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Response to Violent Prone Female Adolescents: The Chicago Public School Approach

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RESPONSE TO VIOLENT PRONE FEMALE ADOLESCENTS:

THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL APPROACH

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BY

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To my family members and friends who have continued to believe in me and pray for me - thank you for your support, encouragement, and never ending devotion!

DEDICATION

In loving memory Feb 24, 1936 - July 3, 2006

This dissertation is dedicated TO MY MOTHER, DR. JOSEPHINE E. DOZIER.

Although you were unable to live to see this great accomplishment, you will always be my greatest supporter and source of encouragement. Without you mom, I would have never been inspired to embark on such a journey. I've admired your tenacity and spirit ever since I was a little girl and I will always love you!

To my sister Tina and Aunt Paula, always remember that with God all things are possible-love you!

To Tajah, Malik, and Tianna, I am laying the groundwork and passing the torch to all of you-love you!

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ABSTRACT

School violence has become increasingly more prevalent among adolescent females over the last ten years. As administrators, teachers, parents, and law enforcement officials try to control and decrease the number of violent incidents that occur in our schools, adolescent females continue to exhibit inappropriate and violent behavior at an alarming rate within our school communities. Adolescent females who behave badly have historically been overlooked or ignored, as girls have often been perceived as being incapable of demonstrating hostile conduct in an academic setting.

The purpose of this study was to investigate, describe, and analyze the frequency and nature of violent incidents committed by adolescent females in the Chicago Public Schools during a four year period. The findings from this study will seek to establish the severity of the problem, offer insight into possible solutions, and provide relevance for future studies.

This study utilized a descriptive quantitative approach to analyzing archival data that highlighted adolescent females that committed serious Group 5 and Group 6 misconduct violations as outlined in the Chicago Public Schools student code of conduct handbook. A comparison throughout the data was conducted based upon factors such as race, age, socio-economic status, location, and disability.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

<u>Female Adolescent Violence: A Contemporary School Reality</u>

Adolescent females have become increasingly violent within their communities
and schools over the past decade. The prevalence of girl-on-girl violence has been clearly
documented by several national and local law enforcement agencies, as well as, school
districts around the country. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2003)
reported that female adolescents who engaged in dangerous fights at school increased
from 16.2% in 2002 to 20.0% in 2003. Female adolescents who fought in group fights
increased 13.5% in 2002 to 16.8% in 2003.

According to the Cook County Commission in Women's Issues (2006), girls
accounted for 18% of arrests for violent index crimes and during the years of 1980 and
2003, girls' arrest rate for simple assault increased by 269%.

The United States Department of Justice, in conjunction with, the Office of
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2008) reported an increase in school
violence among girls and their female peers. In this 2008 Girls Study Group report, 32%
of all vicious offenses against youth ages 12-18 occurred during school or on the way to
and from school. Girls' arrests for simple assault during 1996-2005 increased nearly 24%
while boys' arrest decreased by -4%. As a result of increased safety concerns, public

concern regarding adolescent female violence has heightened, especially in large urban school districts.

National media coverage has highlighted several urban school incidents of adolescent female violence. According to the Associated Press (2003), 31 Glenbrook North High School students (28 females and 3 males), were captured on videotape tormenting junior girls as a "rites of passage" into the next grade. The junior girls were verbally demeaned, physically beaten, and severely injured in an attack by a hostile mob of senior girls, while the boys encouraged and instigated the degradation of the younger high school girls. Several female bystanders reported that this hazing ritual was a convenient way for senior girls to victimize junior girls that they hated. The senior girls' rationale for the savage beatings was that this "hazing" practice had gone on for 23 years and was deemed "tradition".

According to Samuels (2002), three 13 year-old girls attacked a resource officer in Largo, Florida because he was trying to stop one of them from participating in a food fight. Two of the three girls attacked him from behind and began kicking and slapping him several times and spewing obscenities at him. The officer was trying to protect the other cafeteria students but found himself in a physical altercation with girls. All three girls' were charged with felonies and sent to the County Juvenile Center.

