & Ceballo, 2013), the importance of peer influence in adolescent development is an important aspect that should be taken into consideration in the designation and implementation of intervention programs. To promote prosocial behaviours amongst its participants, peer intervention programs should be structured and implemented carefully so that it would not inadvertently enhance the development of antisocial behaviour. This can happen if too many high-risk, delinquent or antisocial children are grouped together in the same intervention group thus further aggravating their already existing problem behaviours.

> Putting antisocial or at-risk juveniles together may provide them the opportunity to actively reinforce deviant behaviour through laughter and social attention while talking about such behaviour. In addition, high risk adolescents may adjust their values as a result of associating with peers who approve of misbehaviour and, as a consequence, be more likely to misbehave themselves.
>
> (McCord et al., 2001, p.138)

Known as deviancy training, this is what takes place when the interaction patterns amongst delinquent children are moving towards the reinforcement of antisocial behaviour due to their overwhelming presence thus undermining any form of successful intervention (Snyder, Schrerepferman, McEachern, Barber, Johnson, & Provines, 2008; Salazar, Bolvin, Vitaro, Cantin, Forget-Dubois, Brendgen, Dionne, & Tremblay, 2015). Deviancy training, however, can be avoided through the careful balancing of the number of high-risk and low-risk individuals in the intervention groups.

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Peer-based intervention programs are normally designed in such a way as to reduce the influences of deviant and antisocial peers whilst at the same time attempting to increase the influences of prosocial and law abiding peers (Farrington & Welsh, 2007). Although there are many such intervention programs around the world, the effectiveness of such programs is still questionable. Research and evaluations on such programs have shown mixed results with some of the programs doing more harm than good (McCord et al., 2001; Valente, Ritt-Olson, Alan, Unger, Okamoto, & Sussman, 2007). This is particularly true for programs that are run by the students themselves with minimal adult supervision.

Since the *Kelab Pembimbing Rakan Sebaya* or Peer Guidance Club has been in operation in the schools for the past two decades, a discussion of this program is necessary in order to provide a deeper insight into the effectiveness of this peer program. A *Pembimbing Rakan Sebaya* is a student who is trained in basic communication and counselling skills who acts as a friend to those in need of help. Just how effective this program is remains questionable as it is not so easy to find trustworthy and reliable club members who can provide the kind of assistance and guidance required by their peers. From what I observed in my previous schools, many of them are not doing anything much and of course it is not surprising to find that some of these club members are actually giving problems to the teachers themselves. Although there are some responsible club members who intend to do their duties well, they are sometimes discouraged to do so for fear of being harmed by those whom they are trying to help. According to Ramu, "So I just advise to them… I just help them to advise but if they don't want to hear or they just the same, I cannot do anything" (Ramu/Stu/09/Sch). Nevertheless, Farrington and Welsh (2007) may be right when they concluded that "at present, a peer-based approach is of unknown effectiveness in preventing delinquency or later offending" (p.156). Allowing students to guide their peers may do more harm than good without careful training and

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supervision by the teachers. Instead of helping their friends, disruptive, lazy, and irresponsible so-called *pembimbing rakan sebaya* who lack maturity may act as bad role models and guide their peers towards a delinquent lifestyle.

Effective peer-based interventions are hard to come by (Welsh & Farrington, 2007) due to the difficulties associated with the formation of properly structured peer-intervention groups. Nevertheless, there are some selected programs that are well-known for their effectiveness in reducing juvenile delinquency as supported by substantial research. Two examples of such programs are the "Stop Now and Plan Program" and the "Adolescent Transitions Program".

The Stop Now and Plan Program (SNAP™ Program) helps the children and their parents to deal with anger effectively by teaching them to stop, think of the consequences of their behaviour, and respond to their problems in such a way that makes these problems seem to be less serious than they think so that they would not act impulsively. The key aspect of the SNAP™ strategy is to "help children regulate angry feelings by helping them to first, calm down through the use of techniques such as taking deep breaths and/or counting to 10 (STOP); second to use coping statements (NOW AND) to think of what to say to remain calm (for example, 'this is hard but I can do this'), and third, to generate effective solutions (PLANS) to make their problems smaller instead of bigger, make them feel like a winner and not hurt anyone, anything, or themselves" (Augimeri, Walsh, & Slater, 2011, p.336). The SNAP™ program consists of courses for the children and their parents and these include family counselling for high-risk behaviour, problem-solving, role-playing, family management skills training, parenting skills training, self-control and anger management strategies (Augimeri, Farrington, Koegl, & Day, 2007). The two core components that are offered to all the children and their families are the 12-week 1.5-hour per week Children's Groups and a concurrent Parents' Groups (Earlscourt Child and

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Family Centre, 2001). Other programs that are available include school advocacy, teacher consultation, victim restitution, crisis intervention, continuing care groups for parents who have completed the SNAP™ Parents' Group and a club for high-risk children who have completed the SNAP™ Children's Group program but who still need some support. Rigorous evaluation of this program has shown that this program helps to control aggressive, destructive and impulsive behaviours before they turn criminal (Augimeri, Koegl, Slater, & Ferrante, 2006; Augimeri, Farrington, Koegl, & Day, 2007).

Similarly, the Adolescent Transitions Program (ATP) is a school-based parent-focused intervention program which targets both high risk adolescents as well as their families in order to prevent delinquent behaviour through the development of individual skills and change of the school environment (Dishion, Kavanagh, Schneiger, Nelson, & Kaufman, 2002). The curriculum is based on family management skills developed by the Oregon Social Learning Center following 20 years of research (Dishion, Kavanagh, Veltman, McCartney, & Stormshal, 2005). The program is made up of two major components, namely, the teen-focused and parent-focused components (Andrew, Soberman, & Dishion, 1995; Dishion, Andrews, Kavanagh, & Soberman, 1996). The aim of the teen-focused component is to help the teens develop self-regulation so as to prevent or reduce problem behaviour. It consists of 12 weekly 90 minutes sessions presented in groups of 8 adolescents. The parent-focused component is designed to improve the parents' management skills. It consists of 12 sessions that are conducted weekly for a period of 12 weeks with each session lasting between 90 minutes to 2 hours. Activities are carried out in groups with each group catering towards the needs of 8 families (8-16 participants). Within the group setting, the parents discuss about their parenting skills which are then practiced at home. In the following week, the parents discuss about the problems that they encounter when practicing their skills at home.

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These peer group intervention programs clearly recognize the importance of working with the parents of at-risk children. As substantiated by extensive research, parental involvement in schools can really work wonders in the lives of the students (Comer, 2005; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Gentry, 2011). No doubt, these programs can be carried out in Malaysian schools by the school counsellors. There is thus no need to employ professionals to carry out this program since the school counsellors are in a much better position to do so. Counsellors do not have to teach and would therefore have ample time to conduct such programs for the school. Further, they also have a team of student facilitators to help them. They can also seek the help of the members of *Kelab Pembimbing Rakan Sebaya* so as to give them more important roles to play in the lives of their peers. It should be noted that the importance of schools working collaboratively with parents to enhance student development and prevent delinquent behaviour is an important aspect of the mesosystem which cannot be ignored. As such, school counsellors have an important role to play in empowering families by getting them involved through various programs in school.

6.3.1.5 Service-Learning Programs

Service-learning differs from community service in a sense that service-learning emphasizes on intentional learning whilst community service places more importance on the service itself (Furco, 1996; Billig, 2010). Defined as "a teaching and learning strategy that attempts to integrate community service with an academic curriculum" (Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki, 2011, p.165), service-learning is a teaching strategy which serves to broaden and enrich the students' learning climate by engaging them in meaningful school and community service activities (Hull, Kilbourne, Reece, & Husaine, 2008; Levesque-Bristol, Knapp, & Fisher, 2010; Furco & Root, 2010; Billig, 2010, 2011). It enables the students to

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work in supervised settings outside the classroom with peers as their positive role models thus providing them with the opportunity for self-development (Larson, Pearce, Sullivan, & Jarrett, 2007; Balsano, Phelps, Theokas, Lerner, & Lerner, 2009). Active participation in service-learning programs not only enables the students to build up new friendships and trust relationships with others but also enhances their self esteem, academic performance, moral reasoning and problem-solving/decision making skills as well as their personal and social competency (Levesque-Bristol, Knapp, & Fisher, 2010; Billig, 2010, 2011; Furco & Root, 2010; Billig, Jesse, & Grimley, 2008). Children who take pride in their service for others also tend to feel good about themselves and this gives them even greater enthusiasm to contribute actively to society (Billig, 2011). Through their service for others, they would develop a sense of belonging and connectedness to society and learn to be responsible for themselves and the outcomes of their actions (Billig, et al., 2008; Celio et al., 2011).

