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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Susan M. Newton

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

The Perceived Effectiveness of Community Programs in Reducing and Deterring

Juvenile Delinquency

by

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MPA, Walden University, 2012

BA, Siena Heights University, 1998

AA, Kellogg Community College, 1996

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

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Abstract

Indianapolis, the capital of the U.S. state of Indiana, continues to experience a high rate of offenses committed by juvenile offenders. Community programs are in place to assist in the deterrence and/or reduction of juvenile crimes, yet the city's crime rate continues to increase with youth being the perpetrator of many of these crimes. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceived effectiveness of these programs, which has not been adequately studied. The research questions focused on identifying which of the city's current programs are perceived as being effective or ineffective in reducing juvenile delinquency and why so. The participants were 15 adults between the ages of 21 years old through 35 years old who were a part of the juvenile justice system as youth.

Phenomenological research was used with Agnew's strain theory as the theoretical framework. Data were collected through guided interviews and analyzed using NVivo, which allowed for coding and categorizing of the collected data. The key findings were that most of the programs were perceived as effective by 80% ($n = 12$) of the study participants. Three (20%) of the study participants perceived the programs as being ineffective. The study data can assist stakeholders in gauging the effectiveness of community programs and in making the community more aware of programs in place for youth, which may improve program participation and decrease recidivism. Policy makers in other communities may also be able to use the data to assist with their community programs. The data from the study supports the need for social change. Social change can occur through the evaluation, revamping, or elimination of programs considered ineffective, staff professional development, and more parental involvement. Through these changes, positive reinforcement can be instilled in youth.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background

Indianapolis is the capital of Indiana and is in Marion County. The city of Indianapolis and Marion County exist as a consolidated (city/county) government (Indianapolis Population, 2018). A mayor-council administration governs the city. Indianapolis is the 17th largest city in the United States, with an estimated population of 6.73 million in 2019 (World Population Review, 2019). Of the city's population, 598,071 (17%) are youth ages 5 to 17 (Census Bureau, 2019).

In the Indianapolis area, there are three juvenile correctional facilities. As of January 2019, 403 youth resided in the three juvenile facilities. The juvenile inmate population consists of those youth who have committed property crimes (25.6%), person crimes (32.3%), sexual offenses (9.9%), drug-related crimes (3.4%) and weapons (11.2%; Indiana Department of Corrections, 2019).

In 2013 and 2014, Indianapolis experienced an increase in crime, becoming one of the top 10 murder cities in the United States (Tamborello, 2016). The combined number of murders and homicides in 2014 was 286, with youth between the ages of 10 and 17 committing 20 of these crimes; male teens committed 65% ($n = 13$) of the 20 crimes (McQuaid, 2014). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reported 6,251 aggravated assaults in Indianapolis in 2014 (FBI, 2017). These aggravated assaults accounted for 7.5% of all the violent crimes committed in Indianapolis for that year (FBI, 2017). This number is a 1.3% increase from the 2007 data on aggravated assaults (Felker-Kantor, 2015). There are no data available showing the number of assaults committed by

juveniles. From 2016 to 2018, Indianapolis went from being the 13th most dangerous city to the 10th most dangerous city in the United States.

With youth crime continuing to rise in the city of Indianapolis, it is imperative to gain a better understanding of the perspectives of former youth offenders (adults who were once in the juvenile justice system as youth) on programs geared toward reducing youth crimes and instilling positive reinforcements. Many programs such as; alternative school or life/job skills, anger management, juvenile detention, and probation to name a few, have been implemented to assist in the reduction of juvenile delinquency. Life/job skills and alternative school programs aid the participant in developing skills that will assist them with financial literacy, and tools and resources that will make them more marketable.

Foster care programs provide the participant with a safe, stable, and nurturing environment. Through anger management programs, participants learn how to identify triggers that lead to anger and frustration. The program also helps the participant learn how to look at situations differently so that they are able to express themselves in a healthier manner. Juvenile detention programs are both punitive and rehabilitative. They assist in keeping juveniles who have committed crimes out of the public population. They also assist in rehabilitating juveniles.

Probation programs have two primary purposes: 1) They make the youth that has offended accountable while also protecting public safety. 2) As an alternative to incarceration, the youth is rehabilitated through the services they receive. However, even with these programs in place, crime rates continue to rise. Although social status can be a contributor to delinquency, one's social environment and family support are specific influences that affect the

behavior of youth (Palermo, 2009). Involvement in school activities is also an important factor in reducing the probability of delinquency.

Problem Statement

The rise of youth crime in Indianapolis is a problem that requires attention (Davis, 2016). Many factors contribute to increases in youth crimes such as school, neighborhood, and occupational conditions (Dwivedi & Dwivedi, 2006). The youth crime rate has catapulted the creation of programs that aspire to reduce delinquent behavior/crimes. Although these programs have taken a stance to reduce crime, crime rates have continued to rise with young suspects tied to some of the most significant crimes committed in Indianapolis. In 2014, 15,814 youth were arrested in Indianapolis (Indiana Department of Corrections, 2014). In 2016, 52.1% of youth were involved in criminal activity, either as victims (18.2%), perpetrators (17.3%), or both (a victim in one instance and a perpetrator of a crime in another, 16.6%), according to Davis (2016). In May 2017, a triple shooting occurred with the perpetrator being a 15-year-old (Boyd, 2017). In the first two months of 2018, 18 homicides were committed, nine of which were committed by youth (Carrera, 2018). Other crimes include those committed with a weapon, resisting law enforcement, escape/failure to return, intimidation, disorderly conduct, or alcohol and vehicle-related offenses (Indiana Department of Corrections, 2018). From January to September 2019, there were 104 criminal homicide investigations opened in Indianapolis. Twenty of the homicides involved youth under the age of 20 (McQuaid & Sullivan 2019). During the weekend of April 6, 2019, Indianapolis experienced six homicides, three of which were committed by youth over a 24-hour

period; this was considered the deadliest weekend in over 5 years (Martin, Mack, & Watson 2019). In August 2019, five youth from three different Indianapolis area schools were arrested for bringing guns to school (Reinke, 2019). On May 20, 2020, three teens in a stolen car were involved in a police chase. This police chase resulted in the teens firing shots at the police and later crashing their vehicle (WTHR Staff 2020).

To delineate the problems affiliated with juvenile delinquency, it is important to gain a thorough understanding of the effectiveness of programs in reducing delinquency. Agnew's (Brezina 2017) general strain theory suggests that delinquent behavior is onset by victimization such as blocked opportunities, self-protection, and social factors such as one's environment. I conducted this qualitative study to obtain the perceptions of adults who have been in the juvenile justice system on the effectiveness of programs' abilities to assist in the reduction of youth crimes. To gather data for this study, young adults who met the study criteria were recruited for interviewing. This study allowed for the community to become more engaged, as well as provided a clearer picture of the crime problem Indianapolis residents face. Crimes such as vandalism, robbery, murder, and rape occur daily in Indianapolis, Indiana (Tuohy, 2013). By gaining a better understanding of the study participants' perceptions of programs, the study may provide data that program leaders can use to identify what is working and what is not working to become more effective.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to obtain the study participants' perspective on the effectiveness of juvenile programs in Indianapolis that aid in the

reduction of juvenile delinquency. I conducted formal interviews to obtain the perceptions of adults who were at one time a part of the justice system as a juvenile regarding the effectiveness of programs. The interviews took place in areas or venues conducive to the study participants. I used the software program NVivo to manage the data collected. The study findings could assist stakeholders in identifying which programs are effective and which need to be changed or eliminated.

Research Questions

I sought to answer the following research questions (RQs), which were based on the stated problem and the theoretical framework:

RQ1. Which of the current programs are perceived as being effective in reducing juvenile delinquency?

RQ1a. Why are these programs perceived to be effective?

RQ2. Which programs are perceived as being ineffective?

RQ2a. Why are these programs perceived to be ineffective?

Theoretical Framework

Phenomenology served as the philosophical basis for this study. Phenomenology acquires its roots from the work of philosopher Edmund Husserl (Lewis, 2015).

Phenomenological research describes the lived experience of a phenomenon: an observed fact or event. Phenomenological research is concerned with how experiences are developed (Errasti-Ibarrondo, Antonio, Díez-Del-Corral, & Arantzamendi, 2018). It also focuses on the perceptions a person might have about something. I studied the lived experiences of those who have experienced the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency

using the social-psychological concept of Agnew's 2001 strained theory. This theory is a criminological theory as strain theory sees the social-psychological mechanism of self-protection as the cause and maintenance of deviant behavior. These protection mechanisms are strategies that enable a person to cope with stress (Froggio, 2007). Strain theory argues that blocked opportunities relating to obtaining successful goals create pressure that can lead to crime. Pressure is not produced at an individual level but is structurally produced. Strain theory incorporates the main idea that a juvenile's daily routine is also a factor. Youth experiencing strain are more likely to release their frustrations through delinquent behavior when they are in a position of minimal to no supervision (Moon & Morash, 2017). Delinquent behavior is even more probable when youth are encouraged by their friends. Situational opportunity is also a major influence of the underlying forces between strain and delinquency (deBeeck & Pauwels, 2010). deBeeck and Pauwels (2010) emphasized that juvenile delinquency is related to family and school strain.

I sought to determine the factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency and assess the involvement of the community and programs that are in place to reduce juvenile delinquency. The most important principle of Agnew's strain theory is that certain situations exist within a youth's external and internal environment that can strongly determine if a youth will portray delinquent behavior (Huck et al, 2017). Community programs were the focus of this study with the intent of obtaining valuable information that can be used by community entities such as community advocacy groups, public policy makers, law enforcement, and legislators. The information may assist

stakeholders in developing and implementing policies and legislation that allow for more effective community programs.

To collect data, I interviewed study participants who experienced the same phenomenon (having been a part of the juvenile justice system as a youth) using a formal and objective systematic process. Through open-ended interviews, study participants were asked to share their stories relating to juvenile delinquency. The study participants were able to expound on their experiences and relationships they had or may still have with community programs and their effectiveness. The interviews also allowed me to identify the study participants' perspectives on the effectiveness of community programs geared toward deterring and reducing juvenile delinquency. I used NVivo software to extract themes from the interview data. These themes assisted in identifying similar experiences the study participants had. The themes also aided in interpreting the study participants' responses. Although the study participants may have experienced the same phenomenon, their experiences may have been situational. The thematic analysis assisted in identifying the potential difference (see Errasti-Ibarrondo, Antonio, Díez-Del-Corral, & Arantzamendi, 2018).

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative approach to collect and analyze responses from adults who were once in the juvenile justice system as to their perceptions of the effectiveness of programs designed to assist in the reduction of juvenile delinquency. I sought to solicit a minimum of 15 young adults to participate in this study to ensure saturation (see Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Saturation is assured by obtaining adequate and complete data that

are of sufficient quality, so that there is no new information or evidence of any new themes from the interviews (Guetterman, 2015). The young adults who participated in the study had experienced the same phenomenon (they were at one time in the juvenile justice system as juveniles). I collected the data using a formal and objective systematic process: interviews. Through open-ended interviews, study participants were asked to share their stories relating to juvenile delinquency. The participants were encouraged to share their perspectives on the effectiveness of community programs geared toward the reduction of juvenile delinquency in their neighborhood.

Qualitative data are text-based; coding is the foundation of analyzing this type of data. I analyzed the data from this study through a coding process using software. The codes, also known as tags or labels, were helpful in assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential data gathered during the study. This process allowed related and/or common words or phrases that the study participants mentioned during their interviews to be identified (see Wiltshier, 2011). Through the identification of these commonalities, I was able to extract themes. These themes reflected similar experiences the study participants had (see Errasti-Ibarrondo et al., 2018). The themes were also helpful in interpreting the study participants' responses. All the interviews were transcribed and coded to extract relevant excerpts, allowing for the sorting of statements by the content of the perception, theme, or the event collectively. Patterns related to the research questions were analyzed using the phenomenological theory process as described by Phillips, Strunk, and Pickler (2011).

Operational Definitions

Adult: A female or male individual aged 25 or older (Knapton, 2015).

Community: A common area where people live, work, attend school, and/or attend faith-based organizations. Community also refers to a group of people from a common area (Tonnie & Loomis, 2017).

Community programs: Programs that focus on fostering healthy positive development of youth (Lerner et al., 2011). The programs are designed to serve juvenile/youth within their environment and promote positive reinforcement leading to the reduction of delinquency.

Juvenile delinquent: A young person/minor over the age of 10 and under the age of 18 who commits an act that violates the law. The acts that are committed are called crimes (Smith, 2008).

Juvenile/Youth: Individuals who are 10 to 18 years old (Curtis, 2015).

Perceptions: A mental impression; the regard, understanding, and/or interpretation of something. Perceptions also encompasses being aware of or the process of becoming aware of something through the senses (Tankard & Paluck, 2016).

Stakeholders: Persons who have an interest and/or concern for the community. A stakeholder can also affect or be affected by the community's actions, objectives, and policies. A stakeholder can be someone who works in the community or in government agencies, who supplies services in the community, or who resides in the community (Gould, 2012).

Young adult: Also known as late adolescence; someone between the ages of 18 and 24 (Teipel, 2017).

Assumptions

I assumed that each participant had a direct connection with the Indianapolis area, as well as an understanding of crimes committed by juveniles. I also assumed that each of the study participants would be honest and provide credible answers to the interview questions.