Rowe (2004) asserted that a lunchroom fight at Rainer Beach High School in Seattle, Washington was so violent that one girl was left with head trauma due to consistent blows to the head and face. The other girl was treated for profuse bleeding, caused by a deep laceration to the face which was inflicted by a knife wound.

In San Antonio, Texas a 13-year-old girl supposedly beat and held down another girl so a group of boys could sexually attack her. Law enforcement officials were horrified to realize that a girl would participate in a potential rape of another girl and be an active perpetrator in the awful incident (Leslie et al., 1993).

School officials in New Orleans, Louisiana reported that a 16 year old girl stabbed another girl in the back with a six-inch kitchen knife after a verbal dispute and in Los Angeles, California school girls are carrying guns and knives to school to protect themselves against female and male attackers (Leslie et al., 1993).

According to Leslie (1993), New York City, New York officials have indicated that girls are "gang attacking" other girls that are caught swimming in public pools and boys are molesting the swimmers. Dr. Naftali Berrill, director of the New York Forensic Mental Health Group states, "I've been amazed at the brutality of the beatings of girls by other girls, the violence is a vicious, antisocial pack mentality aimed at a target who is incapable of fighting back" (p. 44).

Large urban school districts such as the Chicago Public Schools' (District 299) have experienced episodes of school violence perpetrated by high school females. According to the Chicago Public Schools, Office of Communications (2002), the number of female misconduct's reported by high schools has steadily increased from the year 1999 to the year 2002. In the 1999-2000 school year, the total number of female misconduct's for aggravated battery was 61, in the 2000-2001 school year 74, and the 2001-2002 school year 94. The total number of female misconduct's for weapon

possessions in the 1999-2000 school year was 135, in the 2000-2001 school year 131, and the 2001-2002 school year 195.

The Chicago Public Schools, Office of Safety and Security (2006) reported to the *Chicago Sun-Times* that school fights increased by 31% during the 2005-2006 school year compared to the 2004-2005 school year. This increase was attributed to a 21% increase in girl fights with the school system during the 2004-2005 school year. Although battery among girls decreased by 45% during the 2005-2006 school year, assault among girls increased by 18%. Chicago Public Schools, Safety and Security Director, Andres Durbak stated "I don't see a trend developing. I see these as flare ups; a couple of groups will be in conflict, they fight, then it dissipates."

Violence among girls in the Chicago Public Schools' (CPS) continued to escalate past the 2005-2006 school year, despite efforts to curb female aggression through suspensions, expulsions, and arrests. Several documented descriptions of savage beatings by girls within Chicago Public High Schools, were reported in following two local area newspapers:

> ➢ According to Yates (2004), of the Chicago Tribune, a 16 year old girl was attacked in her Literature class at Dyett Academic Center by a group of girls who walked in, choked her, pushed her to the floor, and stomped her face repeatedly. As a result of this incident, nine female students were arrested for assault.

> ➢ Patterson (2007) of the Chicago Defender reported that a 17 year old pregnant girl at South Shore High School (School of the Arts) and a friend were

attacked by at least 20 fellow students near the school's library. According to the victim's mother, "the kids snatched her hair out by the root, the side of her face was swollen, both top and bottom, and the back of her head was swollen. We took her to Trinity Hospital and she didn't get out until three in the morning" (p. 3). Two females and one male were arrested in connection with the beating.

➢ A 16 year old girl at Morgan Park High School was beaten by a group of girls in the school's hallway after one of the girls accused her of trying to go out with her boyfriend. The victim was kicked, punched, and her hair was pulled out by this group of offenders (Patterson, 2007).

In an effort to address this growing crisis of adolescent female violence, the Chicago Public Schools' made a conscious decision to adopt a no nonsense style of discipline when dealing with girls who exhibited violent tendencies at school.

Pardo (1998) reported that in 1995, the Chicago Board of Education adopted the controversial "zero tolerance" discipline approach, which required principals to document all acts of student misconduct and report various Group 4, 5, and 6 student misconducts to the Chicago Police Department. This approach to discipline was a direct result of the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994, which was passed by Congress under the Bill Clinton presidency. However, the Chicago Board of Education has since moved away from punitive zero tolerance policies, and has adopted a more flexible approach to discipline, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct manual.