Service-learning is nothing new as it has always been a part of the educational philosophy in Malaysia for decades. Having its origins in the writings of Jean Piaget, John Dewey, and Alexis de Tocqueville, service-learning is based on the notion that learning is most effective through active participation particularly when there is a purpose behind it (Kenny & Gallagher, 2002). Meaningful service to the community helps to inculcate in the children a sense of responsibility, tolerance, compassion, and civic mindedness all of which can have an essential role to play in their character, moral, and behavioural development (Zeldin, 2004; Furco & Root, 2010; Billig et al., 2008; Celio et al., 2011). Through these programs, members of the community would also form better perceptions of the students as well as their schools. Further, the constructive use of time in meaningful community service also enables the students to engage in prosocial activities in a safe haven thus keeping them off the streets. Community service is therefore an effective pedagogigal approach which enables the students to experience real-world learning whilst at the same

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time contributing to society. Since schools have an essential community role, connecting the students to the community where they live through service-learning can also turn the schools into community centres. Below is a review of some of the more meaningful service- learning projects that have proven their effectiveness and which can be easily replicated in Malaysian schools.

One laudable service-learning project is the Plant Hope Project, an arts and community gardening project which is intended to curb youth violent behaviour by engaging them in community service (Hathi & Bhaerman, n.d., p.24). As part of its project, 21 of its youths participated in 420 hours of service to make 31 postcards of hope for the Katrina survivors. Through helping others in times of adversity, the youths were able to see the difference that they could make to the community by sowing seeds of hope. This project is a simple one and can be easily replicated in Malaysian schools, particularly by members of the Art Club. During the Art Club meetings, students can design birthday cards, greeting cards, and inspirational cards to be sent to the old folks' homes, orphanage, hospitals, and even natural disaster victims in the other parts of the world. These activities are certainly much more meaningful than sitting under the tree and doing nothing with the teacher advisor nowhere to be seen during the Art Club meetings!

The Boys and Girls Club is another youth development agency which is intended to help the youths realize their full potential as productive and responsible members of the community (Arbreton, Sheldon, & Herrera, 2005; Arbreton, Sheldon, Bradshaw, Goldsmith, Jucovy, & Pepper, 2008; Arbreton, Bradshaw, Sheldon, & Pepper, 2009). For instance, 50 youths of The Boys and Girls Club of Syracuse who were involved in its 250 hours of community clean up project had successfully improved the appearance of the neighbourhood by transforming five of Syracuse's West Side garbage ridden inner city sites into clean, scenic, landscaped parks and homes (Hathi & Bhaerman, n.d., p.22). As a

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consequence of their endeavour, many of these youths also developed an interest in recycling and other environmental projects. This is another project which can easily be replicated in Malaysian schools. Instead making the students march on the fields all the time during the uniform group meetings, the teacher advisors can take their students to the nearby mosque, temple, church, orphanage, old folks' home, or even poor families for some kind of voluntary tasks. The least that these teacher advisors can do is to make them clean up and beautify the school and its surrounding area or improve the appearance of these places during the 90 minute uniform groups meetings on Wednesdays.

Another service-learning program that has proven its effectiveness is the Phillip O. Berry Academy of Technology Program in Charlotte, North Carolina. At-risk students from this public high school contributed 360 hours of service at a workshop on "Youth Gangs and Youth Violence" in two neighbourhoods that were notoriously known for their gangterism and violence (Hathi & Bhaerman, n.d., p.22). The over 100 youth participants at the workshop who took part in the workshop were shown a video about the dangers of gangs. They also played games and participated in activities conducted by the at-risk youth who were also former gang members. At the end of the workshop, most of the participants signed a large banner pledging not to become a gang member. In actual fact, this program can easily be conducted by the Crime Prevention Societies of Malaysian schools. Teacher advisors and members of the Crime Prevention Society can organize, forums, talks, workshops, and exhibitions on the consequences of crime and drug abuse not only for their own members but also for the whole school as well. I would suggest replacing the "pledge on banner" component with the "poster drawing competition" component so that students can make their pledge not to get involved in crime on the poster as well as stand a chance to win a prize.

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A well-known local community service program is the *Rakan Muda* youth program which is intended to create an awareness in youths of their responbility towards nation building by offering their services to the community such as bringing groceries, mowing the lawn, cleaning, washing, and painting the houses for the families in need. Serving the community enables them to learn the art of compassion, empathy, and sympathy, all of which can contribute positively towards their moral, character and behavioural development. Camps and outdoor activites are also popular activities of the *Rakan Muda* Program. For instance, the environment camp which provides workshops and seminars about the impact of climate change and global warming can help to trigger an awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. Though laudable in itself, the *Rakan Muda* Program is unknown to the majority of Malaysian students (all my respondents, with the exception of Rashid, have never heard of it). Perhaps this deficiency can be made up for through the incorporation of the *Rakan Muda* Program into the school extracurricular activities, particularly the uniform groups as these are supposed to have a community function. Through its collaboration with schools, the *Rakan Muda* Program can have a much more important role to play in the community.

In actual fact, there is a multitude of service-learning programs that can be carried out in Malaysian schools through the extracurricular activities, particularly the uniformed units. The boy scouts, for example, can participate in some kind of recycling project to raise funds for the poor, old-folks, orphans, or even natural disaster victims. The girl guides, on the other hand, can visit the old folks' homes to help with the spring cleaning. Members of the Red Crescent Society, however, can help their teacher advisors to organize blood-donation campaigns. Much would depend on the creativity of the teacher advisors and how effectively they intend to carry out these programs.

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6.3.2 Extracurricular Activities

Throughout the past decade, extracurricular activities are given strong emphasis by the Education Ministry of Malaysia as these can help to deter our students, particularly those amongst the high-risk group, from participating in antisocial activities during their unsupervised hours by getting them involved in prosocial activities. As an after-school connection, extracurricular activities, if carried out efficiently, provide the students with the reasons to stay in school (Simoncini & Caltabiono, 2012). Extracurricular activities also constitute one of the best investment-prevention approach that Malaysian schools can have to promote the healthy development of students.

Studies have indicated that students who participate actively in extracurricular activities are more likely to have better emotional/social/behavioural development, improved academic performance, higher educational aspirations, reduced antisocial behaviour/dropout rate, and future occupational success (Molinuevo, Bonillo, Pardo, Doval, & Torrubia, 2010; Dumais, 2009; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006, 2008; Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Logan & Scarborough, 2008; Ludden, 2011; Camacho & Fuligni, 2015). Extracurricular participation also reduces the likelihood of students dropping out of school (Peck, Roeser, Zarrett, & Eccles, 2008; Armstrong, 2014), drug addiction (Borden, Donnermeyer, & Scheer, 2001), and teen pregnancy thus giving them better resiliency (Himelfarb, Lac, Baharav, 2014). Apart from reducing stress, participation in extracurricular activities enable the students to explore new roles beyond the classroom setting thus providing them with the opportunity to learn the importance of teamwork and explore their leadership qualities (Ekechukwu, Ateke, & Ekenedo, 2014; Wilson, 2009). The positive developmental experiences that they encounter through their participation in extracurricular activities would enable them to develop a more positive self-image and hence a more positive lifestyle (Blomfield & Barber, 2011; Daley, 2002; Fredricks &

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Eccles, 2008). Given its importance, one cannot deny the fact that extracurricular activities do have a profound impact in the students' future career prospect – something which they cannot learn in the classrooms.

Despite the importance of extracurricular activities, student participation, particularly amongst the high-risk students, has turned out to be rather discouraging in some Malaysian schools even though these are the students who really need intervention. This is due to the ineffective manner in which these activities are being carried out in the schools:

> Nothing to do. All the students were chatting and playing with their mobile phones. It's better not to go so that I could do some part-time work and make some money.
> (AhFook/Juv/08/Sch)

> I just feel like I don't want to come to this cocurriculum activities because like it's just wasting time only… just going early for no reasons… at the same time we keep doing the same activities (sounded very angry).
> (AhMeng/Stu/03/Sch)

As the secretary for extracurricular activities in SMKX for three and a half years, it was one of my duties to go around the school and observe the teachers when the extracurricular activities were being carried out. It seems that nothing much has changed over the past few decades as many teachers still consider extracurricular activities as an onerous task and therefore lack interest and motivation to carry out these activities effectively (Norlena, Mohd Taib, & Nur Asmara Diana, 2011). Needless to say, "the lack of interest and skills among the teachers responsible for the extra-curricular activities" (Norlena, Mohd Taib, & Nur Asmara Diana, 2011, p.50) can easily lead to boredom amongst the students:

Interviewer : What do you think of the extracurricular activities in our school?
Ramu : Sometimes I feel like boring.
Interviewer : What do you mean by boring?
Ramu : Sometimes the speech are not that good… the students something like feel boring because most of the students I saw… something like the face like that (showed me his boring expression). If the speech is very good, they will be like… very active there.
Interviewer : What do you mean by the speech is not very good?
Ramu : Something like they give… ok… this one is… to show something … slowly they will go.
Interviewer : Are you trying to say that nothing much is being taught?