Scope and Delimitations

The study may have lacked generalizability, as only participants from the Indianapolis area were recruited. I was concerned with the programs, stakeholders, and youth in the sample area, Indianapolis.

Limitations

The sample size of 15 may have served as a limitation. Furthermore, the study may not have accurately reflected the needs and problems of surrounding communities.

Significance

Community programs are imperative because they can aid in the deterrence of juvenile delinquency and rehabilitation of youth who have committed crimes. The significance of this research is that it provides new knowledge and understanding of the perspectives of young adults and adults regarding the effectiveness of community programs' ability to reduce and/or deter juvenile delinquency. This research can assist in propelling positive social change by providing data that stake holders could use to determine if the structure of community programs needs to be revamped or if new

programs are needed; programs are not producing positive change in the program participants. These programs can be a way to instill positive reinforcement in youth while also helping youth to develop into responsible adults (Nation et al., 2003). This study can also promote social change because the study findings may assist the community in becoming more aware of programs within the community that provide services for youth. The findings from the study can also be used as an impetus to establish collaborations between community stakeholders; possibly leading to a coalition aimed to further the reduction of juvenile delinquency (Tonnie & Loomis, 2017).

Summary

In Chapter 1, I discussed the purpose and necessity of the study. Juveniles in the Indianapolis area are committing crimes at more frequent and higher rates than in past years (McQuaid, Sullivan and FOXWEB 2019, WTHR.com Staff 2020 & Martin 2019). The study expanded upon available research by providing a qualitative perspective. I focused specifically on identifying the effectiveness of programs geared toward assisting in the reduction of juvenile delinquency.

In Chapter 2, I expand on the literature and theoretical framework used to guide the study. Chapter 2 includes a discussion of the importance of programs geared toward youth and the reduction of juvenile delinquency. I also detail how family, school, community, faith-based organizations, and law enforcement involvement can affect the reduction of juvenile delinquency.

I present the methodology and design in Chapter 3. To collect data for the study, I conducted interviews with adults who were part of the juvenile justice system as youth

using a guided interview tool. The study participants were asked to share their personal experiences pertaining to crimes committed by youth within the community and their perception of the programs in place to assist in the reduction of juvenile delinquency.

More detailed information about the interview questions is provided in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 also includes details on how the study participants were chosen, how the data were collected, and what analyses was used. The findings of the study are covered in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains the additional discussion, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to obtain the study participants' perspective on the effectiveness of juvenile programs that contribute to the reduction of juvenile delinquency. A review of literature supports the need to study the effectiveness of community programs. In Chapter 2, I will present the perspectives and findings of various researchers regarding juvenile delinquency; strains that lead to delinquency; the role of community members, families, faith-based organizations, schools, and law enforcement; and the effectiveness of community programs.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature that was used in this includes a thorough examination of the variables of concern in this study and provides justification for its study. An exhaustive search was done to locate documents concerning programs and services related to juvenile delinquency. I used current and peer-reviewed journal articles that were related to the study. The journals were retrieved from Ebscohost database; Open Dissertations and ProQuest databases; Research Library Prep and Research Library. Journals were also retrieved from Walden University Library database and Sage Online, as well as the search engine Google Scholar. Key search terms that were used to guide the search were *juvenile, delinquency, programs, community, faith-based, family, onset, and general strain theory,*

Phenomenology and the theoretical framework of Agnew's strained theory, a social-psychological concept (Froggio, 2007; Lewis, 2015) is discussed in the literature

review. In my examination of existing literature, I also discuss the cause, onset, and reduction of juvenile delinquency. The review also includes literature on community programs and how the programs are constructed.

Theoretical Framework

Edmund Husserl introduced phenomenology, a theoretical system that is focused on the way people experience or perceive the world around them, in the early 1900s (Brezina, 2017). The lived experience of a phenomenon--an observed fact or event--and the perceptions a person might have about something are the basis of phenomenological research (Lewis, 2015). Phenomenology assists in the explanation of the strains humans experience. The strain that is being experienced is representation of the phenomenology of a specific lived experience. The character and the degree that replies are connected to a specific lived experience of individuals affected depends on how the individual will define the meaning of the situations as well as how the situation emerged.

In 1938, Robert K. Merton introduced the anomie theory, which is also called Merton's astrain/anomie theory. Criminal and delinquent behavior are the basis of anomie. In the study of criminal behavior, anomie is recognized as a dominant paradigm (Antonaccio, Smith, & Gostjev, 2015). Merton argued that the state of anomie could be produced by the disparities between successfully approved goals, endorsed legitimate methods leading to the achievement of goals as well as limited legitimate opportunities (Antonaccio et al., 2015). Merton also contended that strain in individuals along with individual-level criminal behavior changes were caused by anomic conditions

(Antonaccio et al., 2015). According to Merton, the model individual's response to strain is conformity (Antonaccio et al., 2015).

Anomie is often associated with white-collar crimes, crimes that are nonviolent that include public corruption fraud and money laundering (Antonaccio et al., 2015). *Anomie* and *strain theory* are used interchangeably in criminal justice (Antonaccio et al., 2015). Anomie, as it pertains to criminology, can be traced back to Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist. Durkheim contended that in individuals' primitive state, there are wants and desires that are ravenous, and if not satisfied, this condition expresses itself in a greedy thirst for pleasure and never-ending dissatisfaction (DiCristina, 2016).

Durkheim presented five meanings of anomie:

- Anomie 1: the lack of regulated interactions between different social organs or specializations,
- Anomie 2: the lack of controlled desires,
- Anomie 3: lack of a general state of regulation,
- Anomie 4: disproportionate imprecision and weakening of the collective consciousness, and
- Anomie 5: the inconsistency of all morality (DiCristina, 2016).

Both the classic strain theory of Merton and the general strain theory of Agnew are revisions of anomie/strain theory (DiCristina, 2016).

In 1992, Robert Agnew developed general strain theory in response to criticisms of classic strain theories. The main notion of classic strain theory is that the inconsistency

between goals and resources contributes to delinquency among the lower class (Brezina, 2017). General strain theory's focus is on the dynamics between the process of goal identification and the process of goal acquisition relating to later criminal behavior (DiCristina, 2016).

Strain has been identified as experiences that are built on the threat of losing something one values or as an unwanted threat that is yet to come. Three major types of strain that as contribute to future criminal behavior by Agnew and other theorists are (a) goal blockage, the inability for one to achieve their goals; (b) the exhibition of harmful or negative valued stimuli and being exposed to unwanted situations or being mistreated by others (e.g., being harassed or bullied, experiencing bad relationships, or being a victim of crime); and (c) losing supportive valued stimuli, losing something of value, or experiencing a variety of unfavorable events or experiences such as losing treasured property, losing or ending an intimate relationship, or losing the love of a parent (Brezina, 2017). These strains are high in magnitude; they are of the utmost importance to the individual, being severe, frequent, and lasting for long periods. The strains are considered unjust and connected to low social control and often resolved through crime. Being rejected by parents, being abused, and experiencing strict or extreme discipline by parents can cause strain (Brezina, 2017). Having negative experiences in school, failing grades, or bad relationships with teachers and being bullied and abused by peers can also bring about strain. Strain can also occur from being a victim of a crime or experiencing racial discrimination or homelessness. Being a resident in a low-income neighborhood,

not having the ability to make money, and not having masculine status are also conditions of strain.

Researchers have used general strain theory to examine how negative experiences lead to criminal behavior. A different perspective of the relationship between an individual's experience and criminal behavior can be seen in the grounding of general strain theory within a phenomenological theoretical frame through the refusing to give privilege to neither individual perception nor environmental predetermination (Brezina, 2017). The phenomenology of a particular lived experience is represented by the strain being experienced. The degree and character to which these criminogenic responses are connected to particular lived experiences of affected individuals depend on how the individual defines the meaning of the situations along with how the situation emerged (Brezina, 2017).

Objective, subjective, vicarious, and anticipatory are four different strains (Huck et al., 2017; Polizzi, 2011). An objective strain is the result of an event that is categorized as stressful--for instance, a loved one dying. A subjective strain is specific to the perceptions an individual has regarding what is stressful (Huck et al., 2017). Vicarious strain encompasses the emotional response displayed when something bad happens to someone loved, a close friend, or an associate (Huck et al., 2017). An anticipated strain reflects the belief that the current experience of strain will continue or that new strains will be experienced (Polizzi, 2011). According to general strain theory, negative emotions (anger, frustration, depression, and despair) are produced by experiencing strain and are related to crime and delinquency (Brezina, 2017). Female and male individuals

alike report similar levels of anger when responding to strain; however, girls respond more often with a mix of negative emotions to strain (Brezina, 2017). Moral outrage due to being challenged or treated unfairly is the reason males give for being angry (Brezina, 2017). This then leads to males externalizing their reactions (e.g., being aggressive or committing property crimes), while females who are angry, frustrated, and depressed are more likely to internalize their reactions to strains resulting in abusing substances, being truant, or even running away (Moon & Morash, 2017). Resorting to crime and/or delinquency allows individuals to focus on the cause of strain or the ability to alleviate the negative emotions associated with strain.

Delinquency can be influenced directly and indirectly by negative social relations/situations such as not achieving goals that are valued, valued stimuli being removed and experiencing negative stimuli which can cause negative emotions (Moon & Morash, 2017). General strain theory focuses on the relationship between the individual and their social environment. Social psychological strain can be used as a method to explain the patterns of crimes that surface at schools, neighborhoods, and large communities (Polizzi, 2011). The development of subcultural orientations along with attitudes and values that are favorable to crime are nurtured by the traits of high crime communities/economically disadvantaged communities (Polizzi, 2011). Social disorganization theories state that these communities no longer have the ability to control community members. This is due to inadequate supervision of youth. High crime communities tend to experience a high amount of angry and frustrated residents. Deviant motivation is thought to stem from anger and frustration and is a function of severe and

continuing strains (Polizzi, 2011). Moon and Morash, (2017) argued that serious and aggressive delinquency behaviors are limited in females because the expectations from parents and friends; females are expected to conform to gender-related expectations; there are limited opportunities to break the law, females receive more supervision and control along with more stern restrictions that deter association with delinquent peers. On the other hand, males are more apt to receive less social parental control and are more likely to associate with their delinquent peers. Males are also more prone to display aggressive delinquent behaviors when these conditions are present (Moon & Morash, 2017).

In 1992, Agnew performed tests of general strain theory, which showed that there was a relationship between several strains and delinquent behavior. In 1994, a general strain theory test was completed using data from the National Youth Survey to measure the effect of strain on general delinquency. The test results lead to most researchers being in support of general strain theory. There have been several additional tests of general strain theory that have produced comparable results which indicate that there is a correlation between various strains and criminal behavior (Polizzi, 2017).

It was found that often schools that house a fairly high percentage of angry students have high rates of fights amongst students along with aggressive behavior (Brezina, 2017; Warner & Fowler, 2003). It was also found that elevated levels of neighborhood strain are associated with neighborhood disadvantage and instability. A community that is characterized by a low level of social support can have a substantial effect on violence (Warner & Fowler, 2003, Brezina 2017). Huck et al., (2017) found that

factors such as family life, being involved in pro-social activities, self-esteem and socioeconomic status are more powerful dynamics than primary strain elements and assist in linking emotions to crime and deviance. Appropriateness of certain behaviors like crime can be learned from an individual's social environment, peers and family. Social control measure like self-esteem and self-efficacy are protective factors that produce higher levels of esteem and efficacy that can reduce the probability of an individual engaging in deviant behavior (Huck et al., 2017). Moon and Morash (2017) found that when coping strategies are used, cognitive: curtailing the importance of strain along with negative outcomes, the individual can adapt to strain. Taking ownership of one's adversity, emotional; doing away with negative outcomes by engaging in exercise or meditation and behavioral; purging the strain's source or taking part in vindictive behavior the individual can adapt to strain (Moon & Morash, 2017). Those who do not have these delinquency coping strategies along with having a robust temper that leans towards deviant behavior are more probable to relieve strain and negative emotions by engaging in delinquent behaviors (Moon & Morash, 2017).

Review of Literature Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

Criminal Onset

Pechorro, Nunes, Jiménez, and Hidalgo (2014) found that criminal onset occurred at an earlier age for youth who had high levels of callous-unemotional (CU) traits. Callous-unemotional traits have been defined as; not having empathy, emotionally insensitive and not having any remorse (Mann, Briley, Tucker & Harden, 2015). It has also been suggested by recent research that CU traits are a pertinent part of a subgroup of

antisocial youth, who are inclined to participate in harsh, persistent and assertive types of behaviors. Early onset of antisocial behavior is operationally defined as beginning before the youth is age 11 or 12 (Pechorro et al., 2014). Usually, those who have childhood onset display violent and constant patterns of antisocial behavior.

Understanding maladaptive behaviors; substance abuse, alcoholism, juvenile delinquency and being involved in the criminal justice system are all crucial factors associated with the age of criminal onset (Pechorro et al., 2014). There are two types of “age of onset subtyping approach” that have been identified; (1) the early starters/life-course-persistent – those who commit their first crime early on and continue offending throughout their lifespan, (2) the late starters – commit crimes only through adolescence or only for a limited duration (Pechorro et al., 2014).

