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**Cognitive beliefs, moral development, and social knowledge
in differentiating offender type: An attempt to integrate
different models**

by

Chien An, Chen

A Doctoral Thesis

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
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Abstract

This dissertation originated out of a research interest in the role of moral-reasoning development in different types of crime. However, as this interest developed, it became apparent that the evidence that moral-reasoning development is differentially involved in different types of crime was a) somewhat weak and b) did not apply to all types of crime. In addition, as part of the developmental work for this dissertation, it was decided to re-analyze a previous Taiwanese study by the author. This reanalysis substantially supported what the previous research literature had indicated in terms of the, at best, modest role of moral-reasoning development in different types of crime. Furthermore, it was found that when the data were analysed ignoring the conventional moral norms that previous research had employed, there was evidence that question content had a role in differentiating different types of crime. This is at variance with structural approaches to moral-reasoning development. Taken together, these findings steered the development of this dissertation in the direction of social cognitive theories of deviant behaviour for which the research evidence is fairly compelling. Consequently, the dissertation moved from structural models of moral reasoning development to socio-cognitive explanations of why some offenders demonstrate a clear pattern of specialization in particular types of crime.

This research aimed to assess different social cognitions about offending and moral reasoning ability and used them to predict characteristic types of offending. The participants were four hundreds and thirty two male (adult=302, juvenile=130) prisoners incarcerated in seven correctional facilities in Taiwan. Based on the offenders' self-reported crime histories, crime specialism indexes (CSI) were calculated to represent offenders' crime propensities in drug abuse, theft, sexual and violent offending for each of respondents. Twenty-three of these respondents were questioned using semi-structural interviews. The qualitative aspect of the research was informed by interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). In addition to moral reasoning competence measured by Gibbs's SRM-SF, five additional social cognitions were investigated

including 1) normative beliefs, 2) crime cognitive beliefs, 3) moral domain placement, 4) crime episode judgments, and 5) criminal-identity.

It was hypothesized that different cognitive representations predict decisions about types of offences committed. Research questions were, 1) What are the relationships between moral reasoning ability in overall, individual moral value, age, crime episode judgments, and CSIs? a) Juvenile offenders operated at immature moral reasoning level, while adults predominantly exhibited at mature stages. b) No significant correlations emerged between sociomoral reflection moral score (SRMS) and CSIs, except a positive relationship found with the juvenile sexual CSI. c) Comparatively arrested development was found in both age offenders' *property & law* and *legal/justice* than the rest of three moral values. d) Except one in the juvenile drug taking (SRMS), and two in life and legal justice, as well as one significant correlations showed in the adult legal justice in sexual offending context, there was no relationship found between the trend of responses towards crime episode questions and moral reasoning ability. 2) What are the relationships between offenders' crime perceptions, evaluations and CSIs? a) Only drug CSI correlated positively with the criminal identity, while negative relationships were found with theft and sexual CSIs. b) A self approval tendency in normative beliefs was found in all but the juvenile sexual CSIs. c) A self endorsement tendency was observed in cognitive beliefs scale in the adult group. d) Findings indicated that there were two differences in the adult drug and theft CSIs, with those offenders thinking drug taking and stealing behaviour as personal discretions being higher in these two acts CSIs than those regarded these two crimes as moral domains, respectively. 3) Is it possible to predict CSIs from sociocognitive factors considered? Multiple-regressions indicated that content-oriented cognitive appraisals predicted types of criminal behaviour, while structural variables did not, with two exceptions. In the case of adult violence CSI two moral reasoning level indicators accounted for some additional variance. In the case of juvenile violence, SRMS accounted for some additional variance. But in this latter case, a higher level of moral reasoning was associated with greater specialisation in violence. In the qualitative research

questions, research question 4) What are the relationships between offenders' crime perceptions, evaluations and offending behaviour? Interviewees tended to approve their own behaviour more, particularly when compared with other crime patterns. Most of interviewees showed appreciations of Gibbs's mature moral reasoning forms. This seems to contradict with what they had done to others. Despite the meanings behind laws were recognised they largely based their justifications on heteronomous moral thinking. 5) How do offenders' explain the above conflicts, if any? Drug abusers tended to see there was more consistent than conflict, For example, it is a personal prerogative issue. Although theft and violent offenders admitted conflicts present, the former group tended to justify with reasons, such as if they do not harm other physically, stealing is not that bad behaviour, while the latter indicated they only use violence under threatening or legitimate circumstances. Although relatively little information was elicited from sexual offender interviewees on this issue, conflicts were expressed by them.

In summary, a self-serving yet other-blaming tendency was observed in cognitive evaluations both in qualitative and quantitative data. The more intensive an offender's involvement in a specific type of crime the more likely were they to evaluate this type of crime more positively, legitimately and less moral concerns involved than any of the other crime types. Moral reasoning may simply accommodate to offenders' progressively firm crime social cognitions. Based on the research findings, a crime cognitive whirlpool model was proposed. This is an idea that offenders are being pulled down (socio-cognitively strapped) to crimes. The model illustrates how a differential relationship between content and structural social knowledge develops for specific crime commitment. Future research should explore in greater depth the specificity and versatility of social cognitive reasoning in this context. Also, the factors which intervene between beliefs about what is good and good behaviour need to be understood better.

Keywords: Moral cognitive development, delinquents, social cognitions, crime types, cross-cultural, Taiwanese prisons.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The relationship between individuals' social cognitions and offending behaviour

1. The strengths and pitfalls of Kohlbergian moral theories in addressing adult and different type of offending behaviour

Humans have a well-developed capacity for representing, processing, interpreting, and communicating information. *"The psychological processes that humans invoke to perform these tasks are called cognitive processes, and the internal representations of information used in the processes are denoted as cognitions"* (Huesmann, 1998, p.73). Over recent decades, research based on social cognition perspective reveals a great deal about how deviant behaviour can be understood. In the field of forensic psychology, a high proportion of this research examines cognitive moral development and social knowledge in relation to criminal and deviant behaviour, such as aggression and drug-taking, and is mainly concentrated on children and adolescents. In these studies interest is placed on comparing age-matched normal young populations with juvenile deviants. In contrast, little work has studied adult offenders.

- 1) moral cognitive delay and offending behaviour: egocentric thinking

Kohlbergian theories (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987; Gibbs, 1992), which evolved from Piaget's theory, are among the prominent paradigm which has been widely adopted by researchers to measure the developmental differences of moral reasoning (Brugman and Aleva, 2004; Chen and Howitt, 2006, 2007; Gregg, et al., 1994; Palmer and Hollin, 1998). The moral cognitive developmental approach assumes that people's justifications for their moral decisions reflect their underlying structures of moral reasoning, which are assumed to be qualitatively different (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987). The structure is a hierarchical framework, as Kohlberg characterises it. People move invariably from the early egocentric, superficial thinking, immature level through the conventional law-abiding level and even may attain self-principled thought at the mature level. Conceivably, people who uphold societal rules and are aware of collective welfare, essentially defining criteria of the mature level (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987), are more likely to appreciate and respect others' well-being

and, as a consequence, are less likely to damage them purposely (Jennings et al., 1983). Simply put, an inverse relation between the nature of moral reasoning and behaviour is suggested by moral cognitive theorists – that is, the occurrence of deviant acts is the result of individuals' delayed moral reasoning. In this way, researchers distinguish developmentally delayed individuals from the so-called mature ones in terms of moral judgements. Thus, the moral reasoning becomes a target for correctional programmes to focus on. Such programmes include the EQUIP programme developed by Gibbs and his colleagues (Gibbs et al., 1995; Nas et al., 2005).

2) delayed hypothesis is well-supported in juvenile delinquents but mixed result found in adult offender groups

From empirical fieldwork, there is considerable evidence showing that juvenile delinquents' moral reasoning is predominantly at Kohlbergian immature stage. Their moral reasoning is predominantly at the immature level compared to non-offending control groups and other comparison groups (e.g. Blasi, 1980; Nelson et al., 1990; Smetana, 1990; Stams et al., 2006). However, no relationship is constantly reported between the moral reasoning ability and self-report deviant behaviour among adolescents (Tarry and Emler, 2007). It is also questionable whether this is also the case for adult criminals since research, although limited, reveals mixed findings or even no differences for adult criminals compared to controls. Moral reasoning development characteristically is at the mature levels in adult populations (Fabian, 2001; Greenfield and Valliant, 2007; Priest and Kordinak, 1991; Stevenson et al., 2003, 2004). This seems to suggest that moral reasoning stage is more of an issue associated with juveniles than adults.

When viewed closer empirically and theoretically, more convergence in terms of conclusions has been reached with younger populations compared with mature populations. As mentioned above, no clear conclusion can be made about the moral cognitive developmental delay hypothesis in adult offenders. This is partially due to the scant number of investigations undertaken with this group, coupled with inconsistent results being reported. Does this reflect the fact that cognitive moral development stage may not affect offending behaviour in older populations? According to the protocols for defining moral reasoning levels, developed moral reasoning is expected to serve as an inhibiting function for rule transgressions (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987; Gibbs et al., 1992). It obviously fails to prove the effect in mature offender groups. Therefore, these concerns of applicability warrant further research to advance our knowledge.

3) the structural-whole validating construct is not viable

While results produced in juvenile delinquent groups seem to confirm Kohlbergian stage-order models, some researchers dispute the underlying theory (Chen and Howitt, 2007; Gibbs, 2003; Krebs and Denton, 2005; Lapsley, 1996; Turiel, 1998). One of the disputes lies in Kohlberg's fundamental construct "the structure of whole" (Brugman and Aleva, 2004; Chen and Howitt, 2006, 2007; Gregg et al., 1994; Palmer and Hollin, 1998), which questions whether one equally applies structurally homogenous moral reasoning across a wide array of events in social contexts. Some research evidence reveals that people appear not to operate moral reasoning consistently (Ashkar and Kenny, 2007; Bartek et al., 1993; Chen and Howitt, 2006, 2007; Krebs and Denton, 2005; Palmer and Hollin, 1998) in their moral values or across every social context. Particularly, moral norms related to legal and justice facets were found to be relatively lagged compared with others. Moreover, although Chen and Howitt (2006, 2007) reported that there were no differences exhibited among distinct criminal groups, the moral value "Life" functions as a significant predictor for violent juvenile delinquents. This association can be understood here by considering that violent acts are apparently against the intrinsic value - "life".

Opposed to the beliefs of Kohlberg, cognitive developmental theory of moral reasoning in which only single moral order or structure is upheld to operate within an individual, flexibility, overlapping usage or context contingent understanding of moral reasoning are believed to be more plausible by other theorists (Piaget, 1932/1965; Krebs and Denton, 2005; Lapsley, 1996; Rest, 1979; Turiel, 1998). These investigations and those mentioned previously are concerned with relating moral values to offending behaviour and mainly have been conducted on adolescent samples. A contradiction emerges between Kohlberg's "single moral order" postulate (Chen and Howitt, 2007; Turiel, 1998) and the evidence suggesting that people may apply different moral principles dependent on the features of social contexts (Chen and Howitt, 2007; Krebs and Denton, 2005; Turiel, 1998) or the moral values may not, based on individuals' distinct social experiences, progress in the same pace (Chen and Howitt, 2007; Palmer and Hollin, 1998). This issue is manifested in adult populations to the extent that they are disproportionally found to reason morally at the mature level. The inhibiting function for crime involvement has long been claimed by Kohlbergian theorists to be seen to be mature moral reasoning (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987; Greenberg, 2002). However, the Kohlbergian viewpoint is no longer self-evident in the face of the fact that people

who advocate justice and are insightful of others' benefits nonetheless repeatedly commit offending behaviour.

4) does moral reasoning development of summary or individual moral value level is better to predict different crimetype offending?

Linked to this (but beyond this enquiry) is the fourth concern: Is criminal behaviour predicted more effectively by the summarised moral reasoning development level or the moral value pertinent to the offence?. Little is known about how the global cognitive structural development guides human behaviour. Faced with the need to development treatment intervention programmes, the evidence on the relationship between moral reasoning development and offending behaviours, primarily in adolescent groups, seems insufficient to inform the educational and other treatment processes. A more advanced enquiry needs to be made concerning the role that moral reasoning plays in mediating and/or moderating decision making in offending behaviour.

As noted above, in the light of the inconsistent findings obtained from adult offending groups, researchers have raised a critical question; what is the utility of treatment programmes targeting the promotion of moral reasoning ability if offenders are been able to reason at the mature level? Indeed, there is no reason to advance their moral reasoning abilities unless moral reasoning can prevent them from offending. Yet, so far the relationship between structure, moral reasoning and outcome behaviour is far from clear given that it leads us to think that the source of the offending decision making is structural and relatively simplified? Have we overestimated the proximal effect that the structural moral reasoning plays in decision making? If the answers to these questions are yes, then this leaves two problematic concerns; first, can the critical decision making source abstract-moral reasoning exert directly influence on behaviour decision making without mediating factors? Is there any intervening factor which may confound, distort or even mislead one to choose a response to social stimuli? The mediating variables include factors such as personal experiences, interpretations and values. Second, is it plausible to assume that every moral value bears equal weight for every individual and for every social situation when people make a decision? The point here is the variations of personal social cognitive factors should be taken into consideration in understanding the complex relationships between social knowledge and offending behaviour.

2. Content-oriented moral reasoning and offending behaviour

1) the neglect of content-featured social cognition in addressing offending behaviour

To address the questions of how and to what extent that social cognition can unravel different criminal behaviour, a more context-oriented perspective would seem to be appropriate. Many cognitive psychologists argue that cognitive factors are essential to understand human behaviour. Recently, a number of investigations (Stevenson et al., 2003, 2004; Tarry and Emler, 2007) have adopted moral cognitive development variables along with other content-characteristic variables (i.e., attitudes, criminal sentiment and values) in an attempt to understand delinquency. These studies indicate that the content-oriented variables correlated relatively better with behaviour than the structuralist moral judgement ability. The research field of values and attitudes in relation to moral behaviour and delinquency has long been neglected following the failure of early work which failed to obtain consistent results (Tarry and Emler, 2007). Besides this, the shift in research attention is attributable to the claim made by moral structuralists that moral conduct can be systematically predicted by a qualitative change in moral reasoning. Since the alternative approach has been introduced, moral reasoning approaches have attracted most of the interest from researchers. Consequently, this has resulted in the neglect of looking at the potentially considerable variations people may have in the interactive effect between behaviour feedbacks and responses. Simply put, the differences of content-specific social cognition in certain subgroups and individuals in offending decision making may be therefore obscured. Conversely, when examining mental processes, cognitive interactivists posit, based on the epistemology of a social cognition approach; that knowledge is formed through ongoing interaction experiences with the outside world. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the reciprocal effect between outcomes and individuals' mental processing mechanisms may not only influence people's cognitive framework but also the cognitive elements of content characteristics (e.g. perceptions, attitudes). It would be a viable assumption that, in reality, people may apply their moral principles dependent on the social contexts and personal experience. The range of variations in the moral principle use would be larger for adult offenders due to their highly diverse life experiences. A proposal is made by researchers (Stevenson et al., 2003, 2004; Tarry and Emler, 2007) that offenders' moral reasoning may simply accommodate offending conducts by aligning themselves with relevant values and perceptions. Furthermore, it may well be

that offenders develop a stronger degree of moral reasoning quality with moral values relevant to their behaviour. For example, some societal rules have no conflicts with offenders' unlawful acts while others do have. Thus, we should not overlook the variations and preferences of individual's personal cognitive organisation and evaluative perspectives also taking part in decision making which possibly leads to a particular choice of crime being made. As noted above, the distinctive event and context-specific knowledge bases shared within subgroups may shed light on the differentiation relationship between social cognition and offending behaviour decision making.

The relationship between action and cognition may not be a linear development model. For example, it is conceivable that people choosing to break laws might regard their actions as the most "suitable" or "justifiable" (re)action in response to a given social event. Or even they believe that if people in their situation would do the same, or that they ought to do so regardless of whether there are personal errors at any point in the course of information processing. Simply put, and as noted earlier, overtly different acts might be based on a wide variety of different cognitions. Even though moral reasoning indeed has a role in delinquency, it does not offer a full explanation of different criminal activities (Blair, 1980). Wilson, Goodwin, and Beck (2002) reported that there is no relationship between moral development and behavioural intention (i.e. where male respondents were assured that they would not get punished for raping). This finding implies that despite a reliance on "not being caught", reported behavioural intention did not relate to a dependence on pre-conventional moral reasoning. Given the limited success generated from the global structure perspective, this current thesis seeks to integrate two approaches (e.g. structuralism and content paradigms) to gain further understanding of delinquency.

Prior to getting closer to an individual's social cognitive components on decision making, we should point out the actuality of crime careers. Offenders' criminal careers may either be within a specific type or cluster of crimes or embracing a wide array of deviant behaviour. Despite Piquero et al.'s (1999) suggestion that there is some degree of specificity of offending amidst versatile offending patterns, it may be more fruitful to concentrate on how and why some offenders specialise within a narrow cluster of offences (Guertte et al., 2005).

Important recent research attempts to integrate two different social-cognition based perspectives which had previously developed more-or-less independently (Arsenio and Lemerise, 2004; Dodge and Rabiner, 2004; Harvey, Fletcher and French, 2001; Nucci, 2004). These perspectives are generally referred to as the *moral domain model* (Turiel, 1983) and *social information processing model* (SIP) (Crick and Dodge, 1994). Underpinning both these two models is the idea that how people define situations cognitively and construe social information is crucial to their social reasoning processes and, as a consequence, their chosen responses to situations.

2) moral domain model: to relate offenders' perceptions of social cognition domain to offending behaviour

On the assumption that offenders differ in their perceptions and evaluations of various sorts of delinquent acts, which may, in turn, affect their decision making on commission. Turiel's moral domain suggests the appraisal of behaviour is subject to the adjudication context. A considerable number of investigations, although few of which use forensic populations or adults, relate domain assignment to behaviour. Turiel (1983) suggests that there are three distinct conceptual domains that can be discriminated in the processing of social understanding for individuals. His domain model proposes that event contents (i.e. personal, conventional and moral) should be taken into account in social reasoning, and decisions made based upon it. By examining offenders' attributions of unlawful conduct, researchers may gain understanding on how they define offending in terms of criminal cognitive domain. Amonini and Donovan (2006), Kuther and Alessandro (2000), Nucci, Guerra and Lee (1991) and Tisak, Tisak, and Rogers (1994) all report that illicit drug users tended to regard this offence as a matter for personal discretion which had little or no relevance to other social agents such as parents. This may yield valuable points in acquiring insights into why violators might think their behaviour is justifiable by claiming personal prerogative to it. Kohlberg's cognitive developmental paradigm of morality emphasises that universal form rather than content is vital in human behaviour. This model may impose a cage-like framework in explicating why offenders commit and stick in specific crime patterns and why mature moral reasoners still choose to engage in criminal activities.

Criminal behaviour can be motivated by a range of factors, including attitudes to different immoral actions, pragmatics, the degree of punishment, and moral judgement concerns. These cognitive elements are believed to serve as the standard of conduct or as Bandura (1986) calls it, the self-regulation mechanism.

Consequently, it would be less likely to address diverse anti-social behaviours solely on the basis of an overall level of moral reasoning. Lopez and Emmer (2000), and Byrne and Trew (2005) find that different types of criminals varied not just in interpreting crime contexts, but in their social reasoning. As such, the diversification of social reasoning in moral context is noteworthy. Researchers have long suggested that delinquency is a heterogeneous phenomenon (Jurkovic, 1980; Palmer, 2003b). Bennett, Farrington, and Huesmann (2005) claim that social cognition appears to be a crucial variable in connection with crime and violence. Therefore, the mental process of decision-making, ranging from thoughts to performance in the sociocognitive sphere, is worthy of concern. There are three important components (i.e. current cues, past scripts, and schemas) in cognitive processes which mediate behaviour by providing mechanisms for the individual to interpret, consider, and respond to an event (Bennett et al., 2005; Crick and Dodge, 1994). Researchers (e. g. Jourkovic, 1980; Palmer, 2003a) suggest that cognitive or moral content should be incorporated into moral cognitive/structure theory to gain better understanding of the association between offending and individuals' reasoning about moral situations. People have individual tendencies when reacting to stimuli and situations. This may be as important as their habitual reaction in moral decision making. Again, this may shed light on why people at similar stages of moral reasoning commit different types of crime.

3) social information processing: to link latent components with offending behaviour

Crick and Dodge's (1994) reformulated social information processing (SIP) model attempts to integrate cognitive relevant components to understand children's social adjustment. The SIP offers a framework with respect to the processing of decision making. The SIP model consists of cues identification, interpretation, goals selection and enactment. The feature of this model is theoretical integration, where relevant constructs (e.g. social contexts, personal attributes, cognitive components) contributing to criminal acts are drawn upon for consideration through cognition mechanisms (Losel et al., 2007). As noted earlier, researchers (Arsenio and Lemerise, 2004; Nucci, 2004; Palmer, 2000, 2003) make efforts to bring the cognitive moral development and information processing model together to illuminate the complexity of offending behaviour. Due to present research interest being in examining static cognitive components, the focus is put on latent knowledge.

One of the critical concepts that is held in the enduring knowledge base is normative belief. Normative beliefs are "*individualistic*

cognitive standards about the acceptability of a behaviour" (Huesmann and Guerra, 1997). This essential cognitive construct is shared and plays a critical role in both Dodge and Huesman's models. It is referred to as self-regulating internal standards and is derived from Bandura's (1986) social-cognitive formulation. Basically, it serves a filtering function for sociomorally chosen responses. This belief-based, value-prescriptive function may, it is suggested, exert influence in other stages of processing information. This self-censored mechanism has an important influence on the aggression exhibited by a child (Huesmann and Guerra, 1997; Zelli et al., 1999). Furthermore, adolescents who believe that physical aggression is an acceptable response to social situations are more likely to exhibit physically aggressive behaviour. And juvenile delinquents are more likely to use violence when they experience high levels of anger if they consider that physical aggression an appropriate means of dealing with conflict (Sukhodolsky and Ruchkin, 2004).

The integration of content-and structural social cognition approaches in unravelling different types of offending behaviour

Whether it is the structural cognitive deficits or the content of social knowledge that leads offenders to engage in certain types of crimes needs further study to establish with certainty. In addition to differing interpersonally in moral stages, youthful offenders also vary intrapersonally in their own judgment level on different moral issues, as shown by Jurkovic (1980). Furthermore, a consistent favourable assessment in evaluative judgements of behaviour is found for varied deviant behaviours (e.g. substance abuse, stealing and cheating) in a recent review study (Fontaine, 2006b). This differential association to some extent seems to be suggestive of a relationship in both personal and behavioural levels between social cognition and offending patterns. There is a lack of research employing comparative methodology in eliciting cognitive information from offenders' points of view on their own crimes and others. As a result, the question between preferences versus underlying structure dysfunction has been far from resolved from the existing studies. The criminal cognitions produced by different types of offenders may provide a more direct test of the relationship between cognition and action. Besides, through tapping offenders' justifications with respect to decision making for committing specific crimes rather than others, it would also allow us to get more advanced and comprehensive knowledge of their mental processing.

Thus, more studies to examine the cognitions involved in the criminal convicted different kind of offences are called for. As Blackburn (1993) suggests, it remains commonplace for research in the criminal psychology field to ignore dynamic, interactive explanations in favour of a single variable approach. Moreover, Fontaine (2006a) suggests that a system perfection mechanism in individuals' social information processing should not just act as a sociomoral filter but also be involved in cue attentions, script retrieval and other relevant processes. So, it would be more fruitful in practical as well as theoretical respects if both structural and content-oriented social knowledge could be incorporated to understand varied crime patterns of behaviour.

The Kohlbergian approach to morality has been dominant in theory and research methodology in addressing offending behaviour, especially in juvenile delinquents. Research based on this moral reasoning perspective has been much more limited in adult groups. Although a firm finding has been established that juvenile offenders possess lower and immature moral judgment competence than their age-matched normal controls. The current thesis is aimed to address a more complex relationship between different crime-type preferences and social cognition, by integrating structural- and content oriented social cognition approaches. The reasons to draw upon global and event-specific sociocognitive perspectives in a study are, (a) the limit and failure of Kohlberg's moral theories in accounting different types of offending behaviour in both theoretical and empirical levels, (b) moral domain distribution, schema, normative beliefs are believed to be more effective in distinguishing different offending patterns (e.g. more sensitive and proximal to different characteristics of offences). (c) the systems perfection mechanism may come to work in processing social cognition with offending experience. This cognitive function may work by aligning information perceptions, interpretations and valuing to habitual criminal behaviour. Thereby, this cognitive accommodation mechanism may permit offenders to disengage themselves from moral pressure or to be more tolerant to offending.

Chapter 2 Social Cognition Based Theories with Offending Behaviour

This chapter is organized into two parts. The first part introduces theories and models based on social cognition approach to understanding how individuals interpret, process and organise social knowledge. Three sociocognitive theories are employed in this thesis, including moral judgment development, moral domain placement, and the latent knowledge aspect of social information processing model. Research interest is primarily focused on the relationships about how these structural and content-oriented social cognitive constructs relate to different offending behaviours. The second part of this chapter seeks to integrate these above theories by recognising the strengths in addressing different offending behaviours. By integrating three different approaches, to an extent is it possible to compensate for the weakness of each individual cognitive perspective as an explanation of offenders' crime decision making.

In order to associate social cognition with human behaviour and decision making a clarification of how social cognition form and function is made before introducing the socio-cognitive theories drawn upon in this research. Humans have a well-developed capacity for representing, processing, interpreting, and communicating information. "The psychological processes that humans invoke to perform these tasks are called cognitive processes, and the internal representations of information used in the processes are denoted as cognitions" (Huesmann, 1998, p.73). Both social cognition and social cognition processes require clarification prior to examining the relationship between social cognition and crime.

Cognition is static, and refers to individuals' perceptions and knowledge of the world surrounding them. However, cognitive processes are sophisticated dynamic mechanisms by which individuals can operate their existing knowledge so as to interact with an array of cues. Although behaviour is initially instigated by environmental stimuli, and then mediated by cognitive processing, this does not necessarily imply that it causes behaviour. Rather, cognitive processes act as the key role to bridge the external as well as internal cues, and responses (Richardson, 1997).

Social cognitions refer specifically to interpersonal knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour. Social information processing refers to mechanisms such as coding, rehearsing, storage, and retrieval that are employed in interpreting social data and that guide behaviour. When faced with a social event, the individual appraises and interprets situational cues, searches memory for guides to behaviour, assesses and decides on the optimal behaviour (Huesmann, 1998).

Moral cognitive development theories

The theories provided in this section share a number of common assumptions and perspectives:

a) Structuralism is a fundamental principle mutual with moral structuralists in understanding moral behaviour. The pattern of thoughts rather than the specific moral beliefs that make structuralism distinct from content-oriented sociocognitive valuation. Although moral judgments made to different moral norms may vary, they are bound together by common structural features. This is, the form of thinking is developmentally generalisable within and across individuals. Colby and Kohlberg (1987) asserted that to understand one's moral beliefs we should primarily understand their general moral worldview or conceptual framework from which the beliefs derive and reside. Simply put, an abstract cognitive principle is postulated to exhibit an overarching and imperative function and based on which people are to make moral judgments from. The transformation from one type or stage of structure is assumed qualitatively for Kohlberg and Gibbs' theories, while the complete replacement concept is posited by Piaget.

b) A sequential and invariant structure of moral reasoning development is firmly held by researchers in the field of sociomoral development. The changes of the moral reasoning are in the quality rather than in the degree of intensity. And the upward movement is viewed as evidence of progression in moral reasoning. Morality can not be seen as just the conformity to conventional rules or simply something that is internalised or learnt from social regulation. Rather, it emerges from the internal self. Furthermore, as age or interactive experience grows, the quality of moral reasoning is expected to change in a parallel. In Kohlbergian moral theories, the higher the development in terms of its stage, the more decentrational and role-taking the judgement that would be produced, hence inhibiting transgression laws. The theories are explained as follows:

1. Jean Piaget's moral development theory

It is the structures of the justifications that an individual produces when facing issues of morally right and wrong behaviour, rather than the content of their reasoning, that interested Piaget. In Piaget's "*The Moral Judgement of the Child*" (1932/1956), a seminal work in the psychology of moral reasoning, he suggested that children have a differential understanding to the rules of games and justice. According to Piaget's observations of children applying rules when playing, he realised that morality comes from actions and their processes while interacting with the environment. Furthermore, Piaget proposed that there are four stages of logical reasoning that can be discriminated in interviews, delineated as below;

Sensorimotor stage. Children have a limited repertoire of ways in which they respond to social regulations and the environment around them, together with a very low level of physical competence with which to interact with the world.

Preoperational stage. The ability to form mental representations of objects as well as physical ones can be seen at this stage. Thus, the competence in making comparisons to look for similarities and differences is likely to be observed. The ability for transductive reasoning emerges in children in this stage and enables them make an assumption about the potential causal relationship if two subjects occur simultaneously.

Concrete operational stage. General abstract rules and strategies are used appropriately by children in this phase. There is also a shift, towards using inductive logical awareness. Children at this stage are capable of generalising specific examples to broad rules. The acquisition of the principle of conservation also develops.

Formal operational stage. Formal operational thinking is attained during adolescence, and is defined by the ability to use complex, abstract cognitive skills to solve problems. In other words, individuals whose logical reasoning has reached this stage can move their attentions from salient stimuli to the underlying meaning of events.

Piaget believed that child's cognitive ability moves from the *Sensorimotor* stage to *Formal operational* stage as they grow older. The motivation for the shifts that feature in his moral cognitive theory come from equilibration (Piaget, 1977). As noted earlier, the child is posited by Piagetian researchers to be an active information processor. Thus, by interacting with the world and other people, children are able to construct their own understanding, form cognitive structures about the environment and gain knowledge. The

concept of structure implies that a consistent logic or form of reasoning can be abstracted from the content of an individual's response to a variety of situations (Jennings et al., 1983). This process was termed 'adaptation' by Piaget. Two complementary sub-processes of 'assimilation' and 'accommodation' play substantial role in making this functioning possible:

Assimilation: when novel information comes in, it allows children to fit information into existing schemas or knowledge structures so that they are able to tackle a more complex world. Due to the characteristic of human beings' active psychological process, the individual automatically assigns new stimuli to similar categories; rather than simply the passive receipt of information.

Accommodation: The changing of schemas takes place while new experiences are not able to be incorporated into current limited cognitive structures. Through constantly interacting with new information individual's cognitions are reorganised and improved as a result of experiences.

Piaget (1932/1965) proposed that children pass through 'phases' of moral reasoning. He saw the structure of moral reasoning development as reflecting the overall progression through the stages of logical reasoning, comprising two phases:

1) In heteronomous moral reasoning, the rules are perceived by the child as fixed and imposed by figures of authority. There is also an emphasis on pragmatic tit-for-tat exchanges.

2) In autonomous moral reasoning, the rules are perceived by the individual as a result of co-operation and consensus among people, with justice and fairness being the dominant principles relating to the interaction between them.

Piaget considered the logical reasoning stages to be preconditions for moral reasoning phases. So autonomous moral reasoning could not be attained before the individual reaches the logical reasoning stage of formal operational thought. Thus it is possible for people to have a higher logical reasoning stage than moral reasoning phase, but not the other way round.

The evaluation and criticism of Piaget's moral theory

Although Kohlbergian theories were largely inspired and methodologically inherited from Piaget's work (1932/1965), relatively little attention was placed on the peer interaction effect on influencing moral development by Piaget (Carpendale, 2000). Where the peer

interaction would provide more chances of perspective taking and, in turn it is posited by Kohlberg as essential source in improving moral thinking. In addition, Gilligan (1982) contends that Piaget and Kohlberg studied females with a male-based perspective because of their biased sampling (majority male) and therefore their constructing of theories was biased in moral orientation (care versus justice). Especially when it comes to legal issue that Piaget suggested that girls are less interested than boys with "legal elaboration" and that "the legal sense is far less developed in little girls than boys" (Piaget, 1932/1965). However, Turiel (1998) does not agree with Gilligan's argument over the gender issue of sampling bias. Whether girls have a relatively undeveloped legal sense is still left ambiguous in Piaget's work.

2. Lawrence Kohlberg's moral cognitive development theory

Other than examining the relationship between progression through the stages of moral reasoning and social role-taking opportunities, Kohlberg extended the research samples beyond children and proposed a systematic framework of moral cognitive development theory. Decentration and perspective taking are the essential components in the theory. The manifestations of these two cognitive mechanisms are to be observed in the process from the standpoint of egocentrism to the social viewpoints concerning welfare and interests of others in moral reasoning. Although his theory has gained extensive empirical support in the sequencing of moral stages, and has validity in discriminating juvenile delinquents across different cultures (Gibbs et al., 2007), there is scarce evidence available to corroborate the existence of the principled level (Snarey, 1985).

Kohlberg modified Piaget's work and proposed that moral reasoning consists of six sequential stages (1969), each stage is qualitatively different in terms of the perspective used when making moral judgement. He grouped these six stages into a model with three levels, and each level with two stages: namely, preconventional, conventional and post-conventional reasoning. In terms of the genesis of morality, both Piaget and Kohlberg held the idea that morality is not the result of directly conforming conventional regulations or successful socialisation. Gibbs (2003) indicates that, a) Kohlbergian mature moral judgment is a logical ideal constructed through exchanges and appreciations of perspective with others. Therefore, the egalitarian thinking is adopted. This is different from one that simply socialising or learning from existing norms and regulations in which the norms and regulations may be biased and in

favour of certain groups, b) the progress in qualitatively distinct moral phases, from superficial thinking to profound savvy, is invariant and cross-cultural universality. This differs from other morality approaches that specific applicability is emphasised, c) Kohlbergian structure-oriented theories assume that moral reasoning in its own right can motivate mature moral behaviour. This is achieved by cognitive disequilibrium occurred in interaction with more advanced moral reasoning (Jennings et al., 1983). That is to say, the momentum for one to right the wrong or behave morally derives from one's internal self regulation mechanism, instead of passively coming from external moral pressure.

Kohlbergian cognitive moral developmental theory attempts to understand the relationship between self and society's moral rules and expectations. Thus, investigators, in line with Piagetian theory, are interested in the individual's pattern of thought defined in terms of qualitative reorganisation rather than the expansions of new content (Jennings et al., 1983). Three types of relationships are respectively represented in the three levels.

Table 2.2.1: Kohlberg's cognitive moral reasoning

Moral Judgement	Sociomoral perspective
Level 1. Preconventional	Concrete individual perspective
Level 2. Conventional	Member of society perspective
Level 3. Postconventional or Principle	Prior to society perspective

Source: Taken from Colby and Kohlberg (1987)

Moral Judgment	Stage what is right? and it's reason	Sociomoral perspective of stage
Level 1 Pre-conventional	Stage1: To avoid punishment and conform powerful figures.	Put self in the first place of interests, unable to notice psychological states; rather, only perceive physical actions
	Stage2: Crude fairness and interest exchanges, also being able to recognise other people's needs.	Reciprocity is understood as of relativism, and acted out just based on the instrumental intent.
Level 2 conventional	Stage 3: Being good and meeting social expectations in your role. Keeping mutual	Psychological feelings as well as empathy start to emerge. But the

	relationships is a critical behaviour principle.	consideration in interests is still limited in self-group.
	Stage 4: Taking full personal responsibilities and upholding Laws; however, beginning to notice the conflicts between actual events, fixed regulations and reflect on the nature behind them.	To keep the whole institution, the social system, running well, but still standing in individual points of view to define roles and rules.
Level 3 Post-conventional	Stage 5: Impartiality and respecting every member's interests in society, the motivation and guidelines of behaviour is guided, aroused by fairness.	Integrating perspectives by formal mechanisms of agreement, contract, and objective impartiality. The resolution is sometimes hard to find between moral and legal points of view, although they are more aware of the existence of conflicts.
	Stage 6: Acts are underpinned by fairness and justice. Moral reasoning is determined by self-chosen ethical principles.	Universal moral principles are pursued, persons are all living in equality, and social agreement is built on the premise of justice.

Source: Re-organized from Colby and Kohlberg (1987)

Thus, at the different moral reasoning levels, there is a different type of relationship between the person, the rules and the expectations of society:

- 1) Preconventional—the rules and social expectations of society are seen as being external to the person.
- 2) Conventional—the person has internalised the rules and expectations of society and upholds them as a result of this.
- 3) Postconventional—there is a differentiation between the self and the rules and expectations of society. The individual defines their own values using self-chosen but universal valid moral principles.

Overall, movement through the stages represents a shift from perceiving the world and rules as being external to the individual and fixed in nature to an understanding that the world is a flexible place,

where co-operation and reciprocity are important. As they can be seen from the description of the stages, reasoning at each stage involves a reintegration of the reasoning used at the previous stage. This makes the stage hierarchical in nature, with the higher moral stages building upon reasoning used at the lower stages. Kohlberg (1969) proposed that people move through the stages in an invariant sequence, starting at stage 1 and progressing through each stage in a forward movement as they mature. Therefore, at a given point in time, individuals will either be using reasoning from one of the moral reasoning stages, or, if they are in the process of shifting stage, reasoning from two adjacent moral stages. However, Kohlberg acknowledged that not all adults will reach the postconventional stages.

Critique of Kohlberg's sociomoral theory

Criticisms on Kohlbergian theories pertaining to current research mainly lie in three questions. First, how relevant is it between the competences assessed by moral instruments derived from Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental theory and actual behaviour. Second, are dilemma questions adopted by Kohlberg's moral instrument necessary to measure moral reasoning ability? Third, does individual use a full single or the combination of one full stage and a transitional stage adjacent to the full one moral reasoning throughout all social contexts?

For the first question, evidence challenging the hypothesis posited by moral developmental theories in relating moral judgment delay and offending behaviour is available. Tarry and Emler (2007) report that it is the attitudes and values that predict delinquent conduct but lacking of an association with moral reasoning ability. Stevenson et al. (2003, 2004) reported that the development of offenders' morality is mainly at the mature level (stage 3) in Gibbs's model. Furthermore, in Valliant's studies (Greenfield and Valliant, 2007; Valliant et al., 2000), adult rapists, child molesters and violent offenders were found to have mature levels of ability in moral reasoning. In light of above contrary results, especially in adult offending populations, Kohlbergian approach towards morality have left unanswered question in linking immature moral reasoning with offending behaviour. Krebs and Denton (2006) contend that Kohlberg's model of morality plays a relatively minor role determining the moral judgment and behavioural decisions people make in their everyday lives. Regarding the second question, the moral dilemmas used by MJI (Moral Judgment Test) to elicit both one's social reasoning and decision making has received some criticisms. Other than the practical difficulties such as cumbersome in scoring and

administration, dilemmas are criticised as artificial and irrelevant for children and not ecologically valid (Gibbs et al., 1992). Thereby, Gibbs and Rest have developed their own moral measure in assessing moral competence, though not completely unrelated to their origins Kohlberg's MJT. Lastly, some researchers hold different view in terms of the assumption that people make moral decisions consistently throughout all social contexts. Krebs and Denton (2005, 2006) argue that a more pragmatic approach should be more feasible to address everyday life behaviour decision than Kohlberg's structured whole assumption. Carpendale (2000), Rest (1983), and Piaget (1932/1956) also assume a multiplicity of application of morality is of more compatible with interactive approach in knowledge acquisition.

3. John Gibbs' modified sociomoral reasoning model

The term 'sociomoral' is preferred to 'moral' as Gibbs considers that the former more precisely describes the subject concerned in essence (Gibbs et al., 1992). Gibbs' theory is mainly based on Kohlberg's; however, he claims that Kohlberg's post-conventional level of moral theory is against the nature of human being's biological development and not in line with the principle of universality proposed by Piaget (1932/1965). Additionally, Gibbs asserts that the concept of society and the maintenance of the harmony of the world has already appeared in Kohlberg's conventional level of moral judgement. Given that, the principled level is no longer needed in his theory. As a result of these criticisms, a revised version of moral cognitive development theory, with two levels and also two sub-stages in each level, were proposed by Gibbs and his colleagues in 1992. The moral reasoning measure sociomoral reflection measure-short form (SRM-SF) constitutes five moral values, including contract and truth, affiliation, life, property and law, legal justice (see appendix B).

1) The immature level; Stage 1 and 2 constitute the immature level of sociomoral reflection. Both are relatively concrete or superficial, confusing morality with physical power or pragmatic deals. The core idea of stage one moral reasoning is unilateral and physicalistic thinking. The extrinsic and authority-oriented character is best captured in this stage. The facets that define stage 1 thinking, including a) edicts of unilateral authority, b) immediate or physical (status), c) coercive rules, maxim-like prescriptions, or absolute proscription, and d) unqualified positive or negative labels. The aspects for stage 2 are, a) tit-for-tat pragmatic exchanges or deals with others, b) strict equality and inequality, c) concrete rights or

unfettered freedoms, d) contingent preferences and dispositions, d) pragmatic needs, e) calculated advantages or disadvantages.

2) The mature level; As individuals continually interacting with the outside world social role taking chances will result in cognitive decentration on their sociomoral reflection. The mature moral reasoning 'penetrates' superficial or extrinsic considerations to infer the bases of interpersonal relationships and society. The mature level of sociomoral reflection is described in terms of moral types, for example; balancing, fundamental valuing, and conscience. Stage 3 is represented in terms of six respects, including a) relationships or mutualities, b) empathic role-taking or intrinsic concern, c) normative expectations, d) underlying prosocial or antisocial intentions or personality, e) generalised caring or valuing, and f) intrapersonal approval or disapproval. There are seven aspects of stage 4. The defining features are; a) societal requirements, b) basic rights or values, c) societal responsibilities or contractual obligations, d) responsible character or integrity, e) procedural perceptions or consistent and standard practices, f) procedural equity or social justice.

Critique of Gibbs's sociomoral model

Gibbs is one of revisionists of Kohlberg's moral theory. He argues that the postconventional level of Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental model to morality is against the natural development of human cognitive ability (Gibbs, 2003). Thereby, the principled stages should be discarded. Despite of the revision, Gibbs still asserts that the most sophisticated or the competence of moral reasoning is of critical component in associating with social behaviour (Gibbs, 2006). However, the moral stage of Kohlbergian theories is conceptualised as more like schematic construct, as advocated by Rest (1999), rather than philosophical concept. This compromise in perspective is resulted from two criticisms. First, Krebs and Denton (2006) suggest that results produced by measures based on Kohlbergian theories demonstrate limited relevance to one's everyday life behaviour. Although Gibbs uses non-hypothesis probe questions in substitute of moral dilemmas adopted by Kohlberg, as noted, the ability of moral reasoning is concerned. As opposed to the trait approach in conceptualising the relations between cognition and action, Krebs and Denton (2005, 2006) propose that a more pragmatic approach, this is social context or purpose contingent utility of moral order, is believed to "work" better in addressing the discrepant findings between moral reasoning ability and behaviour. Shared with other Kohlbergian theorists, such criticisms as perspectives of flexibility or multiplicity

(Carpendale, 2000; Chen and Howitt, 2007; Piaget, 1932/1965; Rest et al., 1999) and moral domain theory (Turiel, 1983) toward the application of moral orders in dealing with social stimuli are also applied to Gibbs moral model. Second, the suffering of inconsistent relationships found between moral reasoning and actual behaviour for Kohlbergian theorists. In Blasi's (1980) review work, it suggests that there is a relationship between moral reasoning ability and behaviour but the degree of relationship decreases when IQ, SES and other social variables were controlled for. Recently, Tarry and Emler (2007) report that moral reasoning ability assessed by Gibbs's SRM-SF was not related to the degree of adolescent crime involvement.

In summary, reductionism has largely influenced moral cognitive development theories vis-à-vis the action. For example, efforts made in the field are to differentiate the orientation of moral reasoning, and to extract shared concepts and meaning of events from one's justifications. The motivation given by the agent is a crucial component in understanding the processes of mental functioning in connection with moral judgement. Coie and Dodge (1998) point out that there are two contributions from structuralism perspective in relating to aggressive and antisocial behaviour. One is the notion of failure to take perspectives of others, another one is the delayed development of as an indicators. However, the merits of this structure-oriented moral development are also the shortcomings in unravelling more elaborated offending behaviour. First, the lack of specificity, especially in the course of mental processing leading to crime decision making. Second, as seen in the literature this moral approach has been popularly employed in investigations into dichotomous-group, it offers very little specific information in addressing why people committing different clusters of crimes. In order to paint a fuller picture as to why people commit specific crime some more designated theories should be drawn upon to supplement the insufficient insight that this distant social cognitive approach—moral development can offer. As Jennings et al. (1983) admit that although the relationship of moral judgment to deviant and delinquency is significant, it is not direct.

Moral domain theory

Research based on the social cognition approach has recently been more attentive to individuals' processing, assessing and perceiving of social cues pertaining or leading to incompetent behaviour. As

opposed to the perspective adopting cognitive framework derived from moral judgement to expound human behaviour, moral domain theory is concerned otherwise. The individual difference in social contexts is advocated to be a crucial factor mediating behaviour decision making by the domain theory. Important recent research attempts to integrate two different social-cognition based perspectives which had previously developed more-or-less independently (Arsenio and Lemerise, 2004; Dodge and Rabiner, 2004; Harvey, Fletcher and French, 2001; Nucci, 2004). These perspectives are generally referred to as the *moral domain model* (Turiel, 1983) and *social information processing* model (SIP) (Crick and Dodge, 1994; Huesmann, 1998).

A notion underpinning both the *moral domain* and *social information processing* models is that the way people cognitively define situations and construe social information is essential to their social reasoning processes. As a consequence, this leads to their chosen responses to situations. A person's perceptions of and representations of the social world are paramount in determining their responses to situations they confront. Thus it is their personal cognitive 'definition' rather than perceptions of social 'facts' which is crucial. Accordingly, individuals have their own crime orientations. They involve both components of their personal identity as well as evaluative components in relation to particular offences. As such, it may facilitate the sort of crime in question or create a barrier against that particular activity (Byrne and Trew, 2005).

Turiel's and Nucci's moral domain model of social reasoning

Turiel's *moral domain model* proposes that social events fall into three distinctive types plus one subtype of moral domains (Nucci, 1981; Turiel, 1983; Tisak and Turiel, 1984). Consistent with Piagetian theory of moral reasoning development, the moral domain model assumes that a) human social knowledge is organised over time and that, b) the individual's experiences develop into social schemata or scripts as a consequence of the interplay between the self and the environment. These enduring and stable knowledge structures help the individual deal with social situations. Furthermore, the justifications which individuals give for their actions are the basis for evaluating the individual's moral domain.

The three types of Turiel's social events include the personal, conventional and moral concepts domains. The prudential concern

was added later as subtype of the personal domain (Tisak and Turiel, 1984). Sharing aspects of the Kohlbergian paradigm of moral reasoning and behaviour, Turiel's moral domain model also emphasises, at its epistemological foundation, the reciprocal interactions between the individual and the external environment. However, there is a core concept differing from Kohlberg's sequential system. The moral domain model claims that children's social reasoning develops separately and simultaneously on four different trajectories according to their conceptions of social events (Tisak, 1995). These conceptions involve issues such as rightness or wrongness, obligationness, permissibility, alterability, rule and authority contingency, and generalisability. Each of the moral domains is outlined as below;

The *personal domain* concerns the prerogative of the individual over their own decision making behaviour. Yet, it does not involve social rules or moral considerations. The *conventional domain* encompasses social regulations and consensual rules imposed by authorities to maintain social order, with which it plays a critical role in whether the behaviour is regarded as legitimate. The *moral domain* involves consideration of the legitimacy of actions where they are pertinent to moral issues, social justice and welfare to others. That is, damage to the welfare of others is the crucial criterion within this domain. Finally, the *prudential domain* prioritises the consequences of one's own actions for oneself in the decision making process. Although the prudential domain shares the feature of concern for harmful results with the moral domain, no interpersonal factors are involved in the prudential domain.

Offenders' definitions of and attributions about offending behaviour, when viewed from the perspective of the moral domain model may partially explain why offending behaviour often shows distinct patterns. Evidence in support of this can be found in Tisak and Jankowski's (1996) study of a sample of adolescent offenders. A relationship exists between moral domain assignment and the extent to which offences are judged as being wrong and requiring punishment if violated. For these juvenile offenders, moral rules are the most important and deserving punishment when transgressed. However, conventional rules are the second most important and the personal domain is the least. Nevertheless, higher levels of the moral domains were often obscured by the intrusion of other levels with less moral elements. Thus the conventional rule domain tended to be extended into moral concerns and the personal jurisdiction domain into the conventional rules domain. Such domain shifting is part of a psychological defence process since transgressions of the moral

domain are the most threatening to the offender (Leenders and Brugman, 2005). It is conceivable that individuals who chronically commit a specific type of offence, regardless of their rationalisation or psychological defence mechanisms, tend to claim that the crimes they commit fall in a less condemnable domain.

Evaluation of moral domain theory

Turiel's moral domain theory shares with and stems from, in part, Piaget's and Kohlberg's cognitive structural theories in two aspects. First, they are all interactionists in terms of the acquisition of knowledge. This implies that both moral domain and cognitive developmental theories emphasize that human's knowledge comes from the interplay between people's structuring activities and the interacting experience with outside world (Arsenio and Lemerise, 2004; Tisak, 1995; Turiel, 1983,). In addition, the established knowledge is postulated to play a key role in the relation between social reasoning and behaviour. Second, Turiel (1998) points out that the domain approach morality focuses on people's intentions on such as negative acts (i.e. harm or victimisation), and this concern is also overlap with other moral developmental theories. The critical difference is lied on the fundamental assumption over a debate that whether there is only one overarching moral concept (i.e. Kohlbergian) or a multiple and situation-contingent utility (i.e. Piaget, 1932/1965; Rest, 1983; Turiel,1983) in terms of moral order is applied in response to incoming social stimuli.

However, moral cognitive structuralists criticise that Turiel's moral domain model is problematic in two aspects in its' theoretical underpinnings. First, Gibbs (1992), and Glassman and Zan (1995) suggest that the domain framework perspective towards morality lacks of a developmental progression for the development of domains. How the distinction of social events is made and would one's categorisation on the social events change over time if Turiel claims the domain model is formed by the interaction between one and their outside world (Rest, 1983). Thus far, very little time has been spent on delineating these two enquires--reciprocal relationship by moral domainists. Second, although the violation of a social convention may not have intrinsic negative consequences, it can still, in one way or another, bear some moral components. One the other hand, there is inadequate evidence showing that people at the very young age that are able to discern right from wrong can provide sufficient appreciation of intrinsic characteristics of morality (Gibbs, 1992).

Information processing theories: The latent knowledge base

The functioning and role of social cognition in relation to human behaviour has long been a major interest for researchers in various fields. It was not, however, until recently that the research diverts to more specific components of 'on-line' cognition. This is because of inconsistent results in the research on global cognitive constructs, such as perspective taking and referential communication (Crick and Dodge, 1994). Thus far, three specific social information processing models emphasising the importance of self-regulating processes and the perception established with experience in leading to eventual responses chosen have been proposed. A sequential processing in information is of the essential feature among these models. They are respectively, Anderson (Anderson et al., 1998; Anderson and Bushman, 2002), Dodge (Dodge, 1986; Crick and Dodge, 1994), and Huesmann (1998). Anderson and Huesmann (2003) point out that although these three models vary in their specificity, terminology, and scope, similar premises are used about the processing of information. The network associating nodes gradually formed with behavioural outcome, existing episodes, and personal difference in evaluations is a crucial mechanism shared by these models. The node is assumed the smallest unit in mental information processing. Once nodes have been conceptually organised and linked, they are called concepts. Further, these concepts are to store in human memory and become the enduring knowledge structure. Knowledge structures are believed to guide individuals' interpretations and behavioural responses to their social environments (Anderson and Huesmann, 2003)

Crick and Dodge's social-information processing (SIP) model

The social-information processing (SIP) model proposed by Crick and Dodge (1994) is, with regard to children's social maladjustment, in order to understand more detail of the relationship between social cognition and acts. Moreover, the SIP model also speculates on the individual differences in the course of information processing rather than merely dwelling on the universal level or pattern of it. In the SIP model, individuals' social knowledge is crystallised through behaviour rehearsal, retrieval of schemas and cue evaluation and interpretation from time-to-time (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Fontaine, 2006a; Fontaine, 2007; Fontaine and Dodge, 2006; Huesmann, 1998). It should be noted that this involves two psychological mechanisms; one is

developmental and another is a schematically consolidating processes (Fontaine, 2006a).

Unlike previous theories in cognition science, this model is characterised by a number of features. Firstly, although this model is logically operated in sequential steps, the developmental pathway may occur in a non-linear pattern in the causal relationship of S-R. Secondly, in addition to adopting the connectionists' construct that processing is a function of working in parallel routes; the reformed model also develops the idea of feedback loops. Thirdly, the information processor is seen as a "conscious rule interpreter". In turn, the verbalisable feature allows the model to be divided into several steps. This is in contrast to the limitations that connectionists and cognitive constructionists possess; such as an indirect relation between cognition and performance. A body of research utilises this reformulated social information processing model to date. It is predominately seen in child behaviour related literature such as, social adjustment (Crick and Dodge, 1994), violent and aggressive responses (Dodge and Coie, 1987; Shahinfar, Kupersmidt and Matza, 2001), and hostile attribution intent (Dodge, 1980).

Furthermore, the SIP model involves a broad approach, as compared with other global constructs. This model allows investigators to review all of the mental operations that are deployed to generate a behavioural response during social interaction. That is to say, the working mechanism of reciprocal effects within the environment and an individual's mental processing is integrated into this theory. This results in enabling more processing steps to be included in an investigation, which in turn, allows a more complete understanding (Dodge and Somberg, 1987).

In line with other social-cognitive theories, the SIP model regards a child as an active processor of information cues. This notion also suggests that the child has ability, whereby a discretionary authority is assumed for him/her to tackle perceived social cues and then incorporate them into existing personal schemata with two subtype cognitive functions; accommodation and assimilation. Crick and Dodge (1994) suggest that children come to a social situation with a set of biologically limited capabilities and a database of memories of past experiences. The model is based on two ways of functioning; 1) Latent mental structures, including memory stores, acquired rules, social schemas and social knowledge. Bennett, Farrington, and Huesmann (2005) note that scripts are initially acquired through observing others, although their retention is then dependent on the

behavioural consequences, rewards and punishments. 2) On-line processing.

The SIP model consists of five steps with the antecedent enacting the chosen response (Crick and Dodge, 1994). The model is outlined as follows;

Step 1 Encoding of cues, both internal and external.

Step 2 Interpretation of cues, including causal attributions, intent attributions, and other interpretative processes (evaluation of goal attainment, evaluation of past performances, self-evaluations and other-evaluations).

Step 3 Clarification of goals, including arousal regulation.

Step 4 Response access or construction

Step 5 Response decision; including response evaluation, outcome expectation, self-efficacy evaluation, and response selection.

Step 6 Behavioural enactment

Step 1 and 2, encoding and interpretation of social cues.

The motivation of individual behaviour initially comes up from social cues. Two principles of information processing are considered here, such as personal internal tendency and the effectiveness of information processing. It is hypothesised that only some salient and particular situational cues are captured, intentionally or unwittingly, and then encoded and given a certain meaning by individuals. One or more independent processes may be involved in interpretation, including; a) by filtering experienced situational cues people will form a personalised mental representation to these stimuli and then store them in their long-term memory; b) the intent of others and the outcomes of self behaviour of the events that have occurred in the situation; c) a review of whether any previous social exchange had been achieved or not; d) an evaluation of the self-efficacy and efficiency of social exchanges with others in the past and present; e) inferences concerning the meaning for peers and self in both past and present social exchange. As noted, interpretation is a perpetuating reciprocal relationship between data-base information stored in memory and people's interpretational processes. Thus, notwithstanding that cognitive scripts may direct the interpretation process; the revision of the database is possible as a result of interpretational processes.

Step3, once the situation has been given a certain meaning, a goal is expected to take over the previous task. This then plays a role of leading and orientating to give an appropriate response to social

situations. The choice of the goal is based on positive or negative, internal or external personal outcome expectations, or even mixed effects. It is proposed that children bring certain preferences or tendencies to social situations that again could be dependent on the independent variables of responses.

Step 4, there are two cognitive functions serving a critical role in accomplishing this step; assimilation and accommodation. With these abilities individuals can access from memory possible response repertoires to the situation, or, if the situation is novel, new reaction mechanisms would be created in response to immediate social cues. However, these responses may not be triggered by the goal selected. It is worthwhile to pay attention to three individual variations; a) the number of responses that can be generated for the situation, even though it is an inexperienced scenario; b) whether the content of responses is qualitatively different or not; c) the order of accessing specific types of responses.

At Step 5, it is proposed that children, based on possible and potential results, evaluate the previously accessed (or constructed) responses and select the most positively evaluated response for enactment. Outcome expectations, self-efficacy and response evaluations are taken into consideration to produce the most suitable response to immediate social situations.

Step 6, the chosen response is behaviourally enacted.

To date, research has attempted to get insight into the interactive relationship between social knowledge and biased information processing in predicting deviant behaviour in youngster samples. For example, Lösel et al. (2007) and Zelli et al. (1999), use cross-lagged longitudinal experimental design to assess the predictability of these both constructs comprised in the SIP model. These two studies suggest that two independent dimensions of SIP are reflected in the correlation analysis between SIP variables as well as the predicted variable, aggression. Two factors are produced in SIP variables. One refers to behaviour schemata available; the other is the greater cognition aspect relevant to the situation. This result is critically informative for us to recognise the nature of the enactment of behaviour in a given stimulus. That is, a deviant response should not be automatically assumed to happen if they do not interpret the given situation as provocative. In the vein of SIP research, some studies have tried to integrate the perceptions and conceptualisations of social cues with other cognition models to provide a fuller explanation

of the relationship between cognition factors and their related behaviour. Arsenio and Lemerise (2004) suggested that it is useful to combine moral domain theory with the SIP model, as they share a number of similarities in nature; a) they are all concerned with harm and victimisation; b) both models fundamentally focus on the connection between children's social cognition and behaviour; c) active intention is the central interest for these two models (e.g. Nucci, 2004); d) the dynamic interplay has been both posited and assumed to be an must needed factor, no matter whether in functioning or mental operations, in yielding reasons or strategies.

The concept at latent structures and on-line processing actions, presented in social information processing, are parallel with moral structuralism, which emphasises assimilation and accommodation. Also, Dodge and Rabiner (2004) agree with Arsenio and Lemerise (2004) that children's underlying moral structures will generate relatively strong pressure for certain options over others. Despite Dodge and Rabiner (2004) recognising that works being made in theoretical integrations are problematic in a sense of the respective goals and roots in which they are initially developed from in each theory, the combination with moral domain theory is expected to be fruitful. The core contribution for moral domain theory is to offer the nature and boundaries of what is moral.

In Summary, the emphasis on personal social cognitive aspects deserves more focus in investigations to shed more light on criminal offending in theoretical and clinical levels. Researchers (Anderson and Huesmann, 2003; Coie and Dodge, 1998; Schneider, 1991) in psychology suggest that established and stable cognitive schemas and working models, they are called latent knowledge structure in information processing models, guide individuals to process external social cues. It is suggested that a well-rehearsal network association may result in stronger connection if not automatically with use. Thus, a habitual response is acquired as a result. The strength of information processing models are; a) to provide a coherent way to think theoretically, particularly aggression (Anderson and Huesmann, 2003). b) the notion in which to what extent a node and which node would be activated are concerned in processing information. There are two associative indicators. One is how many links to the node are activated, and another one is the strength of associations among the activated links. Other than the above noted critical determinant "rehearsal" which would increase the intensity and possibility of activation, individuals' interpretations are also of influential factor. Despite the strengths that social information processing modes

possess in describing how nodes are linked and how information processing goes along the models, there are couple of aspects needed to work on. First, social information processing models fail to theorise about that what elements in the processes of information would involve for different types of offending. Second, it unable to indicate the strength of associations activated for different offending patterns.

An integrated approach of addressing offending behaviour—from social cognitive perspective

The theories introduced above have their own strengths in either clearly indicating the possible steps of social reasoning when people processing outside stimuli or the ways of conceptualising of outside world based on their social cognitive knowledge. However, it is equally important to acknowledge the differences and limits that the theories have and to what extent they can offer to our understanding in the association between one's social knowledge and offending behaviour. The following section is to present the emphasis that content and structure oriented social cognitive approaches each place and how can these two approaches be integrated to form a cognitive model which with a better explanatory power in addressing the effect between social knowledge and offending behaviour.

1. The commonalties, differences and potential caveats of socio-cognitive theories in addressing offending behaviour

From a broad viewpoint, the socio-cognitive theories discussed above emphasise the role of the individuals' stable cognitive schemata in decision making and, hence, the chosen behaviour. However, attentions and research efforts are placed at different stages and dimensions with regard to the processing of decision making on behaviour. For moral structuralists the concern is on individuals' moral reasoning, backing up their decision making on the decision faced. Superficial reasons, such as attitude or knowledge on behaviour, are not thought to be of a decisive factor in guiding human behaviour. The construct proposed by structuralists is understood on addressing offending behaviour by looking at the relative position between behaviour agents and the outside world. In which role taking ability and justice mentality are to be believed to be fundamental building blocks on behaving morally, if not prosocially. However, some difficulties emerge when the cognitive structuralism is extended to address more elaborated, heterogeneous offending behaviours.

Based on the research to date, the potential problems faced by cognitive structuralism are outlined as below;

1) Structure oriented moral reasoning camp: A global view

a) It may not be the problem of formula but functions. Social cues, which provide individuals information to base their decisions on may not be interpreted correctly. Other than the possibility of offenders' incompetence on perceiving them accurately, the offenders' cognitive beliefs may exert influence on reacting to stimuli. This information process may not necessarily involve moral decision making. Additionally, acting unlawfully may be seen as justifiable under their definition or in certain circumstances. For example, violent offenders with mature moral reasoning and who are also able to appreciate the justice, or more specifically the value of life, but when under physical confrontation or feel life threatened, regardless of the reality of the situations, may behave violently toward the source of the threats. This problem is due to moral cognitive development theories simply sketching protocol criteria for justifications given by individuals. There is no magnitude indication present.

b) Idiosyncratic development in specific areas. As noted earlier, the whole structure postulation is upheld among cognitive structuralists, however there is an accumulation of contradictory evidence stating otherwise. People may develop differently in their moral values as a result of differentiating their interaction with outside work or the outcomes received. The measurement of moral reasoning development thus far is predominately based on assessing a limited number of moral values which are impertinent to the offending contexts. Thus, results derived from existing moral instruments are somewhat far-fetched in relation to the real offending behaviour.

c) The inappropriateness of using the overall moral developmental score when linking to elaborated offending behaviour. The concept of differential relationship on the development of moral values and specific type of offending should be used to unravel distinct crimes. By doing so, the merits of moral reasoning and the nature of different criminal behaviour are able to be associated. The relatedness of each individual moral value to the delinquents with different characteristics may differ from one to another.

d) Moral cognitive development paradigm appears to be limited in addressing the puzzle of why people operate moral reasoning at the same level but result in committing various types of offences. Due to the rigid tenet "structure whole", one of the core validating constructs in Kohlbergian theories, the potential to explain what cognitive moral development theories may bear in understanding sub-group offences is attenuated.

2) Content-oriented social cognitive camp: micro view

The strengths and weaknesses that the perspective looking at the specific belief-behaviour association offers are brought forward in this section. The points are a) content-oriented sociocognitive elements involve in very phases of one's mental information processing, b) what one thinks or perceives would guild what one acts, but in a specific schema-action connectional mechanism, c) lacking a systematic conceptualisation on a question about what is the fundamental thinking pattern that the generated content-contingent scripts and schema are based on.

a) Compared with moral reasoning structuralism, sociocognitive assessments take place in relatively earlier stages of information processing course leading up to offending behaviour. Unlike moral formalists, a comparatively closer process on categorising external cues occurs in individuals' initial perceptions and interpretations on the content of social information. It is not a hierarchy, but a more attribute contingent construct, that results in subsequent responses.

b) Another characteristic is laid on more established value- and scheme-orientated effects on determining deviant behaviour. Enormous differences in cognitive evaluation outcomes for an event are possible among people with different social experiences. That is due to a belief of a psychological mechanism shared among social cognitivists that social schemes are formed in the process of interaction between an individual and the outside world, and feedback from this.

c) A number of caveats are worth noting when looking at the causes of deviant conducts by content-oriented and fragment social knowledge; first, this perspective lacks of systematic and organised understanding in the relationship between variables. Second, although this perspective may work well in addressing different deviant behaviour, it is inadequate for identifying what precipitates people to violate laws. Third, this orientation is unable to identify dysfunctions communal in sociocognitive elements among different kind of offenders. Fourth, it is still not clear about how much weight each identified criminogenic values and scripts carries in facilitating offending behaviour.

3) The function of criminogenic social knowledge elements in contributing to offending behaviour: strengthening and/or insulating? Thus far, research investigating into the relationship between social Knowledge and offending behaviour is heavily targeting the components pertinent to the measured behaviour. However, this is far from helpful in addressing an enquiry why they do not engage crime of others. And, a crucial issue which may have been ignored is

that an impaired social knowledge is shared by delinquents or is only the criminogenic responsible to unique crime pattern. Even, little is known that if one disapproves a particular of offending behaviour may act as a strengthening contributor for the one's established or forming deviant behaviour.

a) The cause for an offender to commit a specific crime may not be only contributed by direct criminogenic sociocognitive elements but also indirect factors. That is to say, while it is understandable that crime sentiments are expected to be in harmony with offenders' offending behaviour, the reason for not engaging other crimes may also indirectly strengthen offenders' main crime patterns.

b) The social knowledge which one possesses in disfavour of certain crime may be the one which would refrain from committing that crime. If one's social cognition is to exercise equally in leading to social behaviour, in accordance with social cognitive theories, the one should be also less vulnerable in the crime which their social knowledge disapproves of.

It is a long term debate about whether social behaviour should be understood by structure or content oriented social knowledge despite that they all think how people organise their experiences and perceive outside world play a critical role in leading to make a criminal decision. The main variations that the two cognitive approaches have are first, Kohlbergian theorists believe that an underlying moral order and invariable upward development in the quality of moral reasoning can be discerned from individuals' moral justifications. A reverse relationship is assumed between the maturity of moral reasoning and the possibility of involving criminal activities. This protective effect is fulfilled by the inhibiting function—decentration thinking, yielded as one's moral reasoning develops mature. Different from Kohlbergian single overarching moral concept in guiding human decisions, Turiel proposes that not every social event we come across in everyday life is approached with morality thinking. Given that social events are divided into three main categories and human decisions are accordingly made in accordance with the nature of the social events. Nonetheless, the inhibiting effect on response chosen is expected to be activated more strongly on social events which are conceptualised as having intrinsic elements of morality than that of social conventional or even personal prerogative ones by individuals. Second, as opposed to some researchers viewing imperative thinking of morality play an influential role in leading to behaviour decision making, an event specific social knowledge and behaviour assumption is advocated by other researchers.

Instead of answering whether content or structure approaches to social knowledge best explain offending behaviour, this research is

aimed to enhance our understanding by asking to what extent these two approaches in combination can shed light on the relationship. And, this aim is fulfilled by incorporating these theories to form a general cognitive model in addressing social reasoning –offending behaviour specifically. Furthermore, how well as to each cognitive theory included can offer in explicating different pattern of offending behaviour is also concerned. In the light of aforementioned merits and limitations on content and structure oriented approaches on analysing offending behaviour, the model is of an offender-centred and designated integration characteristic.

Chapter 3 Social Cognition and Offending Behaviour

This chapter is to provide a comprehensive review of empirical studies based on social cognitive perspectives in unravelling deviant behaviour. The social-cognition approach theories introduced in the previous chapter have been, according to their respective strengths, empirically employed in investigations into different maladaptive and antisocial behaviour. First, Kohlbergian moral cognitive development paradigm has been interested in comparing the difference in terms of moral reasoning quality between juvenile offenders and the age-matched controls. But, relatively less effort is made on understanding the difference among distinct crime patterns and adult groups. Second, moral domain model focuses in distinguishing the placement tendency of moral domain people may have on social situations, and in turn, how it exerts influence in decision making and responses chosen to the external stimuli. Third, social information processing is concerned about the relationship between ones' interpretations on ambiguous external social cues and the selected response. The areas most researched by the information processing mode embrace, hostility attribution and violent offending behaviour, and maladaptive behaviour.

Moral reasoning: A source of influence on criminal behaviour

In recent decades, the view that social behaviour moves under the internal, and social regulating processes is advocated by social psychologists (Anderson and Huesmann, 2003). The individual difference in terms of moral cognitive development has been researched in relating to the occurrence of general deviant behaviour. The social cognition paradigm has been used to address adolescent delinquency by a number of researchers. In general, the focus of interest has been in comparing age-matched normal young populations with juvenile deviants. Kohlbergian theories (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987; Gibbs, 1992) have been widely adopted by researchers to understand the developmental differences of moral reasoning (Brugman and Aleva, 2004; Chen and Howitt, 2006, 2007; Gregg, et al., 1994; Laedén et al., 2006; Palmer and Hollin, 1998). This approach accepts that people's justifications for their moral decisions reflect their underlying structures of moral) reasoning,

which varies qualitatively (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987). The structure is a hierarchical framework, as Kohlberg characterises it. Children only move sequentially from egocentric thinking (the immature level) through to the conventional level (the law-abiding) or are even able to attain a self-principled mature thought level. Conceivably, people upholding societal rules and being aware of collective welfare are more likely to appreciate and respect others' benefits. As a consequence, it is less likely that they will be damaged purposely (Jennings et al., 1983).

From extant findings suggest that is juvenile offenders are less developed than their age-matched non-offending peers. However, many more questions are still left unanswered. To understand the problem, it is necessary to explore a) the applicability of global constructs of moral development in mature populations, b) the role moral reasoning plays in different types of criminal conducts and c) the matter of simultaneous progression in all aspects of moral values? These are discussed in detailed below;

1. The relationship between moral Judgement and criminal acts

There have been a number of approaches studying the relationship between moral cognitive development and acts. However, the research into these variables in relation to moral behaviour has been consistent and it remains questionable as to whether these components have strong correlations with criminal behaviour (Kohlberg, 1984; Palmer, 2003a., Wilson, Goodwin, and Beck, 2002). Moral cognitive development, in contrast, shows a significant correlation with behaviour. The individual's intention is a general concern for structure-oriented moral development theories. In general, the path for researchers working in the area of Piagetian/Kohlbergian moral development has been through moral reasoning. Social cognitions produced by individuals offer enormous opportunities for investigators to make an assessment of moral judgement. Moral judgments are judgements of value, not of fact, and involve people. Besides, moral judgements are judgments of prescriptive, judgements of ought to do, of right and responsibility, for example, rather than the judgement of ones' liking and preference (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987). Blasi (1980) has argued that moral judgement is interchangeable with moral reasoning, "characterised by the general or specific criteria by which moral decisions are supported".

The characteristics of moral judgements are that they direct, command, or obligate us to take some actions on social situations.

Blasi (1983) suggested that a double role of knowledge is given in the cognitive-developmental approach to moral action. Firstly, it defines the specific moral meaning of the action and secondly, it is used to motivate the agent to act according to this understanding. It is important to bear in mind that individuals, regardless of what stage they are in, can choose to break laws and believe that their behaviours are justifiable when they consider the law is against their moral principles. However, as noted above, the justifications used by people in different stages are qualitatively different and, in general, those at less mature or immature moral stage are more likely to act morally. The deficit of role taking ability is one of the defining features for immature moral reasoning. Although we know egocentric thinking is the core indicator of pre-conventional moral development, it does not disappear completely in people's lives. Jennings et al.(1983), suggest that moral judgement is not only able to motivate adolescents to right the wrong as well as perceive responsibility, higher moral stages can also act as an insulator against unjust actions, and the pressures from authorities and peers that sometimes accompany offending. However, such as pressure would not require for pre-conventional adolescent to engage crime activities. Furthermore, Jennings et al. (1983) indicate that the issue of moral relevance may be considered as an index in addressing different types of criminal behaviour.

2. Moral cognitive development stages and different offences

Thus far, the difference between offenders and non-offenders in terms of the moral reasoning stage has been firmly confirmed in the literature (Chen and Howitt, 2006, 2007; Gibbs, et al., 2007; Gregg et al., 1994; Hains, 1984; Palmer and Hollin, 1998, 2000; Trevethan and Walker, 1989.). A relationship between overall moral developmental delay and criminal activity in adolescents has been frequently reported (Blasi, 1980; Gibbs, 2003; Jennings, 1983; Palmer, 2003a; Nelson et al., 1990). Priest and Kordinak (1991) report that the Defining Issues Test (DIT) P index scores did not differentiate adult property and victimless offenders. Using the same moral reasoning measure DIT, Greenfield and Valliant (2007) found that violent adult offenders operated at a mature moral reasoning stage, significantly higher than non-violent offenders. Moreover, Valliant et al., (2000) reports that adult rapists and child molesters developed higher and differed significantly from general offenders, non-offenders and incest offender groups in the moral judgement ability. However, Chen and Howitt (2006, 2007), using a moral reasoning instrument SRM-SF, were unable to distinguish adolescent drug, theft and violent

delinquents from each other in moral reasoning ability. Researchers have warned that caution should be taken when interpreting results measured by the DIT recognition measure, Because DIT is more likely to produce more mature moral reasoning compared with its counterparts, such as SRM-SF (Greenfield and Valliant, 2007; Chen and Howitt, 2007). Based on findings available, whether there is a disparity between sub-types of antisocial behaviour in moral judgement competence is far from clear.

Many investigators have suggested, delinquents are not a homogenous group but differ in the nature of their offending behaviour (Blasi, 1980; Jurkovic, 1980; Nelson et al., 1990; Palmer, 2003). Therefore, different types of crime should be compared in order to understand further the relationship between crime and moral reasoning; that is, we should look in more detail at subgroups of offenders and their offending behaviour. As Blasi (1980) suggests, the characteristic of delinquents sampled in studies lacks corresponding moral values as a precise indicator in which the moral reasoning –delinquencies relationship can therefore be examined. Apart from that, youth offenders are to be found in a variety of moral development stages, though the typical range is narrow. Stevenson, Hall and Innes (2004) also provide evidence of this phenomenon and find that mature-level sociomoral development might not necessarily be a buffer against antisocial influence. The majority of offenders in this sample (65%) were at or above stage 3, but highly supported pro-criminal sentiments.

In the light of this point, while the lag of moral cognitive development is a common characteristic of young offenders, it does not address why these individuals, who are in the same developmental stage, commit different types of crime.

3. The hypothesis of immature development and adult offenders

To date, research on the immature hypothesis in adult offenders is very scarce and that which exists demonstrates inconsistent results. Two studies (Thornton and Reid, 1982; Valliant et al., 2000) show adult offenders' moral reasoning to be at the immature levels (stage 2 or 2/3). Fabian (2001) found offenders' moral reasoning indeed lower than their well-matched controls, yet nevertheless, no significant difference was obtained between the scores of highest 25% in former group and that of the average scores of later Non-offenders. In a recent study, in contrast, Stevenson et al. (2003, 2004) report that the development of offenders' morality is mainly at the mature level (stage 3) in Gibbs's model. In Valliant's studies (Greenfield and

Valliant, 2007; Valliant et al., 2000), adult rapists, child molesters and violent offenders were found to have mature levels of ability in moral reasoning. So why do individuals capable of valuing interpersonal relations and show insight about societal values and protocols for defining mature moral development, still violate laws?

4. Cognitive moral development and type of crimes

Some effort has been devoted to comparative studies examining cognitive moral development in relation to different types of criminal activity (Chen and Howitt, 2007; Greenfield and Valliant, 2000; Nelson et al., 1990; Palmer, 2003b; Priest and Kodinak, 1991). Offenders are not simply a homogenous group in terms of nature of their convictions. Different criminal acts are not caused by the same dysfunctional psychological element(s). Violation may be done to research findings by ignoring the different types of offence groups. Some scattered research has been carried out into samples of adolescent, violent and theft offenders (e.g. Arbthnot, Gordon, and Jurkovic, 1987; Judy and Nelson, 2000). The evidence from such studies shows that the moral development levels of violent and theft offenders are lower than those of non-violent and non-theft controls, respectively. Research also shows that moral reasoning deficits are characteristic of adult violent and non-violent prisoners although moral reasoning does not differentiate these two prisoner groups (Fabian, 2001). This study is also important in that it identifies a group of prisoners who scored highly on moral reasoning, yet nevertheless had offended. Similarly, Priest and Kodinak (1991) report their samples of adult criminals committing three different types of crimes all typically manifested a mature-level of moral development. Jurkovic (1980) suggests that conventional reasoning does not absolutely provide insulation from delinquency, though immoral behaviour may be qualitatively construed as having different meanings by conventional level and immature level adolescents.

1) Violent offenders

Recently Stevenson, Hall and Innes (2004, 2003) compare adult violent offenders and university students in moral reasoning. Non-offenders differ significantly from the offender groups. There is still more than sixty per cent of offender participants' moral development at the mature-level (conventional level). This is convergent with Priest and Kodinak's (1991) study which reported no difference among people with respect to property and victimless offences. This is at odds with the Kohlbergian claim that moral

cognitive development delay would also hold validity into adult deviant groups. As yet, insufficient investigations have been carried out on mature samples, so it is premature to draw a firm conclusion that moral reasoning has no role at any point in the course of decision making of individuals offending violently. Recent research (Chen and Howitt, 2007) reports that no difference was found on juvenile violent offenders compared to other types of offenders (theft and drug abusers). In addition, adult violent offenders are found to develop more maturity in moral reasoning than non-violent offenders (Greenfield and Valliant, 2007).

2) Drug abusers

The question of the moral development of those convicted for drugs offences is difficult to address adequately. Chiefly, to date, there are few of studies specifically investigating samples of drug abusers; furthermore, most of this research remains unpublished. Nevertheless, Jennings et al. (1983), reviewing the moral reasoning research on delinquency, report a sizeable number of Stage 3 thinkers among older incarcerated delinquents (age 18-20). Additionally, most of these are drug addicts. Kohlberg and Freundlich (unpublished and cited in Blair, 1980) considered that prisoners convicted of drug related offences would have a higher moral stage than other inmates. Also this study, as Jurkovic (1980) points out, contains disproportionate numbers of drug-related offenders whose overall moral reasoning was higher than non-drug-related offenders. In contrast, a comparison study was conducted on adult male drug-addict patients, with experience involvement in criminal justice system, with a control sample of non-professional staff working in a hospital. No difference was found between these two groups in moral reasoning; moreover, moral reasoning had no relationship with the number of backgroups and personality characteristics (Arthur et al., 1978). Berkowitz et al. (1991) are highly critical of much of the research on drug offenders for four main reasons:

a) There is insufficient information provided within the text of these reviewed studies, (e.g. inconsistencies in reports often taken from secondary sources);

b) Methodologically, a frequent problem is the comparability of the samples, particularly the unmatched research participants in comparative studies. For example, the age range of drug-use and control samples is substantially different;

c) Inconsistency of the type of drug usage reported among the research. That is, the frequency of using drugs in a certain interval base and the type of drug taken, and whether or not drug taking involves other crimes;

d) Insufficient sample sizes to demonstrate statistical trends effectively. Recent research, however, demonstrated a relationship between drug taking (users in a drug rehabilitation community) and lower moral judgement scores (Comunian and Gielen, 2000). However, a forensically valid sample was investigated using Gibbs's SRM-SF instrument and it was found that adolescent drug abusers' moral reasoning was no different from that of theft and violence offenders (Chen and Howitt, 2007).

3) Theft offenders

Beth and Eileen (2000) found that adolescents reporting involvement in burglary had significantly lower moral developmental scores than those who report no involvement in burglary in the previous year. Chen and Howitt (2007) found that no significant differences existed between theft and other types of delinquent groups in their moral reasoning scores on Gibbs's moral reasoning measure (SRM-SF).

4) Sex offenders

Studies directly investigating cognitive moral development among rapists and other sex offender groups are rare. However, a study by Valliant, Gauthier, Pottier and Kosmyna (2000) did compare the moral reasoning of a group of general offenders with three types of sex offenders: rapists, child molesters and incest offenders, as well as controls. The results show that the general offenders and incest offenders reason at significantly less mature levels of moral reasoning development than the child molesters and rapists. Moreover, no difference was found between non-offenders and child molesters and rapists, who all typically use moral judgement at the conventional stage. Empathy is one of the cardinal elements in progressing to mature moral development. The review and meta-analysis research conducted by Jolliffe and Farrington (2004) on empathy and selected offending types, finds that low empathy is more strongly related to mixed offending than to sex offending. Similarly, Monto, Zgourides and Harris (1998) find that adolescent sexual offenders' empathy is not statistically lower than non-offenders. It can then be hypothesised that individuals indicating a low level of moral development, where, according to Kohlberg (1976), self-interest and avoidance of punishment are the main considerations, would indicate a significantly more pro-rape attitude. Wilson, Goodwin and Beck (2002) report that individuals who express more pro-rape attitudes, as measured by the various questionnaires regarding rape, also show less evidence of mature moral reasoning. This result is found to hold

most strongly within the rapists group, while is only marginally significant within the non-criminal control group, and not at all among the armed robbers. However, Rapists are not significantly more constrained by a dependence on pre-conventional moral reasoning than either criminal or non-criminal controls.

Differential association between moral values development and different offending

1. The inconsistency between moral reasoning and moral behaviour

A contradiction arises from the fact that, in general, most juvenile delinquents are not conventional stage thinkers; however, some conventional thinkers are juvenile delinquents (Jennings et al., 1983). The essential assumption is that the higher the moral judgement stage, the less likely the individual will violate social regulations or damage others interests. Based on this inference, we may say that moral reasoning development is just a necessary component, but not a sufficient cause of delinquency. Some criminal behaviour might not involve moral elements but can be discussed on the premise of rationality, for example. In addition, other aspects of cognition-behaviour can also be drawn into the explanation of immoral conducts.