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Ramu : Yah
Interviewer : How do you think this can be improved?
Ramu : Maybe the teacher must have lots of techniques of speech… something like make the students happy or anything so that they will not boring and just divert their minds anywhere.
Interviewer : Are you trying to say that the teachers should come up with a variety of activities instead of just doing the same things all the time?
Ramu : Yah

(Ramu/Stu/08/Sch)

However, there are students who try to be present during the extracurricular activites even though they find them boring because they know that they have to be present:

> Because although we feel boring, if we feel we can… we have to go.
>
> (Ramu/Stu/08/Sch)

> I don't skip the extracurricular activities… it's not good to do so… and then I just go and just… just talk to my friend like that.
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/03/Sch)

Not all students can tolerate boredom and this is particularly true for those who lack commitment to school. Further, the manner in which the extracurricular activities are being carried out can be so meaningless that many students, particularly those from the high-risk group, prefer not to participate at all and spend their time elsewhere:

> I only put my name for the attendance, after that I went elsewhere. I did not take part in anything.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/09/Sch)

> Some they don't like to join cocurriculum… there's a cyber café nearby here… so like they will just keep going there until 12.30 p.m. then only they come back.
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/04/Sch)

What is even more discouraging for the students is there are teachers who come late for the extracurricular activities or do not turn up at all:

> During cocurriculum, sometimes there are teachers who do not come or come late for the club, society, and uniform group meetings. This caused all of us to feel a bit dissatisfied.
>
> (Ali/Stu/Dia/Sch)

Needless to say, when the teacher advisors are nowhere to be seen, the students will end up doing nothing:

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Interviewer : Have you ever felt bored during the extra curricular activies?
Ali : Yes.
Interviewer : Why did you feel bored?
Ali : Because sometimes there are no activities.
Interviewer : What was it that did not have activities?
Ali : Normally… Art Club
Interviewer : What did you do when there were no activities?
Ali : Sat under the tree.
Interviewer : What did you do under the tree?
Ali : I chatted with my friends.

(Ali/Stu/09/Sch)

Teachers should be aware that child development is not confined to the classrooms alone and that many aspects of child development are taking place outside the classroom. They should ensure that their students, particularly the less privileged ones, are not left behind in these activities. Sad to say, many teachers do not consider the extracurricular activities to have any importance apart from being a burden to them (Norlena, Mohd Taib, & Nur Asmara Diana, 2011). Needless to say, having teacher advisors who are always absent during the extracurricular activities would also mean that student participation is likely to be poor.

One example of the teachers' negative attitude towards extracurricular activities could be seen when I was the assistant Red House leader in SMKX. Although I prepared a timetable for each of the teacher advisors, I still had to remind them to come for the house meetings every week. If I did not remind them, it was most likely that none of them would come as had happened before. Since there were eight of us and we took turns to come (two teacher advisors per week), each of us need only to come at an average of 7 times per year. As I was teaching in the afternoon session, the house meetings started at 8.00 a.m. but my partner only came at 9.00 a.m. bringing along her children with her. With 45 minutes more to go before I dismissed the students, there was nothing much left for her to do. In a way, she was impliedly telling me how busy she was so that I would not remind her to come next time. This was just one of the many situations I have encountered pertaining to the teachers' negative attitude towards extracurricular activities. I honestly feel that family

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commitment should not be an excuse for the teachers who do not want to come for extracurricular activities. Instead of making excuses to avoid coming for extracurricular activities, they should learn time management as it helps them to prioritize their work so that the right time is given to the right activity.

Since it is compulsory for all Malaysian students to participate in at least one academic club/society, athletics club, and uniform group, continuous monitoring by the State Education Department is necessary in order to ensure that these activities are effectively carried out in the schools. The extracurricular activities, if efficiently carried out, can turn into effective and meaningful ASPs for the purposes of crime intervention and prevention. The flaws and shortcomings of our present extracurricular activities are discussed below together with suggestions for improvement in the hope that their objectives can be achieved.

6.3.2.1 Academic Clubs / Societies

In Malaysian schools, many subjects have a club which is related to it such as the English Club, Geography Club, History Club and Maths and Science Club. Apart from supplementing their classroom learning, these clubs also enable the students to organize study groups and discuss their ideas and knowledge of the subjects concerned beyond what is taught in the classroom. Language Clubs, for instance, can provide students with the opportunities to participate in essay writing competitions, debates, oratorical, and poem recitation contests to improve their thinking, reasoning, analytical, communication, decision-making, and research skills. Similarly, members of the History Club can organize field trips, conduct interviews on prominent people, participate in local history projects, or even take photos of the exhibits in the museum and create an album out of these exhibits. Members of the Geography Club, however, can build a working model of an erupting

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volcano, design a glacial landscape using plasticine, explore natural features such as the famous hot spring in Setapak, visit informative agencies such as the National Planetarium or even beautify the environment by doing some community clean-up projects. Sad to say, the problem that our students often encounter is having teacher advisors who do not carry out these activities effectively or keep doing the same monotonous things all year round. Further, some of the teacher advisors would just make their students sit in the classroom without doing anything at all:

> The teachers should carry out more activities instead of making us sit there and do nothing. Usually… at my old school, the teacher(s) would let us sit in the classroom… just sat there and didn't do anything.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/09/Sch)

Students who sit in the classroom doing nothing do not benefit from these academic clubs. Those who feel bored may just loiter around in the school particularly if their teacher advisors do not mind:

Interviewer : What did you do during the extracurricular activities?
Loga : I loiter around in the school.
Interviewer : Did your teachers scold you?
Loga : No

(Loga/Juv/06/Sch)

The manner in which these academic clubs is conducted is also rather discouraging as many of the teacher advisors seem to lack the initiative to make the activities more interesting for their students and keep doing the same things all the time:

> Very boring… they always did the same things… that was why I felt bored… sat down… took attendance… that was all… I was bored… I sat for awhile… I saw them doing the same things only… I pretended to go to the toilet… I jumped over the gate at the back… I went to CC… the CC was nearby.
>
> (Loga/Juv/06/Sch)

This clearly explains why many Malaysian students are not interested to come for the club activities even though these activities are only carried out 12 times (18 hours) per year. Based on my observations as the secretary of the extracurricular activities in SMKX, many students would just disappear before time is up thus defeating the purpose of having these academic clubs.

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In actual fact, it is not that difficult to make the club meetings interesting for the students. What they want is something challenging that really interests them and this is not difficult to come by if only the teacher advisors would put in a little effort to make the activities more meaningful for the students:

> Like if Computer Club, Malay Language Club… they should increase the activities instead of just sitting there and doing nothing.
>
> (Irwan/Juv/09/Sch)

> For club and society, I joined English club… they need to improve more like arrange one of the competitions like story-telling.
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/04/Sch)

As long as the students have something to look forward to for each club meeting, they would come at all costs. Getting the students involved through movies, documentaries, competitions, Facebook, blog posts, trips, and service-learning can even make the least interested ones to become interested. These activities have proven to be very effective for my Crime Prevention Society in SMKX and I would like to share some of my experiences as the teacher advisor in the following section.

Making the most out of movies and documentaries can attract student attention and keep them awake and interested throughout the meetings. My Crime Prevention Society members were particularly interested in the movie entitled *Juvana* (Juvenile) and documentaries like *Beyond Bars – KL's Pudu Prison*. In a way, their reflections on these movies/documentaries also made them realize the negative consequences of crime. Similarly, giving them the opportunity to come up with anti-crime slogans in poster design competitions and win a prize can be very meaningful to them. I used to sponsor the prizes myself and take photographs of the winners and their posters to be posted at the Facebook and blog that I created for our Crime Prevention Society. I have also written some blog posts about our activities and trips to show my students that whatever we did during the Crime Prevention Society meetings mattered a lot to us. By keeping the Facebook and blog

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up-to-date with our latest activities, I could make the students feel proud of what they have done during the meetings.