According to the Chicago Board of Education (2008), the Student Code of

Conduct (SCC) is utilized each school year to help create a safe environment for all students and school personnel. The SCC is also a designated blueprint for all school administrators to utilize, in the event that there is any student misconduct. The disciplinary procedure outlined in the SCC is intended to be educational and counteractive, not penalizing. Students with disabilities who violate the SCC must be administered discipline according to the guidelines set forth by the State of Illinois, the Office of Specialized Services, and the Office of Due Process and Mediation of the Chicago Public Schools. All students are entitled to receive due process in disciplinary removal, in-school or out of school suspension and expulsion.

The Chicago Board of Education (2008) acknowledged that the Student Code of Conduct (SCC) is not designed to address the entire spectrum of inappropriate student behavior that may be displayed at school or on school property; therefore, school officials have been granted discretion when dealing with student misconduct not specifically outlined in the SCC.

Adolescent female students who behave aggressively or violently while enrolled in the Chicago Public Schools, are held accountable for their misbehavior and are disciplined in accordance to the Student Code of Conduct (SCC) guidelines. Sanctions for inappropriate and disorderly conduct exhibited by adolescent females, who are deemed "seriously disruptive" to the learning process, begin with Group 3 offenses and extend to Group 6 offenses (Chicago Board of Education, 2008).

According to the Chicago Public Schools (2008), girls who fight in or around the Chicago Public Schools usually violate the following Group 3 Codes of Conduct:

<u>Violation 3-3</u>: Fighting- two people, no injuries

<u>Violation 3-4</u>: Profane, obscene, lewd, and immoral or seriously offensive language and gestures, propositions, behavior, <u>or</u> harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, gender identity, gender expression, or disability.

First Violation
- Teacher/Student/Parent/Administrator Conference
- In-School Suspension (one to five days)
- Detention – Before/After School or Saturday
- Suspension (one to five days)
- Balanced and Restorative Justice Strategies

Repeated Violations
- Suspension (one to ten days) or disciplinary reassignment per Area office approval
- Referral to Peer Jury in lieu of suspension (if available and approved by school administration)
- Balanced and Restorative Justice Strategies

Penalties for inappropriate and disorderly conduct exhibited by adolescent females, who are deemed "very seriously disruptive" to the learning process, begin with Group 4 offenses. Group 4 offenses may be reported to the Chicago Police Department by school administration (Chicago Board of Education, 2008).

<u>Violation 4-3</u>: Assault

<u>Violation 4-5</u>: Battery or aiding or abetting in the commission of a battery which does not result in physical injury

<u>Violation 4-6:</u> Fighting—more than two people and involves injury or injuries

Consequences
- Teacher/Student/Parent/Administrator Conference
- In-School Suspension (one to five days)

> ➤ Detention – Before/After School or Saturday
> ➤ Suspension (one to five days)
> ➤ Balanced and Restorative Justice Strategies

Adolescent females who "most seriously disrupt" the academic process, often

violate the following Group 5 offenses. Group 5 offenses must be reported to the Chicago

Police Department by school administration (Chicago Public Schools, 2008).

Violation 5-1: Aggravated Assault

Violation 5-4: Use of intimidation, credible threats of violence, coercion, or

persistent severe bullying

Violation 5-6: Gang activity, including overt displays of gang affiliation

Violation 5-12: Battery, or aiding or abetting in the commission of a battery,

which results in physical injury

Consequences
> ➤ Suspension (five to ten days)
> ➤ SMART program in lieu of expulsion(first- time offenders)
> ➤ Expulsion or disciplinary reassignment
> ➤ Alternative Safe School Placement

Adolescent females who "most seriously disrupt" the academic process, often

violate the following Group 6 offenses. Group 6 offenses must be reported to the Chicago

Police Department by school administration (Chicago Public Schools, 2008).