1) The structural whole of moral reasoning/consistency and offending types

Having pointed out the critical contradictions above, questions are thus raised as follows: Does the claim that Kohlbergian theorists make on the fundamental theoretical constructs "structured-whole" apply for adult offender populations? Should idiosyncratic development in moral reasoning ability in varying contexts be assumed? Colby and Kohlberg (1987) assert that the anomaly of moral judgement, where an individual may possibly show lower than their highest competence in exceptional contexts. For example, in the prison setting or in the pressed social environment, because of the lower moral atmosphere being prevalent in these settings (Higgins, et al, 1984; Kohlberg, 1969). This tenet would be challenged further in the situation where people are involved in distinct crime activities.

The comparative examination of offending and non-offending groups is the most traditional methodology used in assessing moral

reasoning development. In this method, the summary moral development score is adopted to represent individual's moral reasoning competence. Based on the dichotomous-style research design and overall moral reasoning score, very limited understanding is gained to allow us to address the complex relationship between moral reasoning and varying offending behaviour. Thus, efforts need to be made to explore more forensic meaningful questions. For example, why some offenders are only chronically involved in unique deviant behaviour but not others if they possess the same moral reasoning ability? And if any offender adheres to a particular crime type, will their moral reasoning develop differentially vis-à-vis their crime patterns? These two suggestions are based on one of Kohlbergian fundamental postulations that knowledge comes from individuals' experiences—interacting with environments, and also as the source of ones' moral decision. Therefore, people may exhibit considerably distinct perceptions and moral concerns from one area to another by virtue of experiencing disparate behavioural outcomes. In a longitudinal cohort investigation (Raaijmaker et al., 2005), a reciprocal relationship was revealed between moral reasoning and delinquency. Notably, the reciprocal effect seems to be magnified in early adulthood.

2) Insynchronous development of moral values

Cognitive moral development is usually assessed by measures comprising a set of essential moral values. This is particularly the case for current popular moral assessment instruments. The terms issues and values are exchangeable; they represent what the individual is evaluating, judging or appealing to rather than his/her model of reasoning about that issue (Jennings et al., 1983). Although the representability of moral values currently embedded in three of Kohlbergian moral measures is not without doubt, the Kohlbergian assessment tools are mostly employed. Moral Judgement Interview (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987; MJJ) is one of the most well-known moral measuring instruments, consisting of 11 moral issues for assessing moral developmental stage. The values sampled include Laws and rules, Conscience, Personal roles of affection, Authority, Civil rights, Contract, trust, Justice in exchange, Punishment and justice, the Value of life, Property rights and values, Truth, Sex and sexual love. In addition, the Sociomoral Reflection Measure-Short Form (SRM-SF) (Gibbs et al., 1992) was created by John Gibbs. In this, some moral issues overlap with MJJ. There are five main values included, such as Contract and truth, Affiliation, Life, Property and Law, Legal justice. Although, as noted above, there may have a question on the concern that whether one's moral reasoning development can be gained by

measuring the moral values included in present morality measures, the five moral values examined in the SRM-SF were widely rated important or even very important to respondents in Chen and Howitt, (2007) and Palmer and Hollin's (1998) studies.

While it seems generally accepted that the moral reasoning level of delinquents is lower than that of non-delinquent controls, forensic researchers have already questioned whether every type of moral value develops at the same pace (Chen and Howitt, 2006, 2007; Palmer and Hollin, 1998). In other words, has it been satisfactorily established whether every moral value develops in perfect synchrony with all other moral values in criminal populations as Kohlberg's approach would suggest? In addition, are people lacking role-taking opportunity or living in certain sub-cultures or sub-groups limited by their moral reasoning environment in terms of their moral development? For example, Palmer and Hollin found that scores on the moral norm of Life were significantly higher than the other four values among a sample of male delinquents. This makes sense when the result is referred to the fact that most of their samples are convicted of property related crimes. Furthermore, Gregg, Gibbs and Basinger (1994) found that delinquents of both genders 'show substantially poorer moral development on the Law value. A Recent study carried out by Chen and Howitt (2007) reports that the moral value "Life" predicts adolescent violent offending. The SRM-SF was used in these three studies. Also, Bruhman and Aleva (2004) report that youthful offenders exhibit relatively lower moral competence on the value of 'obeying the law'. This point is also suggested in Stevenson et al.'s (2004) research - that is the level of moral development had no influence on violent offenders' negative attitude toward the justice system. Additionally, this finding was replicated in Chen and Howitt's work (2006, 2007), in which legal related moral values "Property & Law" as well as "Legal/justice" develop behind other values. However, Bush, Alterman, Power and Connolly (1981), using the MJI, could not differentiate alcoholics, drug addicts and controls in terms of their overall moral development scores. Nevertheless, the moral norms of life and law differentiated between these different categories.

Given the differential development of moral values in offender groups compared with controls, the possibility that different aspects of moral reasoning may contribute differently to moral reasoning in relation to offending is worth consideration by researchers. So do different moral values explain different types of offending behaviour? Some researchers (Carpendale, 2000; Chapman, 1988; Chen and

Howitt, 2006, 2007; Piaget, 1952) consider that inconsistency should be expected in the development of moral norms, though Kohlberg may not have agreed given his concept of the 'structured whole' (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987). In which the concept implies that an individual will employ a consistent level of moral reasoning irrespective of moral content. This leaves no latitude in terms of dealing with inconsistency in moral judgement even though Kohlberg accepts that their highest moral reasoning levels are not applied by an individual to every moral issue. Together, moral norms, comprising of Kohlbergian moral formulations, are assumed to have equal weight making up the overall developmental stage in measures. This claim seems to hold with no research base in support of it available. Besides, it fails to consider what happens when moral norms are applied by different offenders and its relationship to each specific pattern of criminal behaviour.

3) Cognitive content to criminal conducts

Other than the moral cognitive-structural theories, cognition content has been another important factor investigated by researchers in addressing offending behaviour. Of the cognition variables, Gibbs names 'self-centred' as the primary self-serving cognition distortion (Gibbs, 2003). The self-centred schema is defined by Gibbs et al. (1996), as "according status to one's own views, expectations, needs, rights, immediate feeling, and desires to such an extent that the legitimate views of others are scarcely considered or are disregarded altogether" (p.108). Distortion is one of processing biases in information processing theory (Dodge, 1986), which conceptualises cognition as inaccurate or distorted schematic/processing tendencies. In addition, a unique psychological self-defence mechanism used to relieve victimisers' guilt or stresses arising from being responsible for unjustifiable or unreasonable hurt to others are not unusually perceived among offenders (Gibbs, 2003; Nucci, 2002; Palmer and Hollin, 2000). This protective rationalisation, termed secondary cognitive distortions by Gibbs, is composed of Blaming Others, Assuming the Worst, and Minimizing/Mislabelling. Barriga, Landau, Stinson and Gibbs (2000) find that the incarcerated juvenile delinquents evidence higher levels of cognitive distortion (self-serving and self-debasing) and behaviour (externalising and internalising) than did control groups. Moreover, both self-serving and self-debasing cognitive distortion are associated with unique variance in overall problem behaviour. Most notably, self-serving cognitive distortions are specifically related to externalising behaviour, while self-debasing cognitive distortion is particularly connected with

internalising acts. Similarly, Stevenson, et al. (2004) report that criminal behaviour could be neutralised regardless of the sociomoral level. Their results show that mature-level non-offenders endorse more positive attitudes about the justice system, are less willing to neutralise law violation, and have lower identification with other criminals than mature and immature offender groups. These self-centred attitudes are not only able to provide persistent antisocial behaviour but are also able to balance psychological states and cover any potential threats to the wrongdoer's "good" self concept. Researchers (Gibbs, 2003; Nucci, 2002) believe that to maintain a positive imagination is still pursued by offenders. This psychodynamic activity is just same as individuals. Stevenson et al. (2004) suggests that it is the endorsement of criminal sentiments, functionally serving psychological relief that provides a reasonable explanation as to why 65% of high-risk adult violent offenders with mature-level sociomoral development nevertheless offend. A study conducted by Valliant et al. (2000) on sexually related offenders reveals that although rapists and child molesters have the ability to understand moral issues, they are incompetent in interpersonal social values. Moreover, Greenfield and Valliant (2007) report that despite being mature in moral reasoning ability measured by DIT, adult violent offenders are more elevated on the 'Antiestablishment' scale using this moral reasoning instrument.

Moral Domain placement and behaviour

Research on the development of moral reasoning reveals that, while the reasoning quality increases throughout adolescence and young adulthood, it does not consistently predict behaviour (Kuther and Higgins, 2000). Thus, if we want to examine the relationship between moral cognition and moral action, then a clear definition and boundary of the two terms needs to be made (Blasi, 1980). As noted earlier, moral reasoning is one of three prominent approaches in moral cognition to assess and predict moral behaviour. Furthermore, moral reasoning, postulated by moral cognitive theorists, should involve the evaluation of values. However, what values and actions should be classified as moral and immoral? The domain model, somewhat different from earlier cognitive-developmental models, emphasises that the individuals' moral domain placement of social events will guide individuals' information processing and subsequent responses. Blasi (1980), points out that those actions chosen to be research targets may not necessarily have a consensus agreement on whether they are relevant to the morality of the agent. Researchers working in the moral domain area make a distinction concerning the

attribution of social events; namely moral, conventional and personal domain that the social events might be assigned to (Nucci, 1981; Tisak and Jankowski, 1996; Turiel, 1998). Given that different types of offenders may possess quite diverse "worldviews" and "beliefs" to the offences, it is worth acquiring insight into the interaction between delinquents and different crimes. For instance, whereas drug addicts might indicate that taking drugs should be a personal choice, and has nothing to do with moral elements, the behaviour is widely regarded as unlawful in most regions. Justifications used for the drug abusers may be based on the grounds that there is no victim being involved as compared to other crimes against other's property or person.

Harvey, Fletcher and French (2001) propose that aggressive children access information from the underlying social reasoning domain differently than their prosocial peers. This in turn affects their decision-making and subsequent behaviour in social situations. Kurther and Higgins (2000) find that 'Risky behaviour' (e.g. antisocial behaviour, substance use and sexual involvement, and suicidal ideation) were perceived as personal decisions, rather than as ones of morality or convention. Engagement and domain judgement of risky behaviour interacted with each other. With increasing substance involvement, students are more likely to view the decision to use drugs and alcohol as a personal discretion rather than either moral or conventional decisions.

Offending content factors with formal moral reasoning

Another problematic issue regarding to the relationship between framework-featured moral reasoning and actual offending behaviour is in the methodology. Byrne (2005) argues that research aiming to understand offending behaviour is not to link offenders' perspectives on the acts to their own actual perceptions of crime contexts. This is especially the case in moral reasoning--offending association investigations. This idea highlights the issues that how offenders understand their crime conducts has long been neglected by researchers. The point here is that people holding the same moral reasoning level may not necessarily to construe social situations in the same way. As a result they may result into making a rather different decision based on disparate understanding of the social cues on given social stimuli. The applicability of moral reasoning ability assessments on real offending behaviour for offenders is therefore a matter of concern. For example, a situation may occur in which an offender may think that it is very important for people living in society to abide by laws while the offender still commits crimes. This is

obviously in conflict between the moral reasoning competences the one holds and the behaviour one acts out. One explanation of this may lie in that the offender does not think his or her behaviour is really a wrongdoing because of their social environment, the way they ascribe blame for their crimes, and even their personal definitions of crimes.

Instead of simply concentrating on the framework of moral reasoning, two recent studies include content factors (Stevenson et al. 2004; Tarry and Emler, 2007). These report a somewhat different picture which challenges the explanations of moral developmental theories. These results have therefore revitalised the emphasis on offending content issue. Reports from Stevenson et al. (2004) and Tarry and Emler (2007) reveal criminal sentiment or attitudes and values rather than moral reasoning to be better associated to delinquency. Moreover, McCarthy and Stewart (1998) find that the prevailing neutralisation strategy, typically seen among deviants' post-justifications, has no correlation at all with the crime activities that individuals have never engaged in.

Moral cognitive development conceptualised by a structuralist approach places overwhelming emphasis on the underlying formal framework of moral reasoning. However, the subjective interpretations or definition of overt stimuli may lead individuals to behave rather differently despite possessing using the same logic of moral reasoning. In this way one could think that an act, which others see as immoral, would not damage other's welfare. Throughout this, the subject may still uphold "principled" moral reasoning, dictating that we should not cause any harmful behaviour to others. This is a good example to highlight how biased cues, regardless of being intentional or inadvertent, guide people to make enormously different decisions. This is despite the fact that they all base their behavioural decisions on the same form of moral logic.

To bridge the gap in our understanding of the relationship between moral reasoning and offending behaviour, a closer assessment of how moral reasoning is understood is called for. Furthermore, just how do offenders with different characteristic crimes process differing crime episodes and what effects the moral reasoning ability on their response decisions have.

1. Information processing models and decision making

The *social information processing (SIP)* model has been widely acknowledged as a prominent means of understanding deviant

behaviour in general and in children, and adolescent aggressive behaviour in particular (Burks, Laird, and Dodge, 1999; Coie & Dodge, 1998; Crick & Dodge, 1994; Fontaine, 2006b; Huesmann, 1997; and Lösel, Bliesener and Bender, 2007). The SIP model consists of two main operational mechanisms; 1) online processing and 2) latent knowledge systems. Social knowledge (or social schemata) within the individual's memory system is essentially a processed and structured database that guides social reasoning, in general, and is of great involvement in the first three steps of SIP. (Crick and Dodge, 1994; Huesmann, 1998; Zelli, Dodge, Lochman and Laird, 1999). However, recently Fontaine (2006b) suggests that a system perspective should be considered in order to understand the dynamically reciprocal relationship between these two operational mechanisms in the model. In the context of sex offending, some researchers argue that distorted knowledge rather than dysfunctional cognitive functioning may characterise sexual offending (Johnston and Ward, 1996; Ward et al., 1997).

Crick and Dodge's (1994) revised model and Huesmann's (1998) social information processing model substantially enhanced our understanding of children's social adjustment to the situations that confront them. One important feature of the reformulated processing mechanism is its stronger emphasis on the role of the individual's mental representations or social knowledge relevant to the situation. The latent knowledge or data base, as it is called in the SIP model, serves a critical role in helping determine an individuals' response to a given social contexts. Knowledge structures are the products of social interaction involving the individual's values, prior experiences, social adjustment, and the consequences of their behaviour. Cognitive beliefs have moderating and independent functions (Zelli et al., 1999). That is to say, knowledge structures play a guiding role in their own right while also acting as a mediating influence on processing information. This is supported by Lösel et al. (2007) who reports that pro-aggressive repertoire evaluations exert more influence on later aggressive behaviour following retrieval of the repertoire from the memory store. Also, the prediction effect is reported by a longitudinal research (Burks et al., 1999) on children, showing an association between hostile knowledge structure and a tendency to process information in a hostile way. The study suggests that knowledge structures may even have greater value than on-line processing components on explaining children's aggressive behaviour. A similar finding is also reported in Johnston and Ward's work (1996), who argue that the maladaptive beliefs of sexual offenders might contribute to sexual offending. In the light of a paucity of research

looking solely at the cognitive representation on a wide variety of forensically social knowledge and the lack of information from the offender's point of view, it is unclear as yet, just how an offender's social knowledge base relates to their offending behaviour.

2. Normative beliefs and behaviour

Normative beliefs are "*individualistic cognitive standards about the acceptability of a behaviour*" (Huesmann and Guerra, 1997). This essential cognitive construct is shared and plays a critical role in both Dodge and Huesmann's models. This notion is called self-regulating internal standards and is derived from Bandura's (1986) social-cognitive formulation. It essentially serves a filtering function in sociomorally chosen responses. This belief-based, value-prescriptive function may, in turn, exercise in other stages of processing information. It may have an important influence on the aggression exhibited by a child, for example, a child is more likely to be extremely aggressive if they believe that acting aggressively is an appropriate solution to the current problem faced (Huesmann and Guerra, 1997; Zelli, Dodge, Lochman and Laird, 1999). Furthermore, adolescents who believe that physical aggression is an acceptable response to social situations are more likely to exhibit physically aggressive behaviour, whereas adolescents who believe that relational aggression (i.e. psychological and emotional aggression) is an appropriate response to social situations, are more likely to engage in relational aggression (Werner and Nixon, 2005). Similarly, juvenile delinquents are more likely to use violence when they experience high levels of anger if they consider physical aggression as an appropriate means of dealing with conflicts (Sukhodolsky and Ruchkin, 2004). Additional evidence of the specificity of the relationship between beliefs and anti-social behaviour is observed in a study by Crane-Ross, Tisak and Tisak (1998). The specific association in offenders' cognitions and anti-social behaviour is also revealed in Chen and Howitt's (2006, 2007) work. They establish that specific moral value developmental lags had systematic correlations with specific offending behaviours. This inference is built on the thinking that the more mature a moral reasoning ability one has, the lower one's inclination to transgress social rules is, due to the inhibiting function of moral reasoning development. Furthermore, a consistent favourable-assessment was found in different deviant behaviour (e.g. substance abuse, stealing and cheating) where evaluative behavioural judgements were found to be characteristic of adolescent deviants in a recent review study (Fontaine, 2006b).

Crime Self-identity is conceptualised as the offenders' perceptions about themselves and their main unlawful behaviour. As noted earlier, social knowledge is a feature of development. From a social cognition point of view, it is understandable; if one chronically engages in certain deviant behaviour then the identification with the behaviour should also be observed in one's self-concept. Besides, Fontaine and Dodge (2006) suggest that the responses one produces to stimuli have to be congruent with self-identity before the individual proceeds to the next step of information processing. The vital sociocognitive tenet, equilibrium (Piaget, 1977) provides a more theoretically developmental justification for this argument. Human beings are believed to constantly maintain a well-balance between their acts and their cognition.

Classifications of crimes and the versatile nature of crime involvement

It is widely accepted that neither crimes nor offenders are homogeneous (Blackburn, 1993; Gottfredson, 2005). Blackburn (1993) suggests that classifications are needed for mainly three aims, including for the utility of management, of treatment and of theoretical understanding. Therefore, categorisation is the function of perspectives and practices. Although the typing process does ignore the uniqueness in terms of attributes individuals possess, categorisations work in facilitating communications, decision making, and predictions in scientific and professional activities (Brennan, 1987). In sociology, for example, offenders are identified by reference to the form they integrate into social traditions (Sutherland and Cressey, 1970). Furthermore, while psychologists are concerned more on disorders in aspect such as the patterns of strength and deficits in psychology, psychiatrists mainly focus on identifying clinically disorder symptoms. (Blackburn,1993). However, for criminologists classification has longed been held to be significant on crimes rather than the study of crime itself (Gottfredson. 2005). As result of that, the subtypes of offending (e.g. sexual and white collar) are mostly investigated in criminology field. Research in this field normally looks at the difference between groups, such as personal versus property offences (McCarthy and Stewart, 1998), the frequency of incarceration experiences; that is, first offender and recidivists (Priest and Kordinak, 1991); or specific crime type, such as property crime (Kazemian, and Farrington, 2005) and sexual offenders (Robertiello and Terry, 2007) (i.e. rapists, child molesters, cyber sex offenders).

However, the conventional typology approach in criminology noted above has recently received some challenges from mainly both cross-sectional and developmental perspectives. Firstly, findings (Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2005; Williams and Arnold, 2002) revealed by studies adopting a life-course analysis suggest that offending involvement is not age-invariant. In other words, the versatility and specialisation in offending may be found in one's criminal career, or versatile in certain age period, but specialised in other stage in the one's life time. Secondly, the phenomenon of substantial versatility in offending is demonstrated in research evidence (Gottfredson, 2005; Hanson and Bussiere, 1998). This is even more the case for sexual and theft crimes (Hanson and Bussiere, 1998; Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2005; Smallbone and Wortley, 2004). And, Wagner (1996) notes after a comprehensive research review on the relationship between drug use and violent offences there is a high correlation between these two acts in adolescents (Wagner, 1996).

Although questions arose over the application of all-or-none principle by traditional monothetic classification on which offending or criminals are given an exclusive membership (Blackburn, 1993), there is also no theoretical premise to address the enquiry why some offenders may engage in specific or versatile offending activities. Despite Piquero et al.'s (1999) suggestion that there is some degree of specificity of offending amidst versatile offending patterns, it may be more fruitful to concentrate on how and why some offenders specialise within a narrow cluster of offences (Guertte et al., 2005).

Conventionally, in criminology the grouping of offenders as described, based on the degree of seriousness and punishment, by Carlson and Williams, (1993), Priest and Kordinak, (1991), Rossi et al. (1985), Rodriguez et al. (2006), referred to as person (physically against people), property (i.e. theft, shoplifting, burglary), and victimless (i.e. drug taking) three main categories. Recently, an influential volume (Gannon et al. 2007) discusses sexual and violent offenders' social cognition separately but under the title of aggressive behaviour. This denotes these two formidable offences are distinguished by referring to one of their shared characteristics—aggression. In addition to aforementioned classification, these four crime patterns are studied due to the marked differences in both the degree and aspect of damage caused.

Based on offenders' report on the crime checklist (see appendix A) presented to them, four types of crime patterns were therefore formed according their distinct nature in damage. They are drug taking, theft, sexual and violent offending (robbery and mugging,

threatening behaviour, physical violence, homicide, kidnapping, possessing illegal weapons, offences against personal liberty). The reason to classify robbery and mugging into the cluster of violent crimes is built on two overt characteristics, including gaining property from others through intentionally use of force, threat (Adler, Mueller, and Laufer, 2007; Porter and Alison, 2006), and violence and some form of contacts between offenders and victims (Porter and Alison, 2006). However, there is some uncertainty regarding if robbery is the subtype of theft or violent offending, and it is occasionally enshrined into the umbrella category of theft (Conklin, 2007), robbery is more commonly regarded as one of the family member of violent crimes due to the entail of violence and threats (Levi, 1997). Blackburn (2003) points out that "*violence denotes the forceful infliction of physical injury, and criminal violence is the illegitimate injury of an unwilling victim*" (p.53). Jones (2000) also indicates this street violence is normally underreported by its victims. In USA's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) published by American federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (2008), Robbery is defined as sort of violent crime and those offences which involve force or threat of force. In Australia armed robbery is also classified as violent index crime (Stevenson, et al., 2004). According to Taiwan's Ministry of Justice (2008) robbery and mugging are deemed as felony and will receive at least one year to maximum ten, or life sentence in some circumstances in prison. And because these two behaviours not just involve illegal property gain but also violence, therefore they are written in different section of Criminal Code (Article 325, 326, 328, 329). From its shared nature with violent offending behaviour (i.e. interpersonal contact and aggression) and based on legal point of view, robbery and mugging are classified as a subtype of violent crimes in this thesis.

The main concerns which this thesis is to address

Structural-oriental social knowledge approach in addressing delinquency

1. Moral reasoning and offending behaviour

Is offending behaviour associated to immature sociomoral reasoning ability? Efforts have been made by research to demonstrate the immature-offending relationship by largely comparing incarcerated criminals or deviant pupils with normal controls in terms of the degree of egocentric thinking. The results show juvenile offenders generally reason at Kohlbergian stage 2, indicative that the offender's moral thinking is led by punishment, rewards, and calculating benefits mental orientation. As yet the conclusion of moral reasoning

development and offending behaviour in adult group was difficult to be made owing to both only scarce studies have been undertaken and the inconsistent findings have been reported.

In addition, as we known offenders are not homogeneous. However, the simply immature-delinquency assumption based on Kohlbergian moral reasoning theories cannot provide adequate information about why offenders thinking with similar forms of moral reasoning commit different types of crimes. To date, only a few of studies have investigated the relationship between moral reasoning quality and different crime patterns. By exploring the role that moral reasoning plays in offending decision making would enhance our understanding on the link between these two variables.

The hitherto neglected issue between sociomoral reasoning ability and delinquency is derived from the indiscriminate acceptance of Kohlbergian structure-wholeness assumption. Consequently, this has led researchers to adopt summary score in relation with offending behaviour regardless of offences. It is not only recently a number of researchers reported that moral values do not progress at the same rate. Particularly, those moral values or norms pertinent to legal issues are observed develop relatively lower than others. Having observed variations in the development of moral values which may characterise a potential specific link between sociomoral reasoning ability and crime patterns Chen and Howitt (2006, 2007) begun a more elaborate examination between each individual moral value's moral score and juvenile drug, theft and violent offenders. They reveal that the moral value "Life" differentiated crimes types because this was less mature in the violent offenders. They are not alone; Palmer and Hollin (1998) found that scores on moral values of "Life" were significantly higher than other four values among a sample of male delinquents.

Taken together, after reviewing relevant literature in moral reasoning in relation to delinquency a number of concerns have therefore brought forwards in this thesis. Firstly, as the sociomoral reasoning immature-delinquency hypothesis is mixed successfully reported by studies available in adult offenders, this research is aimed to test this hypothesis by assessing adult offenders with distinct offending characteristics. Built on the immature-delinquency assumption, promoting offenders' sociomoral reasoning ability has been critically targeted by people working with offenders to prevent them offending. There is no reason, however, to enhance offenders' sociomoral reasoning competence if this structural-oriented social cognitive factor is not one of the correlates relating to crime commitment.

Secondly, individual moral values may be more proximately and specifically linked to distinct crime pattern than the moral index

represented by the overall sociomoral reasoning ability conventionally adopted in examinations. Because Kohlbergian theories were developed mainly on normal samples, therefore, the fundamental validating construct of wholeness in knowledge structure is problematic. Also, a question arose when Kohlbergian epistemology in knowledge acquisition is introduced to understand this assumption. Kohlbergian theorists believe that the source of one's knowledge derives from interactions with outside world. Given that, it would be unreasonable to expect people generally living in two rather different life styles to develop a "sound and consistent" worldview in their knowledge bases.

Thirdly, it is also not plausible to assume that egocentric thinking, the essential defining characteristic for immature moral stages, is one of the critical correlates in criminality if adult offenders are found disproportionately operating their mental thinking in mature sociomoral levels. It is acknowledged by researchers working in forensic psychology field that sociomoral reasoning alone cannot fully explain or directly related to crime commitment. Therefore, researchers have started to incorporate other sociocognitive factors in advancing our understanding in delinquency causation. Forensic psychologists have gradually diverted their attention to look at how one's sociomoral reasoning interacts with essential sociocognitive components in crime decision making. This new research direction is believed would shed more light on unravelling delinquency. Most importantly, and also the primarily research objective in current thesis is why people choose to commit different types of crimes from social cognitive point of view.

Content-oriented social knowledge approach in addressing delinquency

1. Moral domain placement and offending behaviour

Turiel and his colleagues postulate that one is to process and make sense of social events and in turn, making response decisions by accessing to four organised moral domains in knowledge. Simply put, how one individual perceives social cues would guide the individual to choose different response accordingly. Issues involved in Tisak and Turiel's domain-model conceptual framework include rightness or wrongness, obligationness, permissibility, alterability, rule and authority contingency, and generalizability. Variations in responses to these facets are of central concern in explaining sequent behaviours.

1) Moral domain placement and juvenile deviant behaviour

Blasi (1980) points out that those actions chosen to be research targets may not necessarily have a consensus agreement on whether they are relevant to the morality of the agent. Whereas this domain model has been quite widely studied among various deviant behaviour in adolescent and children groups, literature in that of adult populations is hardly seen so far. The behaviour investigated has been mainly focused on deviant activities more frequently occurred during adolescence, such as, drinking, drug taking, unprotected sex, violent behaviour, and stealing though much less. Evidence has accrued to indicate that adolescents who take drugs or act out violently regard these two acts as a personal domain. To what extent this model can be applied or the results found among adolescent groups are also evident in adult group necessities further research. It would be fruitful if the validity can be expanded to adult population in current thesis.

2) Moral domain attribution and different crime pattern

There is no research, if has but not seen, having recruited officially defined offenders, both juveniles and adults, in examining the moral domain model, let alone testing the model among offenders with variations in crime characteristics in a single study. It is still unknown to what extent in which the validity of the domain model can be gained in a more mixed-specialised offender group. That is, a tendency is expected to exhibit between the offenders who engage in a cluster of crime pattern and personal or conventional domain attribution but no or possibly a negative relationship in those offenders without experiences of involvement in the crime.

2. The relationship between self-identify and crime commitment

From a social cognition point of view, it is understandable; if one chronically engages in certain deviant behaviour then the identification with the behaviour should also be observed in one's self-concept. Besides, Fontaine and Dodge (2006) suggest that the responses one produces to stimuli have to be congruent with self-identity before the individual proceeds to the next step of information processing.

1) Based on the social cognitive perspective, a consistency or equilibrium relationship between individual social cognitions and behaviour is posited. Self-identity has been quite widely studied but research questions are presented in a way which directly illicit offenders' agreement on their own and their crimes. There are a couple of difficulties encountered in research. Firstly, research has been difficult in finding evidence among adult sexual related offenders in justifying their crimes. Secondly, little is known about how specific offenders show stronger identification with their predominant crimes but not others. Is it a trait that offenders justify all unlawful behaviour

or just the offence in which they specialise? By rendering probing questions in a comparative style would further not only confirm the endorsement relationship between self and behaviour but also to get insight of how specific of the association.

2) Matching with self-identity before enacting chosen response

In information processing theories, a chosen response in response to confronted social cues will be considered before proceeding to the last stage—enactment. Therefore, it is important to examine the relationship between identification to self and crime, and the intensity of crime involvement.

3. The relationship between normative beliefs and crime commitment
Normative beliefs are "*individualistic cognitive standards about the acceptability of a behaviour*" (Huesmann and Guerra, 1997). This notion is called self-regulating internal standards and is derived from Bandura's (1986) social-cognitive formulation. It basically serves a filtering function in sociomorally chosen responses.

1) normative beliefs and offending behaviour

This function has been identified as an important element in the aggression exhibited by a child or adolescent. They are more likely to be extremely aggressive if they believe that acting aggressively is an appropriate, more acceptable solution to current problem (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Sukhodolsky & Ruchkin, 2004; Werner & Nixon, 2005; Zelli *et al.*, 1999). Further evidence of the specificity of the relationship between beliefs and anti-social behaviour is to be found in a study by Crane-Ross, Tisak & Tisak (1998). Finally, a consistent favourable assessment in evaluative judgements of behaviour was found for varied deviant behaviours (e.g. substance abuse, stealing and cheating) in a recent review study (Fontaine, 2006b).

Beliefs and anti-social behaviour is found to have relationships. Based on the normative beliefs, measured by the degree of supporting in cognitive aspects such as acceptability, favourism, and seriousness, one is believed to more likely choose response which the one agrees more. In essence, it is an individual's beliefs about the legitimacy or normative nature of behaviour (Werner and Nixon, 2005). So far, normative beliefs have been examined in mainly non felony behaviour, it is unclear if the beliefs can be evident in more serious offending behaviour. Therefore, this research is to explore the relationship between beliefs and offending behaviour.

2) normative beliefs and crime patterns

As we can seen from literature review, aggressive behaviour has received most attention from researchers in assessing the beliefs and behaviour relationship. However, as samenow (2004) observes that

offenders tend to have their own standard of behaviour. And he goes on to contend that the cause of crime is what a person thinks rather than the environment in which the crime is situated. Accordingly, individuals have their own crime orientation which involves both components of their personal identity as well as evaluative components in relation to particular offences which may facilitate that sort of crime or create a barrier against that particular activity (Byrne and Trew, 2005).

Walters (2006) notes that criminal thinking (e.g. pro-offence attitudes, values, and beliefs) has been shown to be a powerful predictor of delinquent behaviour. However, a question which has puzzled researchers is whether maladaptive social cognition varies as a function of the type of offence (Barriga *et al.*, 2008; Chen & Howitt, 2006, 2007; Walters, 2006; Zhang *et al.*, 1997)? There are two competing perspectives concerning whether a) holistic (Samenow, 2004) or b) multifaceted self-serving cognitions (Barriga *et al.*, 2008) characterise criminal thinking. Although to the current researcher's knowledge, the specific relationship is evident that an individual with stronger supporting beliefs of aggressive behaviour the more actual violent behaviour they perform, but not in adult groups and other offending patterns. It is worth understanding how offenders with stark contrast to the nature of offending perceive their own and other offending behaviour.

4. cognitive beliefs and delinquency

McCarthy and Stewart (1998) reported that the neutralisation psychological mechanism was only found between property offenders on property evaluative cognition questions but not on personal crime type, and vice-versa. Recent research (Barriga *et al.*, 2008; Zhang *et al.*, 1997) reports that there is a parallel relationship between maladaptive cognitive with corresponding deviant behaviours. There is a great body of research into identifying sexual offenders' thinking styles, such as cognitive beliefs, values, and distortion thinking. Ward *et al.* (2006) note that sexual offenders' offence descriptions are multifaceted and embody different types of judgments. However, they also found that these maladaptive cognitions tend to cluster together in what they term Thematic Network (TN). Maruna and Mann (2006) argue that more efforts should be made on understanding the attitudes supporting and cognitive schemas underlying offence in order to preventing recidivism rather than targeting responsible acceptance for sexual offenders. Samenow (2004) reports that in clinic practice offenders still manage to maintain a person image. Although research has recognised the importance that offenders' beliefs and values may exert influence on responses chosen to social

cues, and to strike balance in their minds and cognitions which may be disrupted by their deviant behaviour. However, again, how strong relationship it would be between cognitive beliefs and specific pattern of criminals. Treatment results would be benefited more by targeting the most criminogenic need for offenders than generic improvement in their social cognitions.

Taken together, evidence has gradually accrued to indicate the dysfunctional social cognitions may contribute to deviant behaviour. It remains, however, unclear about how specific it is socio-cognitions can be related to corresponding behaviour. Additionally, based on limited literature available on social cognitions—offending behaviour relationship, to what extent that socio-cognition can be observed in different characteristic offences is the primary concern in this thesis. To address the above queries would help illuminate the association between social knowledge and delinquency.

Research questions

Qualitative and quantitative research questions are presented separately. The places where the questions are to be addressed are indicated in each question.

Quantitative research questions

Structure-oriented social knowledge variables

Research question 1. What are the relationships between moral reasoning ability in overall, individual moral value, age, crime episode judgments, and crime specialism indexes? (To be addressed in chapter 5)

- 1.1 Is there a statistically significant difference between adult versus juvenile offender status to the offenders' moral reasoning ability?
- 1.2 Are there any statistically significant relationships between the overall moral reasoning ability and four crime specialism indexes?
- 1.3 Are there any statically significant correlations between the moral reasoning ability of individual moral values and four crime specialism indexes?
- 1.4 Are there any statistically significant differences between each moral value in terms of their moral reasoning stages?
- 1.5. Are there any statistically significant correlations between the number of justifications in response to crime episode judgments and crime specialism index?

- 1.6 Are there any correlations between the trend of opinions offenders produced about crime episode questions and moral reasoning ability?
- 1.7 Are there any relationships between the trend of opinions offenders produced about the four crime episode questions and individual moral value's moral reasoning ability?

Content-oriented social Knowledge variables

Research question 2. What are the relationships between offenders' crime perceptions, evaluations and crime specialism indexes? (To be addressed in chapter 6)

- 2.1 Are there any statistically significant correlations between the crime specialism index and criminal identities?
- 2.2 Are there any statistically significant correlations between the crime specialism index and normative beliefs about different offences?
- 2.3 Are there any statistically significant correlations between the crime specialism index and cognitive beliefs on different offences?
- 2.4 Are there any statistical differences in moral domain placements terms of the crime specialism indexes?

Research question 3. Is it possible to predict crime specialism indexes from sociocognitive factors considered? (To be addressed in chapter 7)

Qualitative research questions

Research question 4. What are the relationships between offenders' crime perceptions, evaluations and offending behaviour? (To be presented in chapter 8)

- 4.1 What are offenders' sociocognitive evaluations and perceptions on their own crimes?
- 4.2 What are offenders' sociocognitive evaluations and perceptions on other crimes?
- 4.3 How offenders evaluate and perceive their crimes when compared with other crimes and offenders?
- 4.4 How are their criminal identities?
- 4.5 How offenders evaluate other crimes compared with their own crimes?
- 4.6 How offenders evaluate their own crime with respect to societal laws and Gibbs's moral principles?
- 4.7: How offenders evaluate other crimes with respect to societal laws and Gibbs's moral principles?

A question emerging during the course of interviews

5. How do offenders' explain if there is any conflict between what they claimed the Gibbs's moral principle to be adopted, perceptions of laws and with their unlawful behaviour? (To be presented in chapter 8)

Chapter 4 Method

1. Research Sample

The participants were four hundreds and thirty two male prisoners incarcerated in seven correctional facilities situated in the north, middle and eastern parts of Taiwan. Adult offenders made up 70% (n=302) while juvenile offenders accounted for 30% (n=130) of the total sample number. The mean age for the younger group was 16.39 years (sd=1.36), ranging from 12.1 to 18, whereas it was 33.38 (sd=9.38), ranging from 18.2- 57, for the older group.

Taiwanese aboriginal people only accounted for 4% of the total sample case. Apart from the crime specialism index, other research relevant personal information was also collected (see Table 4.1.2). Firstly, the average length of time they had spent in the criminal justice institutions was 60.8 months (SD=52.16) for the adult group, whereas it was 18.31 months (sd=18.40) for the juvenile group. Secondly, until the time this study was conducted, mature participants had served time in jail 2.14 (sd=1.09) times, while youth participants had served 1.96 (sd=1.28) times. Lastly, the first time they had contact with the criminal justice system was at the age of 22.84 (sd=7.92) for the adult group, while it was 14.06 (sd=2.04) for the juvenile group.

Based on the offenders' self-reported crime histories, crime specialism indexes were calculated for all of the respondents for each of the four types of crime; namely, drug abuse, theft, sexual and violent offending. The averages of each crime specialism index were 41%, 20%, 17%, and 23% and 8%, 59%, 3% and 29% for adult and juvenile groups, respectively (see Table 4.1.1).

1) Quantitative research sample

Table 4.1.1: the information of participants' age and crime specialism index

Age group	Age	Drug	Theft	Sexual	Violent
Juvenile (n=130)	Mean=16.39 SD=1.36	8% SD=.20	59% SD=.41	3% SD=.13	29% SD=.37
Adult (n=302)	Mean=33.38 SD=9.38	41% SD=.39	20% SD.30	17% SD=.34	23% SD=32

Note: SDs are for the raw data of crime specialism indexes which they have been multiplied by 100%.

Table 4.1.2: additional personal information

Age group	Number of occasions they	Age at first time contact criminal	Time spent in jail
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	have been sent to jails	justice system	(months)
Juvenile	Mean=1.96 Sd=1.28	Mean=14.06 Sd=2.04	Mean=18.31 Sd=18.40
Adult	Mean=2.14 (sd=1.09)	Mean=22.84 Sd=7.92	Mean=60.8 Sd=52.61

2) Interview Sample

Sixteen adult and seven youth questionnaire respondents were further invited to take part in interviews (see appendix E). Adult research participants were classified, according to their self reported criminal histories, into four crime patterns, namely drug abusers (n=5), theft (n=3), sexual (n=4) and violent offenders (n=4). Except for three violent offenders, all interviewees were recidivists with time served in prisons varying from 2 to 4 times. The age and time of being incarceration ranged from 25 to 52 years old and 1 to 12 years for the adults, respectively. For youth interviewees, three of them were theft offenders, two violent and one drug abuser as well as one sexual offender. Their age ranged from 17 to 19 years old, and they had been imprisoned for 1 to 4 years in total.

3) Attrition/Dropout/Non-completion (questionnaire)

The different case number of participants shown in the final questionnaire results was due to two reasons; a) as the time required in completing two questionnaires ranged from 80 to 100 minutes, there were some time-tabling issues over the questionnaire's administration with the adult group, who were unable to arrange sufficient time for finishing the second measure, as the SRM-SF demands a longer time to complete. b) Respondents were either incapable of completing the SRM-SF or were unable to carry on, as it requires fourth grade writing ability to adequately answer the SRM-SF.

The final number of respondents joining the second set questionnaire (SRM-SF) was 275 for the adult group. However, the number of valid forms was brought down to 241 due to the failure of satisfying the rating requirement set up by Gibbs' manual scoring scheme.

2. Research methods

The present research uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method is used to explore the differences in structure and content of cognitive constructs on distinct

offending behaviour. This is achieved by employing one existing and one new psychometric instrument with the offenders. The qualitative method is an idiographic content cognitive evaluation on an array of questions, such as, how do offenders identify, define, assess, and construct their and other offending behaviour? A comparative approach was adopted to guide this current investigation. Information was gained by asking interviewees to explain their sociocognitive assessments with respect to the above probing questions. The aim of integrating these two distinct research methods on data collecting is to further our understanding on how and to what extent offenders' sociocognitive knowledge and evaluations influence crime decisions. Offenders viewpoints are of central concern as well as a critical feature of this thesis. Additionally, the current research design is to test the reciprocity effect that may exist between past crime involvement and sociocognitive knowledge.

1) Research structure

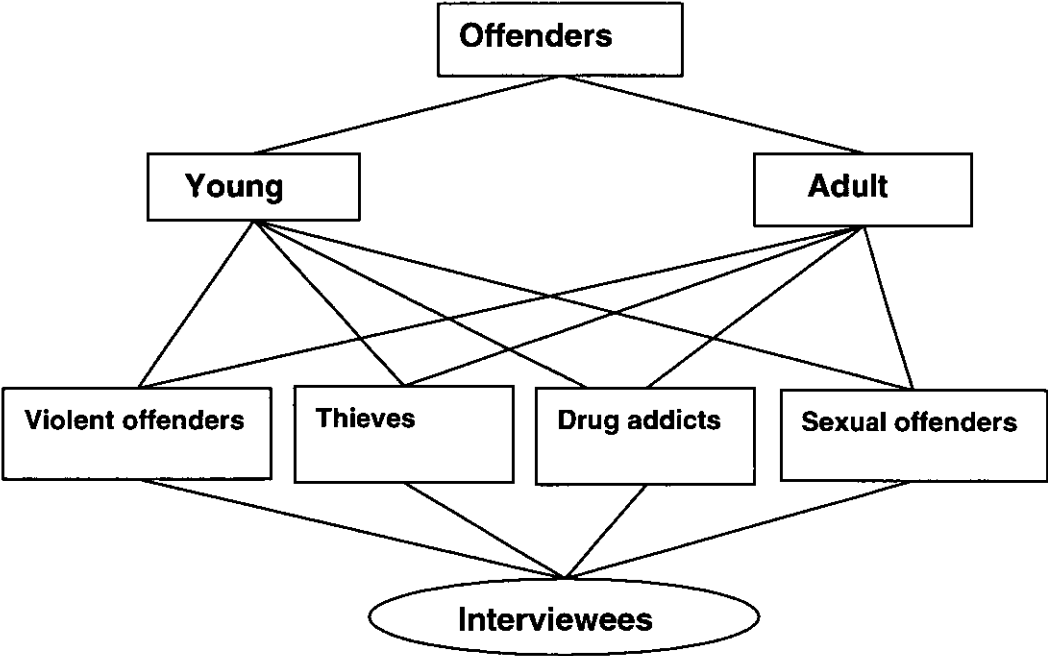


Figure 4.1: The flow chart of recruiting research participants.

The research structure is displayed in Figure 4.1. Two generations of male offenders are investigated. The questionnaires were administrated first, and then followed by the interviews. The reasons for targeting and comparing these four crime types is based on two considerations; 1) This research is aimed to explore the differential association between criminal behaviour and social cognitions, thereby offending behaviours with distinct characteristics are expected to better examine the link. 2) By so doing, this thesis is also expected to

reduce the transparent/direct indicativeness of wordings in answering questions, therefore promoting the reliability of data elicited.

3. Procedure

Jails suitable for current research purposes were approached initially via telephone. As the researcher had worked and conducted research in various prison settings in Taiwan before, the practices of Taiwanese prisons were therefore familiar. Subsequently, two prospective units rejected the researcher's research application. Finally, three designated prisons providing rehabilitation programmes (e.g. psychological and vocational training courses) to drug abusers, sexual offenders, and theft offenders and two general prisons, along with three additional youth correctional facilities agreed to the research applications. However, the final formal agreement was only possible pending further documents (i.e. a detailed research proposal, the researcher's research credentials and checking of identity information). The necessary official paperwork was provided. The final decision was at the discretion of each of the prison governor's. Data collecting was completed within two months, from 07/07/2006 to 08/09/2006.

In the fieldwork, prisoners in these correctional facilities, subject to time availability and security considerations, were invited to join this research. Consent forms were presented to the interviewees and signed before the interviews started. The administration of the questionnaire was completed in the group base, with 12 to 30 participants in each time session. The participants were all volunteers, and had been assured of the preservation of anonymity and confidentiality of their responses.

Respondents were first presented a set of questions asking for demographic information along with a self-reported criminal history checklist. The questions included their histories of imprisonment and for which crime(s) they had served time for, if more than once. The employed questionnaires were presented to respondents in the following order. Given the suggestions of researchers in administering questionnaires, especially on prison populations, it is suggested to present in order of the duration and attention required, with the most time consuming coming first. The SRM-SF measure was therefore given to the respondents, as it demands more writing skill and thought. Next, a questionnaire including six sub-scales concerning cognitive variables on crimes relevant to the current study

was administered. Questionnaires were collected when the participants finished. The second one was not administered until all of them had returned. Questionnaires were all checked individually by the researcher after they had been completed, and the researcher was always present to help and maintain the process of administration. In several sessions it was not possible to administer the full pack of questionnaires, due to time restrictions put in place by the institutional management. The SRM-SF research instrument was, as a result, not presented to participants, especially the adult population. The discrepancy between the total numbers of respondents and the final results produced in the SRM-SF data will be indicated where appropriate.

All respondents were informed that this was an anonymous survey and that no names or ID numbers should be indicated on the questionnaires. Furthermore, they were reassured that no personal identifying information would be revealed to third parties.

4. Research tools

All of the research measures used were written in Mandarin Chinese by the researcher. English translations are provided in Appendix A. B.

Mental representations about Crime: As Fiske and Taylor (1991) suggest that the consistency between behaviour and attitude is strongly evidenced when they are measured at the same level of generality. This newly designed measure consists of four subscales, together with a self-report crime history section and a scale assessing how the respondent perceives the moral reasoning of themselves and others. They are listed below:

4.1 Crime perception scale (Self-edited Crime cognitive evaluation questionnaire 5 point scale)(Appendix A)

1) Cognitive beliefs about criminal self identity: This consisted of a set of statements which essentially assessed the offenders' self-identity as a particular type of offender. These were:

- a) The crimes that I have committed apart from the main ones, that were not committed purposely;
- b) I think that I am different in many ways from offenders who commit other types of crime;
- c) It is very unwise to commit any other types of crime other than the ones I have; and

d) I am not the sort of person who would commit any sorts of crimes other than the ones that I have been convicted for.

The offenders gave responses on a five point Likert scale, with five being the allocated score for 'agree strongly' responses and one being assigned for ratings of 'disagree strongly'.

2) Normative beliefs about different offences: This subscale consisted of six questions concerning aspects of crimes such as

a) their seriousness,

b) how much disrespect people have for such offenders,

c) the damage done to the victim by the crime,

d) the appropriate punishment severity, personal likelihood of committing the offence,

e) being unlikely to do it even if you had the opportunity to do it.

f) and damage to the offender's self image if caught.

Respondents were asked to order the crimes of drug taking, stealing, sexual assault and violent behaviour on these dimensions. A score of four was given to the first ranked crime on these questions through to a score of one for the lowest ranked.

The rationale of this normative instrument is based on two normative assessment tools, including Huesmann and Guerra's (1997) Normative Beliefs About Aggression Scale (NOBAGS), and Werner and Nixon's (2005) normative beliefs scale, revised form the NOBAGS on measuring relational and physical aggressive behaviour. There are 20 items in the former scale while 27 items for the later one. Rather than just to measure the beliefs as a function of the severity of provocation which Huesmann and Guerra meant to achieve, Werner and Nixon differentiated items in their revised scale in terms of the three form of aggressive behaviour being evaluated. Consequently, several items were added to assess other two additional aggressive types (i.e. relational and verbal). Two main psychometric criteria are shared in measuring the beliefs the mentioned two tools meant to achieve, embracing a) general approval, and b) specific approval (e.g. retaliation, friendship threat, rumours, hit, exclude, stop talking, scream).

Shared with above two normative belief scales in general but expanded on Werner and Nixon's idea in particular, the current normative beliefs assessment measure is designed to examine offenders' normative beliefs on four distinct offending behaviours considered. The six questions in the current normative belief measure are created to assess three dimensions of normative beliefs, embracing a) severity (item 1, 3 and 4), self-image (item 2 and 5), and likelihoodness to engage (item 6). The reason to include these

three aspects of normative beliefs is from literature review they may affect and individual's crime decision making and all drawn in items relate to the self. Additionally, in considering the capacity of offenders' literate and the range of attention level, the present normative belief measure is only comprised of six items.

3) Relative cognitive beliefs concerning different offences: All of the possible pairs of offences were identified and used to assess relative cognitive beliefs. Thus there were six pairs of offences – drugs vs. theft, drugs vs. violent, drugs vs. sexual, theft vs. violent, violent vs. sexual and theft vs. sexual offences. The precise wording of the question varied according to the pair in question, but participants rated four question sets from agree strongly to disagree strongly with a score of five being awarded to agree strongly and a score of one to disagree strongly. The questions for the drug vs. theft comparison were;

- a) No matter what reason one might have, I think taking drugs should be forgiven less than stealing;
- b) I think people who take drugs are more selfish than those who steal;
- c) The overall personal costs compared to benefits of taking drugs are less than for stealing; and
- d) Taking drugs causes more harm socially than stealing. Other than the changes in the names of the pairs of crimes, the four statements in each of the five sets of paired comparisons were identical.

As the literature review results indicate that offenders' maladaptive cognitive is multifaceted but theme-networked. In addition, Samenow (2004) notes that offenders may not accept specific crimes and think these crimes are offensive according to their own sets of morals but they are entitled to do what they want. In addition, he also point outs that offenders still want to maintain themselves as a person. Therefore, this section was developed on a conception that offenders hold evaluative social cognitions supportive to their own offences. And, keeping the assessment orientation used in the normative beliefs scale on measuring offenders' perceptions and evaluations along the severity negativity continuum, the paired-style cognitive beliefs question set was developed on negative orientation assessments but expanding into other cognitive evaluation elements. The cognitive elements include forgiveness, selfishness, cost, and social harmfulness.

4) Moral Domain Attributions: Participants were asked to put each of the crimes into a moral domain (moral, conventional, personal, and

prudential) by describing each domain to the participant who then chooses to which domain each type of criminal behaviour belongs. The four moral domains are

a) Personal domain: we have our own absolute right to decide if we want to engage in it;

b) Conventional domain: this is nothing to do with personal conscience or moral concerns but we do not do it because it is prohibited by social regulations or rules which the majority of people agree with or because authorities tell us not to do it;

c) Moral domain: this involves personal conscience and moral concerns – it is not just because we are told not to engage in it; and

d) Prudential domain: the main concern of this moral domain is whether the behaviour will result in negative or harmful consequences to ourselves – not because we are told not to engage in it.

The four moral domain principles were developed based on the work of Turiel (1983) and Tisak and Turiel (1984).

5) Crime Specialism index and personal information. In order to generate a crime specialism index for assessment, a criminal history checklist embedding a list with four clusters of crimes was administered to research participants. They were asked to give both times and types of crimes that they had convicted. This is coupled with how many times they had been sent to correctional institutions as well as how much time in total they had been imprisoned. In addition, personal demographic information was elicited from participants, this included age and ethnic origin. The crime index was based on the proportions of the category of offence for which they had committed. Thus a person whose offences were all for drug crime would receive a score of 100% for drugs. If half of their crimes were for drugs then they would receive a score of 50% for drugs. The same calculating process was applied to produce theft, sexual and violent crime specialism indexes.

In recognising the inappropriateness of gross categories of all-or-none crime patterns, and the reality of possible versatility in offenders' crime patterns, researchers (McCarthy and Stewart, 1998) have started to use the principle of majority of total number of convictions in attributing research participants' crime types. Chen and Howitt (2006, 2007), however, adopt an even more stringent method in assigning their research participants to one of three offences (i.e. drug, theft and violent) considered. According to juvenile delinquents' self-report crime histories, their classification on crime type based on two criteria. Firstly, the greatest total of offences principle is also applied to decide the crime type to which offenders belong. Secondly,

those offenders who had committed more than two of the three considered clusters of offending behaviour were dropped from valid sample in consideration the purity in crime pattern. However, despite the propensity of offenders' actuarial offending nature may have been reflected more accurately than the conventional methods such as all-or-none or classifying crime type merely relying on the convictions which offenders are currently serving for, this method did result in a quite great per cent of attrition rate in samples. In light of the potential pitfalls which conventionally assign crime patternship by a categorical variable and in having acknowledged the versatile tendency observed from research findings this research is to characterise offenders crime patterns by a continuous (i.e. per cent) variable. Furthermore, it is also believed that some statistic analyses (e.g. correlation tests) which previous research would not allowed to be carried out in examining the propensity of crime involvements and offenders' corresponding social knowledge can be performed.

The steps which the current research samples are described in terms of crime patterns are as follows;

Prior to the steps of arithmetic to be reported for producing offenders' crime specialism indexes, there are two principles should be noted; first, each member of the sample is assigned a score (i.e. percentage) for each of the four crime patterns, second, these scores are not independent of each other; they necessarily add up to 100% in every case. Thus, each case is treated as independent case.

a) Producing a denominator. Based on offenders' self crime history reports the total number of their convictions is counted to produce a number (divisor) and which will serve as a denominator in arithmetic calculation.

b) Producing a numerator for each of four crime patterns. The number of convictions are computed separately with regards to the four crime patterns; namely drug, theft, sexual and violent offending. This is used to serve as numerators (dividends).

c) Producing a per cent for each of crime patterns. Offenders reporting just one type of crime convictions were given 100% of that offence type. If one had convictions for two offences; for example, drug taking and sexual offending with 1 time each, the one will given 50% crime specialism index to drug and sexual offence, respectively, but 0% to theft and violent offences. This principle for yielding the crime specialism index applies to every research sample.

The calculation for generating crime specialism indexes is outlined as follows:

A=Adult, J=Juvenile, n =time of convictions, D=drug, T=theft, S=sexual, V=Violent, N=Total crime convictions, CSI=crime specialism index

Step 1 (for each sample)

$$D_{(n)} + T_{(n)} + S_{(n)} + V_{(n)} = N$$

Step 2 (for each sample)

$$D_{(n)} / N * 100\% = \text{Drug CSI}$$

$$T_{(n)} / N * 100\% = \text{Theft CSI}$$

$$S_{(n)} / N * 100\% = \text{Sexual CSI}$$

$$V_{(n)} / N * 100\% = \text{Violent CSI}$$

Step 3 (for each sample)

$$D_{(CSI)} + T_{(CSI)} + S_{(CSI)} + V_{(CSI)} = 100\% \quad \text{for each sample}$$

Step 4 valid adult samples is 302, and 130 for juvenile group

Adult

$$AD_1(CSI) + AD_2(CSI) + \dots + AD_{302}(CSI) / 302 = M \quad (\text{Adult drug CSI, 41\%})$$

$$AT_1(CSI) + AT_2(CSI) + \dots + AT_{302}(CSI) / 302 = M \quad (\text{Adult theft CSI, 20\%})$$

$$AS_1(CSI) + AS_2(CSI) + \dots + AS_{302}(CSI) / 302 = M \quad (\text{Adult sexual CSI, 17\%})$$

$$AV_1(CSI) + AV_2(CSI) + \dots + AV_{302}(CSI) / 302 = M \quad (\text{Adult violent CSI, 23\%})$$

Juvenile

$$JD_1(CSI) + JD_2(CSI) + \dots + JD_{130}(CSI) / 130 = M \quad (\text{Juvenile drug CSI, 8\%})$$

$$JT_1(CSI) + JT_2(CSI) + \dots + JT_{130}(CSI) / 130 = M \quad (\text{Juvenile theft CSI, 59\%})$$

$$JS_1(CSI) + JS_2(CSI) + \dots + JS_{130}(CSI) / 130 = M \quad (\text{Juvenile sexual CSI, 3\%})$$

$$JV_1(CSI) + JV_2(CSI) + \dots + JV_{130}(CSI) / 130 = M \quad (\text{Juvenile violent CSI, 29\%})$$

6) Moral reasoning and cognitive ability minimum competence test. The offenders were given a list of four moral reasoning characteristics based on four moral reasoning levels from Gibbs et al.'s (1992) sociomoral reasoning model. They were asked to select the stage from the list of descriptions which reflected their beliefs, the beliefs that most people in the community adopt, the principle which would help them survive in the community, the principle which is best for the community if everyone applies it, and the principle which is most frequently adopted by their friends.

4.2 Sociomoral reflection measurement-Short Form (John Gibbs et al., 1992) (Appendix B)

This is one of the most utilised production style instruments, designed by John Gibbs and his Colleagues (1992), aiming to assess the ability

of moral cognitive development. The SRM-SF moral model adapted Kohlberg's hierarchical theory and is comprised of two levels—mature and immature, with two sub-stages in each level. The measure comprises 11 probing questions. They revolve around five important moral values. Individuals' development of sociomoral reflection can be discerned in justifications in contexts including;

a) Contract and truth: promise-keeping and supporting of tell the truth.

b) Affiliation: the justifications for helping parents and friends.

c) Life: saving a strangers' life and living even when one does not want to live.

d) Property and law: obeying the law and not stealing.

e) Legal justice: such as deterrence and role responsibility.

Justifications underlying individuals' moral decisions are posited to be more closely linked to the individual's behaviour by moral cognitive development theorists. As such, the referral of assessment is respondents' moral reasoning rather than the simplistic moral decision.

To be a valid questionnaire, respondents must produce at least seven scorable responses for analysis. A rating manual provides researchers stage protocol references to assign scores to the responses generated. For each response the possible score ranged from 1.00 (lowest) to 4.00 (highest). The mean of the items is called the sociomoral reflection moral score (SRMS), which is used for analysis, and can be multiplied by 100 for computation purposes. In addition, for global and statistic comparison purposes the SRMS score can be converted into a ten-level scale, for instance 2.26-2.49= transition 2(3); 2.50-2.74= transition 3(2); 2.75-3.25= stage 3 (See Gibbs *et al.*, 1992 for details). Good reliability and validity for this are evident from many studies (Basinger *et al.*, 1995; Stevenson, *et al.*, 2004). The translated mandarin version used was found to have very good psychometric properties in a large-scale sample of Taiwanese adolescents (Chen and Howitt, 2007).

In this current research, a total of sixty SRM-SF forms (30 for both adult and juvenile groups) were blindly scored by a trained second rater. A good interrater reliability was obtained ($r(60) = .93, p < .001$).

4.3 Crime Episode Judgment (CEJ) (Appendix B)

Crick and Dodge (1994) indicate that one of the most employed methods in cognitive assessment research is to examine the number of justifications participants produced in response to the social situations. The clinic method tapping justifications from respondents

has been applied by researchers (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987; Gibbs et al, 1992, Teevan and Dryburgh, 2000; Tisak and Jankowski, 1996) working with psychometric assessment on understanding an individual's beliefs, attitudes, and stances to social events in relation to behaviour chosen. In order to informing our understanding of the relationship between offenders' social knowledge and specific crime committed offenders' possible specific social knowledge is elicited by answering four crime episodes developed in this thesis. Teevan and Dryburgh (2000) found that different type of offenders give different explanation of their unlawful acts. McCarthy and Stewart (1998) based their research on neutralisation theory proposed by Sykes and Matza (1957) in exploring whether offenders' neutralisation is constrained on crime they have committed but not on others they have no experiences in personal and property crime contexts. Their hypothesis was substantially supported. Based on research findings (Abide et al. 2001; Nucci et al. 1991; Petraitis et al.1995) indicating that drug abusers usually justify the behaviour by arguing that it is a personal discretion and legitimacy, without victim. Additionally, drug policy has long been a heat debate issue among the European Union (Chatwin, 2003), and a great impact on drawing the boundary of legal and illegal drug use ensuing the cannabis decriminalisation in Australia and the United States (Single et al, 2000). Thus, the appeal of decriminalisation in criminal justice system is one of the core concerns for addicts. Drug abusers are deemed as patients in Taiwan's criminal justice system. A fixed rehabilitation length of two months is given for first time violators (Statute for Narcotics Hazard Control, Taiwan). As such, the consideration of the length of convictions is less concerned for them. The rest of three crime episodes are identical except the crime type involved. Findings (Byrne and Trew, 2005; Langton et al, 2008; Lopez and Emmer, 2002, McCarthy and Stewart, 1998; Tisak and Jankowski, 1995; Ward, et al. 2006) show that offenders tend to neutralise or mitigate their responsibilities through a number of cognitive techniques. How much do offenders think they should take on their crime events and what sort of justifications and perspective they would produce and hold is interested in this thesis. For example, in a recent study (Krahe, et al, 2007) on blame attribution study on undergraduate students in a rape context. They found that most blame was assigned to victims of an ex-partner rape, followed by acquaintance and stranger rape; it is a reverse relationship for perpetrators. Therefore, the stance for offences and the number of justifications for their stance is assumed to vary as a function of the intensity of involvement in offences. Previous research (e.g. McCarthy and Stewart, 1998) has mainly used Likert-style questions in determining if there is a relationship between

the magnitude of attitude and crime involvement, yet this is left without knowing the content of offenders' justifications. By asking offender to openly answer four episodes featured with four distinct crime contexts would allow us not only be able to quantify their responses but also the content of their justifications. In addition, because the severity of punishment is the core concern for offenders to activate neutralisation psychological mechanisms towards their wrongdoing and would also reflect their damage done, thus, the conviction episode is used to act as probing question.

a) Do you agree with the government in decriminalising drug taking?

Circle one: agree disagree

Why do you think that?

b) Do you think judges should take theft offence victims personal characteristics into the consideration in convictions? Such as; if the victim is rich; the value of the stolen items; if the victim doesn't pay enough attention to their properties.

Circle one: agree disagree

Why do you think that?

c) Do you think judges should take sexual offence victims' personal characteristics into consideration in convictions? These included conditions such as, the victim's job, the relationship with the perpetrator(s), the victim's attitude to offenders, and even the victim's past relation history with males.

Circle one: agree disagree

Why do you think that?

d) Do you think judges should take violent offence victims' personal characteristics into the consideration of convictions; such as, the victims' attitude to you, your relationship with the victim?

Circle one: agree disagree

Why do you think that?

This measure aimed to elicit offenders' actual judgements in response to the episodes bearing different crime characteristics. The justifications given by the respondents were analysed and grouped thematically in relation to the result generated in the moral reasoning measurement.

Content Analysis

The participants were initially required to indicate if they agreed with the question statements and subsequently asked why they had made those choices. Every identifiable justification emerged in response to the questions was identified first, and a binary classification was applied to assign offenders' justifications to one of the opinion camps—agree and disagree. The same number of themes in both opinion camps was finally identified in order to conduct the following statistical analysis fairly. The evidence of linking immature moral reasoning ability to juvenile delinquents has been established in empirical studies. It is, however, far from clear for the adult populations who possess age-adequate moral judgement competence but who still violate laws. This contradictory result is at odds with the fundamental tenet proposed by Kohlbergian theories. If the developmental effect of cognitive moral reasoning is expected to work universally across different ages then why does it fail to exert influence on older groups (such as evidence found in the adult offender samples).

This investigation is primarily to access the size of criminals' responses on hypothesised situations in relation to different types of crime. The subsidiary goal of this test was to see the direction and tendency that different offenders may generate with respect to these four heterogeneous scenarios. Furthermore, the results will be examined in association to, and to aid in, enhancing understanding of cognitive moral reasoning measured by the SRM-SF.

5. Qualitative research

Interview schedule (Self-designed) (see appendix D for details) was used as a guideline of interviews. There are four main concerns in the schedule including first, offenders' personal information and offending histories. Second, how do they position themselves in social context, and perceive and evaluate their own offending behaviour. Third, how do they think of when comparing with the crimes other than their main ones, such as the identification, intrinsic consequences, assessments based on their normative beliefs and the personal reasons for not to commit other crimes. Fourth, offenders were approached with questions about how they think of the importance of legal system and societal regulations for the members of society. Related to this and as one of the main concerns of this research is the interest of exploration of offenders' Gibbs' moral principle application and understanding of the moral principles. Following their responses a further probing question was presented to the offenders in

assessing the relationship between their own criminal conducts and legal issues as well as moral principles.

It is equally important to recognise the value of in-depth interviews in articulating the formative ingredients of one's social knowledge in and over their past interactive experiences. By administering questionnaires on participants, we are allowed to capture relatively general levels of understanding in terms of offenders' evaluative social cognitions on studied crimes. However, the role of crime social cognition plays in leading one's social information processing to behave differently would be further explored by interviews. Kelle (2006) suggests that a mixed-method research design would help different research to overcome the mutual weakness in paradigm-war by complementing each other where appropriate. Thereby the objective of the semi-structural interview is threefold; 1) to serve as a mutual validation indicator by further confirming findings emerging in the group test format; 2) to provide richer and more illustrative information beyond collectively evaluative decisions produced by interviewees on the offending behaviour; 3) to explore a more offender-centred explanation of aspects such as processing, decision makings, and most critically, the supporting social cognitive elements on guiding ones' information processing of crimes.

5.1 Procedure

Initially, potential research participants were purposely selected based on three screening criteria set by the researcher to answer the research questions in the current study. Firstly, a moral reasoning assessment instrument, sociomoral reflection measure-short form developed by Gibbs and his colleagues (1992), was administrated to assess prisoners' moral judgement competence. Secondly, the potential participants were presented with a self report crime history survey in which they were assigned to one or more of four of offending patterns, namely drug abusers, property criminals and sexual and violent offenders. In the light of the theoretical consideration and its relationship with behaviour, an idea-type principle sampling was applied to recruit specialised offenders for the major crime-types. Lastly, according to previous personal information, qualified participants were approached by the researcher. Recommendations were also sought for from the prison officers on which inmates they thought were more suitable for interviewing and who would fulfil the current research aims.

5. 2 Data collection

A 35-45 minute semi-structured recorded interview with each of interviewees was carried out in private rooms with one or two security

guards outside. Prior to commencing the interview a consent form was presented to the interviewee. All interviewees were fully informed that they were able to stop interviews at any time. In addition, a brief statement regarding the study was given to them. The statement was as follows: "this is a research project in which the researcher wants to know about what you think of your and others' behaviour. Further, what impacts your and other's behaviour may have on a variety of evaluating dimensions in terms of social and personal levels?"

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. An interview schedule including a variety of probing questions was created. This interview guideline was used to tap information about offenders' perceptions and further articulations (interrogation), if appropriate. This research is informed by the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), as Smith (2004) indicates; the distinctive contribution for this qualitative method is in its perspective offered. Having combined phenomenological and hermeneutic epistemology approaches, there are three characteristic features in the IPA, these are; 1) idiographic emphasis: participants' interpretations towards their specific life experiences or life world are regarded as the centeredness of concern in research, but 2) interrogative element is also expected to play out throughout research. Finally, 3) an inductive presentation is produced based on the text participants given. Relatedness is made not only to the interviewees, but also to the extant psychology corpus (i.e. cognitive and thought process) (Meek, 2007; Smith, 2004; Larkin et al., 2006). For the former, research concerns should be evolved around events and contextualised in issues familiar to the people interested. While for the later the excerpt texts are developed beyond superficial meanings and an advanced understanding and meaningfulness of texts should be explored by associating emerging themes to illuminate research value. The researcher is aware of the adjunct role that researchers are expected to play in the interviews adopting the IPA approach.

5.3 Analytic method and processes

By employing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyse collected interview data, this study aims to make sense of how different types of offenders' perceive their dominant criminal behaviour and other crimes. A particular research interest is made in relating their perceptions to moral reasoning development. Rather than seeking an objective truth, the feature of IPA is concerned with individuals' subjective account of an event or experience, entailing a

mutual interpretation (researchers and participants) process (Smith and Osborn, 2003). In other words, the primary concern of IPA qualitative method is to describe personal experiences of a particular phenomenon. Where people's accounts of their experiences are used as the material for analysis, through the analysis people's psychological processes underlying these experiences is sought to (Howitt and Cramer, 2007).

The data analysis procedures outlined below were based on Smith and Osborn (2003) and Howitt and Cramer (2007) recommendations. The analytic steps are as follows;

- 1) In order to make sense of what interviewees actually said, texts were read a number of times.
- 2) Following idiographic approach to analysis, data which are distinct, meaningful, and relevant to the research questions mentioned above were initially extracted as notes.
- 3) These notes were then transformed into concise phrases.
- 4) In order to capture essential quality and conceptualise texts more easily, these initial notes were further thematically grouped. These second higher level data are more abstract and tend to involve psychological terminology.
- 5) Next, superordinate themes are formed to better serve as an even higher level of information helping to illuminate interviewees' transcripts. In addition, transcripts' core underlying concepts were articulated more clearly.

Therefore, three (hierarchical order) scaffold data categories were established to present data.

6.1. Quantitative research

Moral reasoning and cognitive ability minimum competence test.

A set of questions formed by Gibbs et al.'s (1992) four-stage model of moral reasoning was presented to the respondents, in order to; (1) examine whether they were cognitively capable of discriminating the qualitative nature of moral reasoning. The reason to do so was because the group-administrated measures employed in the current study possess cognitive components that require sufficient socio-cognitively evaluative ability to fulfil the task. (2) The trustfulness of respondents' answers has long been one of the essential concerns for researchers conducting self-administrated questionnaires to certain groups. Thereby, a reliable indicator is

required for testing this claim so as to ensuring the data collected is scientifically reliable.

Respondents were asked, from the list of descriptions, to select the stage that reflected their beliefs, the beliefs that most people in the community adopt, the principle that would help them survive in the community, the principle that is best for the community if everyone applies it, and the principle that is most frequently adopted by their friends. These types of reasoning corresponded to different moral reasoning levels. Converting the different moral reasoning categories to scores was simply done by scoring the lowest level as 1 and the highest level as 4. This subset questionnaire is in the last section of cognition evaluative belief measure (see appendix A). The results are presented as below with juvenile and adult groups also being given separately;

Table 4.6.1: The moral reasoning principle used in different contexts by the participants.

Questions	Groups	Mean (stage)	sd
1. Self	Adult (n=285)	2.41	1.106
	Juvenile (n=124)	2.22	1.086
2. Most people apply	Adult (n=285)	2.14	1.095
	Juvenile (n=124)	2.28	1.056
3. To survive in community	Adult (n=285)	2.73	1.067
	Juvenile (n=124)	2.83	1.018
4. Best for your community	Adult (n=285)	3.38	.812
	Juvenile (n=124)	3.05	1.019
5. Used by peers	Adult (n=285)	2.39	1.014
	Juvenile (n=124)	2.28	1.071

Table 4.6.2: Paired T-tests between moral reasoning questions in the participant's self-ratings.

Paired	Groups	t-values	df	Sig.
Q1 v.s Q2	Adult	3.001	284	.003**
	Juvenile	-.446	123	.657
Q1 v.s Q3	Adult	-3.617	284	.000**
	Juvenile	-4.578	123	.000**
Q1 v.s Q4	Adult	-12.437	284	.000**
	Juvenile	-6.030	123	.000**
Q1 v.s Q5	Adult	.254	284	.800
	Juvenile	-.513	123	.609
Q2 v.s Q3	Adult	-7.135	284	.000**
	Juvenile	-4.028	123	.000**
Q2 v.s Q4	Adult	-15.571	284	.000**
	Juvenile	-5.693	123	.000**
Q2 v.s Q5	Adult	-3.189	284	.002**
	Juvenile	.000	123	1.000

Q3 v.s Q4	Adult	-8.720	284	.000**
	Juvenile	-2.021	123	.045*
Q3 v.s Q5	Adult	4.305	284	.000**
	Juvenile	3.932	123	.000**
Q4 v.s Q5	Adult	12.502	284	.000**
	Juvenile	5.958	123	.000**

1) The mean of each self-rating moral context

Adult participants

The moral principle indicated by the adult offenders for the context "best for community if everyone employs" (mean= 3.38, sd=8.12), which is also the most mature moral reasoning applied among these questions. Next, "to survive in the society" gained the second highest score with a mean of 2.72 (sd= 1.067). In contrast, the lowest moral principle used was for the "most people applying" context (mean=2.14, sd=1.095). The score was very close between self (mean=2.41, sd=1.106) and friends (mean=2.39, sd=1.014) questions.

Juvenile group

Similarly, juvenile offender assigned the highest moral principle to the context of "best for community" (mean=3.05, sd= 1.019) if people adopt it. Moreover, the second highest place was also given to the "to survive in the community" moral context (mean=2.83, sd= 1.018). However, the moral principle applied to themselves gained the lowest score with a mean 2.22 (sd=1.086). The same score was found in both peers (mean=2.28, sd=1.071) and most people use (mean=2.28, sd=1.056) moral contexts.

2) Paired T-tests between moral contexts.

The above means were compared using the paired t-test within both adult and juvenile categories.

Adult group

All differences were statistically significant with one exception in the comparison between the moral reasoning level of the principles used to describe the beliefs of themselves and their friends ($t=.254$, $df=284$, NS). The significance levels of the other comparisons ranged from .003 to .000. This means that the differences would remain significant with the Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons applied.

Juvenile group

As with the results found in the adult group, there was no difference between self and peers ($t=-.513$, $df=123$, NS) with regard to the operation of the moral principle. Also, two comparison groups, such as "self" and "most people would use" ($t=-.446$, $df=123$, NS), as well as "most people would use" with "peers" ($t=.000$, $df=123$, NS) showed no significant difference. The remaining paired-groups all show a significance level at .000 but one at .045.

The results suggest that offenders rated themselves and their peers at the same level in terms of moral principle employed. Also, they all gave relatively higher moral principle to the contexts "best to the community", all followed by the second highest "to survive in the community". Interestingly, they indicated that the moral principle their peers would use was analogous to their own, but at a relatively lower level.

Since this data seems to correspond well with a fairly systematic pattern, which in itself, is indicative that participants could use concepts relating to moral reasoning development discriminately, it appears reasonable to accept that they were capable of understanding the underlying concepts that the research entails.

6. 2. Qualitative research (trustworthiness)

Triangulation test

Questions in the SRM-SF instrument, pertinent to law and property as well as legal justice issues were integrated into interview schedule. By so doing, it was possible to verify whether there was an agreement in participants' moral reasoning tapped by the questionnaire and interviewing formats.

Field notes

1) The setting of interviews

All interviews (one-to-one) were completed in places ranging from small prison interviewing rooms (2*3ms) to big classrooms (10*15ms) and the settings were all independent environments. During each session of interview, one or two prison safety officials were present in either the back of rooms (bigger rooms) or outside the rooms nearby the doors. The researcher and prison officials all put the issue of safety as their top priority during the interviews. However, nonetheless a secure and non-disruptive environment was also created for the interviewees.

2) Language used

Most of the prisoners' first tongue was Taiwanese although all were fluent in Mandarin Chinese. In order to facilitate communications

more efficiently, and to build rapport between the interviewer and interviewees, these two languages were used during communications.

3) Difficulties in explanations for juvenile offenders

Due to the deficit of verbal and cognitive ability in juvenile offenders, some social cognition evaluative and comparative questions were difficult for them to articulate cognitively. Given that the youth group faced this difficulty, richer and more social cognition assessment information was thus elicited from the mature group than the younger. Juvenile interviewees, when in difficulty of explanations and understanding, were encouraged to explain or/and given prompts to aid thought during the course of the interviews. Questions that were not answered initially could be linked or mentioned again in relation to other questions later on when it was more suitable, in the course of interviewing. Questions were skipped if the interviewees explicitly expressed no intentions to provide any further information. As a result of the difficulties encountered in the juvenile group, interviews were either dropped or finished with some questions unanswered or resulted in insufficient information given by four youth interviewees.

4) The Interviewing schedule was mainly centred on appraisals of social cognitions on the general level rather than their specific crime events. Information of individual crime events was only referred to when it was necessarily to help clarify their explanations.

Chapter 5 The Development of Offenders' Moral Reasoning Ability and the Trend of Crime Episode Judgments and Their Relationships with Crime Specialism Indexes

In this chapter, the associations of offenders' crime episode judgments and moral reasoning abilities with their crime specialism indexes are investigated. Three main statistical analyses are conducted in this section. First, offenders' moral reasoning abilities were measured with Gibbs' moral instrument "SRM-SF" and represented by sociomoral reflection maturity score (SRMS) before the correlation analysis is performed with crime specialism indexes. The purpose of this is to see whether the development of offenders' moral reasoning abilities have relationships with their crime specialism indexes? A reverse relationship is posited between the maturity of moral reasoning and moral cognitive theories. That is, as people's moral reasoning developing more mature their moral thinking would be characterized more with justice and decentrational ideas, and in turn, preventing them from crime engagement. It is this inhibiting effect in which the cognitive developmental approach to morality is investigated in unravelling offending behaviour. This current research is not only to test this hypothesis but also to further test if the inhibiting effect can be observed across different crime types. For satisfying the one of validating construes--age upward development, in moral cognitive theories, a correlation test between offenders' SRMS and age was conducted. Juvenile and adult groups were conducted separately. Other than the summary moral reasoning score, one of the research questions guiding this investigation is to assess whether the component moral values of the Gibbs's moral reasoning development instrument progress or develop at the same rates. Furthermore, unlike traditional studies in which only the summary score is used as the moral reasoning ability indicator, both summary and individual moral values moral reasoning scores were used to test the hypothesis.

Second, this present research is also concerned with the relationship between the trend of offenders' responses towards the crime episodes and the crime specialism index? The responses given by offenders to four crime episode judgment questions are also content-analysed to show the characteristics of offenders' justifications. Justifications produced by offenders in response to crime episodes were categorised into two camps-- agreement versus disagreement. The numbers of responses were counted with regard to the two answer camps. Offenders are expected to yield more justifications favouring their own types of offending behaviour, but conversely generating

relatively less undesirable opinions to their own crimes. A correlation test was performed to examine this relationship.

Lastly, in order to understand if there is a difference between offenders' response trends (i.e. agree versus disagree) in terms of the moral reasoning stage and individual moral norms, correlation analyses were performed between the number of offenders' responses and their moral reasoning abilities. Results for Adult and juvenile group are reported separately.

Before conducting main analyses, offenders' commitments to the probing questions in SRM-SF were reviewed. Adult participants indicating that the questions comprising the moral reasoning measure SRM-SF were either "important" or "very important" was more than 90 % in each instance. Thus, the moral norms included in the SRM-SF were upheld as crucial issues for the research participants in the adult group. In contrast, for the adolescent group the importance of these questions was less impressive. The computed percentage for very important and important ranged from 80% to no more than 90%, with even 10% for the question11 (legal justice) and 32% for the question2 (to stranger) being regarded as not important. As the substitute for Kohlberg's moral dilemmas, the moral questions used in Gibbs' SRM-SF moral measure are developed to tap people's moral reflections (Gibbs et al., 1992). Regarding that offenders predominantly evaluated the eleven moral contexts for SRM-SF moral judgment as "very important" and "important", the results imply that these moral contexts were widely accepted by them.

Research question 1. What are the relationships between moral reasoning ability in overall, individual moral value, age, and crime specialism indexes?

Question 1.1 Is there a statistically significant difference between adult and juvenile offenders' moral reasoning ability?

In order to address the above research question the following analyses were conducted.

1. The development of adult and juvenile offenders' sociomoral reasoning

A t-test was carried out to compare the mean of the SRMS scores in adult (M=286.4, SD=30, min=200, max=368) and juvenile (M=249.1, SD=28.4, min=188, max=300) groups. The result showed a significant difference ($t=-11.03$, $df=350$, $p=.000<.001$) with adults' moral reasoning developed more mature than the younger samples in this study. In order to see if there is an age

upward trend in the SRMS a correlation examination was performed. A significant correlation was found with $r=.58$, $df=350$ $p=.000<.001$. This implied the instrument (SRM-SF) adequately distinguished older samples from younger ones in this study in terms of moral cognitive development. Note, only 394 participants (275 adults and 119 juveniles) were administered the SRM-SF measure. Furthermore, 34 and 8 respondents were invalid in terms of the requirements of the SRM-SF for older and younger groups, respectively. Consequently, the valid respondents for this analysis were 241 for the adult and 111 for juvenile populations.

The mean SRMS was 286.4 ($n=241$, $sd=30$) for adults, while the average SRMS was 249.1 ($n=111$, $sd=28.36$) for juveniles. According to Gibbs' moral reasoning formulation, the adults' SRMS fell into a global moral stage (GMS) three (mature level), whereas juveniles' was at the immature level (stage 2(3)). In Gibbs' moral model, the adult offenders' moral reasoning ability have reached mature level while juvenile offenders were at immature transitional stage. The results indicate that the adult participants in this research have developed to the level that the perspective of others are appreciated. Also, mutual respect thinking, underlying understanding of social norms and normative expectations begin to be observed at Stage 3. Regarding the juvenile group, they are in an early transient stage moving from stage 2 to 3. This suggests that the juvenile offenders in this research have started to depart an exchanging and instrumental thinking pattern to more intrapersonal approval or disapproval as well as considering broader social world benefit. Nonetheless, the transitional stage with prominent stage 2 and minor stage 3 implies the juvenile samples are still predominantly thinking at superficial style.

Question 1.2 Are there any statistically significant relationships between the overall moral reasoning ability and four crime specialism indexes?

2. The relationships between offenders' moral developmental stage and age, crime specialism indexes

To explore whether there are relationships existing between the SRMS and age, as well as the CSI, correlations were therefore performed (see Table 5.1.1). There was a significantly positive relationship between age and SRMS, for older $r=.43$ ($df=239$ $p<.001$) and younger $r=.26$ ($df=109$, $p<.01$) generations, respectively. These results suggest there is an upward trend with age in both adult and juvenile groups in terms of moral reasoning development. Because,

the older in age the more advanced development they are in the SRMS score. But there was no effects emerging on the offender's intensity of crime involvement (indexed by CSI) and the SRMS score across all four studied offences in both two groups with only one exception in the adolescent group (i.e. sexual offending). In the adult group, the correlations were drug ($r = .074$, $df=239$, NS), theft ($r = -.038$, $df=239$, NS), sexual ($r = -.069$, $df=239$ NS), and violent ($r = .025$, $df=239$, NS), respectively. For the juvenile group, there was no significant correlation, namely drug abusers ($r = -.02$, $df=110$, NS), thieves ($r = -.15$, $df=110$, NS) and violent group ($r = .16$, $df=110$, NS) but sexual offending group ($r = .19$, $df=110$, $p = .04 < .05$). The failure to find any relationships in all but one exception (i.e. juvenile sexual offending) between the development of moral reasoning and the CSI represents the degree of involvement in specific crime does not have relationships. In other words, the intensity that offenders involve themselves in a pattern of crimes studied was unable to be explained by and related to the concept of moral maturity from the cognitive development perspective.