I found that my students were particularly interested in service-learning programs. Needless to say, conducting service-learning projects is a great way to involve students. When I organized the *Hari Raya* (Eid al-Fitr) Program for STB in 2014, there were members from other clubs/societies who skipped over to my Crime Prevention Society just because they wanted to participate in this program. Although they are not well-to-do children, they offered to bring food for the *Hari Raya* party and presents for the lucky draw event specially organized for the trainees in STB. Some of them even volunteered to bring 2 or 3 presents with them instead of only one as agreed earlier. And of course they did not mind paying RM2.50 each for the seedlings and planting them in STB for the gardening/beautifying project suggested by the vice principal of STB. They have also designed their own T-shirts just for this event. Months before *Hari Raya*, the boys had already started practising football in preparation for the friendly match in STB with Rashid as their captain. Similarly, the trainees of STB were very excited when I told them about this program. When I was transferred suddenly to SMKS before *Hari Raya*, all those involved in this program were extremely disappointed after having planned for this event for months. Rashid was so desperate that he begged me to take them there on a Saturday but since I was no longer their teacher, I could not take them out anymore. Following my transfer to SMKS, this program was aborted:

Interviewer : Who took over the Crime Prevention Society after I was transferred to another school?
Rashid : The one who took over… ahh… no one… because they all waited… after that suddenly… they all did not want to come anymore… many did not come… I also already like… did not come (disappointed).

(Rashid/Stu/08/Sch)

My *Hari Raya* Program for STB may have failed to materialize, but it clearly showed how happy and excited the students could be when given the chance to participate in a service-

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learning program. It has also proven that a caring society can actually begin in school through meaningful participation in extracurricular activities.

Although my *Hari Raya* Program for STB can be easily replicated by other clubs/societies as well as the uniform groups after some minor modifications such as changing the venue, sad to say, many teachers are not in favour with the idea of taking their students out for service-learning activities because of the amount of paper work involved. Taking the students out would mean that they have to apply for permission from the Education Department, notify parents, prepare the *kertas kerja* (working paper) before the trip and submit a copy of the documentation to the extracurriculum unit after the trip. Since planning, organizing, and conducting meaningful activities for the students take so much time and effort, it is much easier to make the students stay in the classroom. Perhaps the situation can be improved if the procedure involved could be simplified by taking out the paper work component.

6.3.2.2 Sports / Games

Sports and games are amongst the most popular of all extracurricular activities in Malaysian schools. Through team sports such as soccer and hockey, students not only learn to work and cooperate with others but also develop a more positive self image, better leadership qualities, greater self-awareness, and higher cognitive abilities. Participation in sports can also play an active role in crime intervention since children who are active in sports do not have the time to indulge in antisocial activities (Nichols, 2007). Being physically active is also a picture of fitness and good health. But why is attendance so poor even for the sports activities in school even though the students need only to come 12 times (24 hours) per year? One reason is that it is difficult to make the students come when their teacher advisors are not there. I have seen students coming to school at 8.00 a.m. to play

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football but after having waited eagerly for some time on the field only to find that their teacher advisor was nowhere to be seen, they went home in disappointment. Having teacher advisors who are busy with their laptop or chatting with their colleagues whilst the students are playing on their own does not help either. As what one of my respondents said, "They should invite a coach and train us so that we can become more skillful and we also can fight with the other schools" (AhMeng/Stu/Sch/04). One cannot deny the fact that coaching is an important aspect of sports/games without which the students would never be able to develop to their full potential or learn new skills, particularly if the teacher advisors do not know how to coach the students themselves:

Interviewer : What about games?
Ah Meng : Oh games I am join the badminton… badminton club is nothing.
Interviewer : What do you mean by "nothing"?
Ah Meng : We are not doing anything… not learning anything. We just keep playing, playing only. If we just play like that, we cannot improve.
(AhMeng/Stu/04/Sch)

Since some of the teacher advisors have no experience in sports/games, having a coach to train the students for them is the only alternative they could have. If the students keep on playing without knowing the correct badminton techniques, they would never have proper knowledge on how to play badminton. To enhance student participation, teacher advisors should also organize some friendly matches so as to give the students something to look forward to for each meeting.

6.3.2.3 Uniform Groups

Uniform groups such as St. John Ambulance, Red Crescent Society, Girl Guides, and Boy Scouts provide the students with the opportunity to serve the community and reach out to those in need. St. John Ambulance and the Red Crescent Society members, for instance, are active in community service such as blood donation, *gotong-royong*, visiting old folks' homes and orphanages to bring hope to the inmates. Similarly, the boy scouts and girl

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guides can live up to their oath by helping those in need at all times through their service to others such as community cleanup, *gotong-royong*, and giving a helping hand to the Tsunami or flood victims. Service-learning activities like soliciting donations, visiting hospitals, helping orphaned children, preparing/serving foods, collecting/distributing clothes and food items, cleaning up litter, engaging in neighbourhood beautification projects, repairing/repainting homes/wall murals, working with senior citizens, sick or disabled individuals can be very meaningful to those involved. Knowing that they are also contributing members of the community can provide them with a sense of importance and enable them to look at the world from a better perspective. In addition to developing leadership skills, volunteering enhances the students' self-esteem and makes them feel good about themselves. Given the opportunity to meet people from various cultural, socioeconomic, religious, ethnic, and racial backgrounds, they also learn to conquer their own worries, fears, and negative thoughts particularly when they see that there are others who may be in a less advantageous situation than themselves.

Although there are many uniform groups in Malaysian schools such as St. John Ambulance, Red Crescent Society, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, and Police Cadet, their aims and mission are not effectively carried thus defeating the purpose of these uniform groups:

> For the uniform groups, I got forced to join the Police Cadet because previously in January I was in 1 E… because 1 E and 1 F has to join Police Cadet so I have no choice or else I would have joined PBSM- stands for Red Crescent Society but lucky I didn't join PBSM. I asked my friend what did you guys do in the PBSM… they just say like… the activities like go and pick leaves. I ask did you have learned any about medical, they say no. The PBSM should learn basic medicals and of course they have to learn CPU or something like that. But this year PBSM is just like the scouts and Police Cadet … just march, march, march on the field only.
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/03/Sch)

Teacher advisors who lack ideas and keep doing the same things over and over again all the time are indirectly discouraging the students from coming for the uniform group meetings even though these meetings are only held 18 times (27 hours) per year (on Wednesdays alternating with club/society meetings):

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Interviewer : Do you skip the uniform group meetings or not?
Azman : Er… uniform group… yes.
Interviewer : Do you always skip the uniform group meetings?
Azman : Always
Interviewer : Why do you skip?
Azman : Because not interestinglah… because they do the same things every day.

(Azman/Stu/08/Sch)

Interviewer : Which uniform group did you join?
Rashid : I joined Kadet Remaja (Youth Cadet).
Interviewer : What do you think of this uniform group?
Rashid : It has to be *teratur* (well-formed)…. if they want to do parades they must be well-formed.
Interviewer : You mean they are not well-formed now?
Rashid : Ahh… sometimes they are not well-formed… in the beginning… the first time many came for the *mesyuarat agung* (first general meeting)… after that many did not come… getting fewer and fewer.
Interviewer : Did you come?
Rashid : Initially yes… but towards the end... seldom
Interviewer : Why didn't you come?
Rashid : Because… they did the same things ahh.
Interviewer : What do you mean by *the same things*?
Rashid : What we had to do was just marching… that's all.

(Rashid/Stu/09/Sch)

These conversations clearly show that even good students do not come for the uniform group meetings at times particularly when they get bored with doing the same things over and over again. Children enjoy voluntary work and getting them involved in service-learning is one way of ensuring that they participate fully in the extracurricular activities. Ramu, for instance, has participated in a lot of voluntary services organized by the Rotary Club. As stated in his diary:

> I has involve in a lot of activities and gain a lot benefits and experience from the activities. It's give me a lot of confidence, ideas to stay away from bad things and improve my studies. From this I also had learned how to help poor people for this education. We have to do this because this will bring a joyness and happiness to us and the person that we helped.
>
> (Ramu/Stu/Dia/Com)

Like Ramu, Ah Meng also likes to be involved in volunteer work. As someone who is actively involved with voluntary services at the temple, Ah Meng is extremely disappointed with the way the uniform groups are being conducted in school:

> …like there's nothing else what we are going to do… just march all the time. At the same time like… I feel like it's strange… why we didn't go to the camp… why we didn't go out something else like go to the old folks' home… help each

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> other. I just feel something very, very strange you know… like this secondary school activity.
>
> (AhMeng/Stu/03/Sch)

The least that the teacher advisors can do is to "organize some competitions… like the scouts… competition to tie knots" (Irwan/Juv/09/Sch). Irwan's suggestion does have some merit since competitions can ease boredom during the uniform group meetings particularly if the students have nothing else to do. The problem lies with the teacher advisors who prefer to make the students march on the fields under the hot sun all year round.