Violation 6-1: Use, possession, and/or concealment of a firearm/destructive

device or other weapon or "look-alikes" of weapons as defined in the SCC, or use

or intent to use any other object to inflict bodily harm

Violation 6-6: Use, possession, sale or delivery of alcohol, illegal drugs, narcotics,

controlled substances, "look-alikes" of such substances, or contraband, or use of

any other substance for the purpose of intoxication

Violation 6-8: Aggravated battery, or aiding and abetting in the commission of aggravated battery

Consequences
- ➢ Suspension (ten days) and Expulsion (one year)
- ➢ Alternative Safe School Placement

The Chicago Public Schools' efforts to deter adolescent female violence and aggression through reactive discipline strategies outlined in the Student Code of Conduct (SCC) have been applauded by some yet criticized by others. Pardo (1998) reported that a Chicago Public School parent commented that "the board should try to understand the situation. Most people from the Chicago Public Schools are from bad neighborhoods. They might be using a weapon to protect themselves. They should review the situation instead of "she has a weapon and now she's out of here" (p. 7).

Statement of the Problem

Stinchcomb, Bazemore and Riestenberg (2003) acknowledged that reactive discipline policies are widely used in secondary school settings; however, these reactive policies such as suspension, expulsion, and alternative school placement have little impact on the casual factors that push aggressive adolescent females to "act out". Reactive discipline policies often mimic deterrence theories that criminologist use in predicting if criminals will become repeat offenders; sometimes these deterrence strategies fail.

Weiler (1999) recognized that zero tolerance policies which bring police onto school grounds due to girl-on-girl violence help criminalize students who would best

benefit from a comprehensive psychotherapy, mental health, or sociological treatment program.

Larson (2008) affirmed that teachers and administrators would benefit from crisis response training, as opposed to using reactive discipline measures that result in the suspension, expulsion, or removal of students who benefit from a less punitive form of intervention. School psychologist may be utilized to help train teachers and school administrators in emotional de-escalation techniques through role playing activities and staff development training.

According to Casella (2003), reactive discipline strategies must be implemented in conjunction with violence prevention strategies. Violence prevention initiatives encourage students to understand how to right their wrongs and how disagree with someone in a respectful manner.

Large school districts admit that further research and funding for conflict resolution programs will help school administrators and teachers understand and cope with this evolving crisis (Chesney-Lind & Irwin, 2008). The Chicago Public Schools' methodology to corrective discipline has evolved over the past ten years, as the district has begun to incorporate programs that offer girls' the opportunity to discuss their personal issues that contribute to their delinquency and exclusion from school.

Mentoring Programs

According to the Chicago Public Schools, Office of Student Development (2008), girl groups were developed to promote self-respect, self-advocacy, and self-love by providing a platform for teen girls to discuss current trends, problems and their post-

secondary goals and concerns. Over the past five years, several Chicago high schools have designed mentoring programs for girls. These schools include, but are not limited to, the following:

Table 1

Schools with Mentoring Programs

High School	Mentoring Program for Girls	Program Focus
Bowen Environmental Studies Team (B.E.S.T.)	L.O.V.E. (Ladies of Virtuous Essence)	Self-esteem, hygiene, violence and aggression, goal setting, international women's rights and concerns
CVCAA	S.O.S.(Seas of Sisterhood)	College and adult readiness skills
Crane Tech Prep	S.A.S.S.Y. (Save a Sister, Save Yourself	Academic, social, and personal development
Dyett	L.O.V.E.D	Skills for high school and college success
Fenger	D.I.V.A.S.	Positive self-image seminars
Global Vision	For Sisters Only	Self-esteem and self-image seminars hosted by guest speakers
Hancock	My Girlz Sisterhood Project	Workshops for young women's issues
Harper	N.B.T. (Next Best Thing)	Survival tools for succeeding in society
Hirsch	L.I.F.T. (Inspiring Fabulous Teens)	Educational advancement, skill development, and confidence techniques
Hyde Park	S.W.A.N.S.(Sisters working against negative Stereotypes)	Etiquette, violence, teen pregnancy, health
Julian	Ladies of Distinction	Womanhood development
Kenwood	Ladies Lounge	Character education and leadership training
King College Prep	S.M.I.L.E. (Self-love	Self-esteem, public service,