DeLisi, Neppl, Lohman, Vaughn, and Shook (2013) sought to identify how criminal onset is connected to criminal behavior, psychological and dispositional outcomes. Being part of a dysfunctional family can cause serious and sustained delinquent problems that catapult juveniles into the juvenile justice system. Strain theorists have argued that the lack of parental guidance; not sufficiently providing for their children and/or ensuring they have the skills needed to succeed at school, can lead to criminal behavior (Froggio, 2007 & Brezina, 2017). Using macro-level strain theory (MST), Özbay & Özcan, 2006, found that family supervision has the largest effect on criminal behavior. Criminal onset is seen at an early age in juveniles who display antisocial behavior (DeLisi et al., 2013). DeLisi et al. (2013) conducted interviews with juvenile males and females who resided at a juvenile facility. The interviews sought to

address three measures of onset of antisocial behavior: (1) breaking rules/violating laws, (2) police contact/arrests, and (3) being referred to juvenile court/being associated with different antisocial outcomes (DeLisi et al., 2013). Participants for this study included boys between the ages of 14 and 18 who resided in a juvenile facility for at least three to twelve months (DeLisi et al., 2013). Girls from a different juvenile facility also participated in the study; however, the exact number of girls who participated nor the age of the female participants was provided.

Additionally, four dependent variables were included in the assessment: (1) total number of arrests, (2) self-reported delinquency, (3) The Youth Psychopathic Inventory (YPI) (a self-report measure used to assess significant antisocial traits in youth) and (4) an Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)/Conduct Disorder (CD) diagnosis. ADHD is a disorder that causes a continuous pattern of inability to stay focused (DeLisi et al., 2013). ADHD also impedes the ability to function or develop. CD diagnosis is a disorder that can cause one to display serious disruptive and violent behavior as well as have emotional problems (DeLisi et al., 2013). Age, sex, and race served as control variables.

Twenty-five percent (25%) of study participants reported criminal onset by the age of ten (DeLisi et al., 2013). Almost nine percent (9%) of the study participants were processed formally through the juvenile court system by the time they were eleven years old (DeLisi et al., 2013). The majority of first arrests happened by the age of 13 (17%) (DeLisi et al., 2013). Eighty-one percent (81%) of the study participants self-reported breaking legal rules by the time they were 14 (DeLisi et al., 2013). This study did not

present a separate statistical break down for the female and male participants. No information was provided regarding how families and school environments moderate relationships between behavioral onset and the similarities between the police and the judicial system. While the study discussed the onset of criminal behavior, the study did not provide any information on why juveniles displayed such behavior.

Youth's Perspectives

Interviews and assessments regarding juvenile delinquency at one time only focused on obtaining feedback from parents. It was thought that adolescents and children (youth) were incapable of having logical opinions due to the youth having limited language or communication skills (Celinska, Cheng & Nikiesha, 2015). However, in more recent times, researchers have identified authentic disparities between the youth and parents and recognize that measurements of the perspectives of youth are important (Celinska, Cheng & Nikiesha, 2015).

To discover the perspectives of youth, Barnert, Azzi, Shetgiri, Ryan, Dudovitz, and Chung (2015) conducted semi-structured interviews of twenty youth in a Los Angeles detention facility; twelve male participants, and eight female participants. The ages of the participants ranged from 12 to 17. Thirteen of the participants were Latinos who spoke fluent English; the rest were African American. The sample's racial and ethnic composition was representative of the detention center's demographics (Barnert et al., 2015).

The interviews took place from October to December 2013. The participants were allowed to speak about the role of protective factors and risk factors for the youth in their

community. According to macro-level strain theory (MST), a disadvantaged neighborhood is more susceptible to have elevated crime rates. This is because those who experience substantial strain are more likely to be residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods (Botchkovar, Antonaccio & Hughes, 2018). Data was captured through the participants' conversations allowing them to speak as experts about their community.

The youth stated their homes, schools and neighborhoods were not safe; classifying them as chaotic (Barnert et al., 2015). The juveniles expressed a lack of positive role models, a need for love, attention, discipline, and control (Barnert et al., 2015). During the interview, participants compared the path to school as being similar to the path to jail: though jail was reportedly an easier path (Barnert et al., 2015). This path can be referred to as the "school to prison pipeline" (Rodríguez, 2017). A pipeline effect occurs when a school suspends or expels students who are deemed problematic or difficult. Through this label and the institutional failure experienced, these students often end up in the criminal justice system. This pipeline is a result of the zero tolerance policies put in place in the 1990s (Rodríguez, 2017). To bring about a change where juveniles have access to a more positive path rather than one leading to jail, a joint effort between community stakeholders needs to occur.

Parental/Guardian Involvement

Parents and guardians are the first to make impressions on juveniles (Kelly & Anderson, 2012). They are usually the first teachers a child encounters and their presence can be a positive reinforcement as the juvenile makes life choices (Kelly & Anderson, 2012). Agnew, 1997, contended that parental rejection; erratic and harsh discipline; child

abuse and neglect all were leading forces to delinquent behavior (Brezina, 2017). It was also argued by Simmons, Steinberg, Frick, and Cauffman (2018), that father-child relationships play a big part in being influential in male youth. This is due to children tending to identify with the parent of the same gender. When a father is absent from the home, the burden of raising a child is usually left up to a single parent mom. Youth who live with a single mother, are more probable to engage in more extreme delinquent behavior than those youth who are raised in a home with two parents, (Simmons et al., 2018). However, through positive parental involvement, gang participation and criminal behavior can be deterred (Kelly & Anderson, 2012). The actions of parents along with knowing the whereabouts of their child also plays an important role in preventing risk behaviors in young youth (Kapetanovic, Skoog, Bohlin & Gerdner, 2018). Adolescent disclosure, parental solicitation, and parental control are predictors of parental knowledge according to a Structural Path Analyses (Huck, Spraitz, Bowers & Morris, 2017). However, the strongest source of parental knowledge and the strongest negative predictor of youth risk behaviors is adolescent disclosure. Anderson (2012) examined the influence family and friends have on gang involvement. Substance use and delinquent behavior were indirectly associated with parental competence; a parent believing that they can make a difference in the life of their youth and believing they can parent effectively; relating to parenting practices along with the behavior of youth. A youth's connectedness to their parent is also indirectly associated with substance use and delinquent behavior. Not having a father figure (father is absent from the home and/or the youth's life) involved in a youth's life is also recognized as a main contributor to delinquency (Huck

et al., 2017). Abusive peer relationships amongst youth including but not limited to insults, assaults, being made fun of and criminal victimization can all be attributed to delinquency based on Agnew's Strained Theory (Agnew, 1997; Huck et al., 2017).

Religious Activities

Piltan and Yahyazadeh (2015) looked at the effect religiosity has on the prevention of juvenile delinquency. Faith-based organizations are the most influential established organizations attended by people (Piltan & Yahyazadeh, 2015). According to Piltan and Yahyazadeh (2015), a decrease or deficiency of social supervision and control can cause juvenile delinquency. The purpose of religion is to promote social control that reinforces specific values. Through religion, unlawful acts are deterred and avoided, along with the promotion of internal controls (Piltan & Yahyazadeh, 2015). Fewer crimes are committed by youth when they have some religious involvement (Kerman, 2018). Jang (2018), argued that juvenile offenders who participated in religious activities inside or outside of correctional institutions benefited from the programs. Religious activities provide a positive social network that assists in decreasing delinquency. Religious beliefs are taught and enforced by parents, educators, teachers and mass media (Piltan & Yahyazadeh, 2015). Even for youth with no religious upbringing, religious programs are relevant because delinquent behavior can be transformed through the influence of religion (Jang, 2018). However, those youth without any religious training, are more susceptible to displaying risky behavior that can lead to criminal behavior (Kermen, 2018). Through their study, Piltan and Yahyazadeh (2015) found criminal acts committed by juveniles could be reduced by increasing the juvenile's religiosity. Religious

involvement has also been identified as being beneficial in improving positive outlooks and confidence while promoting better attachment to conventional norms (Yeung et al., 2009). Conformity to norms is produced through religious beliefs and activity. This conformity is then accepted by the majority as being valid (Adamczk et al., 2017). Kermen (2018) found that youth had fewer problems with their teachers in school when the youth attended religious activities. Research shows youth who have religious influences are less likely to use illegal substances (Adamczk et al., 2017). Jang (2018), argued that juveniles who attended a religious activity regularly were less likely to get involved in crime or drug usage.

Substance abuse by juveniles can leave them susceptible to violent behavior and victimization (Yeung et al., 2009, Jang, 2018 & Kermen, 2018). There are three levels of risks associated with substance abuse: (1) societal-and-contextual, (2) family environment, and (3) individual characteristics (Jerf et al., 2009). The societal-and contextual level is where a community is known to be violent and overran with drug problems; therefore, increasing the probability of a youth using drugs as a vehicle of escape from their fears and stress that is generated from the harsh environment of the community (Yeung et al., 2009). Juveniles engage in substance abuse more often to relieve stress or to self-medicate (Yeung et al., 2009). Because family relationships and one's environment are very important to the socialization process for youth behavior, juveniles who have family members with drug problems or strained relationships are more apt to engage in substance abuse (Yeung et al., 2009 & Brezina, 2017). Recent studies have shown both parental and religious involvement added to positive family

interactions and unified family relationships. Low self-esteem, psychological distress, association with delinquent peers, interpersonal problems, and/or problems at school are all risks associated with the individual characteristic level (Yeung et al., 2009). However, Kermen (2018) and Jang (2018) both discovered that youth attending religious activities on a regular basis were less susceptible to low self-esteem, psychological distress, association with delinquent peers, interpersonal problems, and/or problems at school.

In 2001, the Federal government recognized the impact faith-based organizations had on deterring juvenile delinquency and initiated the 2001 Faith-Based and Community Initiative (Adamcz et al., 2017). This initiative provided funding for religious groups to deliver social services. Through a narrative review of 97 studies, positive evidence was identified showing that faith-based organizations providing social services were more effective in deterring crime, decreasing the use of substances and rehabilitating youth than non-religious organizations that provided the same type of social services (Adamcz et al., 2017).

Community Centers

Because community centers are said to be safe havens for youth, providing an environment for youth to thrive and offering a place of refuge for youth free from violence by providing activities for all ages (Kelly & Anderson, 2012), research was conducted within community centers. Kelly and Anderson (2012) looked at the perception juveniles, parents, and community center employees have regarding the effect community centers have on the behavior of juveniles. Study participants included ten juvenile boys (aged 11 to 17), their mothers, and six community center employees. All

participants were African American except for one Caucasian community center employee. Three community centers in Louisville, Kentucky were used as recruitment and data collection sites (Kelly & Anderson, 2012).

Data was collected using a semi-structured interview guide. Questions were used to gather information about (1) concern for safety in the neighborhood, (2) whether gang violence affected friendships with other juveniles, (3) how gang violence affected the individual in the neighborhood and (4) how safe the community center was from violence (Kelly & Anderson, 2012).

Many of the juveniles reported the community centers presented a place to socialize with peers, a place to avoid neighborhood violence, and a place to limit their exposure to negative influences (Kelly & Anderson, 2012). Some of the juveniles came to the centers because it was a place where they were able to obtain meals during the day, which might not be available at home. The community center was also used by parents as a source of babysitting, allowing the parent to work and/or do other activities and not have to worry about their child/s whereabouts. Most of the parents were in support of the centers; they were safe places for youth, and they had many positive qualities. The centers kept the youth away from violence while providing structured activities. At the centers, youth were able to socialize with their peers without the fear of gang violence, as the youth were surrounded by people who cared about them (the center staff). The centers were considered neutral territories/a safe haven from gangs. However, parents were concerned the community centers could also be breeding grounds for gang activity to take place (Kelly & Anderson, 2012). This concern was due to gang members

frequenting the community centers to take part in activities, which in turn could present issues with feuding gang members. However, community center staff took it as their responsibility to ensure the safety of the juveniles at the center by reinforcing the center rules and removing those who choose to not follow the center rules (Kelly & Anderson, 2012). Even with this concern, the parents stated the community center presented a safer environment for the juveniles versus juveniles having no place to go for positive activities (Kelly & Anderson, 2012).

Reportedly, the community center staff believed the community centers were safe places for juveniles, kept juveniles out of trouble, provided the juveniles with people (community center staff) that cared about them and provided structure for the juveniles (Kelly & Anderson, 2012). By developing relationships and trust with the youth, community center workers can be a positive reinforcement regarding the juvenile's behavior.

Schools/Mentoring Programs

Özbay & Özcan, (2006) maintained that negative experiences in the school setting such as low grades, negative relationships with teachers or other students could be a segue to delinquency. However, just as community centers provide assistance and a place of refuge for juveniles, so do schools through mentoring programs. Mentoring programs are used to provide opportunities to juveniles that might have experienced or are experiencing adversities (Simões & Alarcão, 2014). The goal of a mentoring program is to assist the juvenile by providing opportunities that can bring about readjustments in the

juvenile's life, along with compensating for any loss in relationships that might have previously taken place with adults (Simões & Alarcão, 2014).

Simões and Alarcão (2014) conducted a study utilizing School Based Mentoring (SBM) intervention from 2010 through 2011. After administering the SBM intervention, the authors conducted eight focus groups for three months. Simões & Alarcão (2014) identified factors that might facilitate or challenge (SBM) programs. Focus groups were conducted consisting of five schools, twenty-two mentors, sixteen parents (eight females and eight males) and one male moderator (Simões & Alarcão, 2014).