Table 5.1.1: correlate analyses between SRMS and age, crime specialism index.

SRMS		Age	Drug	Theft	Sexual	Violent
Adult	r	.426**	.074	-.038	-.069	.025
M=286.4	Sig.	.000	.254	.556	.290	.698
SD=30.0	n	241	239	239	.239	239
Minimal=200						
Maximal=368						
Juvenile	r	.260**	-.022	-.147	.194*	.155
M=249.1	Sig.	.006	.819	.125	.042	.106
SD=28.36	n	111	110	110	110	110
Minimal=188						
Maximal=300						

3. The distribution of offenders' global moral stage (GMS)

To add more detailed information on offenders' moral cognitive development, offenders' SRMS was recoded into the global moral stage according to Gibbs' classification scheme. Gibbs et al.'s (1992) global moral stage scheme is a ten-level scale. The stage status assigned to respondents represents the developmental vicinity in which an SRMS is located. In addition to four full stages, there are also six transitional levels locating in between two full stages, with two transitions in each transitional zone. The transitional levels are named by the prominent stage first, with the minor stage indicated in parentheses. Table 5.1.2 shows the distribution of participants'

moral reasoning ability. Of the valid adult participants, 68.9% were at mature stage (3), whereas only 5.4% were in the transitional zone between stage 2 and 3 (2/3) and 21.2 % (3/2) fell into transient stages. Still, there were merely 4.6% of adult respondents were categorized into the stage 2 moral level. On the other hand, juvenile offenders were predominately found at the 3(2) stage (40.5%), followed by the immature stage 2(22.5%). There is a similar per cent found in the 2(3) (18%) and the mature level (18.5%). The attrition rate in the SRM-SF made up 12.2% (adult) and 6.7% (youth) of the total populations, respectively.

According to the results displayed in Table 5.1.2, surprisingly more than two-thirds of adult offenders were assigned to the mature level while only 10 per cent of the adult offenders were seen in immature level in terms of moral reasoning ability. For juvenile offenders, nearly 40 per cent of them were rated as immature level and another 40 per cent were at the transition stage (3/2) in moral reasoning ability.

Table 5.2.2: the distribution of offenders' global moral stages (GMS)

Global moral stage	groups	Frequency	Percent %	Valid percentage %	Cumulative percent %
2 immature	Adult	11	4	4.6	4.6
	Juvenile	25	21	22.5	22.5
2(3) transitional	Adult	13	4.7	5.4	10
	Juvenile	20	16.8	18	40.5
3(2) transitional	Adult	51	18.5	21.2	31.2
	Juvenile	45	37.8	40.5	81
3 and above mature	adult	166	60.4	68.9	100
	Juvenile	21	17.6	18.9	100
Missing system (Invalid)	Adult	34	12.2		
	Juvenile	8	6.7		
Total	Adult	275			
	juvenile	119			

Note: the minor stage is in parenthesis behind the modal stage.

Question 1.3 Are there any statically significant correlations between the moral reasoning ability of individual moral values and four crime specialism indexes?

In order to address this research question the following analysis was conducted.

Correlations were calculated in order to see if there is a relationship between the CSI and offenders' cognitive moral development of moral values.

The results are depicted in Table 5.3.1. In the adult group, significant relationships were obtained only between the violence and the moral value contract & truth which showed a positive correlation ($r = .133$, $df = .239$, $p = .04 < .05$) and the moral value legal/justice ($r = -.139$, $df = .239$, $p = .032 < .05$) which showed a negative relation. There are two borderline significant correlations. One is contract & truth with sexual offending ($r = -.110$, $df = .239$, $p = .089 > .05$) while another one is drug abuse and legal/justice ($r = .124$, $df = 239$, $p = .056 > .05$). The mean moral developmental stages with respect to the separate moral values, from the highest to the lowest, are affiliation (mean = 2.96, $sd = .44$), contract & truth (mean = 2.95, $sd = .33$) and life (mean = 2.95, $sd = .42$), Legal/justice (mean = 2.70, $sd = .47$) and property & law (mean = 2.63, $sd = .51$).

More statistically significant correlations were found in the juvenile group, however. Theft and the moral value affiliation showed the highest positive correlation ($r = .206$, $df = 106$, $p = .034 < p = .05$) and there was another positive correlation between the moral value life and sexual offending ($r = .194$, $df = 108$, $p = .044 < .05$). Except the drug group, significant correlations emerged in the theft ($r = -.223$, $df = 109$, $p = .015 < .05$), sexual ($r = .239$, $df = 109$, $p = .012 < .05$) and violent ($r = .199$, $df = 109$, $p = .038 < .05$) groups with the moral value property & law. Lastly, a significantly positive correlation was found existing between the moral value legal justice and sex offending ($r = .220$, $df = 97$, $p = .03 < .05$). In terms of the development of moral reasoning for each specific moral value, property & law gained the lowest score in the juvenile group (mean = 2.08, $sd = .54$) and this was same with the adult group (mean = 2.63, $sd = .51$). By contrast, contract & truth obtained the highest score (mean = 2.76, $sd = .29$), followed by the life (mean = 2.65, $sd = .33$) for the adolescent group. Similar trends emerged for the adult group, legal justice (mean = .223, $sd = .47$) developed to the level only higher than property and law's, whereas affiliation was at the middle ranking place (mean = 2.41, $sd = .40$) in terms of moral reasoning score. The moral developmental stage for the various moral values was in almost same order for both age groups with the exception of affiliation, in which it was the most developed moral value in the adult group while being at the third place in the juvenile group.

The focus of this section was to see if there was a corresponding relationship between different crime characteristics and moral values concerning different moral contexts. Despite there was no significant relationship involving summary moral reasoning score in the adult group, there were two significant correlations showing an opposite relationship. It would be understandable if the relationships are to be

interpreted with respect to the nature about what violent offending behaviour damages and violates and the moral values significantly relating to. Similarly, this way of understanding between the characteristics of offending behaviour and moral values can be applied to the results found in the younger group. In addition, Table 5.1.3 also presents the moral reasoning score of each moral value. The results show that not every moral value developed at the same rate in terms of moral reasoning competence. But nonetheless, the moral value "property & law" was found behind developed compared with other moral values in moral reasoning competence. Further difference comparison will be conducted in the following section.

Table 5.3.1: Correlational analyses between the moral development of moral values and the crime specialism index.

Moral values	Age group		Drug	Theft	Sexual	Violent
Contract and truth 1. How important is it for people to keep promises, if they can, to friends? 2. ...to anyone or people who hardly know? 3. ...to keep promises to their children? 4. .for people to tell the truth?	adult Mean=2.95 SD=.33 N=241	r	.062	-.083	-.110	.133*
		Sig	.342	.199	.089	.040
		n	239	239	239	239
	juvenile Mean=2.76 SD=.29 N=111	r	-.070	-.108	.092	.131
		Sig	.468	.260	.339	.173
		n	110	110	110	110
Affiliation 5. How important is it for children to help their parents? 6. How important is it for a person (without losing his or her own life) to save the life of a friend?	adult Mean=2.96 SD=.44 N=241	r	.054	.004	-.032	-.034
		Sig	.410	.951	.618	.601
		n	239	239	239	239
	juvenile Mean=2.41 SD=.40 N=107	r	-.122	.201*	-.042	-.116
		Sig	.204	.035	.666	.226
		n	110	110	110	110
Life 7. How important is it for a person (without losing his or her own life) to save the life of a stranger? 8. How important is it for a person to live even if that person doesn't want to?	adult Mean=2.95 SD=.42 N=241	r	-.012	.068	-.050	.007
		Sig	.851	.294	.441	.916
		n	239	239	239	239
	juvenile Mean=2.65 SD=.33 N=109	r	.075	-.043	.196*	-.031
		Sig	.437	.652	.040	.746
		n	110	110	110	110
Property and law 9. How important is it for people not to take things that belong to other people?	adult Mean=2.63 SD=.51 N=239	r	.043	-.026	-.043	.020
		Sig	.507	.694	.506	.758
		n	239	239	239	239

10. How important is it for people to obey the law?	juvenile Mean=2.08 SD=.54 N=110	r Sig n	.002 .986 110	-.226* .018 110	.238* .012 .110	.193* .043 110
Legal justice 11. How important is it for judges to send people who break the law to jail?	adult Mean=2.71 SD=.48 N=241	r Sig n	.124 .056 239	-.058 .373 239	.034 .597 239	-.139* .032 239
	juvenile Mean=2.23 SD=.47 N=98	r Sig n	-.021 .826 110	-.082 .392 110	.229* .016 110	.064 .508 110

Note * Correlation is significant at the .05 level. (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level. (2-tailed)

Question 1.4 Are there any differences between each moral value in terms of their moral developmental stages?

One of the central research interests is to examine whether the moral reasoning quality of moral values differ between each other. Paired T-tests were therefore conducted to fulfil the end. In order to address this research question the following analysis was conducted (see Table 5.4.1).

In the adult group, mean differences on the SRMS were found (see table 5.4) when comparing the moral values contract & truth and property & law ($t=9.34$, $df=238$, $p=.000<.001$); contract & truth and legal justice ($t=7.49$, $df=212$, $p=.000<.001$); affiliation and property & law ($t=8.84$, $df=231$, $p=.000<.001$); affiliation and legal justice ($t=6.89$, $df=205$, $p=.000<.001$); life and property & law ($t=10.21$, $df=236$, $p=.000<.001$); life and legal justice ($t=7.26$, $df=21$, $p=.000<.001$). Legal justice showed no difference from property & law ($t=-1.37$, $df=211$, NS). Similarly, there was no difference in terms of moral developmental stage comparing contract & truth and affiliation ($t=-.07$, $df=231$, NS); contract & truth and life ($t=-.07$, $df=238$, NS) as well as affiliation with life ($t=.18$, $df=231$, NS).

Regarding the juvenile group, all comparison t-tests between moral values were significantly different. Moral value contract & truth was significantly different with the affiliation ($t=8.63$, $df=106$, $p=.000<.001$), life ($T=2.85$, $df=108$, $p=.005<.01$), property & law ($t=15.36$, $df=109$, $p=.000<.001$), and legal/justice ($t=11.58$, $df=97$, $p=.000<.001$). Moreover, affiliation differed significantly with life ($t=-6.04$, $df=104$, $p=.000<.001$), property & law ($t=5.53$, $df=105$, $p=.000<.001$) and legal justice ($t=3.37$, $df=93$, $p=.001\leq.001$). Also,

the statistically significant differences were observed between the life and the property & law ($t=11.00$, $df=107$, $p=.000<.001$), as well as the legal justice ($t=9.01$, $df=95$, $p=.000<.001$). Lastly, property & law showed a significant difference from legal/justice ($t=-2.07$, $df=96$, $p=.041<.05$).

Together, the results show that there is more variations in the juvenile group than the adult group in moral values in terms of the scores of moral reasoning. All moral values' scores differed significantly from each other in the juvenile group. However, there were a number of paired comparison tests showed no differences. For example, legal justice and property law had relatively low moral reasoning development. In contrast, the development of moral reasoning for contract & truth, affiliation, and life moral values were at almost same rate.

Table 5.4.1: Paired T-tests between moral values in moral reasoning stage

Moral values		Affiliation	Life	Property and law	Legal justice
Contract and truth	adult				
	t=	-.066	.070	9.34**	7.49**
	sig.	.947	.944	.000	.000
	n	233	238	238	212
	juvenile				
	t	8.63**	2.85**	15.36**	11.58**
	sig.	.000	.005	.000	.000
	n	106	108	109	97
Affiliation	adult				
	t=		.181	8.84**	6.89**
	sig.		.857	.000	.000
	n		231	231	205
	Juvenile				
	t=		-6.04**	5.53**	3.37**
	sig.		.000	.000	.001
	n		104	105	93
Life	adult				
	t=			10.21**	7.26**
	sig.			.000	.000
	n			236	211
	juvenile				
	t=			11.00**	9.01**
	sig.			.000	.000
	n			107	.95

Property and law	adult t= sig. n				-1.37 .173 211
	juvenile t= sig. n				-2.07* .041 96

Note * Correlation is significant at the .05 level. (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level. (2-tailed)

Question 1.5 Are there any statistically significant correlations between the number of justifications in response to crime episode judgments and crime specialism index?

This section is aimed to examine whether participants' social cognition assessments on an array of crime episodes had relationships with their crime experiences (indexed by the CSI). The expectation in terms of the relationship between these two variables is that offenders who have more proportionate experiences of committing a crime would produce more justifications favouring the crime, while less response would be yielded going against that crime. There are four crime episode judgment questions designed to elicit offenders' responses. (See appendix A)

Respondents were firstly asked to indicate if they agree (pro) or disagree (anti) the statements of each crime episode. Responses given by the offenders were then counted and computed against pro and anti camps. (see Appendix C)

Results are presented below (see table 5.5.1):

1. The trends in responses to the crime episode judgment by age groups

1) Adult group

In the adult group, significantly positive correlation in the pro-drug ($r = .427$, $df=232$, $p=.000<.001$) and sexual ($r = .317$, $df=185$, $p=.000<.001$) items were seen in the corresponding drug and sexual CSIs. Besides, these two groups also correlate significant negatively with the anti-drug ($r=-.433$, $df=232$, $p=.000<.001$) and sexual items ($r=-.279$, $df=185$, $p=.000<.001$), respectively. The results mean that the more offenders involved in drug taking and sexual offending activities the more justifications they generated to support their respective unlawful behaviour. However, the opposite case is also

true that offenders higher in these two crime specialism indexes tended to produce fewer responses in disagreeing their respective crime patterns. In other words, offenders involved in taking drugs the more likely they think drug taking should be decriminalised. On the other hand, the higher offenders committed sexual crimes the more possibly they think the victim's characteristic should be taken into consideration by judges for considering the length of sentence that the perpetrators should receive. Yet, the result is reverse when looking at the relationship between the numbers of their justifications given to the anti-sexual offending category and their degree of involvement in sexual offending. In addition, theft CSI also showed a significant negative relationship with the anti-theft ($r = -.183$, $df = 164$, $p = .019 < .05$) item. This result should be interpreted that the higher offenders engaged in stealing activities the less likelihood they would yielded responses against stealing behaviour. That is, they would think the victim's characteristics, such as if the owner had paid sufficient care on the property, the value of the stolen subject, and other reasons favouring offenders to receive a more lenient punishment. Other than the above expected corresponding paired-relationships, offenders higher in drug taking and sexual offending behaviour tended to express mutual-disapproval opinions on each other. Notably, the more participants involved in drug abuse the stronger they produced assessments against sexual offending ($r = .177$, $df = 185$, $p = .016 < .05$) while the less pro-sexual opinions ($r = -.191$, $df = 185$, $p = .009 < .01$) were yielded. Similar finding is also observed in between sexual offending CSI and two items—pro-drug and anti-drug taking. Offenders with higher CSI in sexual offending the stronger they made cognitive evaluations significantly disfavouring drug abuse and on the other hand, less responses were produced to support drug taking acts. The two significant correlations are between, sexual group ($r = -.270$, $df = 232$, $p = .000 < .001$) and the pro-drug along with the anti-drug ($r = .397$, $df = 232$, $p = .000 < .001$) items. Additionally, there was a significant negative relationship emerging between the theft offending CSI and pro-drug ($r = -.149$, $df = 232$, $p = .023 < .05$) items. This means the more offenders with stealing experiences the fewer assessments were given to support taking drugs.

There was no any significant relationship in the pro and anti-violent items with violent offending CSI. Particularly, against expectations, there was no significant correlation indicating the relationship between the experience in violent offending and responses in the pro- and anti- violence items (pro- ($r = .012$, $df = 164$, NS) and anti- ($r = .011$, $df = 164$, NS)).

2) Juvenile group

In the juvenile group, only two out of 16 correlations were significant. A negative significant relationship between the pro-drug ($r = -.205$, $df = 108$, $p = .033 < .05$) and theft CSI was found, whereas there was a positive correlation with the violent CSI ($r = .226$, $df = 108$, $p = .019 < .05$). The results suggest that there is a trend exhibits that juvenile offenders higher in theft CSI the less supportive responses to drug taking would be produced. But, juvenile offenders with higher theft CSI the more they would generate responses favouring violent offending behaviour. The expected correlation did not emerge between the CSI and the crime episodes were such as drug with the pro- ($r = .082$, $df = 108$, NS) and anti- ($r = .072$, $df = 108$, NS); theft with the pro- ($r = .009$, $df = 61$, NS) and anti- ($r = -.043$, $df = 61$, NS); sexual with the pro- ($r = .054$, $df = 60$, NS) and anti- ($r = .014$, $df = 60$, NS); violent with the pro- ($r = -.209$, $df = 55$, NS) and with the anti- ($r = -.157$, $df = 55$, NS). These results indicate that crime experiences had no relationships with the number of justifications supporting (pro) and disavoursing their corresponding crime.

Overall, more significant relationships are found between offenders' responses given to the four crime episodes and their CSIs in the adult group than the juvenile one. Generally, a self-interested or protective evaluation tendency was more widespreadly seen in the age older population than the younger one. On the other hand, it is also the case in terms of age that offenders tended to produce more other-blaming or negative assessments towards the crime patterns other than their main ones. In light of the above results, a suggestion may be made as to that offenders may have differences in their social knowledge in processing social cues pertaining to specific crime characteristics. In turn, the ways they deal with these crime contexts in their social cognitions may lead them to make discrepant decisions in response. Note, the difference in offenders' social knowledge with respect to the crime contexts may function either insulate them or facilitate them to commit specific crimes. This is one of the features in this study which may be able to address the question about why some people may only engage in a cluster of crime but not others.

Table 5.5.1: The correlational analysis between the responses of crime episodes and crime specialism indexes

Categories	Groups		Drug	theft	Sexual	Violent
Pro-Drug	adult	r	.427**	-.149*	-.270**	-.065
		Sig.	.000	.023	.000	.325
		n	232	232	232	232
	juvenile	r	.082	-.205*	-.093	.226*
		Sig.	.399	.033	.339	.019
		n	108	108	108	108

Anti-Drug	adult	r Sig. n	-.433** .000 232	.033 .615 232	.397** .000 232	.036 .588 232
	juvenile	r Sig. n	.072 .460 108	.017 .859 108	.047 .631 108	-.077 .426 108
Pro-Theft	adult	r Sig. n	.012 .878 164	.104 .187 164	-.085 .280 164	-.018 .824 164
	juvenile	r Sig. n	.186 .152 61	.009 .947 61	-.150 .248 61	-.051 .694 61
Anti-Theft	adult	r Sig. n	-.060 .445 164	-.183* .019 164	.081 .304 164	.166* .034 164
	juvenile	r Sig. n	.015 .906 61	-.043 .741 61	.119 .359 61	-.021 .872 61
Pro-Sexual	adult	r Sig. n	-.191* .009 185	-.074 .314 185	.317** .000 185	-.077 .298 185
	juvenile	r Sig. n	-.151 .249 60	.043 .742 60	.054 .684 60	.028 .834 60
Anti-Sexual	adult	r Sig. n	.177* .016 185	.048 .516 185	-.279** .000 185	.073 .326 185
	juvenile	r Sig. n	.212 .105 60	-0.38 .773 60	.014 .914 60	-.093 .481 60
Pro-Violent	adult	r Sig. n	.053 .500 164	.038 .625 164	-.096 .222 164	.012 .879 164
	juvenile	r Sig. n	.151 .272 55	-.140 .307 55	-.209 .126 55	.131 .339 55
Anti-Violent	adult	r Sig. n	-.068 .385 164	-.032 .681 164	.087 .270 164	.011 .889 164
	juvenile	r Sig. n	-.117 .395 55	.156 .254 55	.175 .202 55	-.157 .251 55

Note * Correlation is significant at the .05 level. (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level. (2-tailed)

Question 1.6 Are there any relationships between opinions about the four crime episode questions and moral reasoning ability?

The outcome of using the independent t-test between the pro and anti groups on the SRMS for each crimetype is shown in Table 5.6.1. These comparisons were to explore whether there is a relationship existing between offenders’ opinions (i.e. acceptable/tolerable or deniable) about that the proposed four crime episodes and their moral reasoning quality (i.e. SRMS). Offenders were firstly asked to indicate if they agree (pro) or disagree (anti) the statements of each crime episode. There was no significant relationships between these two variables but one for the drug ($t=-2.389$, $df=98$, $p=.019<.05$) item in the young group. That implies that juvenile offenders who were opposed to decriminalisation of taking drugs were significantly higher (mean=252.69, $sd=27.86$) in the SRMS than who gave affirmations (mean=231.91, $sd=20.59$) to the proposition. In contrast, no significant relation ($t=1.062$, $df=206$, NS) was observed between the pro (mean=288.25, $sd=30.95$) and the anti (mean=283.45, $sd=29.43$) categories in the adult group. In the theft group, no significant difference was found in the adult ($t=.176$, $df=152$, NS) and the juvenile groups ($t=.816$, $df=56$, NS). Similarly, it was also the case for sexual and violent items in both of the adult and juvenile groups. With older category in the sexual ($t=-.794$, $df=169$, NS) and violent ($t=1.303$, $df=150$, NS), while in the younger group in the sexual ($t=1.288$, $df=58$, NS) and violent ($t=1.078$, $df=52$, NS) questions.

The analysis performed in this section was aimed to test whether there is a mediating effect present between offenders’ moral reasoning abilities and the tendencies (i.e. anti versus pro) of their opinions given in response to the crime episodes. Except one significant correlation found in the juvenile drug taking crime episode judgment, this mediating effect was not demonstrated. In other words, the development of offenders’ moral reasoning had hardly influence on the direction of responses given to the crime episodes. Therefore, offenders’ moral reasoning and their crime episode judgment are separate constructs and independent from each other in terms of social knowledge.

Table 5.6.1: Independent T-test Analysis between pro and anti-items by crime episode judgment questions on summary SRMS

Crime episode judgment question(pro v. s anti)	Group	SRMS (N and SD)	t-value	df.	Sig.
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Drug taking Q. Do you agree with the government in decriminalising drug taking? Why?	Adult	Pro=288.25 (n=75, sd=30.95)	1.062	206	.289
		Anti=283.65 (n=113, sd=29.43)			
	Juvenile	Pro=231.91 (n=11, sd=20.59)	-2.389	98	.019*
		Anti=252.69 (n=89, sd=27.86)			
Theft offending Q. Do you think judges should take theft victims' personal characteristics into the consideration in convictions? Such as; if the victim is rich; the value of the stolen items. Why?	Adult	Pro=286.91 (n=45, sd=28.6)	.176	152	.861
		Anti=285.96 (n=109,			
	Juvenile	Pro=157.05 (n=14, sd=21.20)	.816	56	.418
		Anti=250.75 (n=44, sd=26.63)			
Sexual offending Q. Do you think judges should take sexual offence victims' personal characteristics into consideration in convictions? These included conditions such as, the victim's job, the relationship with the perpetrator(s), the victim's attitude to offenders, and even the victim's past relation history with males.	Adult	Pro= 284.86 (n=64, sd=30.02)	-.794	169	.428
		Anti=288.69 (n=107, sd=25.63)			
	Juvenile	Pro=258.56 (n=16, sd=17.83)	1.288	58	.203
		Anti=249.52 (n=44, sd=25.86)			
Violent offending Q. Do you think judges should take violent offence victims' personal characteristics into the consideration of convictions; such as, the victims' attitude to you, your relationship with the victim.	Adult	Pro=289.46 (n=69, sd=31.58)	1.303	150	.194
		Anti=283.01 (n=83, sd=29.36)			
	Juvenile	Pro=259.35 (n=31, sd=22.21)	1.078	52	.286
		Anti=252.48 (n=23, sd=24.45)			

Note * Correlation is significant at the .05 level. (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level. (2-tailed)

Question 1.7 Are there any relationships between opinions about the four crime episode questions and individual moral value's moral reasoning ability?

In order to further understand if offenders with two opposite opinions—agreement versus disagreement with the crime episode

statements have significant differences in each moral value's moral reasoning development independent t-tests were therefore performed. The reason for conducting the examination between individual moral value's SRMS scores and offenders' opinions on crime episode statements is to further understand more elaborate relationships between these two variables. The results are depicted in Table 5.7.1.

There were only three significant correlations emerged in the independent t-test between the two camp opinions—pro versus anti in terms of moral reasoning development. Two significant differences were observed in the juvenile group while one in the adult group. Juvenile offenders who thought drug taking should not be decriminalised were significantly more developed ($t=-3.65$, $n=96$, $p=.000<.001$) in moral reasoning ability on moral value Life than who agreed the decriminalisation proposal. Another significant difference was seen in the moral value legal/justice ($t=-4.27$, $n=87$, $p=.000<.001$). Juvenile offenders who agreed the drug taking should be decriminalised developed slower in moral reasoning in the legal/justice moral value than who disagreed with the decriminalisation on drug taking. The only one significant difference ($t=-2.23$, $n=161$, $p=.027<.05$) for adult group was in legal justice moral value in sexual offending crime episode. This result should be interpreted in a way that those offenders who rejected and disagreed the sexual offending pertinent question statement developed significantly higher in moral value legal justice in terms of moral reasoning than those who agreed or accepted the question's proposition. In which, the offenders who thought the victim's personal characteristic should be taken into the consideration of the length of sentence that judge should give to them. Simply put, sexual offenders thought they should receive less severe punishment if their victims have one of these undesirable personal characteristics.

The results show, except the above reported three significant correlations, that there are no relationships between offenders' moral reasoning ability in the moral values comprising Gibbs' moral assessment measure (i.e. SRM-SF) and their thoughts on whether they identify with the statements. Along with the preceding section using offenders' summary moral reasoning ability as the indicator, individual moral value's moral reasoning score was correlationally tested with the crime episode judgment. The results further show these two cognitive variables are independent constructs.

Table 5.7.1: Independent T-test Analysis between pro and anti-items by crime episode judgment questions on moral values' SRMS

Crime episode judgment questions (pro v. s anti)	Group	Moral value (N and SD)		t-value	df.	Sig.
Drug taking Q. If the government decriminalizes drug taking, do you agree with it or not? Why?	Adult	Contract & truth	Pro=3.00 (n=75, sd=3.2)	1.88	204	.062
			Anti=2.92 (n=131, sd=3.1)			
		Affiliation	Pro=2.96 (n=75, sd=4.8)	.22	202	.833
			Anti=2.94 (n=129, sd=4.3)			
		Life	Pro=2.94 (n=74, sd=4.3)	-.17	203	.865
			Anti=2.95 (n=131, sd=3.9)			
		Property & Law	Pro=2.62 (n=75, sd=5.5)	-.18	204	.855
			Anti=2.63 (n=131, sd=5.0)			
		Legal/justice	Pro=2.69 (n=72, sd=5.3)	-.01	198	.990
			Anti=2.69 (n=128, sd=4.6)			
	Juvenile	Contract & truth	Pro=2.70 (n=11, sd=.33)	-.87	98	.385
			Anti=2.77 (n=89, sd=.29)			
		Affiliation	Pro=2.30 (n=11, sd=.43)	-1.36	97	.175
			Anti=2.45 (n=88, sd=.34)			
		Life	Pro=2.33 (n=11, sd=.24)	-3.65	96	.000*
			Anti=2.70 (n=80, sd=.32)			
		Property & Law	Pro=1.91 (n=11, sd=.55)	-1.33	97	.187
			Anti=2.14 (n=88, sd=.54)			
		Legal/justice	Pro=1.67 (n=9, sd=.25)	-4.27	87	.000*
			Anti=2.31 (n=80, sd=.44)			

Theft Q. The severity of punishment given for theft should depend on the victim's characteristics , either how wealth the victim is, the value of the stolen subject, or even if they had paid adequate care on their property.	Adult	Contract & truth	Pro=2.99 (n=45, sd=.32)	1.11	149	.268
			Anti=2.92 (n=106, sd=.34)			
		Affiliation	Pro=2.96 (n=45, sd=.45)	-.18	148	.855
			Anti=2.97 (n=105, sd=.46)			
		Life	Pro=2.95 (n=45, sd=.44)	.01	148	.992
			Anti=2.95 (n=105, sd=.42)			
		Property & Law	Pro=2.61 (n=45, sd=.47)	-.99	149	.323
			Anti=2.70 (n=106, sd=.50)			
		Legal/justice	Pro=2.65 (n=42, sd=.52)	-.75	143	.455
			Anti=2.72 (n=103, sd=.50)			
	Juvenile	Contract & truth	Pro=2.88 (n=14, sd=.10)	1.76	56	.083
			Anti=2.72 (n=44, sd=.30)			
		Affiliation	Pro=2.52 (n=14, sd=.27)	1.20	56	.235
			Anti=2.38 (n=44, sd=.39)			
		Life	Pro=2.79 (n=14, sd=.32)	.83	55	.413
			Anti=2.70 (n=43, sd=.32)			
		Property & Law	Pro=2.05 (n=13, sd=.52)	-.82	55	.412
			Anti=2.20 (n=44, sd=.55)			
		Legal/justice	Pro=2.15 (n=13, sd=.47)	-1.27	51	.207
			Anti=2.33 (n=40, sd=.40)			
Sexual offending Q. The severity of the	Adult	Contract & truth	Pro=2.93 (n=64, sd=.36)	-.34	167	.433
			Anti=2.95 (n=105, sd=.32)			

punishment given for sexual offender should be based on victims' characteristics , either their relation to the offender, or her status, or her past records in behaviour, or relationship with men, or the event they attend and so on.		Affiliation	Pro=2.93 (n=64, sd=.46)	-1.06	.166	.290
			Anti=3.01 (n=104, sd=.42)			
		Life	Pro=2.96 (n=64, sd=.40)	-.69	166	.490
			Anti=3.01 (n=104, sd=.42)			
		Property & Law	Pro=2.60 (n=64, sd=.46)	-1.35	167	.178
			Anti=2.71 (n=105, sd=.52)			
	Juvenile	Legal/justice	Pro=2.63 (n=63, sd=.47)	-2.23	161	.027*
			Anti=2.81 (n=100, sd=.50)			
		Contract & truth	Pro=2.86 (n=16, sd=.24)	1.69	58	.095
			Anti=2.72 (n=44, sd=.28)			
		Affiliation	Pro=2.56 (n=16, sd=.36)	1.80	58	.078
			Anti=2.36 (n=44, sd=.36)			
		Life	Pro=2.77 (n=16, sd=.31)	.86	57	.394
			Anti=2.68 (n=43, sd=.32)			
		Property & Law	Pro=2.10 (n=16, sd=.39)	-.33	58	.738
			Anti=2.15 (n=44, sd=.54)			
		Legal/justice	Pro=2.34 (n=16, sd=.35)	.49	53	.621
			Anti=2.18 (n=39, sd=.44)			
Violent offending Q. Do you think judges should sentence violent offenders to jails with	Adult	Contract & truth	Pro=2.98 (n=69, sd=.31)	1.62	148	.107
			Anti=2.89 (n=81, sd=.35)			
		Affiliation	Pro=2.96 (n=69, sd=.50)	-.23	147	.817
			Anti=2.97 (n=80, sd=.44)			

uniformed length of time without considering their causes?		Life	Pro=2.96 (n=68, sd=.45)	.02	147	.984
			Anti=2.96 (n=81, sd=.40)			
		Property & Law	Pro=2.69 (n=69, sd=.51)	.42	148	.673
			Anti=2.65 (n=81, sd=.49)			
		Legal/just ice	Pro=2.72 (n=65, sd=.52)	.08	141	.936
			Anti=2.72 (n=78, sd=.43)			
	Juvenile	Contract & truth	Pro=2.84 (n=31, sd=.21)	1.62	52	.111
			Anti=2.74 (n=23, sd=.28)			
		Affiliation	Pro=2.45 (n=31, sd=.31)	.42	.52	.670
			Anti=2.40 (n=23, sd=.42)			
		Life	Pro=2.75 (n=30, sd=.33)	.67	51	.510
			Anti=2.69 (n=23, sd=.34)			
		Property & Law	Pro=2.27 (n=31, sd=.51)	.34	52	.737
			Anti=2.22 (n=23, sd=.45)			
		Legal/just ice	Pro=2.32 (n=31, sd=.42)	-.46	49	.647
			Anti=2.37 (n=20, sd=.36)			

Note * Correlation is significant at the .05 level. (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level. (2-tailed)

Content analyses in pro and anti- crime episode judgments by crime types

Content analysis

Responses contributed by respondents were initially assigned according to their chosen answers given in the questions (agree or disagree), to two camps-- agreement and disagreement. Justifications offenders made in supporting their judgments were

counted and theme-grouped. By so doing, it was believed to help us to understand how offenders cognitively perceive and assess offending behaviour of different characterises. The results were as follows (see appendix c for categorising tables);

1. Drug taking

The question is: If the government decriminalizes drug taking, do you agree with it or not?

Circle one: agree disagree

Why do you think that?

Adult group

1) pro drug taking: The total responses generated by the respondents to endorse their decisions were 110 within 233 valid answers. The most frequently deployed reasons in buttressing adult offenders' affirmative answers of pro-drug taking were as follows: a) drug takers should be regarded as patients and addiction is a kind of illness. We should not be imprisoned or confined (27%), b) I pay for it, and it is my personal issue. It has nothing to do with the government; I just damage my own body (25%), c), drug taking is a sort of behaviour without victims; I don't rob, steal and do damaging things to the society (27%), d) the government can't control it, why not just legalizes it and the drug price would go down as a result. In turn, people will be no need to rob or steal for buying it (16%), e) insofar as there is no other ramifications (i.e., other disorder behaviour) ensuing drug taking (11%).

2) anti-drug taking: On the other hand, the commonest justifications used to anti drug taking included; a) drug abuse would cause social disorder and result in chaos in this country (35%), b) it is bad to health and just waste lives (e.g. makes people mad, destroy minds) (25%), c) it is the root of all evils and it would create a situation conducive to engaging crime activities (21%), e) it is not right, and would make people take more and more people would involve in (17%).

Juvenile group

1) pro-drug taking: Only 15 valid justifications out of 118 valid answers were provided in this section by the youth offenders. Nonetheless, similar with the adults', justifications given by the adolescent offenders include; a) taking drug was believed to be on users' discretion rather than any other authorities by juveniles. Justifications drawn in for this reason is, for example, it doesn't harm others but our own body (60%), b) if drug taking was legalised it would bring more benefit than disadvantages (20%).

2) anti-drug taking: As opposed to identifying with drug using, four most often referred reasons (the total reason was 103 within 118 cases) offered by juvenile offenders fell into a) it is bad to health and other negative consequences may result from taking drugs (41%), b) it would destroy the country and undermine the community (23%), similarly, c) the if drug taking was legalised it would encourage already addicts to take more and even make non-users become involved (23%), lastly d) it is the root of any evil in the society, many crimes are triggered by drug taking (9%).

Because there was not much age-different seen with respect to the quality and orientation in their justifications, thus they are reviewed together. Those who supported drug taking should be decriminalised were based their opinions on several main grounds. For example, more personal prerogative was claimed by individual in taking drugs and on the other hand, relatively less or even no harmful consequences were caused by drug taking as well. As oppose to drug supporting opinions, health, deconstructing, and deteriorating issues were among the most prominent concerns for offenders who disagreed with decriminalising taking drugs.

2. Stealing

The question is: Do you think judges should take theft offence victims personal characteristics into the consideration in convictions? Such as; if the victim is rich; the value of the stolen items; if the victim doesn't pay enough attention to their properties.

Circle one: agree disagree

Why do you think that?

Adult group

1) pro-stealing: The number of 50 answers out of 176 cases was provided by the adult group, with regard to the support of stealing. Reasons expressed by offenders were placed from the most to the least, they were; a) don't let your money being too visible (30%), b) judges should take theft offenders' disadvantage life conditions and under what circumstances they steal into the sentencing considerations (26%), c) the rich just too showed off, and they should take partial responsibility for the loss of their stuff (22%).

2) anti-stealing: Adult group gave 126 reasons out of 176 valid cases in disapproving theft. The most applied four justifications were a) stealing is stealing, and no excuse is warranted. It is fair to the victims (51%), b) you should respect other's properties. It's not yours', whatsoever (21%), c) this is not right behaviour, and should receive a

harsher penalty (19%). Lastly d) the value of the stolen things is not the main concern (9%).

Juvenile group

1) anti-stealing: Young offenders just provided 13 reasons out of 62 valid answers to this question. They were mostly found in the following two answers, a) the perpetrators' disadvantage life conditions and understandable motives should be taken into accounts (46%), another one is b) people should not too be showed off their fortune, and need to take responsibilities of the loss (39%).

2) pro-stealing: A total number of 46 endorsements were obtained for anti-stealing behaviour decisions. Reasons lending support to this judgment were mostly seen in the two themes. a) stealing is stealing no excuses is warranted. It is fair to the victims (66%), b) you should respect others' property. It's not yours whatsoever (23%).

Those offenders agreeing with the statement were seen in either asking judges to take thieves' disadvantages living situations, especially, financial situation or the victims' responsibilities into considerations of giving more lenient sentences. However, those disagreeing with the question statement suggested that it would be fair to victims not to give theft a lenient sentence. In addition, they also emphasize the underlying meaning of law for protecting individual property.

3. Sexual offending

The question is: Do you think judges should take sexual offence victims' personal characteristics into consideration in convictions? These included conditions such as, the victim's job, the relationship with the perpetrator(s), the victim's attitude to offenders, and even the victim's past relation history with males.

Circle one: agree disagree

Why do you think that?

Adult group

1) pro-sexual offending: There were 93 out of 186 valid justifications offered by participants in response to pro-sexual offending focused primarily on; a) Judges should consider our relationships (i.e. offender-victim) (e.g. (ex)-girl/boy friends, (ex)-wife, special relationship) (31%), b) the victims should take partial responsibility, whatsoever (19%), c) she dresses/behaves in seductive ways (14%), d) we are set up, the victim just wanted to take advantage from us (i.e. asking for money) (14%), e) her histories of relationships with males

(10%), f) laws and judges are unfairly in favour of females, and only take one-side evidence/ testimonies (9%).

2) anti-sexual offending: A total number of 158 out of 186 valid responses were given to anti-sexual offending. Reasons particularly appearing in the following answers embrace, a) sexual offending is sexual offending, no excuse (33%), b) sexual offenders should be given a life sentence or severe punishment (24%), c) people who commit the crime (sexual) must have problems in their psyches or characters (16%), d) we should respect others' willingness and bodily autonomy, human rights (12%), e) the victim is already being victimized; we should have sympathy on them, no need to consider their personal characteristics (10%), f) the behaviour is monster-like, and should never be forgiven, and if so that would put others people in danger (5%).

Juvenile group

1) pro-sexual offending: Juveniles produced 15 out of 61 valid responses in this question. Again, reasons only concentrated in two answers, they were; a) the victim and offenders' relationship prior to the incident occurred should be considered in the sentencing consideration (30%), furthermore b) the victims should take responsibility in whatever sense (27%).

2) anti-sexual offending: By contrast, juvenile offenders offered more reasons (49 out of 61 valid responses) to justify their thoughts in against sexual assaults. Supportive reasons were focused in a) sexual offending is sexual offending, no excuse is justifiable (29%), b) the behaviour is monster-like, and perpetrators should not be forgiven, and that really cause harm to others (18%), c) sexual offenders should receive a life sentence or a severe punishment (16%). Lastly, d) the victim is already in victim; we should show sympathy to them. It is no need to consider victims' personal attributes (16%).

Offenders who agreed that sexual victim's characteristics should be taken as potential criteria in giving sexual offender's sentences drew upon some self-serving reasons to supporting justifications. For example, blaming their victims' inappropriate or provoking behaving, they were treated unfairly in the law system, and allegations of they may be set up. In contrast, those who did not think that sexual victim's personal characteristics should be considered in giving their perpetrators' sentences focused their opinions on concepts such as fairness, bodily autonomy, and harm that sexual offending behaviour would cause.

4. Violent offending

The question is: Do you think judges should take violent offence victims' personal characteristics into the consideration of convictions; such as, the victims' attitude to you, your relationship with the victim? Circle one: agree disagree
Why do you think that?

Adult group

1) pro-violent offending: Pro-violent responses (79 out of 164 valid responses) were centred in; a) it takes two to tango (45%), b) the victim just asks trouble themselves, (18%), c) judges should consider the motive and situations at that time when the incident taking place as well (e.g. out of anger, no choice) (15%), d) our histories of relationships (e.g. hatred, feud) should also be taken into considerations, it would be fair for me (13%).

2) anti-violent offending: However, different points of views were taken to back up their disagreement on acting violently. Based on 93 out of valid responses these are; a) violence is violence, no excuse (47%), b) violent behaviour is a really bad thing (26%), c) the victim is already a victim, and we should feel sympathetic with them. No matter what (11%), d) we should respect others' bodily autonomy and there are many ways to resolve arguments (9%), e) violent behaviour causes more social problems and should be given a harsher punishment (5%).

Juvenile group

1) pro-violent offending: From 56 valid responses 29 reasons were made to support their pro-violent decisions. Of the justifications, three most prevalent answers were a) we take two to tango (14%), b) it is the victim whom provokes the physical conflicts (13%), c) the victim just asks troubles themselves; such as threatening gesture given and confrontations (9%).

2) anti-violent offending: There were 21 reasons given among the 64 valid responses. Overwhelmingly, endorsements against the enactment of violent behaviour were because violence is violence no excuse is needed. Another one is violence is a bad thing, together with previous reason they make up nearly 80% of total responses.

The supporting reasons for thinking that violent victim's personal characteristics should be considered in giving violent offenders' sentences were mainly centred on the relationship that both had or blaming their victims' provocation. However, those who disagreed with the question statement thought fairness and the right of bodily autonomy should be maintained and protected. These justifications

are based on perspectives that law and human rights should be advocated and welfare of others' should be respected.

As we can see, there was not much difference in the themes and characteristics of justifications observed between the two age groups in each crime type. This is nonetheless that the younger group tended to generate less responses overall compared with adults. Obviously, different viewpoints were adopted accordingly with reference to respective crime characteristics (i.e. conflict values, and the degree of damage) to endorse and condemn the four unlawful behaviours. Markedly, responses generated by offenders to pro and anti- the four deviant acts differed considerably in the quality and orientation. The elements to be frequently observed in the anti-offending behaviour camp range from appealing for the fairness treatment, sympathy to the victims, mutual respect, and role taking. However, justifications directing to pro the unlawful acts were components such as their disadvantaged situations should be considered in sentencing, crude fairness, take two to tango, the victims should share partial responsibility for the accident, and appeal for the personal discretion on the unlawful act.

In summary, first, the results have showed that majority of the adult offenders' moral reasoning was at mature level. This goes against the inhibiting function assumption postulated by moral cognitive developmental theories, in which mature moral reasoning would prevent people from crime engagements. This raises a validating enquiry into the construe that if the reverse relationship remains validated for adult offending populations. In addition, a further correlational test was conducted between offenders' moral reasoning ability and their CSIs in both summary and individual moral value levels. The results indicated that the two variables showed hardly any relationship. That is, there is no evidence suggesting, as this research expected, that the higher offenders have CSIs in the studied four crimes, the lower their moral reasoning would be, and vice-versa. It is also true in the relationship between the moral reasoning scores of individual moral value and the CSI when a correlational test was performed.

Second, generally adult offenders tended to produce more responses favouring their own crime or supporting their own unlawful behaviour in different direction by yielding less undesirable opinions to the crime other than their own one. Furthermore, other-blaming responses were also observed in the adult offenders' crime episode judgments. That is, they tended to generate relatively more negative

assessments to the crimes that they had smaller proportion in terms of CSIs. There were, however, fewer significant correlations exhibiting between crime episode judgements and the crime specialism index in the juvenile group. The contents of offender's judgments in response to crime episodes were analysed and then theme-grouped. There was no much difference in the content of their responses but there was in the quantity that adult and juvenile offenders produced. The concerns that offenders placed on crime episodes varied from one crime to another and differed with respect to pro and anti statement evaluations. This presents the possibility that offenders have individual differences in terms of social knowledge when assessing offending behaviour with unique characteristics. And this preference phenomenon in social knowledge may be differentially related to crime commitment proclivity.

Third, in order to demonstrate that moral reasoning and crime episode judgements are independent constructs, a correlational test was conducted between these two variables. There are only three significant relationships emerged; thereby these two variables were considered as separate social cognitive components. Simply put, the development of moral reasoning has hardly reciprocal relationship with how offenders judged the four crime episodes.

Chapter 6 Content-Oriented Cognitive Evaluation Components and Criminal Behaviour

The current research is guided by two constructs embedded in major models of social information processing. One is the specific relationship hypothesised to exist between habitual criminal behaviour and social-cognitive knowledge. Another one is the thematically consolidating phenomenon in individuals' processing of social information. Both of these two assumptions converge to create a process of significance in the development of criminal behaviour. Recidivists were sampled in order to test this notion. Furthermore, a multilevel comparison methodology was employed to assess the multifaceted nature of the relationship between social knowledge and offending behaviour. This reflects the complexity of the interaction of these two variables as suggested in the both models.

The four content-oriented sociocognitive elements examined in this section are; a) crime identity, b) normative beliefs (i.e. the standard of behaviour and acceptability), c) cognitive beliefs (i.e. paired-based comparative examinations on different offences in Cognitive Beliefs), and d) moral domain placement (i.e. personal, conventional, moral and prudential). These four social knowledge factors are examined with the crime specialism index by correlation tests. The results of two age groups will be reported separately;

Research question 2: What are the relationships between offenders' crime perceptions, evaluations and crime specialism indexes?

Question 2.1. Are they any statistically significant correlations between the crime specialism index and criminal identities?

The score of each probing question listed above was calculated first before computing them together to form a score representing offenders' criminal identity. A factor analysis was carried out to assure that these four questions test the same cognitive concept.

1. The statistical description of crime identity

Table 6.1.3 gives the mean scores for personal identity subscale by age and crime patterns. This is together with the Pearson correlation test between the individual item in the personal identity measure and the proportion of crime specialism index. The criminal identity measure assessed the individual's cognitive identity in relation to their offending behaviour in comparison to other types of crimes which they tended not to commit. The ratings were based on a

five-point Likert scale where the highest score of five points was given for strongly agreeing with the item. It is notable that each group mean was above the mid-point of the Likert rating scale, which implies that offenders had a tendency to identify with their crimes.

3. Factor analysis and item alpha reliability test results of the measure of criminal identity

An item alpha reliability test was conducted to see if the four items included measured the same concept and if they were coherently related. The alpha reliability of the four questions scale was 0.52 and 0.57 for the adult and juvenile groups, respectively (see Table 6.1.1 to Table 6.1.4). The results show that the younger group's alpha value is better than the older group. However, the alpha reliability test results imply that the criminal identity scale is not highly coherent. As Howitt and Duncan (2008) suggest that the level of 0.8 in alpha reliability is considered to be satisfactory in social science. The factor which could result the low alpha value being produced is that different type of offenders may vary in this relationship. Further correlation examinations between the crime specialism index and criminal identity on crime patterns may provide some further information for this result. In addition, although the criminal identity scale's alpha value in the adult group will increase when the question two is dropped (least related), the delete on this question will reduce the scale alpha value most (related most) in the juvenile group. Therefore, the four questions were retained.

In light of the under satisfactory alpha values being gained and for the statistic examination purposes which will be conducted later on in this section, a factor analysis with principal components method was carried out to reduce the number of factor in offenders' criminal identity variable. And this is also to form a collectively super variable. A one-factor solution was produced for both adult and youth groups. The factor accounted for 41.8% (adult) and 44% (juvenile) of the variance (see Table 6.1.5 and table 6.1.6). This means the four questions used to measure offenders' crime identity were coherently related to one concept. Thereby, the four questions were then computed to form a variable named criminal identity in this research.

Table 6.1.1: Alpha reliability test results for questions measuring adult criminal identity

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.520	4

Table 6.1.2: Alpha reliability test result summary for questions measuring adult criminal identity

	Scale Variance if Item deleted	Corrected Item-Total correction	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	4.465	.300	.456
Q2	4.785	.244	.502
Q3	4.349	.265	.491
Q4	4.101	.443	.330

Table 6.1.3: Alpha reliability test results for questions measuring juvenile criminal identity

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.565	4

Table 6.1.4: Alpha reliability test result summary for questions measuring juvenile criminal identity

	Scale Variance if Item deleted	Corrected Item-Total correction	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	4.922	.375	.470
Q2	5.112	.440	.421
Q3	5.029	.340	.501
Q4	6.125	.247	.565

Table 6.1.5: factor loading matrix for the four questions measuring adult criminal identity

	Component 1
Q4. I would not to commit other crimes	.779
Q1. Commit other crimes accidentally	.640
Q3. It is unwise to commit other crimes	.599
Q2. I am different from other sort of offenders	.539

Extraction method: Principal component analysis.

Table 6.1.6: factor loading matrix for the four questions measuring juvenile criminal identity

	Component 1
Q2. I am different from other sort of offenders	.754
Q1. Commit other crimes accidentally	.696
Q3. It is unwise to commit other crimes	.650
Q4. I would not to commit other crimes	.524

Extraction method: Principal component analysis.

4. The relationship between computed criminal identity scores and crime specialism index

A correlation analysis was performed to test if the crime specialism index had a relationship with the intensity of involvement in particular offence. A positive relationship was expected in which the higher offenders' CSIs are the stronger they identify with their own crime patterns. Results of the adult and juvenile groups are presented together in the following section, and the outcomes are illustrated in Table 6.1.3.

The aggregated variable crime identity was observed to be significant for drugs ($r=.22$, $df=300$, $p=.000<.05$), theft ($r=-.14$, $df=300$, $p=.018<.05$), and sexual ($r=-.14$, $df=300$, $p=.023<.05$) CSIs but not violent ($r=.01$, $df=300$, NS) CSI in adult participants. In juvenile group, no significance exhibited in any type of crime. Results for each crime pattern were drug ($r=.11$, $df=114$, NS), theft ($r=-.17$, $df=114$, NS), sexual ($r=.03$, $df=114$, NS) and violent ($r=.12$, $df=114$, NS) CSIs. These results show adult offenders with higher drug abusing CSI the stronger identification they hold with not only drug taking acts but also themselves. As oppose to the adult offenders specialised in drug taking, adult offenders with higher in theft and sexual offending the less they identified with themselves and their respective crimes.

Adult drug, theft and sexual but none for juvenile offenders in this correctional analysis were statistically significant but they did not always demonstrate a positive relationship between the CSI and criminal identity. Nonetheless, evidence showed the mean score of each item exceeded 3 (not agree nor disagree). This is suggestive of that the four items received stronger than agreement opinions in Likert five point scale from respondents and cognitively supported the view stated in them.

Table 6.1.7: The correlations between personal criminal identity scores and the Crime Specialism Index

Cognitive Beliefs About Criminal Identity	Groups	Crime Specialism Index				
		Drug	Theft	Sexual	Violent	M=sd=
Crime identity (computed)	Adult N=300	$r=.224^{**}$ $p=.000$	$-.141^{*}$.018	$-.135^{*}$.023	.006 .920	3.51 .66
	Juvenile N=114	$r=.105$ $P=.265$	$-.171$.069	.032 .737	.123 .191	3.58 .72

Note * Correlation is significant at the .05 level. (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level. (2-tailed)

Question 2.2: Are there any statistically significant correlations between the crime specialism index and normative beliefs about different offences?

The ratings on six questions which are used to assess offenders' normative beliefs on researched crime patterns are analysed in this section. It is expected that the more frequently offenders engage in a specific offence the more tolerant and less cognitive evaluation of negativity they possess towards that behaviour. In other words, a reverse relationship is assumed to present between normative belief and CSI that offenders persistently involve. The questions employed in this subscale include a) the seriousness of studied crimes, b) how much disrespect people have for such offenders, c) the damage done to the victim by the crime, d) the appropriate punishment severity for the crime, e) the personal likelihood of committing the offence, and f) damage to the offender's self image if caught. Again, factor analyses are carried out for each crime pattern and separately for both age group so as to conceptually aggregate and reduce variable numbers.

1. Factor analysis results of normative beliefs

The Normative Belief subscale was formed through a series of separate factor analyses. There were six cognitive aspects in this subscale. Both personal and social levels were meant to measure by the six probing questions in the study (i.e. seriousness, disrespect the offender, damage to victim, receiving the highest punishment and detriment to ones image). Factor analyses with Principal components method were conducted individually for the four crime patterns considered, with Varimax rotation where appropriate.

Adult group

The factor analysis yielded only one factor for drug, theft and sexual crime specialism indexes which accounted for 46%, 41% and 40% of the variance, respectively. However, two factors were extracted for violent CSI with 32% and 23% of the variance being accounted for. Detriment to the social level (i.e. punishment, seriousness, damaging and unlikely to engage) characterises Factor 2, while detriment to the personal level (i.e. disrespectedness and self image) constitutes Factor 1.

Juvenile group

Factor analyses produced, with Varimax rotation method, two factors for drug and violent group but only a one solution for the theft and sexual group. The first factor (personal) for drug index comprised three questions (i.e. damaging, image and unlikely to do) while the second factor (social) included elements such as seriousness, punishment and disrespectedness. There were also three questions to make up violence's personal factor, including image, damaging, and disrespectedness. Then the remaining elements consisted of social factor, that were seriousness, punishment and unlikely to do. The factor in violent group explained 52% (personal 25% and social 27%) of the variance, while 53% (social 29% and personal 24%) for drug, 39% for theft, and 39% for sexual offences.

2. Relationships between the normative beliefs and crime specialism index

Adult group

Table 6.2.1 depicts the results of the correlations between the normative beliefs and the CSI for different types of crime. A negative correlation means that offenders have higher tolerant of and lower negative cognitive evaluation about the crime referred to (i.e. less agreed with by offenders). As can be seen, in each case the relevant normative belief for its corresponding crime has a negative correlation in each crime type. The cognitive evaluation on drug abusing was negatively correlated with the drug CSI, for example. In other words, those who commit a greater percentage in a crime type tended to give cognitive appraisals which are relatively less negative than those they do not commit or involve relatively less of offences. Drug offenders had significantly negative correlation with the scores given on taking illicit drugs ($r = -.43$, $df = 291$, $p = .000 < .001$). Which implies greater legitimacy is granted to drug taking behaviour by hard core drug abusers (indicated by higher drug abusing CSI). It is, as expected, also the case seen across all offences. Theft ($r = -.274$, $df = 291$, $p = .000 < .001$), sexual ($r = -.319$, $df = 291$, $p = .000 < .001$) as well as violence measured in personal ($r = -.178$, $df = 287$, $p = .003 < .01$) and social ($r = -.170$, $df = 292$, $p = .004 < .01$) levels all showed negative correlation with the respectively corresponding CSIs. In addition, two negatively significant correlations present other than in their own expected relations, such as sexual offending CSI in theft ($r = -.186$, $df = 291$, $p = .001 < .01$) and drug taking CSI in violent personal level ($r = -.140$, $df = 292$, $p = .017 < .05$). The results suggest the more offenders involved in drug taking and sexual offending the more likely they are opposed to the idea that theft and violent offending (personal

level) is detrimental, respectively. Conversely, the higher offenders had sexual CSI the stronger they expressed affirmation indicative of their disfavour to drug abusing ($r=.33$, $df=291$, $p=.000<.001$) and violent behaviour (personal level) ($r=.14$, $df=192$, $p=.018<.05$). Moreover, a positive relationship exists between theft CSI and violent (social level) ($r=.15$, $df=287$, $p=.009<.01$), alongside with drug CSI theft ($r=.35$, $df=291$, $p=.000<.001$) and sexual ($r=.29$, $df=291$, $p=.001$) offences. These results imply the more offenders involved in drug taking behaviour the greater they think theft and- sexual offending behaviour are less tolerable and more wrong.

Juvenile group

The corresponding relation between the CSI and each normative belief was firstly reviewed (see table 6.2.1 and 6.2.2). In drug CSI, the expected negative effect was found in personal level ($r=-.26$, $df=126$, $p=.003<.01$), but not in social level despite the result was of borderline statistical significance. That suggests the more offenders involved in drug taking activity the less they had normative beliefs that this behaviour is of negativity in personal level. Next, theft crime specialism index correlated negatively significant to its corresponding item ($r=-.24$, $df=126$, $p=.008<.01$), that is theft is detriment. This result should be interpreted that juvenile offenders with higher proportion of theft CSI the more acceptable and legitimate opinions on stealing behaviour they held. Moreover, a significant effect only observed in personal ($r=-.21$, $df=125$, $p=.020<.05$) level, yet not in social level with violent crime specialism index. The interpretation for this result is that for juvenile offenders the more offending experiences in violent crime the less they thought violent offending is negative in personal level. It was not significant between sexual CSI and its normative belief ($r=-.09$, $df=125$, NS) item.

Notably, some significant relations came up in the matrix. They are; drug taking CSI, both in the personal ($r=.24$, $df=126$, $p=.007<.01$) and social ($r=.18$, $df=125$, $p=.045<.05$) levels, were positively significant with theft CSI. Juvenile offenders with higher theft CSI the stronger they thought that drug taking is unacceptable and negative in both personal and social levels. Furthermore, offenders higher in violent CSI believed that stealing behaviour is disfavoured ($r=.20$, $df=126$, $p=.024<.05$). Similarly, drug ($r=.25$, $df=125$, $p=.004<.01$) and violent ($r=.19$, $df=125$, $p=.037<.05$) higher specificity offenders registered their disagreement to sexual offending. Still, this was also the case for theft CSI to be found significantly correlated with violent offending in personal aspect ($r=.25$, $df=125$, $p=.006<.01$).

The expected relationships between the variable, cognition-based evaluation factors, and offenders' past crime experiences emerged in most tests, except one failure in the sexual group. This indicates that the more offenders involved in a specific unlawful behaviour the less serious and undesirable cognitive evaluations they gave to that crime when compared with others. Interestingly, other than the positively strong endorsement aforementioned to their own corresponding unlawful behaviour, a number of disapproval assessments were also seen in some correlation tests. This implies that they tended to rate the offending behaviour they had comparatively less crime specialism indexes more negative and harmful to either themselves or others.

Table 6.2.1: The result of correlational analyses between normative beliefs evaluation and crime specialism indexes in adult group.

Normative beliefs	Crime Specialism Index			
	Drug	Theft	Sexual	Violent
Drug taking is detrimental to the personal and social levels (n=291)	r=-.432** p=.000	.096 .102	.327** .000	.086 .143
Stealing is detrimental to the personal and social levels (n=291)	r=.354** p=.000	-.274** .000	-.186** .001	.024 .687
Sexual offending is detrimental to the personal and social levels (n=291)	r=.286** p=.000	-.087 .138	-.319** .000	.077 .191
Violent offending is detrimental to the social level (n=287)	r=.054 p=.366	.153** .009	-.033 .573	-.178** .003
Violent offending is detrimental to the personal level (n=292)	r=-.140* p=.017	.205** .000	.138* .018	-.170** .004

Note * Correlation is significant at the .05 level. (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level. (2-tailed)

Table 6.2.2: The result of correlational analyses between normative beliefs evaluation and crime specialism indexes in juvenile group.

Normative beliefs	Crime Specialism Index			
	Drug	Theft	Sexual	Violent
Drug taking is detrimental to the personal level (n=126)	r=-.260** p=.003	.239** .007	.102 .258	-.173 .053
Drug taking is detrimental to the social level (n=125)	r=-.170 p=.057	.180* .045	-.003 .972	-.113 .208
Stealing is detrimental to the personal and social levels (n=126)	r=.164 p=.067	-.236** .008	-.058 .521	.201** .024
Sexual offending is detrimental to the personal and social levels (n=125)	r=.253** p=.004	-.251** .005	-.093 .305	.187* .037
Violent offending is detrimental to the personal level	r=-.158	.247**	.037	-.208*

(n=125)	p=.078	.006	.685	.020
Violent offending is detrimental to the social level (n=124)	r=-.079 p=.383	.112 .217	.097 .285	-.119 .188

Note * Correlation is significant at the .05 level. (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level. (2-tailed)

Question 2.3: Are there any statistically significant correlations between the crime specialism index and cognitive beliefs on different offences?

Paired-style comparative examinations on different offences in Cognitive Beliefs are to be examined in this section. The questions in this section were worded in favour of the second crime type in all paired questions.

This section was designed to elicit cognitive thoughts from participants. The tests were to see whether offenders' past crime histories (indexed by crime specialism index) have any relationships with their cognitive evaluative beliefs on crimes in relative basis. It is expected that offenders repeatedly engage in a specific offence would perceive the crime more acceptable and less negative. The factor analysis was done on each crime pattern and age group separately with Principal components method and Varimax rotation. The correlation analyses between the offenders' relative cognitive beliefs on pairs of different crime types and crime indexes were shown in Table 6.3.1.

1. The factor analyses for each crime pattern and age group

Adult group

Factor analyses; before performing correlation tests a factor analysis with Principal components method and Varimax rotation was carried out in each set of cognitive belief question. Only one solution was yielded in paired question set. 44% of the variance was explained in drug vs. theft set, while 55% was contributed by the yielded factor in drug vs. violence question set. Moreover, the single factor accounted for 57% of the variance for sexual vs. drug, and it was 54% for that of theft vs. violence. For the other two question sets, 72% and 69% of variances was contributed by respective factor for theft vs. sexual and violent vs. sexual groups.

Juvenile group

Also, factor analyses with Principal components method and Varimax rotation were conducted in each question set. Other than drug vs. sexual question set with two factors yielded, all remaining paired question sets only produced one factor. In drug vs. theft set, 43% variance was explained by the factor, whereas 59% for that of drug vs. violent set. The factor accounted for 56% and 63% for theft vs. violent and theft vs. sexual sets, respectively. The factor for violent vs. sexual set contributed 60% of variance. In drug vs. sexual question set, the first factor produced in drug vs. sexual question set included three questions, yet just one question to form second factor. Given that result, the second factor was discarded and only to take the first factor to represent this question set. And this factor still contributed 64% of the total variance.

2. The correlation analysis of cognitive beliefs and crime specialism indexes is represented in the following section.

Adult group

Generally there is a tendency for one member of the pair in question (e.g. drug versus theft) to show a positive correlation and the other to show a negative correlation with the CSI. In this case the correlation with drug specificity is $-.24$ and with theft specificity $.20$. Both of these are statistically significant. Generally this is true throughout the crime pairs except that the correlations between Theft vs. violent and violent vs. sexual crime items with violent CSI is not significant ($r=.07$, $df=289$, ns) and ($r=-.11$, $df=289$, NS) along with the Theft vs. Sexual correlation is not statistically significant for theft specialism ($r=-.06$, $df=288$, ns). With the exceptions given above, the tendency for one member of the pair to have a negative correlation with the relevant CSI and the other member of the pair to have a positive correlation with the relevant CSI is clear. The results for the rest of four groups were as follows; drug vs. theft ($r=-.24$, $df=290$, $p=.000<.001$; $r=.20$, $df=290$, $p=.000<.01$), drug vs. violent ($r=-.21$, $df=289$, $p=.000<.01$; $r=.18$, $df=289$, $p=.003<.01$), sexual vs. drug ($r=.32$, $df=289$, $p=.000<.01$; $r=-.26$, $df=289$, $p=.000<.01$), Theft vs. violent ($r=-.17$, $df=289$, $p=.005<.01$ (theft)), Theft vs. sexual ($r=.17$, $df=285$, $p<.01$ (sexual)), violent vs. sexual ($r=.16$, $df=289$, $p=.005<.01$). It was rather striking that there was no statistically significant relationships for the crimes which were not involved in the paired item with the exception of drugs in Theft and sexual question mentioned above.

Juvenile group

Surprisingly, these two variables—the CSI and cognitive beliefs did not have significant relationship in any direction, thought there are a number of borderline significant correlations. For example, drug specialism in drug vs. theft item ($r=-.174$, $df=112$, $p=.066$), and in the item of sexual vs. drug ($r=.178$, $df=113$, $p=.060$) item.

The relationship appears to be stronger in mature participants than that of younger ones. This is because there are more significant correlations exhibiting between the cognitive beliefs and crime specialism indexes in the adult population. However, it should be noted that the juvenile group's CSIs varies considerably in terms of crime types. Therefore, cautions should be taken when explain the results in age difference in this analysis. The findings in the adult group show generally that legitimacy is given to offender's main crime pattern whereas more condemnation is directed to another offence in the same question set. Based on the results presented in this section, individual differences in cognitive assessments on crimes are demonstrated. That is, the more offenders engaged in a specific pattern of offences the more they cognitively endorsed the crime by giving it relatively more positive/less unfavourable assessments.

Table 6.3.1: The correlations between relative cognitive beliefs on different crimes with the crime specialism indexes.

Cognitive Beliefs	Groups		Crime Specificity Index			
			Drug	Theft	Sexual	Violent
Drug VS. Theft	Adult N=290	r	-.240**	.196**	.039	.069
		p	.000	.000	.510	.240
	Juvenile N=112	r	-.174	.157	-.032	-.074
		p	.066	.098	.734	.440
Drug VS. Violent	Adult N=289	r	-.205**	.017	.060	.177**
		p	.000	.774	.312	.003
	Juvenile N=113	r	-.135	.024	-.009	.043
		p	.155	.801	.921	.652
Sexual VS. Drug	Adult N=289	r	.321**	-.068	-.264**	-.054
		p	.000	.246	.000	.363
	Juvenile N=113	r	.178	-.173	.031	.091
		p	.060	.066	.748	.337
Theft VS. Violent	Adult N=289	r	.034	-.165**	.040	.073
		p	.561	.005	.500	.222
	Juvenile N=113	r	-.028	-.020	.083	.006
		p	.770	.833	.381	.947
Theft VS. Sexual	Adult N=288	r	-.122*	-.059	.168**	.025
		p	.039	.335	.004	.673
	Juvenile N=113	r	-.045	.113	-.084	-.072
		p	.633	.233	.378	.449

Violent VS. Sexual	Adult N=289	r	-.087	.045	.164**	-.109
	Juvenile N=113	p	.142	.445	.005	.063
		r	-.050	.112	.029	-.109
		p	.601	.236	.757	.252

Note * Correlation is significant at the .05 level. (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level. (2-tailed)

Question 2.4: Are there any statistical differences in moral domain placements in terms of the crime specialism indexes?

This section is to examine whether people with more involvement in an offence are to be more likely to attribute that crime as more self-authority while less moral concern in moral domain. The four moral domain that offender were asked to choose from include a) personal domain, b) conventional domain, c) moral domain, and d) prudential domain. Table 6.4.13 gives summary information about one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for each crime group on the crime specialism index. Detailed information was presented in Tables 6.4.1 to 6.4.12.

Adult group

ANOVA results (see table 6.4.1 to 6.4.8) revealed a significant between-group effect for the moral domain placement in both drug $F_{(3,289)}=4.52$, $P=.004<.01$ and theft $F_{(3,284)}=3.82$, $P=.02<.05$ CSIs. There were, however, no overall differences for sexual ($F_{(3,285)}=.81$, $P=.49>.05$) and violent ($F_{(3,284)}=.86$, $P=.46>.05$) CSIs. The subsequent post-hoc tests (Tukey HSD) exhibited that moral domain placements differed for Drug ($p=.002<.01$) and Theft ($p=.01\leq.01$) CSIs for both the Personal and Moral categories, while no differences were obtained for the Conventional ($p=.56>.05(\text{drug})$) ($p=.07>.05(\text{theft})$) and Prudential ($p=.44>.05(\text{drug})$) ($p=.22>.05(\text{theft})$) domains.

The results unveiled a difference in the intensity of crime involvement in drug taking and theft offending in terms of moral domain attribution. That is, adult offenders who thought that drug taking and theft offending are of personal discretion were found significantly to commit more drug and theft crime, respectively, than did the moral domain goers. Yet, this is only true in two moral domains and two crime types in the adult group (see Table 6.4.13). As moral domain model assumes that how we categorize social development would lead us to make different decisions and the ways to interact with. It is reasonable to suggest that when people think whether to take drugs or not is simply a decision according to individuals' willing and has not

to do with others (i.e. personal prerogative). Given that they would be more likelihood to engage in drug abusing without feeling moral pressure. In contrast, if one regards taking drug has much to do with moral concerns then this would have an inhibiting effect on involvement with drug taking activities. The same logic is also applied to explain other social acts including stealing behaviour here. It may be because that violent and sexual offending behaviours have more clear-cut and established understanding in social development. Given that these two behaviours could not be addressed by the moral domain attribution perspective in which behaviour decision making is posited pending on how people perceive which moral domain they intrinsically belong to.

Juvenile group

Initially, the result did not show any significant difference in the four CSIs in terms of the four domain modes.

In light of the reason that it may result from insufficient cases in cells, the personal and prudential categories were therefore computed to form a generic classification and it was still called personal moral domain. This is a statistically appropriate alternative and theoretically legitimate way to subsume prudential domain into a combined category. Given that prudential domain is a subcategory of the personal domain in the domain theory (Turiel, 1983). Consequently, it reduced the moral domain to three categories. ANOVA tests were redone to see if there was any improvement in result. However, this did not change the outcome when comparing the differences between the moral domains (see table 6.4.9 to 6.4.12). This strengthened the conclusion that there is no specific tendency existed in between the CSI and their moral domain attributions on selected offences in youth group. Again, the results should be interpreted with the consideration that the juvenile offender group had a very unequal distribution in terms of the CSIs. But nonetheless, there was no main effect in the theft group despite it accounting for more than 50% of total CSI. The results are presented in turn as follows;

Table 6.4.1: the summary of ANOVA test for adult drug crime specialism index

	SS	df	MS	F
Between groups	2.003	3	.668	4.520**
Within groups	42.684	289	.148	
Total	43.200	292		

Table 6.4.2: multiple comparisons Tukey HSD (DV: adult drug)

(I)Drug taking	(J)Drug taking	Mean differences (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.

personal	Conventional	.109	.084	.561
	Moral	.200**	.055	.002
	prudential	.090	.060	.442

Table 6.4.3: the summary of ANOVA test for adult theft crime specialism index

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Between groups	.97	3	.323	3.818*
Within groups	24.03	284	.085	
Total	24.99	287		

Table 6.4.4: multiple comparisons

Tukey HSD (DV: adult theft)

(I)Drug taking	(J)Drug taking	Mean differences (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.
personal	Conventional	.133	.055	.071
	Moral	.161*	.048	.005
	prudential	.138	.071	.219

Table 6.4.5: the summary of ANOVA test for adult sexual offending crime specialism index

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Between groups	.29	3	.098	.809
Within groups	34.40	285	.319	
Total	34.69	288		

Table6.4.6: multiple comparisons

Tukey HSD (DV: adult sexual)

(I)Drug taking	(J)Drug taking	Mean differences (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.
personal	Conventional	-.18	.12	.421
	Moral	-.13	.10	.560
	prudential	-.12	.12	.745

Table6.4.7: the summary of ANOVA test for adult violent offending crime specialism index

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Between groups	.26	3	.09	.858
Within groups	28.18	284	.099	
Total	28.44	287		

Table 6.4.8: multiple comparisons

Tukey HSD (DV: adult violent)

(I)Drug taking	(J)Drug taking	Mean differences (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.
personal	Conventional	.05	.06	.871
	Moral	-.03	.05	.941
	prudential	-.04	.06	.921

Table 6.4.9 : the summary of ANOVA test for juvenile drug crime specialism index

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Between groups	.101	2	.050	1.484
Within groups	3.943	116	.034	
Total	4.044	118		

Table 6.4.10: the summary of ANOVA test for juvenile theft crime specialism index

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Between groups	.006	2	.003	0.17
Within groups	20.067	115	.174	
Total	20.072	117		

Table 6.4.11: the summary of ANOVA test for juvenile sexual offending crime specialism index

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Between groups	.036	2	.018	1.068
Within groups	1.951	115	.067	
Total	1.987	117		

Table 6.4.12: the summary of ANOVA test for juvenile violent offending crime specialism index

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Between groups	.041	2	.021	.142
Within groups	16.612	115	.144	
Total	16.653	117		

Table 6.4.13: Means and the results of ANOVAs between the percentage of crime specialism index and the assignment of moral domains

Moral domains	Groups	crime specialism index			
		Drug	Theft	Sexual	Violent
Personal	Adult	M=.49a sd=.39 N=129	.32b .37 49	.04 .14 12	.22 .32 51
Computed (personal + prudential)	Juvenile	M=.08 sd=.18 N=72	.58 .41 40	.05 .14 43	.30 .40 54
Conventional	Adult	M=.38 sd=.38 N=25	.19 .28 67	.22 .41 29	.17 .27 44
	Juvenile	M=.14 sd=.27 N=16	.57 .43 28	.00 .00 14	.31 .36 31
Moral	Adult	M=.28a sd=.35 N=79	.16b .27 147	.18 .35 212	.24 .32 117

	Juvenile	M=.04 sd=.15 N=31	.59 .42 50	.03 .14 61	.34 .37 .33
prudential	Adult	M=.40 sd=.42 N=60	.18 .28 25	.16 .31 36	.25 .33 76

Note: the letter "a" and "b" irrespectively refer to statistically significant differences at 0.01 level between the crime types in any row. m=the mean percentage in the crime specificity index.

In summary, three content-oriented social cognitive variables were measured and then compared with CSIs by correlational tests. Offenders tended to rate their own behaviour as less negative and condemnable when compared with other crimes they were involved relatively less in general and this phenomenon was widely observed in the adult group particularly. In addition to offenders' self-serving cognitive evaluations, a seemingly other-blaming tendency in crimes other than their main ones was also seen, mostly in the adult group. However, the relatively less strong relationships found between the social cognitive assessment and the degree of crime involvement in this chapter should be explained with a caution. That is, the less impressive relationships may be due to the substantial difference in the proportion of CSIs especially in the juvenile group.

This current chapter investigated whether offenders' event-specific social knowledge relates to their crime involvement. In order to fulfil this task a comparison research design was developed in asking offenders to evaluating different crime types to answering this enquiry. Results demonstrated that there was a differential relationship exhibiting between these two variables. In light of the result, it may lend support to the suggestion that how people think would lead to what they act. For instance, offenders may think that their unlawful behaviour as having little conflict with moral concerns, having relatively limited detrimental consequence to themselves or others' welfare, and being more legitimate when compared with others. The self-serving social knowledge may not only alleviate the psychological pressure caused by their offending behaviour but may also strengthen with specific crime experience. In addition, this may shed light on why some offenders only stick in a specific pattern of crime but not others. Because, they hold more undesirable social knowledge in other crimes, therefore, an insulating effect may also be elicited as a result.

Chapter 7 Is It Possible to Predict Crime Specialisms from Cognitive Factors?

The primary research goal in this dissertation is to examine how offenders' social knowledge (including both structural and content approaches) is involved in their choice of criminal activities which they carry out. However, whether event-specific (content-oriented) or concept-general (structure-oriented) social knowledge can address offending behaviour is the main concern in this chapter. And, to what extent the social cognitive components studied in this research can explain distinct patterns of crimes? As we know offending behaviour is not homogenous in such as the intrinsic nature of the damage they cause and the moral values they may involve. The way to demonstrate the relationship assumed to exist between offenders' social knowledge with their offending behaviour is the correlational test. A series of correlation tests have been conducted between individual social cognitive variable and crime specialism index presented in the previous chapters. The reason to relate these two variables is based on an essential notion—knowledge is derived from an interactive mechanism between people's behaviour and their interpretation. In addition, this interactive mechanism is maintained by an equilibrium mechanism through which people can not only actively interpret and make sense of social world but also adapt with the environment they are in. This is an essential hypothesis for theories taking social cognitive approach to understand social behaviour. Thus, a consistency between people's behaviour and social knowledge is posited and expected. Furthermore, in recognising the ongoing reciprocity feature between these two variables (i.e. social knowledge and behaviour) the magnitude of crime involvement is particularly emphasized in this dissertation. Thereby, a continual variable (presented by crime specialism index, CSI) was used as the indicator to represent the offender crime involvement rather than the dichotomous variable. Thus far, very limited research has brought structural and content -oriented social knowledge in a single study, and it has been a central concern on the issue about how much these two types of social knowledge can explain crime conducts. In order to advance our knowledge, regression analyses were therefore performed so as to shed light on the relationship—social knowledge and offending behaviour.

Multiple regression analyses with stepwise method were carried out separately for each age group and crime pattern to examine how well

social knowledge can explain offending behaviour. The dependent variable is the CSI, while the independent variables are comprised of 1) self-identity, 2) normative belief, 3) cognitive belief, 4) moral domain attribution, 5) moral reasoning development, and 6) crime episodic judgments. In order to achieve this, cognitive variables of the sort just mentioned were all entered into multiple regression analyses in order to mode the CSI. The findings from these regression analyses were used to provide a cognitive explanation of specialisation in different types of crime as measured by the CSI. By so doing, it would allow us to systematically translate the previously uncontextualised individual results presented in chapters five, six, and seven into a crime-focused sociocognitive crime decision model. This model is committed to attempting to understand the dynamic relationship between individuals’ cognition assessments and offending behaviour.

The summary of the multiple regression models for each crime specialism index are presented in the next section.

Research question 3: Is it possible to predict crime specialism indexes from sociocognitive factors considered?

Predictors of the Crime Specialism Index

All main variables were entered into the multiple regression models. This is because there is a lack of theory basis which suggests how different sorts of social cognitive variables relate to offending behaviour. In addition, to what extent that these social cognitive components can explain different patterns of offences is also one of the central concerns. Therefore, all variables were entered into the regression analysis together and listed as follows;

Table 7.1.1: items to be entered into regression models

Moral variable	Item
Self-identity	Self-identity score
Normative belief	1. normative belief (drug) 2. normative belief (theft) 3. normative belief (sexual) 4. normative belief (violent (personal)) 5. normative belief (violent (social)) * normative belief (personal and social)
Cognitive belief	1. drug versus theft 2. drug versus sexual 3. drug versus violent

	4. theft versus sexual 5. theft versus violent 6. sexual versus violent
Moral domain attribution	1. dummy value (drug) <i>drug taking is personal issue</i> <i>drug taking is conventional issue</i> <i>drug taking is moral issue</i> 2. dummy value (theft) <i>stealing is personal issue</i> <i>stealing is conventional issue</i> <i>stealing is moral issue</i> 3. dummy value (sexual) <i>sexual offending is personal issue</i> <i>sexual offending is conventional issue</i> <i>sexual offending is moral issue</i> 4. dummy value (violent) <i>violent offending is personal issue</i> <i>violent offending is conventional issue</i> <i>violent offending is moral issue</i>
Moral reasoning development	1. summary moral reasoning scores 2. individual moral value's moral reasoning scores <i>contract and truth</i> <i>affiliation</i> <i>life</i> <i>property and law</i> <i>legal/justice</i>
Crime episodic judgments	1. do you agree with decriminalising drug taking <i>disagreement</i> <i>agreement</i> 2. Should theft victim's characteristics be taken into consideration of the offender's sentence? 2.1 <i>disagreement</i> 2.2 <i>agreement</i> 3. Should sexual victim's characteristics be taken into consideration of the offender's sentence? 3.1 <i>disagreement</i> 3.2 <i>agreement</i> 4. Should violent victim's characteristics be taken into consideration of the offenders' sentence? 4.1 <i>disagreement</i> 4.2 <i>agreement</i>

1. Drug abusing (crime specialism index)

Adult group

Table 7.1.2 summarised the multiple regression model for adult drug CSI. The model explained 31 % ($F(5.224)=2.76$, $p=.000<.001$) of the variance and with the five predictors included. Therefore, there were total 38 items for adult group whereas 35 items (only 3 moral domains but one more normative belief item than adults) for juvenile group. Normative beliefs explained the most of the variance (19%) in taking drug ($F(1.228)=52.53$, $p=.000<.001$) with a beta value of $-.23$. This showed that adult offenders with higher involvement in drug abusing tended to perceive this behaviour as being relatively less negative and more acceptable than the rest of crimes studied in this research. This item is followed by the "drug disagreement" (i.e. the opinion which disagree with drug taking in the crime episode judgment subscale), which accounted 8% ($F(1.227)=23.36$, $p=.000<.001$) of the variance with a negative beta value ($-.27$). This suggests that the heavier the offenders engaged in drug abusing the less they produced responses disapproving this act. The third item entered into the adult drug abusing regression model is cognitive belief "Sexual versus Drug". A significant increment of 4% ($F(1.226)=11.25$, $p=.000<.001$) of the variance was explained. With a positive beta value ($.22$), this relationship has to be interpreted as that those offenders with higher drug taking CSI the more possible they thought sexual offending behaviour is more negative than drug taking act. The next included item for predicting adult drug taking behaviour is "violence is detrimental at the personal level", adding 2% ($F(1.225)=5.43$, $p=.021<.05$) of the variance and with negative beta value ($-.13$). This represents violent behaviour is not detrimental at the personal level, and this thinking becomes stronger when offenders involved more in drug taking behaviour. Lastly, the item "Drug taking is moral concern" was included into the model. This item explained 1% ($F(1.224)=4.13$, $p=.043<.05$) of the variance and its beta value is $-.11$. This implies that the heavier offenders involve in drug taking the less likely they would assign drug taking to the moral domain.

There are no any moral reasoning related variables included in this model predicting adult drug CSI. Of the five predictors entered in the adult drug abusing model four are intrinsically related to drug abusing, in which drug taking acts are endorsed. Also, items entered in this model all come from different subscales.

