

'Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child': The Criminal Career of an Armed Robber

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Abstract : The aim of the study upon which this article is based was "to evaluate the possibility of using criminal career research in the development and evaluation of crime control strategies, particularly for armed robberies." The research employed a concurrent triangulation mixed-method approach where quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently but analysed separately through the use of SPSS and Atlas.ti respectively. Forty offenders incarcerated at six correctional centres around the Gauteng province of South Africa for robbery with aggravating circumstances were interviewed as research participants. Since the researcher had no prior information on the total number of the population, purposive sampling (i.e. snowballing) was executed to draw the sample. This research found that offenders launched their criminal career at a very young age of, 11 years, by committing petty crimes such as theft and then, as they grew older, they progressed to more serious and violent crimes such as vehicle hijacking and Cash-in-Transit (CIT) robberies. Thus, it is pivotal that those responsible for developing crime prevention policies focus on interrupting the root causes of crime in the early stages of one's life in order to prevent continuation of delinquent behaviour from childhood to adolescence and adulthood.

Keywords : criminal career, robbery with aggravating circumstances, cash-in-transit robbery, criminal career research

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