Preparation, discussion, and conclusion were the three phases of the focus groups. There were two topics discussed at each focus group; (1) the general outcomes delivered by the SBM program and (2) the influential barriers or facilitators to the success of SBM (Simões & Alarcão, 2014). All of the focus groups were video recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions included verbal and nonverbal communication. To analyze the study data, the researchers used NVivo 8 (qualitative software used to perform analysis using text and multimedia information) (Hoover, & Koerber, 2011).

Both mentors and parents identified relational factors (i.e. parental involvement, communication between mentors and parents, commitment to the mentoring goals by the mentors) as the most important contributors to the success of mentoring relationships (Simões & Alarcão, 2014). Mentors and parents also thought parallel interventions, interventions similar to the SBM program and administered alongside it, influenced the success of the SBM programs. Having open communication between the mentors, parents and others involved in the SBM program was identified as being pertinent to the success

of the program (Simões & Alarcão, 2014). Parental involvement was a huge factor in the success of the program, it was referenced 27 times in the study by the mentors (Simões & Alarcão, 2014). This being said, relationships established between the mentors, parents, teachers and social services officials tended to influence the success of the SBM program (Simões & Alarcão, 2014).

According to Kretschmar et al, (2018), youth that are involved in the juvenile justice system report substantial health and trauma concerns. Diversion programs have been developed based on these findings. Diversion programs are typically based in juvenile justice facilities; however, some are administered in communities. Diversion programs encompass in-depth assessments, comprehensive and evidence-based treatment along with supervised services. Diversion programs have produced positive outcomes, such as a reduction of recidivism. To further explore the positive outcome Diversion programs can have, Kretschmar et al., (2018), conducted a study. Three groups were examined using the Ohio Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) Initiative. BHJJ is a diversion program for youth that are involved with the juvenile justice system that have behavioral health issues. The three groups that were examined are; (1) youth who were considered a good choice for the BHJJ but did not participate in the program, (2) youth who were a part of the program but failed to complete the program and (3) youth who participated and completed the program. The youth who completed the program were less likely to offend as young adults (Kretschmar et al., 2018). Youth involved in the BHJJ were allowed to stay in their community while taking part in the program. This enabled

the youth to receive treatment modalities that were best administered in community settings: family-based treatment.

Another diversion program that has been used is Functional Family Therapy (FFT) which is a family and strength-based treatment model for youth between the ages of 11 and 18. Youth involved in the FFT were referred to the program because of behavioral or emotional problems. These referrals are from different child services; juvenile justice, mental health, child welfare and schools (Kretschmar et al., 2018). Assessments and interventions were developed to address family risk and protective factors that influence youth and their development. There are five components of FFT: engagement, motivation, relational assessment, behavior change and generalization with each component having its own goal, focus, approach, and intervention. Much research has been done on FFT with a conclusion that FFT is effective and has been shown to reduce youth recidivism along with improving functioning.

Reading for Life (RFL) a Diversion Program is an alternative to prosecution for youth who are in the juvenile justice system. REL is a nonviolent juvenile first offenders diversion program that fosters moral development in juvenile offenders. What makes REL unique is that it uses philosophical virtue theory, literature, and small mentoring groups (Seroczynski, Evans, Jobst, Horvath and Carozza, 2016). REL functions as a catalyst of transformation and long-lasting life changes through education and empowerment. Mentors administer it. REL is a randomized control trial (RCT); it provides the largest possibility for internal validity. Because there was a scarcity of palpable evidence about successful diversion programs for youth, Seroczynski et al.,

2016 explored REL. The researchers found that REL attempted to reduce recidivism by implementing character education along with moral development. The researchers also found that REL used mentoring as the means to administer the program. Youth who participated in the REL program experienced drops in future arrests. REL has been successful for reducing the rate of juvenile recidivism regarding more serious offenses and for youth with high propensity for future offenses (Seroczynski et al., 2016).

The probability of a juvenile offender becoming an adult criminal is reduced when youth are engaged in interventions and positive life events. Turning points or life changes which can reinforce or counteract criminal behavior for youth are enhanced when opportunities are created through social relationships. Most juvenile offenders do not progress into career criminals because negative outcomes are usually outweighed by positive turning points (Seroczynski et al., 2016) A major concern with mentoring programs is that youth are matched with mentors they are not familiar with or who are not familiar with them (Garringer, McQuillin, & McDaniel, 2017). Many mentors are not a part of the community of the youth; therefore, there is no commonality of the community environment experienced by the youth. This can result in a significant drawback to the possibility of the programs' effectiveness especially with youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system. This is due to the possibility of the mentoring relationship ending prematurely and there not being any sense of consistency or support for the youth (Taussig & Weiler, 2017).

Youth-Initiated mentoring (YIM) is a mentoring program that allows youth to select adults from their communities to be their mentor. The program consists of youth

who were either in the juvenile justice system or in foster care. For youth who were involved in the juvenile justice system, it was required that a parent/guardian assist in the enrollment and mentor selection process. Parents/guardian involvement for those youth who were in foster care was dependent on the involvement the parent/guardian had in the youth's life (Spencer, Gowdy, Drew and Rhodes, 2018). Youth participating in the YIM have the opportunity to connect with adults that they might meet on a daily basis. Connections are formalized through YIM by recruiting adults that have been identified by the youth to be mentors (Garringer et al., 2017). After the mentoring screening process and training, programmatic expectations for meetings, and regular monitoring of the mentoring relationship is established.

YIM has the potential to redress many problems that many other mentoring programs face that might affect juveniles in the justice system; volunteer attrition: matches prematurely culminating and low to limited effect sizes mainly pertaining to youth who are high risk. Very few programs use YIM as their mentoring selection process. Spencer et al. (2018), found that YIM assisted in the development of positive non-judgmental relationships with mentors. Youth also developed trust; the ability to rely on and/or confide in a mentor, based on the relationship experience being reliable in word and deed, honesty and emotional understanding, as well as there being protection from any expressive harm (Levine (2016). Levine (2016). The youth participate in YIM because it offers them someone they can talk to, and it provides positive reinforcement. YIM gives the youth a place to go outside of their home, allowing them to partake in fun activities with their mentor. Many of the youth have expressed the lack of a person to

turn to, however, through YIM, they now have someone that is there for them (Spencer et al., , 2018). Youth who participated in YIM were more likely to develop closer relationships with their mentors. Also, parent/guardian investment in YIM was more apt to occur than in formal mentoring programs, (Spencer et al., 2018). While many barriers pose problems for formal mentoring relationships, YIM potentially addresses as well as capitalizes on possible benefits like supporting help-seeking behavior, ensuring mentors are screened as well as trained and monitoring mentor/mentee relationships (Spencer et al., 2018).

Law Enforcement and Zero Tolerance

Along with School Based Mentoring programs, the presence of law enforcement has increased in schools. Many schools use law enforcement to deter juvenile criminal activity during school hours, programs, or events. This increase in law enforcement is due mostly in part to funding from the U.S. Department of Justice and Community Policing Services (COPS). With increased funding from COPS, Cops In Schools (CIS) was implemented in 1999 (Chongmin & Gottfredson, 2013). Many state governments also support more law enforcement/School Resource Officers (SROs) in schools and therefore, contribute additional funding (Chongmin & Gottfredson, 2013).

Advocates for SROs think students and school administrators are safer when SROs are present (Chongmin & Gottfredson, 2013). Advocates believe SROs can build bonds with students which lead the students to develop trust in the SROs. Through this established trust, crimes can be curtailed because the students feel more at ease in reporting potential crimes and criminal activity to the SROs (Chongmin & Gottfredson,

2013). According to, the presence of SROs affected changes in the amount of crimes committed in school and how the schools' responded to criminal activity.

The School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSCS) was used to measure how effective SROs are in deterring crime in schools, The SSCS was also used to measure the responses schools had regarding crimes committed (Chongmin & Gottfredson, 2013). The survey was administered to approximately 3,000 principals from public schools (Chongmin & Gottfredson, 2013). The principals reported the number of violent incidents and thefts that occurred between 2010 and 2011. The principals also stated how many of each incident was reported to the police.

The study found no evidence that proved School Resource Officers (SROs) or other law enforcement added to the safety of schools (Chongmin & Gottfredson, 2013). Evidence showed there were more crimes committed involving weapons and drugs in schools with a police presence as compared to schools with no SROs presence (Chongmin & Gottfredson, 2013). Based on the results from the study, the presence of SROs in schools did not more adversely impact minorities or special education populations (Chongmin & Gottfredson, 2013).

School administrators were in favor of having SROs in schools because they assisted school administrators by providing legitimacy to many initiatives and policies such as the zero-tolerance policy (Chongmin & Gottfredson, 2013). The zero-tolerance policy aims to increase school averages on standardized test scores through the reduction of truancy and the removal of juveniles who present problems; holding juveniles accountable for their actions (Chongmin & Gottfredson, 2013). However, with the

enforcement of zero tolerance policies, juveniles who find themselves suspended from school due to non-compliance of school policies fall further behind in school; thus the possibility of grade promotion or graduating becomes less probable (Chongmin & Gottfredson, 2013).

While zero tolerance policies are used as a vehicle to deter juvenile delinquency in schools, community stakeholders play a major role in the deterrence of juvenile delinquency in the community (Henning, 2013). Who are these noted community stakeholders? They are the residents, the business owners/businesses, those who work in the businesses, community centers, faith-based organizations, schools, along with law enforcement and political representatives of the stated neighborhood. Their power and persuasion on policy implementation is needed to bring about change. Community stakeholders should work together to ensure stereotyping and implicit biases are not present in the community (Henning, 2013). Also, stakeholders should review the various programs offered that can have an adverse effect on juveniles such as zero-tolerance in schools (Henning, 2013).

Police, probation officers, prosecutors, and lawmakers also play a role in the deterrence of juvenile delinquency. This group has been charged with serving and protecting the community, as well as writing and implementing laws and policies. Often the implicit bias of police, probation officers, prosecutors and lawmakers toward youth of color can be seen within the justice system (Henning, 2013). There are few empirical studies discussing how implicit racial bias is displayed by police, probation officers, prosecutors, and lawmakers. Implicit racial bias is the construct of acting without

thinking, without control and accountability (Henning, 2013). In 2012, Stanford University conducted a study to identify the effects of race regarding the perception of juvenile accountability. Study participants were given a summary of the Supreme Court case *Sullivan v. Florida* (2009). Participants were also given information that both supported and opposed sentences of life without parole for youth charged with committing homicides. The race of the offender was manipulated in half of the case summaries presented to study participants. The study participants who received the manipulated information were made to believe the offenders were white. Those who received the manipulated information imposed more lenient punishments for the white youth (Henning, 2013). Those who received the uncompromised information, stating the defendant was black imposed harsher punishments. It was found that white participants were in support of more severe sentences based on the race of the offender (Henning, 2013).

Implicit biases can have an impact on public policy when it comes to sentencing juveniles and/or trying juveniles as an adult (Henning, 2013). Henning (2013) suggests there is an unequal implementation of juvenile justice policies due to inaccurate perceptions of race, crime, and threat of an attack with a weapon (Henning, 2013). It is also suggested zero tolerance policies in schools target youth of color at higher rates above their proportion in society (Henning, 2013). Nationally, 23.2 percent of all black high school students were suspended compared to only 6.7 percent of white high school students in 2011-2012 (Winter, 2016).

Scholars and youth advocates have introduced models that can assist in reducing racial bias related to prosecutorial discretion. These models require prosecutors to collect and publish data on racial impact studies (Henning, 2013). A racial impact study, also known as Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) was used to identify how diverse groups are affected by a proposed action or decision. Racial impact studies identify the unfavorable consequences racism can have on youth. Racism can impact how policies are proposed and analyzed, how policies are established and practiced, how programs are implemented and how decisions pertaining to budgets are derived (Henning 2013). Racial impact studies can provide a means of preventing official racism along with providing options to do away with inequities (Keleher, 2009). Before the prosecutor makes charges, the demographic information in case files is masked by staff. Prosecutors are encouraged to develop decision-making framework that confronts bias. Periodic reviews, along with training for prosecutors, is suggested to alleviate bias (Henning, 2013).

When comparing homicide rates in the Western World, rates in the United States are among the highest (Loeber & Ahonen, 2013). Loeber and Ahonen (2013) addressed the four following issues: (1) independent predictors for homicide offenders, (2) independent predictors for homicide victims, (3) common predictors for both homicide offenders and victims and (4) advantages and disadvantages of the interventions in place to reduce homicides. The authors used the Pittsburgh Youth Study (PYS) to identify the causes and correlation of delinquency. The PYS uses childhood predictors; explanatory, behavioral, and offenses to predict factors that might lead to juveniles committing

homicide. Some of the predictors were broken homes, bad neighborhoods, young mothers and low socioeconomic status (Loeber & Ahonen, 2013). The PYS was used to compare homicide offenders to homicide victims. The study included 1,517 high-risk boys, along with their parents. The boys were in grades 1, 4 or 7. The study was broken down into three cohorts based on age range: youngest, middle-age and oldest. The first cohort had 503 boys, the second cohort had 508 boys with the third cohort having 506 boys, (Loeber & Ahonen, 2013).