Table 7.1.2: The summary of multiple regression analysis for adult drug abusing crime specialism index

Variables	items	Multiple R	Adjusted R Square	R square change	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Normative belief	Drug is detrimental	.43	.18	.19	-.23	-3.35	.001**
Crime episode judgment	Drug disagreement	.51	.26	.08	-.27	-4.51	.000**
Cognitive belief	Sexual vs. drug (in favour of drug)	.55	.29	.04	.22	3.35	.001**
Normative belief	Violence is detrimental	.56	.30	.02	-.13	-2.32	.022*
Moral domain	Drug taking is moral issue	.57	.31	.01	-.11	-2.03	.043*

a. Dependent variable: Drug (crime specialism index)

Juvenile group

The multiple regression model for predicting juvenile drug abusing CSI was outlined in Table 8.1.3. A 25% ($F(5.93) = 7.09, p = .000 < .01$) of the variance was accounted for in this model. The item "Drug is detrimental at the personal level" explained the most of variance (8%) ($F(1.97) = 8.32, p = .005 < .01$). Due to its negative beta value (-.18), a tendency indicative of the relationship that those juveniles having more drug taking experiences the more likelihood they thought drug taking is less damaging at the personal aspect. Next, the following two predictors included in the model were from the camp of moral domain placement variable. One is "violent is conventional" and another one is "drug taking is conventional" moral domain, contributing 4% ($\text{beta} = -.24$) ($F(1.96) = 4.84, p = .030 < .05$) and 6% ($\text{beta} = .30$) ($F(1.95) = 6.36, p = .013 < .05$) of the variance, respectively. Given that the respective beta value, their relationships have to be interpreted in the following ways. First, youth offenders who involved more in drug taking the stronger they think violent behaviour does not fall into conventional moral domain. By contrast, those who engaged more extensively in drug taking acts the more possibly they tended to regard this behaviour as an issue being within the boundary of conventional moral issue. When "Sexual versus drug" was entered as the forth predictor, a significant increment of 5% ($F(1.94) = 6.18, p = .015 < .05$) was explained. As the beta value was positive (.26), therefore, the interpretation for this relationship is made that the more juvenile offenders engaged in drug taking the higher possibility they thought sexual offending is more of negativity compared to drug taking acts. The last factor to be included in the

model was "sexual offending is a personal domain", improving 2% of the total variance explained ($F(1.93) = 6.04, p=.016<.05$). In consideration of the negative value (-.23), the relationship needs to be understood as that those who engaged more in drug abusing activities the more likely they saw sexual offending as not a personal issue.

Similar to the adult drug regression model, structural cognitive knowledge was not included. Although there are also five items to be entered in juvenile drug regression model, among them, only three predictors were directly related to drug abusing acts. Additionally, of the five included predictor three are from moral domain model.

Table 8.1.3: The summary of the multiple regression analysis for juvenile drug abusing crime specialism index

Variables	items	Multiple R	Adjusted R Square	R square change	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Normative belief	Drug is detriment (personal)	.28	.07	.08	-.20	-2.15	.034
Moral domain	Violent offending is a conventional issue	.35	.11	.04	-.24	-2.62	.010
Moral domain	Drug taking is a conventional issue	.42	.15	.06	.30	3.10	.002
Cognitive belief	Sexual vs. Drug (in favour of drug)	.48	.20	.05	.26	2.80	.006
Moral domain	Sexual offending is a personal issue	.53	.24	.02	-.23	-2.46	.016

a. Dependent variable: juvenile drug (crime specialism index)

2. Theft offending (crime specialism index)

Adult group

Table 8.1.4 depicts the multiple regression model for adult theft CSI which totally explained 17% ($F(7.222) = 7.594, p=.000<.001$) of the variance. "Theft is detrimental" coming from the normative belief variable was the item first entered in the model, contributing 6% of the variance ($F(1.228) = 17.46, p=.000<.001$). Since it was a reverse relationship ($\text{beta} = -.22$), thus the result needs to be interpreted in a way that adult offenders who involved in more stealing activities the more likely they saw this unlawful act as relatively less serious or negative. In the same main variable, violence

is detrimental (social level) added 2% ($F(1.227) = 5.52, p=.020<.05$) of the variance to the model with a beta value of .17. Thus, it has to be interpreted as that the more intensive offenders engaged in stealing behaviour the stronger they believed violence is a damaging behaviour at the social aspect. Next, "theft was a personal issue" was included into the model as third predictor which accounted 3% ($F(1.226) = 6.50, p=.011<.05$) of the variance. The beta value was .20, as a result of that the relationship needs to be understood in the way that the higher offenders having theft CSI the more possible they would see stealing is a personal issue. However, it was a negative (beta=-.18) relationship for the fourth included item "Self-identity" which added 2% ($F(1.225) = 5.62, p=.019<.05$) of the variance. This implies that those adult offenders with higher theft CSI the lower of their self-identity with themselves and their crime. In crime episode judgement, "violent offending disagreement" ($F(1.224) = 4.95, p=.027<.05$) and "Sexual offending agreement" ($F(1.223) = 4.05, p=.045<.05$) all explained 2% of the variance with respective beta value of -.15 and -.13. This means offenders involving more in stealing activities the less likely they disapproved violence while tended to have a view of negativity on sexual offending. Lastly, another 2% ($F(1.222) = 5.38, p=.021<.05$) of the variance was increased by "Drug versus Theft" which the question wording was in favour of theft. Because of the positive beta value (.16) therefore the result suggests that the more offenders involved in theft crime the more likelihood they perceived drug taking as more of negativity. Moral reasoning variables were not entered as predictors to this regression model.

There are seven factors included in the regression model predicting adult theft offending. Among the entered predictors, there are three items directly relating stealing behaviour and all are supportive for this behaviour. Theft offenders, on the other hand, show disapproval to sexual and violent offending based on two entered items. However, the cognitive evaluation to violent offending is somewhat complicate. Contrast to expectation, self-identity is in a reverse relationship with the degree of involvement in adult theft offending.

Table 7.1.4: The summary of multiple regression analysis for adult theft crime specialism index

Variables	items		Multiple R	Adjusted R Square	R square change	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Normative belief	Theft detrimental	is	.27	.07	.07	-.15	-2.17	.031
Normative belief	Violence detrimental	is	.31	.09	.02	.20	3.27	.001

Moral domain	Stealing is a personal issue	.34	.11	.03	.20	3.18	.002
Self-identity	Self-identity	.37	.13	.02	-.18	-2.18	.005
Crime episode judgment	Violent offending disagreement	.40	.14	.02	-.15	-2.38	.018
Crime episode judgment	Sexual offending agreement	.42	.15	.02	-.14	-2.12	.021
Cognitive belief	Drug vs. theft (in favour of theft)	.44	.17	.02	.16	2.32	.021

a. Dependent variable: theft (crime specialism index)

Juvenile group

The multiple regression model for juvenile theft crime was presented in Table 7.1.5. with 30% ($F(5.93) = 9.38, p=.000<.001$) of the variance being explained. The first predictor included was "sexual offending is a moral issue", contributing 9% of the variance ($F(1.97) = 9.55, p=.003<.01$). It was a positive relationship ($\beta=.29$), suggesting that youthful offenders with higher CSI in theft the higher possibility they would regard sexual offending as a moral concern. Next predictor entered was "Drug taking agreement", explaining 8% ($F(1.96) = 9.88, p=.002<.01$) of the variance. According to the negative beta value ($-.36$) this relationship has to be understood in a way that offenders in the younger population having committed more theft crime the more likely they did not agree with drug taking behaviour. The third factor included was "Self-identity" which added 7% of the variance ($F(1.95) = 9.35, p=.003<.01$) and with a negative beta value ($-.27$). The relationship of this is interpreted as that the more youthful offenders taking part in theft activities the weaker their endorsement were given to this act and themselves. Furthermore, a 5% ($F(1.94) = 6.55, p=.012<.05$) of the variance was advanced by the factor "Legal justice" moral value. With a negative beta ($-.25$), thus, a reverse effect exists. This relationship is understood that the more juvenile offenders involved in the theft activities the less developed of their moral reasoning ability was in this moral value. The last entered factor was "theft is detrimental", explaining 4% ($F(1.93) = 5.35, p=.023<.01$) of the variance. This indicates that juvenile offenders who had more extensive experiences in stealing the less they thought this antisocial act was detrimental.

Although there are five factors to be entered into the juvenile theft regression model for predicting juvenile theft crime, only one predictor is intrinsically pertinent to stealing behaviour. But, different from previous crimetype (i.e. drug taking) and adult theft group there was one moral reasoning factor entered into the regression model.

Based on the two included items, juvenile thieves are opposed to drug abusing and sexual offending behaviour with experience. As with adult theft CSI regression model, self identity is also the significant predictor.

Table 7.1.5: The summary of multiple regression analysis for juvenile theft crime specialism index

Variables	items	Multiple R	Adjusted R Square	R square change	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Moral domain	Sexual offending is a moral issue	.30	.08	.09	.29	3.35	.001
Crime episode judgment	Drug taking agreement	.42	.16	.09	-.36	-3.95	.000
Self identity	Self identity	.50	.22	.07	-.27	-3.18	.002
Moral value	Legal justice	.55	.27	.05	-.25	-2.73	.008
Normative belief	Theft is detrimental	.58	.30	.04	-.20	-2.31	.023

a. Dependent variable: juvenile theft (crime specialism index)

3. Sexual offending (crime specialism index)

Adult group

Table 7.1.6 summaries the multiple regression model for adult sexual offending CSI. The total variance explained by this model was 32% ($F(6.223)=18.95$, $p=.000<.001$). The predictor "Drug taking disagreement" was the strongest predicting factor in this model, contributing 15% $F(1.228) = 41.49$, $p=.000<.001$) of the variance and its beta value was positive (.29). Whereby the relationship has to be understood as that the more adult offenders involved in sexual offending the stronger they disapproved with drug taking. The second factor to be included was "Sexual offending is detrimental", sharing 9% ($F(1.227) = 27.47$, $p=.000<.001$) of the variance with a beta value of -.16. This suggests that adult offenders with higher sexual offending CSI the more likely they held a tendency to view this criminal conduct as not detrimental. In addition, the third entered factor "sexual offending agreement" showed the same direction relationship ($Beta=.23$). This item explained 4% $F(1.226) = 13.19$, $p=.000<.001$) of the variance. Given that the positive beta value this relationship needs to be interpreted in way that the more extensive the offenders engaged in sexual offending the more justifications they would produce to support this crime. Next entered item, explaining 2% $F(1.225) = 6.38$, $p=.012<.05$) of the variance, came from cognitive belief variable "Sexual versus Theft". As the beta value

was .14 and the wording of this question set was in favour of sexual offending thus this relationship should be understood as that those offenders with higher sexual offending CSI the stronger they thought theft was more of negativity. The following included predictor “Drug versus Theft” also derived from the same main variable, this comparative item promoted another 2% $F(1.224) = 5.94$, $p=.016<.05$) of the variance in the model. Due to the negative effect ($\beta=-.20$), thus more undesirable evaluations were given to theft crime compared with drug taking when offenders involved more in sexual offending crime. The last factor included into the model was “Drug taking is detrimental” which contributed 1% $F(1.223) = 4.58$, $p=.034<.05$) of the variance and the beta value was .17. As that, it represents that the more offenders engaged in sexual offending the stronger they considered drug taking is detrimental in their cognitive assessments. However, items belonging to moral domain and moral reasoning variables were not included into the regression model.

As like previous crime model supporting offenders’ dominant crime, the three included sexual relevant predictors are indicative of favouring sexual offending behaviour. Notably, drug taking behaviour is the crime type which is disfavoured most by sexual offenders.

Table 7.1.6: The summary of multiple regression analysis for adult sexual offending crime specialism index

Variables	items	Multiple R	Adjusted R Square	R square change	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Crime episode judgment	Drug disagreement	.39	.15	.15	.29	4.79	.000
Normative belief	Sexual offending is detrimental	.50	.24	.09	-.16	-2.37	.019
Crime episode judgment	Sexual offending agreement	.54	.28	.04	.23	3.99	.000
Cognitive belief	Theft vs. Sexual (In favour of sexual)	.55	.29	.02	.14	2.46	.015
Cognitive belief	Drug vs. Theft (In favour of theft)	.57	.31	.02	-.20	-3.14	.002
Normative belief	Drug is detrimental	.58	.32	.01	.17	2.14	.034

a. Dependent variable: Sexual (crime specialism index)

Juvenile group

Only one predictor “Legal justice” was included into the multiple regression model summarised in Table 7.1.7 ($F(1.97) = 6.01$,

$p=.016<.05$) for juvenile sexual offending CSI. The single variable explained 5% of the variance with a positive beta (.24). This implies the more youthful offenders involved in sexual offending the higher their moral cognitive development stage were in the moral value legal justice.

Table 7.1.7: The summary of the multiple regression analysis for juvenile sexual crime specialism index

Variables	items	Multiple R	Adjusted R Square	R square change	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Moral value	Legal justice	.24	.05	.06	.24	2.45	.016

Dependent variable: Sexual (crime specialism index)

4. Violent offending (crime specialism index)

Adult group

The multiple regression model for adult violent offending CSI was summarized in Table 7.1.8, which explains 10% ($F(5.224) = 7.10$, $p=.000<.01$) of the variance. "Violent is detriment to personal level" was entered with a negative relationship ($\text{beta}=-.21$) contributing 4% of the variance ($F(1.227) = 9.90$, $p=.002<.01$). This means that adult offenders with higher proportion of violent CSI, the more likelihood they were to hold the thought that acting violently is not detrimental to their personal images or reputations. The predictor included next was "theft is a moral issue", with an increase of 2% ($F(1.227) = 5.94$, $p=.016<.05$) of the variance in this model. Because the negative beta value (-.17), thus the relationship was interpreted in way that the more offenders engaged in violent crime the more they thought stealing is a moral issue.

There were two items coming from the moral reasoning variable included, namely, "legal justice" ($F(1.226) = 7.81$, $p=.006<.01$) and "contract & truth" ($F(1.225) = 5.61$, $p=.019<.05$), contributing 3% and 2% of the variance, respectively. The beta values for the former one was negative ($=-.23$) whereas it was positive ($=.16$) for the later one. Therefore, the relationships need to be interpreted in ways that those offenders with more experiences in violent offending, the lower moral reasoning quality they operated in legal justice, while developed relatively higher in contract & truth moral values. The last factor included was "Violence is detrimental at social level". This item promoted 2% ($F(1.224) = 4.56$, $p=.034<.05$) of the variance with a

beta value of -.14. Given that the reverse relationship, the interpretation of this relationship was that the more offenders took part in violent crimes the more likely they perceived this conduct is not detrimental at the social level.

Unlike with previous adult regression models, there are two moral reasoning related items to be found in the adult violent regression model. This suggests that the deficit of structural social cognition may exert more influence in leading individuals to behave violently. As the results found in the previous three offences in which entered predictors, more or less, are indicative of endorsements to the criminal behaviour predicted in the model, it is also the case in violent offending model.

Table 7.1.8: the summary of the multiple regression analysis for the adult violent offending crime specialism index

Variables	items	Multiple R	Adjusted R Square	R square change	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Normative belief	Violent is detriment at personal level	.20	.04	.04	-.17	-2.67	.008
Moral domain	Theft is a moral issue	.26	.06	.02	.18	.2.78	.006
Moral value	Legal justice	.31	.09	.03	-.22	-3.35	.001
Moral value	Contract & truth	.35	.10	.02	.16	2.38	.018
Normative belief	Violence is detrimental at social level.	.37	.12	.02	-.14	2.14	.034

a. Dependent variable: violent (crime specialism index)

Juvenile group

Table 7.1.9 presents the result of the multiple regression model of juvenile violence. This model explained 11% of the variance ($F(3.95) = 5.95, p=.001<.01$). "Sexual offending involves moral concerns" was the best item amongst included items in predicting juvenile violent offending. A significant increment of 5% of the variance ($F(1.97) = 6.21, p=.014<.05$) was explained with a positive beta value ($=.23$). This has to be interpreted that the higher juvenile offenders possessed violent CSI the more of affirmations were given to indicate that sexual offending involved moral concerns. A 5% of the variance was promoted by the factor evaluating "drug taking" positively. Because of the positive beta value (.27) the relationship needs to be understood as that the more offenders committed in violent offending the stronger they agree with drug taking. The last factor included into

the model was "SRMS". This overall moral maturity score contributed 4% ($F(1,95) = 4.53, p=.036<.05$) of the variance. Given the positive beta value (.20), the relationship is understood as the more juvenile offenders involved in violent crime the higher their SRMS were.

Juvenile violent offending regression model is the only one in which there is no predictor entered in supporting the model in which the crime was predicted. And unexpectedly, SRMS is entered with a positive relationship with the growth of violent experiences. Whereas sexual offending is disapproved by juvenile violent offenders, "drug taking agreement" relate positively with violence involvement.

Table 7.1.9: The summary of the multiple regression analysis for juvenile violent offending crime specialism index

Variables	items	Multiple R	Adjusted R Square	R square change	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Moral domain	Sexual offending is a moral issue	.25	.05	.06	.23	2.48	.015
Crime episode judgment	Drug agreement	.34	.10	.05	.27	2.82	.006
Moral development	SRMS	.40	.13	.04	.20	2.13	.036

a. Dependent variable: violent (crime specialism index)

In summary, in general a tendency was found that offenders' social knowledge was aligned with their own offending behaviour. This is evidenced by the items included in the multiple regression models. The entered items indicate that offenders gave their own crimes more favourable sociocognitive evaluations and/or endorsed themselves and their own crimes more strongly. On the other hand, items indicating comparatively negative cognitive evaluations towards the crimes that were not their main one were also entered into a number of regression models. This implies that offenders had different social cognitive assessments on different patterns of crimes. And the sort of self-serving social cognitive evaluations became more widespread and stronger in magnitude as offenders' specific CSI increase. The entered items came from not only one main social cognitive variable except the juvenile sexual offending regression model, but at least three or even five main variables. This implies that we can say offending behaviour is not determined by barely one social cognitive factor but more than one aspect. Or, there may have a system deficit in offenders' social knowledge, at least/only for the crime type which they persistently commit. In addition, more predicting items were

entered into adult regression models than younger ones and consequently explained more variances. This again, may be due to the considerable discrepancy in juvenile offenders' CSIs. But nonetheless, the result is also in accord to a trend found in the adult group in which the higher level of CSI the more items were included in regression models.

After reviewing the quantity aspect of the variance explained and the number of items include in the regression models, it is of importance to look the character of entered items. Among the entered items, more directed and pertinent items to the predicted crime were also observed. And, they were seen more in adult groups than the same crimes age younger groups. This finding suggests that the included predictors (i.e. social cognitive items) were intrinsically used to measure the predicted crime pattern. Simply put, it only makes sense when the entered items were the items designing to assess the offending behaviour it was meant to predict. For example, in adult drug taking regression model, the included items encompassing "drug is detrimental", "drug decriminalising disagreement", and "drug taking is moral issue" were related to drug taking social knowledge evaluation. This indicates that the more of this sort of intrinsically associated items the stronger relationship there would be between social knowledge and offending behaviour. Notably, structure-oriented social knowledge was only found in violent offending regression model in adult group, while being included in all but drug juvenile regression modes.

In short, a systematic impairment was demonstrated in offenders' social knowledge. And this social knowledge dysfunction is related to the degree of offenders' crime involvement in a specific type of crime. This is evidenced by the result presenting in the multiple regression models in which the higher of offenders' CSI the more variances the models can explain. To say there is a systematic impairment in offenders' social knowledge is because the entered items came from more than one social cognitive main variable investigated in this thesis. Given that social cognitive theories postulate that there is a reciprocal mechanism between social knowledge and behaviour, therefore, a systems perfection mechanism may be assumed. By consistently acting out behaviour one would establish a theme (i.e. crime)-specific social knowledge which permits them processing social stimuli more efficiently and makes specific response more readily accessible for retrieval. Furthermore, it may be possible that the undesirable or adverse social cognitive assessment to crimes other than their main one would by one way or another strengthen their endorsements or identity to their own crime by blaming others.

Chapter 8: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Socicognitive Evaluations of Different Crimes and Their Moral Domain Placement

The data, gathered by semi-structured interviews, presented in this chapter was intended to complement the information elicited by the questionnaires used in this research. This section aims to make sense of how different types of offenders perceive their dominant criminal behaviour and other crimes. This research concern is shared with the quantitative measurement conducted in preceding chapters in this thesis. However, a particular research interest is made in relating their perceptions to moral reasoning development in this chapter. More precisely, more efforts were made to answer a tangling question --why offenders with mature moral reasoning abilities still commit crimes. It would be fruitful if we can address this issue through exploring offender' viewpoints in a more contextualised way. That is, rather than seeking an objective truth, people's own worldviews and understanding to their social behaviour and experiences are of critical concerns. An inhibiting effect is theoretically expected to come into effect by Kohlbergian theorists when people's moral reasoning abilities achieve mature level. Apparently, offenders with mature moral competences go against the fundamental assumption of moral cognitive developmental theories. Thus, this study is also to understand the conflict revealed between Kohlbergian theoretically mature moral reasoning and offending behaviour. Moreover, a further exploration is made on how explanations given by offender are related to specific crime patterns.

To fulfil the tasks mentioned above this research was informed by an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith and Osborn, 2003). All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. An interview schedule including a variety of probing questions was created. This interview guideline was used to tap information about offenders' perceptions on their and other crimes, and how do they evaluate their crime with respect to legal issues and moral concerns. Further articulations (interrogation) were made, if appropriate.

In this current research, three (hierarchical order) scaffold data categories were established to present data. At the lowest level, three characterised groups of data were to be initially coded. Firstly, data concerning evaluating elements (i.e. supporting reasons on seriousness, the degree of punishment deserved, the degree of likelihood to do if had the chance to, and degree of infamy) on the differing criminal behaviour studied in this research. Secondly, the

moral reasoning of moral values (i.e. property, law and legal justice) related to the commitment of crimes. Thirdly, the justifications regarding whether the violation of the researched offences are involved, in any way, with conscience and social order. Finally, indicating with respect to the moral reasoning principle, which they and their peers would apply, with the added question; which moral principle is the best for the society if everyone operates it. Transcripts were organised and presented in four main categories: First, evaluations on their own crimes. This category is comprised of two sub-themes, including a) the nature of the crime (without comparing to other offences), b) justifications for it. Second, comparisons of crimes. This category consists of three themes, embracing a) the differences or similarities when compared with other crimes as well as, b) self identity, c) evaluation of other crimes. Third, how much is it to do with moral concerns and societal laws, including a) from offenders' viewpoints to evaluate their own offences, and b) from offenders point of views to evaluate other offences on these two concerns. A comparison perspective was also adopted in the fourth one, consistencies and conflicts between moral principles used and laws. The fourth section comprises two themes: a) the moral principle applied (i.e. the best principle, and the offenders would utilise), and b) justifications and explanations for consistencies and conflicts between behaviour and the moral principle indicated, if at all. Due to less rich information was elicited from the young interviewees, sub-categories insufficient of data were absent in several parts in this chapter

Interviewees were assigned to four groups based on their offending records revealed by the questionnaire. Sixteen adult and seven youth questionnaire respondents were further invited to take part in interviews (see appendix E). Research participants were classified into four crime patterns, namely drug abusers (adult=5; Youth=1), theft (adult=3; Youth=3), sexual (adult=4; Youth=1) and violent offenders (adult=4; Youth=2).

The interviewing transcripts in the following analyses, a letter represents each type of crime and the number of each interviewee is indicated. These are presented in the parentheses after the quotes below, as follows; "a" stands for adults; "y" for juveniles; "d" for drug abusers; "t" for theft; "s" for sexual offenders; and "v" for violent offenders. The numbers are the case numbers for these crime types. In addition, offenders' transcripts were analysed and shown in master tables with three columns, including initial note, theme, and superordinate theme. The initial note (e.g. Q1.1.d.1A) is presented with specific question numbers coming first, and followed by the sub-question numbers in the question, and then crime types, and

next is superordinate themes, theme numbers comes last. The analyses on adult and juvenile groups are shown separately, as below;

Research question 4: What are the relationships between offenders’ crime perceptions, evaluations and offending behaviour?

It would be very informative and helpful to understand offenders’ decision making and mental information processing by exploring their perception and sociocognitive evaluations on their own offences. Interviewing data pertinent to evaluations and perceptions on offender’s own crimes are grouped into this theme. Two sub-themes are comprised in this section, including a) the nature of their own offending behaviour; b) the evaluations and justifications generated on their unlawful behaviour. Data are to be displayed in a crimetype basis.

Question 4.1: What are offenders’ sociocognitive evaluations and perceptions on their own crimes?

Q: How do you perceive and evaluate the crime you committed and that behaviour?

In this section information is presented regarding to the evaluations and perceptions interviewees had for their own crimes. Interviewees were asked to make evaluations only from their own viewpoints. Interviewing data were presented by the basis of crime patterns. (The ways how themes and superordinate themes were extracted in master tables are demonstrated in this section). (see appendix F for the transcripts)

Drug abusers

Table 8.1.1 Master table of themes for adult drug abusers on drug taking

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Disagreement with criminalisation	Not crime	Q1.1.d.1A
	No harm to others	Q1.1.d.1B
	Personal issue	Q1.1.d.1C
2. Unfair and unbalanced in terms of feeling and treatment	I neither robbing nor stealing	Q1.1.d.2A
		Q1.1.d.2B
		Q1.1.d.2D
		Q1.1.d.2A
	Feel unfair	Q1.1.d.2B

	Not serious act Just an addition	Q1.1.d.2C Q1.1.d.2B Q1.1.d.2C
3. Just damage myself	Doesn't harm others Just damage myself	Q1.1.d.3A Q1.1.d.3B

1) disagreement with criminalisation

A: Drug taking should **not** be regarded as a sort of **crime**. (ad1)

B: We **don't** cause any **harm to others**, but to ourselves only. (ad3)

C: I think taking drugs is **personal issue**, if I just use it. (ad4)

2) unfair and unbalanced in terms of feeling

A: As a result of my behaviour (taking drugs), I feel that I am **neither robbing nor stealing** since I spend my own money, and that I have to be admitted here, to be humiliated, I **feel** is very **unfair**. (ad2)

B: Taking drugs is **not very serious** (punishment deserved), as it doesn't harm others. We use our own money to buy them and **don't steal**. I **feel unfair** to have been put behind bars for ten years just for taking drugs, that's even **longer than a murderer**. (ad3)

C: If taking drugs is **an addiction**, then there are many other things that cause addiction such as smoking or even drinking wine, so **why are they legal**. (ad4)

D: I feel **drug regulations are unfair**. Of course there is (criminal) behaviour that damages others, such as stealing and violence, but we won't do this, we **just take drugs** and smoke. (ad4)

3) Just damage myself

A: Taking drugs is not very serious (punishment deserved), as **it doesn't harm others**. (ad3)

B: Taking drug just **damages myself**, no harm to others. (ad4)

Thieves

Table 8.1.2 Master table of themes for adult thieves on stealing

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Money being the only purpose and avoiding confrontations	No confrontations	Q1.1.t.1A
	To get money rather than harms	Q1.1.t.1B
	Stealing for livelihood, thieves are not ruthless	Q1.1.t.1C
	Money only	Q1.1.t.1D
2. It's no good but not that bad either	Just steal stuff, just a sort of "behaviour"	Q1.1.t.2A
	That is ok!	Q1.1.t.2B
	I don't use violence, won't be a big deal	Q1.1.t.2C
	Have moral conscience involved, no	Q1.1.t.2D

	acquaintances, practice code	
3. It doesn't harm victims physically	No physical harm to victims	Q1.1.t.3A

1) Money being the only purpose and avoiding confrontations

A: I will run away if the owner happens to come back, ***I won't confront them.***

(at1)

B: Because it would become... the ***primary purpose is*** to get ***money rather than to harm others.*** (at1)

C: Theft is very widespread, as we all do it ***for our livelihood***, you know...to steal to survive. Some ***thieves are not as ruthless as them*** (other criminals). ***Take it and go, if you can't succeed then just run away***, that's it. (at3)

D: As our mentors taught us, what we want is ***money only***, we don't want women, if we happen to be confronted with them, ***we can't do immoral things***, can we? (at3)

2) It is not good, but not that bad either

A: Other people might think ***we just steal stuff***; it's ***just a sort of "behaviour"***. (at1)

B: Everyone has ***different idea about it*** (stealing), and I feel ***that it is ok!*** (at1)

C: As for theft, ***as long as you do it sneakily***, and ***don't use violence***, then it ***won't be a big deal*** (at2)

D: ***Thieves have moral conscience***; if I know you then ***I won't steal from you.*** We have this as a ***sort of code***; no matter how rich you are we won't burgle your house, you ***have got to have this sort of conscience.*** (at2)

3) It doesn't harm victims physically

A: stealing causes ***no physical damage to victims.*** (at1)

Sexual offenders

Table 8.1.3 Master table of themes for adult sexual offenders on sexual offending

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Legitimation of offending	Don't need to dress like that, she is deliberately	Q1.1.s.1A
	Won't view them as same sort(normal) of girls	Q1.1.s.1I
	Won't care the consequence if she(under consent age) agreed	Q1.1.s.1B
	You can say drunk	Q1.1.s.1K
	Some girls are really loose and easy	Q1.1.s.1C
	You have to take it if you the victim has to be blamed	Q1.1.s.1E
		Q1.1.s.1D
		Q1.1.s.1F
		Q1.1.s.1G

	Wrong places, wrong time, should take responsibilities as well Victims' provocations	Q1.1.s.1H Q1.1.s.1I Q1.1.s.1J Q1.1.s.1L
2. Fully recovered before long	Housewives would suffer more but other girls not or less Some won't bother and recovered before long Nothing for them	Q1.1.s.2A Q1.1.s.2C Q1.1.s.2E Q1.1.s.2F Q1.1.s.2G Q1.1.s.2D
3. Sexual offenders' are looked down on (status)	They are looked down on Most disliked inside	Q1.1.s.3A Q1.1.s.3B Q1.1.s.3D Q1.1.s.3E Q1.1.s.3C
4. Under age of consent and ambiguity	If consent is expressed ambiguously If she agree but under 18, that is acceptable having sex with them	Q1.1.s.4A Q1.1.s.4B Q1.1.s.4C Q1.1.s.4D Q1.1.s.4E

1) Legitimisation of offending

A: If a female dresses seductively and skimpily, I **would think she is deliberately** trying to seduce me; you **don't need to dress like that**, even in a clubbing setting. (as1)

B: If one is... dresses sexily and another normally, then **I wouldn't view them as the same girls**. (as1)

C: If I used force or threats, or even the excuse of drunkenness, to assault others, I would feel guilty. But, **if she agreed**, and was just under 18, then **I wouldn't care about the consequences**. (as1)

D: If you sexually assault others, then **you can say you were drunk** and that is a good excuse. (as1)

E: **If she(under 18) was willing to have sex with me** then I would agree to it, but I don't agree with people forcing others to have sex through violence. (as2)

F: So you think, oh... **when you watch porn or sexy images**, they make you **think**, wow, **they are really loose and very easy**, these sort of girls. (as3)

G: I have said it depends on each individual, if **they have something to be blamed** for then **they need to take it** (the punishment) as well. (as4)

H: ... such as, they **dress skimpily** in the **wrong places**, and at the **wrong time** (small hours), so **they should take the responsibility**. (as4)

I: Yes, **if they go to places** where only a few people would go and **dress sexily** and **skimpily**. (as4)

J: **They should have taken precautions** but they failed to do so, like lanes or places not many people would go to avoid the danger. (as4)

K: Girls who intentionally dress in way to induce others, yes, **there must be these sorts of girls out there**. (as4)

L: **If the incident happens due to the victim's provocation**, then the offender should be given a shorter sentence. (as4)

2) Fully recovered before long

A: If they are sexually assaulted, then **I would think that housewives would suffer more**. But **other girls** would not feel hurt, or would **suffer much less**. if I went out clubbing or to pubs, I would think these girls, **who dress like that, were very easy**. (as1)

B: If you rape others just out of a need for sexual satisfaction, then you will hurt the victim psychologically. (as2)

C: For sexual ... it is not necessary; it depends on respective individuals (victims). **Some won't be bothered and will be fully recovered before long**. (as4)

D: Yes, after all they don't feel...having not been harmed much. **They recover very quickly, so it is nothing for them** (as4)

E: Yes, it (recovery) is **just a matter of time**, just a matter of time if they (housewives vs. girls) have any difference. (as4)

F: some victims just take three or five months to **totally forget it**. (as4)

G: There is the **possibility to recover**, so it's **not so damaging**. (as4)

3) Sexual offenders' status

A: Sexual offending behaviour is mostly **looked down on**. This is the prevailing attitude in jail settings. (as1)

B: Sexual offending is mostly **looked down on**, although it's my first time in jail, but people all say that sexual offenders are **the most disliked group inside**. (as2)

C: From the outside, every type of criminal is **looked down on**, but **on the inside it is us, the sexual offenders**. (as3)

D: It is of course **sexual offenders who are looked down on most inside**. It is not just a feeling, it has been this way for a long time. (as4)

4) Under age of consent and ambiguity

A: **If it (consent) is expressed ambiguously** then..., if she doesn't want to, but I still sexually assault her, then I'll feel it is wrong. (as1)

B: If both agree on having sex, but just the girl is under the consent age, I think **both parts need to take responsibility** (as1)

C: I think if you are going out with a girl, but **she is under 18**, and if the situation is discovered by the parents, then, I would accept responsibility if I was accused. But people who sexually attack others just because they want to, I couldn't accept that. (as2)

D: I **can accept it (having sex with female under 18)**, as it is not out of impulsiveness that others are raped, **they are not randomly chosen** (as2).

E: ***If I was willing to have sex with her (and she was under 18) then I would agree with it***, but I wouldn't accept it if it involved force and violence. If you rape others just out of a need for sexual satisfaction, then you will hurt the victim psychologically. (as2)

Violent offenders

Table 8.1.4 Master table of themes for adult violent offenders on violent offending

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. The sudden and impulsive incident	It could be a incident Impulsive behaviour Sudden challenge	Q1.1.v.1A Q1.1.v.1B Q1.1.v.1C Q1.1.v.1D
2. Legitimate reasons must be required	You must have reason to hit others Under threatening situations Must have two sides in conflicts	Q1.1.v.2A Q1.1.v.2D Q1.1.v.2B Q1.1.v.2C
3.Recovery is a matter of time	Full recovery is shorter Recoverable	Q1.1.v.3A Q1.1.v.3B

1) The sudden and impulsive incident

A: Yes we need to take responsibility that's right, but you can't say we need to take full responsibility, can you? ***You've got to consider the cause of the incident.*** (av1)

B: Violent behaviour ***could be a sudden event, such as out of impulsivity***, it comes to you suddenly. (av2)

C: it is because of the moment, as people sometimes ***inevitably have emotional arousal. In these moments it (behaviour) is hard to control.*** (av2)

D: ...unless ***you challenge/confront them***, otherwise they won't act violently towards you. (av3)

2) Legitimate reasons must be required

A: ***you must have reasonable grounds to hit others***; we (violent offenders) wouldn't hit you without provocation, ***unless you suddenly threaten us*** with violence. The reason must like this. (av1)

B: the key point is that ***we must be under a certain threatening situation*** or in a confrontation, ***otherwise it is impossible for us to harm you.*** (av1)

C: Violence must have two parties involved; ***there are always two sides in conflicts.*** (av3)

D: Yes violence is simple and unilateral, and ***must have reasons***. It all depends if you are ***active or passive.*** (av4)

3) Recovery is a matter of time

A: Although it (violent behaviour) also causes damage, the time needed to make a full **recovery is shorter**. (av2)

B: grievous bodily harm also is... also **recoverable** and can be compensated for. (av4)

The cognitive perceptions and evaluations given by the drug abusers on drug taking behaviour were focused on mainly three themes. These concerns encompass a) the disagreement of criminalisation, b) unfair penological policy, and c) that drug taking only damages the user. Drug takers don't think that their behaviour should not be regarded as a sort of crime because it is a personal discretion. Moreover, they are perplexed with the penological policy imposed on them. This is supported by beliefs, for example, that they do not commit crimes such as robbery, thus why should they receive the same treatment as other more serious criminals. Furthermore, according to their definitions of criminality, they and their behaviour simply do not meet the defining characteristics for this term, for the reason that they do not impose any threatening impact on others but only damage themselves.

For theft, interviewing data was grouped into three categories, a) stealing does not physically harm the victims, b) stealing may not be good but it's not so bad either, c) what they want is money only and confrontations must be avoided. The need for and the relatively less harmful consequences of stealing were heavily stressed by those convicted of thefts.

Sexual offenders' attitudes towards sexual offending behaviour were assessed in four aspects. The points most frequently suggested were a) legitimising of sexual offending; b) the victims being fully recovered before long; c) sexual offenders being outcasts; d) the consent age and ambiguity. Despite the awareness of the poor reputation received from among inmates, let alone outside, some unique justifications were produced by the sexual offenders for legitimising sexual offending behaviour. Reasons given for rendering sexual assaults as less condemnable acts are 1) that the victims should share partial responsibility for the accident; 2) a more concrete point, they view the victim as the source of the problem (e.g., dressing, ambiguously and appearing in the wrong places or at the wrong time), initiating offenders' motivation for sexual offending; 3) the acceptability of having sex with someone under consent age or because of the ambiguous cues received. Two extreme evaluations, in terms of the harm done to sexual victims, were exemplified by one interviewee, who believed that sexual offending causes psychological

harm, while another one thought that the victim, regardless of the degree of harm, would nonetheless be fully recovered before long.

The cognitive assessments on violent offending behaviour by the violent offenders were mostly seen in the context of three concerns: a) that recovery is just a matter of time; b) legitimate reasons must be present; c) it is because of impulsiveness. Violent offenders did not deny the potential damage violent acts might cause, but considered that recovery is just a matter of time. Furthermore, a critical component must present prior to acting violently, a legitimate reason, irrespective of proactive or reactive violence. Violent offenders think that they do not engage in violent activities with no threatening provocation. Having perceived or given threatening information to violent criminals is one of the plausible reasons for them rationalising their unlawful acts. In addition to the perceived reasons that entitle offenders to act violently, violent offending behaviour was also attributed to the uncontrollable external circumstances in the offender's real situations and their psychological state. Under a compelling moment and situation, there can be no other option but to react violently.

4.2 What are offenders' sociocognitive evaluations and perceptions on other crimes?

Justifications of their crime involvement (Q: Why and how did you involve in the unlawful behaviour?

This section is to present information of sociocognitive explanations given by inmates on their own criminal behaviour. Unlike the previous section, this section seeks to elicit understanding of why offenders involve into their own criminal behaviour and its' potential consequences that may cause.

Drug abusers

Table 8.1.5 Master table of themes for adult drug abusers in justifying drug taking

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1.Bad for family but not against social integrity	Might be bad for my family, but nothing to do with social integrity	Q1.2.d.1A
	Waste you hard earned money	Q1.2.d.1B
	Keep enjoying it though almost died of it	Q1.2.d.1F
	Feel guilty for my parents and partner.	Q1.2.d.1B
		Q1.2.d.1C
		Q1.2.d.1D

2.Decriminalising would do good than bad	It's legal in other countries	Q1.2.d.2A
	If it was legalised then people would not have curiosity	Q1.2.d.2B
	Should not a sort of crime	Q1.2.d.2C
	A good drug management system rather than criminalising it	Q1.2.d.2D
	Drug would be cheaper if legalised	Q1.2.d.2E
3.No other bad habit but taking drug	Keep job and enjoy it	Q1.2.d.2E
	I have no bad habit but taking drug	Q1.2.d.3A
4.Uncontrollable	It is a normal habit	Q1.2.d.3B
	Can't resist	Q1.2.d.4A
		Q1.2.d.4D
	Can't control	Q1.2.d.4B
		Q1.2.d.4C

There are three topics related to drug taking behaviour. Firstly, for justifications for chronically taking drugs, addicts gave two supporting reasons: a) irresistibility to satisfy both the psychological and physical needs generated by drug addition -one inmate argued that he simply felt ill when he needed drugs; b) drug taking behaviour was simply regarded as a sort of bad habit parallel to drinking and smoking acts; c) one of the arguments frequently raised among drug abusers was whether governments should to decriminalise drug taking behaviour. Note: this assessment was only to serve as a probing question rather than quizzing interviewees about the extent to which the governments should control the drug policy. A decriminalisation preferred tendency was observed from the evaluation responses generated from drug abusers. Their reasons given were either that it would help to reduce to black market drugs prices, in turn, lowering the crime rates caused by financially desperate addicts, or calling for a better management system instead.

Drug addicts were not unaware of the negative effects of abusing drugs. The broken relationship between them and their families was the most discussed topic, but the undesirable consequences, as result of drug abusing, seemed not outside boundary of the family aspects. That is because they thought that there were no moral implications for their unlawful behaviour.

Theft

Table 8.1.6 Master table of themes for adult thieves in justifying stealing behaviour

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
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1. Ties with peers	Friends invite me, close friendships Wrong friends, did it together I would say yes, if friends ask me to do	Q1.2.t.1A Q1.2.t.1B Q1.2.t.1C
2. The gains are so tempting	It's sort of habit, though respecting others' property rights is important Benefits are really tempting Need money to survive, though it's important (property right)	Q1.2.t.2A Q1.2.t.2B Q1.2.t.2C
3. Theft victims no need to share responsibility	The victims don't need to share responsibility	Q1.2.t.3A

Continued engagement in theft activities is sustained by two factors—the temptation of the benefits of crime and peer pressure. Despite knowing that the victims do not need to take any responsibility for the loss of their property, the incentive of the gains coming from crime and relationships with people involved in theft careers are two strong factors for continued theft.

Sexual offenders

Table 8.1.7 Master table of themes for adult sexual offenders in justifying sexual offending behaviour

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Coercion vs. consent	There are two convictions— coercive and under consent age, I accept the latter one As long as I don't use violence	Q1.2.s.1A Q1.2.s.1B Q1.2.s.1B
2. no violence involved	Sexual offending doesn't necessarily require violence I am not randomly choosing any one	Q1.2.s.2A Q1.2.s.2B
3. Had the victim's consent but they were under 18, then acceptable	I was accused by her father. The girl needs to take responsibility as well, if she agreed I agree having sex with girls under 18, I don't care the consequence	Q1.2.s.3A Q1.2.s.3B Q1.2.s.3C Q1.2.s.3D
4. They are different girls	Clubbing goers are different from housewives Porn and sexy images make you feel they are promiscuous Female dressing skimpily, appearing in wrong place, wrong time, should take responsibility if assaulted	Q1.2.s.4A Q1.2.s.4A Q1.2.s.4C

5. Seeking sexual satisfaction	Just wanted to satisfy my sexual desire	Q1.2.s.5A
	We can't make girlfriends in a normal way	Q1.2.s.5B
6. They create chances	They should have taken precautions, have avoided	Q1.2.s.6A
	Intentionally to dress like ..to induce others	Q1.2.s.6B

The reasons given by sexual criminals to repeatedly commit sexual offences were focused on a number of themes. Of these justifications, tendencies were notably seen to be legitimising sexual offending and can be classified as a) intentionally picking out females with certain characteristics, such as girls dressing skimpily and being present at places they are not supposed to be; b) acceptance of having sex with the females under the consent age; c) attributing blame to the victim for creating environments conducive to the occurrence of sexual offending; d) seeking sexual satisfaction due to the inability to make girlfriends via legitimate means; e) emphasising that there was no violent component involved in the process of their sexual offending. The factors presented above predominately concentrate on the victim's responsibility rather than perpetrator's.

Violent offenders

Table 8.1.8 Master table of themes for adult violent offenders in justifying violent offending behaviour

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Violent instincts	Fighting and killing are quite common, friends are very important All human beings have violent instincts	Q1.2.v.1A
2. passive vs. active	Murders and manslaughters are different from killing for money Passive and active violent offending are different	Q1.2.v.2A Q1.2.v.2B Q1.2.v.2C
3. The victims should share responsibility	You can't say we need to take full responsibility Emotional arousal, can't control myself Violence must involve two sides	Q1.2.v.3A Q1.2.v.3B Q1.2.v.3C

Violent offenders tended to believe that acting violently is more acceptable if it arises out of a reactive and legitimate reason in response to an external threatening stimulus. Therefore, the motive (i.e., reactive versus proactive) of violent offending is the critical concern for them. In light of this, responsibility for violent offending should be shared partially with the victims. Furthermore, they refer to an inevitability of behaving violently due to nature of human beings or their own character.

In summary; Cognitive evaluations in favour of offenders' behaviour were widely observed in their transcripts. There are three critical socicognitive components in which majority of adult interviewees', regardless of crime types, arguments were evolved around. First, the condemnability of their criminal conducts was attenuated through arguing that their delinquencies had little damaging consequences to the victims or others. Second, offenders' called for their victims to share the responsibility of incidents. For example, sexual perpetrators thought that their victims should take partly responsibility for incurring the incidents, and violent victims were frequently accused of the provokers of violent incidents. Third, concerns were also emphasized on "uncontrollable development" of human nature. That is, the craving for drugs, the need of money, the inevitable of sexual attacks in conducive circumstances, and the use of violence for self-defence. By and large, offenders rendered their law violating acts and themselves in a situation where less significant consequences of their behaviour would cause. Furthermore, the justifiability of their unlawful behaviour was emphasized.

Question 4.3: How offenders evaluate and perceive their crimes when compared with other crimes and offenders?

(Q: How do you evaluate and perceive your crime when compared with other crimes and offenders.)

What are offenders' comparative evaluations on crimes and their self-identities?

To add more information about offenders' social-cognitive evaluations of their own criminal behaviour, data relevant to assessment on offences other than interviewees' own is shown in this section. Three sub-categories of interview data are included in this section, such as a) when compared with other crimes, b) self-identity (i.e. their crimes and themselves), 3) how do they evaluate other crimes.

Offenders were asked to compare their own crimes with other crimes which they have no or hardly no experience. The interest in this section is focused on how do they perceive and evaluate own offences under a comparative angle. Interviewees were only given prompts used in the questionnaire. For example, the seriousness, damage, moral concerns, likelihood to involve, self-image etc.

Drug abusers

Table 8.2.1 Master table of themes for adult drug abusers in evaluating drug taking act compared with theft, sexual and violent offending behaviour

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Possibility of committing other crimes	Would steal but no sexual offending, though would act out violently	Q2.1.d.1A
	No stealing	Q2.1.d.1B
2. Victimization	We are ourselves' victims	Q2.1.d.2A
	We are collective perpetrators and victims	Q2.1.d.2A
3. Similarity or difference	No difference between me and other criminals	Q2.1.d.3A
	We are all the same	Q2.1.d.3B
	I am also a criminal	Q2.1.d.3C
	I am surely different from them (other type of criminals)	Q2.1.d.3D
4. Perceptions (drug abusers more visible)	Class A drug takers are very ill	Q2.1.d.4A
	We are more easily recognised by appearance	Q2.1.d.4B
	Drug takers are more visible	Q2.1.d.4C

When drug abusers were asked to compare themselves with other patterns of offenders, they looked at four aspects: a) the possibility to commit other unlawful behaviour. One of the addicts indicated that theft may still be a future possibility, however the others expressed the opinion that there was no possibility of them engaging future in stealing and sexual or violent offending; b) while some indicated that they were all "criminals" and there was no difference between them and other types of offenders, one drug taker suggested he was different from sexual and violent offenders with respect to the inclination to commit other crimes; c) the unique relationship in terms of victims and perpetrators was pointed out by one of the drug takers, in that they are the victims of their own behaviour; d) as some

unfavourably overt effects are manifested in drug takers’ appearance as a result of abusing drugs, they are much more easily distinguished by their appearance.

Thieves

Table 8.2.2 Master table of themes for adult thieves in evaluating stealing behaviour compared with drug taking, sexual and violent offending behaviour

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Better practices	We can control our behaviour (compared with drug abusers)	Q2.1.t.1A
	I don't steal who I know but from rich, but drug takers don't care anyone	Q2.1.t.1B
	It's pointless to rob and rape others	Q2.1.t.1C
	Violence is more serious than theft	Q2.1.t.1D
2. No or less harm	As compared with them (other types of criminals) stealing is not serious	Q2.1.t.2A
	Stealing does no damage to the victims, but other crimes do	Q2.1.t.2B
	Stealing does less harm	Q2.1.t.2C
3. not looked down on (status)	Only drug abusers and sexual offenders are looked down on here	Q2.1.t.3A
4. Possibility (rare or no)	I won't touch them (drugs)	Q2.1.t.4A
	Wouldn't do drugs or commit sexual crimes, and less likely to act violently	Q2.1.t.4B

Stealing behaviour was characterised as a more pragmatic and better practice compared to drug taking and violent and sexual offences by thieves. The substantial benefits of their crimes were emphasised by thieves in marking a distinction between theft and other offences. Moreover, stealing behaviour was thought of as causing relatively less or even no harm to victims. With regard to reputations, one thief indicated that it is only the drug abusers and the sexual offenders who are looked down on. The thieves expressed the impossibility of being involved in, particularly taking drugs, as well as sexual offences.

Sexual offenders

Table 8.2.3 Master table of themes for adult sexual offenders in evaluating sexual offending compared with drug taking, theft and violent offending behaviour

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
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1. Lowest status	Most despised Looked down on most Not reputable (sexual offending)	Q2.1.s.1A Q2.1.s.1B Q2.1.s.1C Q2.1.s.1D
2. Damaging and serious	Violent and sexual offending behaviour damage people These four types of crimes are harmful to society Drug and sexual offending are more serious Violent and sexual offending are more serious	Q2.1.s.2A Q2.1.s.2B Q2.1.s.2C Q2.1.s.2D
3. Nature (other crimes)	It is embarrassing, if you are found out stealing We are all criminals You just bullying girls, can't do big deals, you have got nothing Sexual and violent victims are difficult to recover	Q2.1.s.3A Q2.1.s.3B Q2.1.s.3C Q2.1.s.3D
4. Possibility of committing other crimes	Won't touch drugs	Q2.1.s.4A

The sexual offenders knew that they were socially marginalised and considered social pariahs, for the damaging and serious consequences imposed by their criminal behaviour. The sexual offenders also gave either negative evaluations of themselves and their unlawful acts, or expressed no possibility of them being involved in sexual offending again. Notably, when the interviewees were asked to make comparisons with other crimes on crime nature and seriousness, sexual criminals also named other crimes (i.e. violent offending, drug abusing) as jointly representing the class of serious crimes.

Violent offenders

Table 8.2.4 Master table of themes for adult violent offenders in evaluating violent offending behaviour compared with drug taking, stealing and sexual offending behaviour

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Sexual offending is more serious	Sexual offending is more serious than violent behaviour Sexual offending had longer term	Q2.1.v.1A Q2.1.v.1B Q2.1.v.1C

	consequence	
2. Different with murder, no difference among these four crimes	People are inevitably sometimes emotionally aroused, murders are totally inhumane, different from them Murders should be given harsher punishment These four crime are no difference	Q2.1.v.2A Q2.1.v.2B Q2.1.v.2B Q2.1.v.2C
3. The least looked down on	It (violent offending) is least looked down on	Q2.1.v.3A

The characteristics with which violent offenders evaluated their behaviour compared with other offences were that sexual offending is more serious, not just in the degree of damage, but also in the length of time of recovery. The reason that they perceived their crime as being less serious was, unlike sexual offending, that the effects of the violent offender's behaviour fully stopped at the end of the violent act itself.

Question 4.4: How are their criminal identities?

Information related to identification for offender themselves and their own crime is showed in this section. Interviewees were asked to assess not only their own crime but also others' offences. Interview data is presented separately based on each offence.

Drug abusers

Their own crimes and themselves

Table 8.2.5 Master table of themes for adult drug abusers' self-identity

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Just like smoking, and drunkenness	Just smoke and take drug only It is like with drunkenness A normal habit, like smoking and drinking	Q2.2.d.1A Q2.2.d.1B Q2.2.d.1C
2. We don't steal, only take drugs, we spend our own money	I am not stealing, I spend my own money, I feel unfair Using my own money, I don't rob, why I was put behind bars longer than a murderer We don't steal and rob, drug	Q2.2.d.2A Q2.2.d.2B Q2.2.d.2C

	regulations are unfair The money I bough drug with was all my money	Q2.2.d.2D
3. Hard to make friends	I have been suffering from a low self-esteem, dare not to approach people who don't take drugs	Q2.2.d.3A
	For who have bad records, we just get together and only do bad things	Q2.2.d.3B
	We are less likely to make friends, more easily to be told apart from appearance	Q2.2.d.3C
4. Easily discovered from appearance	It's like we have done something wrong, and are fearful to be discovered	Q2.2.d.4A
	We are more easily told apart from others	Q2.2.d.4B
5. Normal life and people, not that bad, just ill	There is no difference	Q2.2.d.5A
	Not as bad as others perceive	Q2.2.d.5B
	Many drug takers still can work regularly	Q2.2.d.5C
	I just feel I am ill	Q2.2.d.5D

The addicts likened drug abusing behaviour to smoking and drinking which are not uncommon or unlawful in their societies. With regard to their self-identity, the following two reasons are essential; 1) using their own money to buy drugs and not and stealing for them; and wondering why they should be penalised. However, in terms of social aspects, they were aware that they had difficulties making friends due to their distinctive appearance, and low self-esteem. One even indicated that he was fearful of being discovered, as his behaviour makes him feel that he has done something wrong. However they also thought that there was no difference between them and other criminals, that they were not as bad as people perceived, or just simply felt that they could not control themselves. Some also believe that they can keep working on regular bases.

Thieves

Their own crimes

Table 8.2.6 Master table of themes for adult thieves' self-identity

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Only a trivial crime	Stealing is a trivial crime	Q2.2.t.1A
	Compared with drug takers, we can	Q2.2.t.1B

	control our behaviour Only drug takers and sexual offenders are looked down on inside I won't do other crimes	Q2.2.t.1C Q2.2.t.1D
2. It is still fine (backing to normal life)	It is still fine if we go straight I don't steal from people I know but the rich	Q2.2.t.2A Q2.2.t.2B
3. We don't do immoral things	The current high crime rate mainly derives from drug abuse, I don't touch them We just want money, we can't do immoral things as our mentor taught us	Q2.2.t.3A Q2.2.t.3B

Compared with other crimes, theft offenders perceived stealing as a minor crime. This belief was reflected by their justifications such as the belief that they do not do immoral things, and the fact that they are able to make friends when they go straight.

Sexual offenders

Their own crimes

Table 8.2.7 Master table of themes for adult sexual offender' self-identity

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Acceptability	I would feel guilty if force or threats are used to assault others, but I wouldn't care the consequence if she (under 18) agreed I can accept it, if not done out of impulse	Q2.2.s.1A Q2.2.s.1B Q2.2.s.1C
2. We are all criminals	I just feel excluded We are all criminals whatsoever	Q2.2.s.2A Q2.2.s.2B
3. Never commit other crimes	I wouldn't say I am different from them (other criminals), I have never been involved in crime other than this I still dislike sexual offending	Q2.2.s.3A Q2.2.s.3B
4. Not so damaging	There is the possibility of recovery	Q2.2.s.4A
5.If I am a normal person	I would not do it, if I am a normal person	Q2.2.s.5A
6.Responsibility	If they have something to be	Q2.2.s.6A

sharing	blamed for then they need to take it	
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Some sexual offenders indicated that their behaviour was either not harmful or even was acceptable in terms of having sex with females under 18. Regarding their self-identity, each interviewee took different angles. One thought he felt excluded socially even though they were all criminals. Another looked at the fact that he did not commit crimes other than sexual offending, in spite of disagreeing with his own behaviour. Another took the perspective that he would not have done it if he were a normal person. This implies that he was not as normal as other males. Lastly, the victim should take partial responsibility if she had something to be blamed for in causing the incident.

Violent offenders

Their own crimes and themselves

Table 8.2.8 Master table of themes for adult violent offender’ self-identity

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. The least group to be looked down, quick recovery	It’s (violence) the last offence to be looked down	Q2.2.v.1A
	Full recovery time is quicker than sexual victims	Q2.2.v.1B
	They don’t hit you without your provocation	Q2.2.v.1C
2. Impossible to commit other crimes	Impossible for me to be involved in sexual offending, theft and taking drugs	Q2.2.v.2A
	I am a normal human being, so don’t commit sexual offences	Q2.2.v.2A
3. I didn’t mean to harm	We must be under certain threatening situations, otherwise it is impossible to harm you	Q2.2.v.3A
	I never harm people(robbery)	Q2.2.v.3B
	I didn’t mean to harm you	Q2.2.v.3C
	I totally had no idea (killed him)	Q2.2.v.3D

Compared to other crimes, the violent offenders perceive their unlawful behaviour as the least to be looked down on; their victims (compared to sexual victims) are quicker to fully recover. Moreover, violent behaviour normally does not happen for good reasons. As for

themselves, half of them stated that there was no possibility to engage in other crimes. The reasons or situations for the occurrence of the violent offending behaviour was described as either being under threatening situations, because of human instincts or out of inevitability.

Question 4.5: How offenders evaluate other crimes compared with their own crime? (How they see others)

How do offenders perceive and cognitively evaluate other crimes is concerned in this section. That is, from their viewpoints what the nature other crimes are and to what aspects that the crimes affect are explored. By cross examinations, information tapped from interviewees on other crimes is believed would illuminate why they do not involve certain crimetypes. Again, prompts were only offered to the interview which appeared in questionnaires used in this thesis. For example, the seriousness, damage, moral concerns, likelihood to involve, self-image etc.

Drug abusers' point of view

Drug abusers thought theft behaviour and crime were:

Table 8.2.9 Master table of themes for drug abusers' thoughts on stealing behaviour

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Harmfulness	Just lost property Just results in property loss If the victims are the rich then that is fine	Q2.3.d.1.1A Q2.3.d.1.1B Q2.3.d.1.1C
2. Not legitimate	That is your fault, you can't say because they are rich You didn't get others' agreement It's theft, if you take things that don't belong to you You should not take them	Q2.3.d.1.2A Q2.3.d.1.2B Q2.3.d.1.2C Q2.3.d.1.2D
3. Moral concern involved	Moral concerns are involved	Q2.3.d.1.3A Q2.3.d.1.3B Q2.3.d.1.3C Q2.3.d.1.3D
4. Negative reputations	Awkward men's behaviour I don't want to be surrounded by thieves People will say derogatory things	Q2.3.d.1.4A Q2.3.d.1.4B Q2.3.d.1.4C

	about you Theft gives you a bad reputation	Q2.3.d.1.4D
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Drug abusers' thought of sexual offending and crime were:

Table 8.2.10 Master table of themes for drug abusers' thoughts on sexual offending

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1 Despised	Sexual offending behaviour is looked down on I look down on them We don't interact with them People don't make friends with sexual offenders The worst behaviour Mostly looked down on Despised greatly	Q2.3.d.2.1A Q2.3.d.2.1B Q2.3.d.2.1C Q2.3.d.2.1D Q2.3.d.2.1E Q2.3.d.2.1F Q2.3.d.2.1G
2. Harmfulness	Cause enduring harm Cause harm tot others The victims suffer greater harmfulness to women Will cause harm physically and psychologically Is harm to others	Q2.3.d.2.2A Q2.3.d.2.2B Q2.3.d.2.2C Q2.3.d.2.2D Q2.3.d.2.2E
3.Disapproval	I disagree with sexual offending It's the fault of the perpetrators You can't do anything with them whatsoever, no is no People who rape others are useless, coward and despised You are totally stigmatised if people find out Don't understand the feeling the people who sexually assault others Hard to make friends I don't think male should rationalise their behaviour	Q2.3.d.2.3A Q2.3.d.2.3B Q2.3.d.2.3C Q2.3.d.2.3D Q2.3.d.2.3E Q2.3.d.2.3F Q2.3.d.2.3G Q2.3.d.2.3H
4. Seeking alternative outlets	There are many alternative ways, you don't need to rape others	Q2.3.d.2.4A Q2.3.d.2.4B
5. Dislike and keeping a distance	All people dislike sexual offenders Disreputable behaviour	Q2.3.d.2.5A Q2.3.d.2.5B
6. It goes against	Moral concerns are involved	Q2.3.d.2.6A

your morals and conscience		Q2.3.d.2.6B
7. Harsher punishment	Should be given harsher punishment	Q2.3.d.2.7A

Drug abusers thought violent offending and violent crime were:

Table 8.2.11 Master table of themes for drug abusers' thoughts on violent offending

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. No moral concerns	Bad to social security, but has no moral concerns	Q2.3.d.3.1A
	Don't think it involves moral concerns	Q2.3.d.3.1B
	If they come to do it without reason, then it has	Q2.3.d.3.1c
2. acceptable and unacceptable	You don't want to be surrounded by this sort of things (fighting, killing)	Q2.3.d.3.2A
	Violence is ok, sometimes people just have arguments	Q2.3.d.3.2B
	The victims should take some responsibility, as they had feuds	Q2.3.d.3.2D
3. It's fine, if just fighting	If just break legs and lambs	Q2.3.d.3.3A
	If it's just fighting	Q2.3.d.3.3B

This section is to examine the evaluative information from offenders' viewpoints on other crime behaviour. Data concerning the assessment of stealing behaviour was grouped to form four categories of concern. These topics include; a) it is harmful behaviour in terms of its nature to the victim; b) most drug abusers thought stealing is a crime involving moral issues and no legitimacy. At the social level, stealing behaviour will bring about a bad reputation.

Sexual offences were strongly despised, disapproved and regarded as very harmful acts. They also considered that these crimes had moral concerns and go against a persons consciences. Therefore, the drug takers called for a harsher punishment to be imposed on sexual criminals in their responses, and they may even intentionally keep away from sexual offenders.

Violent behaviour was perceived as a harmful crime to the victims by the drug takers, though the motives behind or situation prior to the offending may sometimes legitimise them. Furthermore, some drug abusers agreed on the involvement of moral concerns.

Theft offenders' perspective

Thieves thought drug abusing acts and drug abusers were:

Table 8.2.12 Master table of themes for THIEVES' thoughts on drug abusing

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. harmfulness	It endangers society It damages you body	Q2.3.t.1.1A Q2.3.t.1.1B
2. Hard to get along	It's difficult to get along with Difficult to make friend with You will have no friends People don't want to get along with Don't want to make friends with	Q2.3.t.1.2A Q2.3.t.1.2B Q2.3.t.1.2C Q2.3.t.1.2D Q2.3.t.1.2E
3. Disapproval	I don't agree with (drug taking) It's the most terrible thing I would not do it All crimes derive from abusing drugs Should receive severer punishment	Q2.3.t.1.3A Q2.3.t.1.3B Q2.3.t.1.3C Q2.3.t.1.3D Q2.3.t.1.3E
4. Makes people mad	You brain will become dysfunctional People may go mad If drug withdraw sets in, they would do everything they want	Q2.3.t.1.4A Q2.3.t.1.4B Q2.3.t.1.4C

Thieves thought Sexual offending behaviour and sexual crime were:

Table 8.2.13 Master table of themes for thieves' thoughts on sexual offending

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. looked down on	It is looked down on Abnormal behaviour, disgusting Will be teased and taunted if you do it	Q2.3.t.2.1A Q2.3.t.2.1B Q2.3.t.2.1C
2. Excluded	Don't want to have contact with them Hard to make friends	Q2.3.t.2.2A Q2.3.t.2.2B
3. Causing harm to the victims	That girls' life is then destroyed, can't be recovered forever	Q2.3.t.2.3A Q2.3.t.2.3B

Thieves thought violent offending behaviour and violent crime were:

Table 8.2.14 Master table of themes for thieves' thoughts on violent offending

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Harshest punishment	Should be given the harshest punishment Violence is serious It cost you several years in prison, it is different between you rob and steal	Q2.3.t.3.1A Q2.3.t.3.1B Q2.3.t.3.1C
2. No need to harm people	No need to harm people	Q2.3.t.3.2A
3. Legitimacy	Judges should give a shorter sentence, if happen under provoked circumstance Violence is normally provoked by the victims	Q2.3.t.3.3A Q2.3.t.3.3A

Drug taking was perceived as an act not just undermining the relationship with family and society but also making people mentally unwell and doing bad deeds as a result. In addition to the disapproval of drug behaviour, people who take drugs were disliked and theft offenders did not want to get along with them.

In the theft offender's eyes, sexual offenders are excluded from the social world and given the lowest ranking in the jail setting. As well as the physical damage sexual offending causes, the lasting psychological harm was also particularly emphasised.

Despite the fact that violent acts were seen as serious offending and thus, a severer punishment is called for, a lenient penalty and the legitimacy of violent behaviour was nonetheless suggested to be imposed on violent offenders by violent offenders themselves. This suggestion was justified on the grounds that the violent behaviour may be provoked by the victim. Among the interviewees, one theft offender expressed his belief in the lack of necessity in harming others through theft.

Sexual offenders' perspective

Sexual offenders thought drug abusers and drug abusing acts were:

Table 8.2.15 Master table of themes for sexual offenders' thoughts on drug taking

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
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1. Ramifications following taking drugs	Damage to themselves	Q2.3.s.1.1A
	You will get addicted, and make your family annoyed	Q2.3.s.1.1B
	Not just harms yourself but also others	Q2.3.s.1.1C
	It makes people not want to work and rely on selling drugs	Q2.3.s.1.1D
	The society is messy enough	Q2.3.s.1.1E
2. Worthless behaviour	Don't think that is worthwhile	Q2.3.s.1.2A
	I wonder what it really for, just a moment of joyfulness	Q2.3.s.1.2B
3. Moral concerns	I never think of the consequences on family or society	Q2.3.s.1.3A
	It has something to do with moral concerns	Q2.3.s.1.3B
4. Given severer punishment	Drug offences should be punished more harshly, as it is a long-term problem	Q2.3.s.1.4A

Sexual offenders thought stealing and theft crime were:

Table 8.2.16 Master table of themes for sexual offenders' thoughts on stealing behaviour

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Involves moral concerns	It involves moral issues, not just the law and social regulations dictate that	Q2.3.s.2.1A
	It involves moral concerns	Q2.3.s.2.1B
	It involves moral concerns and people's own conscience	Q2.3.s.2.1C
2. Great impact to the victims	They may have been important to the victims	Q2.3.s.2.2A
	It will do enormous harm to them, the poor	Q2.3.s.2.1B
3. Behaviour that gives a bad reputation	It is very embarrassing and really infamous	Q2.3.s.2.2A
	You would be hit if you are caught	Q2.3.s.2.2B

Sexual offenders thought violent offending behaviour and violent crime were:

Table 8.2.17 Master table of themes for sexual offenders' thoughts on violent behaviour

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
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1. Very serious behaviour	I felt that violence is most serious offence	Q2.3.s.3.1A
	It's quite serious if the victim gets damage to their organs	Q2.3.s.3.1B
2. Involves moral concerns	It is not very much to do with moral concerns, as it may be the victims who have provoked it	Q2.3.s.3.2A
	Something to do with moral issues	Q2.3.s.3.2B
	It has something to do with moral concerns	Q2.3.s.3.2C
3. Responsibility sharing	Both parties need to share the responsibility	Q2.3.s.3.3A
	The victims of violence should share some of the responsibility	Q2.3.s.3.3B
4. We don't do it	I don't agree with robbing	Q2.3.s.3.4A
	I was less likely to commit violent offences	Q2.3.s.3.4B
	We(sexual offenders) generally don't do it	Q2.3.s.3.4C

Sexual offenders thought that drug abuse was a crime resulting in many ramifications, such as ruining health, family relationships and the stability of society. What's more, it is a worthless behaviour that also has something to do with moral concerns. One of the sexual offenders even proposed that drug abuse should be given a harsher punishment.

In terms of stealing behaviour, the sexual offenders' concerns can be placed in three topics. First, the implication of moral issues on theft behaviour. Second, the potential harm to the victims. If the property lost was very important to the owner, or if the owner was a poor person, it would cause a great impact to the victim. Third, the undesirable reputation that theft offenders are labelled with.

Violent offending was seen as a conduct involving moral concerns, yet, if the victim is considered the source of the problem, then it is less to do with moral issues. Therefore, the so-called initiator of violent behaviour must share the responsibilities. In spite of this widespread perception, violent offending was still viewed as serious behaviour and the sexual offenders indicated that they would not engage in it.

Violent offenders' perspectives

Violent offenders thought drug abusing acts and drug abusers were:
Table 8.2.18 Master table of themes for violent offenders' thoughts on drug abusing

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. not healthy in mind	They are not sound and healthy anymore. Their minds have been subject to drugs, their minds are distorted and very moody If they can't control themselves then they are game over	Q2.3.v.1.1A Q2.3.v.1.1A
2. Bad behaviour	That is a bad behaviour You just enjoy yourself and don't care about other people I was afraid of it being known, I would hide myself or avoid seeing people	Q2.3.v.1.2A Q2.3.v.1.2B Q2.3.v.1.2C
3. Ramifications	It will evolve lots of problems If it was legal then our teenagers and the future of our country would be in danger Most of the prisoners had been involved in drug abuse It demands a lot of money to sustain the habit	Q2.3.v.1.3A Q2.3.v.1.3B Q2.3.v.1.3C Q2.3.v.1.3D
4. The victim is themselves	The victim of drug abuse is themselves It damages your body, and that's the most important thing Drug abusers just harm themselves	Q2.3.v.1.4A Q2.3.v.1.4B Q2.3.v.1.4C
5. Hard to being friends	Drug abusers find it most difficult to make friends	Q2.3.v.1.5A

Violent offender thought stealing and theft crime were:

Table 8.2.19 Master table of themes for violent offenders' thoughts on stealing

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Its bad to be labelled a thief	A bad thing to be labelled a thief	Q2.3.v.2.1A
2. It's not yours	As they're not yours Theft is itself a wrong Property is a right protected by laws, so no one can violate it	Q2.3.v.2.2A Q2.3.v.2.2B Q2.3.v.2.2C
3. Cowardly behaviour	It is kind of cowardly behaviour I have limbs, why do I need to	Q2.3.v.2.3A Q2.3.v.2.3B

	steal	
4. Punishment	Career theft should be given a more severe punishment	Q2.3.v.2.4A
5. Property rights	Property rights are protected by laws It invades others' rights Even if the victims are rich, as they have worked for it	Q2.3.v.2.5A Q2.3.v.2.5B Q2.3.v.2.5C

Violent offenders thought sexual offending behaviour and sexual crime were:

Table 8.2.20 Master table of themes for violent offenders' thoughts on sexual offending

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. No need to dehumanise others	You don't need to dehumanise/torture others We all have sexual needs, but they are based on love and relationships	Q2.3.v.3.1A Q2.3.v.3.1B
2. Not sound and healthy	They are not sound and healthy any more They are psychologically deviant, we don't consider them as normal human beings Sexual offenders in terms of psychology, it is a sort of illness	Q2.3.v.3.2A Q2.3.v.3.2B Q2.3.v.3.2C
3. Victims should take partial responsibility	The victims should take responsibility to some degree	Q2.3.v.3.3A
4. An immoral behaviour	It's an immoral behaviour	Q2.3.v.3.4A
5. Life long harm	It will have a life long effect Sexual offending causes huge harm to others. It causes life long damage They (the victims) will be permanently affected by your behaviour They cause so much harm	Q2.3.v.3.5A Q2.3.v.3.5B Q2.3.v.3.5C Q2.3.v.3.5D Q2.3.v.3.5E
6. Definitely not do it	Sexual offending, I definitely would not do it	Q2.3.v.3.6A

Drug abusers were perceived as people who are not psychologically healthy by adult violent offenders, as their minds have been fully subject to the control of drugs. Furthermore, the negative consequences ensuing from taking drugs has profound impacts both individually (i.e., selfishness, bad health) and socially (i.e., social problems, the young generation).

Other than unfavourable stigma (i.e., coward, thief) given to thieves, the legal issues were introduced to evaluate theft behaviour. The legal appraisals embraced calling for the respect of property rights, and harsher punishment.

The concerns of violent offenders on sexual offending were predominately concentrated on a) unnecessarily dehumanising behaviour; b) the long-term negative effect on the victim and; c) 'sick' behaviour due to the perpetrators' unhealthy mind. Additionally, other concerns were spread through a number of topics, such as it being hard to make with friends with people with sexual offending records, the fact that they would definitely not commit it, and sexual offending is an immoral behaviour.

In summary; the feature of the specific research question 2 was the use of a comparative perspective into further exploring offenders' crime cognitive evaluations. Thus, offenders' crime perceptions were assessed by asking them to contrast their offences with other crimes. That is, how offenders positioned their own crimes and themselves among the four studied crime patterns was the central concern in this question. The data showed that self-favouring cognitions were largely held by interviewees when comparing, in one way or another, with other crimes. In addition, offenders tended to identify with their own crimes more strongly than other delinquencies. More precisely, offenders were found to cognitively evaluate other offences more negatively; such opinions as, other offences were undesirable and blameworthy. This phenomenon was resulted from the variations that different characteristic offenders looked at in terms of evaluative subjects. That is, when offenders were asked to make cognitive assessments on their crimes compared with others, they tended to select components that were relatively positive to them. For example, drug abusers thought of sexual offending is the behaviour of causing extremely harmful and long-term consequences to their victims. In this point, drug abusers indicated there was no victim involved in drug taking. In contrast, drug taking behaviour was perceived as an act which would undermine human minds and as the roots of all social evil by sexual offenders. In this regard, sexual offenders claimed that only their victims' welfare may be damaged as a result of their behaviour. Surprisingly, some moral components which are believed to be the

building bricks for maintaining a justice community were used to support offenders' criticisms on other crimes. For example, the involvement of moral concerns, justice appeals, role taking, and fairness were applied to highlight unlawful behaviour of others' were comparatively more of negativities. Therefore, the interview data suggested that offenders may adopt different positions and bring different angles to assess social information, and in turn, leading them to more likely engage in a specific crime pattern. By doing so, their offending behaviour may be therefore legitimated. However, the undesirable sociocognitive assessments to other delinquencies may possibly function in opposite direction insulating them from involvement in other crimes.

Question 4.6 How offenders evaluate their own crime with respect to societal laws and Gibbs’s moral principles?

(Q: How much is your unlawful behaviour to do with societal laws and moral principles?)

In this section, two focuses are placed on dimensions such as laws (societal order) and moral concerns. That is, explorations are directed to concerns how offenders perceive their and others’ crimes and how much they think their own and others’ offences relevant to broader social well-beings, orders and moral concerns. In short, the research interest here is to look at how they, from their point of view, understand and make sense of the offending behaviour to legal and normative issues. Two sub-themes are; a) how offenders evaluate their own crime, b) evaluations are made towards other crimes.

1. How offenders evaluate their own crimes with respect to societal laws and moral principles?

Drug abusing from drug abusers’ point of view

Table 8.3.1 Master table of themes for drug abusers’ thoughts on drug taking with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. I don’t behave badly	I clearly know it is illegal I don’t behave badly. I use my own money...like a habit, like smoking and drinking, I don’t steal	Q3.1.d.1A Q3.1.d.1B
2. Should be decriminalised	If taking drug were legal people would not do it anymore Legalising it is not such a bad idea.	Q3.1.d.2A Q3.1.d.2B

	What we need is a good management system If it was legalised, than it would become much cheaper, the price could be reduced, then we could enjoy it while having a job	Q3.1.d.2C Q3.1.d.2D
3. Moral concerns	It has nothing to do with social integrity, really Taking drugs is my personal decision If just simply take drugs, then you should have no moral concerns	Q3.1.d.3A Q3.1.d.3B Q3.1.d.3C

Drug taking was placed within a personal discretion boundary by drug takers. They also believed that it has no undermine at the social level and is not concerned with the moral domain. This belief was consistent with their justifications for decriminalising drugs and they didn't view it as bad behaviour.

Stealing, from the theft offenders point of view

Table 8.3.2 Master table of themes for thieves' thoughts on stealing with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Least serious	Theft should receive the least serious punishment I feel stealing causes less harm and deserves a much less serious punishment	Q3.1.t.1A Q3.1.t.1B
2. Against property rights	It is wrong, because you take things belonging to others Others' property is theirs, it is not yours', and they have the right to it	Q3.1.t.2A Q3.1.t.2B
3. Against your conscience	It has something to do with social integrity; you will feel guilty We don't need to go against our conscience We thieves are concerned with moral conscience, you get to have a sort of conscience It has something to do with moral concerns	Q3.1.t.3A Q3.1.t.3B Q3.1.t.3C Q3.1.t.3D
4. A widespread activity	Compared with them (the other offences), it (stealing) is not as	Q3.1.t.4A

	serious Theft is really common and widespread	Q3.1.t.4B
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While stealing was evaluated as a crime which should receive a lesser punishment and as not being very serious in damaging social welfare, theft offenders also realise that their behaviour goes against property rights and their own conscience and morals. We can see here that a paradox exists between cognitive evaluations and behaviour in terms of law and moral concerns.

Sexual offending: From the sexual offenders' perspective

Table 8.3.3 Master table of themes for sexual offenders' thoughts on sexual offending behaviour with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. It has something to do with moral issues	Yes this has something to do with moral issues as well	Q3.1.s.1A

Only one sexual offender gave information relevant to this issue. The interviewee believed his criminal behaviour was violating moral concerns.

Violent offending: From violent offenders' perspective

Table 8.3.4 Master table of themes for violent offenders' thoughts on violent offending behaviour with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Involvement of moral concern	Violence involves moral concerns as well	Q3.1.v.1A
	That is already against the law and also against your conscience	Q3.1.s.1B

There was only one violent criminal giving information pertinent to this topic, he expressed that violent offending involves moral concerns, and goes against others' rights.

Question 4.7: How offenders evaluate other crimes with respect to societal laws and Gibbs's moral principles?

Drug abusers' point of view

Stealing

Table 8.3.5 Master table of themes for drug abusers' thoughts on stealing behaviour with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Moral issues involved	Moral issues are involved	Q3.2.d.1.1A
	Theft involves moral concerns	Q3.2.d.1.1B
	People will make derogatory comments behind your back	Q3.2.d.1.1C
	Has something to do with moral concerns	Q3.2.d.1.1D
	If you do take it, then it involves moral issues	Q3.2.d.1.1E
	It has to do with moral concerns	Q3.2.d.1.1F

Sexual offending

Table 8.3.6 Master table of themes for drug abusers' thoughts on sexual offending behaviour with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Involved with moral issues	It involves moral concerns	Q3.2.d.2.1A
	This involves moral concerns	Q3.2.d.2.1B

Violent offending

Table 8.3.7 Master table of themes for drug abusers' thoughts on violent offending behaviour with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Bad for social security	Violence is bad for the security of society	Q3.2.d.3.1A
2. Has nothing to do with moral concerns	Violent offending does not really involve morality	Q3.2.d.3.2A
	I don't think it involves moral issues	Q3.2.d.3.2B
	But if they come to do it without reasons, then I think it does (have moral concerns)	Q3.2.d.3.2C

From the drug abusers' perspective, theft and sexual offending, but not violent offending, were considered as having strong implications on morality and the law. Whereas, violent offending was seen as not to do with morality but was seen as causing a threat to the security of society.

Theft offenders' point of view

Drug abusing

Table 8.3.8 Master table of themes for thieves' thoughts on drug taking with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Endangering society	Taking drugs endangers society and sometimes the family	Q3.2.t.1.1A
	Drug abusing undermines society	Q3.2.t.1.1B
	It will cause negative effects to the public and family	Q3.2.t.1.1C
	The concerns are to do with health	Q3.2.t.1.1D
	Crimes at the moment mainly derives from drug abusing	Q3.2.t.1.1E
	The problem is in rapid growth	Q3.2.t.1.1F

Sexual offending

Table 8.3.9 Master table of themes for thieves' thoughts on sexual offending with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Empathy	How about if our sisters or family members were raped?	Q3.2.t.2.1A

Violent offending

Table 8.3.10 Master table of themes for thieves' thoughts on violent offending with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Active and negative	If it happens under this circumstance, then the judge should give him a shorter sentence	Q3.2.t.3.1A
	Violence is normally provoked by the victims	Q3.2.t.3.1B

In terms of law and moral concerns, drug taking was believed to be the root of social problems such as broken families and a main contributing factor to crime. In case of sexual offending, one theft offender showed empathy towards the victims. However, it was the motive (active versus proactive) of the violence which was the main concern.

Sexual offenders' point of view

Drug abusing

Table 8.3.11 Master table of themes for sexual offenders' thoughts on drug taking with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Nothing to do with law and moral concerns	I think taking drugs is a personal choice; it has nothing to do with law and moral concerns	Q3.2.s.1.1A
2. The society is in enough of a mess	I think it has something to do with moral concerns	Q3.2.s.1.2A
	I don't agree now, as society is in a mess	Q3.2.s.1.2B
	They make people not want to work and rely on selling drugs	Q3.2.s.1.2C

Stealing

Table 8.3.12 Master table of themes for sexual offenders' thoughts on stealing behaviour with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. It involves moral concerns	Involves moral issues	Q3.2.s.2.1A
	It involves moral concerns	Q3.2.s.2.1B
	It has much to do with moral concerns, people's own conscience	Q3.2.s.2.1C

Violent offending

Table 8.3.13 Master table of themes for sexual offenders' thoughts on violent offending behaviour with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Very horrible	It is very horrible	Q3.2.s.3.1A
2. Not much to do with moral concerns	It does not have much to do with moral concerns	Q3.2.s.3.2A
3. Has something to do with moral concerns	It has (something to do with moral concerns)	Q3.2.s.3.3A
	Yes, it has something to do with moral concerns	Q3.2.s.3.3B

From the data, there is only one interviewee who regards drug taking as involving moral concerns, while more sexual offenders believed it had a negative effect to social integrity or involved moral concerns. The sexual criminals assigned stealing behaviour to the moral domain.

Lastly, violent behaviour was thought of as a crime implicating moral concerns. The sexual offender who expressed that violent acts have nothing to do with moral concerns also perceived this behaviour as terrifying.

The violent offenders' point of view

Drug abusing

Table 8.3.14 Master table of themes for violent offenders' thoughts on drug taking behaviour with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. A personal matter	It is only a personal matter It doesn't involve moral concerns	Q3.2.v.1.1A Q3.2.v.1.1B
2. Causes many social problems	Definitely result in some negative effects to your family and the public It causes lots of problems The future of our country, would be in danger Many problems derive from drug abuse. Enjoy yourself and don't care about the people around you It's little to do with moral concerns	Q3.2.v.1.2A Q3.2.v.1.2B Q3.2.v.1.2C Q3.2.v.1.2D Q3.2.v.1.2E Q3.2.v.1.2F

Stealing

Table 8.3.15 Master table of themes for violent offenders' thoughts on stealing behaviour with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Involves moral concerns and should be given more severe punishment	Theft has something to do with moral issues Career thefts should be given a more severe punishment	Q3.2.v.2.1A Q3.2.v.2.1B

Sexual offending

Table 8.3.16 Master table of themes for violent offenders' thoughts on sexual offending behaviour with respect to societal laws and moral concerns

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. An immoral behaviour	It is an immoral behaviour Everyone are protected by laws	Q3.2.v.3.1A Q3.2.v.3.1B

Although two violent offenders placed drug taking behaviour in the personal domain, all the violent offenders believed this behaviour would fuel or result in many more social problems. One violent criminal indicated that theft belonged to the moral domain and should be given a harsher punishment. As for sexual offending, concepts of morality and invasion of the body being protected by laws were referred to, demonstrating their disagreement with sexual offending.