Although the Education Ministry has made it compulsory for every student to have at least 15-20 hours of service-learning per year, the funds allocated for it is normally spent on *ceramah* (talks) in order to "avoid trouble" (quoting what the head of extracurricular activities of SMKX said when I suggested otherwise because she knew that many teachers would make a big fuss over it):

Interviewer : How are the uniform group activities being carried out in your school?
Irwan : Just sit in the hall and listen to talks for awhile… after that go home.

(Irwan/Juv/09/Sch)

It should be noted that sitting in the hall and listening to talks is nothing compared to the actual service-learning itself. Listening to talks/speeches is not service-learning and cannot replace it. If every uniform group is to carry out their own service-learning programs during the meetings, the talks/speeches are totally unnecessary. The problem lies in the fact that the uniform group meetings only last for 90 minutes per session (normally 11.20 a.m. to 12.50 p.m. for the afternoon session and 1.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m. for the morning session) and there is insufficient time to carry out service-learning projects effectively. In many one-session schools, the uniform group meetings are conducted during school hours from 7.30 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. (due to poor attendance if the meetings are conducted after school) thus defeating the purpose of having these uniform groups as they are intended to keep the students out of mischief during the nonschool hours. Further, when these meetings are held in the mornings, they are often replaced by school events such as prize-giving ceremonies,

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talks, speeches, retirement, and farewell ceremonies. Since students are assumed to have attended the uniform group meetings when they are present for these school events, the actual number of times they come for the uniform group meetings is less than 18 per year.

Effective service-learning is only possible if there is sufficient time for it to be carried out properly. For instance, whenever I had any programs for my students, I took them out at 8.00 a.m. and brought them back to school by 12.30 p.m. for lunch since the afternoon session starts at 1.00 p.m. Nothing much could be done if I were to take them out at 11.20 a.m. and bring them back to school by 12.50 p.m. Perhaps it is time for the Education Ministry to look into the possibility of having longer school hours so that whatever programs intended for the benefit of the students can be carried out more effectively with ample time during the students' unsupervised hours before or after school.

6.4 Single-Session Schools

ASPs "have become an important setting for aiding schools' mission of promoting positive youth development and academic achievement, and accumulating evidence indicates that program quality is critical to their success" (Oh, Osgood, & Smith, 2015, p.681). A potentially negative aspect of ASPs is having teachers who are "unable to organize and perform extracurricular activities effectively" (Zalina, Norihan, & Nooraini, 2013, p.439). The presence of teacher advisors who are totally unprepared to carry out the activities or are unwilling to spend extra hours in school, or simply carry out some activities in an ineffective manner "just to meet the school administrators' directive" (Zalina, Norihan, & Nooraini, 2013, p.439) can easily cause their students to lose interest in the after-school programs altogether. The problem lies in the fact that some Malaysian teachers do not like the idea of coming to school early or staying back after school to conduct the extracurricular activities. It is not uncommon for these teachers to push their work to others

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in order to avoid working extra hours. For instance, when one of the teachers in SMKX was chosen to be the advisor of the Table Tennis Club, she negotiated with the head of extracurricular activities to make a new teacher exchange with her for the reason that she would be robbed if she had to go to work early in the morning as she had earlier been robbed of her mobile phone. Because of her seniority, the head of extracurricular activities had to give in to her irrational demand and she ended up being the advisor for the Chess Club instead. Since the Table Tennis Club is conducted on Mondays from 8.00-9.30 a.m. and the Chess Club is conducted on Fridays from 12.30-2.00 p.m., this would mean that she need not come early to school.

The problems encountered in the implementation of ASPs can be overcome if all teachers are required to stay in school from 7.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Working nine hours a day like other government servants would mean that they would not pick and choose the kind of extracurricular activity that does not require them to spend extra hours in school. Since there is a great disparity between the workload of teachers from single-session and two-session schools, having a fixed number of working hours for teachers would also mean that all of them would have equal workload and work the same number of hours.

Presently, single-session schools normally end at 1.50 p.m., 2.30 p.m. or even 3.30 p.m. depending on the school. In some schools, there are meetings to attend almost every day until late in the evenings as the school principals are free in the afternoons. In actual fact, many of these meetings are totally unnecessary and uncalled for. In SMKS for instance, a meeting held to brief the teachers how to give out the RM100 schooling aid to the students can last for 2 hours whilst a meeting to identify the students who did not pay school fees can take up to 3 hours as the class teachers have to read out the names of the students one by one and provide reasons why they have not paid their fees during the

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meeting. These issues can easily be solved without the need to call for meetings. The time spent on meetings can actually be utilized for the ASPs for the benefit of the students.

On the other hand, the morning session of two-session schools have to dismiss the students at 1.00 p.m. (on normal days) or 2.30 p.m. (if there are extracurricular activities) to make way for the afternoon session as the afternoon session normally starts at 1.00 p.m. Since the school principals are busy with the afternoon session, meetings are seldom held which means that the teachers in two-session schools can go back early almost every day. This clearly explains why many Malaysian teachers are not in favour of one-session schools. For instance, when one of the English teachers in my former school, SMKX (a two-session school), was transferred to SMKS (a single-session school), she was very unhappy about it. SMKS is famous for its frequent and lengthy meetings that can extend late into the evenings and this would mean that she would have to stay back until late in the evenings almost every day. Since she did not want to go to SMKS, she persuaded the school principal to put me in her place and this clearly explains for my sudden transfer. In actual fact, some teachers in SMKX told me that they would rather travel far from their homes to teach in this school because it is a one-session school and there is less work to do compared to the two-session schools in their housing areas. Further, they can also go back early almost every day. Even those who are staying within walking distance from SMKS have chosen to teach in SMKX because SMKS is famous for its meetings. This kind of situation would not have existed if all Malaysian teachers have a fixed number of working hours. As a lecturer in a teachers' training institute now, it is my hope that this can be achieved through the implementation of single-session schools throughout the country.

Until the implementation of single-session schools is fully accomplished, all two-session school teachers should be made aware that it is their responsibility to come early to school or stay back after school to conduct the ASPs for the benefit of their students.

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Similarly, ASPs can be carried out in two-session schools until 4.30 p.m. every day. Keeping the schools open for longer hours and using them as a venue for ASPs can help to transform the schools into community centres thus expanding their advantages and benefits for the students. Students from two-session schools who spend the hours in the morning doing nothing or are dismissed early in the afternoon may get entangled with some kind of antisocial activities during those unsupervised hours before and after school. The same applies to students from one-session schools who are dismissed at 1.50 p.m. or 2.30 p.m. Getting them involved in ASPs can prevent them from falling into mischief. Most important of all, the extension of school hours would enable the ASPs to be carried out even more effectively and meaningfully.

6.5 School-Based Assessment

School-based assessment (SBA) is an assessment process whereby the students are being assessed by their subject teachers who would determine if a particular learning outcome has been achieved by the students. Instead of giving marks to the students, the students are told which outcomes they have achieved and which they have not. For those who have not achieved the outcomes required for their age group, the subject teachers concerned would help them to achieve those outcomes. This method of assessment which includes project work, assignments, presentations, and group discussions provides the students with multiple opportunities to achieve the necessary outcomes required in the learning process. The SBA has already been adopted for a long time by many countries throughout the world including Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scandinavia, and Scotland. In these countries, the teachers themselves take responsibility for the school-based assessment system through a wide range of challenging tasks and activities which clearly accounts for the high standard of education in these countries.

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The School-Based Assessment Curriculum was implemented at the primary and secondary levels in Malaysian schools in 2011 and 2012 respectively with the intention to replace the current public examinations as part of the country's educational reform in stages (Faizah, 2011; Alla Baksh, Mohd Sallehhudin, Tayeb, & Norhaslinda, 2016). Under this new holistic assessment system, teachers are given the empowerment to assess their students' cognitive (intellect), affective (emotional and spiritual) and psychomotor (physical) aspects in line with the country's National Philosophy of Education and the standards-based school curriculum through the designation of appropriate assessment tasks or activities that align with their students' learning outcomes (Nor Hasnida, 2016). They have to monitor their students continuously and give constructive feedback to improve their learning abilities and as such the SBA Curriculum also helps to improve their teaching strategies (Azlin Norhaini, Ong, Mohamad Sattar, Rose Aminah & Nurhayati, 2013). Since the SBA Curriculum caters to the differing needs of the students, it is most appropriate for the weaker students as it helps to prevent them from dropping out of school since children tend to have better interest in their studies if they find school less stressful. Weaker students can therefore progress at their own pace and no longer have to worry about being exam machines and competing with their contemporaries in school to get high marks in their exams or a higher position in class. These changes in the examination system "must be seen in the wider context of increased autonomy for Malaysian schools" as the "trend is moving towards empowering the schools and greater community involvement" (Vlaardingerbroek & Taylor, 2009, p.117).