Each cohort participated in three interventions and prevention strategies. The interventions were implemented simultaneously to deter delinquent behavior. The three interventions were: (1) a downstream approach which identified known delinquents and intervened to stop future crime, (2) enhanced security to prevent crime by erecting fences around any buildings that could become a victim to juvenile delinquency, (3) an upstream approach that intervenes and prevents juveniles from becoming criminals. The focus was placed on three predictors; (1) early explanatory factors such as family and neighborhood environment, (2) early childhood conduct behavior, and (3) early childhood offenses such as self-report, arrest or conviction (Loeber & Ahonen, 2013).

The top two factors for predictor 1 were (1) young mothers who physically punished their child and used alcohol or drugs, and (2) living in bad neighborhoods. School suspension, disruptive behavior disorder, and high delinquency were identified as the strongest factors for predictor 2. For predictor 3, robbery, gang fighting and weapon carrying were the most common identified factors (Loeber & Ahonen, 2013).

The study findings confirmed careful implementation of interventions to meet the needs of the intended audience (Loeber & Ahonen, 2013). The findings also showed interventions could have both positive and negative outcomes. A positive for the downstream approach was the reduction of recidivism, victimization, and fear within the community (Loeber & Ahonen, 2013). However, there are some disadvantages of the downstream approach; it was not inclusive to juveniles who avoided the justice system; juveniles who were not caught or prosecuted for committing a crime (Loeber & Ahonen, 2013). Downstream interventions did not deal with renewal problems; with every generation of juveniles, new delinquents arise (Loeber & Ahonen, 2013). As for upstream interventions, they can be cost-effective. When the upstream approach was implemented, the rate of homicides went down. The downside of upstream interventions, however, is that conventional interventions may not be as successful at reducing delinquency in younger juveniles (Loeber & Ahonen, 2013).

Summary and Conclusions

The research questions of this study are the main point of the literature examined. The literature also supports the role that community programs play in reducing juvenile delinquency. Imperative to answering the research questions was the identifying of the various types of strains that contribute to juvenile delinquency. By using the concepts that were developed in the studies regarding the influence of strains, the study identified strains that led to juvenile delinquency, but also determine the effectiveness of community programs that are in place to assist in the reduction of juvenile delinquency. The literature presented many different perspectives and views regarding strain theories

(Polizzi, 2011; Agnew, 1997 & 1999; Froggio, 2007; Özbay, & Özcan, 2006; Criminol, 2018; May & Vowell, 2000). However, all to some extent believe that criminal behavior can be the result of one experiencing some kind of “strain”.

Researchers of the literature administered several methods; quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. Qualitative methods based on understanding the specified Phenomenon using Agnew’s Strain Theory was used for this study. A discussion on the research methodology and design for the study is provided in Chapter 3. The topics include an in-depth discussion on the data collection instrument, type, and sources of data, selection of study participants, ethical protection of participants, procedure/data collection data analysis and validation.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to obtain the study participants' perspective on the effectiveness of juvenile programs designed to deter and/or reduce juvenile delinquency. The perceptions of adults who were a part of the juvenile justice system as youth were obtained. With the problem of interest being juvenile delinquency, it was imperative that I use a research design that enabled an understanding of the causes of juvenile delinquency along with the lived experiences of study participants. Therefore, I used a phenomenological research design with Agnew's strained theory as the theoretical framework (Froggio, 2007; Lewis, 2015). In Chapter 3, I discuss the phenomenological approach and Agnew's strained theory, as well as the study sample selection process, potential validity issues, data collection procedures, and the analysis process.

Qualitative research is derived from hermeneutics, the theory and methodology of interpretation and phenomenology (Brezina, 2017; Jackson, Drummond, & Camara, 2007). Qualitative research allows the researcher to draw rich data that inform the conclusion and that respect human intricacy in individual and group processes (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative researchers rely mostly on nonnumeric data or words that include all types of textual analyses--content, conversations, and narrative analyses (Creswell, 2014). The goal of qualitative research is to gain an understanding of human activity through the description of innate or vital characteristics of social objects or human experience (Brezina, 2017; Jackson et al., 2007).

Qualitative research focuses on the understanding of human beings through a psychological viewpoint with an emphasis on the person as a whole (Brezina, 2017; Jackson et al., 2007). In qualitative research, human behavior is observed through the eyes of the researcher as well as the person displaying the behavior. This approach also allows the researcher to exploit their interest in the welfare, values, and dignity of the study participants. Such research focuses on thoroughly understanding the study participant's interwoven experiences and reflections (Brezina, 2017; Jackson et al., 2007).

Phenomenology is the philosophical study of the structures of experience and consciousness (Jackson et al., 2007; Lewis, 2015). More in-depth information about a phenomenon can be obtained through qualitative research. Qualitative research permits the researcher a heightened level of awareness of their role in the research, allowing for varying levels of participation. This subjectivity leads to a higher level of trustworthiness through informant feedback or respondent validation (Brezina, 2017; Jackson et al., 2007). This technique assists in improving the accuracy, credibility, validity, and generalizability of the study.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Questions

RQ1. Which of the current programs are perceived as being effective in reducing juvenile delinquency?

RQ1a. Why are these programs perceived to be effective?

RQ2. Which programs are perceived as being ineffective?

RQ2a. Why are these programs perceived to be ineffective?

Edmund Husserl introduced phenomenology in the early 1900s (Brezina, 2017). Phenomenology focuses on how people experience or perceive the world. It is based on the lived experiences of a phenomenon, an observed fact, or an event. The way an experience is developed along with a person's perceptions is the objective of phenomenology (Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio, 2019).

In 1938, Robert K. Merton established the anomie theory, also known as Merton's strain/anomie theory. Anomie is based on criminal and delinquent behavior. It is known as a dominant paradigm within the study of criminal behavior (Antonaccio et al., 2015). Anomie over time has become known as a classic work in criminological tradition of strain theories inspiring other theoretical followings such as Agnew's theory. According to Merton, unstable societies, disparity between goals approved as successful, and methods that are endorsed as being legitimate in achieving goals, along with the limitation of legitimate opportunities, produce the state of anomie (Antonaccio et al., 2015). Merton argued that anomic conditions were more apt to bring about strain in individuals as well as individual-level criminal behavior changes (Antonaccio et al., 2015). According to Merton, under anomic conditions, the model individual's response to strain is conformity (Antonaccio et al., 2015). Anomie is often used in reference to white-collar crimes and the general or specific breakdown of standards due to changes in an organization of society, dealing with free competition and free enterprise (e.g., price-fixing; Antonaccio et al., 2015). In criminal justice, anomie is used interchangeably with strain theory (Antonaccio et al., 2015). As anomie relates to criminology, it can be traced

back to the work of Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist. Durkheim argued that the primal self has wants and desires that are ravenous, and if these wants and desires are not satisfied, this condition expresses itself in a greedy thirst for pleasure or success and unending dissatisfaction (DiCristina, 2016).

Various social scholars have revised anomie/strain theory several times. These revisions include the classic strain theory of Merton followed by Agnew's general strain theory (DiCristina, 2016). I used Robert Agnew's general strain theory for this study. In 1992, general strain theory was introduced due to the criticisms about classic strain theories and the proposition that the lower class is more inclined to display delinquent behavior because of inconsistency between goals and resources (Brezina, 2017). General strain theory focuses on the dynamics between the process of goal identification and goal acquisition that relates later to criminal behavior.

Strain is identified as the experiences that are erected on the possibility of losing things that are valued or an unwanted hazard that might occur (Brezina, 2017; DiCristina, 2016). Agnew, along with other theorists, identified three major types of strain that contribute to future criminal behavior:

- Experiencing goal blockage: not being able to achieve goals;
- displaying harmful or negative valued stimuli: being subjected to unwanted situations or being mistreated by others, being harassed or bullied, having unfavorable relationships, or being a victim of crime; and
- losing supportive valued stimuli: losing something of value or experiencing a variety of unfavorable events or experiences such as losing treasured property,

losing or ending an intimate relationship, or losing the love of a parent (Brezina, 2017).

These strains are severe, frequent, and last for long periods. The strains are thought as unjust and attached to low social control. They are in most cases resolved through crime.

There are many conditions of strains;

- Parental/Guardian – rejection, abuse, strict or extreme discipline
- School/Teachers – negative experiences in school, failing grades or bad grades, bad relationships with teachers
- Peers – being bullied or abused by peers
- Being a victim of crime
- Racial discrimination
- Homelessness
- Being a resident in a low-income neighborhood
- The inability to make the desired amount of income
- Masculine status

Through strain, one's experiences are expounded by Phenomenology.

Context of the Study

The theoretical framework, the problem of the study, and the research questions established the study context which examined the social factors that contributed to the general strains that catapulted juvenile delinquency (Green, 2014). Numerous social factors were indicated in the literature review about youth crimes. Parent/guardian/family

involvement, school environment, neighborhood environment, and friends were included in these factors. Agnew's GST was used by researchers to present an example of correlated social factors; family, home, friends, and school, along with other factors that influence the behavior of youth (Polizzi, 2017). GST was used to assist in identifying the rationale of youth's behavior and programs in place that are geared to be a positive reinforcement.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is the research instrument in qualitative research (Patton, 2015). One-on-one interviews were conducted using an interview guide with open-ended questions in order to learn the study participants' perceptions of crime (Cairney & St. Denny, 2015). The interviews probed the ideas, thoughts, and opinions of the study participants regarding deterring juvenile delinquency in the Indianapolis area. The data from the interviews was recorded using audio/video recording and/or written notes.

Through the interviews, study participants' perceptions and opinions on crime and answers to the open-ended interview questions, data was obtained. This data helped identify the participants' perceptions and opinion on the effectiveness of programs that aid in the deterrence and/or prevention of crimes committed by juveniles. The study participants were encouraged to share these perceptions.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

To obtain theoretical saturation, purposeful sampling was the strategy used to select fifteen study participants (Nelson, 2017). Purposeful sampling selects participants

using a pre-determined criterion centered around the research questions (Bullard, 2019; van Rijnsoever, 2017). Homogeneous sampling was the purposeful sampling technique used in this research (Bullard, 2019).

Homogeneous sampling is the sampling of small groups of subjects or units for studies. Homogenous sampling helps the researcher to gain a better understanding and description of a group in depth. It was used to ensure the participants share the same phenomenon; they were in the juvenile justice system as a youth and that the participants know about programs geared towards preventing and/or reducing juvenile delinquency (Bullard, 2019). By using homogeneous sampling study participants who were once in the juvenile justice system as youth were identified and chosen from the community. The population for this study included individuals who are adults no younger than the age of 21 years old and no older than 35 years old who were once in the juvenile justice system. The researcher surveyed prospective study participants before they are invited to participate in the study. This ensured study participants resided and/or worked in Indianapolis, Indiana, and had some knowledge of the trends in the community; familiar with the affairs within the community, community programs, events, crime, school system and law enforcement activity.

Instrumentation

To obtain the perceptions and opinions of the study participants, one-on-one in-person interviews were conducted using an interview guide developed by the researcher (Englander, 2019). The interview guide was constructed based on the critical points related to the research questions that the researcher wanted the participants to address.

Open-ended questions derived from the research questions were used to obtain the participant's perceptions, allowing the researcher to gain more in-depth meaning. The overall productivity of the interview was promoted through the probing questions. The goal of each interview was to capture the participant's experience and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of programs in their community geared toward deterring and/or reducing juvenile delinquency (Roulston, 2017). From their responses, the researcher identified the actual (as well as the perceived) effectiveness of programs. Interviews were conducted at venues in the community that study participants frequent: faith-based organizations, community centers, and barbershops.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Approximately 15 young adults were recruited for the study (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Study participants participated in an informal one-on-one guided interview. Open-ended interview questions from the interview guide were used (Weller, Vickers, Bernard, Blackburn, Borgatti, Gravlee & Johnson, (2018). The interviews ranged in time from 20 minutes to 30 minutes. The interviews were recorded using written notes and later transcribed and analyzed.

The interviews were analyzed on an on-going basis using NVivo. NVivo is a software program that allows the qualitative researcher to organize, analyze, and find insights in qualitative data such as interviews, surveys, and content from websites (Castleberry, 2014).

Data Analysis Plan

Collected data was analyzed using NVivo. NVivo allows for rich description of data. It offers the researcher easy to use tools that assist with the organization and analysis of data (Castleberry, 2014). By using NVivo, the researcher was able to code data around themes through the use of storage containers called nodes. Nodes are representative of anything the researcher chooses them to be. Nodes allow for easy organization and reorganization of themes within the data (Castleberry, 2014). NVivo allowed the researcher to keep track of thoughts through the creation of memos and annotations linked to the data. NVivo has many other functions such as packaged queries and reports that include word search and word frequency options. NVivo has a wizard that can assist the researcher through every step of implementing a query. NVivo can create high-quality pictorial representations of data.

A single NVivo project can accommodate multiple collaborations through logs of all events and tracked changes. NVivo is optimum for comparing coding by several researchers. NVivo allows the researcher to export data to other software: Excel, Access, SPSS, and SAS/STAT. The researcher is also able to export projects to a web page allowing others to view the project (Castleberry, 2014). NVivo enables the researcher to import documents as well from Microsoft Word (.doc and .docx), Portable Document Format (.pdf), rich text (.rtf) and plain text (.txt). NVivo can import Excel spreadsheets, and Access databases, as well as most forms of audio, photo and video files. NVivo 12, was used in this study and supports the use of Web pages, social media, YouTube and SurveyMonkey (Castleberry, 2014).