In summary; offenders' cognitive assessments was drawn more closely on legal issues and moral concerns in the specific research question 3. It was apparently that offenders were found tended to point out that other crimes involved moral concerns and conflicted more greatly with legal issues. In other words, offenders were easier to see other crimes' illegitimate components while turned blind eyes to aspects which their criminal conducts go against in terms of societal laws and personal norms (e.g. conscience and moral concerns). This obviously biased perception or failure in recognising the damage, regardless or explicit or implicit, that their behaviour may cause may be one of the cognitive source contributing to their specialisation in crime engagement. It is worth mentioning that the specialised offenders interviewed in this research were competent to identify the detriments to other crime's victims and potential conflicts other offences may have with societal regulations and social normative, though this was not always true found on themselves. Societal laws and personal norms are believed to serve as an inhibiting function of preventing people from crime involvement, and the function would reduce the threshold of behaving violently in response to social stimuli or enhance personal discretion on decision of whether taking illicit drugs. The information presented in this section showed, based on their knowledge basis, offenders specialised in different crime patterns took variant viewpoints in assessing other and their own crimes.

Research question 5: How do offenders' explain if there is any conflict between what they claimed the Gibbs's moral principles to be adopted, perceptions of laws and with their unlawful behaviour?

This section was set to make sense of contradictory information provided by offenders during last section with their perceptions on laws and moral principles they would employ. Additionally, with interviewees' further clarifications and explanations the researcher

and interviewees would be therefore to gain a more insightful and underlying understanding on their crime decision making. In addition, how the explicit conflicts, if at all, between offenders offending behaviour and the two above mentioned issues (i.e. laws and moral principles) are explained by offenders is the primary interest. Information falling into these three sub-topics is showed in each crimetype basis.

Drug abusers

1. Law

Table 8.4.1 Master table of themes for drug abusers' perceptions on laws

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. It is important to comply with laws	It is very important to comply with laws	Q4.1.d.1.1A
	If you do something unlawful, you need to be sent here	Q4.1.d.1.1B
	Otherwise society would be in chaos	Q4.1.d.1.1C
	I don't comply with laws in this respect (drug regulations), but other than that I do	Q4.1.d.1.1D

2. Moral principles

Table 8.4.2 Master table of themes for drug abusers' perceptions on moral principles

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. As a member of society	Society should have justice and fairness, we have to abide by rules and laws and when I come across unfair events I strive to change them	Q4.2.d.1A
	If everyone upholds this (stage four) attitude then the community will progress in positive direction	Q4.1.d.2.1B
	Treat people sincerely then you might get unexpected feedback and results	Q4.1.d.2.1C
	As a member of the society and comply with the laws	Q4.1.d.2.1D
	I would be concerned with the whole interests of the community and do my best at being a	Q4.1.d.2.1E

	law-abiding person	
2. Think of my personal interest	I would only think of my own personal interest	Q4.2.d.2A
	I would only think of my own personal interest, and most people would be the same as me	Q4.2.d.2B
3. The best moral principle (mature moral principle)	Stage three is the best	Q4.2.d.3A
	Stage three is the best, but it is impossible to achieve	Q4.2.d.3B
	Stage four is the best	Q4.1.d.3C

3. Conflicts between the moral principle employed and offending behaviour

Table 8.4.3 Master table of themes for drug abusers' explanations on whether what they claimed and what they behaved had conflicts or not

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Conflicting	It is a bit contradictory to my behaviour	Q4.3.d.1A
	Sometimes I think I want to change...but taking amphetamine isn't that bad	Q4.3.d.1B
	Yes, they are contradictory. It is like someone has a disease, they can't control it	Q4.3.d.1C
2. Consistency	I am not stealing, spend my own money, it's unfair	Q4.3.d.2A
	Just an issue of a different understanding between people, and second, I don't affect others	Q4.3.d.2B
	I don't think my statement has any conflicts with this moral principle, I just take drugs that's all	Q4.3.d.2C
3. Exceptions	Yes, drug taking is the only exception	Q4.3.d.3A
	Other than this one, I comply with the law	Q4.3.d.3B
	I fully know this it is illegal, Its' just like a sort of habit	Q4.3.d.3C

According to the information provided by drug abusers, some interviewees said it was important to comply with laws, for a variety of reasons. For example, the society would become chaotic or be sent

here. When talking about the moral principle issue, three drug abusers produced information related to this question indicating that they regarded themselves as a member of society, and appreciated the values of law and community. Nonetheless, they, in reality or at least occasionally, only cared for their own interests. For the question of which one was the best moral principle to be applied in the society, more than half of the drug abusing interviewees believed Gibbs' moral model stage three or four was the best to be utilised in society if everyone could operate at that level.

When interviewees were confronted with questions asking if there were any conflicts between the moral principle and laws they claimed to operate and appreciate and their criminal behaviour, two of the drug abusers admitted that their behaviour contradicted what they had asserted, and that this was because they were unable to control their drug habit. Other interviewees argued that their behaviour did not contradict with what they had just claimed (i.e. complying with laws and using mature moral principles), as they were neither committing robbery nor stealing. Their justifications were firmly based on arguments that drug taking is a personal prerogative and that this behaviour does not cause harm. However, some also pointed out that drug taking was the only exception for the consistency between what mature moral reasoners are expected to behave (i.e. law abiding and integrity) and their actual behaviour.

Thieves

1. Law

Table 8.4.4 Master table of themes for thieves' perceptions on laws

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. I didn't think about the law	I never thought about laws in my time outside	Q4.1.t.1A
	I didn't think of the law when I was doing it	Q4.1.t.1B
	I didn't really think about the law really	Q4.1.t.1C
2. To stop people doing bad things	The reason for complying with laws is to stop me being involved	Q4.1.t.2A
	If you didn't punish them, then they will commit more and more	Q4.1.t.2B
	No punishment, then no regret	Q4.1.t.2C
	It is important to obey laws, because if you are caught, then you will come back again	Q4.1.t.2D

3. Pay the price	It is important to receive punishment for your behaviour	Q4.1.t.3A
	Try not to go against the laws, because it doesn't pay, the price is just too high	Q4.1.t.3B
	If you didn't (punish them)they would keep doing bad things to society	Q4.1.t.3C

2. Moral principles

Table 8.4.5 Master table of themes for thieves' perceptions on moral principles

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. The moral principle applied	I would use stage three	Q4.2.t.1A
	I used stage two before	Q4.2.t.1B
	It depends (social contexts) I would consider the collective social benefits	Q4.2.t.1C
2. The best moral principle to be used	Stage four is the best I think stage three or four is better	Q4.2.t.2A Q4.2.t.2B

3. Conflicts between the moral principle employed and offending behaviour

Table 8.4.6 Master table of themes for thieves' explanations on whether what they claimed and what they behaved had conflicts or not

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Conflicting	It conflicts with my behaviour. I didn't think about it much before coming here	Q4.3.t.1A
	For my life and to live for a better life, but I anyway feel stealing is much less harmful and requires a less serious punishment	Q4.3.t.1B
	I will obey the law as best I can, but when there is nowhere to go Yes it contradicts, but that is because I needed money	Q4.3.t.1C

When questioned in relation to laws, theft offenders often came up with the response that they did not think about laws whilst they were committing crime. Furthermore, the purpose of laws was perceived as

an instrumental function, stopping people, particularly offenders, behaving badly, for example. Besides, the tit-for-tat thinking was upheld and was exemplified in their own cases. The moral principle they would use varied from between them. Of the theft offenders, one claimed to utilise stage three, considering collective social benefits, while another also indicated that he would use the mature principle. Yet, the latter used to use the immature moral reasoning of stage two. Still another answered that the moral principle he would apply was dependent on the context or situation.

Interviewees pointed out that mature moral reasoning would work most effectively if people could use it. Despite of the ability to recognise that mature moral principles would maximise social welfare, as well as knowing that their behaviour had conflicted with what they claimed, there was a further question regarding why they still chronically engaged stealing? The reasons for this question was to ascertain; a) why, when laws and mature moral reasoning which they claimed to adopt were conflicting with their personal interests, would they still choose to violate them; and b) the differences in time between admitting into jails and while they were outside.

Sexual offenders

There was no information regarding law issues produced by sexual offenders. In addition, no information was gained on topic of information conflicts or consistency.

1. Moral principle

Table 8.4.7 Master table of themes for sexual offenders' perceptions on moral principles

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Moral principle applied	Before I came in, I used stage one	Q4.1.s.1A
	Stage three is the best principle	Q4.1.s.1B
	Stage two inside but Stage three in society	Q4.1.s.1C
	I use Stage three, now, but Stage two before	Q4.1.s.1D
	I would use stage three after this time	Q4.1.s.1E
	I think in the stage three	Q4.1.s.1F
	I use the stage three	Q4.1.s.1G
	No I don't include the level of society in stage three	Q4.1.s.1H

2. The best moral principle	Stage three is the best principle	Q4.1.s.2A
	Stage three is the best	Q4.1.s.2B
	Stage four is the best	Q4.1.s.2C
	Surely stage three is better	Q4.1.s.2D

Two features were observed in the interviewing data generated by the sexual offenders. One was the difference in the point in time, before their incarceration and after and the other was that the application of moral principles depended on the social contexts they were in. Prior to serving in jails, most of them confessed they would use the immature level of moral judgement, but now they would consider and/or assert that mature moral reasoning is the principle of their behaviour.

Furthermore, almost all of the interviewees were able to appreciate the benefits of mature moral reasoning for the whole society and the maintenance of the community, while one sexual offender doubted that only few people could live up to it.

Violent offenders

1. Law

Table 8.4.8 Master table of themes for thieves’ perceptions on laws

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Forget or don’t care about laws and regulations	Yes we are supposed to obey laws, but it(violence) is the only way to survive	Q4.1.v.1A
	We had already forgotten about it and didn’t care about laws and regulations	Q4.1.v.1B
2. Maintaining the equity of the society	The social system is the result of efforts that the members of society make	Q4.1.v.2A
	The purpose of laws is to maintain the equity of the society	Q4.1.v.2B
	The purpose of law is to protect everyone’s right, maintain freedom	Q4.1.v.2C
	Laws are like the rules of a game	Q4.1.v.2D
	If there were no regulation in place, the community would be in chaos, that makes us can't live interdependently	Q4.1.v.2E
3. To say what is right what is	If they were no laws then who would say ‘this is right and that is wrong’	Q4.1.v.3A

wrong	The meaning of laws is regulation It is fair to send people violating laws to jail, so don't do bad things	Q4.1.v.3B Q4.1.v.3C
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2. Moral principle

Table 8.4.9 Master table of themes for violent offenders' perceptions on moral principles

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Moral principle applied	I would use stage three It must be stage one I would use stage four I would choose stage four I use stage four now	Q4.2.v.1A Q4.2.v.1B Q4.2.v.1C Q4.2.v.1D Q4.2.v.1E
2. The best moral principle	I would use stage three I think stage four is the best Stage four is better	Q4.2.v.2A Q4.2.v.2B Q4.2.v.1C

3. Conflicts between the moral principle employed and offending behaviour

Table 8.4.10 Master table of themes for violent offenders' explanations on whether what they claimed and what they behaved had conflicts or not

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Conflicting	As I am not a great person, I can't do it Yes it conflicts with my past behaviour, but I just needed money Surely it contradicts my behaviour. But they were all out of anger and impulse My case was an accident... unexpected, out of control Yes, there are contradictions, but we were passive Self-defence, as my life was under threat, because of human nature	Q4.3.v.1A Q4.3.v.1B Q4.3.v.1C Q4.3.v.1D Q4.3.v.1E Q4.3.v.1F

The values of laws were widely recognised and appreciated by the violent offenders. The functions of laws were pointed out by interviewees that included maintaining the equity of society,

protecting everyone's rights, freedom, as well as dictating the dos and don'ts.

Again, the disparity in time in terms of the moral principle used was found in violent offenders. Although they knew stage four or the three would be the more beneficial for society, they admitted they used to use a more self-centred moral reasoning or would operate at the immature moral stage in real life. Similarly, as with the offenders presented previously, violent offenders were able to identify the value of mature moral reasoning for communities and even themselves, when in reality, their violent offending behaviour was described to occur in either desperate situations (i.e. needed money, impulsive circumstances) or in passive reaction aggression form.

In summary, the specific research question 5 was meant to ask interviewees about which moral principles in Gibbs' four stage moral model they would apply and which one they thought would be the best if every one uses it? Furthermore, they were interrogated and asked to further make sense of what they claimed in the moral principle relevant issue and their delinquencies, if any conflicts between them emerged. Firstly, all adult interviewees were able to recognise and even appreciate the benefits and utility of mature moral reasoning if applied by every member of society. The mature moral reasoning characterise thinking such as reciprocity, equality, decentric thinking, and mutual respect in Kohlbergian theories. And surprisingly, of those interviewed, most of them indicated they would use at least stage three moral reasoning in moral decision making. This claimed moral principle use apparently went against what they did. This raised an enquiry about how one who was able to take perspective of others and respect others' welfare but still violated laws. As noted at the outset of this chapter, interviewees were recruited with consideration that they had to be recidivists, rather than one-off offenders, except a couple of violent interviewees. Therefore, the interviewees' offending behaviour should not be viewed as incidental. Instead, offenders' chronic behaviour should be seen as a phenomenon happening repeatedly based on their rational cognitive evaluation. However, offenders' persistent behaviour cannot be made sense of according to this hypothesis. Thus, a question was called for to make the obvious contradiction between what they claimed and what they behaved sensible to the research and themselves. Except of three drug abusers who suggested there was no conflict exhibited, other types of offenders all admitted the conflicting existed between these two parts. The explanation offered by the latter group embraced 1) the difference in time with respect to moral principle use, 2) they did not think of laws and societal regulations while doing it, 3) the needs of

money or compelling satisfaction of sex, 4) the appeal of anger or impulse. As just noted, most of them were chronic offenders; thereby the first justification they made would seem to be less convincing. The other three reasons proposed however have challenged one of the fundamental assumptions proposed by social cognitive theorists with regard to the association of what people think and what they actually behave. This information may shed some light on explaining the inconsistency of people's moral reasoning ability and behaviour.

Juvenile interviewees

Research question 4: What are the relationships between offenders' crime perceptions, evaluations and offending behaviour?

Question 4.1: What are juvenile offenders' Sociocognitive evaluations and perceptions on their own crimes?

Similar with adult group, interview data pertaining to the aspect of evaluations on offenders' own crime is presented in this section.

Drug abusers

Drug taking

Table 8.5.1 Master table of themes for juvenile drug abusers on drug taking

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Bad for health	Drug taking is bad for your health I look at the aspect of harm to the victim, or themselves	Q1.1.Yd.1A Q1.1.Yd.1B
2. Looked down on	Drug abusers are looked down on most I knew but the drug craving is too strong	Q1.1.Yd.2A Q1.1.Yd.2B
3. Hard to make friends	What drug takers say is less reliable I can make lots of friends who also take drugs, but there will be only a few friends outside this circle	Q1.1.Yd.3A Q1.1.Yd.3B
4. Lenient punishment	Should be given the least severe punishment Only hurting yourself, so should not be given such a serious punishment	Q1.1.Yd.4A Q1.1.Yd.4B

The juvenile drug abuser’s evaluations on drug taking can be listed as a) it’s bad for your health; b) it’s looked down on by others; c) it makes it hard to make friends; and d) it should have a more lenient penalty.

Thieves

Stealing

Table 8.5.2 Master table of themes for juvenile thieves on stealing

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. No physical harm	Stealing doesn’t harm people physically	Q1.1.Yt.1A
2. Brings disrepute	It is disreputable People will call you a thief and blacklist you People think that thieves are only able to do petty things They are easy to look down on	Q1.1.Yt.2A Q1.1.Yt.2B Q1.1.Yt.2C
3. Not serious and things are just got disappeared	Compared with other crimes, things are just disappear Just steal others’ stuff; it’s not that serious It is not as serious as the harm caused by other crimes	Q1.1.Yt.3A Q1.1.Yt.3B Q1.1.Yt.3C
4. Avoid confrontation	I run away, I don’t fight with them	Q1.1.Yt.4A
5. Not serious	It’s not as serious as sexual offending and drug taking Stealing is a small deal, a minor crime The length of the sentence is quite short Don't care at all (the consequence when got caught)	Q1.1.Yt.5A Q1.1.Yt.5B Q1.1.Yt.5C Q1.1.Yt.5D
6. Moral concerns	Theft has little to do with moral concerns I did (felt guilty), but it’s not as strong as sexual offending I don’t feel bad at all about stealing	Q1.1.Yt.6A Q1.1.Yt.6B Q1.1.Yt.6C

The interviewing data provided by the three juvenile theft offenders were to form six themes. There are as follows; 1) stealing was thought of a conduct without harm to the victim, 2) not a serious

crime and 3) it only results in the “disappearance” of the property stolen. However, on the other hand, they also 4) recognised that it was disreputable behaviour, 5) when faced with confrontations they would choose to leave the crime scenes, and 6) Feelings of guilt did not always occur when committing thefts.

As far as moral issues are concerned, stealing was believed to have little implication on social integrity and moral concerns, or even to have no significant effect at all.

The Sexual offender

Sexual offending

Table 8.5.3 Master table of themes for the juvenile sexual offender on sexual offending behaviour

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Harms others	Sexual offending also harms others physically and psychologically	Q1.1.Ys.1A
2. Most looked down on	Sexual offenders are the most looked down	Q1.1.Ys.2A
3. The victim no need to take any responsibility	The victim doesn't need to take any responsibility	Q1.1.Ys.3A
4. Moral concerns involved	It definitely has something to do with moral concerns	Q1.1.Ys.4A
5. If we are girlfriend and boyfriend	It's just a part of a relationship if we are girlfriend and boyfriend	Q1.1.Ys.5A

One juvenile sexual offender gave his evaluations on a number of topics. These comprised of the concerns a) behaviour causing harm to others; b) being the most looked down on type of offence; c) involving moral concerns; d) there being a different situation when it happens between boyfriend and girlfriend.

Violent offenders

Violent offending

Table 8.5.4 Master table of themes for the juvenile violent offender on violent offending behaviour

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. A good way	I don't know how to deal with conflicts in any way but fighting	Q1.1.Yv.1A
2. Responsibility sharing	The victims should also take some responsibility (gang fighting or other forms of fighting)	Q1.1.Yv.2A
3. Didn't think while doing it	I never thought about it while I was doing it The point is why does it happen, what is the motive It might be the victim who provokes	Q1.1.Yv.3A Q1.1.Yv.3B Q1.1.Yv.3C
4. Not good	It's not good to hit others	Q1.1.Yv.4A
5. Everyone fights	It is very common, everyone fights	Q1.1.Yv.5A

Both juvenile delinquents indicated that the central concern of violent behaviour was not the consequences, but the motive behind the incident. If the victim initiated the incident then they believe that they should share responsibility as well. Moreover, violent behaviour was believed to be a good way to solve problems, as after all, everyone fights.

What are juvenile offenders' comparative evaluations on crimes and their self-identities?

Information regarding to evaluations on others' crimes is showed in this section. Unlike with adult group, less rich interview data was provided from the juvenile interviewees, therefore, it results in only limited sub-themes that can be formed. However, there is not much difference in terms of the characteristics of the established topics found in between the two age groups.

Question 4.2: What are offenders' sociocognitive evaluations and perceptions on other crimes?

(Evaluations and perceptions on drug abuse were collectively presented in this section due to less rich information elicited from juvenile interviewees) (What juvenile thieves, sexual and violent offenders thought about drug abusing)

Drug abuse

Table 8.6.1 Master table of themes for juvenile thieves, sexual and violent offenders' thoughts on drug abuse

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Moral concerns involved	It has, it would cause harm to others It has something to do with moral issues If it has, then it's because this behaviour would affect their relationship with their families	Q2.1.Y.1A Q2.1.Y.1B Q2.1.Y.1C
2. Only personal concerns	It has no moral concerns It has nothing to do with moral concerns It is a personal discretion	Q2.1.Y.2A Q2.1.Y.2B Q2.1.Y.2C
3. Harm to themselves	Taking drugs cause harm to themselves I think they only (take the drugs) themselves Let them do it, as long as I don't have to come into contact with it Drugs give you delusions and lead to you harming yourself It normally ends in tragedy in their life They don't just harm themselves, but also their families	Q2.1.Y.3A Q2.1.Y.3B Q2.1.Y.3C Q2.1.Y.3D Q2.1.Y.3E Q2.1.Y.3F
4. Behave oddly	Drug takers are freaks Their reactions (i.e., thinking and moving) are really slow, they can't work	Q2.1.Y.4A Q2.1.Y.4B
5. Hard to make friends	Gradually their friends become fewer and fewer Drug takers just take advantage of friends' money If people know you are a drug taker, you will be socially excluded	Q2.1.Y.5A Q2.1.Y.5B Q2.1.Y.5C

Delinquents had two opposite perceptions as to what moral domain drug taking should belong to. Of the juvenile interviewees, half of them thought that drug taking involves moral issues, yet, the other half considered that this behaviour is a personal discretion. Nonetheless, all of the young offenders indicated that drug taking is

harmful to the user's health, but despite it being unlawful behaviour, generally evaluated it as not being a serious crime. Due to some of the negative effects caused by drug abuse, drug takers are perceived as 'freaks', and hard to make friends with.

What juvenile drug abuser, sexual and violent offenders thought about stealing behaviour?

Theft behaviour

Table 8.6.2 Master table of themes for juvenile drug abusers, sexual and violent offenders' thoughts on stealing behaviour and theft

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Being alert to theft	People should be alert to thieves	Q2.2.Y.1A
	Because it is not yours, you should not take it	Q2.2.Y.1B
	People will have a bad opinion of you	Q2.2.Y.1B
2. Moral implications	Yes, there are (moral implications)	Q2.2.Y.2A
	If I did it I would feel guilty	Q2.2.Y.2B
	That is really immoral	Q2.2.Y.2C
	Yes, it's to do with moral issues	
3. Great impact to the victim's life	May have a great impact on their life	Q2.2.Y.3A
	You will cause great harm to their lives	Q2.2.Y.3B
4. Not very serious	It's not very serious	Q2.2.Y.4A
	It is just a sort of bad habit, they aren't really malicious	

Stealing received several evaluations by other offenders, such as; a) it involves moral issues; b) it may cause profound impact to victims' lives; c) stealing behaviour may lead people to fear you or have bad opinions about you. However, one violent delinquent perceived it as not being a serious unlawful behaviour.

What juvenile drug abuser, thieves and violent offenders thought about sexual offending behaviour?

Sexual offending

Table 8.6.3 Master table of themes for juvenile drug abusers, thieves and violent offenders' thoughts on sexual offending

Superordinate	Theme	Initial
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theme		note
1. Harmful	<p>They harm others' bodies</p> <p>It harms others, and it's the most serious crime</p> <p>Sexual offending is very serious; if I caught them I would hit them</p> <p>It will leave psychological trauma</p> <p>sexual offending causes the most harm to the victim</p> <p>Sexual offending is harmful to the victims</p> <p>It will result in a life- long negative effect</p>	<p>Q2.3.Y.1A</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.1B</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.1C</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.1D</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.1E</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.1E</p>
2. Difference	<p>I'm not such a freak</p> <p>I am a normal person</p>	<p>Q2.3.Y.2A</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.2B</p>
3.Moral concerns	<p>It's against your conscience and social morals</p> <p>If I did it I would feel very guilty</p> <p>It has a lot to do with moral concerns</p> <p>They're a kind of deviant</p> <p>It involves moral concerns</p>	<p>Q2.3.Y.3A</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.3B</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.3C</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.3D</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.3E</p>
4. Most looked down on	<p>Sexual offenders are the most looked down on</p> <p>I look down on them</p> <p>It is a really bad reputation to have</p> <p>Sexual offenders are the most looked down on</p> <p>It is pointless to sexually assault others</p> <p>This kind of behaviour is definitely looked down on</p>	<p>Q2.3.Y.4A</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.4B</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.4C</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.4D</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.4E</p>
5. Difficulty in making friends	<p>Other males dislike this behaviour</p> <p>I have a very bad opinion of them</p> <p>Who would dare to make friends with him</p>	<p>Q2.3.Y.5A</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.5B</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.5C</p>
6.Severe punishment	<p>should be given a harsher punishment</p> <p>Should receive the severest punishment</p> <p>Should be given a life sentence</p>	<p>Q2.3.Y.6A</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.6B</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.6C</p>
7. The victims should take partial responsibility	<p>I think the girl has something to be blamed for</p> <p>If you cover your body well all the time, no one would get sexually</p>	<p>Q2.3.Y.7A</p> <p>Q2.3.Y.7B</p>

	aroused and sexually assault you	
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The adolescent criminals gave a large amount of information on sexual offending behaviour. Interviewing data was concentrated on three main themes; a) thinking the criminal behaviour is very harmful to the victim; b) it being the most looked down on behaviour; c) this unlawful act being strongly against your conscience and moral concerns. Based on these characteristics, interviewees thought they were; a) different from sexual offenders in terms of their character and mind; b) unwilling or unlikely to make friends with them; c) calling for a more severe punishment to be imposed. However, two adolescent offenders suggested that if the victims had something to be blamed for, such as dressing sexily, that they should share some responsibilities.

What juvenile drug abuser, thieves and sexual offender thought about violent behaviour?

Violent offending

Table 8.6.4 Master table of themes for juvenile drug abusers, thieves and violent offenders' thoughts on sexual offending

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1.Harming others physically	It also harms others physically It causes harm to others Violence may possibly kill people or give them brain damage Violent behaviour may not just harm others but also the perpetrator	Q2.4.Y.1A Q2.4.Y.1B Q2.4.Y.1C Q2.4.Y.1D
2. Out of impulse	Violent acts are caused by impulse The reason they act violently is often because others provoke it Violence must involve two sides, such as feuds or interpersonal conflicts At that time I just thought that I wanted him to die They can't control themselves	Q2.4.Y.2A Q2.4.Y.2B Q2.4.Y.2C Q2.4.Y.2C Q2.4.Y.2D
3. Moral concerns	It has something to do with moral issues It has nothing to do with moral concerns	Q2.4.Y.3A Q2.4.Y.3B

	It generally has nothing to do with moral issues	Q2.4.Y.3C
	It also involves moral concerns	Q2.4.Y.3D
4. Not very serious	Compared with drugs it's not too bad What you need is just to go and see the doctors, or be sent to jail If you hit him with good reason, then judges should consider that and give a shorter sentence	Q2.4.Y.4A Q2.4.Y.4B Q2.4.Y.4C
5. More severe punishment	Violent offending behaviour should be given a more severe penalty	Q2.4.Y.5A

There were three main themes attracting the most concern from the juvenile offenders: a) the physical damage caused to victims; b) the implications of moral issues, where some offenders expressed that it did and others that it didn't have any moral concerns; c) with regard to the motives and causes behind the occurrence of violent offending, emotional impulse was taken into considerations in their accounts. One adolescent interviewee perceived it was not a serious crime compared with drug taking, while another suggested violent offenders should be given a harsher punishment.

Question 4.2 to 4.5 were skipped due to insufficient information provided by the juvenile interviewees

Question 4.6 How offenders evaluate their own crime with respect to societal laws and Gibbs's moral principles?

Information about how juvenile offenders thought about which moral principles would they use and which moral principle in Gibbs's moral model would they use is presented in this section. In addition, information about how juvenile offenders make assessments of their and other crimes in relation to laws also displayed in this section.

Moral principle

Drug abusers (from juvenile drug abusers' point of view)

Table 8.7.1 Master table of themes for drug abusers' thoughts about moral principles

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Moral principle	I use Stage two	Q3.1.Yd.1A

used		
2. Best moral principle	Stage three is fine, I don't really understand it. But basically if you are able to help others out then that's great	Q3.1.Yd.1B

Theft (from thieves' viewpoints)

Table 8.7.2 Master table of themes for thieves' thoughts about moral principles

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Moral principle used	I use stage four thinking now, I used to use stage one I would use stage four I use stage two, it is a kind of reciprocity	Q3.1.Yt.1A Q3.1.Yt.1B Q3.1.Yt.1C
2. The best principle	Stage three is the best I think the stage three is the best for people to survive in the community Stage four is the best, that is, to help each other and abide by laws	Q3.1.Yt.2A Q3.1.Yt.2B Q3.1.Yt.2C

Sexual offending (from juvenile sexual offender's viewpoint)

Table 8.7.3 Master table of themes for the juvenile sexual offender's thoughts about moral principles

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Moral principle used	I would use stage four, I like fairness	Q3.1.Ys.1A
2.The best moral principle	Stage four is the best	Q3.1.Ys.2A

Violent offending (from juvenile violent offenders' viewpoints)

Table 8.7.4 Master table of themes for juvenile violent offender's thoughts about moral principles

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Moral principle used	I used to use stage one, I didn't care about the consequences to others, I just cared about my own self-interests	Q3.1.Yv.1A

	I am not so great as to use the Stage three principle, but I have started to think about it I would use Stage two I would use stage three thinking	Q3.1.Yv.1B Q3.1.Yv.1C Q3.1.Yv.1D
2. The best one	Surely Stage three or four is the best one Stage four is the best, as a society should have justice and laws	Q3.1.Yv.2A Q3.1.Yv.2B

Despite that all the youth interviewees acknowledged that stage three or four moral reasoning of Gibbs' moral model were the best moral principles to be applied by people in societies, their claims of moral principle that they would use differ greatly. All youth criminals indicated that they would use stage three or four moral principles now, but some pointed out that they used to use immature moral reasoning. The disparity in time, in terms of the applications of moral principle, was also found in the adult interviewees, this deserves further discussion.

Legal issues

Drug abusing (from juvenile drug abuser's viewpoint)

Table 8.7.5 Master table of themes for juvenile drug abusers' thoughts about legal issues

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. For preventing social chaos	Yes, it is very important. If there is no regulation or law, then this society would become chaotic	Q3.2.Yd.1A
	Yes, it is very important because if there is no penalty, then there is no chance of change	Q3.2.Yd.1B

Theft (from juvenile thieves' viewpoints)

Table 8.7.6 Master table of themes for juvenile thieves' thoughts about legal issues

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Life would be easier and better	If you abide laws your life will be much easier	Q3.2.Yt.1A
	Lets them learn the lesson and	Q3.2.Yt.1B

	know that they are wrong	
2. Chaos	Society will become chaotic They would possibly think that it's ok, then keep doing bad things	Q3.2.Yt.2A Q3.2.Yt.2B
3. Learning lessons	Will make them understand what's wrong with their behaviour and may change after their release	Q3.2.Yt.3A

Sexual offending (from juvenile sexual offender's viewpoint)

Table 8.7.7 Master table of themes for the juvenile sexual offender's thoughts about legal issues

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Protect self and others	They can protect yourself and others	Q3.2.Ys.1A
2. law violators should be send to jails	It's very important to send law breakers to jail	Q3.2.Ys.2A

Violent offending (from juvenile violent offenders' viewpoints)

Table 8.7.8 Master table of themes for the juvenile violent offender's thoughts about legal issues

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Should not be decriminalised	I don't agree with drug taking being decriminalised	Q3.2.Yv.1A Q3.2.Yv.1B
2. It is important to obey laws	For people like us, it is very important to obey laws For others it is very important, but not for me	Q3.2.Yv.2A Q3.2.Yv.2B
3. Pay the price	If you don't want to be sent here then don't do it	Q3.2.Yv.3A

For the drug abusers, they reasoned that if law violators were not sent to jails, then they would not learn the lessons needed to reform them. Similarly, the theft offenders also took the same opinion and saw justifications for prison such as stopping them committing crimes again and letting them learn lessons and that otherwise society would descend into chaos. The sexual offender was concerned with the function of laws in the protection of people, but they still indicated that it was important to send law violators to jail, as they would learn the lessons from it. For the violent offenders, in addition to

emphasising the relationships between the purposes of sending criminals to jail, abiding by laws and stopping committing further crimes, they also disagreed with the proposal of decriminalising drug use.

Question 4.7 was skipped due to insufficient information was offered by the juvenile interviewees

Research question 5: How do offenders’ explain if there is any conflict between what they claimed the Gibbs’s moral principle to be adopted, perceptions of laws and with their unlawful behaviour?

Do offenders’ think what they claimed on moral principles used and legal issues consist with their behaviour? If not, how do they explain it? (Conflicts—offenders’ behaviour and moral principles used)

Drug taking (from juvenile drug absuer’s viewpoint)

Table 8.8.1 Master table of themes for juvenile drug abusers’ explanations on whether what they claimed and what they behaved had conflicts or not

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. I needed money	I needed money to buy drugs That was all down to taking drugs	Q4.1.Yd.1A

Theft (from juvenile thieves’ viewpoints)

Table 8.8.2 Master table of themes for juvenile thieves’ explanations on whether what they claimed and what they behaved had conflicts or not

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. Used to use stage one, but stage three now	I used to use stage one, just thought of my own interests, but I use Stage three now I have changed a lot since I came in	Q4.1.Yt.1A Q4.1.Yt.1B

Sexual offending (from juvenile sexual offender’s viewpoint)

Table 8.8.3 Master table of themes for the juvenile sexual offender’s explanations on whether what they claimed and what they behaved had conflicts or not

Superordinate theme	Theme	Initial note
1. This is an exception	Except for selling pirate DVDs and sexual offending. I still consider others’ interests	Q4.1.Ys.1A

	It conflicts with my behaviour, I didn't think that much when I was doing it	Q4.1.Ys.1B
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Except for the adolescent violent offender, who gave no information, all interviewees admitted the existence of conflicts between the moral principle they claimed to operate and their past behaviour. They gave such reasons for this as; it depends on the situation and; they desperately needed money. The difference in the point of time on the application of moral reasoning was again referred to here.

In summary, compared with adult interviewees, juvenile interviewees gave less rich information in both the scope of topics and the depth of explanations about their cognitive evaluations. Nonetheless, juvenile interviewees provided generally similar orientations in terms of social cognitions and perceptions on crimes with adult interviewees. This resulted in that more analysis themes were extracted from the former group than the latter one.

With IPA, idiographic perceptions and individual's sense making on offences and their offending experiences are emphasized in the current chapter. With this perspective offenders' internal psychological processes underlying their chronic offending behaviour were therefore understood. Based on the (superordinate) themes and contents, some distinct tendencies of social representations on differing offences were presented as follows;

Firstly, interviewees generally tended to give supportive information and endorsement assessments to the crimes themselves committed, while condemning other crimes which they had no experience. This self-serving or self-legitimizing and other-blaming phenomenon is achieved by highlighting the damaging and undesirable consequences other unlawful behaviours would cause, while reducing the negativity of their own crimes. That is to say that what social cues the offenders attended and which social information that are salient to them may vary according to their personal interest. And this is a subjective component that is believed to navigate offenders choosing more salient social cues for their mental processing in coping stimulus. Also, this appears to be a subtle cognitive manipulation. These selective attentions and biased cognitive assessments were observed from very general level to specific dimension, such as seriousness, the level how much does crime against laws, how much does the crime involve moral concerns, and the likelihood of engagement in other offences. These aforementioned normative beliefs are believed to act as the

internal self-regulating function when responding to given social stimuli. And this psychological manipulation may be utilised by perpetrators to disengage from moral pressures and reduce psychological discomfort or cognitive dissonance in their socio-cognitions. For example, when one believes the use of violence is justifiable and in certain circumstance then the one would more likelihood either to reduce the threshold of or promoting the legitimate cognitive assessments for acting out violently. However, the internal psychological processes may differ for drug abusers and thieves. For them, physical confrontations are avoided and evaluated unfavourably.

Secondly, offenders of both ages were mostly able to recognise Gibbs's mature moral principle (i.e. stage three and four) were most suitable for them and communities to operate with but nevertheless failed to follow what they claimed. There was obviously a discrepancy between what they claimed and what their transgression behaviour in aspects such as the moral principles (i.e. predominantly they thought mature moral principle is best) they would use, the law they perceived. As this research was informed by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), therefore, efforts were also made on seeking further articulations from interviewees regarding to the information that appears to be at odds. By scrutinising offenders' justifications light might be shed on the long-term enquiry about why mature moral reasoners still commit crimes. Reasons most observed were, 1) there was no conflict at all between what they claimed and their unlawful behaviour. This is best exemplified by drug abusers. Because they viewed their behaviour as personal discretion, along with no harm caused on others, as such, drug taking does not go against with their mature moral reasoning. 2) Contradiction only comes about in the crimes they committed but not other social aspects. Simply put, except the transgression behaviour they involved, they generally follow the mature moral level. This justification was widespread in thieves, violent offenders or drug abusers. 3) The difference in time in terms of moral reasoning used. Offenders pointed out what they used to operate and the moral principle they are using is different. That is, more self-central thinking style was more prevalent in time before they came to serve in jails. They now have realised the importance of respecting other's welfare and appreciating societal regulations. However, it would be less convincing when considering that mostly of them were not first-timers in incarceration, 4) impulse and uncontrollability were appealed to justify the difference in claims. This reason was applied frequently by sexual and violent offenders. Although this research is interested in social knowledge, factors leading to crime committing such as impulsivity, immediate arouses,

or emotional regulation may be taken into account. Additionally, there is an issue worth mentioning in addressing the failure to meet the expectation for mature reasoners. It is the delayed moral reasoning, such as exchanging and instrumental thinking, prevalently observed in legal related issues in interviews that may account the contradiction. Given that people with these more calculating and heteronymous thinking style are suggested to be more vulnerable of criminal transgressions.

Third, offenders were not dysfunctional in social knowledge in all social contexts. It is inadequate to say that all offenders are incompetent in those psychological components essential for being an adaptable person or maintaining a justice society. Some components which are believed to be the underlying elements in building and maintaining a justice society were observed in their interview texts. The components included the involvement of moral concerns for certain offending behaviour, role taking, equity, and fairness thinking. These self-regulating beliefs and values were nevertheless quite often frequently found in social cognitive appraisals on other crimes but not their own ones. As noted, offenders were easily to see others' faults but not negative consequence of their transgressions. In light of this, it is reasonable to suggest that offenders may only fail to appropriately process full present social cues for decision making for the crime committed but competent in other social situations or behaviour.

Chapter 9 Discussion

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the relationships between social cognitive knowledge and the committing of crime patterns. Two prominent social cognition based research branches—structure-oriented cognitive moral reasoning and content-oriented cognition evaluation-- were integrated to form a sociocognitive model of crime in accomplishing the aim of this thesis. Each investigated variable was initially examined against the crime specialism index prior to developing multiple regression models for predicting offending patterns. In addition to the sociocognitive-criminal behaviour relationships being addressed by quantitative data, information collected by interview method was used to advance the understanding of these relationships. A subsidiary research objective was to compare how well structural and content approaches toward social knowledge could address different offending patterns in two age populations – juveniles and adults. The dependent variable is the crime specialism index, while the independent variables are comprised of self-identity, normative beliefs, cognitive beliefs, moral domain model, moral reasoning development, and crime episodic judgments. The Discussion is presented in the order in which each tested independent variable is examined in relation to the crime specialism index and followed by integrated discussions.

Research question1: What are the relationships between moral reasoning ability in overall, individual moral value, age, crime episode judgments, and crime specialism indexes?

Question 1.1: Is there a statistically significant difference between adult versus juvenile offender status to the offenders' moral reasoning ability?

The findings in the current study showed that adult male offenders' overall moral reasoning levels were predominately at 3 and above the mature moral stages (68% of the total samples) with an average of 286.4 SRMS (stage 3). For juvenile offenders, the transitional stage 3(2) (40% of the total samples) was the dominant level with an average of 249.1 SRMS (just over the point boundaries of stage2 (3)) in Gibbs' moral scheme. In addition, there were no significant correlations between the crime specialism index and the SRMS in both age generations except for juvenile sexual crime specialism index. Because there was only a very small proportion of juvenile offenders

having committed sexual related crimes examined in this study, caution should be taken when interpreting these findings. Furthermore, with only one exception (i.e. the juvenile violent regression model), the SRMS (computed overall moral reasoning ability) was not entered into any of the regression models.

To date, there has been little research conducted in adult offender populations on the quality of moral reasoning, thus only limited evidence was available for making a clear conclusion. Recently, Stevenson et al. (2003) found that most of their adult research samples operated their moral reasoning at the mature level. Moreover, studies were conducted by Valliant and his colleagues (Greenfield and Valliant, 2007; Valliant et al., 2000) on adult offenders comparing between a number of sexual related crimes and also between violent and non-violent offenders using the Defining Issues Test (DIT) measure. These two investigations revealed that adult offenders reasoned at the mature moral judgement stages. This thesis replicates their findings.

In contrast to the mature group, there is a wealth of literature (Chen and Howitt, 2007; Gregg et al., 1994; Hains, 1984; Lardén, et al., 2006; Palmer and Hollin, 1998, 2000; Trevethan and Walker, 1989) assessing juvenile offenders, and deviant adolescents' cognitive moral reasoning qualities. These investigations, along with a number of review studies (Blasi, 1980; Gibbs et al., 2007; Palmer, 2003a; Nelson et al., 1990) found that adolescent offenders reason at a less mature moral judgement stage compared with their age-matched counterparts. Predominately, adolescent offenders' cognitive moral development abilities are at the immature Stage 2 in the Kohlbergian formulations (i.e. Kohlberg's six and Gibbs' four stage models). This study again finds this already established result existing pervasively in the youth offender group. Compared with Chen and Howitt's (2007) investigation in also Taiwanese juvenile offender populations, the mean sociomoral reasoning score in the current research is some 20 scores higher than their's despite the age of these two samples were hardly different. However, when the two samples' sociomoral reasoning scores are represented by Gibbs's Global stage, they fall either into the same developmental vicinity level (drug abusers' moral stage 2(3)) or just a Global stage (theft and violent offenders at moral stage (2)) lower than the current one.

According to Gibbs's age norm and compared with Chen and Howitt's (2006, 2007) research on Taiwanese adolescent populations (i.e. normal and juveniles), the immature hypothesis proposed by Gibbs's sociomoral reasoning model was only corroborated in the younger

sample in the current study, but not in the adult group. In terms of Kohlbergian theoretical assumptions, when people have attained a mature moral judgement level, it is much less likely for them to commit crimes, unless in circumstances of maintaining social justice or moral principles (Jennings, et al., 1983). This is because when moral reasoning ability has grown towards higher and more adequate levels, the characteristic of egoistic-instrumental and pragmatic moral understanding found among immature reasoners will be therefore simultaneously reduced (Gibbs et al., 1992; Kohlberg, 1984). Instead, the perspective of the world will be replaced with a concept of reciprocity, appreciating the underling meaning of events as well as including social welfare and justice into individuals' moral considerations. As Jennings et al. (1983) pointed out, the meaning and the truth of acts is discerned when individuals actively interact with the world in which they live.

Decentration is the movement from superficial or physical characteristic viewpoints to profound and intrinsic understanding; individuals' self-central thinking thus disappears with the growth of moral reasoning competence. This is also the theoretical basis on which moral cognitive theorists base their reverse assumptions and hence calculate the likelihood that people would be involved in deviant behaviour. Evidently, however, the delay hypothesis is not corroborated due to the divergent findings in the adult sample. A question raised here is that if people utilise a type of moral reasoning that values mutuality and interpersonal reciprocity, as such, they are supposed to be refrain from committing crime. However, why then do they still get in trouble with the criminal justice system not once but, for a substantial proportion of the participants in current sample, repeatedly? This is even conflicting with an essential mature protocol "empathic role taking" with which the offenders' behaviour contradicts even greater with this developed moral judgement. This, in theory, makes it even more difficult to make sense of these contradictory results.

As noted above, most of our adult samples were recidivists, and some show adherences in specific clusters of offences. Given this reality, the reasons for their offending behaviour should not be acceptable with justifications such as "it is an accident" or ascribing their unlawful behaviour to a one-off event. Instead, their chronic offending states should be understood as phenomenon. In the light of the above understanding, there are reasonable reasons addressing the inconsistent result—criminal behaviour versus quality moral reasoning.

There are a number of possible explanations that may shed light on this conflicting situation given below;

1) the role of moral reasoning function in relation to offending behaviour.

The extent to which offending behaviour is to do with moral components is noted worthy. Jennings et al. (1983) suggest that the relation of moral reasoning to delinquency is based on an assumption in which delinquency has moral dimension. Certainly the offences studied in this thesis are all in conflicts with laws. However, this normal understanding may not be able to reach a consensus answer among the offenders. In other words, the understanding may not only differ from within offenders' viewpoints to different crime patterns but varying across offenders to the same offences with considerably disparate offending experiences. As known, delinquency is a heterogeneous group of behaviours, some with more moral relevance than others. This is an important aspect that worth further exploring from particularly offenders' point of view. In addition to the moral context prerequisite to relate offending behaviour and moral judgment competence, there is another functioning assumption to associate these two variables. Jennings et al. (1983) also postulate that the function of more mature moral reasoning is to serve as an insulator against offending behaviour from such precipitating factors as incentives, impulse, and external pressures. It implies that the complex nature of delinquency is recognised by Jennings *et al*, moral reasoning is viewed by moral structuralists to play a critical internal self-controlled cognitive correlate though. However, they also stressed that moral reasoning element have to be salient in the process of their mental information decision making. Simply put, people should firstly recognise whether they are making a moral-laden decision. Given that, it merits an exploration about how offenders perceive their and other crimes in this regard so as to understand the role of moral reasoning in their crime decision.

2) People do not always operate in full moral reasoning across all social contexts

Is moral reasoning content specific or does it operate across all moral situations? This notion is not new, and in fact was proposed by Kohlberg (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987) for addressing their anomalous research outcomes. For example, the regression of the moral reasoning stage used in their longitudinal research participants and

the poor degree of correlation exhibited between cognitive-orientated moral reasoning and behaviour. Investigations on law-violation related areas reported lower development in participants' moral reasoning (Chen and Howitt, 2006, 2007; Palmer and Hollin, 1998). This finding implies that there is a potential corresponding deficit in moral reasoning more likely responsible to offending behaviour. Because of this, further investigation is warranted to expand moral reasoning aspects (i.e. moral values) and social cognitive components to more crime sensitive or elaborated dimensions permitting researchers to examine the specific correlation between social cognition and offending behaviour. In order to explore whether there is a systematic impairment in social cognition, other cognitive elements will be brought into the discussion in the following sections.

3) The development of moral values, in terms of moral reasoning, do not occur in synch.

The fundamental assumption "the structure-wholeness" shared by Kohlbergian theorists is questionable. Research concerning the potential differential association between the moral development stage of moral values and specific crime patterns is restricted to only a few researchers (Brugman and Aleva, 2004; Gregg et al., 1994; Palmer and Hollin, 1998). Moral value "life" was found related to juvenile violent offenders in Chen and Howitt's (2007) recent research on a sample of Taiwanese juvenile delinquents. Other than the present study, there is as yet no empirical project undertaken on adult groups. The potential specific relationship assumption may be an effective way in addressing structural cognitive elements and criminal behaviour. Moral cognitive theorists posit that human knowledge derives from social interactions and accumulation experiences, therefore it is reasonable to think that these two social factors would play a critical role in shaping and fostering human's social cognition. It takes place in a form of continuously reciprocity process. Following this logic, how can we expect people, particularly persistent offenders, to possess structure-whole moral reasoning in their everyday lives? More detailed discussion is presented in the later sections.

4) Human behaviour is mediated by structural moral reasoning but not determined by it.

Is it appropriate to link the abstract and global level social knowledge to elaborate subtype offending acts? Apart from the above possible confounding factors in unravelling the complexity of the relationship

between cognition and behaviour the most fundamental and essential issue that needs to be considered and further explored here is how sociomoral reasoning is associated with actual behaviour? When we apply the moral cognitive development model of hierarchical order in addressing the occurrence of offending behaviour in general and, the subtypes of deviant acts in particular, have we recognised the inappropriate interrelating of these two variables? In other words, Kohlbergian moral theories are an abstract framework in essence; they are the composites entailing undirected moral values pertinent to criminality. That is to say, we may have overestimated the predictability between moral reasoning ability and real enactments by, at least, the current conceptualisation of moral reasoning. Besides, this problem is further confounded by existing inadequate moral reasoning measures which are not designed specifically for assessing deviant groups'. Before we move on to explore the complex relationship—cognition and behaviour, there are two essential issues we need to look at. First, whether, Gibbs' moral reasoning tool (SRM-SF) is able to distinguish offenders' moral reasoning level from normal controls? While it was a valid tool for youth population, it was not demonstrated effectively in the adult group in the present research. This result gives rise to advanced questioning. That is, "Is SRM-SF an effective instrument in measuring adult moral reasoning" and/or "does structural cognitive moral reasoning exert the same influence found in juvenile groups as in adult populations". Second, to take a metaphor for better describing the unique relationship. The linking that uses results yielded by abstract tools to interrelate offending behaviour, particularly varying subtypes of deviants, is likened to measuring the width of hairs by a meter scale ruler. Because the current moral reasoning measures cannot provide adequate variances in moral cognitive developmental stages for distinguishing offences with different characteristics. However, it may work nicely to be used to measure the length of hairs. This implies that the current non-crime designated moral reasoning instruments with general moral values are capable of differentiating juvenile offenders from their age-matched normal counterparts. That is because these two groups are not homogenous in many psychological aspects. A number of studies (Chen and Howitt, 2007; Palmer and Hollin, 1998) have associated the impaired area of cognition to corresponding crime patterns. This finding suggests a potential differential association between the offending behaviour and the intrinsic moral values that this behaviour conflicts with. On the other hand, this implies that there are variations present among moral values in terms of moral reasoning quality. More precisely, the assumption of synchronous progression in each moral value is

therefore questioned. And apparently, the unparalleled developmental progress rate also indicates scepticism about the Kohlbergian fundamental assumption, the "structured-wholeness". The specific correlations between moral reasoning and crime patterns will be discussed in more detail in the appropriate later section.

5) Have we overlooked the variability of definitions over social cues given by offenders?

The factors which intervene between beliefs about what is good and good behaviour need to be understood better. It may be the problem of offenders' cues perception and interpretations rather than the formal moral reasoning. The notion brought forward here is to connect the nodes associating moral reasoning ability and the information attained in supporting offenders' thinking. Simply put, the definition behind moral relevant concepts (i.e. laws, fairness, against self-conscience and justice) should be scrutinised in order to see a fuller picture. It is logically understandable for us to infer that people adopting immature moral reasoning as behaviour guidance are more vulnerable to violating social regulations. However, the results observed in adult convicts go against this assumption- which underpins moral cognitive reasoning paradigm. This invites the questions, is there any variation in individuals' definition on what is defined as law violating behaviour? What is perceived as justice? What constitutes the concept of unfairness for different types of offenders? And even, to what extent is criminal behaviour perceived as undermining social integrity? For instance, drug abusers may assert that their unlawful behaviour is neither harmful to others (no victims), nor undermine social integrity and that it should be a personal discretion, having nothing to do with authority agencies. These issues have been neglected by moral structuralists but are crucial sources for bridging the relationship between moral reasoning and offending behaviour. For researchers interested in explaining criminal behaviour through a social knowledge approach, both the abstract concepts and the elements that make up the concept are instrumental in making the decision of crime engagements. It would be fruitful for advancing understanding of what leads to their behaviour by exploring offenders' self definition and theorising of social knowledge. More discussion on this issue will be given later in this section.

The research samples in this study consisted of diversified characteristics, covering considerable variation in age, offences, and the length of imprisonment. Thus, the findings would be more

generalisable for adult male convicts' moral cognitive development than previously established. However, the results are in contradiction to Kohlbergian theories, where mature moral reasoning is expected as a protective factor against law violation. This is built on the premise that people reasoning at this level regard themselves as members of society. Expectations for mature moral thinkers are also accompanied by attaining this advanced level to energise perspective taking, behave lawfully, and also to appreciate others' welfare. The delay hypothesis claim was therefore not corroborated in the adult group. Yet, a significant upward trend in moral stage with increasing age was obtained in both age groups. A number of potential explanations in understanding the failure were proposed, such as a) how much does a particular offending behaviour involve moral concern, b) one may not exercise their full moral competence in coping with all stimuli, c) it is problematic to assume that the moral values comprising moral assessment measures develop at the same rate, d) does moral reasoning play as influential role as on adult groups as which found on youthful populations, and e) individuals' personal definition on what is justice and legitimacy of behaviour should be taken into considerations of how do they lead to a offending decision based on available social knowledge. The possible reasons mentioned above will be examined in the following sections.

Question 1.2: Are there any statistically significant relationships between the overall moral reasoning ability and four crime specialism indexes?

There are few investigations comparing the maturity of moral reasoning in different types of offenders. It is known by researchers that offenders are not simply a homogenous group given the characteristics manifested in their overt acts and the psychological facilitating elements involved (Anton et al., 2005; Chen and Howitt, 2007; Davey et al., 2005; Palmer and Hollin, 1999). Thus it would be a misleading to assume all offenders possess the same quality of moral reasoning. There is scattered research carried out using samples of adolescent violent and theft offenders (e.g. Arbuthnot et al., 1987; Judy & Nelson, 2000). The evidence from such studies is that the moral reasoning development levels of violent and theft offenders are less mature than those of the non-violent and non-theft controls, respectively. In contrast, Chen and Howitt (2007) found that there was no significant difference among drug abusers and theft and violent youth offenders. Research has also shown that moral reasoning development delay is a characteristic of the adult violent

and non-violent prisoners compared with general population norms, but moral reasoning fails to differentiate these two prisoner groups (Fabian, 2001). This study, using the Defining Issues Test (DIT) (Rest, 1979), also found that there was a group of prisoners who scored more maturely on moral reasoning yet nevertheless had offended. Priest and Kordinak (1991) used the DIT to measure the differences of moral reasoning development among criminals committing crimes such as those against persons, against property and victimless crimes. No significant differences were noted between different crimetypes and the interaction of this with criminal history (first offence versus recidivist). Greenfield and Valliant (2007), Valliant et al. (2000), also employing the Defining Issues Test, found differences among three sexual related offenders', and violent offenders to operate at a more mature moral judgement than non-violent controls. Wilson et al. (2002) found sexual offenders' moral reasoning level was not lower than other types of offenders.

No clear conclusion can be made based on the evidence available. Instead of using a categorical variable, a crime specialism index was generated based on crime history provided by the offender for the four subtypes of crime in this study. Therefore, the present research changed direction to test whether or not there is a correlation between the crime specialism indexes and the SRMS in full would be better. Given that crime specialism index had little relation to the SRMS in this study, further elaborated tests were carried out. An examination between the SRMS and individual moral values and different crime patterns was performed. The reasons for doing that are presented below:

1. the moral values targeted by existing moral reasoning instrument (SRM-SF) are not sensitive enough to address this issue

The moral values constituting the SRM-SF employed by the current study may have more commonality for all juvenile population than specificity, in terms of dysfunctionality in moral reasoning. This is because SRM-SF was designed to examine more general populations rather than purposely developed to apply on sub-groups, such as offenders. Therefore, an offender-tailored moral reasoning instrument is warranted for advancing our understanding between cognition and behaviour.

2. Offenders are more homogenous in terms of the quality of moral reasoning than we realise.

The important issue here is what makes offenders operate with a similar quality of moral reasoning? A plausible answer may be firstly, that they share similar experiences in their lives or secondly, the treatments given out by the society in response to their behaviour or thirdly, that they possess the same viewpoint towards the world. As research participants in the present study were predominantly recidivists, this factor should not be dismissed completely. In turn, the communal experiences of contact with the criminal justice system may shape their worldview. Although information of prison experiences was not available in Chen and Howitt's (2007) work, their research samples were also recruited from incarcerated Taiwanese juvenile delinquents. As a result of this, their results were left with a relatively smaller variation in the serious dimension of offending for researchers to compare the effect of seriousness of offending behaviour on moral reasoning. Chen and Howitt (2007) report that there was no significant difference exhibited among adolescent drug abusers, theft and violent offenders in moral reasoning assessed by Gibbs' moral measure. This thesis replicates their finding.

3. The specific impairment area in moral reasoning may be the problem

Despite the possible reason why the SRM-SF may be invalid for discriminating between different offender types, it may be ascribed to the fact that offenders actually possess a similar worldview. A further exploration is therefore directed to a more elaborated differential relationship, which is the specific relationship between moral values and corresponding behaviour. This issue is to be examined and discussed in specific question 1.3.

There were no significant relationships emerged between crime specialism indexes and moral reasoning ability indexed by SRMS. The reasons for addressing the failure to find the expected reverse relationship are a) the moral measure used to assess offenders' moral reasoning ability was not adequate to distinguish one sub-group of offenders from another, b) in the overall moral reasoning level offenders generally hold a more similar worldview than we realised, especially those who have persistent troubles with criminal justice systems, c) it may not be the summary moral reasoning level but particular moral value(s) which correspond to their crime experiences.

Question 1.3: Are there any statically significant correlations between the moral reasoning ability of individual moral values and four crime specialism indexes?

Question 1.4: Are there any statistically significant differences between each moral value in terms of their moral reasoning stages?

The relationship between moral cognitive development and offending behaviour may be better understood by scrutinising the differential association between criminal patterns and the moral reasoning stage of moral values. Rather than to view individual's moral reasoning progression as a structural-whole phenomenon, a more event-focused moral reasoning system is suggested to account for the interplay between one's social knowledge and behaviour. That is to say that, instead of holding a notion that human behaviour is subject to a monolithic and non-segregated moral belief, a complex multi moral belief system is assumed following this research. Thus, the functions and the reciprocal effect of these two variables in crime situations need to be identified further, the purpose of this being to answer why the sociomoral reasoning theories should warrant being theoretically connected with actual behaviour. For example, what are the potential explanations and why people in the same overall stage of moral reasoning commit different types of crimes? Is it because they share impairment in certain aspects of moral reasoning ability rather than being deficient in the overall level?

Despite failing to demonstrate the reverse relationship between overall moral maturity and the intensity of involvement in offending behaviour, there were two and six significant correlations for adult and juvenile groups, respectively. For significant correlations in the older group, "legal justice" moral value correlated negatively with the violent Crime specialism index while positively with "contract & truth". In the younger group, theft crime specialism index correlated with moral value "affiliation" positively, but negatively with "property & law". The higher juvenile delinquents score in the sexual crime specialism index, the stronger they correlate with "life", "property & law" and "legal justice" moral values. Only one moral value "property & law" correlated positively with the violent Crime specialism index. In this study, the relatively arrested moral development phenomenon was found in two moral values in both age populations. This result is in convergent with previous research (Chen and Howitt, 2006, 2007; Palmer and Hollin, 1998), revealing that the moral values "legal justice" and "property & law" were significantly behind the other values in terms of development (stage 2) in moral reasoning ability

compared to the rest in the juvenile group. In addition, compared with Chen and Howitt's (2007) work, contract & truth was also found most developed in terms of moral reasoning in the current dissertation. Therefore, the pattern of Taiwanese male juvenile offenders' sociomoral reasoning developmental schema may be established. That these two legally related moral values develop with a relative lag (transitional stage 3(2)) is a new finding for adult populations.

Further demonstration of non-simultaneous development in moral values was shown in the follow-up comparison tests. The results suggested that the developmental scores of "legal justice" and "property & law" were all significantly lower than other moral values in the SRM-SF moral reasoning measure. There was no significant difference between the two moral values in the adult group, whereas all the five moral values differed significantly from each other for the juvenile group. There was no difference found between these two moral norms in Chen and Howitt's (2007) study.

The current study is to address the question of whether the development of moral values in moral reasoning can be related to specific offender types? More precisely, whether there is a general cognition-structural impairment in areas that correspond to the four studied crime types is an important issue. For instance, why do property criminals not commit violent crimes and vice versa if theft and violent offenders employ the same moral reasoning structure in processing social information? Obviously, findings revealed from the current research were not congruent with Kohlberg's (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987) fundamental concept of the "structured whole". In Kohlberg's theory one's moral reasoning ability should be found developing at the same rate across all aspects of moral contents. This leaves little or no latitude in terms of dealing with inconsistency in maturity of moral judgement even though Kohlberg accepted that the highest moral reasoning levels are not applied by an individual to every moral issue. Social interaction and role-taking opportunities are theoretically understood and empirically established to be crucial resources for the development of moral reasoning (Eisenberg et al., 2001; Gibbs et al., 1984; Kohlberg, 1984; Piaget, 1965; Walker, 1983).

Three implications and further questions are to be discussed, as follows;

- 1) Some evidence has emerged to support the specific relationship between social cognitive ability and corresponding behaviour.

Fontaine (2007, 2006) proposes that there is a specific relationship between social cognitions and behaviour. A number of studies show unique correlation between cognitive contents and corresponding behaviour. Although these results are divergent with Kohlberg's assumption (i.e. sociomoral structured whole), they are convergent with social cognitionists' epistemology of knowledge. That is, "interaction with the outside world". (Cobly and Kohlberg, 1987). Individuals' social cognitive development occurs in a form of continual feedback and interpretation within an individual's social cognitive database. In other words, if we are to construe moral behaviour by a social cognitive approach, then the role of interactive mechanism between subjects and the outside world in human social information processing should not be ignored. Certainly, as noted, a psychological mechanism is vital for us to make sense of this interactive activity—interpretation. That is the meaning-giving mental process to external stimuli by people. Thereby, the variations of ones' offending experiences, the generation of interpretations on the offending, and the offending behaviour outcomes should be taken into consideration in relation to knowledge crystallisation by crime specificity.

The difference of moral reasoning operation is related to the variation of contexts. Krebs et al. (1991) and Krebs and Denton (2005) found the flexible use of moral judgement by the feature of contexts among an adult general sample where the drunk-driving question evokes the lowest level of morality than that of the prosocial one by the respondents. The impaired driving dilemma question is "A person named Jack is out drinking with his friends. He doesn't keep track of exactly how much he drinks, but, when it comes time to go home, he senses that he has had more to drink than the legal limit. His car is outside". Following this dilemma was a set of 11 probing questions made comparable to those on Kohlberg's test. In the same study, however in the set of questions taken from Kohlberg's classic dilemmas, it showed an even higher developmental stage within subjects and across these employed questions. That is, the respondents operated higher moral reasoning level in conventional Kohlberg's dilemma questions than that of on drunk-driving dilemma questions. An essential issue is worth noting here, that is, is our moral reasoning level deployed to fit specific situations or whether its development is hampered by our unique past experiences. Recently, Krebs and colleagues (2005) proposed a more pragmatic approach to morality in which people's deployments of moral orders to given social situations are believed to be context-dependent rather than rigidly being one consistent global structure. They are not alone; other moral theorists such as Piaget (1932/1965), Lapsley (1996) and Rest (1979)

all suggest that one would equip moral judgement of multi-structures in dealing with everyday lives. For people who chronically act out behaviour that is intrinsically different from their conformitive law abiding behaviour, are believed to hold unique moral orders designated for that antisocial behaviour. Thus it is reasonable to suggest that, over time, offenders may develop and experience specific moral structure in processing unlawful conduct. In short, offenders may simply accommodate their moral reasoning to a particular offending behaviour, or as Krebs and Denton (2005) suggest different moral orders are recognised and applied to different social contexts. The contingent application practice is exercised in the principle that to gain maximum benefits for persons.

The characteristic of violent offenders was positively evident in the correlation with two moral values but in opposite directions. Violent offenders have been found to have loyalty to their peers and with much less concern for legal issues. A longitudinal work conducted by Conway and McCord (2002) reported that non-violent offenders are at increased risk if they commit their co-offence with violent accomplices. The questions employed to assess "contract & truth" moral norm concern about the importance of keeping promises to friends, to people who are hardly known, from parents to their children and the importance of telling the truth. That makes sense when higher development of "contract & truth" in moral reasoning is connected with higher commitment to peer and people as it is one of the defining feature found among violent offenders.

Another example of a corresponding relationship may be offered as further evidence. In the youth groups, offenders who were involved in more theft activities were observed scoring lower in and significantly related to "property & law" moral value, while having an opposition to "affiliation". Similar finding also emerged in Chen and Howitt (2007) research. However, there were significant correlations showed between "property & law" and sexual as well as violent crime specialism indexes. This further confirms the current research hypothesis—specific relationship, reflecting the connection of experiences and moral reasoning impairment. The implication of positive relationships between sexual crime specialism index and moral values—namely "life", "property & law" and "legal justice" may be construed as being that sexual offenders develop relatively healthily in these areas.

Current moral development assessment instruments usually employ responses to a composite of several moral values. Other forensic

researchers have begun to question whether reasoning about every moral value develops at the same pace. Palmer and Hollin (1998) found that scores on the moral value of "Life" were significantly higher than the other four values among a sample of male delinquents. They attribute this to the characteristic of the research participants, mainly property criminals. Furthermore, Gregg et al. (1994) found that delinquents of both genders showed substantially less mature moral reasoning development on the Law value. The moral measure SRM-SF was used in these two studies. Also, Brugman and Aleva (2004) reported that youthful offenders exhibited relatively less mature moral reasoning for the value of "obeying the law". However, Bush, Alterman, Power, and Connolly (1981), using the Moral Judgement Interview (MJI), could not differentiate alcoholics, drug addicts and controls in terms of their overall moral reasoning development scores. Nevertheless, the moral values of life and law differentiated these different categories from each other. Although this is an important finding, the groups involved did not necessarily relate to criminologically defined categories.

Taken together, there are two findings of importance. One is the corresponding relationship between the developmental stage of moral values and crime patterns. Another one is the relatively moral cognitive development delay in areas related to legal contexts. This also reflects their characteristic, offending status. It is understandable that based on the sociocognitive approach's epistemology of knowledge the interaction between a person and his outside world is vital for fostering social knowledge. With experience, an equilibrated social cognition is assumed to emerge and consequently affect people's mental process in deciding suitable responses to given stimuli. The comparatively deficient and advanced areas in terms of moral reasoning ability are partly evident in this section.

2) Can the evidence of structural social cognitive impairment be found in relation to specific crime patterns?

Can the specific relationship--social cognition and behaviour evidence systematically in both content and structural social knowledge? As yet, researchers have paid insufficient attention to studying individuals' crime patterns by bringing offenders' moral reasoning and their schema, perceptions and beliefs together to address criminal behaviour. This is because these two research branches have long developed separately and have distinctive principles on explaining human decision making behaviour. Researchers advocating the notion that a global moral cognitive developmental level determines

human behaviour believe that imperative instructions made to external stimuli are derived from ones' moral reasoning structure. In Kohlbergian theories, individuals' moral judgements of external events are based on the worldview moving from a self-centred perspective to conformity - to regard themselves as members of society. This increasing decentration process is characterised by including more social justice thinking and role taking skills. On the other hand, for researchers taking a content approach of social cognition, emphases are placed with a more schematised mentality, agentic perceptions as well as beliefs in information processing. To date, limited information is available to answer the question as to whether content or structural social cognition can better explain offending behaviour and whether or not they play an equally important role in both juvenile and adult groups. Therefore, it is justified to investigate how offenders perceive different crime and criminal behaviour so as to accomplish this aim. This concern is to be discussed in the following section.

Question 1.5: Are there any statistically significant correlations between the number of justifications in response to crime episode judgments and crime specialism index?

Question 1.6: Are there any correlations between the number of opinions offenders produced about crime episode questions and moral reasoning ability?

Question 1.7: Are there any relationships between the number of opinions offenders produced about the four crime episode question and individual moral value's moral reasoning ability?

In this section, qualitative and quantitative data are drawn upon to address the relationships between crime perceptions, evaluations and offenders' crime patterns. A hypothesis was offered that offenders tend to legitimate their behaviour by justifying their unlawful behaviour as less serious or condemnable. In addition to the reverse effect relatively little is known about what offenders perceive and cognitively evaluate the crimes of others. By this cross-examining assessment a differential relationship may therefore be further established. The components to be examined against the crime specialism index are a) the number of responses generated by offenders in crime episode judgment subscale, b) criminal identify for themselves and their crimes, c) normative beliefs to their own and other crimes, and d) cognitive beliefs in comparison with their own and other three crime types examined with one individually in each time.

Four crime episodes pertinent to the studied crime offences were designed to discover what offenders cognitively thought about their own crimes and those of others. All respondents were asked to answer the four questions.

1. Quantitative results

In crime episode judgements, significantly differential correlations are found, except for violent items, between the CSI and either/both pro-and/or anti-items in the adult group. That is, except for violent CSI, there were significantly positive correlations existed between the numbers of supporting responses offenders produced to their own crimes with their corresponding CSIs. However, the correlation results were less impressive in the juvenile group. The only significant correlation was shown in the pro-drug item in the crime specialism index theft and violent offending. More crime episode judgment variables were entered into adult regression models than juveniles. The result partially rejects the hypothesis that there was no differential correlation between offences and the preferences of cognitive evaluation on crime episode judgment. Thus, the finding revealed that the crime episode judgment is a more effective predictor for adult groups than juveniles in relating to criminal behaviour. According to the expectations, in accordance with social cognitive approach, individuals would maintain cognitive equilibrium and self-interests to mitigate the stresses of cognition dissonances stemming from their unlawful behaviour. The findings reveal that offenders tended to shift the blame attribution of their offences. This specific association result partly supports McCarthy and Stewart (1998)'s finding that the generating of rationalisation restricts the crime activities one experiences. However, the result also suggests a more sophisticated relation in this regard. For example, in the case of drug taking, offenders generated more agreements to legitimise their behaviour than other crimes, namely theft, sexual and violent offences. Drug taking and sexual offending CSIs appeared to have an identical pattern of relationship producing strong endorsements or justifications aiming to reduce convict's culpability with regard to their respective wrongdoings. Interestingly, offenders those had higher CSIs in these two crimes seemed to take greatly opposing viewpoints between one and other. This may reflect the fact that offenders who take drugs do not identify with sexual offending activities. Literature on studying the relationship between drug abuse and sexual offending indicates mixed findings. Some research (Jeffrey, et al., 2000; Jan, et al., 2004) suggests that alcoholic abuse history is a more influential contributor to sexual offending behaviour than to violent offenders. However, Antonio and Guerra (2008) report that drug consumption,

together with a higher level of impulsivity may facilitate sexual offending. Although drug abusing may be one of the antecedent facilitators for sexual offending, these two offences cause different kinds of harm. In addition, based on the ideal-type cognition-behaviour research hypothesis proposed in the current thesis, which investigates the differential association between these two variables, the current mutually disapproval result between drug abusers and sexual offenders and their acts is in accordance with the hypothesis. For theft, "theft disagreement" was found negatively and positively associated with theft crime specialism index and violent CSI, respectively. While offenders with higher theft crime specialism index did not reduce the responsibilities of their unlawful behaviour by ascribing them to victims, fewer statements were produced that could be considered anti-stealing. Contrary to the theft, in this correlation examination, offenders with higher crime specialism index in violent behaviour provided more judgements against stealing acts. When the correlations between the pro and anti response camps of violent offending were performed, no correlation was found in any direction. This finding may be interpreted in two possible ways. Firstly, as the occurrence of violent offences inherently requires two parties to be involved, offenders across different types of crime may tend to believe that it 'takes two to tango'. This notion implies that violent offending is more like an instrumental means rather than the purpose itself. Moreover, the victim of violent offending is commonly the acquaintance of the perpetrator, and with a past relationship of conflict (i.e. feud, gang conflicts), this being one of the principle causes. As such, a distinctive favourable/unfavourable assessment in this item is comparatively less likely to be detected.

T-tests show that there was no disparity in terms of the SRMS between pro and anti groups expressed by the adult offenders, although one significant difference was observed in the drug item in the youth group. In addition, the pro and anti crime episode judgment camps were further compared with their moral reasoning for each moral value. There were five moral values in Gibbs's SRM-SF moral measure. Similarly, there were only three significant differences emerged, two for juvenile and one for adult groups. This implies that moral cognitive development has little to do with the tendency of offenders to indicate either pro or anti choices. This finding also suggests that the quality of moral reasoning has no effect on determining which cluster of crime people would be more vulnerable to engaging in. Therefore, crime episode judgment and moral reasoning are variables of independent social cognitive concepts.

In summary, a trend was found that generally offenders with more CSIs in a particular offence tended to produce excuses or justifications favouring that unlawful act. In contrary, offenders also more likely to disagree with the crime episodes (statements) which they did not involved. That is to say, offenders only rationalised away the offence they had experiences. This is a selective bias in cognitive evaluation. In which they may hold normal worldview and normative beliefs that general publics advocate in offences other than their own.

2. Content analysis on response to the crime episode judgment

A following review was carried out to analyse the quality of offenders' responses in justifying why they thought pro or anti responses to be more appropriate for them.

1) Drug taking: Some of those who agreed that the government should decriminalise taking drug tended to see drug taking as a personal discretion behaviour without causing any harmful repercussions to others. This viewpoint corroborates that drug abusers seek out reasons from the personal domain proposed by Turiel and colleagues (Nucci, 1981; Turiel, 1983) and evident in studies (Amonini and Donovan, 2006; Nucci et al., 1991; Tisak et al., 1994). Others viewed drug taking as sort of sickness, and addicts should be treated as patients rather than being confined or incarcerated. Still others even demanded that the government should legalise drug taking, and by doing so that this would result in a reduction of crime rates. Unlike those who agreed with the legitimacy of taking drug, some offenders argued that taking drugs is bad for the health based their viewpoint on the notion of prudential concern. This concept is in accordance with Tisak and Turiel (1984) prudential moral domain. In addition, drug taking would make people taking even more as well as making more people become involved. Additionally, non-drug abusers indicated drug taking is the root of evil and even appealing to the unexpected disasters and chaotic consequences to the society drug abusing would cause.

2) Theft: The supporting reasons for demanding judges to take victims' responsibility into consideration in their sentence in the occurrence of stealing were most commonly expressed by offenders who expressed "affirmative" cognitive assessments. In addition, the disadvantaged living conditions were also brought forward to back up their confirmations. On the other hand, the appeal of fairness to the property owners; respectfulness to others' property being upheld; and no excuse is warranted for rationalisation were also observed. Finally, non-theft offenders asserted that people should take full

responsibility for their behaviour. Also, a harsher punishment should be given to theft offenders. These statements proposed by offenders represent a substantially different angle in corroborating their own standpoints or in operating in their own interest.

3) Sexual offending: With regard to sexual offending, some offenders agreed that judges should also consider mitigating factors when deciding the length of a sentence, such as, if the victim was the offender's ex-wife/girlfriend, the way they behave/dress (seductively), their past history with males. Some offenders also blame the biased justice system being in favour of females, together with stipulating that the victim should take partial responsibility. Apparently, external blame attribution strategy was employed to alleviate their guilty feelings (Blumenthal et al., 1999) or harsh justice called for in Kohlberg stage 2 moral reasoning (tit for tat) (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987). A meta-analysis research (Gendreau, et al., 1996) points out that impulsivity and inappropriately hostile information process of other's intent are predictive variables to violent recidivism (Serin and Kuriychuk, 1994). In contrast, endorsements generated by those who disagreed that sexual victims' personal characteristics should be taken into considerations by judges were, for example, 'sexual offending is sexual offending', no excuse is needed, and sexual offenders should receive a severer penalty. Furthermore, the expression of empathy toward victims, respectfulness of others' bodily autonomy and fairness to the victims were among the reasons given in this section. Even more strongly and widely suggested was that a harsher punishment must be imposed on them. The psychological or character problems of sexual offenders were also of concern. The points proposed by these two camps seem to focus on two distinct aspects. Those who agree, appear to put more concern on the procedures of the criminal justice system as well as the part played by the victim in the incident. In contrast, in another group of offenders there was a stronger tendency to show concern for the justice and fairness and sympathy to the victims. External attribution is a characteristic found by researchers to relate to sexual offending against adults (Blumenthal et al., 1999; Garlick et al., 1996, Ryan, 2004), this may become as one of the criminogenic elements of their criminality (Dolan, 1995; Gudjonsson, 1984, Ryan, 2004). Ward (2000) proposes that a variety of cognition distortions and maladaptive thoughts commonly detected by clinicians and researchers in rapists and molesters may be underpinned by an implicit theory.

4) Violent offending: Violent behaviour, as noted earlier, had fewer variations between the response of agreement and disagreement. However, offenders expressed a similar orientation in these two camps. Firstly, some offenders agreed that judges should also take into consideration the relationship between the victimisers and the victims, including factors such as if the victim gives rise to the incident. The victim should take partial or even most responsibility for the occurrence of violence, as if certain aforementioned conditions could entitle the perpetrators to deal with the situation with violence. Obviously, components such as instrumental, hostile and reactive and proactive motivations, which have been detected as antecedents of aggression, were seen in the offenders' justifications (Salmivalli, 2001). Polaschek et al. (2004) report that violent offenders are significantly higher than the control groups (i.e. other types of non-violent offenders) in the criminal attitude to violence scale. Those who took the opposite view were more concentrated on points such as "violence is violence", "no point looking for an excuse", highlighting the bad nature of violent behaviour. Sympathy was most frequently shown in the wish to not include the victims' personal characteristics in considerations.

Thus far, we have witnessed a consistency and conflict phenomenon in offenders' two underlying cognitive belief systems—moral reasoning vs. crime attributions. From the moral cognitive development perspective, the current results reveal that moral values pertinent to criminal contexts are relatively less developed and at the immature level in Gibbs' model. Moreover, when looking at crime episode judgements a contradictory orientation of responding crime-related questions emerges. Offenders are inclined to see law violating behaviour, which they had previously engaged in, in a more favourable way in which the emphasis is focused on issues serving their own interests. However, surprisingly, offenders, particularly the adults, advocated the values of fairness, respectfulness, role taking, as well as expressions of the wider social order and safety concerns. These mentioned components are all the defining characteristics of the mature moral reasoning in Kohlbergian theorists. The co-existence (i.e. consistence and contradiction) situation was vividly witnessed in their moral reasoning—at the mature level. There are two plausible psychological mechanisms being exercised here; one is offenders' proclivity to draw upon cues meant to disengage them from moral condemnability, reduce their culpabilities, and make them felt less guilty. Another operational mechanism is, offenders react to deviant acts other than their main offence in ways simply like the general public. They also show anger to others or certain types of

deviant acts. Their moral reasoning functions perfectly in other areas except their deficit areas. This selective functioning, regardless of intention or involuntariness, may act as a kind of mitigating function to offenders. Since this would allow the convicts to maintain a balanced cognition-behaviour relationship or lessen cognitive dissonance.

3. Three strategies employed in tackling cognitive discomfortability among offenders

Thus far, how offenders deal with and perceive different criminal behaviour has been examined. Three strategies were often used among offenders;

1) The “bypassing” of morality issues. Instead of being concerned with the consequences caused as a result of their wrongdoing, offenders may mitigate uncomfortable feelings by means of diverting their attention to the victims’ responsibility for the incident. This strategy may be acted out based on a number of grounds including psychological operations such as, appealing to the criminal justice system’s fairness (i.e. concerning on the process of convictions), as well as seeing the victim as the provocateur of the crime event.

2) The second strategy is the utilising of “self-definition” on social events, with offenders having their own established definitions of what is called good or bad. To illustrate, a drug abuser states *“as long as we do not steal, I don’t think others have authority over our drug taking behaviour”*. These very personalised-interest embedded definitions on behaviour would render them able to tackle conflicts with mature or possibly pseudo-mature moral reasoning and their cruder sense of fairness. Even ironically, by this cognitive operation violent offenders may be able to get by the social sanction that “we should not damage other’s bodies”. Similarly, Samenow (2004) suggests that offenders tend to have their own set of morals. From their moral standards, other people are perverts, scoundrels, and real criminals.

3) The third strategy is “double layer cognition” or “conditional upholding”. This features two separate processing mechanisms — facial cognition and conditional cognition. The individuals’ surface cognition simply produces social judgements to a reference target in a normal situation. However, when confronted with certain conditions offenders may be more likely to respond, or even pre-respond to the stimuli with aggressive behaviour where they think acceptable. This strategy may shed light on why violent offenders cannot be differentiated from other types of criminals in the crime episode

assessment of pro and anti violent behaviour. This may also be understood by relating to the initial cognitive judgement, such as, "we should not hurt others". Violent offenders may agree with this statement, but when it leads to conditional cognitions, the thinking of entitlement may be activated to result in them acting or responding violently. This may be the reason why they, compared to sexual offenders, feel less guilty about their wrongdoing (Gudjonsson and Bownes, 1991; Gudjonsson and Petursson, 1991).

In summary, offenders' excuse acceptance and offence approval were examined for four crime episodes. The selective pattern of attention and the differential association of working cognitive mechanisms can be observed in making cognitive evaluations on crimes. The results indicated offenders' excuses acceptance varied as a function of their level of involvement in crime. That is to say, that the more offenders involved in a particular crime pattern the more justifications they produced. Social cues (i.e. external or internal), essential to mental processes, are subjectively accessed dependent on how salient they are to the offender. This was fulfilled by using three cognitive strategies a) bypassing of moral concerns on their unlawful acts, b) making a self-interested definition of what is wrong and what is right, c) conditional upholding of regulations and societal values. However, the above three mitigating cognitive operations and justifications generated in favour of their own offence do apply to cognitive evaluation into crime other than their main ones. In other words, a "normal" worldview was adopted to cognitively assess other crime patterns. That is to say, disapproval and negative evaluations (i.e. undesirable consequences, condemnability, and even calling for severer punishment to be imposed) were given to offences they had comparatively less or non experience. Therefore, it is suggested that through a complex and repeated weighting process, a distinct pattern is suggested to form over time by offenders engaging a similar crime patterns.

Research question 2: What are the relationships between offenders' crime perceptions, evaluations and crime specialism indexes?

Question 2.1: Are there any statistically significant correlations between the crime specialism index and criminal identities?

Question 4.1 What are offenders' sociocognitive evaluations and perceptions on their own crimes?

Question 4.4: How are their criminal identities?

This research aims to address the relationship between social-cognitive factors and specific types of criminal behaviour. Rather than to treat crime as a homogeneous activity, the focus of this dissertation is to understand several distinct types of crime in terms of variations in individuals' social cognitions. Research to date has paid insufficient attention to establishing the commonalities and the idiosyncrasies in the relationship between deviant behaviour and social cognition, especially in adult populations.