However, like the Teaching of Mathematics and Science in English (PPSMI), the SBA Curriculum was strongly opposed by the teachers and was put on hold in 2014. One of the major problems encountered in the SBA approach was the fact that many teachers lacked knowledge and skills in conducting school-based assessment despite the availability

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of guidelines and objectives (Faizah, 2011; Rohaya, Hamimah, Nor Sahidah & Mohd Aisamuddin, 2014). Many of my former colleagues, for instance, did not take the trouble to design any assessment tasks at all but took them directly from only one book, in other words, they only ordered one workbook with a series of exercises and made the students do all the exercises in this workbook as their assessment. Although the teachers collected back the workbooks after every lesson and tore out the answer page from the workbooks so that the students would not get to see the answers, students who were ambitious to get better results could easily go to the bookshops to get another one and memorize all the answers prior to their assessment in school thus rendering this method of assessment ineffective and invalid. Due to the invalidity of this method of assessment, the monthly tests, midyear and final examinations had to go on as usual thus defeating the purpose of the SBA. To make matters worse, some of the teachers did not complete their assessment tasks but simply keyed in the bands into the computer system based on their instinct. And of course those who did not key in anything at all were greatly relieved when the SBA was put on hold in 2014! As what Tan Sri Dr Murad Mohammad Nor, the former Education-Director General said, "the most important part in the implementation of any plan, is the teachers. However good the plan, it will be of no use if the teachers do not implement it well" (as cited in Hamzah & Sinnasamy, 2009, p.14).

The recent reimplementation of the SBA Curriculum would mean that the Education Ministry or State Education Department would have to monitor the progress of the teachers continuously in order to enhance its effectiveness and ensure that the assessment tasks are valid and effectively carried out. Due to the possibility of biasness in grading, they should also ensure that the keying-in of the bands is based on evidence of the students' performance and not the teachers' instinct. As the implementation of the SBA is dependent on the teachers' attitude, their knowledge of the assessment procedure, and skills

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in implementing the procedure, they must be properly trained and given meaningful and relevant input with regard to the SBA curriculum (Mohd Aisamuddin & Rohaya, 2013). Since many teachers still do not understand the rationale of the SBA curriculum and its benefits to the students, they should be sent for courses so as to make them more receptive to the changes that come with the country's educational reform. Having a master trainer in the school to monitor their progess and give them the necessary feedback would also help to ensure the smooth running of the SBA curriculum. There is no doubt that the Malaysian education system is one of the best in the world as it emphasizes on quality education that caters for the needs of the whole child but much would still depend on how well it is being carried out by the teachers.

6.6 Concluding Summary

This chapter looks into the investment-prevention strategies that can help to alleviate juvenile delinquency in Malaysia and how these can be implemented effectively in the schools. Also referred to as the *school-based after-school programs*, these include tutoring programs, mentoring programs, truancy programs, peer programs, service-learning programs, and extracurricular activities. As an after-school connection, the extracurricular activities are categorized into academic clubs/societies, sports/games, and uniform units. Although these ASPs are nothing new to the Malaysian Education System, their effectiveness is yet to be seen. In this chapter, the weaknesses of these programs are highlighted and suggestions for more effective implementation of these programs are discussed. In addition to the ASPs, a discussion of the advantages and benefits of the single-session school system as well as the school-based assessment system have also been put forth for the purposes of more effective prevention and control of juvenile delinquency in the future. Needless to say, prolonged school hours can help to reduce or prevent

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antisocial behaviour during the students' unsupervised hours before and after school through meaningful participation in ASPs whilst the SBA Curriculum has an effective role to play in overcoming school failure and dropout prevention.

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CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary of Findings

This study adds to existing literature by identifying the risk and protective factors affecting juvenile delinquent behaviour within the various settings that contain my respondents and utilizing information on these factors as tools to design effective investment-prevention strategies to prevent or reduce the onset of crime and delinquency. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory which places great emphasis on the environment as the major force that influences child development, my findings not only reaffirm the important roles played by the family, school, and peers in affecting juvenile delinquent behaviour as indicated in previous research but also bring forth new knowledge associated with the important aspects of these major domains.

The current study not only corroborates earlier findings that the family, particularly the parents or primary caregivers, have a significant role to play in the proper upbringing of children but also provides a deeper insight into the various parenting practices in Malaysia and their effects on the behavioural outcomes of children. The findings clearly indicate that single mothers are less well-equipped in raising a family due to diminished financial resources and their lack of authority over their children, particularly their sons. It takes a lot of courage and determination for a single woman to raise a family and not everyone can afford to take up this responsibility even though some of them can do quite well. Divorced fathers, on the other hand, are not only unwilling to provide for their children from a former marriage but seem to have disappeared completely from their lives altogether. The results also indicate that the family's low socioeconomic status can have a crime enhancing effect as poor children are more likely to resort to illegal means to increase their pocket money in order to live up to the expectations of society. What is even worse is the fact that some poor

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parents prefer to keep one eye closed even though they have knowledge of their children's antisocial activities and do not even consider the consequences of their children's misbehaviour as long as their children do not give them trouble. This kind of parents would normally discover the harm that they have done to their children (through their inaction) when their children have done something seriously wrong by the time it is already too late as indicated in the lives of my respondents from STB. My findings also indicate how cruel a father could be when he threw his 13-year-old son out of the house telling him not to return home again on the assumption that he was dead. Any parent in his right senses would not treat his own flesh and blood in such a cold-blooded manner regardless of how mischievous the child is. This was indeed an eye-opening incident as it clearly brings to light the inhuman side of a father.

On the other hand, my findings have shown that good parenting can atone for the inadequacies in a child's life even under the most adverse circumstances. Parents who are concerned about their children and try to provide for them irrespective of the family's financial circumstances could give their children the impetus to study hard and excel in life so as to improve the family's situation as one way to express their gratitude to their parents. Knowing that whatever they do matters a lot to their parents, they would try their best to live up to their parents' expectations and would not do anything to disappoint them even if it means that they have to forego some of the things they like to do. Having parents who keep track of their daily activities would also mean that they do not have much opportunity to mingle with antisocial peers, roam the streets, or participate in antisocial activities.

The current study also results in the production of many new discoveries pertaining to my respondents' school experiences (in an unexpected manner). The video cues used in my stimulative-recall methodology have stimulated my respondents to recall many of their school experiences which they gladly shared with me. However, their school experiences

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have also revealed the painful truth that some Malaysian teachers are still treating their students without respect (such as calling them names and mocking them), teaching ineffectively and inefficiently, not entering class, refusing to come for extracurricular activities, conducting the extracurricular activities in an ineffective manner, and inflicting irrational physical punishment on the students as a means of correction. Although it is not uncommon for teachers to be rude to the slow learners and troublemakers, it has never occurred to me that they could do the same to good students even though these students have not done anything to deserve it. As caregivers in the school microsystem, teachers should know how to respect their students instead of making life difficult for them, calling them names like "pig" or "idiot" and inflicting irrational physical punishment on them as these would not only destroy their interest in learning and reduce their commitment to school but also enhance their antisocial behaviour. Sad to say, none of the local researchers has given any emphasis on the impact which negative teacher attitude can have on the students' behavioural outcomes even though this issue can turn out to be a serious one.

Although school experiences have an essential role to play in child development, very few local researchers have given attention to the ineffective and monotonous teaching and learning activities that are being carried out in the classrooms or the ineffective manner in which the extracurricular activitites are being conducted in the schools. As clearly proven in this study, ineffective teaching strategies can make learning difficult for the students and destroy their interest to learn whilst meaningless extracurricular activities can be so repulsive to the students that many of them, particularly those from the high risk-group, have chosen to stay away from these activities thus defeating the purpose of these activities which are intended to keep the students in school during their unsupervised hours. Similarly, the issue of teachers not entering class has never been given its due attention by our local researchers even though this can have serious repercussions on the students. As

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indicated in this study, students not only create havoc in the classroom when there is no teacher around, but in the long run, this "no-teacher classroom situation" may also cause some of the students to lose interest in their studies and even drop out of school. Although there are students who can manage to study on their own or form study groups, not all of them would take the initiative to do so and this is particularly true for high-risk students who would take every opportunity to avoid learning and drop out of school when they do not have adequate academic support. My findings therefore bring to light many eye-opening occurrences in Malaysian schools that ought be taken seriously by the Ministry of Education.