Issues of Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, validity means appropriateness (Leung, 2015). In this qualitative research, the researcher ensured that the tools, process, and data brought about the desired outcome. The methodology answered the research questions, the design was valid in regard to the methodology, the sampling and the data analysis was appropriate, and the final results and conclusions were valid for the sample and context (Leung, 2015). Reliability was ensured by recording data; writing answers down and then entering the data into NVivo. Data obtained from interviews was reviewed and summarized with participants after each session to ensure there were no distortions, (Galdas, 2017 & Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter 2016).

Ethical Procedures

Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines were followed to ensure the ethical protection of the study participants. All mandated forms were obtained and signed by the researcher. Before the study interviews begin, the researcher explained the study details to the study participants. Each participant also received written documentation; consent forms approved by the IRB (Roth & von Unger, 2018). Both methods, verbal and written were used to inform study participants about the details, purpose of the study, how the study will be conducted and possible risk: hidden consequences associated with the study from the dialogue and data collected that participants might consider private that could have inadvertent usage or meanings in other areas outside of the study (Dooly, Moore & Vallejo, 2017). The study participants had the opportunity to express any concerns they may have had regarding the study as

well as ask questions. Each participant was allowed to voluntarily agree to participate in the study along with an option to opt-out via the informed consent form (Dooly et al., 2017). If the study participant agreed to sign the consent form and participate in the study, the interview was commenced. The participant had the ability to withdraw their consent at any time during the study. To maintain confidentiality, any data collected from the interviews that presented concerns; misconduct/recent criminal behavior by participants will not be disclosed (Dooly et al., 2017). Letters of cooperation (LOC) were used to obtain permission to use sites for interviews. The LOC included details describing the contributions the site would render towards the study (Creswell, 2018).

Summary

Chapter 3 presented an overview of the research design that the researcher used for the qualitative research. Phenomenology which is a qualitative research method with Agnew's General Strain Theory as the theoretical framework determined to be the most ideal for this study. Interviews with adults ranging in age from 21 to 35 years old was the source of data collection. The collected data was analyzed using NVivo which allowed for categorizing, searching for patterns and developing themes.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

I conducted interviews to obtain the perceptions of 15 adults who themselves were at one time in the justice system as a juvenile regarding the effectiveness of programs. The interviews took place in areas or venues conducive to the study participants. In this chapter, I present the data analysis and results of the study originating from the intent of the study and the research questions. The collection and analyses used will also be discussed. Chapter 4 will end with a closing summary of findings and concluding statements. The concluding statements will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

The interviews were the source of the findings of this qualitative study. I used two research questions to obtain the perceptions of 15 study participants who were once in the juvenile justice system as youth regarding the effectiveness of programs geared towards deterring or reducing juvenile delinquency. The following research questions were based on the stated problem and the theoretical framework:

RQ1. Which of the current programs are perceived as being effective in reducing juvenile delinquency?

RQ1a. Why are these programs perceived to be effective?

RQ2. Which programs are perceived as being ineffective in reducing juvenile delinquency?

RQ2a. Why are these programs perceived to be ineffective?

The interview questions can be found in Appendix A. Table 1 shows the relationship between the research questions and the interview questions.

Table 1

Research Questions and Related Interview Questions

| Research questions | Interview questions |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| RQ1 = Which of the current programs are perceived as being effective in reducing juvenile delinquency? | Questions 1 and 2 |
| RQ1a = Why are these programs perceived to be effective | Questions 3, 4, 5, 7/7a, 8, 9, and 10 |
| RQ2 = Which programs are perceived as being ineffective? | Questions 1 and 2 |
| RQ2a = Why are these programs perceived to be ineffective? | Questions 3, 4, 6, 7/7b, 8, 9, and 10 |

Data Collection

The data collection process began with IRB approval from Walden University (approval no. 01-17-20-0290532). Then, the pastor of one faith-based organization and one barbershop owner signed a letter of cooperation in which they agreed to assist me with handing out study flyers and providing venues for the interviews to take place. I submitted the signed Letters of Cooperation (see Appendix B) to Walden University IRB. Flyers were also handed out by others, including sorority sisters, fraternity brothers, coworkers, and family members. A total of 274 study flyers were handed out. The study consisted of 15 participants who were interviewed for approximately 20 to 30 minutes. Before being interviewed, the participants were screened to ensure they met the criteria of

the study, which were that they must be between the ages of 21 and 35 years old, must reside in the Indianapolis, Indiana area, must have been in the Juvenile Justice System as a youth, and must be familiar with programs geared towards reducing and deterring juvenile delinquency. Once their eligibility was determined, the study participants were given the study consent form to read and sign if they agreed to participate. I explained to the study participants how their participation might assist in gauging the effectiveness of programs designed to reduce and/or deter juvenile delinquency. I used an interview guide (see Appendix A) to ask questions (Roulston, 2017). Based on the responses from the questions, more probing questions were used to obtain more data. To ensure that authentic and detailed responses were given, I informed each study participant that there were no right or wrong answers. The study participants were also informed of the steps that would be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, that their names would not be mentioned in the study, and that their signed consent forms and the study guides with their answers would be stored on a password-protected laptop and jump drive and in NVivo.

The interviews took place at the various agencies and organizations that had signed letters of cooperation. Participants were identified through the organizations' and my distribution of flyers. Once the participants were identified and found to meet the study criteria, the interviews were conducted.

Data Management

The interviewees signed consent forms prior to beginning their interview in front of me. In addition to the signed consent forms, I asked each agency to sign a Letter of

Cooperation, which I forwarded to the faith-based organization via email. The pastor of the faith-based organization signed the Letter of Cooperation and sent it back to me via email. A Letter of Cooperation was signed by the barbershop owner in front of me. I submitted both signed copies of the Letter of Cooperation to the IRB committee for approval. I have stored the signed consent forms and Letters of Cooperation on a laptop and on a jump drive in a password-protected file. The interviews are also stored in NVivo (Castleberry, 2014), which was used to analyze the data. I am the only person with access to this data. All documents will be kept for 5 years as required by Walden University IRB.

Data Analysis

I based the data collection and analysis process on the research questions and theoretical framework. The research questions aided me in staying focused on the data that was pertinent to the study objective. I also used the study guide to create nodes/categories and themes for analysis in NVivo.

Word documents were used to store the data from the interviews. The Word documents were then uploaded into NVivo. I read through each interview several times to obtain thorough insight and understanding of significant words, phrases, and terms. Nodes were then created based on each question in the study guide. Significant words and phrases were highlighted, and categories were then established (see Table 2).

Table 2

Categories Resulting From Data Analysis

| Category 1 | Category 2 | Category 3 | Category 4 |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------|---------------|
| Expectations | Life Skills | Freedom | Environment |
| Program and Services | | | Program Staff |
| | | | Family |
| | | | Influences |
| | | | Support |

Themes were created from categories that were compared for commonalities and frequencies (see Table 3). Themes are integrated concepts that are defined as threads or statements of meaning intertwining through most or all the data that is important (Errasti-Ibarrondo et al., 2018). The following section contains Table 3, the Participant Interview Summary. The chart is numbered 1 through 15, representing each study participant. Narratives of the interviews are also listed in this section.

Table 3

Participant Interview Summary Chart

| Participant # | Familiar Programs | Program Participated in | Expectations | | Expectations Met | | Developed Life Skills | | Best Part | Worst Part | Program Staff | Had Best Interest in Mind | | Recommend Program | |
|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---|----|------------------------------------|----|-----------------------|---|--|--|---|--|----|---|----|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 1 | Juvenile Detention | Juvenile Detention | | X | X | | | X | Being away from things or people that had bad influences | No freedom | They kept me in line | X | | X | |
| | | | Had no clue, had never been before | | Taught me not to steal | | | Didn't teach me anything – Kept doing the same behavior | | | | Everyone tried to show support and teach me to do better | | It helps you to make better decisions | |
| 2 | Life Skill Program | Life Skill Program | X | | | X | X | X | Completing the program and getting out | Everything they were teaching me things I already knew | They were unfair – only there for the check | | X | | X |
| | | | I would get what I needed out of the program and get out and back home with my family | | Felt forced to do the program | | | It was boring and I learned nothing new | | | | The staff was just there for a job | | Staff didn't have my best interest in mid | |
| 3 | Juvenile Detention Center | Detention Center and bootcamp | | X | | X | X | X | Helped me stay away from trouble | Didn't like the staff | There weren't helpful | | X | | X |
| | | | Didn't want to be there | | Was upset, didn't want to be there | | | Didn't like the treatment of the authorities | | | | Didn't receive any help or assistance from staff | | You wouldn't receive help – the staff was disrespectful | |

(table continues)

| Participant # | Familiar Programs | Program Participated in | Expectations | | Expectations Met | | Developed Life Skills | | Best Part | Worst Part | Program Staff | Had Best Interest in Mind | | Recommend Program | |
|---------------|--|-------------------------|---|----|--------------------------------|----|--|-----------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------|---|----|---|----|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 4 | Juvenile Detention and Alternative School | Alternative School | | X | | X | | X | It took me out of the streets | I didn't like the restrictions | They were too push and strict | | X | | X |
| | | | Thought I was going to jail | | No real expectations | | It introduced me to more crime in the school center | | | | | They were mostly there for money | | The school needed to stay in contact with parents and have the parents more involved with their kid | |
| 5 | Home Detention | Alternative School | X | | X | | X | Learning life skills | Having to wake up early and having to be there | They needed to have a balance with work and communication and relationships with the students | | X | | X | |
| | | | I thought the staff would be harsh and rude | | It turned out to be ok | | I learned how to act right and think twice before making choices | | | | | I learned life skills | | It teaches you a lesson to make better choices | |
| 6 | Juvenile Justice & KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) | KIPP and Probation | | X | | X | X | I was able to see my family | There was no time for myself | They were terrible, too strict. They always went by the book, no exceptions | | X | | X | |
| | | | Didn't know what the programs were about | | I didn't have any expectations | | It helped me to build character | | | | | The staff didn't care about you, they were only there for a job | | Staff wasn't skilled, they were too strict, didn't know what they were doing - had no training | |

(table continues)

| Participant # | Familiar Programs | Program Participated in | Expectations | | Expectations Met | | Developed Life Skills | | Best Part | Worst Part | Program Staff | Had Best Interest in Mind | | Recommend Program | |
|---------------|---------------------------|--|--------------|---|------------------|--|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|---------------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 7 | Life Skill Program | Mental Health Services, Life/Job skill program | X | I only knew what I saw on television – thought there would be horrible fights | X | It was everything I thought it would be | X | I learned carpentry skills | I can use the skills I learned now as an adult | There was no consistency | The staff really didn't care about you. They were mostly there for a job | X | Staff did it for the money. There were too many people in one class | X | Classes were too small; staff didn't care about you. And there were lots of fights |
| 8 | Juvenile Detention School | Juvenile Detention School | X | Thought I might get better resources | X | It was a bad experience. It was like bootcamp, a lot of exercising | X | Helped me to make better choices – think twice about what I did | There wasn't a best part, there was nothing good about the program | There was no downtime, no freedom –you had no say | The staff weren't helpful | Yes & No | Helped me to make better choices, the staff were too strict | X | It helps you to learn more |
| 9 | Foster Care | Foster Care | X | I was unaware of what was going to happen – I was very upset | X | It actually created a more hostile environment – there was no order or structure | X | It provided resources for extracurricular activities; boxing, could receive help paying for college | There was freedom to do what I wanted | Being in a home, going from home to home | Every individual was different, some were helpful, and some weren't | Yes & No | Depended on the individual staff person, some cared and some didn't care | | Possibly Some parts of the program were helpful, while other parts weren't |

(table continues)

| Participant # | Familiar Programs | Program Participated in | Expectations | | Expectations Met | | Developed Life Skills | | Best Part | Worst Part | Program Staff | Had Best Interest in Mind | | Recommend Program | | |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--|----|---|----|--|----|-----------|--|---|---|----------|-------------------|---|-----|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | | | | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| 10 | Life Skill Program | Life Skill Program | | X | X | | X | | X | The assistance that was received – there was support | Being around other people in the program – the information from the program was general – it was information I already knew | They didn't always know the answer – I felt they were in my business and sometimes they were very sarcastic | Yes & No | No | Yes | No |
| | | | I had no expectations – I was excited about attending classes for the benefits | | It provided a class to help me better manage my money | | I learned how to do my finances better | | | | | They didn't have the best personalities to be in the business, they did offer support most of the time | | | They could receive support – life could be less stressful. They could receive a place to live in a nice safe area and also help with transportation | |
| 11 | Young Men's Inc. | Young Men's Inc. | X | | X | | X | | X | The activities were the best part; chess, 3-on-3 basketball and trophies were awarded. It was more than just going to school | I didn't like the discipline | They were very informative – they helped me a lot | X | | X | |
| | | | It was going to be a new experience | | It helped me to make good choices and taught discipline and helped me to recognize good from bad so I could make good choices | | I was able to become a better speaker | | | | | It was very helpful to me | | | I learned a lot of skills and how to be a better speaker | |