Criminals' self-identity is conceptualised as the offenders' perceptions about themselves and their main unlawful behaviour. As noted earlier, social knowledge is a feature of development. It is understandable that if one chronically engages in certain deviant behaviours, that these specific and concrete behaviours should also be observed in the offender's self-concept in terms of their identity and their cognitions about their main type of offending. Fontaine and Dodge (2006) suggest that responses produced to stimuli have to be congruent with one's self-identity before the individual proceeds to the next step in information processing. In consideration of one vital sociocognitive tenet, equilibrium (Piaget, 1977), a more theoretically developed justification is provided. Based on foregoing fundamental assumption of the cognitive paradigm, there is an equilibrium between individuals' cognitions and behaviour. Additionally, the experience of reciprocal feedback between cognitive appraisals and the consequent behavioural outcomes have an influence over time. It is expected that there should be a consistency amongst cognitions, serving as self-defending cognitive mechanism in all aspects of this study of offending behaviour.

Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered in this study to address the cognition—behaviour relationship. This research elicited offenders' cognitive beliefs on their criminal self-identity by asking them to indicate their positions regarding different types of offending behaviour. This was used to test the primary assumption that offenders inherently endorse their own habitual offending.

1. Quantitative results

Despite of the overall trend of offenders being supportive of their own behaviour in the self-identity measure (average scores being more than three in the both age groups) and the relationship between the personal criminal identity questions and CSI for drug abuse (adult), the same relationship was not found for each crime in the two age groups. There was a reverse relationship for theft (both adult and youth) and sexual offending (adult), while there was no relationship

for violent CSIs in the adult group. In addition, there was a positive relationship for the youth group in violent crime. This result might be understood by considering the average percentage of adult participants in each crime category. Theft and sexual offending accounted for 20 and 17% of the CSIs, while drug taking and violent offending had higher proportions in the overall indexes (40 and 23 per cent, respectively). It is reasonable to assume that offenders with a narrower variety of offending (higher CSIs) tend to regard themselves differently from other criminals as well as having less inclination to commit crimes different from their usual ones. In addition, there is evidence that those offenders with higher theft and sex CSIs are more likely to exhibit versatile offending behaviour in their criminal careers whereas violent offenders tend to offend with a cluster of violent activities. Reviewing studies suggested that sex offenders tend to commit a broad range of offences (Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2005; Lussier et al., 2005; Sooth, et al., 2000). This tends to support the findings found in this research. Therefore, those offenders who were higher in theft and sexual CSIs their personal criminal identities were less strong than for other crime types. In regression analyses, the crime identity was not found in any multiple regression models in either age group, but in the theft crime specialism index in both age groups, with a negative relationship. It is less easy to explain this result as the juvenile theft CSI was nearly sixty per cent. This may be due to that theft offenders relatively tend not to justify their stealing acts. Nevertheless, the aggregated score in the self-identity variable was even higher than that of the mature research participants. Taken together, offenders, on average, identified themselves and their own crime by giving a score higher than 3 on the Likert five point scale.

2. Qualitative data

Qualitative data is drawn upon to provide additional information on the relationship between the CSI and self-identity issue. Topics relating to self- and crime-identity consist of a number of parts in the interview data, including; 1) evaluations of the nature of their own crimes; 2) self-identity. Due to less information being produced by juvenile interviewees, interviewing data was not able to cover all the mentioned topics, unlike the adult groups. Generally, an apparent tendency of favourably identifying the self and their own crimes was pervasive among the interviewees and the adult participants in particular. Taking drug abusers' cognitive evaluations for example, they identified their behaviour by arguing that there is no aversive outcome ensuing from their "so-called habit" (taking drugs), their justifiable "normal" act. Drug addicts themselves were depicted as normal people compared with other inmates serving for non-drug

related crimes. Although self-identification information was not explicitly given by the sexual offenders, and they were aware of their relatively low status among criminals, they still legitimised their behaviour under a number of circumstances. A number of topics emerged in the interviewing are presented below:

1) Defence and diversion

Overall, interview data pertaining to self-identity reflects two features; a) the defence of their own wrongdoings by either diverting attention to seemingly justifiable aspects or by rendering the situation so that blame could not be exclusively attributed to them; b) utilising strategies that compared their behaviour to other crimes. The point being, according to these two findings, the self-identification function in the offenders' social cognition of offending. It would be too early to claim, as most cognition researchers suggest, that when one identifies or evaluates one's own offending behaviour positively, then this is all done out of self defence. However, this positive evaluation tendency will, to certain extent, play a role in the social cognition and offending behaviour relationship. That is because it would be cognitively incomprehensible for us if a persistent criminal disagreed with their own crimes. To disagree with one's own repeated offences goes against one of the social cognition theories' basic assumptions. That is, people's social cognition should be consistent with their behaviour, under normal situations or at least under conscience-controlled circumstances. However, if we want to prove that individuals' social cognition has a differential relationship with their crime patterns, more investigations into comparisons are called for.

2) The role of self-identity in information processing

As noted above, it would not be understandable for those who chronically commit a specific cluster of crime not to identify themselves and their dominant crimes. Also, it would be difficult to make sense if offenders defend their offending behaviour sociocognitively yet, did not approve of their crime. Given this, self-defence or blame diversion function is assumed to act as an essential and fundamental role in the cognition-behaviour relationship.

In summary, based on the average score exceeding the Likert scale mid-point 3 in both of each question constituting criminal identity subscale and the computed criminal identity variable offenders were evidently found, this result suggests that offender identified their

crimes as well as themselves. A number of significant correlations were found between the score of self-identity and crime specialism indexes but they were not always positive. The criminal identity variable was only entered into theft regression model in both age groups. This result is neither congruent with the expectation nor to elucidate the upwards relationship that the more offenders repeatedly engage in a particular offence the higher they endorse and identify the crime. However, information tapped in interview showed clear identification for offenders to their offences. For example, by comparing with their unlawful behaviour with other offences they thought they were less serious and worth harsh punishment.

Question 2.2: Are there any statistically significant correlations between the crime specialism index and normative beliefs about different offences?

Question 4.2: What are offenders' sociocognitive evaluations and perceptions on other crimes?

Question 4.3: How offenders evaluate and perceive their crimes when compared with other crimes and offenders?

This section uses the fundamental assumption of the cognitive paradigm, which suggests that there is equilibrium between individuals' cognitions and behaviour. Reciprocity of behavioural outcomes and individuals' cognitive assessments on them is the critical operational mechanism in maintaining a balanced psychological state. It is therefore expected that a consistency between the crime specialism index and offenders' normative beliefs should also be observed. Quantitative results will be presented first, followed by the qualitative data.

1. Quantitative results

Some striking findings emerged when testing the relationship between the crime specialism index and the normative beliefs with different crimes. First of all, a reverse significance relationship was found in all crimes in both age populations except in sexual offending in the juvenile group. The questions in this part are worded in such a way as to ask respondents to rank which offence they think is comparatively more negative, in six contexts. The results showed that the offenders cognitively evaluated their own crimes as being relatively less undesirable. Secondly, in most multiple regression models, normative beliefs were in certain populations the most powerful predictor for CSIs. It is worth noting that apart from the

finding that offenders involved in a specific type of offending tended to rate their criminal behaviour as less detrimental socially or personally or both, compared to other offences. This result confirms the hypothesis proposed by reviewed information processing models (Fontaine, 2006a; Huesmann, 1998) and is also consistent with previous studies (Crane-Ross et al., 1998; Huesmann and Guerra, 1997; Zelli et al., 1999). In addition, this finding supports the proposition brought forward in this thesis that offenders tend to justify their own behaviour by promoting its acceptability or/and reducing its condemnation. In other words, self-serving definitions of deviant social behaviour at a personal socio-cognition level can ease the cognitive discomfort generated by the offending behaviour. The strength of the behaviour-cognition relationship observed in the sexual offender group is important as previous research has been unable to discriminate this type of offender from other types of behaviour in terms of some cognitive variables (Harmon et al., 1995; Marolla and Scully, 1986).

Moreover, some sub-group offenders had tendencies of rating the offending behaviours that they do not commit more unfavourably. In other words, offenders tended to legitimise or alternatively mitigate their own unlawful behaviour by regarding other blame-worthy acts more negatively. This is a subjective component that is believed to navigate offenders choosing more salient social cues for their mental processing in coping stimulus. This appears to be a subtle cognitive manipulation, and is reminiscent of Bandura's (2002) advantageous comparison mechanism; which is one of the psychological operations of moral disengagement, utilised by perpetrators to reduce psychological discomfort or cognitive dissonance in their socio-cognitions. In other words, they think, *"I am not such a bad person since others are even worse"*. The evaluation of the offending behaviour is dealt with as if it is not too bad and that other possible transgressions are worse according to the offender's subjective 'definition'. The concept of disengagement with respect to criminal thinking and offending is also addressed by Farrington et al. (1990). If there is a way to justify and excuse behaviour so that it is more in line with offenders' beliefs and values, the behaviour would be more likely to enact. In addition, there is evidence about the extent to which normative beliefs work in the individual's interests. Sex offenders significantly disapproved of drug taking, whereas sex offending was viewed negatively by drug abusers in the adult group. Likewise, the CSIs for theft and violence also illustrates this phenomenon. In other words, these groups seem to stand at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of how they regard the other offending behaviour. Theft

offending was also rated more negatively by offenders with higher drug taking CSI, but evaluated more positively in comparison to other types of offences. In relation to detrimental consequences at the social level, offenders with higher theft CSI the stronger they registered a disapproved opinion on this item, while offenders with the higher theft CSI was joined by the sexual CSI in expressing that there would be negative ramifications at the personal level for violent offending in adult group. Conversely, the more drug and violent offenders engaged exclusively in their index deviant acts, the more they believed that violent behaviour is not such a bad thing. In several cases normative belief relating to other crimes were also entered in predicting models rather than the corresponding one. For example, "violence is detrimental (personal level)" was included as a predictor in the adult drug, and "violence is detrimental (social level)" for theft, "drug taking is detrimental" for adult sexual offending regression models, respectively.

The above differential relationship is note-worthy, particularly in the social information-processing model. What leads people to be more at risk to act violently may not be merely based on the fact that the person has violent repertoires or violent supporting beliefs at a personal level in their social knowledge. The result from drug abusers is evidence that might encourage one to reconsider this seemingly self-evident claim. Furthermore, in the light of offenders' more positive perceptions of their own criminal behaviour, it may be appropriate to suggest that such cognitions may not simply make their own crime more likely but also insulate them from the pressures to commit other types of crime. This is a significant finding in terms of addressing why specific patterns of crime occur from a socio-cognitive perspective.

2. Qualitative data

Qualitative data produced information related to normative beliefs came from two main data categories, including a) the evaluation of other crimes and b) the comparison made with other crimes. The self-defence phenomena shown in the quantitative results were also observed among the interviewees qualitatively. Cues that offenders looked at intentionally, when comparing with other crimes, were seemingly used to serve the offenders' interest. In short, points picked up by offenders were those issues negating other crimes and offenders and relevant social information is discriminately processed. For example, although sexual offenders received enormous criticism over the serious consequences on the victims in the present study, negative comments towards other crimes were still considerably

made by sexual convicts. For drug abuse, these assessments include; a) a variety of ramifications would ensue from taking drugs, not just in the personal but in social level as well; b) it involves moral concerns; c) pointless behaviour; d) addicts should be given severer punishment. However, when sexual criminals were asked to evaluate their own crimes and compare them with other crimes, they were either to legitimise their offending behaviour by asserting that the victims caused the event, to express acceptance of having sex with certain sorts of females or to reduce their own guilty feelings by emphasising the short recovery time from their assaults. Besides, sexual offenders jointly named other crimes are just as serious as they are. These ostensibly plausible justifications were made even in situations where sexual offenders were well aware that they were looked down on, even when being given the lowest social status among inmates. In the light of above cognitive assessments given by sexual offenders on drug abusers, it is reasonable to believe that sexual offenders are less susceptible to taking drugs. However, sexual offenders' disturbed cognitions and crime perceptions on their wrongdoings would make them firmer in their already established cognitive patterns and repeated offending. Characteristics of social cognitive appraisals observed in sexual criminals were not independent; they were also pervasive in the rest of the researched offenders.

The objective of this study is to establish the systematic development of specific relationship between crime involvement and cognitive pattern in an interactive perspective. Research findings and interview data in this section show that there is a negative relationship between the degree of involvement and crime endorsement by rating the crime as comparatively less adverse and acceptable. In most of regression models normative belief variables were the best explanatory factors except the model predicting violent crime specialism index for both age populations. Although this relationship has been demonstrated in the four-offence involved style questions where offenders were asked to compare the four studied offences together, it would be better to test the relatedness in a more specific format (i.e. paired-style crime type questions). By doing so, a more unique distinction can then be made.

Question 2.3: Are there any statistically significant correlations between the crime specialism index and cognitive beliefs on different offences?

Question 4.6: How offenders evaluate their own crime with respect to societal laws and Gibbs's moral principles?

Question 4.7: How offenders evaluate other crimes with respect to societal laws and Gibbs's moral principles?

The specific cognition-behaviour notion is only further corroborated in the adult group when the correlations between the respondents' relative cognitive evaluations on the paired-style crime type questions are examined. Whether or not there is an age effect here, a more specific examination needs to be made. Offenders were asked to indicate to what extent in which they agree or disagree with the two offences involved in the statement in terms of negativity (i.e. forgivability, harmfulness, social costs and selfishness). Results displayed in the juvenile group are clearly much less impressive than in last section comparing normative beliefs on the generic level.

Quantitative results

In the adult group, there were both significantly positive and negative correlations between each crime type and cognitive belief. Of course, the interpretation of these relations is dependent on which member of the pair was presented first in the questions. Here, probing statements were phrased in favour of the second crime type in the question. Only three unexpected outcomes were found. Again this interesting result provides a more elaborate picture regarding how relative cognitive beliefs operate on their own crime beliefs and offending behaviour. This detailed analysis would lead support to the research hypotheses that offenders gave relatively positive evaluations to their offending behaviour as opposed to the other offending behaviour paired with it in the question. The question in this section was entered into a number of the stepwise multiple regression models. For example, the item sexual vs. drugs (in both age groups) was entered in predicting drug CSI. Moreover, sexual vs. drugs was included into a regression model predicting adult theft CSI. For the sexual offending regression model, the comparative question "sexual vs. drugs", as well as "drugs vs. theft" were entered as predictors. On inspecting the results for the relative cognitive beliefs subscale, we found the strength of the correlations to be less than impressive, despite being statistically significant. This result was reflected in the regression analyses, in which, the cognitive belief variable was not included as a predictor in both age violent groups. For these crime patterns, having the cognitive beliefs included make comparatively less contribution to the percentage of variance explained. Nevertheless, a relation between the cognitive belief and CSI is present. These correlations suggest that the engagement in offending behaviour is more determined by offenders' unique social reasoning patterns or preferences formed from crime thematic contingencies

than situational contingencies that the conventional rational calculus perspective implies. Or, at least, the choice to engaging in specific type of crimes is not congruent with the public's beliefs on such aspects as seriousness, punishment, or harm to the victim or the self. However, it may be also reasonable to point out that different types of offenders have discrepant conceptions of different types of deviant social behaviour especially their own chosen types of offending. This social cognitive mechanism is like Gibbs' "self-serving" cognitive distortions (2003) in which offenders hold biased social perceptions serving as self protection from suffering stress caused by their deviant behaviour, which also serves to justify their behaviour.

Qualitative data

Interviewing data pertinent to this comparative exploration on particular topics such as laws, societal consequences, and moral concerns is mainly drawn from two sections. Other than the information already presented on the crime evaluations, the question that interviewees were presented with was "how much it is to do with societal consequence, laws and moral concerns". As noted earlier, in some issues juvenile interviewees were only able to provide limited information, or made no further explanations even after the following probing questions were posed. Nonetheless, the juvenile interviewees were simply differing with the adult groups in the amount of scripts they produced, rather than the scope and content. These two age groups are jointly discussed in this topic.

Despite most offenders suggesting that the repercussions following drug abusing acts were enormous, many offenders, including drug abusers themselves, were commonly found having social knowledge indicating drug-taking behaviour having rather less or even no moral implications and being not so strongly positioned against laws and regulations. Drug addicts even called for decriminalising their behaviour when approached with relevant questions. The point that drug abusers see as distinguishing themselves from other offenders was that drug taking is harmless to society and has no damage to others' welfare, given that there was no moral concerns involved. However, more concerns were paid to indirect problems evolved with abusing drugs other than destroying the abusers' own physical health. Drug abusing behaviour was even named as 'the root of all evils' by most of the interviewees._

As far as the moral domain is concerned, drug addicts only related stealing and sexual offending but not violent behaviour to the moral concern. In contrast, when non-drug abusers were asked to evaluate

their own and others' behaviour, there was a slightly different picture. This is especially the case for the adult interviewees, who more or less admitted that moral implications had bearing in their behaviour, but more explicitly pointed out that there were moral concerns and undesirable influences in other crimes. Even though there was limited information received from the interviewees on moral concerns and law issues, it seemed to suggest that theft, sexual and violent offenders had understanding of the consequences caused by their unlawful behaviour. This raises a conflicting issue as to how non-drug offenders align themselves in terms of social cognition and behaviour.

It would be important to further directly explore what moral principles offenders think they would operate. Furthermore, are there any conflicts between what they say and how they have behaved (their criminal behaviour). Thus far offenders were only asked to give cognitive evaluations on their own and other crimes in the third person. The following question was formed in the course of interviews, when information given by the interviewees was found to conflict with itself. Also, this is due to the consideration that one of the distinctive features of interpretative phenomena analysis (IPA) employed in the qualitative section is to confront interviewees with given inconsistent information with efforts being made to make sense and seek better understanding and clarification.

Question 2.4: Are there any statistical differences in moral domain placements terms of the crime specialism indexes?

The moral domain attribution is also an important contributor to understanding offending behaviour. Crane-Ross et al. (1998) suggest that the intrinsic nature of an act recognised by an individual has a critical influence on his or her view of acceptability. Additionally, they found that aggressive and conventional transgressions were better predicted by beliefs and values coming from the same socio-cognitive domain than from across domains. Further, rule violators are found to tend to manipulatively or self-righteously think their deviant behaviour is not within moral domain but conventional or even in the personal domain. In this way, offenders are expected to downgrade, regardless of the intrinsic nature of the act, the transgression as being less condemnable or having less impact on domains. So far, the moral domain model has been largely applied on young populations and it would have a great improvement on theoretical and applicability levels if we could extend the validation to adult groups. The

relationship between moral domain assignment and the CSI worked differently according to the type of crimes under consideration. Before discussing the interactive effect on the involvement of crime patterns, a review about the potential effect on age needs to be carried out. According to the findings of one-way ANOVA tests between the CSI and the placement of moral domain, more significant effects were seen in the adult group than the younger one. For drug taking behaviour, Nucci et al. (1991) report that adolescents were to view this act as in the personal or prudential moral domains regardless of the level of individuals' involvement. It should be noticed that for the younger age group these two moral domains were computed together in this study, however, no interactive effect between the domain assignment and level of drug use was found. It seems that the older populations had more established social cognitions in terms of moral domain judgements based on their past experiences. Nonetheless, significant differences only emerged in moral domain sub-levels such as in the moral and personal domains and were restricted in the drug abusing and theft crimes. The sexual and violent offending group did not reveal any differences on the crime specialism index.

In multiple regression analyses, "taking drugs belongs to moral domain" was entered as the predictor for adult drug CSI. Although the result did not directly indicate that drug taking acts being a personal concern, drug CSI correlated negatively with the item "drug taking is a moral issue". Moreover, juvenile drug CSI had a positive correlation with the item "drug taking is a conventional issue". The result for drug addicts was in accordance with well-documented research (Amonini and Donovan, 2006; Kuther and Alessandro, 2000; Nucci et al., 1991; Tisak et al., 1994). In which, those who had heavier involvement in taking illicit drugs the more they were likely to see this act as personal or less to do with moral concerns. Thus, the validity of the domain model was extended to adult drug abusers in this study. In addition, the findings in the present study for the other offending studies are also new. Conceivably, offenders who view criminal behaviour as personal or prudential concerns are more likely than those who regard offending as a moral issue to engage in that sort of crime, granted that they do not see themselves as moral transgressors. In turn, this tolerant attitude reduces psychological stress when violated. Because moral concerns or reasoning are as a result not activated, thus moral or uncomfortable pressures would not follow when laws are violated. The findings in the present study only partially support this assumption. More drug crime specialised offenders are more likely to categorise drug taking as a matter of personal prerogative while those

with lower drug involvement are more likely to see their behaviour as a matter of the moral domain. Furthermore, this was also the case for the theft CSI. Similarly, a relationship was also found in the adult theft CSI regression model with the more offenders involved in theft activities, the more likely they think of stealing as a personal issue. In the juvenile regression model, theft pertinent moral domain variables were not included for predicting theft offending. Nonetheless, juvenile theft was joined with juvenile violent offending to include the item "sexual is a moral issue" into respective models with a positive relationship. However, the item "theft is a moral issue" was entered into regression model for the adult violent CSI.

The moral domain model has been employed on 'grey area' issues in terms of morality, such as drug taking (Amonini and Donovan, 2006; Kuther and Alessandro, 2000; Nucci et al., 1991; Tisak et al., 1994) and women's decision making about abortion (Smetana, 1981). The present study, thus, tests the applicability of this model for sexual and violent offending, which morally, are rather more clear-cut. Apart from the tendency of degrading moral elements drug abuse and theft offending as less to do with moral involvement found in the adult group, moral components were indeed observed in both age group offenders' distributions of moral domain on crimes that they did have experiences of. The implication of these self-protective and other blaming findings in their social knowledge is noteworthy. And this may be the reason in which to address why some offenders adhere in certain crimes but not others from content-oriented social cognition's perspective.

More detailed discussions about a) why the effect of moral domain placement and crime specialism index was only found in adult population but not in juvenile group, and b) the justifications behind offenders' decision of moral domain placement on crime types are presented below;

1) The main effect of the distribution of moral domain in the crime specialism index was only found in the adult drug and theft crime specialism indexes. This result may be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, compared with the adult offenders, the younger criminals were less experienced in life and particularly, in their criminal career. Thus, their knowledge bases were less developed and concrete for understanding social events. Consequently, they would be less likely to produce a non 'wishy-washy' value-based judgement on given crimes. Secondly, from the moral reasoning development results we have learnt that the younger samples' SRMS were at stage two on

average. That is to say, their moral reasoning are still overwhelmingly dominated by principles like an unfettered freedom from concrete laws, pragmatic needs and preferences or calculated advantages and disadvantages (Gibbs et al., 1992). Insofar as they base their moral judgement on superficial understanding, they are therefore not capable of yielding prosocial and systemic moral principles from social events. In other words, more developed social cognitions in response to social stimuli are expected to be more likely produced from people holding standards as well as mutual perspective moral reasoning.

2) Although information collected in the crime episode judgement section was not aimed at linking the preference of moral domain distribution for individuals, some components bear moral concerns in response to their justifications of dos and don'ts of crimes.

Convergent with the results of moral domain placement examination in questionnaire format, offenders who thought drug taking should be decriminalised and had nothing to do with authority agencies were appealing to the behaviour as a personal prerogative. The reasons underpinning their decisions, encompassing mainly either that taking drugs does not cause any harm to others or/and no undermining of social integrity. This is the sort of justification on which their reasoning is heavily based. When inspecting offenders' reasons for not committing, or the consequences that theft, sexual and violent offending behaviour may have; components (i.e. justice, fairness, and empathy) defining mature cognitive moral judgements are commonly seen. This phenomenon suggests offenders may not be deficient in the competence of moral reasoning altogether. Yet offenders may be impaired in specific aspects of social information processing. Complementary data helping to further clarify the relationship between moral domain placement and engagements in crime comes from qualitative interviews, where decision-making and cognitive reasoning are clearly seen in context.

Drug abuse

There is no clear perception about whether drug taking involves moral concerns or is against self-conscience across all criminals. However, drug abusers give more indications that taking drugs is a personal discretion and draw upon evidence to back up their arguments. The supporting reasons embraced, based on their own definitions; a) taking drugs only damage themselves; b) spending their hard earn money; c) no harm to others; d) not undermining social integrity. Apparently, drug abusers selectively choose social cues favouring their persistently unlawful behaviour. As noted above, despite only few explicit suggestions yielded by non-drug abusers expressing their

disapproval of substance abusing behaviour by appealing to moral concerns, they also stress its' negative ramifications on other aspects.

The adverse points for abusing drugs included; a) it is the root of evil, for example, making people steal when in financial need and destroy social integrity; b) it is pointless, just for a moment of excitement; c) causing mental illness and damaging health. This supporting evidence was consistent with Tisak et al.'s (1994) findings, where people who approved of drugs primarily based their reasons on prudential considerations. Unlike drug taking, moral issues were frequently referred to in criminals' perceptions and cognitive judgements concerning stealing. Although theft offenders appeared not to explicitly admit that stealing acts involved moral concerns.

Theft

The justifications for implicating stealing behaviour with moral domains were; a) that it violates property rights; b) it may cause great impact to the victims, as the lost property may mean a great deal to them and; c) illegitimate behaviour. Unlike non-theft offenders, thieves turned their focuses, though not completely denying the moral implications their behaviour has, to other respects. Emphases given by theft offenders were; a) their behaviour does not harm people physically; and b) it's not good behaviour but it's not that bad either; c) that they only want property and avoid confrontations. Seemingly, these justifications aim to manipulate the perception of their offences so they appear less serious, and may, by doing so, mitigate the negative consequences in the degree of seriousness and undesirable feeling caused.

Sexual offending

With regard to sexual offending and in terms of moral domain placement, moral implications were unambiguously pointed out in the case of sexual offending behaviour, as this causes enormous and lifelong harm to the victims both psychologically and physically. As a result, the severest punishment was even called for, to be given to sexual crime perpetrators. Inconsistent with the quantitative examination of this relation examination, when sexual offenders were presented with a question about whether their behaviour has moral concern implications they did not reject it straight-out. In other words, sexual offenders did not ignore their behaviour's impact on moral level. However, they suggested that the victims should, under certain situations, share the responsibilities for the unexpected "incidents". The specific conditions suggested by the sexual offenders for

legitimacy included; a) if the victims consent to have sex with them regardless of age; b) if they appear at the wrong times (late night) or in the wrong places (remote or dark areas) and thus should also be blamed and; c) if they dress seductively and behave in seductive ways. Insofar as the victims fall into one of these three categories, sexual offenders may disengage themselves from the moral domain or downgrade it to the lower moral domain with more individual controls. This implies, again, less guilty feelings or negative sentiments towards their behaviour being raised.

Violent offending

Violent offending is an offence type that the majority of interviewees do not think is much of a concern to moral issues; or that the moral concern is weak, if any. Also, this phenomenon is reflected in quantitative results in that no significant main effect was found in the violent crime specialism index. Non-violent offenders concentrated their reasons for not committing violent crimes in the following areas; a) it may cause grievous bodily harm or even threaten life; and b) no need to harm others. Non-violent offenders also indicated that the occurrence of violent incidents; a) must involve both sides; b) it may be the victims who provoke the incident; and c) it could be just fighting with each other, which often happens. While violent offenders shared these identified features with non-offenders, they relied more on these justifying reasons. They also stressed that this was the legitimate response to the threatening circumstances as well as calling for more responsibilities to be shared by the provocateurs. The term 'provocateur' usually refers to the victims of violent offenders. Despite of above communal viewpoints violent and non-violent offenders have observable differences. For example, more legitimate justifications for behaving/responding violently were identified in violent offenders' interviewing data than for offenders without or with relatively less violent experiences. Under these so-called legitimate conditions they, like other criminals, disengage themselves from moral condemnations and cognitive dissonance yielded from their law-violating behaviour.

Thus far, the difference in terms of placement of moral domain between theft, sexual and violent offending has been shown. This demonstrates that individual variations in social cognitive judgements about different patterns of offences, including beliefs, social judgements and identities may exist among offenders. The notion is in reference to cognitive mechanism "consistency" as well as "equilibrium" between people's social cognition and behaviour. The

magnitude of this relationship may be even stronger for repeated offenders based on this cognitive concept. Thus, it would be valuable to look at their other cognitive content-oriented factors to examine this idea. This concern is to be discussed in the section to be followed.

Additional questions emerging during the course of interviews

Question 5. How do offenders' explain if there is any conflict between what they claimed the Gibbs's moral principle to be adopted, perceptions of laws and with their unlawful behaviour?

So far, interviewees' social cognitions, perceptions and evaluations on their own and others' crimes have been presented. The data shows that offenders possess substantially different perspectives on their own criminal behaviour compared to that of others'. However, this research has not yet directly explored issues closely related to criminal offending behaviour. As interviewees' cognitive moral reasoning, measured by the SRM-SF, has been gained, thus, it would be helpful to understand what offenders' viewpoints on crimes are and what moral principles they would apply in general life practice. Are the moral principles they would adopt consistent with the moral levels assessed by the SRM-SF? And how do they explain their offending behaviour which explicitly conflicts with law. Notice, adult interviewees' moral reasoning level were mostly at mature or in an adjacent transitional stage (3/2), while youth interviewees were selected with moral reasoning competence of immature stage 2 or in a transitional stage 2(3). Related to their moral reasoning and their status, as law violators, law issues regarding offending behaviour and their general perceptions were together explored. The discussion to be given below focuses primarily on data provided by adult interviewees, information contributed by the youth interviewees is mentioned where there has some distinctive features. The reasons for doing that embrace a) there were 16 adult interviewees but only 7 juvenile interviewees joined the interview section (see more details at Appendix E), b) adult interviewees provided much rich and thick information than that of the youths', c) in many aspects adult and juvenile interviewees shared very similar themes and features of information in response to questions. Each crime type is discussed separately in the following section:

1. The consistence and conflict of the information (i.e. moral principles applied, the importance of legal issues) given by

interviewees with moral reasoning levels measured, their offending behaviour and within their interviewing data

1) Drug abusers: whereas drug abusers knew the importance of complying with laws and the potential consequences when violating them, the reasons for supporting their judgements vary. Most addicts indicated that law-violating behaviour would have negative impact at the social level; only one pointed out that law-violators would end up being incarceration. As for the use of the moral principle, surprisingly, all claimed that they regarded themselves as a member of society, and upheld the importance of law-abidance for communities. However, a couple of addicts expressed that they believed most of the general public still thinks as selfishly as they do. Of the interviewees responding to the question "which is the best moral principle if people are able to use it", all of them thought that the Stage four or three (mature level) in Gibbs' moral model were the most appropriate. Taken together, drug abusers showed their mature quality of moral reasoning and evidence defining the ability of understanding the inferred underlying meanings of laws. It is apparent that there is a contradiction and conflict concerning what they justified and their actual acts. That is, people who have attained mature moral reasoning are able to value social order and the function of laws, but offenders still persisted in drug abusing activities. In order to solve this contradiction, interviewees were asked probe questions aimed at making sense of this, for the interviewer and possibly themselves. Explanations in response to the questions were categorised into three sub-themes. Firstly, they confessed that there were conflicts between what they claimed in items of moral judgement they would use and their antisocial behaviour. However, justifications falling into this category appealed to the uncontrollable factors that led to their continued use of drugs, despite the presence of cognitive dissonance. That is, the meaning and function of laws for communities were appreciated by drug abusers but nonetheless they repeatedly behave unlawfully. Secondly, there was no conflict at all between these two variables—drug taking and upholding societal regulations. Reasons endorsing their judgements included; a) they still insisted that taking drugs is a personal prerogative and should be decriminalised. They believed that there is no moral element embedded in drug taking behaviour, so they do not see themselves as moral transgressors when using drugs; b) no damaging effect on others was also used as a reason to back up their claim. Thirdly, drug-taking behaviour was seen as the only exception for the inconsistency between what they claim and how they behave. To quote an addict's response as an example,

"Yes (conflicting), drug taking is the only exception, I am a law-abiding person (ad2)".

The above self-defined or rationalised justifications for drug taking behaviour seem to demonstrate how crucial is it to elicit social cognition evaluations on crimes from the offenders' viewpoints. This is because structural-oriented moral reasoning theories only help us to identify the location and the very abstract relationship between an individual and the world they live in. And Krebs and Denton (2005) argue that the focus of cognitive-developmental approach to morality is overwhelmingly placed on moral judgment than on behaviour. However, for example, drug abusers are still able to go through the self-constraining effect generated from mature moral cognitive reasoning easily while they keep enjoying drugs and meanwhile claim to regard themselves as members of society. That is, once taking drugs is deemed as harmless, moral component irrelevant, and personal prerogative behaviour then this would not go against mature moral reasoning. As noted, they were in the cognitively moral mature level according to the moral reasoning measure. What makes this situation occur? The possible answer, built on the current research results, comes from the offenders' own definitions, the content-oriented social cognitions.

2) Theft: Responses for questions regarding the function of laws and the relatedness of laws for theft offending were categorised into three themes. All theft interviewees viewed that the purpose of laws is either to stop people doing bad things or just the need to pay the price for a crime. Moreover, laws did not mean very much for the interviewees or, at least, they were not bothered with the laws. Despite this, they all agreed the importance of laws in this society; their moral justifications here in the interview mainly fall into the Stage two or even the lower moral stage in reference to Gibbs's judgement criteria. More instrumental and exchange purposes of laws and regulations were emphasised by the theft offenders, while their moral reasoning level, measured by questionnaire, were at the 3(2) level, not at the mature stages. They seemed to reason at a considerably low level in their responses.

In response to the question "which moral principle you would apply", theft offenders replied that they would either consider the collective benefits, use stage three moral reasoning or that it depends on the situation. A point of note is the difference of moral reasoning applied at different times. As an interviewee said:

"I use Stage three (moral principle). Yes, it conflicts with my behaviour. I didn't think (about laws) that much before coming here, but as time goes on... I have changed... (at1)".

The above response refers to their different attitudes before they served in jail compared to now. However, this argument is not very convincing given that they had been imprisoned for more than once. Unlike the drug abusers, theft offenders all admitted that their stealing behaviour did go against their self-conscience and laws. Furthermore, they were aware of the conflicts between what they claimed and how they behaved. Similarly to the drug abusers, theft offenders all indicated that the mature stages were the best if everyone could live up to them. Again it is difficult to make sense why people who are able to appreciate the sophisticated underlying meaning of laws and recognise the benefits of mature moral principles still repeatedly engaged in stealing activities. One of the reasons provided by thieves themselves was that it comes down to being in desperate financial need, or that stealing was the final resort. To quote one of the theft offender's responses:

"I would steal again before long; I would obey the law as well as I could, but when there is nowhere to go I might... (at3)".

This justification is congruent with what they said in response to questions regarding laws and the moral principles they used to use before serving in jail this time. However, this appears to contradict the moral reasoning level assessed by the SRM-SF. Aside from the results of cognitive moral judgement ability measured in the questionnaire format, the theft interviewees' moral development ability seemed to be at the immature level. Nonetheless, they ostensibly identified with the mature moral principles being more beneficial for society, and recognised the functions of laws for themselves and communities.

In the case of juvenile thefts, surprisingly, almost all interviewees believed that they would use mature moral reasoning as their behavioural guides. In addition, they also suggested that mature moral principles were better for societies. This means that they are as good as the adult delinquents in discerning the quality difference in an array of moral principles. Yet, when their justifications were analysed in relation to the meaning of law-abiding, a different picture emerged. Responses given by the juveniles on this issue were concentrated on either life being easier if laws are followed, offenders learning their lesson from ensuing punishments or stopping people doing bad things. Clearly, these justifications were heavily based on a superficial

understanding of moral reasoning. Although the level of moral judgement measured by the SRM-SF seemed to be slightly higher than that of the interviews, they seem to be closer in reality, in terms of this issue. According to the findings of the quantitative investigation, the developmental levels of moral norms related to legal issues were substantially lower than other moral values.

3) Sexual offenders: Similarly to the other types of criminals presented above, sexual offenders also indicated that they would use stage three for their behavioural principle thereafter. However, there are some variations to this, the first one being, as noted in the case of theft offenders, the time difference in the utility of moral principles in directing their behaviour. All the sexual offenders consistently pointed out they used to use the immature level of the moral principle. The second is the contingency of social contexts in applying moral principles for guiding behaviour, including such factors as the relation with the offenders and the social environments. As a sexual offender said:

"Before I came in, if the person was dying or drowning, I wouldn't even give him a glance. I thought it's useless, because I will get no benefit at all. I wasn't even able to survive, or I wasn't even able to help myself let alone to help you. (as2)"

"I use the stage three, but it depends. If I am not getting on well with you, I use stage two, I don't like you, I don't owe you, so why I need to help you. (as4)"

For the question of "which is the best moral principle if everyone uses it", again, they all suggested that stage three or four in the Gibbs's moral model are the best. According to the limited information relating to legal issues produced by the sexual offenders, they seemed not to care about laws. As sexual offenders said, they used to think selfishly and operated a lagged moral reasoning. This is consistent with their unlawful behaviour, thus, no further probing question was asked.

4) Violent offenders: three of the four adult violent offenders' moral reasoning was at the mature level (stage 3) while one was at 3(2). The responses produced by violent offenders to the probing question on law relevance issues fell into three main categories. Except for one who replied that they did not care about laws and regulations, others showed sophisticated understanding.

For example, the purpose of law is to maintain the equality of society;

"The social system is the result of efforts that the members of this society have made, if everyone obeys it, despite there being some things that are not perfect, but after long term efforts on it, I think it would change gradually. (av2)"

One interviewee thinks it is fair to send law violators to jail;
"It's fair to send people violating laws to jail, so don't do the wrong things. (av4)

"As laws are to protect us, if there were no laws in place to sanction us, then who could say this is right and that is wrong. (av4)"

With regard to the question "which is optimum for us if everyone could use it?" and "which moral principle would you apply as your behavioural guide". As with the above criminals, adult violent offenders all indicated that they would use mature moral reasoning as their behavioural principle and identified that we are able to benefit most and live better lives if everyone could operate at the mature levels. Given that the responses claimed by the violent offenders are clearly contradictory with their past actions, it seems important to know what their thoughts were on this apparent inconsistency. Violent offenders all thought that there was certainly a conflict with what they claimed about the laws and the moral principles applied. The justifications they yielded were; a) if I wasn't in financial need, I would not have done it (robbery).

"Yes it conflicts with my behaviour, but I just needed money, can't...., in fact, I really needed money, if I didn't rob then I didn't have money to buy drugs, It would have been painful. (av1)";

b) It was an accident, or done out of compulsivity, they couldn't control themselves.

"Sure it contradicts my behaviour, but it was all out of anger and impulsivity. (av2)"

c) They did not actively attack the victim, but rather, they did it reactively (self-defence).

"As it was you who attacked me, rather than me actively attacking you, I didn't mean to harm you, but you were. (av4)"

For the younger interviewees, one exhibited the 3(2) stage, but another was at stage 2 of Gibbs' moral model. Both of these two juvenile delinquents were able to appreciate that the mature moral

level behaviour principle was the best for societies, although one suggested that he would use Stage one moral reasoning.

"I would use the stage two, a bit selfish. If I used stage one, then I would come back to jail before long. (YV1)"

Furthermore, although the juvenile violent offenders gave affirmative answers indicating that obeying laws is very important, it seems that it is not for them, otherwise they wouldn't be paying the price.

"If you don't want to be sent here then don't do it. No one forces you to commit crimes. (YV2)"

It is clear that the juvenile violent interviewees still based their thinking on moral principles of exchange and cruel reciprocity, characterising Gibbs' immature cognitive moral judgement development stages.

Despite that adult offenders' moral reasoning ability being predominantly at mature level they still violated laws. However, more consistencies than differences were observed between moral reasoning ability measured by the SRM-SF and juveniles' interview data, immature level moral reasoning was operated. Surprisingly, interviewees regardless of the age all recognised that moral principle (moral stage 3 and 4) was more suitable for society and the member of society would benefit most from if everyone used it. This reflects the distance in the nature between what people think and what they do. To address why mature moral thinkers behave against laws, there are four explanations observed from interview data, firstly, as Jennings et al. (1983) point out the critical prerequisite to link moral reasoning with behaviour is the moral component (moral relevance). People have to make the moral component salient in the course of their mental processing before bridging the relationship between these two variables. As we saw, for example, a trend of deny of moral concerns involving in drug taking acts by drug addicts. As McCarthy and Stewart (1998) suggest that with crime involvement offenders may be gradually desensitising their offending behaviour. Here, Bandura's (2002) selective moral disengagement may be one of the mechanisms as a result of this psychological process. Secondly, legal related areas of moral reasoning appeared to develop relatively lower than the interviewees' overall moral reasoning ability. As that, they are therefore more vulnerable to law violations. This reminds us the pragmatic utility of moral order in different social contexts proposed

by Krebs and Denton (2005), in which the use of moral order is dependent on the nature of social contexts. Thirdly, the difference of moral reasoning offenders operated before offenders served in jails and now. It is theoretically possibly that people's moral reasoning may develop over an adequate period of time or after interacting with outside world. For example, for offenders incarceration would be of a great impact for them. Thus, as offenders indicated they used to have self-central thinking or while were committing crimes. Yet, one of the criteria for recruiting interviewees in this research was they had to be recidivists (see appendix E for details), some even had three and four times imprisonment experiences. Lastly, the making of definition as to what constitutes legitimacy and fairness is on offenders' hands. Generally, superficial rather than profound understanding of law and legal issues are of the nature of their moral reasoning.

Comprehensive discussion: How does the proposed offender-centred, integrated social reasoning approach work in understanding specific offending behaviour?

The relationship between offenders' social knowledge and crime engagement is to be discussed by integrating information and results gained by qualitative and quantitative research methods in this research. By doing so, a crime specific social knowledge model is able to establish. Information which are supportive of offenders' unlawful behaviour and that information inhibiting/aversive for offenders to engage crime rather than their main one are discussed separately.

The relationship between crime specialism indexes and social knowledge: a crime specific crime social reasoning model

Information and findings addressing why people with certain cognitive characteristics have more of a propensity to engage in crime are reviewed together here. One of research features of this study was incorporating two cognitive orientations to understand how one's latent knowledge in information processing exerts influence in crime decision making. To accomplish this research aim, offenders' cognitive knowledge was elicited through two forms of question. Apart from using conventional methods in which offenders were asked to evaluate their own unlawful behaviour, they were also approached with questions set in a comparative manner on the four studied offences. Data are analysed systematically under the opposing stream-- self-serving and other-aversive social cognition on the crimes. The dependent variable is the crime specialism index, while

the independent variables are comprised of self-identity, normative belief, cognitive belief, moral domain model, moral reasoning development, and crime episodic judgment. Detailed discussions are presented, as follows;

1. Drug taking acts

Comparatively better predictability was produced in the multiple regression model for predicting substance abuse behaviour in the quantitative section. Besides this, more coherent and confirmative justifications were generated by drug abusers to elicit drug abuse in the qualitative data. This remains true when some undesirable evaluations (i.e. unattractive appearance, not an acquisitive crime) were expressed by the drug abusers. The addicts were noted as having adopted a number of manipulating strategies which are believed to act as either an alleviating guilt or mitigating cognitive dissonance resulting from the crime they engaged in.

1) Excitatory cognitive evaluations; the notion of specific correlation between cognition and criminal behaviour suggests the more one specialises in a crime pattern, the stronger cognitive endorsement of the crime would be exhibited. This assumption is indeed supported in the adult drug abuse multiple regression model. However, 24% of the variance was explained in the juvenile model, with just 8% of the crime specialism index compared with 41% of the crime specialism index and 31% of the variance was accounted for in the adult model. When inspecting items entered into the two models, there appears to be a somewhat different picture. Variables included into adult drug crime specialism index regression model came from more sub-scales than the juvenile one. Additionally, the variables entered into the adult model were also more directly related to drug taking behaviour. However, there was, no moral value or SRMS found in either age's model. Furthermore, drug abuse was the only crimetype investigated in which moral values were absent in the multiple regression models. This implies that the structurally oriented social knowledge is not a determining factor in leading to drug taking behaviour. This is not an independent case. Items which may facilitate people to become involved or even lead people to more heavily embrace drug taking include; a) denying that drug taking is detrimental (both ages)(*normative beliefs*); b) disagreeing less negatively with drug use in various social aspects (adult)(*crime episodic judgment*); c) thinking that drug taking is less serious compared with sexual offending (both ages)(*cognitive beliefs*); lastly, d) less likely to place drug taking in the moral domains (adult), while drug taking is a conventional issue (juvenile) (*moral domain model*).

In the qualitative data, drug interviewees also pointed out that this act is a personal prerogative and should be decriminalised. Following this, drug taking becomes a sort of membership issue in which an individual has absolute right to decide whether or not to engage it from a moral domain theory perspective. Additionally, this perception may result in drug taking behaviour being excluded from the Kohlbergian moral development paradigm as a result, as there is no material (i.e. interest conflicts, moral issue related arguments) used for examining individuals' cognitive moral reasoning. What's more, they justified their conducts by arguing that drug taking does not cause harm to others and would even cause no negative effects. Compared with other inmates they do not steal, let alone assault females. Let us turn to review their cognitive ability. The addicts were competent in moral reasoning in reference to legal issues; this is together with their ability to recognise mature moral principles as optimum to societies if employed. Drug abusers indicated that they would apply mature moral reasoning in guiding their behaviour. As a result of the above response, drug abusers did not even believe their behaviour contradicted what they claimed. Built on consistent information coming from both data sets, a clear summary is therefore made that content-oriented cognitive evaluations and perceptions exerted more determining influence than that of a structural approach on addressing drug taking behaviour.

2) Aversive/inhibiting cognitive evaluations (to self and other crimes); in the multiple regression models one cognitive belief item (sexual vs. drugs)(both age groups) and two items (sexual is personal issue and violence is conventional)(juvenile only) were included. Although this result was less impressive for the juvenile samples when looking at individual sub-scale results, it was better than that of the adults in the regression analyses. Indeed, sexual offending was markedly disfavoured in cognitive evaluations by drug abusers in both age generations generally and for the adult group, particularly. In addition to giving undesirable appraisals, especially to sexual offending, juvenile drug abusers also offered considerable cognitive evaluations indicative of aversion to other non-drug taking crimes. This unique phenomenon was observed in content data as well. They demonstrated sophisticated moral reasoning competence on other criminal behaviour, such as underlying understanding and empathy which defines mature moral reasoning in Gibbs' moral model. From a cognitive approach viewpoint, there is a positive relationship between cognition evaluation and the probability people would engage in that conduct. In this way, this may work to insulate drug addicts from committing stealing, sexual and crimes. It should be noted this

inference is based on a theoretical view (purified samples) and may contradict empirical evidence in which drug addicts are detected as being involved in acquisitive crimes.

The evidence has helped illuminate why people who chronically engage in drug taking activities are not involved in other crimes. It suggests that hard-core drug abusers may simply have deficits in the areas of social cognition conducive to drug taking behaviour, whereas they develop healthily and soundly in other areas regardless of the substance abuse. Social cues salient to drug abusers place more weight against those social dimensions they subjectively value less.

2. Theft offending

1) Excitatory cognitive evaluations; when all of the information collected in this current research is put together, the persistent engagement of stealing behaviour can be interpreted in the following way. In the multiple regression model, the juvenile prediction model accounted for more variances than that of the adults. This result would strengthen the specific cognition-behaviour assumption again when considering that there was nearly 60% and 20% in the CSIs in the juvenile and the adult groups, respectively. Of the entered items, theft offending is detrimental (*normative beliefs*) was shared by the two groups with negative base values. That means that the higher offender possessed CSI in theft the stronger they did not think stealing behaviour is relatively serious in the employed six contexts in the normative beliefs scale compared with the rest of crimes. Another theft pertinent variable included was that stealing belongs to the personal moral domain (*moral domain model*) for the adult regression model. This is along with an item coming from the cognitive beliefs (drug vs. theft), suggesting that thieves comparatively favoured theft behaviour. Although the moral value "property & law" was not entered into the juvenile theft regression model, it is the only moral value that negatively correlates with juvenile theft CSI. In contrast, this moral value was positively correlated with youth sexual and violent offending CSIs. This replicates Palmer and Hollin (1998)'s findings which report that adolescent offenders, with more theft records, were less mature in this moral value in terms of moral development. Does this imply that different age thieves have differential cognitive mechanisms contributing to them stealing repeatedly, as the adult offenders' moral reasoning have primarily developed at the mature level? Although the possibility of relatively lagged development in this moral value compared with others in Gibbs' model may not be dismissed, this cannot be confirmed in the current study. Another moral value that negatively correlated with juvenile theft crime is

"legal justice". This may make juveniles more vulnerable in stealing behaviour. Lastly, there was a reverse relationship with self-identity in both age populations.

In the qualitative data; from thieves' knowledge basis, stealing behaviour is regarded as a trivial crime in comparison with other studied offences. This is based on their perceptions and cognitive evaluations that; a) it does not result in physical harm to victims, and has not much to do with psychological damage, if anything; b) stealing, in fact, is neither involved moral concerns nor belongs to the moral domain; c) the punishment of theft crime is relatively trivial, if they are caught; d) the gains of stealing are tempting, especially when they have no way out of a situation but through stealing. Nonetheless, they acknowledged that law-abiding is important but that they would also consider going back to their previous career when they are in financial desperation. Furthermore, they were aware that society is built on mutual trust and respect but that self-centred thinking was still rife in their mentality. In spite of the guilty feelings or cognition dissonance they may still have as a result of their offences, these adverse feedback processes were not that strong or cognitively attended. This was particularly true when they compared with other criminals engaging in other offences. Property theft victims do not suffer very much from stealing behaviour; rather, it just causes some material losses. As theft interviewees indicated, they are "normal" persons, they do not take drugs, assault females, and they repeatedly stressed that they avoided physical confrontation with others (i.e. victims) categorically. Notably, social cues salient to theft are treated differently and highlighted. This differential cues attention is operated in thieves' own interest.

2) Aversive/inhibiting cognitive evaluations (to self and other crimes); this includes those variables entered into the multiple regression model by a stepwise method but not explicitly supporting stealing behaviour cognitively. It was against expectation that crime identity had a reverse correlation with the CSI regardless of the considerable difference in percentage in the two groups. Thus, this result needs to be understood, as the more people are involved in stealing activities, the less they identify with this crime and themselves. Is this outcome the result of other confounding factors, because research has suggested that thieves tend to commit more varying types of crime? Or, this is a unique psychological feature; that relatively, thieves do not strongly identify with their blatantly law-violating behaviour and/or themselves. Other than this item not corroborating with the notion that cognition and behaviour are believed to be consistent, in

this direction, no other item was included for the adult group. Offenders with higher theft CSI were significantly less approving of drug taking behaviour (juveniles) (less drug taking agreement) and less approving of sexual offending (adults) (*crime episode judgment*). This was jointly held with the belief that sexual offending had much to do with moral concerns (juveniles)(*moral domain model*). Lastly, the item violence is detrimental (*normative beliefs*) was positively correlated to adult theft CSI. This again may protect thieves from committing violent crimes.

To add more information to this result, qualitative data is drawn upon. Theft interviewees indeed generally gave negative perceptions and cognitive evaluations on drug abusing, but also suggested undesirable sentiments and moral implication on sexual offending behaviour. This is the representation of individuals' cue attention differences to which more attention is paid to social cues salient to them and therefore in their mental information processing. In this aspect, this is a contradiction with the findings generated in significant test format. Furthermore, although theft interviewees also indicated disagreement with violent behaviour, they had something in common in cognitive evaluations, favouring violent behaviour. This result also emerged in the adult theft regression model. Where theft offenders did not think violent behaviour was socially detrimental as well as being less disapproving of it in crime episode judgements.

The accrued information has helped us to understand why people persistently remain in stealing behaviour but refrain from non-theft crimes. Although they do not deny the negative consequences caused by stealing, thieves look to the belief that they are relatively less harmful to both victims and the community. Thereby, while they conceded that stealing behaviour might involve moral concerns and go against their own conscience, by diverting attention or downgrading the damage done by stealing behaviour, they would engage in it when in financial need. From a cognitive moral reasoning perspective, the under-developed competency exhibited by theft interviewees may partly account for how they position themselves in relation to the society and laws. This information is divergent with what they claimed regarding the moral principles they would use and the ability they showed in recognising the optimum moral reasoning. In addition to this, this is inconsistent with the mature competence of moral reasoning measured by the SRM-SF. Based on the above evidence the researcher proposes that both age groups of thieves have only of limited impairment in aspects which directly relate to stealing in social cognition. Additionally, this is coupled with a lag of

moral reasoning in specifically property and law moral values for juvenile thefts.

3. Sexual offending

1) Excitatory cognitive evaluations; of the variables included in the multiple regression model for adult sexual offending CSI, there were three items directly connected to this behaviour. The first item is that adult sexual offenders were not affirmative that their behaviour is detrimental (*normative beliefs*). This means that sexual offenders did not think they are relatively serious or harmful to society and victims. In addition, compared with theft behaviour, sexual offenders (theft vs. sexual)(*cognitive beliefs*) disagreed with their unlawful behaviour as being more negative. Moreover, the more people are involved in sexual offending, the stronger they support that behaviour. This is shown in the crime episode judgment scale, in which more supporting responses were generated for offenders who had higher sexual offending CSI. The above mentioned facilitating results may serve to make people more vulnerable to committing sexual offences by rating the behaviour positively in their social knowledge evaluation. This confirms the cognitive interpretation that the specific relationship between cognition and behaviour as well as being more involved in an act, would lead to greater people identifying with that behaviour sociocognitively.

More contextualised information content-oriented data is therefore introduced to make an integrated discussion. Sexual convicts think that their victims should, under certain circumstances, share the responsibility or be blamed for the occurrence of incident. Such facilitating conditions for initiating sexual offending behaviour are based on the grounds such as the victim dressing skimpily; appearing in dark and remote areas, being alone late at night. They distinguish these sub-group females from normative females once they are sexual assaulted. The sexual offenders thought that females with "deviant" characteristics were either not really getting hurt, that they just deserved it, or that the recovery (e.g. psychological and physical aspects) is just a matter of time. With this logic, this represents that they may process information differently towards females with and without the identified characteristics. It also shows a different style of interaction patterns with potential victims. Moreover, in their normative beliefs they accepted that having sex with females under the consent age if the girls agreed. In the juvenile group, only the moral value "legal justice" was entered into the model. This may be due to only 3% of CSI in the juvenile sexual offending behaviour. It is quite perplexing that the more adolescents involved in sexual

offending activities the more mature they were in moral reasoning in this moral value. This is further confounded by the result that this moral value was relatively mature in both age samples. This may be because sex offenders tend to be oversocialised. In this regard, the reverse relationship assumed by cognitive-developmental theorists between deviant behaviour and the moral reasoning maturity is questionable in addressing sexual offending behaviour. More research is warranted to address this issue.

2) Aversive/inhibiting cognitive evaluations (to self and other crimes); drug taking behaviour received considerable undesirable evaluations by sexual convicts (Drug disagreement)(*crime episode judgment*)(adults). This result has been observed in the sub-scale in the questionnaire, showing that drug and sexual offenders mutually disagreed strongly. Similar results on drug taking came from the normative beliefs variable, where drug taking was rated as being comparatively more detrimental. This is believed to act as an inhibitory function preventing sexual offenders from being involved with drug taking behaviour.

With regards to the content data gathered, as noted above, the sexual offenders accepted having sex with females who are under consent age, despite conceding the potential consequences of sexual offending. Moreover, they also realised their criminal behaviour had moral implications and knew how the general public or other inmates who were non-sexual offenders, may have a bad opinion of them. Despite the above negative perceptions and cognitive evaluations given on sexual offending behaviour, they still engaged in the crime activities. In contrast, sexual offenders expressed that they were not liable to commit other crimes and this was together with negative evaluations of other crimes. On the other hand, they admitted that they used to utilise the immature moral principle for behavioural guidance, but meanwhile suggested they would use mature moral reasoning now and in the future. This demonstrates that sexual offenders may just have deficits in the knowledge base that precipitate their sexual offending but prevents them from being involved in other crimes.

In terms of the quality of moral judgement, three of the adult sexual interviewees were at mature stage 3, while other two (one adult one juvenile) were at transition stage 3(2) measured by the SRM-SF. It should be noted that the cognitive moral development of moral norms pertaining to legal issues assessed in questionnaire format were relatively lower than the rest of the moral norms. This was not just for

the adult group, but also in the juvenile delinquents. The contradictory situation between the moral principle they claimed to use and what is most appropriate for societies and their actual conduct, was also pervasively seen in the interviewing data. Sexual offenders were capable of indicating that the public and society would benefit from the employment of Gibbs' mature level (stage three and four) moral principles, if adopted by everyone. Yet, they confessed that they used to use immature moral reasoning or at least immature moral reasoning in aspects related to criminal justice and laws, as their behavioural guide. In legal issues, both qualitative and quantitative data were quite consistent. Is this delay development as a function of their continued engagement in sexual offending activities, resulting in debilitating effects on the sensitivity of moral concerns on peculiarly sexual offending issues? Hence, this effect might enhance their vulnerability to be involved in sexual crimes, but at the same time act as an inhibiting factor to other deviant behaviour. Mental processing is a complex brain operation, in order to work more efficiently or serve personal interest; social cues may be processed with a bias. Therefore, social cues salient to an individual might lead them to take up subsequent cognitive reasoning in response to external stimuli. Finally, this again casts doubt on the global construct that parallel development of moral reasoning across all areas is infirm, at least when it is indexed with outcome measured by the SRM-SF.

4. Violent offending

1) Excitatory cognitive evaluations; violence is detrimental to personal and social (normative beliefs) levels was included in the adult violent multiple regression model. Offenders have a higher crime specialism index in violence the less they put value on the negative effects of physical assaults. This finding is not surprising, as research has reports that violent behaviour might sometimes be understood as instrument to gain status among peers or occur out of an attempt to construct a tough-guy impression with others. This phenomenon was also seen among violent interviewees. They did not think, compared with other studied crimes, they were looked down on. Another potentially strengthening item comes from the moral domain model variable "contract & truth". Because this moral value was assessed by questions measuring commitment with peers and others, therefore the concept of loyalty and promise keeping may make people more likely engage in physical conflicts. This may be considered together with another moral value "legal justice", in which an opposite relationship was found as with the adult violence CSI.

Violent offenders looked down on other criminal behaviour for reasons that sexual offending is very shameful, stealing behaviour is embarrassing when you are known, and that there is no point to taking drugs. That is, they did not think they should be 'tarred with the same brush', although they are all inmates. Furthermore, despite violent offenders perceiving their acts as being quite socially serious, they diverged attentions to other causes that would legitimise their aggressive behaviour. "It was reactive rather than proactive" was often referred to when rationalising their "uncontrolled" or "self-defence" violent conducts. Another motive was that their behaviour was for the sake of maintaining or preventing friends' interests when under threat. The aggressive act was the last resort, or an inevitable outcome, and the suffering posed on victims was just a means to an end. Compared with other non-violent offenders, they seemed more confident with the enactment of aggression. Besides, they were more liable to thinking that violent behaviour is able to reduce aversive treatments by others. As noted above, "contract and truth" was an item entered in the regression model and may work similarly in nature in violent offenders' information processing. The item represents that peer trust and interdependence is valued more if people are involved in more violent activities in the adult group, since the establishment and maintenance of social relations are vital for them in their value systems. As Krebs and Denton (2005) suggest that a more pragmatic approach to morality seems to be plausibly practiced in our everyday lives. For violent offenders, especially gang members, be cooperative with others in the same group would secure them the maximum benefit. Furthermore, aggressive repertoires and resolutions were more frequently detected in the interviews; consequently it may be easier for violent offenders to retrieve and access these scripts when in conflicting social situations. Additionally, the repeated enactment of violent offending may, in turn, result in adjusting their normative beliefs on aggressive acts to alignment with the standards of appropriate behaviour. In summary, findings found in this research provide support for the hypothesis that violent offenders evaluate aggressive acts, regardless of them being pro-or reactive, in ways that are likely to encourage them to enact and maintain such externalising behaviour.

2) Aversive/inhibiting cognitive evaluations (to self and other crimes); in the violent multiple regression analysis the item theft was a moral issue (*moral domain model*) and sexual offending is a moral issue (*moral domain model*) were included in the adult and juvenile regression models, respectively. This implies that the higher the offenders scored in violent CSI, the stronger they believed stealing

behaviour involved moral concerns for the adult group. The same mentality was applied in the juvenile delinquents for sexual offending.

In the qualitative data, other than theft and stealing behaviour, violent interviewees, regardless of age, gave enormously undesirable evaluations on other crimes. Comparatively, more aversive comments and perceptions were made against sexual offending and offenders. As the violation of the moral norms by sexual offending is a more salient social value for the violent offenders, a higher value was placed on that offending behaviour. Nonetheless, sexual offending related items were not included in the adult violent regression model, rather, they were seen in the juvenile model, in which, sexual offending was placed in the boundary of the moral domain. Additionally, although in certain aspects drug taking was not the behaviour that was rated most unfavourably, it was also entered in to juvenile regression model. Lastly, there was a reverse relationship between the SRMS and the juvenile violent CSI.

In terms of moral reasoning measured by SRM-SF, only one of the three adult violent interviewees attained the transitional stage 3(2), others were at mature stage three. For the juveniles, both of the two interviewees were at the immature level. Like most of the other interviewees, violent offenders were not just able to recognise the more suitable and beneficial moral principle to be adopted by everyone, they also indicated that they operated at the mature level of moral judgement. However, when they were further confronted with their unlawful behaviour, they ascribed the cause of the incident to their impulsive and passive motives. That is, even in a circumstance in which they believed violent offending is something to do with moral concerns, they remained suggesting that the occurrence of violent incidents must have involved both sides. Sometimes, they accused the victims of instigating violent conflicts. Moreover, violent offenders were able to appreciate the meaning behind social events and laws, and also showed empathy to the victims of crimes. Justifications in response to other offending and the function of legal issues have embodied mature level moral reasoning. It is obvious that some contradictory information was measured or provided by the violent offenders in their moral judgement ability and evaluations. Again, this inconsistency leads to the thought that violent offenders' social knowledge is impaired in areas contributing to their crime pattern only, whereas developed soundly in other dimensions irrelevant to aggressive behaviour. This is coupled with their individual variations in attending social cues subjectively salient to the decision-maker.

In summary, through an integrated discussion on cognitive processes, a more detailed association between crime patterns and social knowledge among the studied criminals in the two age groups is delineated. Current research findings show a differential relationship between these two variables. The phrase "cognitive process" denotes two aspects of the mental process; one is how people think, and another is what people think (outputs) (Crick and Dodge, 1994). By eliciting information from these two cognitive components this study has shed light on enquiries regarding to what extent offenders' responses can be generalised into other contexts, and whether offenders' latent mental structures are organised with situation constraints, or are at the moral universal level (Crick and Dodge, 1994). Based on the information gathered by the two research methods, an offender's cognitive processing should be conceptualised as a context/theme specific orientation. In other words, a global perspective should be dismissed, at least, for offenders' populations, especially for those who chronically adhere to a specific crime pattern. This is not to deny the hierarchical development framed by Kohlberg in terms of moral reasoning quality. Instead, how moral hypocrites, found especially in the adult offenders in this research, cognitively maneuver themselves into a "safe and self-affirmative position" is more of importance for forensic psychological study. There are two cognitive phenomena are worth noting from developmental perspective on recidivism. This is the impulsivity in retrieving stored scripts or latent established values. Fontaine (2008) suggests that there may have an interactive effect between impulsivity and behavioural disinhibition—scripted and value-based impulsivities. Scripted impulsivity implies that when a well-rehearsal script is initiated, then evaluative decision making is, by virtue of that, functionally turned off. For value-based impulsivity, offenders' decision making may be overridden by one valued norm or regulation, irrespectively extremely high or low. This may lead some support on the results observed in this thesis. That is, the option to commit other crimetypes may be simply discarded as a result of disfavour in terms of values, and vice versa one crime pattern may be retained and repeatedly acted out due to offenders' formed knowledge structure across experiences. According to the results found, this research has confirmed a construct "specific relation between cognition and behaviour" advocated by socio-cognitivists (Chen and Howitt, 2007; Crick and Dodge, 1994; Crane-Ross et al., 1998) working on predicting social behaviour by cognitive correlation. Moreover, understanding is further advanced and extended to more forensic psychological fields by expanding this present investigation to more forensically qualified populations.

The Crime cognitive whirlpool model

Based on the findings in this research, a dynamic model integrating two underlying critical resources of individualised behaviour decision making—social cognition content and moral reasoning structure is proposed. An analogy is made between cognitive functioning and a water whirlpool. Thus, it is named the “crime cognitive whirlpool” (CCW) model (see graph 9.1). This is basically an idea that offenders are being pulled down to crimes. In addition, as offending experience growth, offenders would develop more established social cognitions underpinning their offending. This socio-cognitive model is a device with a bi-dimension and underlying drive features. This interactive and dynamic model was created in an attempt to better describe the emerging process and maintenance of persistent offending behaviour. The two dimensions respectively refer to a global cognitive structure (longitude) and a cognitive content (latitude). The drive of the whirlpool’s movement is triggered and maintained by individual’s active and biased favouritism in content oriented social cognitions, and strengthened by repeatedly specific law-violating behaviour. Furthermore, structural deficit areas corresponding to impaired content cognitions (i.e. water surface) may also contribute to offenders’ specific crime involvement. Detailed information is presented as follows;

1. Content-oriented social cognition assessment (water surface)

This crime cognitive whirlpool model constitutes three water currents (i.e. content sociocognitive evaluation tendencies) in the water surface (see graph 9.1). They are 1) drawing upon favourable cues and social cognitions to their own crimes, but 2) excluding disfavoured cues and social cognitions to their own crimes, and 3) having other-blaming sociocognitive evaluations on other crimes (see Table 9.1.1). The first two tendencies found in offenders’ social information processing or crime social cognitions on their own offences are together called “excitatory cognitive evaluation”, while the last one is called “aversive/inhibiting cognitive evaluations”. As noted, there are two currents occurring in areas with opposite currents (positively evaluate their own offence (first current) but defensively exclude negative consequences (second current)). These two sociocognitive assessment tendencies on their own crimes are found linked to offenders’ crime engagements, where the stronger offenders were observed holding these two tendencies in a specific crime the more they engaged in that crime. Thereby, they are believed to contribute to offenders’ specific crime involvement by way such as self-serving or self legitimating cognitive evaluations. One the

other hand, the aversive/inhibiting cognitive evaluations is also found to associate with offenders having more specialised crimes, where they tended to give undesirable cognitive evaluations on crimes other than their main ones. It is a reverse relationship between offenders' CSIs and aversive cognitive evaluation on other. Since the first and third currents move in the same direction (having positive beta values in regression model) they converge in the central of the crime cognitive model. This means they jointly lead to crime commitment with the same orientation. With these three main currents (i.e. crime sociocognitive assessment tendencies) spiralling downward around an entrenched-crime pattern, one is therefore suggested to be more susceptible in a specific cluster of crime.

As described above biased sociocognitive assessments are to serve as the driving momentum (spinning) in the model. Additionally, as one of the notions that social cognitive theorists firmly hold on addressing behaviour is the reciprocal effect between one's ongoing interpretations and the outcomes of enacted behaviour. Hence, offenders are suggested by cognitivists to bring social cognition with already robust cognitive patterns into social situations, referring to habitual crime decision-making behaviour and processes. Of course, it is not possible to understand offenders' social cognition without context. The impetus is believed to work actively in the social cognition paradigm, and the underpinning force comes from continuous interaction between the individual's existing model and the behavioural consequences.

The specific relationship is strengthened further by offenders' unique crime cognition judgement made on their own and other crimes studied. As offenders did not give consistent perceptions to the studied offending acts, rather, a self-serving/other-blaming psychological mechanism was widely seen in the results and the information collected by the two research methods employed. Therefore, the deviancy of cognitive content is also specific here. However, the degree of correlation regardless of the direction varies from one to another crimetype in both the moral reasoning structure and the content-oriented crime cognitive evaluations. This is a result indicative of the extent of how deep-rooted a person may be cognitively trapped in this crime cognitive whirlpool model. The tendency of offenders' favouritism may be of utility for offenders to give their own crimes more legitimate reasons, but attenuate negative consequences caused by their disorderly behaviour. The adult drug abuse and juvenile theft crimes best exemplify this phenomenon. Here, the content-oriented social knowledge offers greater power of explicability in addressing these two crime patterns

than that of the others. This finding matches well with their relatively higher CSIs. This is an effect called the "solidifying process", and keeps on developing with experience. Furthermore, this developing process is energised through the reciprocal function between the subjective ongoing knowledge organisation and behaviour outcomes. On the other hand, the "formative process" may play a critical role in insulating an individual from being involved in other cluster of crimes as well.

2. Structural-oriented social cognition assessment (the root of whirlpool)

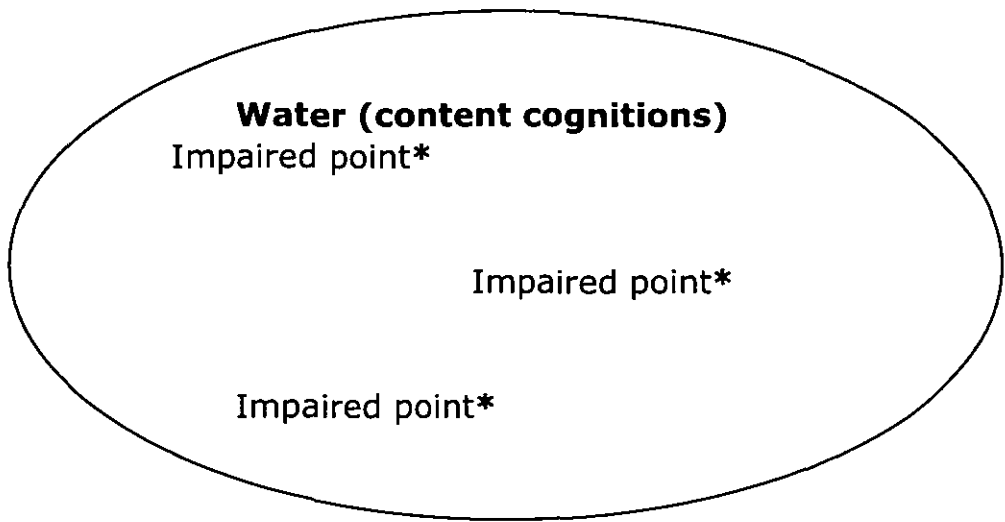
With regard to the ability to pin down problematic cognitive areas; firstly, it was found that the moral reasoning delayed hypothesis was supported in the current juvenile samples only according to the SRM-SF results. Therefore, it is believed that an immature level of moral judgement is responsible for adolescents' moral reasoning at the overall level whereas ineffective in distinguishing different crime patterns. However, both adult and juvenile offending are partially determined by the relatively lagging developed legal issue related moral values – legal justice, property & law and contract & truth. Specifically, moral value "contract & truth" works jointly with "legal justice" to show at-risk areas for facilitating adult violent offending, while "property & law" delay the juvenile theft crime. As the hierarchical framework is a feature shared with cognitive moral theories, thus it represents the yardstick of longitudinal dimension in the crime cognitive whirlpool model. Given that the risky locations having been pointed out, it is suggested that offending would only occur in specific areas and only function differentially to different offending behaviour rather than overall situations among adult offenders. This is because of certain moral values being respectively entered to predict different offences. On the other hand, this model also indicates that different offenders had peculiar development arrested areas (moral values). The at-risk areas correspond to their criminal behaviour but they function relatively healthily in their crime irrelevant areas. In other words, in a seemingly peaceful water surface (i.e. mature moral reasoning overall) there may be certain dangerous areas present. As such, the specific relation between cognitions and crime patterns remain unclear and, it appears that the moral reasoning variable has exerted decisive power in predicting and explaining crime patterns, especially for adult samples.

3. The location of impaired content and structural oriented social cognition in relationship to specific offence.

To make a clear demonstration regarding where the impaired content oriented social cognition is and how do they differentially relate to dysfunctional structural oriented moral values are illustrated by graphs (see graph 9.1 and 9.2) as follows;

1) Locations

The vertical view of the crime cognition whirlpool (CCW) model. Graph 1 illustrates the position where impaired social cognition areas may lie at for different offending behaviour. At-risk social cognition points are clearly pointed out for different offences. The notion that this research is making is, offenders' social knowledge may well be impaired only in offending corresponding points but developed healthily in other irrelevant areas. Thereby, a complete dysfunction in offenders' social knowledge in relation to all crime patterns is not assumed. Therefore the social cognition and offending behaviour should be conceptualised as a specific and differential relationship. Simply put, one of the conclusions the current research made is that different pattern of criminal behaviour is exclusively or more strongly associated with individuals' specific cognition-deficit areas in content characteristic social cognitions. Table 9.1.1 gives the studied content-oriented cognitive components which were entered into each crime multiple regression model. There are two patterns of included social cognitions, namely excitatory and inhibiting cognitions. The age group that each included item for is indicated in the parentheses behind the items. Along with this indication, the main variable in which each entered item comes from is also presented.



Graph 1: the location of impaired sociocognitive components.

Table 9.1.1: The content-oriented sociocognitive components which were entered in to different crime multiple regression models.

Drug taking

Main variable	Entered item
<i>Excitatory cognitions for drug taking (draw in supporting cues)</i>	
Normative belief	1. Drug taking is not detrimental (both ages)
Crime episode judgment	2. Less disagreement with drug taking (adult group)
Cognitive belief	3. Drugs taking is more favourable than sexual offending. (both ages)
Normative belief	4. Drug taking is hardly to do with moral concerns (adult)
Moral domain	5. Drug taking is a conventional issue (juvenile)
<i>Aversive/inhibiting cognitions (condemning others)</i>	
Moral domain	1. Violent offending is not a conventional issue (juvenile)
Moral domain	2. Sexual offending is not a personal issue (juvenile)

Theft

Main variable	Entered item
<i>Excitatory cognitions for stealing behaviour (draw in supporting cues)</i>	
Normative belief	1. Stealing is not detrimental (both ages)
Moral domain	2. Stealing is a personal issue (adult)
Cognitive belief	3. Compared with drug taking theft is less serious. (adult)
<i>Aversive/inhibiting cognitions (condemning others)</i>	
Normative belief	1. Violence is detrimental (social level) (adult)
Crime episode judgment	2. Less agreement with sexual offending behaviour (adult)
Moral domain	3. Sexual offending is a moral issue (juvenile)
Crime episode judgment	4. Less agreement with drug taking (juvenile)

Sexual offending

Main variable	Entered item
<i>Excitatory cognitions for sexual offending (draw in supporting cues)</i>	
Normative belief	1. Sexual offending is not detrimental (adult)
Cognitive belief	2. More favourable to sexual offending compared with thefts (adult)

Crime episode judgment	3. More justifications for sexual offending (adult)
<i>Aversive/inhibiting cognitions (condemning others)</i>	
Crime episode judgment	1. More disagree with drug taking acts (adult)
Cognitive belief	2. More favourable to drug taking compared with thefts (adult)
Normative belief	3. Drug taking is detrimental (adult)

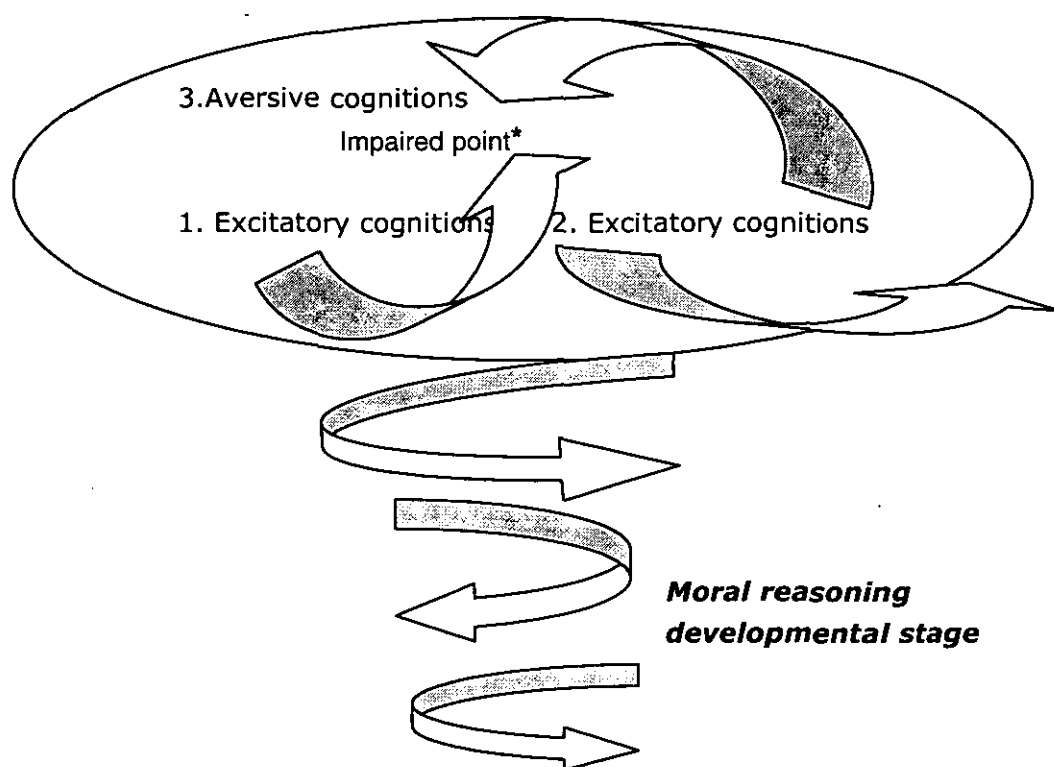
Violent offending

Main variable	Entered item
<i>Excitatory cognitions for violent offending (draw in supporting cues)</i>	
Normative belief	1. Disagree that violent behaviour is detrimental at the personal level (adult)
Normative belief	2. Disagree with violent behaviour being detrimental at the social level. (adult)
<i>Aversive/inhibiting cognitions (condemning others)</i>	
Moral domain	1. Stealing is a moral issue (adult)
Moral domain	2. Sexual offending is a moral issue (juvenile)
Crime episode judgment	3. More disagree with drug taking acts. (juvenile)

2) Cross-sectional graph—content and structural cognitive evaluations on offending behaviour. (**The impaired point***)

There are three water (i.e. cognitive evaluation proclivity) currents—one is drawing upon desirable social cues and cognitive evaluations (i.e. favouring cognitive assessments, no moral concerns involved and legitimacy) while another one is excluding disfavoured sociocognitive evaluations (i.e. denying damaging) and still other is aversive cognitions (i.e. condemning other crimes). In addition to the tendencies observed in offenders' information processing which were embodied in their content social cognitive assessments, the contribution (impaired and facilitating effects) in offenders' structural social cognition (i.e. moral reasoning ability) was also identified. Table 9.1.2 shows the entered moral values and an overall moral reasoning score (SRMS) in three juvenile and one adult multiple regression models. However, although their beta values were not all negative (contract and truth (adult violent), legal justice (juvenile sexual), and SRMS (violent juvenile) were positive), they did relate or contribute precipitate respective crimes but by different directions. Relevant more detailed discussions on this issue have been presented in the

specific question 1.3. To recap the points central to the relationship between moral reasoning and offending behaviour, there are a) the feature of structural social knowledge is suggested to be more stable and more general (i.e. abstract) in concepts and have wide scope of influence in people’s decision making. For instance, legal justice was the predictor with a reverse relationship (i.e. negative beta value) for juvenile theft and adult violent CSIs in this research. This implies that those higher in these two indexes are more likely to have self-central, cruel benefit exchange, unilateral and physicalistic thinking in legal justice issue. Therefore, people delayed in moral reasoning in this moral value would be more at risk in precipitating into criminal involvement. b) However, it would be also possible that strong commitment (i.e. contract and truth) with others (i.e. peers, gang members) may put people higher in violent crime index more likely to be subject to peer pressure and influence. Cognitive developmental approach to morality is viewed as people’s internal regulatory mechanism, functioning like Huesmann’s (1998) normative belief. Thereby, moral reasoning ability along with content-characteristic social cognitions are drawn upon together to address offending behaviour. But these two types of social cognitions work in different levels in dealing with social cues.



Graph 2: crime cognition whirlpool (CCW) model

Table 9.1.2: The structure-oriented cognitive judgements items entered into multiple regression models

Theft (juvenile)	Sexual (juvenile)	Violent (adult)	Violent (juvenile)
1. Legal justice	1. Legal justice	1. Contract & truth	2. SRMS (juvenile)
		2. Legal justice	

4. The advantage of this model

The advantages of this whirlpool framework are;

1) It illustrates a reciprocal relationship between socio-cognition and the commitment of specific offence. That is, efforts are made in the crime cognitive whirlpool model to both locate dysfunctional areas in the horizontal level and to exhibit the extent of deficits in the vertical level of offenders’ social cognition. The relationship between the proclivity of particular crime engagement and social knowledge should be understood as likelihoodness. With this understanding, the independent variable in this research is represented by “crime specialism index” rather than categorical variable. Social information processing model proposed by Dodge and colleague (Coie & Dodge, 1998; Crick & Dodge, 1994) clearly describes how human beings process social cues. The model depicts the procedure that a decision is made and a response is decided upon two psychological mechanisms—online versus latten social knowledge. This current research only looked at the latter part. However, Dodge’s model does not spend sufficient time on how stable social knowledge influence decision making. Additionally, how social cognitions (e.g. social schema, moral reasoning, normative beliefs, and values) work on different pattern of behaviour.

2) Thus far, there is insufficient effort made to address the question why some people stick in specific crime pattern but not other from social cognitive perspective. Findings of this research may shed some light on this issue. That is the development of specialism may be a consolidating process evolved around a cluster of crime. Where two psychological mechanisms-- assimilation and accommodation may entail in the systems purifying process by aligning with existent delinquency. The crime cognitive whirlpool model reveals and gives insights of how does this alignment process in social cognitions mat work in relation to offending behaviour.

3) This current research was aimed to integrated two branches of social knowledge—content versus structure, having developed separately. This has resulted in a heat debate over whether content or

structure social knowledge can address offending behaviour better. The crime cognitive whirlpool model has provided a systematic thinking and indicates differential relationships may replace the conventional understanding—competing relationship in addressing offending behaviour, especially crime specialisation.