My findings are also consistent with earlier literature on the positive correlation between delinquency and association with deviant peers. Association with deviant peers increases the likelihood of antisocial behaviour since children tend to emulate their peers and adopt their attitudes and behaviours irrespective of whether they are right or wrong. The results of this study clearly indicate that children mingling with peers who are actively participating in some kind of antisocial activities are likely to indulge in these activities themselves so as not to be left out. On the other hand, children who mingle with prosocial peers are most unlikely to participate in antisocial activities because none of their peers is doing so. Children do not normally venture into crime or delinquency alone as they need a lot of encouragement and support from their peers to perform such challenging tasks, or in other words, delinquency is still a group activity.

My findings relating to negative peer associations also resulted in some new discoveries pertaining to the seriousness of loafing which is a common practice amongst many Malaysian children. Loafing or *lepak* in Malay can be taken to mean idling away one's time aimlesslessly and hanging around without doing anything in particular. Since hanging around without doing anything seems to be heaven for many Malaysian children,

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the *lepak* culture is getting more and more rampant in this country. However, the negative effects of loafing cannot be overlooked as this term may not be as harmless as it seems to be. My study has indicated that this seemingly harmless activity can turn out to be one of the most prominent causal factors in crime and delinquency. This is because children who hang around with delinquent peers tend to come up naturally with all kinds of creative antisocial ideas such as stealing, burglary, robbery, vandalism, mugging, house and shop breaking. Some may be doing it out of necessity whilst others may do so just for the fun of it because they have nothing to do. Whatever the situation may be, loafing is harmful to the children as it may spark off their criminal career. Needless to say, members of the public are also negatively affected by their antisocial activities

My study also brings to light some important information pertaining to the roles played by the local crime gangs or triads in inducing crime and delinquency amongst Malaysian students. As indicated in this study, gang or triad membership means a lot to children who lack family support, protection, security, and status. For those who are involved with criminal activities such as selling stolen motorcycles, gang/triad membership provides them with a licence to carry out their business without being harassed by those in the same niche. Since crime gangs/triads have already seeped into the schools, it is nothing surprising if the schools are to play the role of producing generations of gang/triad members. Once the students have sworn in as members of these crime gangs/triads, they would end up being life members as they are not allowed to leave the organization without bringing trouble upon themselves. Although crime gangs and triads provide security and protection for their members, this service is not free as their members have to do something in return which may turn out to be criminal in nature thus putting the children at risk of crime and delinquency as this study clearly illustrates. Since crime gang/triad members should always be ready to defend and stand up for each other even if it involves putting up

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a fight (whenever circumstances demand it), gang clashes are not uncommon and when these happen, death or injury is inevitable due to the aggressive and violent manner of the fights. This, therefore, is the fate that would befall our children if they become involved in crime gangs or triads.

Contrary to previous literature, my findings do not show any causal relationship between urbanization on the delinquent or non-delinquent behaviour of my respondents. The behaviour of my respondents from STB have proven that even a peaceful village environment can bring about the occurrences of crime and delinquency through the formation of delinquent peer groups. On the contrary, all the temptations present in the heart of the city of Kuala Lumpur have failed to play havoc with the lives of my student respondents because of their good upbringing. Neither does the neighbourhood infrastructure have any effect on my respondents as children do not normally make use of facilities that are meaningless to them. On the other hand, they do not mind travelling far and wide to look for things that interest them. My study has indicated that the best buffer against adverse neighbourhood effects is proper parental supervision and control. Parents who are fully aware of their children's whereabouts and do not give them much freedom to go out untended are more likely to bring up good children. Through positive parenting, they can instill in their children the positive aspects of physical, mental, spiritual, and moral development which can help them to resist the lure of temptation found within their social environment. On the other hand, children who lack parental supervision and control are more vulnerable to external influences as they are free to follow the tide.

The findings that have resulted from his study strongly propose that the major factors affecting juvenile delinquency are the community social processes with the family, school, and peers as mediators (Brisman, 2012; Mulvey, Steinbery, Piquero, Besana, Fagan, Schubert, & Cauffman, 2010). These findings enable the researcher to come out

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with some practicable ideas and suggestions for possible intervention programs that can help to deter juvenile crime and delinquency. As there is no single route to delinquency, many factors would have to be taken into consideration in the implementation of these early prevention strategies. What is really lacking in the current crime prevention programs in Malaysia is an acceptable theoretical framework that can be integrated with the research findings and put into practice through the development of effective intervention measures and I have made up for this shortcoming in this study.

My findings have indicated that "programs involving a juvenile's family, school, peers, and community are most effective in minimizing factors that contribute to serious violent juvenile offending and maximizing those that prevent delinquency" (Catalano, Loeber, & McKinney, 1999, p.1). These programs can best be carried out in the schools as they can be easily accessible by the students. Since the ecology of crime is a complex phenomenon involving the family, school, peers, and the community, any intervention programs implemented should therefore include "actions intended to change the social conditions that are believed to sustain crime in residential communities" (Hope, 1995, p.21). These can be achieved through the collaboration of schools, families, and the community. It should be noted that the importance of early intervention and prevention strategies lies in the fact that they not only prevent the development of future delinquent behaviour but also promote the emotional, psychological, and social development of high-risk children.

When the school bell rings in the early noons, sending out millions of school children onto the streets, the peak time for juvenile participation in crime and delinquency begins. Needless to say, children who are left unsupervised during the after-school hours are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour compared to those with proper supervision and monitoring. The time after school is therefore the best time for the implementation of

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"meaningful' activities that could enhance the children's emotional, psychological, and social development. The term *meaningful* in this aspect refers to organized and well-structured skill-building activities with proper guidance and supervision from adults that are intended to achieve specific goals (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Larson, 2000; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). These activities can best be implemented in the form of school-based ASPs such as tutoring programs, mentoring programs, peer programs, truancy programs, and extracurricular activities. If properly carried out, these activities would enable the students to learn and develop in a safe environment without having to burden the parents financially. Since many Malaysian parents, particularly those from the poor working class, really lack proper parenting skills, schools should play a more important role as the fuel of child development. By getting the parents involved through the various programs in school (such as the parent-teacher association), schools can also work together with the parents to build a culture of engagement that could enhance the students' learning and well-being. Similarly, its collaboration with the community through properly organized before- and after-school programs (such as service-learning) would result in a myriad of positive outcomes amongst the students. These include higher academic achievement, improved self-esteem, a more positive self image, better behaviour, character, and attitude as well as reduced antisocial behaviour and dropout rate.

7.2 Cost-Benefit Analysis

The increase in juvenile crime rate is an indication that many of our youths are wasting their lives in prison. The lifelong harms that stem from early behavioural problems in the form of adult criminal behaviour can be very costly not only to the individuals concern but also to their families and society. These convicted youths not only stand in a very disadvantageous position in today's job market but also cost the country a high price in

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unemployment, lost revenues, and criminal justice. The costs of arrest, adjudication, and incarceration are too excessive to determine and not easy to be estimated in monetary values as these may amount to billions of ringgit a year. Further, there is no guarantee that the juveniles behind bars would not reoffend upon their return to society which would mean that further costs would be incurred. Several studies focusing on cost-benefit analyses (Welsh & Farrington, 2000) have indicated that early intervention programs intended to prevent the development of criminal behaviour in children at an early age not only produced many fruitful outcomes but could turn out to be very cost effective in the long run. Even minor behaviour changes in children resulting from early intervention can bring about significant social and economic benefits. Investing in early prevention programs is therefore the best possible solution to the problems associated with crime and delinquency.

For each ringgit spent on early prevention or intervention programs, is it possible to get back more than a ringgit's worth of benefits? How can we offer taxpayers the best return of their ringgit? The cost-effectiveness of any program is the criterion that is often used to determine programs that serve the needs of the community whilst at the same time taking into consideration the available resources. Given our country's present economic situation, school-based ASPs are the most cost effective intervention-prevention programs that our country could have as these are not jeopardised by budget restrictions. Further, they have been in existence for decades and are easily accessible by all students. All we need to do is to enhance their effectiveness and this can be done without further burdening our government or taxpayers. School-based intervention programs, if successfully implemented, not only pay for themselves but also represent a multi-million ringgit return to the government not only in terms of reduced correctional, welfare, and social services costs but also increased employment and tax revenue. Investing in these cost effective programs would certainly give taxpayers a good return on their ringgit.