(table continues)

| Participant # | Familiar Programs | Program Participated in | Expectations | | Expectations Met | | Developed Life Skills | | Best Part | Worst Part | Program Staff | Had Best Interest in Mind | | Recommend Program | |
|---------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|---|------------------|---|-----------------------|--|---|--|--|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 12 | Probation | Probation | X | Wasn't planning on being in the process | X | Helped me stay out of trouble | X | Was helpful to say positive, stay out of trouble | The structure and the expectations | My living area | Helped me to get through program | X | | Not sure It depends on the persons' background – why there were on probation | |
| 13 | Juvenile Diagnostic System | Juvenile Diagnostic System | X | Thought it would be like bootcamp – boys' school | X | More than met my expectations | X | It disciplined me to be more respectful | Counseling was the best part of the program – I didn't have to deal with the guards | The guards, the guards treated me like a prisoner – not like a child who needed assistance | Felt like the staff were just there for a job (money) | X | The guards weren't friendly, you weren't treated fairly or like your age | X | The way they taught the kids, they didn't respect the kids |
| 14 | Drug Program | Drug Program | X | I expected to be rehabbed after the program – make better decisions | X | It helped in a lot of ways. I still apply some of the things from the program | X | Anger management more self-control | The support. Sentence could be overturned if I finished the program and take accountability for my mistakes | It was a hard program to do – the regular staff were not friendly, respectful or helpful, | The regular staff were not good, but inmates that assisted with the program were very helpful respectful | X | Everyone looked out for you as far as you becoming a better person | X | The program was very helpful |

(table continues)

| Participant # | Familiar Programs | Program Participated in | Expectations | | Expectations Met | | Developed Life Skills | | Best Part | Worst Part | Program Staff | Had Best Interest in Mind | | Recommend Program | |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|----|------------------|----|-----------------------|----|---|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|----|-------------------|----|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 15 | Anger Management Classes | Anger Management Classes | No expectations | X | X | | X | | It helped me to have better conversations – better dialog | It ended; I didn't want it to end | They were spiritual warriors – always – there, alert conscious of situations | X | | X | |

Results

Initial Interview Themes

Familiar programs. Study participants were asked what programs they were familiar with within the Juvenile Justice System in the Indianapolis, Indiana area. Most were more familiar with juvenile detention; with Life Skill Programs being the next most familiar program. Both juvenile detention and Life Skills Programs are a part of the juvenile justice system, which is an extensive system that encompasses many different programs. Other programs study participants mentioned were alternative schools, KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program), foster care, probation, anger management classes, drug rehab program, home detention, and mental health. Alternative schools are in place to aid students who have been identified as at risk of educational failure due to bad grades, displaying behavior that is disruptive, excessive truancy, and having mental health problems (Nowicki, 2019). Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) is in place to catapult the achievements of students as well as uplift the community (Maranto, 2014). Foster Care is a program that places a child or children in the care of an adult temporarily because the child or children's birth parent is not able to care for them (Heard 2020). Probation is a period where the probationer must prove by complying with specific court-ordered requirements that they are deserving of having the privilege of nonconfinement (Lewis, 2015). Anger Management is a psycho-therapeutic program for control and prevention of anger. Anger Management can be described as reducing or eliminating anger successfully (Basu, 2017). Drug rehab is a medical or psychotherapeutic treatment

process for dependency on prescription drugs. Prescription drugs are defined as a pharmaceutical drug that requires written instructions by a doctor, dentist or pharmacist to be dispensed (Dean, 2014). Drug rehab is also the treatment for cannabis, cocaine, heroin, or amphetamines, also known as street drugs or illicit drugs (Mjaland, 2015). Street drugs are substances that are prohibited by the law that stimulate or inhibit the nervous system, they can cause hallucinogenic effects and are highly addictive (Finklea 2019). Home detention, which can sometimes be known as house arrest, is where the person is confined to their residence by the justice system (Chamiel & Walsh, 2018). Mental health services are the assessment, diagnosis, treatment, or counseling that assists an individual or a group to alleviate mental-emotional illness, symptoms, conditions, or disorders through a professional relationship (Kretschmar, Butcher, Flannery, & Singer 2016).

Programs that study participants participated in as a juvenile were; juvenile detention ($n = 4$), life skill programs ($n = 3$), alternative schools ($n = 2$), KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) ($n = 1$), foster care ($n = 1$), probation ($n = 3$), anger management classes ($n = 1$), drug rehab program ($n = 1$), and - mental health ($n = 1$). Three (2%) of the study participants had been in more than one program.

Expectations. When the study participants were asked what their expectations were about the programs or services they received before participating in them, two participants responded with, “I had no expectation”. One study participant stated they thought it would be an introduction to jail. Another study participant thought the program

would be like boot camp. Another study participant stated that they thought it would help them to rehabilitate. It was also stated by one participant that “the staff would be harsh and rude.”

Best interest. Seven of the study participants felt like the program or services they received were not in their best interest: “they were forced to do the program; they were in a more hostile environment while in the program; and the staff was disrespectful”. Six of the study participants felt that the programs were administered in their best interest. Their comments were; “it took them off the street; it kept them from getting in trouble; it helped them to make better choices; it aided them in learning self-control; and they were able to gain life skills – money management, vocational skills and rehab from addiction”. Two of the study participants were undecided, one stated that “the program helped me to make better choices, but the staff were too strict, and you had no time for yourself”. The other study participant that was undecided said “it depended on the individual staff person, some cared and some didn’t”.

Best part of program or service. Fourteen of the study participants stated there was something they liked best about the program or programs they participated in. What the study participants liked the most about the programs were “the activities – playing chess, and basketball completing the program and getting out of it”; “it took me out of the streets”; “support from staff – the staff was always helpful”, “I was able to see my family”, and “I was able to stay out of trouble”. One participant stated that, “going to counseling was the best part of being in juvenile detention”. It was also stated that the

programs: home detention, alternative school, probation, mental health services, anger management, and life skills program, kept them away from bad influencers; there was support gained from being in the program, and they were able to make better decisions. One study participant saw the staff as being spiritual warriors; the staff gave advice and guidance that aided in making better decisions and choices. There was one participant who stated, “there was nothing good about the program; it was like bootcamp – a lot of exercising besides schools”.

Least liked part of program or service. When the study participants were asked what they liked least about the program or service that was received, the study participants gave answers such as; “my living area”, “having to wake up early”, and “there was no consistency”. Other responses were: “the staff weren’t friendly”; “there was no freedom”, “didn’t like the restrictions”, and “I didn’t like the discipline”. A study participant stated that, “you were taught things you already knew”. One study participant felt like everyone was in their business. Another study participant disliked that the program ended.

Life skills. The study participants were asked if the program or services helped them to develop life skills. Ten of the study participants stated that they had developed life skills. Four study participants stated they learned skills that helped them to become more disciplined and respectful. It was also stated by study participants that they received resources ($n = 3$), assistance with school ($n = 1$), and boxing classes ($n = 1$). Study participants from this group also stated that they developed the following life skills; built

character ($n = 1$) and become a better speaker ($n = 2$). One study participant learned about financial management, and another study participant learned carpentry skills.

For those that did not claim to have developed life skills through the program or services ($n = 5$), their reasons were; it was boring, they were introduced to more crime, there were a lot of bad influences, and they did not learn anything. There was one study participant that was not sure if they developed any life skills.

Program or service staff. When the study participants were asked about the staff and their knowledge of the programs, the responses varied. One participant thought that the staff was too pushy. Another participant stated the staff was very informative. Another participant felt the staff was not very skilled and they were too strict. One participant stated that each staff person was different; some were more helpful, while others were not helpful. Other study participants thought the staff was only there for the money, and they did not care about them. Some study participants believed that the staff was terrible. It was also stated that the staff did not always know the answers. Another study participant stated that the staff needed to have a balance with work, communication, and relationships. Another study participant said the staff kept them in line.

Recommend program. The last question the study participants were asked is if they would recommend the program or service they received to others. Five of the study participants (33.33 percent), said they would not recommend the program or services they received. They stated, “there needs to be more parental contact from the school, you

would not receive help, and the staff was disrespectful, staff did not have my best interest in mind, the staff was too strict/no real skills, the staff did not respect the kids”. Eight of the participants (53.3 percent) claimed they would recommend the programs or services received to others. These participants said, “everyone was helpful; the program was helpful; it helped you to make better decisions. The program and services also helped you to learn more; they could receive support, a place to live, and help with transportation and learn to be a better speaker”. The other two participants (13.34 percent) interviewed stated they were not sure if they would recommend the program or services to others. They stated, “some parts of the program were helpful while other parts were not, and it would depend on the persons’ background and why they are on probation”.

Summary of Initial Interview Themes

There were 10 themes derived from the interviews. They are as follows: (a) familiar programs, (b) programs and services received, (c) goals of programs, (d) expectations, (e) best part of the program, (f) least liked part of program, (g) life skills, (h) staff’s knowledge, (i) best interest, and (j) recommendation. Key responses and the emerging themes are captured in Table 4.

Table 4

Summary of Interview Themes and Responses

| Themes | Responses | Number of participants |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Familiar Programs | Juvenile Detention was the most known program, there were other programs mentioned which are programs within the juvenile detention program | 15 |
| Programs & Services Received | Juvenile detention was attended more than any other program or service | 14 |
| Goals | To further education, develop life skills and assist in making better decisions | 15 |
| Expectations | Yes - 9 participants' expectations were met, helped make better choices, made participants better, provided support and education. No - 6 participants had no real expectations and didn't know what the program or services were about. | 9 (yes), 6 (no) |
| Life Skills | Learned discipline, how to be respectful, received resources; assistance with school and boxing classes, built character and becoming a better speaker | 11 (yes), 4 (no) |

(table continues)

| Themes | Responses | Number of participants |
|--|--|------------------------|
| Best Part of Program or Service | Support, counseling and staying out of trouble and learning to make better decisions and learning life skills | 8 |
| Least Liked Part of Program or Service | The two most disliked parts of the programs were the staff and having no freedom | 7 |
| Staff Was Knowledgeable | Yes - The staff was helpful and supportive | 3 |
| | No - Staff weren't helpful, they didn't care and were in it for the money | 11 |
| Best Interest | Yes - Staff showed support and skills were learned | 5 |
| | No – Staff were there for money only and didn't care, weren't helpful and unsupportive, program was too strict | 10 |
| Recommend Program | Yes – Program was helpful, received supportive and helped with making better decisions | 6 |
| | No – Program was too strict, and staff didn't care and weren't helpful | 8 |

Subsequent Themes

Four themes resulted from the original 10 themes: (a) staff, (b) support, (c) assistance/helpful, and (d) education/skills. These four themes are discussed in more detail below.

Staff. The staff was seen as being too strict, unhelpful, uncaring, unfair, and only there for the money by 60 percent ($n = 9$) of the participants. Approximately 27 percent of the participants ($n = 4$) stated that the staff was helpful; they helped them stay in line, and the staff was informative. Thirteen percent of the participants ($n = 2$) felt the staff needed more balance between their work, communication, and relationships. They also stated that the staff did not always know the answers to their questions or concerns they had about the programs being administered.

Support. Support was a theme that appeared throughout the interviews. Sixty percent of the participants ($n = 9$) felt that the staff were not very supportive; the staff did not have the best personalities. There was a lack of support most of the time. While other participants 27 percent ($n = 4$) stated that the staff was supportive; it was the best part of the program, and all the staff tried to be supportive. Thirteen percent of the participants ($n = 2$) were indecisive and thought some staff were helpful while others were not helpful.

Helpful. The Helpful theme encompasses assistance and decisions. Both assistance and decisions were the two main things participants stated were most helpful to them while being a part of a program. A program is a developmentally appropriate designed plan, that prepares youth for productive adulthood by providing opportunities

and support that will assist the youth to gain competencies and knowledge that is needed to meet challenges they might encounter as they mature. A service provides assistance, support, guidance or help. Six of the study participants (40%) stated the programs they were in helped them in making better decisions later in life. The other seven participants (47%) did not feel as if they received support while participating in a program, or while receiving a service. Two participants (13%) had different answers; one participant became more disciplined, and another participant learned to be more respectful.

Education/Skills. The Education/Skills theme includes life skills as well as any type of education or training that was received while participating in a program or receiving services. Eleven (73.33%) of the study participants said they developed positive life skills. Some of the life skills were becoming a better speaker, thinking before making decisions, learning a trade, carpentry skills, and learning about financial management. Participants also stated they learned about resources to assist with attending college. Two participants attended courses in anger management. The other four participants (26.67%) claimed they did not develop any life skills.

Discrepant Information

There were many variations in the responses that can be described as peculiar data. One instance is there were a few study participants who stated the program they were in helped them to stay out of trouble or taught them a lesson not to steal, but then when asked about developing any life skills, they replied they did not develop any. Another peculiar example is of a study participant who stated the program helped them to

build character, they were able to see their family on weekends, and they learned job skills. However, when they were asked if they would recommend the program to someone else, they replied they would not. Many of the study participants stated their experiences were not the best and therefore, they would not recommend the program. Those study participants who would not recommend the program or services had a negative opinion about the staff; the staff was disrespectful to the youth, the staff lacked skills in working with the youth, the staff did not care about the youth, and there was a need for more parental involvement,

Evidence of Quality

A good qualitative study is a study that is systematically, as well as ethically supported with trustworthy findings. Creswell (2017) gave nine strategies for validation in qualitative research. For this study, two of those strategies were used. All collected data was systematically recorded to help ensure reliability. Data obtained from the interviews was reviewed and summarized with participants after each session to ensure there were no distortions (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter 2016; Galdas, 2017).