4) This crime cognitive whirlpool may revive the importance of cognitive developmental approach to morality being limited explanatory power in understanding offending behaviour. Instead of positing moral reasoning development is a construe of structure-whole, individual moral values would in their own right to better associate with varied crime characteristics.

In summary, a view that integrates these two sociocognitive approaches would offer more fruitful result in explaining offending behaviour, though content-oriented social cognitive components provided more variances than did the structural ones. The crime cognitive whirlpool model provides a dynamic framework in depicting the differential association between social knowledge and crimes by incorporating the two approaches. In addition to the suggestion of integrating the two social knowledge approaches, a systems perfection mechanism (Fontaine, 2006a) in individuals' cognitions is suggested to work interactively in content and structural social knowledge and mental information processing within individuals.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

This research aimed to address the relationships between social-cognitive factors and specific types of crime pattern. Rather than to treat crime as a homogeneous activity, in the present research the research objective was to understand several distinct types of crime in terms of the variations in individual's social cognitions. Besides, age factor, essential in developmental cognitive theories, was included in this research design.

A set of cognitive factors (i.e. criminal identity, normative beliefs, cognitive beliefs, moral domain, and cognitive evaluations on crime episode questions) was used to examine the effect of the latent social knowledge on drug abuse, theft, sexual and violent offending behaviour. Researchers have paid insufficient attention to discriminating the commonalities and the idiosyncrasies in the relationship between deviant behaviour and social cognition. How specific offenders' knowledge bases are associated with their entrenched unlawful behaviour is still unclear. Why some people only commit one type of crime but not others if they are all described as the individuals possessing poor role taking competence or tend to think law violating is not that blameworthy. A theoretical premise is still lacking to explain this enquiry from sociocognitive perspective. This is the primary research question guiding the orientation of this thesis. Furthermore, modern treatment philosophy has switched its emphasis from general improvement to specific targets which offenders are diagnosed most needed. As such, treatment outcomes would be improved if we are able to distinguish sociocognitively criminogenic components predisposing individuals to specific offending behaviour. In addition, one of the possibly ignored issues to researchers in understanding offenders' mental thinking is not thinking in ways what offenders are thinking. And it would be equally inadequate to assume offenders with markedly different crime characteristics to process social cues with the same "lens". Moreover, thus far the dearth of research has not related findings to participants' actual behaviour. To fulfil the research purposes, both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to elicit information from incarcerated juvenile and adult male convicts.

The first concern of this thesis is what are the relationships between moral reasoning ability in overall, individual moral value, age, crime episode judgments, and crime specialism indexes (CSI)? Juvenile offenders' were found to reason at immature moral reasoning stage (represented by sociomoral reflection moral score, SRMS), while adult

group were at mature moral reasoning level through Gibbs's SRM-SF. However, the causation relationship between delinquency and moral reasoning ability is unable to demonstrate due to the cross-sectional research design employed. This finding has replicated an investigation (Chen and Howitt, 2007) conducted in Taiwan in juvenile delinquents. Moreover, although this is the first study conducted on adult Taiwanese male offenders, the mature moral reasoning ability revealed is also in line with two of only a few studies conducted in Australia (Stevenson et al. 2004) and Canada (Ashkar and Kenny, 2007). As research participants in this thesis consisted of varied characteristics in terms of crime history, imprisonment experiences, crime patterns and age, the results in this study lead to a fuller picture particularly in understanding adult offenders' social knowledge. The thrust of concern here is why and how people with adequate ability in moral reasoning still fail to desist themselves from crime engagement? This enquiry invites a further research question about whether there is a relationship between the crime pattern involvement and moral reasoning ability. The results denied the hypothesis by showing there were no relationships existing between these two variables. To interpret this liner relationship hypothesis assuming the more individuals engaged in crime activities the lower their moral ability, defined by poor perspective taking competence, would be, correlation tests were redone by replacing the SRMS variable in the tests with individual moral values. There are only two (i.e. contract & truth (positive) and legal justice (negative)) with adult violent CSI but six (i.e. affiliation with theft CSI positive), property & law with theft CSI (negative) and sexual CSI (positive) and violent CSI (positive) significant relationships emerged. The results have two indications. Firstly, that structural-oriented moral reasoning ability deficiency may link more strongly to juvenile delinquency than with adults. From that, it is doubtful just now how much impact that moral reasoning ability still remains on adults' crime decision making. Would moral reasoning simply accommodate to offenders' progressively established crime-prone social knowledge. Secondly, one of Kohlbergian fundamental theoretical constructs is the structural-wholeness should be reviewed if not dismissed altogether. Instead, it would make cognitive developmental moral theories more sensible to specifically associate offending behaviour with its potentially corresponding moral value. For example, according to the findings in this thesis, a reverse relationship exhibited between property & law moral value and theft offending. Simply put, this immature development result in specific moral values is suspected as a factor leading individuals to specific crime commitment.

Related to previous question and to further test Kohlberg's structure-wholeness assumption ANOVA tests were carried out to examine whether the five moral values develop at the rate. Legal aspect moral values (i.e. legal justice and property & law) were found to be significantly lower than other moral values in both age groups. Differences were even found between each other amongst the five moral values in the juvenile group. More compelling evidence has therefore suggested that offenders' moral reasoning progresses asynchronously. Since Kohlbergian theories mostly developed out of investigations on normal adolescents and a relatively less part of general adult populations, thus, this wholeness concept in moral reasoning form has gained fairly little ground for its validity evidence on criminal populations. And, it is problematic to assume that, at least, chronic offenders operate their moral reasoning consistently in dealing with their daily social situations and lives. The reason is they live in a distinct world—normal and unnormal. If, according to Kohlberg's epistemology, knowledge is acquired through social interactions, then why offenders are expected to possess a single-worldview. Still in this main question but developing further into another question, does moral reasoning ability relate to content-characterised crime justification trends? Offenders' justifications were tapped through responding to four crime episode questions. The number of justifications for their chosen decisions (i.e. disagree and disagree to the statements of crime episode judgments) were counted. There was only one significant difference. Those who held the anti drug taking opinion were found to develop higher than the group supporting drug taking in terms of the SRMS. Furthermore, T-tests were performed between the two opinion camps and moral reasoning ability in the individual moral value context. There were only three 3 out of 40 possible significant relationships emerged. Since, there was only a few significant difference observed, therefore, offenders' moral reasoning and their crime episode judgement orientation are suggested to be independent cognitive constructs.

To the second main research question, what are the relationships between offenders' crime perceptions, evaluations and CSI? Primarily, this research question aimed to address the relationship between social-cognitive factors and specific types of criminal behaviour. How offenders perceive and evaluate the four crime patterns considered in a comparative perspective, and to what extent in which offenders' perceptions and evaluations can be related to their CSIs. The research is based on the fundamental assumption of the cognitive paradigm which holds that there is equilibrium in individuals' cognitions and behaviour. Additionally, the experience of reciprocal feedback

between cognitive appraisals and the consequent behavioural outcomes is also assumed to have an influence over time. This was used to test the primary assumption that offenders are supportive of and inherently endorse their own habitual offending.

Firstly, despite of the overall trend that both adult and juvenile offenders were supportive of their own behaviour on the criminal identity measures (average scores being more than three) there was no relationship found in the juvenile group. Although a positive significant relationship emerged between the criminal identity questions and crime specialism for adult drug abuse, the same relationship was not found for other crimes. Rather, there was a reverse relationship for theft and sexual offending, while there was no relationship for violent crime. This result might be understood by considering the average percentage of our adult participants' in each crime category. Theft and sexual offending accounted averagely for 20 and 17% for the CSIs, whereas drug taking and violent offending had higher proportion in overall index (41 and 23 per cent, respectively.). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that offenders with a narrower variety of offending tend to regard themselves differently from other criminals as well as having less inclination to commit crime naturally different from their main ones. In addition, there is evidence that theft and sex offenders are more likely to exhibit versatile offending behaviour in their criminal careers whereas violent offenders tend to offend with the cluster of violent activities. A review suggested that sex offenders tend to commit a broad range of offences (Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2005). This tends to give some support for the findings. Therefore, their criminal identity is less strong than for other crime types. However, although juvenile theft had an average 59% of CSI, no relationship was found with criminal identity. This result may be understood by drawing upon the fact that juvenile deviant behaviour may be more to serve as an instrumental function rather than ends. Moreover, adolescents' social knowledge may be still at a formative stage and due to less experience they are less likely compared with adults to form a concrete social cognition generally. Yet, on the other hand, the role that social cognitions play in guiding behavioural decisions may be less influential on adolescents in comparison with age older populations. More research is needed to address this issue.

Secondly, some striking findings emerged when testing the relationship between the CSI and normative beliefs about different crimes. Except juvenile sexual CSI (only 3%), offenders involved in a specific type of offending tended to rate their criminal behaviour as less negative compared to other offences. This result confirms the hypothesis proposed by reviewed information processing models

(Fontaine, 2006a; Huesmann, 1998) and is also consistent with previous studies (Crane-Ross, Tisak, & Tisak, 1998; Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Zelli, Dodge, Lochman & Laird, 1999). In addition, this finding supports the thesis's proposal that offenders tend to justify their own behaviour by promoting its acceptability or/and reducing its condemnation. In other words, self-serving definitions of deviant social behaviour at personal socio-cognition level may ease the cognitive discomfort produced by the offending behaviour. The strength of the behaviour-cognition relationship observed in the adult sexual offender group is important as previous research has been difficult to discriminate this type of offender from other types of behaviour in terms of some cognitive variables (Harmon, Owen & Dewey, 1995; Marolla & Scully, 1986).

Moreover, all but one (i.e. juvenile sexual offender) groups had tendencies to rate more or less the offending behaviours that they do not or commit less more unfavourably. That is to say, offenders tend to legitimise or alternatively mitigate their own unlawful behaviour by regarding other blame-worthy acts more negatively. This appears to be a subtle cognitive manipulation, and is redolent of Bandura's (2002) advantageous comparison mechanism; which is one of the psychological operations of moral disengagement, utilised by perpetrators to reduce psychological discomfort or cognitive dissonance in their socio-cognitions. In other words, they may think "*I am not such a bad person since others are even worse*". Samenow (2004) notes that offenders may not accept specific crimes and think these crimes are offensive according to their own sets of behave standards but they are entitled to do what they want. In addition, there was evidence about the extent in which cognitions work in the individual's interests. Adult drug taking was significantly disapproved by sex offenders whereas sex offending was viewed negatively by drug abusers. The result implies that these groups seem to stand at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of how they regard the other groups offending behaviour. Adult theft was rated more negatively by drug offenders as well but they were evaluated more positively in comparison to other types of offenders. In contrast, juvenile drug was disapproved by offenders having higher involvement in stealing activities. In relation to violent behaviour's detrimental consequences at the social level, only adult theft offenders gave a disapproved opinion on this item, while the theft group was joined by sexual group to express that there would be negative ramifications at the personal level from violent offending. This later relationship was also found in the juvenile theft group. Conversely, the more adult drug and violent offenders engaged exclusively in their index deviant acts, the more they believed that violent behaviour is not such a bad thing. This is a

noteworthy differential relationship particularly in the social information processing model. What leads people to be more likelihood to act-out violently may not merely be indicated by the extent to which the person has violent repertoires or violent supporting beliefs at a personal level in their social knowledge. For those convicts sticking on drug taking violent offending behaviour is conceptualised in a knowledge structure with two layers cognitive social meanings. The results from the group of drug abuser are evidence which might encourage one to reject this seemingly self-proved claim. Instead, this outcome may help to understand aggressive behaviour taking place in different forms and contexts. As we know there are a variety of different forms of violent offending behaviour. Therefore, why is it that adult drug takers, in the findings, possessing violence supporting beliefs in personal level (but didn't agree with the statement that violent is not detrimental to social level) do not end up committing violent offences? There may be some differences at certain stages (i.e. on-line processes) of information processing which make some people more vulnerable to acting violently but not others. Nonetheless, the specific endorsement to violent behaviour expressed by adult male prisoners in Polaschek *et al's* (2004) work is replicated in the current study. And it is also demonstrated in the juvenile violent personal level.

Furthermore, in the light of offenders' more positive perceptions of their own criminal behaviour, it may be appropriate to suggest that such cognitions may not simply make their own crime more likely but also insulate them from the pressures to commit other types of crime. This is a significant finding in terms of addressing why specific patterns of crime occur in socio-cognitive terms. Moreover, in view of Fontaine's (2006a) systems perfection on social information processing models, this would not just act as a sociomoral filter but also be involved in cue attention, script retrieval and other relevant processes. Additionally, offenders may align themselves with their predominant crimes with experience.

This notion is further corroborated when the correlations between the respondents' cognitive evaluations on the paired-style crime type questions are examined. There were both significant positive and significant negative correlations between each crime type and cognitive beliefs. But this result is only restricted on adult group only. No relationship exhibited in the juvenile group. This may be interpreted in ways that the age younger group may still hold a "wishy-washy" cognition on crimes and due to a very unbalanced distribution on the juvenile CSI in this thesis. Of course, the interpretation of these relations is dependent on which member of the

pair was presented first in the questions. Four unexpected outcomes were found (i.e. violent CSI for the Theft vs. violent item, the theft CSI in Theft vs. sexual item, and drugs CSI for the Theft vs. sexual item, violent CSI for the violent vs. sexual item) in the adult group. Again this interesting result provides a more elaborate picture regarding how cognitive evaluations operate on their own crime beliefs and their own offending behaviour. This detailed analysis sheds light on this thesis's research hypotheses that offenders gave relatively positive evaluations to their offending behaviour as opposed to the other offending behaviour paired with it in the question. These correlations suggest that engaging in offending behaviour may be more determined by offenders' unique social reasoning patterns or preferences formed from crime thematic contingencies than situational contingencies which the conventional rational calculus perspective implies. However, it may be also reasonable to point out that different types of offender have discrepant conceptions of different types of deviant social behaviour especially their own chosen mode of offending. This social cognitive mechanism is like Gibbs' (2003) "self-serving" cognitive distortions in which offenders hold biased social perceptions serving as self protection from suffering stress caused by their deviant behaviour which also serve to justify their behaviour.

Moral domain attribution was also an important factor to understanding offending behaviour. The theorised relationship between moral domain assignment and the CSI worked differently according to the type of crime under consideration. For the moral domain items, neither the adult sexual and violent offending group nor all four crime types show any differences on the CSI. The result for adult drug addicts was in accordance with well-document research (Amonini & Donovan, 2006; Nucci, Guerra & Lee, 1991; Tisak, Tisak & Rogers, 1994). However, the findings in the present study for the other offending studies are new. The reason for not being able to find significant difference in juvenile drug CSI is a) juvenile drugs only accounted 8% of average CSI. b) less crystallised knowledge was established. Conceivably, offenders who view criminal behaviour as personal or prudential concerns are more likely than those who regard offending as a moral issues to engage in that sort of crime. The findings in current study only partially supported this assumption, with the more drug crime specific offenders being more likely to categorize drug taking as a matter of personal prerogative and those lower on drug involvement more likely to see their behaviour as a matter of domain bearing moral component. This was also the case for the adult theft group. A moral domain model has been employed

with issues with grey areas in terms of morality such as adolescent drug taking (Amonini & Donovan, 2006; Kuther & Alessandro, 2000; Nucci, Guerra & Lee, 1991; Tisak, Tisak & Rogers, 1994) and women's decision making about abortion (Smetana, 1981). The present study, thus, tests the applicability of this model to sexual and violent offending which, morally, are rather more clearcut. The reason to address this failure may be that the occurrence of these two offending behaviours would be as noted earlier more sophisticated in the process of social reasoning and needs further exploration in more detailed aspects. For example, how established knowledge databases interact with on-line information processes to come to a behaviour decision making is also crucial to get insight into the cognition-behaviour relationship. Especially, sexual and violent offending events require interactive subjects to involve other than the perpetrators. The moral domain approach has provided some valuable information as to why drug abusers and theft offenders engage persistently in these criminal activities. Their decisions to engage in these crimes were seen as a personal matter rather than one for others to contribute to.

The third main question was is it possible to predict CSIs from sociocognitive factors? First of all, generally in all but one (i.e. juvenile sexual CSI) multiple regression models content-oriented cognitive evaluations were most powerful predictors for each crime type studied. The variance explained seems to as the function of the degree of CSIs. That is, the higher in the CSI the better prediction was able to be made by assessed social cognitions. However, among the entered items in the multiple regression models, adult SCIs appear to be explained more by items pertinent to the crime type they meant to predict. This may suggest that adult offenders were more sociocognitively solid or their social knowledge may have developed in a theme-centred mode. Legal justice was the best predictor from structure knowledge camp. This moral value was included in the prediction models for juvenile theft ($\beta = -.27$), sexual ($\beta = .24$). Moreover, contract & truth ($\beta = .16$) was joined with legal justice ($\beta = -.22$) into adult violent CSI model, explaining 2% and 3% of the variance, respectively. This means the more adult offenders involve in violent crimes the higher of their moral reasoning in contract & truth would be. The aforementioned moral values predicting crime specialism indexes were believed to be responsible for weakening the inhibiting effect that mature moral reasoning ability (i.e. adults' overall moral reasoning scores) is expected to work in preventing people from crime involvement.

Criminal identity was only entered in the adult ($\beta = -.18$) and juvenile theft ($\beta = -.27$) multiple regression models. That indicates the more they engage in stealing activity the least they identify with the act. With two exceptions (juvenile theft and violent), normative beliefs were entered in all hierarchical stepwise regression models. Two normative beliefs were even found in the adult drug ("drug is detrimental" ($\beta = -.23$) and "violence is detrimental" ($\beta = -.13$)), theft ("theft is detrimental" ($\beta = -.15$) and "violence is detrimental" ($\beta = .20$)), and sexual ("sexual offending is detrimental" ($\beta = -.16$) and "drug is detrimental" ($\beta = .17$)), and violent ("violence is detrimental at personal level" ($\beta = -.17$) and "violence is detrimental at social value" ($\beta = -.14$)) CSIs. For the juvenile group, only one normative belief item entered to drug ("drug is detrimental" ($\beta = -.20$)), theft ("theft is detrimental" ($\beta = -.20$)). The positive beta values imply offenders had affirmative cognitions on them while negative beta values suggest offenders held evaluative cognitions against the items. The next variable examined is the cognitive beliefs. The wording in this scale is in favour of second crime involved in the pair-styled question sets. For the adult group, sexual vs. drug ($\beta = .22$), drug vs. theft ($\beta = .16$), and theft vs. sexual ($\beta = .14$) and drug vs. theft ($\beta = -.20$) were entered into the drug, theft and sexual CSIs regression models. As to the juvenile group, sexual vs. drug ($\beta = .26$) was the only predictor from the cognitive beliefs camp to explain drug taking behaviour. Another social cognitive factor assessed by the questionnaire form is moral domain. The item "drug taking is a moral issue" explained 1% of the variance for adult drug CSI, but with a negative $\beta = -.11$. However, "stealing is a personal issue" contributed 3% of the variance with a $\beta = .20$. Next, "stealing is a moral issue" explained 2% of the variance for violent CSI, with a $\beta = .18$. Regarding to the juvenile group, items included in the regression models were such as "violent offending is a conventional issue" ($\beta = -.24$), "drug taking is a conventional issue" ($\beta = .30$), and "sexual offending is a personal issue" ($\beta = -.23$), explaining 4%, 6%, and 2% of the variance, respectively, for the juvenile drug taking SCI. The item "sexual offending is a moral issue" was the predictor increasing 9% ($\beta = .29$) of the variance for juvenile theft regression model. And this item also explained 6% ($\beta = .23$) of juvenile violent SCI in the regression model. The last cognitive factor examined in the quantitative data in this thesis is crime episode judgments. The item "drug disagreement" was entered into the multiple regression model for the prediction of adult drug taking. It explained 8% of the variance with a beta value of $-.27$. There were two predictors coming from this factor, such as "violent offending disagreement" ($\beta = -.15$) and "sexual offending

agreement”(beta=-.14) and with a 2% of the variance each contributed to the adult theft regression model. For the adult sexual offending SCI, “drug disagreement”(beta=.29) explained 15% and “sexual offending agreement”(beta=.23) explained 4% of the variance for adult sexual offending regression model. There was no item found in the adult violent regression model from this factor. In the juvenile regression models, theft SCI was predicted by “drug taking agreement”, but with a negative beta value-.36 explaining 9% of the variance. Next, juvenile violent CSI was explained by “drug agreement”(beta.27) for improving 5% of the variance. The different patterns of relationships found in the multiple regression analyses show a quite clear relationship between the extent of specific crime engagement for different crimes and offenders’ identification of themselves as a particular type of offender.

For research question 4, what are the relationships between offenders’ crime perceptions, evaluations and offending behaviour? Generally, adult interviewees offered richer and thicker information than adolescents regarding to the concerns proposed in interviews. Interviewees were intentionally selected with convictions falling at the same cluster of crime types. Adult interviewees’ moral reasoning ability were predominately at mature level or with only one Gibbs’s Global moral reasoning stage lower, while juvenile interviewees were all at immature stages. Most of the adult interviewees and all of the juveniles were observed to reason at the immature or at adjacent transitional stages in legal related issues, despite claiming that mature moral principles are preferable for society, if everyone employs them. Surprisingly, most of the interviewees, especially adults, were able to appreciate the sophisticated and underlying inferred meanings (e.g. against fairness, injustice, empathy & respectfulness). These components are protocols defining mature moral judgements. However, these quality characteristics were constrained in the unlawful behaviour where they had no or less experiences. But, following the interpretation phenomenon analysis (IPA), the information provided by the interviewees appeared to be contradictory, and seemingly, not understandable. With adult drug abusers as an exception, theft, sexual and violent interviewees all conceded that some conflicts existed between the moral principles they claim they would use and how they had behaved. The conflicts appealed to self-serving tendencies aiming at disengaging offenders from condemnation or moral pressure. The flexible employment of moral reasoning might be due to the immature development in the moral reasoning by means of the reciprocal effect between engagement of specific behaviour and its outcomes. Conversely, it

may be a pragmatic strategy used to cope with this kind of social situation. The reason for adopting the strategy may be simply because it allows the individual to attain goals more efficiently.

Information gained from qualitative research method in understanding what is most determining in addressing the studied law violating behaviour shows much more consistency with evaluative cognitions reported in quantitative form than discrepancy. For drug taking behaviour, a number of evaluations which are crucial, including; (1) drug taking is not detrimental to the personal and social level; (2) drug taking is not a moral issue, instead it is a personal discretion; (3) identifying drug taking behaviour. With respect to stealing, some influential deviant socio-cognitions were held for maintaining behaviour against property crimes. The cognitive evaluation included; 1) theft is not detrimental; it causes no physical harm and features an avoidance of confrontation. Also, they thought stealing a trivial crime; 2) stealing is a personal moral domain issue (adult) or exhibits a relatively moral reasoning developmental delay in the "property & law" moral value (juvenile); 3) it is acceptable to steal when in financially desperate. This result is an apparent disruption of competent moral reasoning and demonstrates some of the negative perceptions and evaluations theft offenders produced of their own behaviour. In the case of adult sexual offending, perceptions and evaluations upheld by the sexual offenders were; 1) sexual offending is not detrimental in comparison with other crimes; 2) more justifications to legitimise sexual offending behaviour were generated by offenders with a higher sexual crime index. For example, the relationship between the victim and perpetrators, blaming victims' for dressing skimpily, appearing at the wrong (dark, or remote) places or in the small hours; 3) acceptance of having sex with victims under consent age in their normative beliefs. Finally, violent offending is more likely to occur when; 1) people possess relatively immature moral values in legal justice, while being more mature in contract and truth; 2) violent behaviour is not detrimental to the personal level; 3) the "incident" (killing or bodily damage) are done out of compulsivity and uncontrollability, for example, they did not mean to kill the victim, they were just acting out of self-defence. Leenders and Brugman (2005), and Tisak and Jankowski (1996) point out that there is a general tendency for aggressive adolescents to legitimise aggressive behaviour in various ways. In present study, the cognitive manoeuvre in which Yes-But conditional cognition may likely be applied, where offenders may agree to the moral involvement in sexual and violent offending but under certain environments to act out these two behaviours is considered legitimised.

There is a tendency for offenders to legitimise their own behaviour more positively or less unfavourably by selectively picking up social cues and values favouring them, while flippantly pointing out the condemnable nature of other unlawful behaviour. Bandura (1991) has argued that moral reasoning alone is inadequate to explain conduct. It is suggested that the extent to which people make moral-sense judgements relevant to themselves on social stimuli seems to be more important than what they know about morality. Which social cues are to be viewed as moral relevance is subject to a person's systematic sociocognitive knowledge developed over time and experience. This phenomenon is analogised into two currents moving in opposite directions. Lastly, maladaptive cognitions may contribute to the persistence of offending acts, including aggressive and other deviant behaviour. Results demonstrated the specific effect by which social cognition is believed to exert influence on corresponding offending behaviour. And the favouritism or the established cognitive schemata, scripts of the social cognitions for offenders with discrepant characteristic are also to exercise for decision making in that act.

In summary, content- and structurally oriented characteristics of social knowledge collected through two research methods are integrated to form a cognitive model in addressing law violation conduct. Based on the results gained in the present study, a crime cognitive whirlpool (CCW) is proposed to describe the specific interactive relationship. It is believed that this model would help us to specify the extent to which content- oriented social cognitions risk initiating or increasing to the participation in specific crimes. Also, this model is able to locate dysfunctional areas in cognitive moral reasoning that contribute to corresponding offending behaviour.

Limitations of this research and directions for further studies were discussed as follows; 1) the per cent of CSI was not equal across all crime types researched in both age groups. This may have had an impact on examination conducted throughout this research, although the current research sampled a quite large scale of participants. In other words, the number of predictors included in the regression model may be subject to the proportion of CSIs. Thus, how well the CSIs are predicted by the investigated social cognitive components in this study should be interpreted accordingly. This concern may be remedied in further studies. But on the other hand, the lack of asymmetry in the CSI in this research has allowed the analysis of the effect of predictability to be undertaken. 2) different stories may exist in subgroups of differing offending context, such as the type of victims or other variables. This research might be interpreted accordingly. A

more elaborated research design is called for to include an information-processing model to study offending behaviour by combining cognitive content variables and moral reasoning structure. 3) the relatively less impressive relationship with CSIs compared with content-oriented social knowledge might be due to the inadequate moral measure used Gibbs SRM-SF. In other words, the SRM-SF may be not sensitive enough to discriminate one pattern of offending behaviour from others. A criminal-tailored moral instrument is warranted for to assess subtype offenders' moral reasoning. 4) as juvenile offenders' limited cognitive abilities some questions in the interview schedule were beyond their capacity to fully understand. This may be also due to their relatively less living experiences compared with the adult offenders. As result of that, more difficulties were encountered by age younger interviewees than older ones and therefore, less rich information was gained form the former group. 5) the factors which intervene between beliefs about what is good and good behaviour need to be understood better. That is, further research interested in understanding offenders' mental processes with social cognition approach (i.e. moral reasoning, normative beliefs, and values) should include individuals' perceptions and definition of legitimacy in contexts. With this consideration, the association between behaviour and social cognitions would be more ecologically valid. 6) the causation relationship between delinquency and moral reasoning competence can't be demonstrated due to the cross-sectional research design employed in the current thesis. Therefore, studies are needed to explain the relationship between these two variables by such as using longitudinal research design.

Appendix A

Crime perception evaluation Questionnaire

Background information

- 1) Date of birth: _____ Day _____ Month _____ Year
- 2) How many different times have you been set to jail? _____
- 3) How much time in total have you spent in jail? _____
- 4) What crime(s) are you in jail for this time? _____
- 5) How old were you when you first were convicted in court?
- 6) How many separate times have you been convicted of the following crimes::
 - 1) Theft: _____ times.
 - 2) Drug taking: _____ times.
 - 3) Robbery and mugging: _____ times.
 - 4) Sexual assaults: _____ times.
 - 5) Threatening behaviour: _____ times.
 - 6) Physical violence: _____ times.
 - 7) Homicide: _____ times.
 - 8) Kidnapping: _____ times.
 - 9) Possessing illegal weapons: _____ times.
 - 10) Offences against personal liberty: _____ times.
 - 11) Status crimes: _____ times.
 - 12) Other crimes: _____ times.

2. Please choose one of the most suitable items for the following statements.

2.1 The crimes that I have committed apart from the main ones were not committed purposely.

*agree strongly agree neither agree disagree disagree strongly
nor disagree*

2.2 I think that I am different in many ways from offenders who commit other types of crime:

*agree strongly agree neither agree disagree disagree strongly
nor disagree*

2) It is very unwise to commit any other types of crime other than the ones that I have:

*agree strongly agree neither agree disagree disagree strongly
nor disagree*

3) I am not the sort of person who would commit any other sorts of crimes than the ones that I have been convicted for (circle the answer closest to what you think):
agree strongly agree neither agree disagree disagree strongly nor disagree

3. There are four types of behaviour following, please answer the following questions referring to them:

a. Drug taking	b. Stealing	c. Sexual assaults	d. Violent behaviour
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3.1 Please rank the above behaviours in terms of how serious you think they are (from the most to the least)
_____ > _____ > _____ > _____

3.2 Please rank the above behaviours in terms of how much other people would disrespect you if you committed them (from the most to the least)
_____ > _____ > _____ > _____

3.3 Please rank the above behaviour in terms of how serious damage it may result in victims. (from the most to the least)
_____ > _____ > _____ > _____

3.4 Please rank the above behaviours in terms of which should receive the severest punishment (from the most to the least).
_____ > _____ > _____ > _____

3.5 Please rank the above behaviours in terms of you being unlikely to do it even if you had the opportunity to do it (from the most to the least).
_____ > _____ > _____ > _____

3.6 Please ranks the above behaviours in terms of how they would damage your self-image if you were caught (from the most to the least):
_____ > _____ > _____ > _____

4. There are four types of behaviour which have been put in pairs, Please compare them and give letter of the answer closest to what you think:

A. *agree strongly* B. *agree* C. *disagree* D. *disagree strongly* E. *no difference*

4.1 Drug vs. Theft

- () a. No matter what reason it might have, I think taking drug should be forgiven less than stealing.
- () b. I think people who take drug are more selfish than who steal.
- () c. The overall personal costs compared to benefits of taking drugs are less than for stealing.
- () d. Taking drugs causes more harm socially than stealing.

4.2 Drug vs. Violent

- () a. No matter what reason it might have, I think taking drug should be forgiven less than violent behaviour.
- () b. I think people who take drug are more selfish than who commit violence.
- () c. The overall personal costs compared to benefits of taking drugs are less than for violent behaviour.
- () d. Taking drugs causes more harm socially than stealing.

4.3 Drug vs. Sexual

- () a. No matter what reason it might have, I think taking drug should be forgiven less than sexual assaults.
- () b. I think people who take drug are more selfish than who commit sexual assaults.
- () c. The overall personal costs compared to benefits of taking drugs are less than for sexual assaults.
- () d. Taking drugs causes more harm socially than sexual assaults.

4.4 Theft vs. Violent

- () a. No matter what reason it might have, I think stealing should be forgiven less than violent behaviour.
- () b. I think people who steal are more selfish than who commit violent behaviour.
- () c. The overall personal costs compared to benefits of thieving are less than for violent behaviour.
- () d. Stealing causes more harm socially than violent behaviour.

4.5 Theft vs. Sexual

- () a. No matter what reason it might have, I think stealing should be forgiven less than sexual assaults.
- () b. I think people who steal are more selfish than who commit sexual assaults.
- () c. The overall personal costs compared to benefits of stealing are less than for sexual assaults.

() d. Stealing causes more harm socially than sexual assaults.

4.6 Violent vs. Sexual

() a. No matter what reason it might have, I think violent behaviour should be forgiven less than sexual assaults.

() b. I think people who commit violent behaviour are more selfish than who commit sexual assaults.

() c. The overall personal costs compared to benefits of violent behaviour are less than for sexual behaviour.

() d. Violent behaviour causes more harm socially than sexual assaults.

4. There are four types of descriptions regarding behaviour, please gives each category of behaviour an attribute to which that is appropriate to them.

a	We have our own absolute right to decide if we want to do it.
b	This has nothing to do with personal conscience or moral concern, but because that is prohibited by the social regulations or rules agreed with by most people or those in authority.
c	This involves personal conscience and moral concern – not because we are told not to do it.
d	It's main concern is whether it will result in negative or harmful consequences to ourselves – not because we are told not to do it.

4.1 Drug taking behaviour _____

4.2 Stealing _____

4.3 Sexual assaults _____

4.4 Violent behaviour _____

5. There are four types of normative beliefs, please refer them to the following questions.

a. I normally only take my personal interest as the main consideration. I take into account whether or not I will receive punishment from the authorities or other powerful people. I don't really care about other people's interests, needs and rights.

b. I would normally consider the interests and needs of others into account when it is beneficial to me and I get something back from them in return. Although I know people should consider others, I always seek a balance in terms of the benefits for me.

c. I would consider wider social interests and other's needs into considerations. I follow laws and societal regulations. I consider myself a member of society and other people are always a concern to me.

d. Justice and equality in Society are my main consideration. I obey rules and regulations so long as they treat everyone equally and fairly.

If would sacrifice my own personal interest and benefit if it results in a better Society and better lives for people living in it.

6.1 Please choose one principle appropriate to describe your normative belief. _____

6.2 Please choose one principle most adopted by most of people in this community. _____

6.3 Please choose the one principle with which you apply to survive in your community. _____

6.4 Please choose one principle which is the best for this community, if everyone applies it. _____

6.5 Please choose the one principle which is most frequently used by your friends. _____

Appendix B
Sociomoral Reflection Measure-Short Form (question 1-11)
Crime episode judgments scale (question 12-15)

1. Think about when you’ve made a promise to a friend of yours. How important is it for people to keep promises, if they can, to friends?

Circle one: very important important not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/ IMPORTANT/ NOT IMPORTANT

2. What about keeping a promise to anyone? How important is it for people to keep promises, if they can, even to someone they hardly know?

Circle one: very important important not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/ IMPORTANT/ NOT IMPORTANT

3. How important keeping a promise to a child? How important is it for parents to keep promises, if they can, to their children?

Circle one: very important important not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/ IMPORTANT/ NOT IMPORTANT

4. In general, how important is it for people to tell the truth?

Circle one: very important important not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/ IMPORTANT/ NOT IMPORTANT

5. Think about when you’ve helped your mother or father. How important is it for children to help their parents?

Circle one: very important important not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/ IMPORTANT/ NOT IMPORTANT

6. Let’s say a friend of yours needs help and may even die, and you’re the only person who can save him or her. How important is it for a person (without losing his or her own life) to save the life of a friend?

Circle one: very important important not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/ IMPORTANT/ NOT IMPORTANT

7. What about saving the life of anyone? How important is it for a person (without losing his or her own life) to save the life of a stranger?

Circle one: very important important not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/ IMPORTANT/ NOT IMPORTANT

8. How important is it for a person to live even if that person doesn't want to?

Circle one: very important important not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/ IMPORTANT/ NOT IMPORTANT

9. How important is it for people not to take things that belong to other people?

Circle one: very important important not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/ IMPORTANT/ NOT IMPORTANT

10. How important is it for people to obey the law?

Circle one: very important important not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/ IMPORTANT/ NOT IMPORTANT

11. How important is it for judges to send people who break the law to jail?

Circle one: very important important not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/ IMPORTANT/ NOT IMPORTANT

Crime episode judgments scale

12. Do you agree with the government in decriminalising drug taking?

Circle one: agree disagree

Why do you think that?

13. Do you think judges should take theft victims' personal characteristics into the consideration in convictions? Such as; if the victim is rich; the value of the stolen items; if the victim doesn't pay enough attention to their properties.

Circle one: agree disagree

Why do you think that?

14. Do you think judges should take sexual offence victims' personal characteristics into consideration in convictions? These included conditions such as, the victim's job, the relationship with the perpetrator(s), the victim's attitude to offenders, and even the victim's past relation history with males.

Circle one : agree disagree

Why do you think that?

15. Do you think judges should take violent offence victims' personal characteristics into the consideration of convictions; such as, the victims' attitude to you, your relationship with the victim?

Circle one: agree disagree

Why do you think that?

Question1 to question4 are combined to form the moral value Contract and Truth.

Question5 and 6 are combined to form the moral value Affiliation.

Question7 and 8 are combined to form the moral value Life.

Question9 and 10 are combined to form the moral value Property and law.

Question11 represent the moral value Legal justice.

Appendix C

Content analysis Coding manual (crime episode judgments)

Q1: Do you agree with the government to decriminalize drug taking? What is your reason?	
Agree	Disagree
D11: I pay for it, It is my personal issue. I just damage my self's body, It has nothing to do with the government.	D21: It is bad to health, and waste lives. (e.g., make people mad, destroy minds)
D12: Drug taking is a behaviour without victims, I don't rob, steal and damaging the society.	D22: The root of evil, and creating a situation conducive to engaging crime.
D13: How about drinking and smoking cause more damaging.	D23: Causing the nation and society disorder and chaos.
D14: As long as we the drug abuser doesn't engage other crimes.	D24: Should receive harsher punishment.
D15: Incarceration is not the best policy to tackle drug abusing. Drug takers should be regarded as patients; it is a sort of sick.	D25: It is an unwise behaviour, you pay money to be incarcerated.
D16: The government can't control it; why not legalize it and the drug price will go down, as a result. In turn, people will no need to rob or steal for buying it.	D26: Before finding a better way to deal with drug abusing.
D17: It is all because few drug abusers who involve other crimes that draw media and public concerns.	D27: It is not right , and makes people taking more and more people would involve in.

Q2: Do you think judges should take the victims personal characteristics into the consideration of convictions? Such as; if the victim is rich; the value of stolen items; the victim doesn't pay enough care on it. Why? And your reasons.	
T11: Don't let your money too visible.	T21: Stealing is stealing, no excuses.
T12: The value of stolen objects should be taken into consideration of sentence.	T22: You should respect other's properties. It is not yours, whatsoever.
T13: The theft's disadvantage life condition and motive should be considered as well.	T23: I look down people who take things belonging to others.
T14: Drugs make me so.	T24: Regardless the value.
T15: The rich should be aware the suffering of the poor.	T25: It is not right behaviour, and should receive harsher punishment.
T16: The victim has to take partial responsibility for their things getting stolen. It is fair.	T26: It is fair for victims.

Q3: Do you think judges should take sexual offending victims' personal characteristics into consideration of convictions; such as, her job, the relationship with perpetrators, her attitude to offenders, and even her past relation history with male. Why? And your reasons.	
Agree	Disagree
S11: The Judge should consider our relationship (victim-offender). (e.g., girl friends, ex-wife).	S21: Sexual offending is offending, no excuse.
S12: We were set up, the victim just want money.	S22: People who sexual others should receive life sentence or severe punishment.
S13: She just dresses/behaves in seduced ways.	S23: It is the wrongness of their psyche and characters.
S14: Her history of relationship with male. (e.g., complicated.)	S24: We all have female relatives and friends.
S15: The victim's work and status and age should be taken into consideration of making sentence.	S25: The victim is already being victimized; we should have sympathy on them, no need to consider their personal attributes.
S16: The law and the judge are in favour of female, and only take one-side evidence/ testimonies.	S26: We should respect other's willingness and body autonomy, human right.
S17: The victim should take partial responsibility, whatsoever.	S27: The behaviour is animal like, should not forgiven and causing threat to others.

Q4: Do you think if the judge should take victims' personal characteristics into consideration of sentence? such as, his/her attitude to you, your relationship with the victim. Why? And your reasons.	
Agree	Disagree
V11: We can't make a sound with one hand.	V21: Violence is violence, no excuse.
V12: The victim just asks troubles themselves. (Such as, bad attitude,)	V22: There are many other ways to resolve conflict and arguments.
V13: The history of relationship should also be taken into consideration.	V23: The victim is already a victim; we should feel sympathetic with them. No matter what.
V14: The degree of damage.	V24: We should respect others body.
V15: The judge should consider our motive and situation as well.(e.g., because of anger)	V25: Violent behaviour is a really bad thing.
V16: The victim causes the accident.	V26: Causing more social problems and should be given harsher punishment.

Appendix D

Interview Schedule

- 1) How many times have you been in prisons and which crimes?
- 2) What else offending have you ever committed?
- 3) Could you talk about your perceptions and thinking about theft, drug taking, sexual assault, and violent behaviour irrespectively? (justifications)
 - a. Which moral domain does they belong to. (I will remind them beforehand)
 - b. Do you think you are distinct in some ways from other people who commit other crimes?
 - c. The extent to which you agree with these behaviour.
 - d. The degree of seriousness in terms of sentence or personal judgment.
 - e. Others' or the societal thinking and perception to these behaviour.
 - f. The reason(s) why you don't do them?
 - g. The purpose(s) that you commit them. (What do you want to get from doing it?)
 - h. If you were one of these kinds of people committing nominated crimes here, then what would you feel and what different would be for you or affect you in any respect?
 - i. If you have involved other crime activities? And why do you stick up in certain offending?
 - j. What characteristics/consequences can you think of which are relevant to or linked to these types of criminal behaviour.
 - k. Have you ever changed your perception towards any criminal behaviour? If have, why?
- 4) Who or what will suffer or be detrimental from your behaviour?
5. There are four types of normative beliefs, please refer them to the following questions.
 - a. I normally only take my personal interest as the highest priority, then take into account whether or not I will receive punishment from authorities or powerful others. I don't really care other people's interests, needs and rights.
 - b. I would consider other's interests and needs, but when they gain benefits from me, I must also take something back from them.Although I know people should be reciprocal to each other, I always seek balance in terms of benefits.

c. I would consider wider social interests and other's needs, and follow laws and societal regulations. I think I am the member of the society, and always concern others.

d. I think this society should have justice and equality, and I would obey the rules and regulations as long as they treat everyone equally and fairly. If they would sacrifice my interests and benefits if they can result in better welfare to this society and people living in it by doing so.

5.1 Please choose one principle appropriate to describe your normative belief.

5.2 Please choose one principle most possibly agreed with most of people in this community.

Appendix E

Table: Personal Information of interviewees

No	Age	crimetypes	Times admitted in prisons	Time served in prisons (years)	Moral reasoning (Global stage)
AD1	27	Drug	2	1	3
AD2	39	Drug	3	8.5	3
AD3	39	Drug	3	11.5	3(2)
AD4	43	Drug	3	7	3
AD5	45	Drug	4	7	3
AT1	27	Theft	2	5	3(2)
AT2	52	Theft	2	6	3
AT3	51	Theft	4	8	3(2)
AS1	24	Sexual	3	5	3(2)
AS2	35	Sexual	2	2.5	3
AS3	26	Sexual	1	3	3
AS4	37	Sexual	2	6	3
AV1	31	Violent	4	11	3
AV2	39	Violent	1	6.2	3(2)
AV3	36	Violent	1	3.1	3
AV4	44	Violent	1	9	3
YT1	17	Theft	4	2.5	2(3)
YT2	17	Theft	3	2	2
YT3	17	Theft mixed with violent	2	1.5	3(2)
YV1	18	Violent	4	1.7	3(2)
YV2	18	Violent	2	4	2
YD1	19	Drug	3	2	2(3)
YS1	18	Sexual	1	1	3(2)

Appendix F Transcribed statements illustrating content categories in chapter 7.

2. Justifications of their crime involvement (Q: Why and how did you involve in the unlawful behaviour?)

Drug abusers

Q. The reasons why you keep using

1) Uncontrollable and controllable psychological/physically factors

A: It was all out of curiosity initially, it was a sort of epidemic at that time in communities. I didn't know it would make people addicted, I didn't know it was so powerful, but then you **can't resist** once you are addicted. (ad3)

B: As I only take class B and C drugs, unlike class A users, I **can't control** it I need to. (ad4)

C: I just feel I **am ill** but I **can't control myself**. (ad5)

D: As I all take first class drugs, it isn't others. Once the effects have faded, you just need more of it. You don't necessarily need to eat, but you do need to use the drug. People say that you can stop your mouth but not your heart (arousal), you **can't resist the seduction** when you are outside. (ad5)

2) I have no bad habits apart from taking drugs

A: I often make jokes with my friends like saying, "**I have no bad habits**, no drinking, no gambling, **I only take drugs**. (ad4)

B: **It is like a normal habit**, smoking and drinking, for example. (ad5)

Q: If it was decriminalised would you agree with it? (the question for drug abusers only)

A: Using marijuana is **legal in other countries** (ad1).

B: if taking drugs, such as heroin for example, was legal, people would not use it anymore, they say that only the rich would be able to afford to use it. Because it is expensive, it's rare, so people want to have a try. **If it was legal then people would not feel any curiosity towards it**, and consequently wouldn't want to take it (ad1).

C: drug taking **should not** be regarded as **a sort of crime** (ad1)

D: legalisation would not be so bad, **what we need is a good management system**. (ad4)

E: I have been thinking about why drugs are so expensive, it's because the government bans them. **If they were legalised**, then they would become much **cheaper**, so we might be able to get it for one or two hundred dollars, but now, it costs one or two thousand. Because of this, committing crime is just inevitable. If the price could be reduced then **we could enjoy it while having a job**. In fact, many drug takers work regularly, **so why do they need to steal?** It's just because they can't afford **the financial pressure incurred in taking drugs**. There are many people who have jobs.(ad4)

Q. Potential harm may have resulted from your behaviour

Drug abuse (*the question for drug abusers only*)

A: Oh...I have never thought about it (against the societal order or consensus). But **it might be bad for my family**, say, the atmosphere might not be good, making it difficult to integrate with relatives. But, **it has nothing to do with social integration really**. (ad3)

B: The first **harm is to your family**, and sure, your **hard earned money**. (ad4)

C: I **almost died** because overdosed, but I still **keep enjoying it**. (ad4)

D: I **feel guilty** with my... current situation with **my parents** and **my partner**. (ad4)

E: It is **no good to rob after taking drugs**, so...it's like that. (ad5)

F: it will **affect my family**. (ad5)

Theft

1) the tie with peers

A: Because **friends sometimes invited me** to do it, then I just thought, based on our **close friendship**, I would go along with them. (at1)

B: There are many reasons that make people steal. At that time I made the **wrong friends**, I **didn't know how serious it was**, as we, as a group, **did it together**. (at2)

C: if someone in finical need asks me to do it with him, I **would absolutely say yes**. (at3)

2) The gains are so tempting

A: It's important (to respect others' property rights), because **it's also a sort of habit**, if you take others' stuff today then you will also take others' stuff tomorrow. It will **become a kind of habit**, and then theft becomes a career. (at2)

B: the **benefits** of stealing **are really tempting**, if someone in finical need asks me to do it with them, I absolutely say yes. (at3)

C: it is not very important, as we will all need money when we get out of here. But when you can't make money... **but you need to survive**, then you would think when you are out (of prison), "ok!" let's go back **and take the same career again**, stealing. (at3)

3) Don't need to share any responsibilities

A: No. There is no need. They (the victims) **don't need to share any responsibility** of stealing. (at3)

Sexual offenders

1) Coercion versus consent age

A: There are two kinds of convictions in sexual offending. Firstly, **violent and coercive**, and secondly, where **the victim is under the age of consent** but is thought to agree to the act. (as1)

B: If I was willing to have sex with her (and she was under 18) then I **would agree with it**, but I wouldn't accept it if it involved **force and violence**. If you rape others just out of a need for sex, then, you first psychologically hurt the victim. (as2)

2) No violence involved

A: It (sexual offending) **doesn't necessarily require violence**. (as1)

B: I can accept it, as raping others is not done out of impulse; I am **not randomly choosing any one** (as2).

3) Had the victim's consent but they were under 18

A: This time I **was accused by her father**, it happened when I was drunk. (as1)

B: If both agree on having sex, but only the girl is **under consent age**, then I think that **both parties need to take responsibility**. (as1)

C: It is to do with moral concerns. If I used force or threats or even the excuse of drunkenness to assault others, I would feel guilty. But, **if she agreed and was just under 18**, then I **wouldn't care about the consequences**. (as1)

D: I think, if I was going out with a girl, and she **was under 18**, and the situation was found out by her parents, and then they accused me, **then I would accept it** (it is justifiable). But, if you sexually assaulted others just out of a need for sex, then, I couldn't accept that. (as2)

4) They are different girls

A: **Girls who go to pubs and housewives should not be regarded as the same group**. (as1)

B: I think so far, If you haven't had opportunities to make girlfriends in a normal way. How to say, to make girlfriends in ways that normal people do. You would think, "wow", when you watch porn or sexy images, **they make you think that these girls are really promiscuous**. Then, you **don't think about the consequences** and you are liable to do it out of impulse. (as3)

C: ... such as, they **dress skimpily** in the **wrong places**, and at **wrong time**, so **they should take responsibility**. But in normal situations, the offender should take responsibility (as4)

5) Seeking sexual satisfaction

A: I didn't think of the consequences. I started to realise after my family's guidance and encouragement that I had **just wanted to satisfy my sexual desires** for a moment of happiness... (as3)

B: It is our own problem; the victims don't need to share any responsibility for the incidents. Others' may think that there is not a big problem for us, **but if you can't make girlfriends... why others have (girlfriends)**, you will think ok... because we can't make friends in a normal manner, we will try every possible way to do it (as3)

6) They create chances

A: **They should have taken precautions**, but they failed to do so. They could have used lanes or places not many people would go, **they should have avoided these potentially dangerous places**. (as4)

B: **Intentionally to dress like...**to induce others, yes, I think there must be these sorts of girls. (as4)

Violent offenders

1) Violent instincts

A: As I grew up in a village which... and **so fighting and killing was quite common**, if you don't help people then people won't help you, so it is a kind of reciprocal relationship. **Friends are as important as**, or even more important than, my family members, and I left my parents when I was young, we are interdependent (friends). (av2)

B: How to say... I believe **human beings all have violent instincts**, but I would try to avoid doing it(violence)

2) Passive and active

A: I think there is a difference in degree terms, for **murder and manslaughter** or if it is **out of impulsive or emotional anger**. If it is **because of money** that they kill people, then I think they **should be given a harsher punishment**. After all, they have no relationship, no hatred between them. (av2)

B: There is a difference in terms of level, **some are passive and others are active**. (av3)

C: Yes, **violence is simpler and unilateral** (compared with other offending behaviour), and must have reasons. It all depends whether you are **active or passive** (av4)

3) The victims should share responsibility

A: Yes, we need to take responsibility, that's right, but **you can't say we need to take full responsibility, can you?** You've got to consider the cause of the incident. (av1)

B: As people **inevitably sometimes have emotional arousal**, in these moments it is hard to control behaviour. I regretted it later on, but murders are more inhumane, so it is about a difference in degree. (av2)

C: **Violence must involve two sides**, both in conflict. (av3)

Do offenders tend to evaluate their own crime relatively more favourable and identify their crime more when compared with other crimes? (General interviewing question: What are offenders' Comparative evaluations on crimes and their self-identities?)

1. Do offenders tend to cognitively evaluate their own crime relatively more favourable or less negative when compared with other crimes (Q: How do you evaluate and perceive your crime when compared with other crimes and offenders.)

Drug abusers

1) Possibility of committing other crimes

A: If I was really poor I **would be able to steal**, but it would be **impossible for me to commit sexual offences**. As for **violence**... if they **didn't initiate** it, then **I wouldn't do** it. (ad1)

B: I will only take drugs, but **no stealing**. (ad5)

2) Victimisation

A: Basically, **we are ourselves' victims**. Other offences have relative relationships, one person is the perpetrator and on the other is the victim. We **are collective perpetrators and victims**. (ad4)

3) Similarity or difference

A: There is **no difference between me and others** (criminals). (ad1)

B: Yes, **they (other types of criminals) are all the same**. I feel it is much easier to make friends for normal people. But, for people with bad records, we just get along together with each other and only do bad things. (ad2)

C: I think that because I am also a criminal, I don't think **I am qualified to judge other types of criminals**. (ad4)

D: **I am surely different from them**. Violent offenders have a propensity for acting violently, sexual offenders when released, will commit sexual offences again before long...it seems that they are inclined to this in their minds. Their offending just... like me, once I was engaged in it then it was hard to get out of it. (ad5)

4) Perceptions

A: **People who take class 'A' drugs look like they are very ill**. (ad4)

B: We are much **more easily recognised by appearance, unlike sexual and violent offenders**, when they are let out, they can't be so easily recognised, can they? (ad5)

C: Sexual offenders are most looked down upon, if they are known, but the **drug takers are obviously more visible**. (ad5)

Thieves

1) Better practices

A: Compared with drug taking, **at least we can control our behaviour** (stealing). (at2)

B: Unlike drug abusers, who don't care who you are; siblings, friends, even parents are all potential victims to them. We (theft offenders) are less liable to do so, that is my character and practice. **I don't steal from who I know**; siblings, friends, and good-hearted persons, **but I would steel from the rich**. (at3)

C: The prime purpose of our crime (stealing) is money. It is all the matter of your mind, what is a theft for (just property)? **Why would you rob or rape others, it is pointless**, isn't it. (at3)

D: You don't fight with others without a provoking reason, do you? But we are different, when you are in financial need then you just go out and do it, so I think **violence is more serious than theft**. (at3)

2) No or less harm

A: **Drug abusing undermines society**, and theft does as well, but compared with them (the other offences), **it (stealing) is not as serious**. (at1)

B: Compared with the others, **violent and sexual offending causes greater damage, stealing does no damage to the victims**. (at1)

C: This (stealing) has much less harm to them (victims). (at3)

3) Status

A: Here, **only drug takers and sexual offenders are looked down on**. (at2)

4) Possibility

A: As the current high crime rate mainly derives from drug abuse. There are rare cases, **like me who don't take drugs**, Thieves more or less all engage in abusing drugs, **I don't touch them**. (at2)

B: **I wouldn't do drugs or commit sexual crimes and am also less likely to act violently**, even if I had the chance to. (at3)

Sexual offenders

1) Lowest status

A: Yes, sexual offenders are the **most despised**. (as1)

B: On the outside, every type of criminals **is looked down on**, but in the inside it **is us sexual offenders**. (as3)

C: It's, of course, **sexual offenders who are looked down on most inside**. This is not just a feeling; it has been that way for a long history. (as4)

D: It (sexual offending) is **not a thing which is really reputable**. A real man wouldn't do that. Like they say, they are genuine gangsters, and as gangsters, we don't do that. (as4)

2) Possibility of committing

A: I won't even touch them (drugs), absolutely. (as3)

3) Nature

A: For example if you stole something and you were found out, but if you didn't admit **it, this would be very embarrassing and have a bad reputation?** (as1)

B: I feel whatever you are, **a sexual offender, a theft or violence offender, they...are all criminals**. (as1)

C: For example, others' may say **you are just bulling girls, if you are so great, why don't you do bigger crimes**. Compared with other crimes, frankly speaking, **what you have got, nothing!** (as3)

E: **Sexual and violent damage is very difficult to recover** from compared with others. (as4)

4) Damaging and serious

A: Both **violent and sexual offending behaviour damage people**. (as1)

B: **These four types of crimes are all very serious and harmful to society**. (as3)

C: **Drug taking and sexual offending are more serious**. (as3)

D: **Violent and sexual offending are the most serious crimes**, as they all cause psychological damage. Taking drugs only harms the user, theft it is just the loss of property really. (as4)

Violent offenders

1) Sexual offending is more serious

A: **Sexual offending is the most serious** and will have more life long negative effects, **than violent behaviour**. (av2)

B: **Sexual offending is more serious than violent behaviour**. (av3)

C: **It (sexual crime) wastes more social resource**, as the victim doesn't die and it impacts on them psychologically. Violent behaviour **happens in an instant, not over a long period** and its' effects are also like this, they do not endure after the event. When it's finished, then it's over, at this point then it's ok. (av4)

2) Different with murder, no difference among these four crimes

A: It is because that in the moment, as people are **inevitably sometimes emotionally aroused**, it is hard to control, but, I regretted it later on. But **murders are totally inhumane**, so it is a sort of difference in degree. **I am different from them**. (av2)

B: I think there is **a difference in degree, murder and manslaughter**, or if it committed out of impulse or emotional anger. If this is for the sake of making money to kill people, then I think they **should be given a harsher punishment**. After all there is no relationship, no hatred between you and them (av2)

C: **These four types of crimes are all unlawful**. (av3)

3) The least looked down on

A: Yes it must be ranked the **one to be looked down on least**. (av1)

2. Self-identity

Drug abusers

Their own crimes and themselves

1) Just like smoking, and drunkenness

A: People have negative opinions on drug taking, but I **just smoke and take drugs only...** that is all. (ad4)

B: After I take drugs I don't have violent behaviour, **like with drunkenness**, I don't hit people. (ad4)

C: It is like **a normal habit, like smoking and drinking**, for example. (ad5)
Themselves

1) We don't steal, only take drugs

A: Talking of my behaviour (taking drugs), **I am not stealing. I spend my own money** and that I have to be admitted here to be humiliated, I feel it is **very unfair**. (ad2)

B: We **use our own money, I don't rob**. I have been put behind bars for ten years due to drugs, **that's even longer than a murderer**. (ad3)

C: I feel drug regulations are unfair, of course other behaviour would harm others such as stealing and violence but **we don't do it**. We just **take drugs and smoke**. (ad4)

D: Drug abusers are mostly looked down on, as users don't always payback money to people they borrow from, and many steal. I don't have...many even take money from their families, people admire me though, as **the money I bought drugs with was all money I had earned**. (ad5)

2) Hard to make friends

A: As all my friends are drug takers, and I have been **suffering from a low sense of self-esteem**, so **we dare not approach people who don't take drugs**. (ad2)

B: I feel it's much easier to make friends for normal people, But, **for people who have bad records, we just get along together and only do bad things**. (ad2)

C: We are more easily to be told apart from others (type of criminals), and **less likely to make friends**. (ad5)

3) Easily discovered from appearance

A: **It's like we have done something wrong, and are fearful to be discovered by others**, something like that. (ad2)

B: **We are more easily told apart from others** (types of criminals), and less likely to make friends. (ad5)

4) Normal life and people, not that bad

A: **There is no difference** between me and others (criminals). (ad1)

B: **I don't think I am as bad as others perceive**. (ad2)

C: In fact, **many drug takers work regularly**, so why do they need to steal? Because they can't afford the financial pressure incurred in taking drugs, so they do it. There are many people who have jobs. (ad4)

D: **I feel that I am ill**, but I can't control myself. (ad5)

Thieves

Their own crimes Themselves

1) Only a trivial crime

A: People would only say yeah... **stealing is a trivial crime**, you can still make friends and that must be possible. (at1)
 B: **Compared to drug taking, we can control our behaviour (stealing)**. (at2)
 C: Here, **only drug takers and sexual offenders are looked down on**. (at2)
 D: **I wouldn't do drugs or commit sexual crimes** and also I'm less likely to act violently even if I had the chance to. (at3)

1) It is still fine

A: Others look at ...although we are theft offenders, **it is still fine when we go straight**, we can still make friends (at1).
 B: We (theft offenders) are less liable to do so, that is my character and practice. I **don't steal from people I know**, from **siblings, friends, and good-hearted** persons, but **I would steal from the rich**. (at3)

2) We don't do immoral things

A: **The current high crime rate mainly derives from drug abuse**. I don't take drugs myself, but theft offenders do usually engage in drug abusing, **but I don't touch them**. (at2)
 B: As our mentors taught us, we only want money. We don't want women, if we happen to confront them, **we don't do immoral things**. (at3)

Sexual offenders

Their own crimes and Themselves

1) Having sex with females under the age of consent is acceptable

A: If I used force or threats or even the excuse of drunkenness to assault others, **I would feel guilty. But if she agreed and was just under 18, then I wouldn't care about the consequences**. (as1)
 B: I think if I was going out with a girl, and she was under 18, and her parents found out the situation, **then I would accept it**. But if you commit sexual offences just out of a need for sex, I can't accept that. (as2)
 C: **I can accept it** (having sex with females under 18) as it is not done out of an impulse to rape others, I am not randomly choosing one (as2).

2) Not so damaging

A: **There is the possibility of recovery**, it's so not so damaging. (as4)

3) We are all criminals, but I am excluded from certain groups

A: As I am in the unit designated for murders and kidnappers, **I just feel excluded**. (as1)
 B: I feel that whatever you are, a sexual, theft or violence offender, **we are all criminals**. (as1)

4) I never commit other crimes, though I still dislike sexual offending

A: I **wouldn't say I am different from them**, because I have committed this crime, but **I have never been involved in crimes other than this**. (as2)

B: **I still dislike sexual offending**. (as2)

5) If I am a normal person

A: **I would not do it** (sexual offending) if I had chance; I am not boasting, if I am a normal person. (as3)

6) They need to be blamed for the incident

A: It depends on each individual, **if they have something to be blamed for then they need to take it**. (as4)

Violent offenders

Their own crimes

1) The least group to be looked down on, quick recovery, quite common and they don't actively seek out violence.

A: Yes it (violence) **must be ranked the last offence to be looked down on**. (av1)

B: Although it also causes damage, **full recovery time is shorter**. But I think sexual offending causes more harm psychologically. (av2)

C: Unless you challenge /confront them, **they won't act violently towards you**. (av3)

2) Impossible to commit other crimes

A: **It is impossible for me to be involved in sexual offending, theft and taking drugs**. (av3)

B: **I don't commit sexual offences, as I am a normal human being**. (av4)

3) I didn't mean to harm

A: The key point is **we must be under certain threatening situations** or confrontations, otherwise **it is impossible for us to harm you**; That (violence) happens must because we have some problems in emotion management. (av1)

B: **I never harm people** (robbery). If I had harmed them then I would have felt bad. (av1)

C: I was not able to control myself., **I didn't mean to harm him**, after all I am even willing to help people who are injured in car accidents... let alone to harm others, I think it is impossible. (av2)

D:... **every human being has violent instincts, but I try to avoid them**. (av3)

E: ... Like my case, I was just standing there, then I got hit, as to why, **I totally have no idea**. (av4)

3. Evaluations of other crimes (How they see others)

Drug abusers' point of view

Drug abusers thought theft behaviour and crime were:

1) Harmfulness

- A: If we take others' cars, then they have **just lost property**. Compared with violence, it's not so serious. (ad2)
- B: Stealing **just results in property loss**. (ad4)
- C: **If the victims are the rich then that is fine**, but if they are poor and are already in bad living conditions, then it would cause great impact to them. (ad5)

2) Not legitimate

- A: **That is your(thieves) fault**, you **can't just say because they are rich** that you can steal from them, no. (ad1)
- B: Thieves also **didn't get others' agreement**. (ad1)
- C: **If you take things that don't belong to you**, then it is theft, regulations are in place already. (ad2)
- D: If things are not yours, then **you should not take them**. If you do take them, then it involves moral issues. (ad5)

3) Moral concern

- A: **Moral issues** are involved. (ad1)
- B: Theft involves **moral concerns**. (ad2)
- C: It has **something to do with moral concerns**. (ad3)
- D: If you steal, then **moral issues are involved**. (ad5)

4) Negative reputations

- A: As stealing is **awkward men's behaviour**, others will look down on you. (ad1)
- B: **I don't like being surrounded by thieves**. (ad1)
- C: You will have broken the law and **people will say derogatory things about you**. (ad3)
- D: **Theft gives you a bad reputation**. (ad3)

Drug abusers thought Sexual offending and crime were:

1) Despised

- A: **Sexual offending behaviour is looked down on**, as the offenders don't get consent from others. (ad1)
- B: I don't like being surrounded by sexual offenders, **I look down on them**. (ad1)
- D: In prisons, they are ostracised; **we don't like to interact with them**. (ad2)
- E: **People do not make friends with sexual offenders**. In the prison settings, they are looked down on, people say they are rapists; they used to be bullied more in the past. (ad3).
- F: Regardless of being male or female, all dislike violent offending, **so I think this sort of behaviour is the worst**. (ad3)
- G: **Sexual offenders are mostly looked down on**. Do you know they need "special" protection? If they are put in the same cell, they will receive special treatment physically and verbally from cell mates. (ad4)

H: From society's point of view **these people are despised greatly**. (ad5)

2) Seeking alternative outlets

A: If you really want it (sex), then you **just buy it, you don't need to rape others**. (ad1)

B: If you want it **there are many alternative ways, you don't need to rape others**. I have argued with them, they just say that it is exciting, but I can't see any excitement there. (ad3)

3) Harmfulness

A: It will **cause enduring harm**. (ad1)

B: Because sexual offending **will cause harm to others** and it will stigmatise you, It is bad to do it as a man. (ad3)

C: The traumatised overshadow in mind will last for the whole life, as **the victims suffer great impact and harms**. (ad3)

D: Sexual offending **causes greater harmfulness to women**, so I think it is the most serious offence. Whereas physical damage is easier to recover from, psychological damage lasts for their whole life. (ad4)

E: I think sexual offending **will cause great harm physically and psychologically**. (ad4)

F: Sexual-offending behaviour **is harmful to others** (ad5)

4) Disapproval

A: **I disagree with sexual offending**, I have had this kind of thought since I was young, like a default in a computer system. (ad1)

B: Because **it's the fault of the perpetrators**. It is their (the victim's) business what they want to wear or who they want to go out with. If you force them, your behaviour is kind of abnormal. (ad1)

C: If they say no, then it is no, **you can't do anything with them whatsoever**. (ad2)

D: Yes, because we think that **people who rape others are useless, cowards, men that will be despised**. (ad3)

E: **You are totally stigmatised if people know you are a rapist**. (ad3)

F: **It is hard to understand the feelings of people who do it**, but in the society we don't normally approach to them actively. (ad3)

G: **Sexual offenders find it difficult to make friends**, except when you conceal (keep your criminal status unknown) yourself very well, otherwise once your identity is known then..., it's same outside (ad4).

H: **I don't think males should rationalise their behaviour**, women are no difference. (ad4)

5) Dislike and keeping a distance

A: Sexual offending is the most serious behaviour. I learnt that **all people dislike sexual offenders** when I was young. (ad2)

B: Sexual offending is **disreputable behaviour**. (ad4)

6) It goes against your morals and conscience

A: It is abnormal behaviour, **moral concerns are involved**. (ad1)

B: **Moral concerns are involved** because you have victims. (ad5)

7) Harsher punishment

A: Sexual offenders **should be given harsher punishment** if they rape good women and young girls. (ad3)

*Drug abusers thought violent offending and **violent crime** were:*

1) It's fine, if just fighting

A: Violent offending does not really involve moral concerns, as long as it doesn't kill people. **If you just break legs and hands**, that is fine. (ad1)

B: There are many categories of violent offending. Domestic violence is bad, but if **it's just fighting outside**, I feel that is fine. (ad2)

2) Moral concern

A: Violence is just **bad to social security**, but **has no moral concerns**. (ad2)

B: I **don't think it involves moral issues**, as some may not be able to survive if they don't do it (i.e., robbery, kidnappings and so on)(ad3)

C: But **if they come to do it without reason, than I think it does have** (moral concerns), that is different. (ad3)

3) Acceptable and unacceptable

A: Everything has its opposite side, I don't want my family members to come across this thing; killing. So we don't do that, **you don't want to be surrounded by these sorts of things**. (ad1)

B: **Violent offending is ok, as people sometimes have arguments**; it's just a question of more or less, isn't it. (ad3)

C: There are two kinds of facilitators prior to the occurrence of violent events. One is violent offenders, they think they have a justifiable reason, the other is being intoxicated, people always feel stronger and get bold to others when they are drunk. (ad4)

D: **The victims should take some responsibility**, as they must have had some conflict (feuds) prior to the incident. But theft and sexual offenders don't have this justification. Drug takers only hurt themselves. (ad5)

Theft offenders' perspective

Thieves thought drug abusing acts and drug abusers were:

1) Harmfulness

A: **Drug taking endangers society**, and sometimes the family, especially in a financial respect. (at1)

B: I don't do it, as **it damages your body**. I have witnessed the painfulness when withdrawal sets in, it is like you are dying. (at3)

2) Hard to get along

A: If you get together with them (drug users), and you don't take drugs, they will ask you to try, then we will be implicated. So **it is difficult to get along with them**. (at1)

B: Sexual offenders and **drug takers are more difficult to make friends with**. (at3)

C: **If you take drugs, then you will have no friends** (at3)

D: People are more cautious towards drug takers. **People don't want to get along with them** because when they are in need financially, they will borrow money from you and will keep disturbing you. (at3)

E: **Do you really want to make friends with** people who are drug abusers? (at3)

3) Disapproval.

A: **I don't agree with this**, after all it will cause negative results to the public and family. (at1)

B: Taking drugs **is the most terrible thing**. (at2)

C: **I would not do it**, even I had the chance to. (at2)

D: The high crime rate at the moment **mainly derives from abusing drugs**. (at2)

E: Drug abusing **should receive a severe punishment**, as it is in rapid growth. (at3)

4) Makes people mad

A: Many robberies and sexual offending cases are involved with drug abuse, because they steal once they don't have money, and once you involve drugs then **your brain will become dysfunctional**, and do some inexplicable things. (at2)

B: Taking drugs is the worst behaviour, as **people may go mad**, and do insane things. (at2)

C: Drug abusing is the most serious crime, **if drug withdrawal sets in, then they would do everything they want**. (at3)

Thieves thought Sexual offending behaviour and sexual crime were:

1) It is looked down on

A: As sexual offending is perceived as...**it is looked down on by me**. (at1)

B) Sexual offending is a sort of **abnormal behaviour**, those kinds of people are just **disgusting**. (at2)

C: Your friends **will tease/taunt you if you do it**. (at3)

2) Excluded

A: Sexual offenders are hard to make good friends with, as people all know your crime they **don't want you to have contact with them**. (at1)

B: Sexual offenders and drug takers are **more difficult to make friends with**. (at3)

3) Causing harm to the victims

A: Sexual offending is **harmful to victims physically and psychologically**. (at2)

B: Sexual offending is to rape others. How about if your sisters and family members got raped? Those who rape others have psychological problems, if you can't control yourself, you can buy it (sex). Consequently, you don't want you rape others, because **that girl's life is then destroyed, it can't be recovered from, it's forever!** (at3)

Thieves thought violent offending behaviour and violent crime were:

1) Harshest punishment

A: Violence **should be given the harshest punishment**. (at1)

B: Violence is **serious** as well. (at3)

C: As for robbery, as I thought, **it is different between you rob and you steal**. When they (victims) wake up it become robbery, **it cost several years!(in prison)**. But it is lesser, we analyse the cost and benefits. (at3)

2) No need to harm people

A: I think there is no need to harm people. (at2)

3) Legitimacy

A: If it is caused by others, then when you won't stand for it, you hit him back. **If it happens under this circumstance then the judge should give a shorter sentence**. (at1)

B: **Violence is normally provoked by the victims**. (at3)

Sexual offenders' perspective

Sexual offenders thought drug abusers and drug abusing acts were:

1) Ramifications following taking drugs

A: (drug users do) **damage to themselves**, although you spend your own money. (as1)

B: You will **get addicted**, and when you run out of money you would turn to your family, which just **makes them feel annoyed**. (as2)

C: Drug taking not only **harms yourself** but also **causes harm to others**. For example, if a law-abiding person happens to see that you are taking drugs, that might induce him try them and become involved as a result. So apart from satisfying your own arousal/desire, you, as a result, harm others. (as3)

D: Yes, some will go into poverty due to taking drugs. **It makes people not want to work and rely on selling drugs** (as4)

E: If society has developed to that level, then it (decriminalisation) is acceptable for most of people, if the life standard has reached that level, but ***I don't agree now, as society is in enough of a mess.*** (as4)

2) Worthless behaviour

A: I feel that if you take drugs and have no money to buy them, then you rob, ***I don't think that is worthwhile.*** (as2)

B: (drug taking is pointless) I have been thinking, and yet I have seen my friends doing it (drugs), ***I wonder what is it really for, just a moment of joyfulness,*** that's it. (as2)

3) Moral concerns

A: As drugs are bought using money, ***I never think of the consequences on family or society.*** (as1)

B: Yes, I think ***it has something to do with moral concerns.*** (as2)

4) Given severer punishment

A: ***Drug offences should be punished more harshly,*** as it is a long-term problem. (as3)

Sexual offenders thought stealing and theft crime were:

1) Involves moral concerns

A: It is not just that the law and social regulations dictate that we can't do it, ***but it also involves moral issues.*** (as1)

B: It ***involves moral concerns*** as well. (as2)

C: Sure, ***it has much to do with moral concerns and people's own conscience.*** If you steal things from the rich, then it won't cause damage, but if you take things belonging to the poor, then it will do enormous harm to them. (as4)

2) Great impact to the victims

A: When you steal others' things because you are in financial need, you never think that ***they may have been important to the victim.*** (as1)

B: If you steal things from the rich, then it cause damage, but if you take things belonging to ***the poor, it will do enormous harm to them.*** (as4)

3) Behaviour that gives a bad reputation

A: For example if you stole something and were found out by others that you did it, but you don't admit it this is ***very embarrassing and really infamous.*** But if you sexually assault others then you can say you were drunk as a good excuse. (as1)

B: If you were caught (stealing) in scene you would be hit, ***that is because this sort of fearful feeling.*** And generally the gain is not that much, unless it is gang theft (as3)

Sexual offenders thought violent offending behaviour and violent crime were:

1) Very serious behaviour

A: Before I came in, ***I felt that violence was the most serious offence***, because you could accidentally cut someone badly, or turn them into a 'vegetable', or break their limbs, that is very horrible. (as1)

B: Violence, it depends the extent they get hurt; ***it is quite serious if the victim gets damage to their organs***. (as4)

2) Involves moral concerns

A: ***It is not very much to do with moral concerns***, as it may be the victims who have provoked it, or past conflicting history, at the time you would not be able to think that much, you're just angry. (as1)

B: It has, especially domestic violence, ***something to do with moral issues***. But there's not much when two people are just fighting. (as2)

C: Yes, ***it has something to do with moral concerns***, because your violent behaviour will raise fear in others, but actually these four behaviours all have negative impact on society. (as3)

3) The victim should share the responsibility

A: ***Both parties need to share the responsibility***. But the side initiating the incident should take more. (as1)

B: I think ***the victims of violence should share some of the responsibility***. (as3)

4) We don't do it

A: ***I don't agree with robbing*** when you need money. (as1)

B: ***I was less likely to commit violent offences*** before I came in (to prison). (as1)

C: ***we (sexual offenders) generally don't do it (violence)***, as it normally involves things like gang fighting, or arguments of money. (as3)

Violent offenders' perspectives

Violent offenders thought drug abusing acts and drug abusers were:

1) Not healthy in mind

A: Frankly speaking, being a drug taker or a sexual offender makes it hard to find friends, they implies that you ***are not sound and healthy anymore. As drug takers' minds have been subject to drugs, their minds are distorted and very moody*** (av1)

B: For drug abusers, ***if they can't control themselves then they are game over (become useless)***. (av2)

2) Bad behaviour

A: Drug abuse will definitely result in some negative effects to your family and the public, yes, **this is a bad behaviour**. (av1)

B: Yes, it involves moral concerns, **you just enjoy yourself and don't care about people who surround you**, Your own pleasure always comes first. (av3)

C: Yes, it's a little to do with moral concerns. At the time I used it, **I was afraid of it being known, I would hide myself or avoid seeing people**. (av4)

3) Ramifications

A: Problems would arise, when you ran out of money; **it will evolve lots of problems**. (av1)

B: After all drugs harm people, **if it was legal then our teenagers and the future of our country would be in danger**. (av2)

C: I don't agree with the proposition of decriminalising drug taking, **as most of the prisoners had been involved in drug abuse**. (av3)

D: **It demands a lot of money to sustain the habit**. (av3)

4) The victim is themselves

A: **The victim of drug abuse is themselves**. (av2)

B: **It damages your body, and that's the most important thing**. I would not do it, even if it were legal. (av2)

C: **Drug abusers just harm themselves**, apart from that they are patients. (av4)

5) Hard to being friends

A: **Drug abusers find it most difficult to make friends**, as they can't even control themselves. Even when they have friends, they still can't be good friends. (av2)

Violent offender thought stealing and theft crime were:

1) Its bad to be labelled a thief

A: It's long been **a bad thing to be labelled a thief**. (av1)

2) It's not yours

A: Yes, we should not take others' things, **as they're not yours**. (av1)

B: **Theft is itself a wrong**, but we need to know the motives, if I didn't steal things from you, then may be I couldn't survive. (av1)

C: **Property is a right protected by laws, so no one can violate it**, if you break it then you should receive punishment. (av2)

3) Cowardly behaviour

A: **It is kind of cowardly behaviour**. (av2)

B: I have never committed it, because **I have limbs, why do I need to steal**. (av4)

4) Punishment

A: **Career theft should be given a more severe punishment.** If they really are in a desperate situation, then they may receive a less severe punishment. (av2)

5) Property rights

A: **Property rights are protected by laws.** (av2)

B: Theft has something to do with moral issues, as **it invades others' rights.** (av2)

C: You can't take it, **even if the victims are rich, as they have worked for it.** (av3)

Violent offenders thought sexual offending behaviour and sexual crime were:

1) No need to dehumanise others

A: Sexual services are available to buy; **you don't need to dehumanise/torture others.** (av1)

B: **We all have sexual needs, but they are based on love and relationships.** So, as you have already denied relationships and love, then what do you need to make friends for, that's the stuff you already think is unimportant. Why do you need friends? (av4)

2) Not sound and healthy

A: Frankly speaking, drug takers and sexual offenders find it hard to make friends. This implies that **they are not sound and healthy any more** (av1)

B: We, inside the prisons, think that **they are psychologically deviant, we don't consider them as normal human beings.** (av3)

C: There are many kinds of **sexual offenders in terms of psychology, it is a sort of illness.** (av4)

D: It is not a matter of how the girl dresses or behaves, others' don't commit assaults, so why does a sexual offender, **because they are ill.** (av4)

3) Victims should take partial responsibility

A: **The victims should take responsibility to some degree.** If you behave in a seductive way, then you encourage people to commit crimes. (av1)

4) An immoral behaviour

A: Needless to say, **it's an immoral behaviour.** (av1)

5) Life long harm

A: Sexual offending is very serious, and **it will have a life long effect.** (av2)

B: I think **sexual offending causes huge harm to others.** There are no clues displayed on their (the offender's) faces. **If the victim was my sister or a family member, I think I could not bear with it.** (av2)

C: It is the most serious crime, as **it causes life long damage**; this is my observation and feeling after years in prisons. (av3)

D: **They (the victims) will be permanently affected by your behaviour.** (av3)

E: **They cause so much harm**, don't you feel that the punishment is just too kind, this is this reason there are so many cases. (av4)

6) Definitely not do it

A: **Sexual offending, I definitely would not do it.** (av2)

Do offenders perceive their own crimes relatively less conflict with societal order and moral order? (General interviewing question: what is the relationship between offenders' own crimes, societal order and moral concerns?)

Q: How much is your unlawful behaviour to do with societal laws and moral principles?