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7.3 Policy Implications

This study has important policy implications as the discovery of risk and protective factors associated with juvenile delinquent behaviour has provided the researcher with the idea to propose the necessary school-based ASPs for the purposes of early intervention and prevention. These are intended to provide all Malaysian students with a variety of constructive skill-building programs to keep them in school during the unsupervised hours when they are most vulnerable to external influences. By providing the children with a safe and stable environment to learn and develop, they will be more likely to achieve scholastic success and less likely to engage in antisocial behaviour. In a way, the ASPs also save the parents the trouble of thinking where to send their children whilst they are at work. This is particularly true for poor parents who have no choice but to put up with their latchkey children as they cannot afford to pay for tutoring programs, skill-building programs, or nannies. Through their interactive partnerships with parents, NGOs, and even the police in the ASPs, schools would have more effective roles to play in promoting positive child development whilst at the same time protecting their students from the adverse influences of their social environment. Needless to say, the role of schools as community institutions would be greatly enhanced through the implementation of school-based ASPs as these can help to strengthen community cohesion.

In a way, the unexpected discoveries of the "hidden truths" pertaining to my respondents' school experiences can have a lot to contribute towards the improvement of the school system. The flaws and weaknesses of the present school system, if made known to the Ministry of Education or State Education Department, would enable them to monitor closely what is going on in the schools and "supervise school practices to align them with the demands of children in the twenty first century" (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015, p.125). For instance, frequent in-depth monitoring and supervision can be carried out in the schools

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by the relevant authorities so as to ensure that the teachers are really teaching effectively and making use of teaching strategies that correspond to the learning needs of their students. School principals can also play a more effective role in the supervision of teachers to ensure that "proper teaching, scheming, and planning is done" (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015, p.125). Teachers who are always absent and cannot finish the syllabus on time can be made to replace the classes instead of asking the students to study on their own. Similarly, those who are exhibiting bad attitude towards their students, do not like to enter class, teach ineffectively, do not mark exercise books, and punish their students irrationally can be sent for retraining during the school holidays so as to enhance their professionalism.

With the discovery of the ineffective and monotonous ways in which the ASPs are being carried out in the schools at present, the authorities concerned can now take more drastic measures to enhance their effectiveness and ensure that these programs really benefit the students. For instance, the head of extracurricular activities in every school can take the initiative to monitor closely what the teacher advisors are doing during the extracurricular activities instead of leaving everything to them. The ASPs, if conducted efficiently and meaningfully, can turn into effective investment-prevention strategies that can alleviate juvenile delinquency in Malaysia.

Since teachers who are already in the comfort zone are less likely to do their work efficiently and more likely to push their work to others, the Ministry of Education or State Education Department can consider transferring teachers who have been teaching in the same school for more than ten years (who are enjoying their comfort zone) to a new school environment so that they can live up to their potential. Sad to say, there are teachers who want to stay put for fear of the extra workload that comes with the new school environment and would desperately look for a substitute when they are being transferred to another

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school. My sudden transfer to SMKS to replace another teacher is a very good example of this kind of teacher attitude.

The Education Ministry can also consider the implementation of one-session schools throughout the country and prolong the school hours from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. so that the ASPs can be carried out more effectively and with ample time. Since one of the reasons for school failure is the students' inability to catch up with their lessons as indicated in my findings, the Education Ministry can look into more effective ways of implementing the SBA curriculum as well as the tutoring programs in school. As for the schools that are invaded by crime gangs/triads, the State Education Department can consider relocating the student gang/triad members or possibly take action against them so as to weaken their influences on other students. The schools affected can also work closely with the police in order to curb their activities. With the transformation of schools going on actively in this country at present, there is no doubt that the findings that have resulted from this study as well as the researcher's suggestions for change can bring forth lots of improvements in our present education system and arrest the decline in our education standards.

7.4 Limitations of Study and Future Research

No research is without its limitations and the current study is no exception. The current study seeks to identify the various risk and protective factors associated with juvenile delinquency within the family, school, peer groups, and community microsystems. Since the findings of this study are based mainly on the study of male delinquents/students, future research should therefore incorporate female delinquents/students to see if the outcome would be the same. This is because females tend to indulge in less violent behaviours such as stealing, cheating, and bullying compared to males who seem to have more courage to

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participate in violent crimes such as robbery, gang fights, and murder (Liem, Cavell, & Lustig, 2010; Weerman & Hoeve, 2012; Hart & Mueller, 2013).

Since my respondents are either institutionalized young offenders or my former students, the participants of status offences such as prostitution and premarital sexuality who are not institutionalized are omitted in this study. Future research can therefore include these participants so as to supplement the knowledge generated in this study. Further, the present study has also failed to look into the effects of individual characteristics, religion and the mass media on juvenile delinquency and the protective factors associated with these aspects. It is therefore strongly recommended that future researchers should explore these areas particularly with reference to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Future researchers should also look into possible family-based, peer-based, and community-based intervention programs in order to supplement the school-based intervention programs emphasized by the researcher.

With the dramatic increase in the juvenile population every year, there is the undeniable need for further research in this subject area so as to provide more valuable insight into the nature of this problem in the hope that more effective measures can be developed to overcome juvenile delinquency. My study on juvenile delinquency does not end upon the completion of this thesis as it also marks the beginning of my research into this area. My future studies would focus on teacher education and training and how these can be improved so as to enable Malaysian students to learn, grow, and develop in a safe and favourable school environment even if their their parents are too busy to provide them with the necessary supervision and control.

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7.5 Final Remarks

This study has clearly indicated that the developmental outcomes of children are affected by the interactions amongst the various risks and protective factors that can be found within the family, school, and peer settings in the social environment. As the mediators of the social processes within the community, these interactions would ultimately shape the children's life trajectories. Children who grow up in families characterized by lack of parental nurturance, poor supervision, weak parental attachment, abuse, and neglect are more likely to fare badly in life than those with higher levels of parental nurturance, affection, supervision, and control. The negative developmental outcomes that flow from adverse family conditions can be further exacerbated by a negative school environment where the teachers lack interest in their students. Teachers are a source of stimulation to the cognitive, emotional, and social development of children and their attitude, expectations, classroom management and teaching strategies can have a lot to contribute to the children's behavioural outcomes. This is particularly true for children from poor families as they are equipped with lesser literacy experiences and are more dependent on teachers for their academic development. Since student commitment is dependent on teacher commitment, poor teacher-student relationship, ineffective teaching strategies, neglectful teachers, harsh and irrational punishment would somehow affect the students in a negative way. Lacking guidance and support from their family and teachers, they would eventually turn to their peers for support, consolation, and assistance. Birds of a feather flock together and since delinquent children can only mingle with children of their kind, they can easily influence each other in a negative way and hence turn to crime and deviance as their way of life.

At-risk students need help and not punishment. Instead of exacerbating the students' antisocial behaviour, schools should shelter them from the adverse effects of their social environment by providing them with the opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and

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stable haven in the presence of caring teachers particularly during the unsupervised moments of their lives whilst their parents are busy at work. Since children spend a considerable amount of their time in school, schools can actually play a significant role in shaping their personality, attitude, character, and behavioural development through properly organized programs. Given the current economic situation of our country, the most cost-effective programs that can enhance positive child development are school-based after-school programs (ASPs). As suggested by the researcher, these ASPs include tutoring programs, mentoring programs, truancy programs, peer programs, community service-learning programs, as well as the extracurricular activities. Since these programs are conducted by the teachers in school, they are easily accessible by the students without having to burden the parents financially. Although these programs are nothing new to Malaysian schools, they have not served their optimum purpose due to the ineffective and inefficient manner in which they are being conducted in some schools. Children, particularly those from adverse family backgrounds who are at risk of antisocial behaviour, have very little interest in these programs as clearly indicated by all my respondents from STB. However, with the recent escalation in juvenile crime and delinquency, there is indeed a need for the ASPs to be properly implemented for the purposes of prevention and control of juvenile delinquent behaviour in this country.

Stricter measures should therefore be taken by the Education Ministry to ensure that the ASPs actually serve their purpose. Teachers should be made aware of the importance of ASPs and the roles that these programs have in child development. Given the fact that many teachers still lack the necessary knowledge and skills in organizing and conducting the ASPs, they should be sent for courses that could enhance their professionalism in this field. A change in teacher attitude is also necessary as teachers who carry out these activities in a dull and repetitious manner in order to meet the school administrators'

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directive would do more harm than good (Zalina, Norihan, & Nooraini, 2013, p.439). Needless to say, if properly carried out, the ASPs would provide the students with a safe haven to learn, develop, and grow into responsible adults. Through effective implementation of ASPs, schools would also have a more central role to play in the lives of the students, their parents, as well as the community.

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