Summary

This qualitative study was conducted to obtain the perspective of fifteen study participants regarding the effectiveness of programs in place to deter or reduce juvenile delinquency. The data collection procedures were presented in this chapter. A summary of the findings from the interviews was also presented. Through the analysis of the data

collected, four themes were discovered; (1) staff, (2) support, (3) assistance/helpful, and (4) education/skills.

The research questions are listed in Chapter 5. A review of the outcomes will be reviewed in detail in Chapter 5, as well as the purpose and the significance of the study as they relate to the outcome. The in-depth interpretation of the themes is given along with the results, and how they relate to the theoretical framework.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In Chapter 5, I present an overview of the research questions, the results, the conclusions and recommendations. The focus of the study conclusion is based on the connection between the published literature and the study findings. Ideas and suggestions for additional research can be found in the recommendations section. I also discuss the study's implications for positive social change in the chapter.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to obtain the perspectives of study participants on the effectiveness of programs to reduce or deter juvenile delinquency. Interviews were conducted using a guided interview tool. I was the main data collection instrument. The following research questions were addressed using an interview guide.

RQ1. Which of the current programs are perceived as being effective in reducing juvenile delinquency?

RQ1a. Why are these programs perceived to be effective?

RQ2. Which programs are perceived as being ineffective?

RQ2a. Why are these programs perceived to be ineffective?

I created nodes based on the interview questions and answers. Significant words or phrases and terms were identified through the analysis of the data. Table 2 in Chapter 4 includes the categories and themes that emerged from analysis of data.

Interpretation of the Findings

Research Question 1

The juvenile justice system is an overarching system that encompasses many programs and services such as juvenile detention, mental health, anger management, life skills, probation, foster care, drug rehab, alternative school, and home detention. All 15 of the study participants were in the juvenile justice system at some point and involved in one or more of the juvenile justice system programs and services. Participants were most familiar with juvenile detention (47%; $n = 7$). Juvenile detention is for criminal offenders under the age of 18. Youth under 18 years old are still growing and learning (Ferrand, 2020). Because they are easily influenced and more apt to make mistakes, the justice system applies different consequences for them. Juvenile detention is one option that a youth might receive for a sentence. Juvenile detention is a closed confinement facility for youth (Ferrand, 2020). There are strict schedules and responsibilities in juvenile detention. If a rule is broken, institutional charges, a prolonged sentence, and possible time in the adult prison system can occur (Ferrand, 2020).

Research Question 1a

Eight (53 %) of the participants thought the programs or services they received were administered in their best interest. Participants received support from the staff. They stated that the program curricula assisted them in making better choices and thinking about the consequences of their actions before making decisions. Seventy-three percent ($n = 11$) of the study participants also expressed that they felt as though the program or

service they were involved in was effective in assisting them to develop life skills and vocational skills. Participants were able to learn self-control as well as become accountable for their actions. Financial literacy was taught, enabling the participants to better manage their finances. Participants also received assistance with housing and college tuition. When participants were asked if they would recommend the programs or services, seven (47%) of the participants stated that they would. Participants said that they believed that a person could learn to make better decisions and gain a more positive attitude by participating in a program or receiving services. Three (20%) of the study participants thought that the staff was helpful and very supportive. The staff encouraged participants by showing support and assisting participants with problems or concerns they had about the program or services. The staff aided in instilling positive reinforcement in the participants' lives, by explaining the importance of policies and guidelines and ensuring guidelines and policies were followed.

Research Question 2

Several programs and services were considered ineffective by 47% of the study participants ($n = 7$). These included mental health services, juvenile detention, probation, life skills development programs, and alternative school. The participants gave several reasons why they perceived these programs to be ineffective. One reason was that the participants did not receive the help they needed while participating in said programs or receiving services. Another reason was the staff treated participants unfairly and the staff did not provide any help with situations, fights, or disruptions during the programs.

Participants also did not receive the assistance or resources they needed to be successful; some were unable to read, write, or speak English. Being in juvenile detention presented a more hostile environment; there were fights, riots, and crimes occurring, along with thefts and drug use. Two (13%) participants felt forced to participate in and complete programs.

Research Question 2a

Some of the study participants indicated that the programs or services they received were not administered in their best interest. Six (40%) of the study participants said they would not recommend the program or services to anyone else. Four study participants (30%) thought the program or services did not benefit them. Three participants (20%) thought the program catapulted them into more trouble or crime. There were two study participants (13%) who were unsure whether they benefited or not from the programs or services. Nine study participants (60%) thought the staff was unhelpful. Six (40%) of the study participants stated the staff did not care about them and that they were often harsh and disrespectful. It was also stated by one participant that there needed to be more parent involvement.

Summary

The results of this study indicate that most programs geared towards reducing juvenile delinquency were effective. However, the programs that were ineffective in some cases were doorways to more crime or trouble. The programs, number of participants, and percentages can be seen in Table 4.

Table 5

Program Participation

| Programs | Total participants | Effective | | Ineffective | |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|
| | | Number of participants | Percentage | Number of participants | Percentage |
| Juvenile detention | 6 | 4 | 27% | 2 | 13% |
| Drug program | 1 | 1 | 7% | | |
| Foster care | 1 | 1 | 7% | | |
| Alternative school | 2 | 1 | 7% | 1 | 7% |
| Probation | 2 | 2 | 13% | | |
| KIPP | 1 | 1 | 7% | | |
| Anger management | 2 | 2 | 13% | | |
| Life skills Program | 3 | 2 | 13% | 1 | 7% |
| Mental health | 1 | 1 | 13% | | |

Note. Some participants participated in more than one program or service.

Programs were perceived as ineffective by five (33%) of the study participants, due to participants being in contact with other program attendees who influenced them to become more involved in crime or drugs. Many study participants stated that program staff lacked the knowledge needed to effectively administer programs. It was also stated that it appeared as though staff did not care about the program attendees, and that the staff were only there for the money. There were various perspectives and views on the effectiveness of programs that aligned with the literature and the theoretical framework. Four themes, (1) staff, (2) support, (3) assistance/helpful, and (4) education/skills, that are

congruent with with the literature, justify the perceived effectiveness and ineffectiveness of programs and service.

For change to occur there needs to be a change in the attitude and priorities of program staff and how programs are administered (Griffin, Hogan, Lambert, Tucker-Gail, & Baker, 2010). Also, parental involvement is needed. The data included in the literature review affirmed involvement of parents is pertinent in the deterrence and reduction of juvenile delinquency (Brezina, 2017; Froggio, 2007).

The findings from this study are important because programs and services should be effective in reducing and deterring juvenile delinquency. Program staff need to be provided with resources and professional development that aid them in becoming effective, knowledgeable instructors.

Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of the study was using purposeful sampling that had specific detailed inclusion criteria for recruiting participants. This method limited who could participate in the study because of age, residency and history requirements. The participants were between the ages of 21 and 35. This age range was chosen because all participants were legal adults; at least 21 years old and were able to give their own consent. The cut-off age of 35 years old was chosen as a random number. Therefore, those that were out of this age range were unable to participate in the study. It was also required participants reside in the Indianapolis, Indiana area. This criterion limited those who resided in other areas outside of the Indianapolis, Indiana from participating in the

study. Thus, any individuals who participated in programs within the Indianapolis area, but had since moved, were excluded from the study.

. The participants also had to have been in the juvenile justice system as youth. If a person did not meet this requirement, they were unable to participate in the study. The sample size of 15 was also a limitation, as this sample size may not have accurately reflected the needs and problems that surround the community. This study, however, was only concerned with the programs, stakeholders, and youth in the sample area. Another limitation is that the participants were self-selected. Participants may have agreed to participate in the study because of an inherent bias. This bias could have affected the results of this study because the participant may not have been truthful in their answers to the interview questions. If this study were to be duplicated in a different geographic location, or using a different age range, and residential requirements, the results could be very different. Caution should be taken in using the findings from this study to generalize about other age groups and geographic locations

Implications

The need for positive social change is supported by the data analysis of the study. The effectiveness of programs was addressed by the study participants in an effort to gain a better understanding of what makes the programs effective or ineffective, and why. Even though many of the programs were deemed as being effective, the study participants saw the program staff as unfavorable, uncaring and/or only there for the money.

Social change can be obtained through the evaluation, revamping or elimination of programs deemed ineffective, professional development for program staff, and more parental involvement. Positive reinforcement can be instilled in youth through these changes. The juvenile justice system encompasses many programs and services that are geared towards deterring and reducing juvenile delinquency that may not be known to the public. The findings from this study can assist in heightening the community's awareness about programs available to youth. By making the data available to the community, the community will be able to gain more knowledge about the existence of programs in their area. This can enable the community to obtain assistance and resources needed to assist them in deterring and reducing juvenile delinquency. The findings from this study can be used by other communities to aid them with their community programs. The results of this study can assist other communities in gauging the effectiveness of similar programs they have in place. The results can also assist other communities in identifying new methods to administer programs or services.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Action

A qualitative method was used for this study. This allowed the participants to give their perspective of the effectiveness of programs and services that are in place to deter or reduce juvenile delinquency. Participants gave their answers to the interview questions based on their experiences from participating in programs or services. The analysis of this study shows several programs to be effective, however, there are many programs also

deemed ineffective. Based on the analysis of the data obtained in the study, there is a need to re-evaluate the effectiveness of programs to determine what is working and what is not working. Program staff must receive the resources and professional development they need to effectively administer programs and services that assist in deterring and reducing juvenile delinquency. Program and service administrators need to be aware of the results of this study. Study results will be shared with the agencies and organizations that assisted in the study process by allowing the researcher to distribute study flyers and provide spaces for interviews.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to obtain the study participants' perspective on the effectiveness of juvenile programs. The analysis of the interview questions showed staff as contributors to the ineffectiveness of programs. Nine (60%) of the study participants did not recall the program staff in a positive light. Three of these nine (33.3%) participants reported the staff as uncaring. Two of the nine (22%) participants did not think the staff were helpful. Two other participants (22%) thought the staff were too strict and pushy. Finally, one of the participants said the staff needed more balance; to work on their communication skills and relationships with participants.

Based on the participants' responses, further research could focus on program staff and the resources and professional development they receive. Future research could assess the hiring process and minimum requirements for new staff, the type of training staff is required to complete once hired, as well as the continued training requirements.

The information obtained from this type of study could provide empirical data beneficial in making programs more effective by ensuring staff is well informed on the modern techniques and resources that can aid them in being more effective.

Parental involvement is important in deterring or reducing juvenile delinquency (Brezina, 2017; Froggio, 2007). Therefore, another avenue for future research could assess parent programs. This study could look at the effectiveness of programs in place to assist parents to become more involved – supplying training and resources that aid parents in assisting with deterring and reducing delinquency among their youth.

Finally, future research may include a review of community involvement as related to deterring delinquency. This study could incorporate various stakeholders in the community: businesses, schools, community centers, faith organizations, and residence. The study could look at the role each stakeholder is currently performing in deterring or reducing juvenile delinquency and whether these actions are effective. The study could assist in identifying changes that are needed, and ways the stakeholders could collaborate to more effectively assist with deterring and reducing juvenile delinquency.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to obtain the study participants' perspective on the effectiveness of juvenile programs. Fifteen participants were interviewed, and the findings revealed that the staff played a major role in the programs' perceived effectiveness. The participants also spoke to parental involvement as related to the perceived effectiveness of a given program. Lack of social support like parental

involvement is one of the most relevant contributing factors leading to offending and recidivism (Brezina, 2017; Froggio, 2007). It is important that programs that are geared towards the deterrence or reduction of juvenile delinquency be assessed and reviewed so that changes that are needed can be made and implemented. Also programs that are geared towards promoting parental involvement need to be established and implemented. Through these changes, youth can possibly receive the help and assistance they need to guide them in to making better decisions and becoming upstanding citizens.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

1. What programs are you familiar with that are in place to deter or reduce juvenile delinquency?
2. Were you involved in a program while in the Juvenile Justice System?
 - a. If so, what was the program?
 - b. What was the goal of the program?
3. When you learned you were going to be in this program, what expectations did you have about the program?
4. Did the program meet your expectations?
 - a. Will you explain?
5. What was the best part of the program?
 - a. What made this the best part of the program?
6. What did you like least about the program?
 - a. Why was this your least favorite part of the program?
7. Did the program aid you in developing more positive life skills?
 - a. If so, what type of skills?
 - b. If no, why do you think you were unable to learn or develop life skills from the program?
8. Will you tell me your thoughts on the program staff as far as their knowledge in administering the program?
9. Was the program administered with your best interest in mind?

10. Would you recommend this program to others?

- a. If so, why?
- b. If not, please explain why.

Appendix B: Sample Letter of Cooperation

(Name of Business)
(Contacts Name)
(Address)
(City, State, Zip Code)

(Date)

(Researcher's Address)

Dear (Researcher's Name),

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled "Reducing and Deterring Juvenile Delinquency: Are the Programs Effective?" at The Way Church. As part of this study, I authorize you to recruit study participants and conduct interviews. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: assisting the researcher with identifying study participants and providing a space/room (private if needed) for interviews to take place. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that the student will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in Proquest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,
*(Authorization Official
Contact Information)*

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).