	Makes Intelligent Ladies Empowered	peer mentoring
Las Casas	Girls Group	Conflict resolution, safe sex practices, body image
Manley Career Academy	Women of Destiny	Teen discussions, school activity planning
Morgan Park	S.I.S.	Self-esteem, team building
Phoenix Military Academy	Sisterhood	Social, intellectual, and spiritual development
Robeson	S.M.A.C.(Sisters Making a Change)	Stress and violence reduction
Schurz	Girl-to- Girl Mentoring Club	Relationships and teen dating violence
York Alternative	SISTA Chicago Child Care Initiative	Parenting education and modeling for teens

The Office of High School and High School Programs, Chicago Public Schools (2008), established that sponsored events for teen girls are available each month to aid schools in fostering the development of self-worth and self-love in teen girls. The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) girl clubs are open to any young lady who expresses an interest in joining mentoring groups; however, the participation in these groups are solely based upon a voluntary commitment to participate. Adolescent females who behave aggressively or violently are not mandated to participate in these groups that have been established by the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), to enhance the social, emotional, and academic development of female adolescents.

Mentoring clubs sponsored by the Chicago Public Schools' appear to be geared toward adolescent females who desire to secure an adult mentor who will help foster emotional growth and personal development.

However, are these mentoring groups adequate enough to help deal with the

violent adolescent female and her personal issues?

According to Essex (2000), "many troubled students need special counseling, mentoring, and moral support to succeed in school" (p. 38). However, zero tolerance policies often exclude students that would greatly benefit from proactive intervention programs that begin with the school counselor.

Weiler (1999) contended that at- risk adolescent females benefit from comprehensive counseling that offers strategies to help with issues of violence, abuse, family dysfunction, sexuality, rejection, anger, stress, and gang involvement.

Research Questions

Contemporary research focusing on adolescent female aggression and violence is primarily reported on a national level and does not exclusively tailor its studies to the Chicago Public Schools. This claim can be substantiated by numerous studies, reports, newspapers, and journals that investigate incidents from all over the country. This study seeks to focus on adolescent female aggression/violence within the Chicago Public Schools – District 299. The following research questions are raised in this study:

1.) Is there an increase in adolescent female violence in the Chicago Public Schools' from 1999-2003 between the ages of 14 and 20?

2.) What types of adolescent female violence misconducts occur within the Chicago Public Schools for females between ages 14-20?

Significance of the Study

The primary purpose of the study is to collect quantitative data on adolescent female violent misconducts in the Chicago Public School system that validates an increase in adolescent female violence. While there is limited information specific to adolescent female violence documented within the Chicago Public Schools' archives, the findings may provide insight for further research.

The secondary purpose of the study will be to examine societal, familial, environmental, and female sub-cultures within the Chicago Public Schools that contribute to the violence among adolescent females. This information may be used to uncover the problem and develop possible solutions.

The final purpose of the study is to determine what proactive or reactive programs or services have been developed in the Chicago Public School system to address or prevent adolescent female violence.

Definition of Terms

School Violence: an unacceptable social behavior ranging from aggression to violence that threatens or harms others, goes beyond highly publicized incidents of mass bloodshed to include acts, such as bullying, threats, and extortion (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, 2001).

Fighting: physical contact between two or more individuals with intent to harm. It is not an act of misconduct to defend oneself as provided by law (Chicago Public Schools, Student Code of Conduct, 2008).

Relational Aggression: any behavior that is intended to harm someone by damaging or manipulating relationships with others (Crick & Grotepta, 1995).

Gang: any ongoing organization or group of three or more persons having as one of its primary activities the commission of one or more criminal acts, which has an identifiable name or identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal activity (Chicago Public Schools, Student Code of Conduct, 2008).

Gang Activity: Any act of recruitment with the use of intimidation, tagging or marking, assault, battery, theft, trespassing, or extortion, performed by a gang member or on behalf of a gang, and intended to further a common criminal objective. Intent can be implied from the character of the individual's acts as well as the circumstances surrounding the misconduct (Chicago Public Schools, Student Code of Conduct, 2008).

Weapon: any object that is commonly used to inflict bodily harm, and/or an object that is used or intended to be used in a manner that may inflict bodily harm, even though its normal use is not a weapon (Chicago Public Schools, Student Code of Conduct, 2008).