2. How offenders evaluate their own crimes with respect to societal laws and moral principles?

Drug abusing from drug abusers' point of view

1) I don't behave badly

A: **I clearly know it is illegal**, I know it well, but I still do it. (ad5)

B: Taking drugs just damages myself, **I don't behave badly. I use my own money...like a habit, like smoking and drinking, I don't steal.** (ad5)

2) Should be decriminalised

A: **If taking drug were legal people would not do it anymore.** For example heroin, people say only the rich would be able to use it. Just because it is expensive and unusual, people want to have a try. If was freely available, then people would not feel any curiosity, **then consequently wouldn't want to take it.** (ad1)

B: **Legalising it is not such a bad idea. What we need is a good management system.** (ad4)

C: I have been thinking that the reason why drugs are so expensive is because the government bans them. **If it was legalised, than it would become much cheaper**, so we might be able to get it for one or two hundred dollars, but we can't. Currently it costs one or two thousand dollars, so committing crime is just inevitable. **If the price could be reduced, then we could enjoy it while having a job.** (ad4)

3) Moral concerns

A: It might be bad for my family, if the atmosphere is not that good and it is difficult to integrate with relatives. But, **it has nothing to do with social integrity, really.** (ad3)

B: ***Taking drugs is my personal decision.*** (ad4)

C: Only the drug dealers have issues of morality and personal conscience, but ***if just simply take drugs, then you should have no moral concerns.*** (ad5)
Stealing, from the theft offenders point of view

1) Least serious

A: ***Theft should receive the least serious punishment.*** (at1)

B: When you take someone's property, it goes against your conscience; my thought is they feel pain over it. But because of my desire to live for a better life, ***I feel stealing causes less harm and deserves a much less serious punishment*** (at3)

2) Against property rights

A: ***It is wrong, because you take things belonging to others.*** (at1)

B: ***Others' property is theirs, it is not yours', and they have the right to it.*** (at2)

3) Against your conscience

A: ***It has something to do with social integrity,*** because you take other people's things, your conscience sometimes would...if your victim is poor, that money may have had other purposes, or could have been for an emergency, then ***you will feel guilty.*** (at1)

B: You should not to steal things, even from the rich. ***We don't need to go against our conscience.*** (at1)

C: No, ***we thieves are concerned with moral conscience;*** if I know you then I won't steal from you. No matter how rich you are we won't burgle your house, we have this sort of practise, ***you get to have a sort of conscience.*** (at3)

D: Yes ***it has something to do with moral concerns.*** (at3)

4) A widespread activity

A: Drug abusing undermines society and theft does as well, but ***compared with them (the other offences), it (stealing) is not as serious.*** (at1)

B: ***Theft is really common and widespread,*** as we all steal for the sake of survival. Some thieves are not as disreputable as them (other types of offenders). Take it and go, if I can't succeed then I just run away, that's it. (at3)

Sexual offending: From the sexual offenders' perspective

1) It has something to do with moral issues

A: ***Yes this has something to do with moral issues as well,*** if I didn't have sex with girls, as I am over 30, ***I think I have against social integrity and moral.*** (as2)

Violent offending: From violent offenders' perspective

1) Involvement of moral concern

A: **Violence involves moral concerns as well.** (av2)

B: If you can't control yourself then you... invade other people's rights, then **that is already against the law and also against your conscience.** (av2)

2. Evaluations on other crimes

Drug abusers' point of view

Stealing

1) Moral issues involved

A: **Moral issues are involved.** (ad1)

B: **Theft involves moral concerns.** (ad2)

C: You will be going against the law and **people will make derogatory comments behind your back.** (ad3)

D: It **has something to do with moral concerns.** (ad3)

E: If something is not yours' then you should not take it, **if you do take it, then it involves moral issues.** (ad4)

F: **It has (to do with moral concerns),** if the victims is rich then that is fine, but if they are poor and already in bad living conditions, then it will cause a great impact on them.(ad5)

Sexual offending

1) Involved with moral issues

A: It is abnormal behaviour and **involves moral concerns.** (ad1)

B: **This involves moral concerns,** because you have victims. From society's point of view, this is despised greatly. (ad5)

Violent offending

1) Bad for social security

A: **Violence is bad for the security of society,** but has no moral concerns. (ad2)

2) Has nothing to do with moral concerns

A: **Violent offending does not really involve morality,** as long as they don't kill people. If they just break legs and hands, that is fine. (ad1)

B: **I don't think it involves moral issues,** as some may not able to survive if they don't do it (i.e., robbery or kidnappings and so on). (ad3)

C: **But if they come to do it without reasons, then I think it does (have moral concerns),** that is different. (ad3)

Theft offenders' point of view

Drug abusing

1) Endangering society

A: ***Taking drugs endangers society and sometimes the family***, especially in a financial respect. (at1)

B: ***Drug abusing undermines society*** (at1)

C: I don't agree with this, after all ***it will cause negative effects to the public and family***. (at1)

D: Basically it is a personal issue, ***the concerns are to do with health***. (at1)

E: The high ***crime rate at the moment mainly derives from drug abusing***. (at2)

F: ***Drug abusers should receive severe punishment, as the problem is in rapid growth***. (at3)

Sexual offending

1) Empathy

A: Sexual offending is raping others. How about if our sisters or family members were raped? (at3)

Violent offending

1) Active and negative

A: If it is caused by others, then you can't stand for it, you hit him back. ***If it happens under this circumstance, then the judge should give him a shorter sentence***. (at1)

C: ***Violence is normally provoked by the victims***. (at3)

Sexual offenders' point of view

Drug abusing

1) Nothing to do with law and moral concerns

A: ***I think taking drugs is a personal choice; it has nothing to do with law and moral concerns***. If you want to take drugs, you spend your money to buying drugs and you enjoy them, then why does the law need to intervene? (as1)

2) The society is in enough of a mess

A: Yes, ***I think it has something to do with moral concerns***. (as2)

B: If the society had developed to that stage then decriminalisation would be acceptable for most of people, if society had reached to that level, but ***I don't agree now, as society is in a mess***. (as4)

C: Yes, some people will end up broke due to taking drugs. **They make people not want to work and rely on selling drugs.** (as4)

1) It involves moral concerns

A: It is not just the law and social regulations that dictate that we can't do it, **but it also involves moral issues.** (as1)

B: **It involves moral concerns as well.** (as2)

C: **Sure, it has much to do with moral concerns and people's own conscience.** If you steal from the rich it won't do damage but if you take things belonging to the poor, then it will do enormous harm to them. (as4)

Violent offending

1) Very horrible

A: I feel that violence is the most serious, as if you accidentally cut others, break their limbs or damage their brains, **it is very horrible.** (as1)

2) Not much to do with moral concerns

A: **It does not have much to do with moral concerns,** as it may be the victims who provoke it, or a past history of conflict. At the time you would not be able to think that much, you're just angry. (as1)

3) Has something to do with moral concerns

A: **It has (something to do with moral concerns),** especially domestic violence. But there is not much in the case of fighting with each other. (as2)

B: **Yes, it has something to do with moral concerns,** because your violent behaviour raises fear in others, but actually these four kinds behaviour all have a negative impact on society. (as3)

The violent offenders' point of view

Drug abusing

1) A personal matter

A: If it is simply about taking drugs or not, then **it is only a personal matter.** (av1)

B: **It doesn't involve moral concerns,** as it doesn't harm others. (av2)

2) Causes many social problems

A: But drug abusing will **definitely result in some negative effects to your family and the public,** yes, it is a bad behaviour. (av1)

B: I don't harm others. But problems do come up, when you run out of money, **it causes lots of problems.** (av1)

C: Drugs harm people. If they were legal then our teenagers, and **the future of our country, would be in danger.** No one wants to work when they're on drugs, so it should not be legalised. (av2)

D: They damage themselves, but I think that **many problems derive from drug abuse**. (av3)

E: Yes, **it involves moral concerns; you just enjoy yourself and don't care about the people around you**. (av3)

F: Yes, **it's little to do with moral concerns**. (av4)

Stealing

1) Involves moral concerns and should be given more severe punishment

A: **Theft has something to do with moral issues**, as it invades others' rights. (av2)

B: **Career thefts should be given a more severe punishment**, but they (the offenders) may have some difficulty in their lives. If they are in a really desperate situation, they may be given a less severe punishment. (av2)

Sexual offending

1) An immoral behaviour

A: Needless to say, it is an immoral behaviour. (av1)

B: **Everyone** has freedom in where they go and the way they dress. Whoever they are, they are free to do what they want to and are protected by laws. (av2)

What do they perceive law and moral principle, and Whether what offenders claimed on their behaviour with respect to laws and moral principles being consistent with their unlawful behaviour, if not how do they explain it? (General research concern: Consistencies and conflicts between laws, moral principles used and their unlawful behaviour)

Drug abusers

1. Law

1) It is important to comply with laws

A: **It is very important to comply with laws**, otherwise society will have no order, and people will just do what they want to. Society would become messy; I don't want to see that. (ad2)

B: It should be that **if you do something unlawful, you need to be sent here**, although it is useless in changing people. They just want to put you in until you are old. (ad2)

C: It is important to comply with laws; **otherwise society would be in chaos**. (ad3)

D: Honestly, **I don't comply with laws in this respect (drug regulations), but other than that I do**. (ad5)

2. Moral principles

1) As a member of society

A: Society should have justice and fairness, ***we have to abide by rules and laws and when I come across unfair events I strive to change them.*** (ad1)

B: People say it is stupid to stand for or against, but if everyone possessed this kind of mentality then no one would follow you. ***If everyone upholds this (stage four) attitude then the community will progress in positive direction.*** (ad4)

C: I would say, ***if you treat people sincerely then you might get unexpected feedback and results***, although initially we don't mean to help others just for the expectation of return. (ad4)

D: Regard ourself ***as a member of the society and comply with the laws.*** (ad5)

E: ***I would be concerned with the whole interests of the community and do my best at being a law-abiding person***, and regard myself as a member of the society. (ad5)

2) Think of my personal interest

A: I would only think of my own personal interest; that is the reality of the current society and I think people in this community are mostly self-centred. (ad2)

B: I would only think of my own personal interest, and most people would be the same as me. (ad3)

3) The best moral principle

A: ***Stage three is the best***, if everybody does this then there wouldn't be such abnormal things happening out there. (ad1)

B: ***Stage three is the best, but it is impossible to achieve.*** (ad2)

C: ***Stage four is the best***, when people use this moral principle there is justice and fairness in the society. (ad3)

3. Conflicts between the moral principle employed and offending behaviour

1) Conflicting

A: Yes, I will do my most (to operate at the mature stage), ***but it is a bit contradictory to my behaviour.*** (ad1)

B: ***Sometimes I think I want to change...but taking amphetamine isn't that bad*** a thing, it just makes you (keep) working, working (i.e., working longer). (ad1)

D: ***Yes, they are contradictory. It is like someone has a disease, they can't control it***, can't control it, its like that. (ad5)

2) Consistency

A: Talking of my behaviour (taking drugs), ***I am not stealing, I spend my own money, then I have to be admitted here to be humiliated, I feel very unfair.*** (ad2)

B: ***No, there is no conflict***; as drug taking is ***just an issue of a different understanding between people, and second, I don't affect others.*** (ad3)

C: ***I don't think my statement has any conflicts with this moral principle, I just take drugs that's all.*** (ad4)

3) Exceptions

A: ***Yes, drug taking is the only exception***, I am a law-abiding person. (ad2)

B: ***Other than this one, I comply with the law.***(ad5)

C: ***I fully know this it is illegal, but why do I still do it? Its' just like a sort of habit; smoking and drinking.*** (ad5)

Thieves

1. Law

1) I didn't think about the law

A: ***I never thought about laws in my time outside.*** At that time I didn't know where it would end. After these years in prisons I now think that you really need to follow the law, as you will otherwise disappointed your family and harm the victims, making you feel really bad and distressed. (at1)

B: ***I didn't think of the law when I was doing it***, if I had thought about it, then I wouldn't have done it. (at2).

C: I thought if we, as a group, had done it together, then there would have been less chance of getting caught, we've all got the guts, so ***I didn't really think about the law really.*** (at2)

2) To stop people doing bad things

A: ***The reason for complying with laws is to stop me being involved*** (in crime). (at1)

B: It is important to put them (law violators) inside, ***if you didn't punish them, then they will commit more and more.*** It's because they don't care. Like me, this time, I believe I will not do it again. (at2)

C: ***No punishment, then no regret***, if you didn't punish them they wouldn't have this sort of mentality. It makes it more likely to occur again without punishment. (at2)

D: ***It is important to obey laws, because if you are caught, then you will come back again.*** If you obey laws then you won't offend again, if you don't steal you will not be caught, then you will not be sent here, so it's very important. (at3)

3) Pay the price

A: Yes **it is important to receive punishment for your behaviour**. Because you have done something wrong, and if you receive punishment, then this will stop people committing crimes. (at1)

B: (you should) **try not to go against the laws, because it doesn't pay, the price is just too high**. Like this time, I have been imprisoned for several years, three or four, although I am getting out soon, but I feel regretful, it really doesn't pay. (at2)

C: If people violate laws then you just have to give them punishments, **if you didn't they would keep doing bad things to society**. (at3)

2. Moral principles

1) The moral principle applied

A: **I would use stage three**. Yes, it conflicts with my behaviour. I didn't think that much before coming here, but as time goes on... I have. (at1)

B: **I used stage two before**, if I help you then I will ask for a return (at1)

C: **It depends (social contexts)**. (at2)

D: **I would consider the collective social benefits**. (at3)

2) The best moral principle to be used

A: **Stage four is the best** if everyone uses it. (at1)

B: **I think stage three or four is better** for our society. (at2)

3. Conflicts between the moral principle employed and offending behaviour

1) Conflicting

A: **I would use stage three. Yes, it conflicts with my behaviour. I didn't think about it much before coming here**, but as time goes on... I have. (at1)

B: When you take their property, it goes against your own conscience. My thought is that they are in pain over the loss. But as **for my life and to live for a better life, but I anyway feel stealing is much less harmful and requires a less serious punishment**. (at3)

C: I would steal again before long; **I will obey the law as best I can, but when there is nowhere to go**, I may... (at3)

D: I would consider the collective social benefits. Yes it contradicts, but that is because I needed money. When I go back there will be nothing left, as a result I would probably think about doing more (crime). (at3)

Sexual offenders

1. Moral principle

1) Moral principle applied

A: **Before I came in, I used stage one.** But after I am released I will consider the benefit to others and obey laws. (as1)

B: **Stage three is the best principle.** Are you asking about inside or outside? Because it's different, it's only a small group inside, and big group outside, I will use

C: **Stage two inside but Stage three in society.** (as1)

D: **I use Stage three, now, but Stage two before.** (as2)

E: I used to think others' needs, but if you get benefits from me, than I also want to get something back from you. (as2)

F: As I have been inside twice, and have caused lots of annoyance and trouble to my family, so **I would use stage three after this time.** (as2)

G: Before I came in, if a person was dying or drowning, I wouldn't be even bothered to help him. I thought it was useless, because I get no benefit at all, I was barely able to help myself let alone to help you. (as2)

H: **I think in the stage three,** but I used to use the stage one before. (as3)

I: **I use the stage three,** but it depends. If I am not getting on well with you I use stage two, if I don't like you, or I don't owe you, why do I need to help you? (as4)

J: If other's feel good then I feel the same, as well, I will... most of time I am an honest person. (as4)

K: **No I don't include the level of society in stage three,** personally. (as4)

2) The best moral principle

A: **Stage three is the best principle,** are you asking about inside or outside, because it is different, it is only a small group inside and big group outside, I would use the stage two inside, but stage three in society. (as1)

B: **Stage three is the best,** after all collective benefit should be prioritised. (as1)

C: **Stage four is the best,** as the country would become a good place to be and ...so it must be dependent on individual. (as3)

D: **Surely stage three is better,** people who use this live peacefully, righteously. stage four is good as well, but I think there are only few people using it. (as4)

1) Forget or don't care about laws and regulations

A: **Yes we are supposed to obey laws, but it is the only way to survive.** (av1)

B: While we were committing the crime **we had already forgotten about it and didn't care about laws and regulations,** things like that. (av1)

2) Maintaining the equity of the society

A: **The social system is the result of efforts that the members of society make,** if everyone obeys it (the law), despite the fact that some things are not perfect, then after long term efforts, I think things would change gradually. (av2)

B: Following laws is very important, as we are a democratic country, **the purpose of laws is to maintain the equity of the society,** if we didn't obey them then there would be in chaos. (av2)

C: **The purpose of law is to protect everyone's right, maintain freedom**, and it is based on the fact that everyone obeys it. If we didn't follow laws then there is no protection at all for our property and lives. (av2)

D: **Laws are like the rules of a game**; they are there, so we need to obey them, it is very important. (av3)

E: ...because we want to live in a peaceful community. I think laws constrict us and don't want us to exceed behavioural boundaries. If there were no regulation in place, the community would be in chaos, that makes us can't live interdependently. (av3)

3) To say what is right what is wrong

A: As laws are to protect us, **if they were no laws then who would say 'this is right and that is wrong'**. (av4)

B: **The meaning of laws is regulation**. (av4)

C: It is fair to send people violating laws to jail, so don't do bad things. (av4)

2. Moral principle

1) Moral principle applied

A: **I would use stage three**. Honestly I think I would use this moral principle, but in reality I would apply A (self-centred principle). (av1)

B: **It must be stage one**, self-benefit must be the first, I don't lie. (av1)

C: **I would use stage four**. I have long been using this principle... (av2)

D: **I would choose stage four**; I've been thinking like this since I came in. But I used to use stage two. (av3)

E: **I use stage four now**, but before I used stage three, but always after the event. (av4)

2) The best moral principle

A: **I would use stage three**. Honestly, I think I would use this moral principle, but in reality I would apply stage one (self centred). (av1)

B: **I think stage four is the best**, but I think these four principles have to be used in different settings. (av3)

C: **Stage four is better**, with justice and fairness, and then the society will be better. (av4)

4. Conflicts between the moral principle employed and offending behaviour

1) Conflicting

A: **As I am not a great person, I can't do it**. Honestly, I was a hard working man. If I didn't fall short of money I would not have committed crimes. (av1)

B: **Yes it conflicts with my past behaviour, but I just needed money**, can't ..., in fact, I really needed money, if I didn't rob, then I didn't have money to buy drugs, I would have been in pain. (av1)

C: **Surely it contradicts my behaviour. But they were all out of anger and impulse.** (av2)

D: **My case was an accident... unexpected, out of control**, so it is fair for me to come here, I am paying the price. (av2)

E: **Yes, there are contradictions, but we were passive**, I don't know why it ended in that situation. (av4)

F: **...self-defence, as my life was under threat, because of human nature I certainly wanted to fight back.** It is useless to call the police, we had tried to avoid it, but unfortunately it happened to me. (av4)

G: That was **because you attacked me rather than I actively attacked you** (reactive), I didn't mean to harm you, but you did. (av4)

Juvenile interviewees

Do juvenile offenders tend to attenuate the significant consequence or negativity of their unlawful behaviour in their sociocognitive evaluations?

(General interviewing question: What are offenders' Sociocognitive evaluations and perceptions on their own crimes?

Drug abusers (How juvenile drug abuser thought drug taking acts?)

Drug taking

1) Bad for health

A: **Drug taking is bad for your health**, I think it is serious. (yd1)

B: From my point of view, **I look at the aspect of harm to the victim, or themselves**, so that would make it more serious in terms of ranking (compared with the other three crimes). (yd1)

2) Looked down on

A: I think **drug abusers are looked down on most**. Because you would do everything inconceivable, you would rob or defraud. I cheated my family to get money. (yd1)

B: Yes, **I knew but the drug craving is too strong**. (yd1)

3) Hard to make friends

A: ...because **what drug takers say is less reliable**, people tend to trust them less. (yd1)

B: **I can make lots of friends who also take drugs, but there will be only a few friends outside this circle.** (yd1)

4) Lenient punishment

A: Drug takers **should be given the least severe punishment.** (yd1)

B: ... yeah, if just take drugs and don't hurt others, like robbing or cheating them. It may be that some people commit crimes after taking drugs, so it is perceived as being very serious. If it wasn't linked with these things, then I think taking drugs should simply be seen as using your own money and **only hurting yourself, so should not be given such a serious punishment.** (yd1)

Thieves (How juvenile thieves thought stealing behaviour?)

Stealing

1) No physical harm

A: **Stealing doesn't harm people physically.** (yt1)

2) Brings disrepute

A: People have a bad opinion about it and **it is disreputable.** (yt1)

B: If you steal others' property, then **people will call you a thief and blacklist you.** I don't want to be insulted like this. (yt1)

C: **People think that thieves are only able to do petty things** (jobs), so they are looked down on for this as well. (yt2)

D: I think **thieves just steal this and that, small stuff, so are easy to look down on.** (yt2)

3) Not serious and things are just got disappeared

A: **Compared with other crimes, things are just disappear.** (yt1)

B: They **just steal others' stuff; it's not that serious** (yt2)

C: Because it is just a money matter, **it is not as serious as the harm caused by other crimes.** (yt2)

4) Avoid confrontation

A: **I run away, I don't fight with them** (property owners). (yt2)

5) Not serious

A: For thieves, although some are still wary of you, **it's not as serious as sexual offending and drug taking.** (yt2)

B: Because **stealing is a small deal, a minor crime**, so it should...(yt2)

C: **The length of the sentence is quite short.** (yt2)

D: **Don't care at all (the consequence when got caught)**, and the length of sentence is pretty short. (yt3)

6) Moral concerns

A: **Theft has little to do with moral concerns** because you don't know whether or not the stolen things are important to the owners. (yt2)

B: Yes, **I did (felt guilty), but it's not as strong as sexual offending**. (yt2)

C: **I don't feel bad at all about stealing**. (yt3)

Sexual offenders (How sexual offender thought about sexual offending behaviour?)

Sexual offending

1) Harms others

A: Like violent behaviour, **sexual offending also harms others physically and psychologically**. (ys1)

2) Most looked down on

A: **Sexual offenders are the most looked down**. It makes me feel shameful. I didn't feel that until I came here. I just knew about having fun. (ys1)

3) The victim no need to take any responsibility

A: **The victim doesn't need to take any responsibility**. (ys1)

4) Moral concerns involved

A: **It definitely has something to do with moral concerns**. I felt really guilty after the third time. (ys1)

5) If we are girlfriend and boyfriend

A: **It's just a part of a relationship if we are girlfriend and boyfriend**, but if we were not then that (sexual offending) would harm others. (ys1)

Violent offenders (How juvenile violent offenders thought about violent offending behaviour?)

Violent offending

1) A good way

A: **I don't know how to deal with conflicts in any way but fighting**. (yv1)

2) The victim should take some responsibility

A: It is impossible to fight with others without good reason, isn't it. But robbery is an exception; I mean gang fighting or other forms of fighting. So **the victims should also take some responsibility.** (yv1)

3) Didn't think while doing it

A: **I never thought about it while I was doing it.** (yv1)

B: **The point is why does it happen, what is the motive?** (yv1)

C: **It might be the victim who provokes it** (violence). I was provoked, or the victim may be drunk. (yv2)

4) Not good

A: **It's not good to hit others.** (yv2)

5) Everyone fights

A: **Violent offenders are not looked down on, it is very common, everyone fights,** because everyone has conflicts. The definition of violence is fighting out of a disordered psychological state. (yv2)

Do juvenile offenders tend to evaluate their own crime relatively more favourable and identify their crime more when compared with other crimes? (General interviewing question: What are offenders' Comparative evaluations on crimes and their self-identities?)

1. what juvenile thieves, sexual and violent offenders thought about drug abusing)

Drug abuse

1) Moral concerns involved

A: **It has, it would cause harm to others.** (yt1)

B: **It has something to do with moral issues.** (yt2)

D: **If it has, then it's because this behaviour would affect their relationship with their families.** (yv1)

2) Only personal concerns

A: **It has no moral concerns.** (yt3)

B: **It has nothing to do with moral concerns;** just let them do it, as long as they don't harm others or do other bad things. (yv2)

C: **It is a personal discretion.** (ys1)

3) Harm to themselves

A: People **taking drugs cause harm to themselves**. (yt1)

B: I think they only (take the drugs) themselves, so it's less serious. (yt2)

C: **Let them do it, as long as I don't have to come into contact with it**. (yt3)

D: **Drugs give you delusions and lead to you harming yourself**. (yv1)

E: People who take drugs just want to enjoy a very short period of happiness, but **it normally ends in tragedy in their life**. (yv2)

F: **They don't just harm themselves, but also their families**. (ys1)

4) Behave oddly

A: I feel that **drug takers are freaks**, their reactions are really slow. (yt1)

B: People who I know taking drug are...their reactions (i.e., thinking and moving) are really slow, they can't work. They have nothing to say, and their memories are also deteriorating. (yv2)

5) Hard to make friends

A: Because they always need money to buy drugs, **gradually their friends become fewer and fewer**. (yt2)

B: Many **drug takers just take advantage of friends' money**. (yt3)

C: **If people know you are a drug taker, you will be socially excluded**. It's because they are afraid that you will make them take drugs as well. (ys1)

2. What juvenile drug abuser, sexual and violent offenders thought about stealing behaviour?

Theft behaviour

1) Being alert to theft

A: **People should be alert to thieves**. (yd1)

B: Because it's their property, as long as the person doesn't too show off and **because it is not yours, you should not take it**. (yd1)

C: If you steal others' property, **people will have a bad opinion of you** once you are known to have done it. It is a bad habit, yes. (yv2)

2) Moral implications

A: **Yes, there are (moral implications)** because this property doesn't belong to you, so you should not to take it. You can work to get it, using your abilities. For example, if the stuff you have stolen is very important to them, then you, in this case, have caused harm to them. (yd1)

B: **If I did it I would feel guilty**. (yv1)

C: If they really want to steal, they should not steal from elderly people. **That is really immoral**. (yv2)

D: **Yes, it's to do with moral issues**. (ys1)

3) Great impact to the victim's life

A: It is very important, because if you take away something that the person is really relying on, then you **may have a great impact on their life**. (yd1)

B: If the property you stole is very important to the owner, then **you will cause great harm to their lives**. (ys1)

4) Not very serious

A: If you steal something, the worst consequence is just that you get caught. **It's not very serious**. (yv1)

B: **It is just a sort of bad habit, they aren't really malicious**. (yv1)

3. What juvenile drug abuser, thieves and violent offenders thought about sexual offending behaviour?

Sexual offending

1. Harmful

A: Sexual offending should receive the harshest punishment, because **they harm others' bodies**. (yv1)

B: I feel that sexual offending **harms others, and it's the most serious crime**. (yt2)

C: Violence may possibly kill people or damage their brains and sexual offending may as well. (yt2)

D: **Sexual offending is very serious; if I caught them I would hit them**. (yt3)

E: **It will leave psychological trauma**. (yt3)

F: Because **sexual offending causes the most harm to the victim**, it's the most serious. (yd1)

G: **Sexual offending is harmful to the victims**. You should not harm others. (yv1)

H: When you harm others, **it will result in a life-long negative effect**. (yv1)

2. Difference

A: I am not the sort of person who is that bad, **I'm not such a freak**. (yt1)

B: **I am a normal person**, I don't do that. (yv2)

3. Moral concerns

A: **It's against your conscience and social morals**. (yt1)

B: **If I did it I would feel very guilty**. (yt2)

C: **It has a lot to do with moral concerns**, because it's about a kind of esteem and dignity, if you know the girl has been sexually assaulted, then, from a male point of view, we would think she is less worthy of respect. (yd1)

D: **They're a kind of deviant**, they might only think about it after they have done it. (yv1)

E: Sure, **it involves moral concerns**, no doubt. No one likes that to happen to their friends and families. (yv2)

4) Most looked down on

A: **Sexual offenders are the most looked down on**. Sexual offending and then theft, then third is violence. Drug taking is the least one. (yt2)

B: Its' a sort of feeling, **I look down on them**. (yt3)

C: If I did it, I would be looked down on; **it is a really bad reputation to have**. (yt3)

D: **Sexual offenders are the most looked down on**; you don't need to do that, no. (yv1)

E: Almost all people think that **it is pointless to sexually assault others**. Just to enjoy a moment's excitement. Who should take responsibility if you harm her physically? How would their parents feel? Everyone thinks like that, not just me. (yv1)

F: **This kind of behaviour is definitely looked down on**. (yv2)

5) Difficulty in making friends

A: When people know you have committed a sexual offence they dare not get too close to you. **Other males dislike this behaviour**. (yt2)

B: **I have a very bad opinion of them**; I don't know how to describe it. But if they are easy going, then I think it's still possible to make friends with them. (yv1)

C: If I have a wife or a girlfriend, and if I know he has committed a sexual offence, **who would dare to make friends with him**. (yv2)

6) Severe punishment

A: People who sexually assault females **should be given a harsher punishment**. (yt3)

B: Sexual offending **should receive the severest punishment**. (yv1)

C: Sexual offenders **should be given a life sentence**, if not capital punishment, they are just trash. (yv2)

7) The victims should take partial responsibility

A: Because some girls dress in very sexy and skimpy ways, some people may not be able control themselves, but I wouldn't do that. Although judges should not give sexual offenders lenient sentences, **I still think the girl has something to be blamed for**. (yd1)

B: **If you cover your body well all the time, I think no one would get sexually aroused and won't then sexually assault you**. But, you should not sexually assault girls just because of the way they dress. No you can't do that. (yv1)

4. What juvenile drug abuser, thieves and sexual offender thought about violent behaviour?

Violent offending

1) Harming others physically

A: ***It also harms others physically.*** (yt1)

B: ***It causes harm to others.*** (yt2)

C: ***Violence may possibly kill people or give them brain damage,*** and sexual offending also. (yt2)

D: ***Violent behaviour may not just harm others but also the perpetrator.*** (ys1)

2) Out of impulse

A: ***Violent acts are caused by impulse,*** they can't control themselves in the moment. (yt1)

B: ***The reason they act violently is often because others provoke it.*** They would otherwise be a good person. (yt3)

C: For violence I feel it is...because ***violence must involve two sides, such as feuds or interpersonal conflicts...***(yd1)

D: ***At that time I just thought that I wanted him to die,*** I didn't think of the outcome, being sent to jail or whatever, I was very angry then. (yv2)

F: It normally happens because they are provoked, and ***they can't control themselves.*** (ys1)

3) Moral concerns

A: ***It has something to do with moral issues.*** (yt2)

B: ***It has nothing to do with moral concerns;*** it is simply their business, it's between them. (yt3)

C: Yes, ***it generally has nothing to do with moral issues*** because often, both sides have something to be blamed for. For example, it may be because your victim annoys you or provokes you in the first place, so you just react. The principle is don't cause any harm to innocent people. (yd1)

E: ***It also involves moral concerns.*** (ys1)

4) Not very serious

A: ***Compared with drugs it's not too bad.*** (yt3)

B: ***What you need is just to go and see the doctors, or be sent to jail, that's it.*** (yt3)

C: ***If you hit him with good reason, then judges should consider that and give a shorter sentence.*** (yt3)

5) More severe punishment

A: **Violent offending behaviour should be given a more severe penalty.**
(ys1)

Are juvenile offenders' able to distinguish moral principles in terms of the most suitable one for our society, and would the degree of conflicts between offenders' unlawful behaviour and legal concerns be attenuated by the juvenile offenders?

Q: How much is your unlawful behaviour to do with societal laws and moral principles?

1. Moral principle

Drug abusers (from juvenile drug abusers' point of view)

1) Moral principle used

A: It varies from person to person. If I take drugs, it's out of certain reasons and I don't hurt others or cause any problems to society. I think that is ok. But if the reason you take drugs is to show you have the guts (for committing crimes) or facilitate something and cause problems to the community then I think it does have implications on moral issues. (yd1)

B: **I use Stage two.** I just feel some are ... if I help someone or they get benefit from me, I would hope they would do something in return ... but it's just a hope. (yd1)

2) Best moral principle

A: **Stage three is fine**, that is if you can help others out, you don't really need to ask for anything in return. I don't really understand it. But basically if you are able to help others out then that's great, but if you need to sacrifice some benefit then I would say sorry, I can't do it. (yd1)

Theft (from thieves' viewpoints)

1) Moral principle used

A: **I use stage four thinking now, I used to use stage one.** (yt1)

B: **I would use stage four.** (yt2)

C: **I use stage two, it is a kind of reciprocity.** I help my friends then they help me out another time. (yt3)

2) The best principle

A: **Stage three is the best**, to help people out without asking for anything in return. (yt1)

B: ***I think the stage three is the best for people to survive in the community*** and that stage four is the best overall. Because if you don't always ask for something in return people will like you more identify with you. (yt2)
C: ***Stage four is the best, that is, to help each other and abide by laws.*** If everyone could do it, then I would do it, otherwise ...I don't want to be taken advantage of by others. (yt3)

Sexual offending (from juvenile sexual offender's viewpoint)

1) Moral principle used

A: ***I would use stage four, I like fairness, don't like taking advantage of others.*** (ys1)

2) The best moral principle

A: ***Stage four is the best.*** If everyone brings forward different opinions and then uses these opinions to make things become better. Therefore, things can be improved and everyone can get more benefits. (ys1)

Violent offending (from juvenile violent offenders' viewpoints)

1) Moral principle used

A: ***I used to use stage one, I didn't care about the consequences to others, I just cared about my own self-interests.*** (yv1)

B: ***I am not so great as to use the Stage three principle,*** not asking for anything in return. ***But I have started to think about it.*** (yv1)

C: ***I would use Stage two,*** its' a bit selfish. If I used stage one, then I would come back to jail before long. (yv1)

D: ***I would use stage three thinking.*** I would consider others' and the whole society's benefits. (yv2)

2) The best one

A: ***Surely Stage three or four is the best one,*** but I wouldn't use it because others would take advantage of me. I am not that stupid. (yv1)

B: ***Stage four is the best, as a society should have justice and laws*** that people abide by. People shouldn't be treated differently. They are all equal. (yv2)

2. Legal issues

Drug abusing (from juvenile drug abuser's viewpoint)

A: ***Yes, it is very important. If there is no regulation or law, then this society would become chaotic,*** people would just do what they wanted. In these circumstances, people would not consider others' interests. They will think there is no punishment at all. (yd1)

B: **Yes, it is very important because if there is no penalty, then there is no chance of change.** If they just get verbal disciplines they would just think "oh that's it". But if they are sent to jail, then they will lose their freedom, I feel freedom is very important. (yd1)

Theft (from juvenile thieves' viewpoints)

1) Life would be easier and better

A: **If you abide laws your life will be much easier.** (yt1)

B: It's important to send them jail because they have violated laws. **That lets them learn the lesson and know that they are wrong.** (yt1)

2) Chaos

A: If people don't obey the law then many more people would commit bad things and not be afraid, then **society will become chaotic.** (yt2)

B: **They would possibly think that it's ok, then keep doing bad things.**

3) Learning lessons

A: I feel **it will make them understand what's wrong with their behaviour and may change after their release.** (yt2)

Sexual offending (from juvenile sexual offender's viewpoint)

1) Protect self and others

A: It is very important to obey laws, as **they can protect yourself and others.** (ys1)

2) Important to send law breakers to jail

A: **It's very important to send law breakers to jail.** If they didn't, such as in the case of murderers, it would cause more harm to victims' families and make society panic. (ys1)

Violent offending (from juvenile violent offenders' viewpoints)

1) Taking drugs should not be decriminalised

A: **I don't agree with drug taking being decriminalised.** It's better if they're not, otherwise society would be very messy because everyone would just take drugs and not want to work. (yv1)

B: **I don't agree with drug taking being decriminalised** because that would make even more people into users, especially those who don't already take drugs. If people knew it was legal, then everyone would take it, as it is exciting. (yv2)

2) It is important to obey laws

A: ***For people like us, it is very important to obey laws.*** But the problem is that you don't think about it while you are doing it, not until you get caught and sent here. (yv2)

B: ***For others it is very important, but not for me.*** (yv2)

3) Pay the price

A: ***If you don't want to be sent here then don't do it.*** No one forces you to commit crimes. (yv2)

Do offenders' think what they claimed on Gibbs' moral principles used and legal issues consist with their behaviour? If not, how do they explain it? (Conflicts—offenders' behaviour and moral principles used)

Drug taking (from juvenile drug abuser's viewpoint)

1) I desperately needed money

A: At that time I was... because I needed money to buy drugs, so ...(yd1)

B: That was all down to taking drugs, because I needed money to buy them. (yd1)

Theft (from juvenile thieves' viewpoints)

A: Yes, ***it did. I used to use stage one, just thought of my own interests, but I use Stage three now.*** I didn't think of them (laws and moral issues). (yt1)

B: Yes (it conflicts), but I will change. As I do a lot of self-reflection, ***I have changed a lot since I came in.*** (yt2)

Sexual offending (from juvenile sexual offender's viewpoint)

A: Yes, it does (conflict), because it depends on the situation. ***Except for selling pirate DVDs and sexual offending. I still consider others' interests.*** It's because I didn't have money at that time. (ys1)

B: ***It conflicts with my behaviour,*** so after I did it I was very anxious. ***I didn't think that much when I was doing it.*** (ys1)

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How cognitive beliefs, normative beliefs and moral domain are involved in specific crime patterns: A study of adult offenders

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Abstract

The different cognitive beliefs about offending exhibited by offenders are discussed. The question addressed in this paper concerns the extent to which beliefs and social knowledge about offending characterise different characteristic types of offending (drug abuse, theft, sexual and violent). Two hundred and ninety adult male prisoners in four Taiwanese prisons provided self-reported criminal histories. From these a crime index indicative of the proportion of offences of each type (or specialism in offending) was calculated for each offender. Offenders legitimize their own offending while they tend to regard the offences of others negatively. In this way, cognitive representations reinforce an offender's specific pattern of criminal acts while also insulating them from pressures towards other criminal activities. Evidence is presented that offenders' social knowledge development is consolidated around crime themes.

How cognitive beliefs, normative beliefs and moral domain are involved in specific crime patterns: A study of adult offenders

Over recent decades, research based on the social cognition perspective has revealed a great deal about how deviant behaviour can be understood. A high proportion of this research has examined moral development and social knowledge in relation to criminal and deviant behaviours such as aggression and drug-taking and has mainly concentrated on children and adolescents. In contrast, little work has been directed to studies of adult offenders. The present paper partially rectifies this.

Just what is the process of offence-related decision making? Work in this field considers that deviant behaviour is influenced by the ways how individuals perceive, interpret and process social situations (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Lösel, Bliesener, & Bender, 2007). It is suggested that the analysis of social cognitions play a role in an individual's social reasoning leading towards a particular crime (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Harvey, Fletcher and French, 2001). Maruna and Mann (2006) argue that more attention needs to be given to understanding the attitudes supporting and cognitive schemas underlying offences in order to prevent recidivism. Walters (2006) notes that criminal thinking (e.g. pro-offence attitudes, values, and beliefs) has been shown to be a powerful predictor of delinquent behaviour. However, a question which has puzzled researchers is whether maladaptive social cognition varies as a function of the type of offence (Barriga *et al.*, 2008; Chen & Howitt, 2006, 2007; Walters, 2006; Zhang *et al.*, 1997)? There are two competing perspectives concerning whether a) holistic (Samenow, 2004) or b) multifaceted self-serving cognitions (Barriga *et al.*, 2008) characterise criminal thinking. Recent research, though not using forensically-defined samples of adolescents, found a relationship between maladaptive cognitive (i.e. self-serving cognitive distortion and pro-crime attitudes) and corresponding deviant behaviours (Barriga *et al.*, 2008; Zhang *et al.*, 1997). More research is needed in order to evaluate these different views.

In criminology, offenders' criminal careers have been regarded as either be within a specific type or cluster of crimes or versatile embracing a wide array of deviant behaviours. Empirical research

includes Kempf (1987), Piquero *et al.* (1999) & Schwaner (1998); theoretical discussions include Cornish & Clark (1986), Moffitt (1993) and Piquero *et al.* (1999). Despite Piquero *et al.*'s suggestion that there is some degree of specificity of offending amidst versatile offending patterns, nevertheless, it may be more fruitful to concentrate on how and why some offenders specialize within a cluster of offences (Guertte *et al.*, 2005). Thus, the primary concern of the current paper is to understand how specific aspects of offenders' social knowledge are related to different categories of offences. While the Kohlbergian global perspective on moral reasoning development has dominated much thinking in this field, the social information processing model which is also focused on social cognitive may be pertinent. This has mainly focused on addressing the development of children's aggressive behaviour through their social representations in the crime context. Important recent research has attempted to integrate two different social-cognition based models which had previously developed more-or-less independently (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2004; Dodge & Rabiner, 2004; Harvey, Fletcher and French, 2001; Nucci, 2004). These perspectives are generally referred to as the *moral domain model* (Turiel, 1983) and *social information processing model* (SIP) (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Huesmann, 1998).

Underpinning both the *moral domain* and *social information processing* models is the idea that how people define situations cognitively and construe social information is crucial to their social reasoning processes and, as a consequence, their chosen responses to situations. Learning is a process involving a continuous reciprocity between behaviour and the outcome of that behaviour. There is uncertainty about the degree to which one believes in the acts one carries out and the degree to which one acts on what one believes (or both) (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Gannon & Polaschek, 2006). A person's perceptions of and representations of the social world are paramount in determining their responses to situations they confront. Thus it may be their personal cognitive interpretation rather than the social facts which are crucial. Samenow (2004) contends that the cause of crime is what a person thinks rather than the environment in which the crime is situated. Accordingly, individuals have their own crime orientation which involves both components of their personal identity as well as evaluative components in relation to particular offences which may facilitate that sort of crime or create a barrier against that particular activity (Byrne & Trew, 2005). In social information processing, individual's social knowledge is crystallized through behaviour rehearsal, retrieval of schemas and cue evaluation and

interpretation from time-to-time (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Fontaine, 2006a, 2007; Fontaine & Dodge, 2006; and Huesmann, 1998) and by reciprocal effect (Walters, 2006).

Social information processing model and offending behaviour: The *social information processing* (SIP) model has been widely acknowledged as a prominent means of understanding deviant behaviour in general and child and adolescent aggressive behaviour in particular (Coie & Dodge, 1998; Crick & Dodge, 1994; Harvey, Fletcher & French, 2001; Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Lösel, Bliesener & Bender, 2007). The SIP model consists of two main operational mechanisms: 1) online processing and 2) latent knowledge systems. It is believed that these two mechanisms work collaboratively and are subject to change with experience. Social knowledge (or social schemata) within the individual's memory system is essentially a processed and structured database which guides social reasoning, in general, and is greatly involved in the early steps of the Social Information Processing model (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Zelli, Dodge, Lochman & Laird, 1999). In the context of sex offending, some researchers argue that distorted knowledge rather than dysfunctional cognitive functioning may characterise sexual offending (Johnston & Ward, 1996; Ward *et al.*, 1997).

The Crick and Dodge (1994) and the Huesmann (1998) social information processing models substantially enhanced our understanding of children's social adjustment to the situations which confront them. The full six steps in Crick and Dodge's model of cognitive processing are 1) encoding cues; 2) interpreting cues, 3) selecting or clarifying goals, 4) response access, 5) selecting responses, and 6) enacting chosen behaviour. There are four processes in Huesmann's model including 1) cue attention and interpretation, 2) script retrieval, 3) script evaluation and selection, and 4) evaluation of society's response to one's behaviour. Furthermore, these two models have provided an elaborate framework within which to examine these distinct steps of information processing. One important feature of the reformulated processing mechanism is its emphasis on the role of the individual's mental representations or social knowledge relevant to the situation. The latent knowledge or data base, as it is called in the SIP model, serves a critical role in helping determine an individuals' response to a given social contexts. Knowledge structures are the products of social interaction involving the individual's values, prior experiences, social adjustment, and the consequences of their behaviour. Zelli *et al.* (1999) suggest that cognitive beliefs have moderating and

independent functions. That is to say, knowledge structures play a guiding role in their own right while also acting as a mediating influence on processing information. This notion is supported by Lösel *et al.* (2007) who reported that pro-aggressive repertoire evaluations exert more influence on later aggressive behaviour following retrieval of the repertoire from the memory store. A similar finding was also reported in Johnston and Ward's work (1996) who argued that the maladaptive beliefs of sexual offenders may contribute to sexual offending. In the light of a paucity of research looking solely at the cognitive representation on wide variety of forensically and the lack of information from the offender's point of view, it is unclear, as yet, just how an offender's social knowledge base is related to their offending behaviour.

Normative beliefs are "*individualistic cognitive standards about the acceptability of a behaviour*" (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997). This essential cognitive construct is shared and plays a critical role in both Dodge and Huesman's models. It is referred to as self-regulatory internal standards and is derived from Bandura's (1986) social-cognitive formulation. Basically, it serves a filtering function for sociomorally chosen responses. This belief-based, value-prescriptive function may, in turn, exercise influence in other stages of processing information. This function has been identified as an important element on element in the aggression exhibited by a child. For example, a child is more likely to be extremely aggressive if they believe that acting aggressively is an appropriate solution to current problem (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Zelli *et al.*, 1999). Furthermore, adolescents who believe that physical aggression is an acceptable response to social situations are more likely to exhibit physically aggressive behaviour (Werner & Nixon, 2005). In contrast, adolescents who believe that relational aggression (i.e. psychological and emotional aggression) is an appropriate response to social situations are more likely to engage in relational aggression. Similarly, juvenile delinquents are more likely to use violence when they experience high levels of anger if they consider physical aggression an appropriate means of dealing with conflict (Sukhodolsky & Ruchkin, 2004). Further evidence of the specificity of the relationship between beliefs and anti-social behaviour is to be found in a study by Crane-Ross, Tisak & Tisak (1998) and the differential association between offenders' cognitions and types of anti-social behaviour is also shown in Chen & Howitt's (2006, 2007) work. They established that specific moral value developmental lags had systematic correlations with specific offending behaviours. Finally, a consistent favourable assessment in evaluative judgements of behaviour was

found for varied deviant behaviours (e.g. substance abuse, stealing and cheating) in a recent review study (Fontaine, 2006b).

Crime self identity is conceptualized as the offenders' perceptions about themselves and their main unlawful behaviour. As noted earlier, social knowledge is a feature of criminal development. It is to be expected that if a person chronically engages in certain deviant behaviours, these specific and concrete behaviours will also become incorporated into that person's self-concept including their identity and their cognitions about their dominant type of offending. Besides this, Fontaine and Dodge (2006) suggest that responses produced to stimuli have to be congruent with one's self-identity before the individual proceeds to the next step in information processing. In consideration of the vital socio-cognitive tenet of equilibrium (Piaget, 1977), this argument appears to provide a more theoretically developed justification.

The Moral domain model and behaviour: Turiel's moral domain model proposed that social events fall into three distinctive types plus one subtype of moral domains (Nucci, 1981; Turiel, 1983; Tisak & Turiel, 1984). Consistent with Piagetian theory of moral reasoning development, the moral domain model assumes that a) human social knowledge is organised over time and that b) the individual's experiences develop into social schemata or scripts as a consequence of the interplay between the self and the environment. These enduring and stable knowledge structures help the individual deal with social situations. A clinical methodology is adopted by researchers working with moral domain model. The justifications which individuals give for their actions are the basis for evaluating the individual's moral domain.

Unlike Kohlberg's formulation of cognitive moral reasoning development, Turiel (1983) contended that social knowledge serves as a cognitive resource which can influence an individual's coping response and decision making. Individual's social reasoning involves a knowledge framework which characterised by three distinct moral domains. These moral domains are the personal, conventional and moral concepts domains. Prudential concern was added later as subtype of the personal domain (Tisak & Turiel, 1984). Sharing aspects of the Kohlbergian paradigm of moral reasoning and behaviour, Turiel's moral domains model has at its epistemological foundation the reciprocal interactions between the individual and the external environment. Yet, unlike Kohlberg's sequential system, the moral domain model claims that children's social reasoning develops

separately and simultaneously on four different trajectories according to their conceptions of social events (Tisak, 1995). Issues involved in Tisak and Turiel's domain-model conceptual framework include rightness or wrongness, obligationness, permissibility, alterability, rule and authority contingency, and generalizability. Variations in responses to these facets are of central concern in explaining sequent behaviours.

The *personal domain* concerns the prerogative of the individual over their own decision making behaviour and does not, as such, involve social rules or moral considerations. The *conventional domain* encompasses social regulation and consensual rules imposed by authorities to maintain social order which play a critical role on whether the behaviour is regarded as legitimate. The *moral domain* involves consideration of legitimacy of actions where they are pertinent to moral issues, social justice and welfare to others – that is, damage to the welfare of others is the crucial criterion within this domain. Finally, the *prudential domain* prioritises the consequences of one's own actions for oneself in the decision making process. Although the prudential domain shares the feature of concern with harmful results with the moral domain, no interpersonal factors are involved in the prudential domain. Numerous investigations, although few of them use forensic populations or adults, have examined the variations of moral domain placement in relation to behaviour. Amonini & Donovan (2006), Kuther & Alessandro (2000), Nucci, Guerra & Lee (1991) and Tisak, Tisak, & Rogers (1994) all report that illicit drug users tended to regard this offence as a matter for personal discretion which had little or no relevance to other social agents such as parents. This was especially the case with high users of drugs.

Offenders' definitions of and attributions about offending behaviour when viewed from the perspective of the moral domain model may partially explain why offending behaviour often shows distinct patterns. Evidence in support of this can be found in Tisak & Jankowski's (1996) study of a sample of adolescent offenders. A relationship was found between moral domain assignment and the extent to which offences were judged as being wrong and requiring punishment if violated. For these juvenile offenders, moral rules were the most important and deserving punishment when transgressed while conventional rules were the second most important and the personal domain the least important. Nevertheless, the influence of the more morally relevant of the moral domains (e.g. the moral concepts domain) was often obscured by the intrusion of less intrinsically moral domains. Thus the conventional rules domain

tended to be extended into moral concerns and the personal jurisdiction domain into the conventional rules domain. Leenders & Brugman (2005) suggest that such domain shifting operation may be part of a psychological defence process since transgressions of the moral domain are the most threatening to the offender. As such, it would be conceivable that individuals who chronically commit a specific type of offence would more likely to claim that the crimes they commit fall in a less condemnable domain.

In summary, evidence has gradually accrued to indicate the dysfunctional social cognitions may contribute to deviant behaviour. It remains, however, unclear about how specific socio-cognitions can be related to types of offending behaviour. That is, whether social decision making about their criminal behaviour is based on specific features of the crime and specific aspects of their cognitions. Because the criminal has cognitions about offending which may be different from those of another offender type or the general public, it is important to understand the specific cognitions of each offender type. Additionally, based on the limited literature available on the social cognitions-offending behaviour relationship, it is clear that we need to know more about the social-cognitions which characterise different sorts of offences. To address the above two issues would help illuminate the association of social knowledge with delinquency and crime.

The primary purpose of the present study was to elicit cognitive information pertinent to different types of offending based on the perceptions of the offenders themselves. This information was then used to address the question of whether there is a unique behavioural-cognitive relationship for each type of offence. Consequently, based on relevant research and theory, it was hypothesised that 1) offenders tend to identify themselves and their crimes as being of a particular sort; 2) a relationship with supportive evaluation and beliefs on offenders' main crime types is more likely to be observed than others crimes. 3) the moral domain is expected to be more likely assigned to the crime which is not the main ones committed for the offender whereas the personal domain is more likely to be assigned where the crime is of the main type committed by the offender.

Method

Participants

Adult male offenders (n=290) with index offences for one of four different types of crime (drug taking, theft, sexual, and violent) participated in this study. They were incarcerated in four correctional institutions located in the north, central and east of Taiwan. Their mean age was 33.2 years ranging from 18.1 to 57.0 years (SD=9.3). Only about 4% were Taiwanese aboriginals. The average length in time, they had spent in criminal justice institutions were 60.4 months (SD=52.39). Of the participants, 37.7% served in prisons for the first time, whereas 62.3% were recidivists (M= 2.12 times, SD=1.08). The index crimes were drugs 40%, theft 20%, sexual 17% and violent 23%.

Procedure

Designated prisons providing rehabilitation programmes (e.g. psychological and vocational training courses) to drug abusers, sexual offenders, and theft offenders were approached. Participants at the units selected were invited to join this research. Respondents were first presented a set of questions asking for demographic information along with a self-reported criminal history checklist including their histories of imprisonment and for which crime (s) they served for each time if more than once. Next, a questionnaire including six sub-sections concerning cognitive variables on crimes relevant to the current study was administered. All respondents were informed that this was an anonymous survey and that no names or ID number should be indicated on the questionnaire. Furthermore, they were reassured no personal identifying information would be revealed to third parties.

Measures

All of the measures were written in Mandarin Chinese by a native speaker (C-A C). English translations are provided in this paper.

Mental Representations about Crimes. As Fiske & Taylor (1991) have suggested that the consistency between behaviour and attitude is strongly evidenced when they are measured at the same level of generality. This newly designed measure consisted of four subscales, together with a self-report crime history section and a scale asking which type (level) of moral reasoning they and others operate at. They are as follows:

1) Cognitive beliefs about criminal self identity: This consisted of questions which essentially assessed the offenders' self-identity as a

particular type of offender. These were i) The crimes that I have committed apart from the main ones were not committed purposely, ii) I think that I am different in many ways from offenders who commit other types of crime, iii) It is very unwise to commit any other types of crime other than the ones I have, and iv) I am not the sort of person who would commit any other sorts of crimes than the ones that I have been convicted for. The offenders gave responses on a five point Likert scales, with five being the allocated score for 'agree strongly' responses and one being assigned for ratings of 'disagree strongly'.

2) *Normative beliefs about different offences*: This subscale was comprised of six questions concerning aspects of crimes such as their seriousness, how much disrespect people have for such offenders, the damage done to the victim by the crime, the appropriate punishment severity, personal likelihood of committing the offence, and damage to the offender's self image if caught. Respondents were asked to order the crimes of drug taking, stealing, sexual assault and violent behaviour on these dimensions. A score of four was given to the first ranked crime on these questions through to a score of one for the lowest ranked.

3) *Relative cognitive beliefs concerning different offences*: This consisted of six pairs of offences – drugs vs. theft, drugs vs. violent, drugs vs. sexual, theft vs. violent, violent vs. sexual and theft vs. sexual. The precise wording of the question varied according to the pair in question, but participants rated four question sets from agree strongly to disagree strongly with a score of five being awarded to agree strongly and a score of one to disagree strongly. The questions were for the drug vs. theft comparison i) No matter what reason one might have, I think taking drugs should be forgiven less than stealing, ii) I think people who take drugs are more selfish than those who steal, iii) The overall personal costs compared to benefits of taking drugs are less than for stealing, and iv) Taking drugs causes more harm socially than stealing. Other than the changes in the names of the pairs of crimes, the four statements in each of the five sets of paired comparisons were identical.

4) *Moral Domain Attributions*: Participants were asked to put each of the crimes into a moral domain (moral, conventional, personal, and prudential) by describing each domain to the participant who then chose to which domain each type of criminal behaviour belonged. The four moral domains are i) We have our own absolute right to decide if we want to engage in it; ii) This is nothing to do with personal conscience or moral concerns but we do not do it because it is

prohibited by social regulations or rules which the majority of people agree with or because authorities tell us not to do it; iii) This involves personal conscience and moral concerns – it is not just because we are told not to engage in it; and iv) The main concern of this moral domain is whether the behaviour will result in negative or harmful consequences to ourselves – not because we are told not to engage in it. The four moral domain principles were developed based on the work of Turiel (1983) and Tisak & Turiel (1984).

5) *Self-reported criminal history and personal information.* In order to generate a crime index for assessment, a criminal history checklist embedding a list with four cluster of crime was administrated to research participants. They were asked to give both times and types of crimes that they had committed regardless the official records, coupled with how many time had they sent to correctional institutions as well as how much time in total had they been imprisoned. In addition, personal demographic information was elicited from participants, these including age and ethnic origin. The crime specialism index was based on the proportions of the category of offence for which they had committed. Thus a person whose offences were all for drug crime would receive a score of 100% for drugs. If half of their crimes were for drugs then they would receive a score of 50% for drugs. The average index percentages were as follows: drug offenders ($M=40\%$, $SD=.39$), theft offenders ($M=20\%$, $SD=.30$), Sexual offenders ($M=17\%$, $SD=.34$) and Violent offenders ($M=23\%$, $SD=.32$) with minimum to maximum=0 to 100% in each group.

6) *Moral reasoning and cognitive ability minimum competence test.* The offenders were given a list of moral reasoning characteristics based on four moral reasoning levels from Gibbs *et al.* (1992) sociomoral reasoning model. They were asked to select the stage from the list of descriptions which reflected their beliefs, the beliefs that most people in the community adopt, the principle which would help them survive in the community, the principle which is best for the community if everyone applies it, and the principle which is most frequently adopted by their friends. The purpose of this was to ensure that the participants had the cognitive ability to comprehend the measures employed in the study.

This measure essentially asked participants to attribute types of moral reasoning to themselves and others. These types of reasoning corresponded to different moral reasoning levels. It was intended to help assess the extent to which the respondents are capable of comprehending the qualitative differences between the different

moral reasoning stages. Converting the different moral reasoning categories to scores simply by scoring the lowest level as 1 and the highest level as 4, offenders identified moral principles which would be best for the community if everyone in the community applied it which indicated high levels of moral reasoning development. ($m = 3.38$, $n=280$, $sd = 0.80$). On the other hand, they ascribed a lower level of moral reasoning to themselves in order to survive in the community ($m=2.70$, $n= 281$, $sd = 1.07$). Similarly, they chose as their own normative beliefs ones which were relatively low too ($m=2.41$, $n=280$, $sd=1.11$) and the moral principles exemplified by their friends had an equally low score ($m=2.41$, $n = 280$, $sd=1.02$) were identical. Nevertheless, the lowest moral reasoning development was applied to the principles adopted by most people in the community ($m=2.13$, $n = 280$, $sd=1.10$).

The above means were compared using the paired t-test, all differences were statistically significant with the exception of the comparison between the moral reasoning level of the principles used to describe the beliefs of themselves and their friends. The significance levels of the other comparisons ranged from .003 to .000. This means that the differences would remain significant with the Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons applied.

Since these data seem to correspond to a fairly systematic pattern which, in itself, is indicative that participants could use concepts relating to moral reasoning development discriminately, it appears reasonable to accept that they were capable of understanding the underlying concepts that the research entails.

Results

Essentially, the assumption of the present research is that there are complex relationships between cognitions about crimes among criminals and their chosen pattern of offending. Inevitably, because this study is in part exploratory, there are not strong hypotheses to guide the detail of the analysis. Consequently, the analysis is structured according to the different measures that were employed.

Cognitive Beliefs about Criminal Identity

Table I gives the mean scores for the personal identity measures together with the Pearson correlations between these and the crime specialism index. The personal identity measures assess the

individual's cognitive beliefs about their offending behaviour in comparison to other types of crimes. The ratings are based on a five-point Likert scale where the highest score of five points was given for strongly agreeing with the item. A factor analysis with principle components method was carried out to form a collectively super variable. A one-factor solution was produced. The factor accounted for 42% of the variance.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

A correlation analysis was performed to test if the crime specialism had effect on the extent to which offenders may possess stronger personal identity as a particular type of offender. Table 1 shows that offenders with higher specialism for drug abuse ($r=.23$, $df=288$, $p<.05$) tended to identify with drug taking stronger. In contrast, offenders who engaged relatively more in theft ($r=-.15$, $df=288$, $p<.05$) and sexual ($r=-.15$, $df=288$, $p<.05$) crimes tended to indicate that they had less identification with the two offending, respectively. There was no significant relationship emerging between violent specialism index ($r=.02$, $df=288$, ns) and criminal identity. It is notable that the mean(=3.52) is above the mid-point of the Likert rating scale implying that offenders have a tendency to see their crimes as reflecting a specific pattern.

Drug abuse, theft and sexual crime specialism indexes were statistically significant and not always did they demonstrate a positive relationship with criminal identity. There is therefore some evidence in favour of the idea that criminals have cognitions support of the view of themselves which is crime specific.

Normative Beliefs

The Normative Belief measures (cognitive evaluation scores) are based on separate factor analyses of the six cognitive aspects measured in personal and social levels in the study (i.e. seriousness, disrespect the offender, damage to victim, receiving the highest punishment and detriment to ones image). Principle component factor analyses were conducted individually, with orthogonal rotation where appropriate, for the four types of crimes. The factor analysis yielded only one factor for drug, theft and sexual crimes which accounted for 47%, 41% and 42% of the variance, whereas two factors were extracted for violent group with 32% and 23% of the

variance accounted for. Detriment to the person characterises Factor 2 and detriment to society characterises Factor 1.

Table 2 gives the correlations between the measure of normative beliefs and the specialism index for the different types of crime. A negative correlation means that the cognitive measures about the crime types are lower (i.e. less agreed with). As can be seen, in each case the relevant normative belief for a particular crime has a negative correlation with each crime type. Thus the cognitive evaluations about drug abusing are negatively correlated with the drug specialism index, for example. In other words, those who commit a greater percentage of a particular crime type tend to give cognitive appraisals which are relatively less negative than those who tend not to commit that crime type. Drug offenders had significantly negative correlation with the scores given on taking illicit drugs ($r=-.44$, $df=283$, $p<.001$) which implies greater legitimacy to drug taking behaviour, and this also applied to the assessment on personal level ($r=-.14$, $df=284$, $p<.05$), yet there was not a statistically significant correlation with violence measured in social level ($r=.06$, $df=284$, ns). By the contrast, positive correlations were obtained to stealing ($r=.35$, $df=283$, $p<.001$) and sexual offending ($r=.31$, $df=283$, $p<.001$) behaviour. Similar for drug abusers, a negative correlation was found between being high on theft specialism and the cognitive evaluation for stealing. Theft positively correlated to the cognitive evaluation of Violent offending in both personal and social dimensions ($r=.15$, $df=279$, $p<.05$; $r=.20$, $df=284$, $p<.01$, respectively). Similarly, sexual participants also responded negatively to sexual offending behaviour ($r=-.35$, $df=283$, $p<.001$) and theft ($r=-.17$, $df=283$, $p<.01$), but had a positive correlation with drug ($r=.31$, $df=283$, $p<.01$) and violence at the personal level ($r=.15$, $df=284$, $p<.05$). There was, however, no correlation with social level ($r=-.02$, $df=279$, ns). Lastly, as expected, violent offenders' responses correlate negatively with both in social ($r=-.20$, $df=279$, $p<.01$) and personal levels ($r=-.18$, $df=284$, $p<.01$), while no relation was found with drug taking, theft and sexual offending.

Table 2 About Here

Relative Cognitive Beliefs Concerning Different Pairs of Offences

The correlation analyses between the offenders' relative cognitive beliefs on pairs of different crime types and crime indexes are shown in Table 3. The questions in this section were worded in favour of the second crime types in all paired questions. Notice that generally there is a tendency for one member of the pair in question (e.g. drug versus theft) to show a positive correlation and the other to show a negative correlation with the crime specialism index. In this case the correlation with drug specialism is $-.25$ and with theft specialism $.20$. Both of these are statistically significant. Generally this is true throughout the crime pairs except that the correlations between Theft vs. violent crimes item with violent crime specialism is not significant ($r=.08$, $df=286$, ns) and the Theft vs. Sexual correlation is not statistically significant for theft specialism ($r=-.06$, $df=285$, ns). However, theft does have a negative correlation with violent specialism ($r=-.17$, $df=286$, $p<.05$). With the exceptions given above, the tendency for one member of the pair to have a positive correlation with the relevant crime specialism and the other member of the pair to have a negative correlation with the relevant crime specialism is clear. The results for the remaining four groups were as follows: drug vs. violent ($r=-.20$, $df=288$, $p<.01$; $r=.19$, $df=286$, $p<.01$), sexual vs. drug ($r=-.20$, $df=286$, $p<.001$, theft vs. violent ($r=-.17$, $df=286$, $p<.01$ (theft)), theft vs. sexual ($r=.17$, $df=285$, $p<.01$), violent vs. sexual ($r=-.12$, $df=286$, $p<.01$). It was rather striking that there was no statistically significant relationships for the crimes which were not involved in the named pair of the questionnaire item with the exception of drugs in Theft and sexual question mentioned above.

Table 3 About Here

Moral domain

Table 4 gives information about one-way ANOVAs for each index crime group on the crime specialism index. The table shows a significant between-group effect for the moral domain placement in both drug $F_{(3,272)}=3.99$, $P=.008<.01$ and theft $F_{(3,266)}=3.47$, $p=.02<.05$ groups. There were, however, no overall differences for sexual ($F_{(3,267)}=.64$, $p=.59>.05$) and violent ($F_{(3,263)}=.99$, $p=.40>.05$) respondents. The subsequent post-hoc tests (Tukey HSD) showed that moral domain placements differed for Drug ($p=.004<.01$) and Theft ($p=.009<.01$) groups for both the Personal and Moral categories, while no differences were obtained for the Conventional and Prudential domain.

Table 4 about here

Predictors of the Crime Specialism Index

Drugs: Table 5 summarises the stepwise multiple regression model for drug group which explained 32% ($F_{(6,262)}=20.11$, $p<.001$) of the variance in the model which included the four main cognitive variables studied. Normative beliefs for drugs explained the most of variance in taking drugs with nearly 16% ($t=-6.06$, $df=266$, $p<.001$). This showed offenders with higher involvement in drug abusing tend to perceive this behaviour as being relatively less negative than the rest of crimes studied in this research. A further 6% ($t=4.86$, $df=263$, $p<.001$) of the variance was contributed by the belief that taking drugs is a personal concern. It was, however, a positive association ($Beta=.26$). This relationship suggests that those offenders who involved more drug abusing activity were more likely to assign taking illicit drug as an issue of personal prerogative. Next, crime identity accounted for 5% of total variance. That implies the greater the scores gained in crime identity measure, designed to tap the extent to which they identify themselves as a drugs criminal, the more likely they had tendency of abusing substance. There are two cognitive aspects both accounting for 2% of the variance ($t=-3.06$, $df=265$, $p<.01$ and $t=2.70$, $df=262$, $p<.01$) of the variance of drug abusing. These are a) believing that violent offending is not damaging at the personal level and b) believing that sexual offending is a moral issue. Finally, the normative belief favouring drug taking over sexual offending accounted for 1% of variance in the drug abuse crime specialism index.

Table 5 about here

Theft: The details of the stepwise multiple regression for theft were given in the Table 6. Three predictors were entered to totally explain 13% of the variance in theft, with $F_{(3,265)}=13.22$, $P=.000<.001$. There was no interplay effect between normative belief and stealing behaviour in this study. The best prediction item is Cognitive evaluation ($t=-4.51$, $df=266$, $p<.001$), which accounted to 8% of the variance to stealing behaviour. The moral domain of theft placed in

personal discretion offers further 3% ($t=3.05$, $df = 265$, $p<.01$) of total variance, whereas a negative association was observed between personal identity in offending ($Beta=-.14$) and theft. 2% ($t=-2.41$, $df=267$, $p<.05$) of variance is explained by personal identity variable. This suggested that offenders who obtained lower scores on personal identity the more likely they would engage in theft.

Table 6 About Here

Sexual offending: Table 7 shows the stepwise multiple regressions for sexual offending. This model explained 15% of the variance ($F_{(4,264)}=11.45$, $P=.000<.001$) of sexual offending behaviour. Normative beliefs is the best predictor to sexual offending, with 9% ($t=-4.41$, $df=266$, $p<.001$) of variance accounted for. That meant those offenders with more involvement in sexual offending were more likely to think the behaviour negatively. In addition, normative belief with negative association accounted for 2% ($t=-2.58$, $df=265$, $p<.05$) of variance. As the questions in this section were phrased in favour of drug taking, so the relationship was to be understood as the more disagreed with the statements against sexual offending over taking drug the greater engagement they were in sexual offending activities. Similarly, 2% ($t=2.31$, $df=264$, $p<.05$) of variance was explained by moral domain attribution of sexual offending in moral domain. That is those who committed proportionately more sexual offending believed sexual crime was a moral concern. Personal identity accounted for another 2% ($t=-1.05$, $df = 267$, $p<.05$) of variance in predicting sexual offending. As this was a negative effect in association between perception of themselves and crime specialism index, therefore, the more an offender involving in sexual offending the less strong they held in identifying themselves as that sort of criminal.

Table 7 About Here

Violent offending: The results of the stepwise multiple regression for violent offending behaviour are given in Table 8. The three entered cognitive variables explained overall approximately 10% of the variance in predicting violent crime specialism ($F_{(3,265)}=9.23$, $P=.000<.001$). Violent offending is, compared with other crime types,

relatively not damaging socially which was first entered and the best predictor in this model, with 5% of the variance explained ($t=-3.26$, $df=267$, $p<.001$). Also, within the cognitive evaluation section, violent behaviour is perceived as comparatively less damaging (with $Beta=-.16$) at the personal level. Taken together these two items, offenders who believed of violent offending behaviour is not detrimental to social and personal levels in comparison to other types of crimes studies were more likely to be found had more intensively involved in violent crimes. Moreover, 2% ($t=2.38$, $df=265$, $p<.05$) of the variance was further contributed by assigning theft as moral issue with positive effect for violent engagement. It implies that offender with more tendencies to view stealing as moral issue they would more possible to be involved in violent offending activities.

Table 8 About Here

Discussion and Conclusions

Primarily, this research aimed to address the relation between social-cognitive factors and specific types of criminal behaviour. In forensic psychology, researchers have faced a somewhat daunting task when trying to specify the role of cognitive factors in criminal behaviour. Rather than treat crime as a homogeneous activity, in the present research the focus has been to understand several distinct types of crime in terms of variations in individual's social cognitions. A set of stable cognitive factors (such as self-identity, normative values or beliefs, moral domain, and cognitive evaluations) was used to examine the effect of latent social knowledge on drug abuse, theft, sexual and violent offending behaviour. Research to date has paid insufficient attention to establishing the commonalities and the idiosyncrasies in the relationship between deviant behaviour and social cognition especially in adult populations.

The research is based on the fundamental assumption of the cognitive paradigm which holds that there is an equilibrium in individuals' cognitions and behaviour. Additionally, the experience of reciprocal feedback between cognitive appraisals and the consequent behavioural outcomes have an influence over time. It was expected that there should be consistency amongst cognitions which serve as excitatory cognitive mechanisms in different aspects of offending behaviour.

The central concern of the research is on the differential relationship between cognitions about different types of crime and criminal behaviour. Accordingly, this research elicited adult offenders' social knowledge about their criminal self-identity by asking them to indicate their positions about different types of offending behaviour. This was used to test the primary assumption that offenders are supportive of and inherently endorse their own habitual offending. Despite of the overall trend that offenders were supportive of their own behaviour on the personal criminal identity measures (average scores being more than three on each of the items) and the significant relationship between the personal criminal identity questions and crime specialism for drug abuse, identical patterns of relationships were not found for each crime. Rather, there was a reverse relationship for theft and sexual offending, while there was no relationship for violent crime specialism index. This result might be understood by considering the average percentage of our adult participants' in each crime category. Theft and sexual offending accounted for 20 and 17% for the crime specialism indexes, whereas drug taking and violent offending had higher proportion in overall index (40 and 23 per cent, respectively.). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that offenders with a narrower variety of offending (higher crime specialism index) tend to regard themselves differently from other criminals as well as having less inclination to commit crime naturally different from their main ones. In the case of drug abusers, for example, 5% of variance of the drug crime specialism can be explained by criminal identity. In addition, there is evidence that theft and sex offenders are more likely to exhibit versatile offending behaviour in their criminal careers whereas violent offenders tend to offend with the cluster of violent activities. A review suggested that sex offenders tend to commit a broad range of offences (Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2005). This tends to give some support for our findings. Therefore, their personal criminal identity is less strong than for other crime types. Nonetheless, the different patterns of relationships found in the multiple regression analyses show a quite clear relationship between the extent of specific crime engagement for different crimes and offenders' identification of themselves as a particular type of offender.

Some striking findings emerged when testing the relationship between the crime specialism index and normative beliefs about different crimes. First of all, in all multiple regression models cognitive evaluations were the most powerful predictor for each crime type studied. Offenders involved in a specific type of offending tended to rate their criminal behaviour as less negative compared to other offences. This result confirms the hypothesis proposed by reviewed

information processing models (Fontaine, 2006a; Huesmann, 1998) and is also consistent with previous studies (Crane-Ross, Tisak, & Tisak, 1998; Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Zelli, Dodge, Lochman & Laird, 1999). In addition, this finding supports our proposal that offenders tend to justify their own behaviour by promoting its acceptability or/and reducing its condemnation. In other words, self-serving definitions of deviant social behaviour at personal socio-cognition level may ease the cognitive discomfort produced by the offending behaviour. The strength of the behaviour-cognition relationship observed in the sexual offender group is important as previous research has been difficult to discriminate this type of offender from other types of behaviour in terms of some cognitive variables (Harmon, Owen & Dewey, 1995; Marolla & Scully, 1986).

Moreover, all offender groups had tendencies to rate the offending behaviours that they do not commit more unfavourably. That is to say, offenders tend to legitimise or alternatively mitigate their own unlawful behaviour by regarding other blame-worthy acts more negatively. This appears to be a subtle cognitive manipulation, and is redolent of Bandura's (2002) advantageous comparison mechanism; which is one of the psychological operations of moral disengagement, utilised by perpetrators to reduce psychological discomfort or cognitive dissonance in their socio-cognitions. In other words, they may think *"I am not such a bad person since others are even worse"*. This self-identified but other-blaming tendency in offenders' conceptions is also observed in more clinical work. Samenow (2004) notes that offenders may not accept specific crimes and think these crimes are offend against their own moral principles but they, nevertheless, are entitled to do what they want. The evaluation of the offending behaviour is dealt with as if it is not too bad and that other possible transgressions are worse in terms of the offender's own moral standards. In addition, there was evidence about the extent in which cognitions work in the individual's interests. Drug taking was significantly disapproved by sex offenders whereas sex offending was viewed negatively by drug abusers. This seems to imply that these groups seem to stand at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of how they regard the other groups offending behaviour. Theft was rated more negatively by drug offenders as well but they were evaluated more positively in comparison to other types of offenders. In relation to detrimental consequences at the social level, only theft offenders gave a disapproved opinion on this item, while the theft group was joined by sexual group to express that there would be negative ramifications at the personal level from violent offending. Conversely, the more offenders engaged exclusively in drug and

violent index deviant acts, the more they believed that violent behaviour is not such a bad thing. This is a noteworthy differential relationship particularly in relation to the social information processing model. What leads people to be more likely to act-out violently may not merely be indicated by the extent to which the person has violent repertoires or violent supporting beliefs at a personal level in their social knowledge. The results from the group of drug abusers might encourage one to reject this seemingly self-proven claim. Instead, these findings may help us to understand aggressive behaviour which takes different forms and occurs in different contexts. As in social information processing models, violent repertoires or scripts are regarded as influential components for one to behave violently in response to a relevant stimulus. As we know there are a variety of different forms of violent offending behaviour. Therefore, why is it that drug takers who possess violence supporting beliefs in personal level (but didn't agree with the statement that violent is not detrimental to social level) do not tend to commit violent offences? There may be some differences at certain stages of social information processing (i.e. on-line processes) which make some people more vulnerable to acting violently but not others. Nonetheless, the specific endorsement of violent behaviour expressed by adult male prisoners in Polaschek *et al's* (2004) work is replicated in the current study.

Furthermore, in the light of offenders' more positive perceptions of their own criminal behaviour, it may be appropriate to suggest that such cognitions may not simply make their own crime more likely but also insulate them from the pressures to commit other types of crime. This is a significant finding in terms of addressing why specific patterns of crime occur in socio-cognitive terms. Moreover, in view of Fontaine's (2006a) systems perspective on social information processing models, this would not just act as a sociomoral filter but also be involved in cue attention, script retrieval and other relevant processes. Additionally, offenders may align or identify themselves with their predominant criminal activities.

This notion is further corroborated when the correlations between the respondents' normative evaluations on the paired-style crime type questions are examined. There were both significant positive and significant negative correlations between each crime type and normative beliefs. Of course, the interpretation of these relations is dependent on which member of the pair was presented first in the questions. Only three unexpected outcomes were found (i.e. violent offenders for the Theft vs. violent item, the theft group in Theft vs.

sexual item, and drugs for the Theft vs. sexual item). Again this interesting result provides a more elaborate picture regarding how normative evaluations operate on their own crime beliefs and their own offending behaviour. This detailed analysis sheds light on our research hypotheses that offenders gave relatively positive evaluations to their offending behaviour as opposed to the other offending behaviour paired with it in the question. The question in this section was, however, only entered into the hierarchical stepwise multiple regression model in predicting drug abusers with drug vs. sexual items lastly. On inspecting the results for the normative belief subscale, we found the strength of the correlations were less than impressive, despite being statistically significant. Nevertheless, the relation between normative beliefs and crime specialism index is therefore present. These correlations suggest that engaging in offending behaviour may be more determined by offenders' unique social reasoning patterns or preferences formed from crime thematic contingencies than situational contingencies which the conventional rational calculus perspective implies. Or, at least, the choice to engage in specific type of crimes is not congruent with public's normative standards on such aspects as seriousness, punishment, or harm to the victim or the self. However, it may be also reasonable to point out that different types of offender have discrepant conceptions of different types of deviant social behaviour especially their own chosen mode of offending. This social cognitive mechanism is like Gibbs' (2003) "self-serving" cognitive distortions in which offenders hold biased social perceptions serving as self protection from suffering stress caused by their deviant behaviour which also serve to justify their behaviour.

Moral domain attributions were also important contributors to understanding offending behaviour. The theorised relationship between moral domain assignment and the crime specialism index worked differently according to the type of crime under consideration. For the moral domain items, the sexual and violent offending group did not show any differences on the crime specialism index. However, there were variations for drugs and theft. The result for drug addicts was in accordance with well-documented research (Amonini & Donovan, 2006; Kuther & Alessandro, 2000; Nucci, Guerra & Lee, 1991; Tisak, Tisak & Rogers, 1994). However, the findings in the present study for the other offending studies are new. Conceivably, offenders who view criminal behaviour as personal or prudential concerns are more likely than those who regard offending as a moral issues to engage in that sort of crime. The findings in current study only partially supported this assumption, with the more drug crime specific offenders being

more likely to categorize drug taking as a matter of personal prerogative and those lower on drug involvement more likely to see their behaviour as a moral issue. This was also the case for the theft group. A moral domain model has been employed with issues with grey areas in terms of morality such as drug taking (Amonini & Donovan, 2006; Kuther & Alessandro, 2000; Nucci, Guerra & Lee, 1991; Tisak, Tisak & Rogers, 1994) and women's decision making about abortion (Smetana, 1981). The present study, thus, tests the applicability of this model to sexual and violent offending which, morally, would seem to be rather more clear-cut.

When considering the stepwise multiple regression results, the relationship for believing their behaviour is a personal issue was upheld for drug and theft offences. Drug and violent offenders thought sexual assaults and stealing were more matters for the moral domain. Interestingly, sexual offenders were the only crime type for which regarding the crime as a moral issues was a significant predictor. That is completely against the idea that the cognitions of sex offenders are self-serving. As mentioned earlier, previous research has had difficulty in distinguishing sex offenders from other types of offenders in terms of their cognitive appraisal of their crimes – that is they do not strongly support their type of offending. As such, the central point may not be whether they have same understanding on sexual offending but how do they avail themselves of the circumstances or objective conditions to make the sexual act happen? This could be a limitation of the social information processing model in general. In addition, although sexual offenders view their offending acts as having moral relevance, possibly they may utilise such self-serving cognitive distortions as minimising/mislabelling and blaming others proposed by Gidds (2003) to alleviate the feelings of guilt. Also a recent study (Lord, Davis, & Mason, 2008) analysing the stance-shifting in language employed by sex offenders provides a vivid illustration on aspect of avoidance of responsibility in the aggressors' crime events. Consequently, this self-favouring interpretation and maladaptive cognitions may contribute to the persistence of offending acts.

Leenders and Brugman (2005), and Tisak and Jankowski (1996) point out that there is a general tendency for aggressive adolescents to legitimise aggressive behaviour in various ways. In present study, the 'yes-but' cognitive manoeuvre may be relevant in that offenders may agree to the moral unacceptability of sexual and violent offending yet consider such behaviours legitimate for other reasons. Irrespective of this, the moral domain approach has provided some valuable

information as to why drug abusers and theft offenders engage persistently in these criminal activities. Their decisions to engage in these crimes were seen as primarily a personal matter rather than one that primarily concerned others.

Three main findings were found in this study. 1) Socio-cognitive patterns supportive of offenders' main type of crime were prevalent in the findings. This supports the idea of a differential relationship between social knowledge and behaviour. This is believed to have a mitigating function for offenders to minimize stress and maintain a well-balanced knowledge base 2) An alternative way of reducing socio-cognition problems resulting from the criminal acts is to compare one's preferred crime more positively than other types of crime. 3) A self definition cognitive mechanism seems to operate pervasively in serving the offender's interest. This is the theme-oriented developmental process hypothesized in this study.

It is suggested that for future research the information processing model has a lot to offer in that it synthesizes how one perceives, encodes, interprets, chooses and finally enacts actions. The present research, which is based on social-cognitive premises, has provided a structure for understanding aspects of the choice of particular types of offending behaviour. Socio-cognitions may play both excitatory and inhibitory roles in leading offenders towards committing a specific cluster of crimes the offenders favoured while insulating them from offences disapproved of.

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Table1: The correlations between criminal identity scores and the Crime Specialism Index

	Crime Specialism Index				
	Drug	Theft	Sexual	Violent	
Criminal Identity	r=.229** p.=.000 N=288	-.152** .010 288	-.153** .009 288	.024 .685 288	M=3.52

Table 2: The results of correlation analyses between normative beliefs evaluation and crime specialism indexes.

Normative beliefs	Crime Specialism Index			
	Drug	Theft	Sexual	Violent
Drug taking is detrimental to the personal and social levels	r=-.439** p.= .000 N = 285	.107 .072 285	.312** .000 .285	.105 .077 .283
Stealing is detrimental to the personal and social levels	.352** .000 285	-.282** .000 285	-.168** .004 .285	.013 .833 .285
Sexual offending is detrimental to the personal and social levels	.308** .000 285	-.095 .110 .285	-.354** .000 .285	.090 .128 .285
Violent offending is detrimental to the social levels	.063 .296 281	.149* .012 .281	-.017 .778 .281	-.202** .001 281
Violent offending is detrimental to the personal level	-.135* .023 286	.200** .001 286	.151* .011 .286	-.183** .002 .286

Table 3: The correlations between relative cognitive beliefs on different crimes with the crime specialism indexes.

Relative Cognitive Beliefs	Crime Specialism Index			
	Drug	Theft	Sexual	Violent
Drug VS. Theft	r=-.245** p=.000 N=289	.197** .001 289	.035 .558 289	.090 .180 289
Drug VS. Violent	-.200** .001 288	.013 .825 288	.054 .364 288	.181** .002 288
Drug VS. Sexual	-.328** .000 288	.071 .227 288	.260** .000 288	.065 .269 288
Theft VS. Violent	-.032 .591 288	-.166** .005 288	.033 .576 288	.082 .163 288
Theft VS. Sexual	-.128* .031 287	-.056 .348 287	.165** .005 287	.035 .551 287
Violent VS. Sexual	-.076 .197 288	.042 .475 288	.165** .005 288	-.119* .043 288

Table 4: Means and the results of ANOVAs between the percentage of crime specialism index and the assignment of moral domains

Moral domains	Crime Specialism Index			
	Drug	Theft	Sexual	Violent
Personal	m = .484a N = 118	.327b 48	.046 11	.207 50
Conventional	.375 25	.192 55	.212 26	.176 39
Moral	.289a 76	.169b 139	.175 195	.260 108
Prudential	.392 57	.182 25	.158 36	.267 68

Note: the letter "a" and "b" irrespectively refer to statistically significant differences at 0.01 level between the crime types in any row. m=the mean percentage in the crime specificity index.

Table 5 Multiple regression analysis for the crime specialism index of drug abuse

Variables	items	Multiple R	R square change	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Criminal identity	Criminal identity	.21	.05	.11	2.1	.037
Normative beliefs	Drug taking is detrimental	.45	.16	-.36	-6.06	.000
	Violence is detrimental to personal level	.48	.02	-.16	-3.06	.002
Relative cognitive evaluation	Drug vs. sexual	.49	.01	.12	2.09	.038
Moral domain Placement	Drug taking is a personal issue	.54	.06	.26	4.86	.000
	Sexual offending is a moral issue	.56	.02	.13	2.70	.007

Table 6: Multiple regression analysis for the crime specialism index of theft

Variables	items	Multiple R	R square change	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Criminal identity	Criminal identity	.15	.02	-.14	-2.41	.017
Normative beliefs	Stealing is detrimental	.32	.08	-.26	-4.51	.000
Moral domain placement	Theft is a personal issue	.36	.03	.18	3.05	.003

Table 7: Multiple regression analysis for the crime specialism index of sexual offending

Variables	items	Multiple R	R square change	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Criminal identity	Criminal identity	.14	.02	-.06	-1.05	.028
Normative beliefs	Sexual offending is detrimental	.33	.09	-.27	-4.41	.000
Relative cognitive evaluation	Sexual vs. drug	.36	.02	-.16	-2.58	.013
Moral domain placement	Sexual offending is a moral issue	.38	.02	.14	2.31	.018

Table 8: Multiple regression analysis for the crime specialism index of violent offending

Variables	items	Multiple R	R square change	Beta	t	Sig. of t
Normative beliefs	Violent offending is detrimental in social level	.23	.05	-.20	-3.26	.000
	Violent offending is detrimental in personal level	.27	.02	-.16	-2.66	.011
Moral domain placement	Stealing is a moral issue	.31	.02	.14	2.38	.018