Zero Tolerance Policy: a school district policy that mandates predetermined consequences or punishment for specific offenses, regardless of the circumstances, disciplinary history, or age of the student involved (Stader, 2004, p. 62).

Assault: an attempt or reasonable threat to inflict injury on someone which is accompanied by a show of force which would cause the victim to expect an immediate battery. An assault may be committed without actually touching, striking, or injuring someone (Chicago Public Schools, Student Code of Conduct, 2008).

Students with Disabilities: students who exhibit cognitive, behavior, emotional, physical, or developmental deficiencies that utilize an individualized education plan (IEP) (CPS, 2008).

Free and Reduced Lunch: refers to students who qualify for free or reduced lunch based upon their family enrollment in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) formally known as the food stamp program or the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF) (CPS, 2008).

Summary

School buildings that seek to function efficiently and effectively must seek to minimize the threat of violence. It is equally important that students feel secure at school and be provided an environment that is conducive for learning; however, administrators, teachers, community leaders, and parents must begin to conceptualize the problem of adolescent female violence and its impact on the educational setting. Proactive intervention programs that are specifically tailored to meet the needs of non-compliant adolescent females must begin to be offered in the academic setting to reduce girl on girl violence.

School communities that are challenged with increasing populations of violent adolescent females must begin to cultivate and implement suitable prevention and intervention programs that address the root causes of violence in adolescent females (American Bar Association, 2001).

The proposed study will explore the frequency and types of violent incidents involving 483 Chicago Public School adolescent females who were cited for serious

Group 5 and Group 6 misconducts outlined the CPS discipline handbook. Chapter One

presented the problem, background of the issue, significance of the study, research

questions, definition of terms, and a summary. Chapter Two will provide a review of the

literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Appropriate socialization is tricky during adolescence when
students are establishing their own identity, dealing with societal
pressures and expectations, thus making a transition into adulthood
(Deshler, Ellis & Lenz, 1997).

Introduction

Chapter One explained the reasons and purpose of this descriptive quantitative

study, as it related to the prevalence of adolescent female violence on a national and local

level. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2008), a survey conducted in 2003

illustrated that 25.1% of high school females engaged in physical confrontation at school.

A 2004 follow-up study found that 32% of all serious violent crimes such as aggravated

assault, battery, and robbery against adolescents 12-18 years of age occurred during

school or on the way to and from school (U.S. Department of Justice, 2008). The

National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2004) reported that the proportion of female

adolescents participating in group on group fights increased from 13.5% in 2002 to

16.8% in 2003.

To understand violence within the educational context, administrators and

teachers should begin to examine the relevant factors that contribute to adolescent female

violence. Chapter Two will explore the societal perceptions of adolescent female

violence, research studies, major causes of adolescent female violence, sociological and

psychological theories, prevention approaches, adolescent female gang sub-culture, and a summary.

Societal Perceptions of Adolescent Female Violence

Adolescent female aggression has historically been perceived as a small issue that is no cause for alarm. However, several researchers provide insight into the dangerous world of adolescent female violence and aggression.

Yin (2006) reported that an ethnographic study of girls revealed that there appears to be more violence and more fighting among girls than there was 20 years ago.

Chmelynski (2006) reported that incidents of girl-on-girl violence in schools continue to rise and according to the U.S. Department of Justice (2006), for every four boys arrested for assault, there is one girl arrested for an assault as well. School violence perpetrated by adolescent boys has gained national attention over the last two decades; however, the rapidly increasing statistics and incidents addressing girl violence has scarcely been examined by researchers or reported by school districts. As school officials ponder why adolescent girls have become so aggressive and violent, it is clear that the day of bobby socks, sock hops, and tea parties appear to be a thing of the past.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Reports (1985-1996), indicate that violent crimes committed by females rise greatly in early adolescence, peak in late adolescence, and remain relatively steady in early adulthood. This report also cites Cornell and Loper (1996) stating that more than 10% of girls in high school in a large school system reported engaging in fighting, drug abuse, and weapon violations within the period of one month.

Weiler (1999) reported that girls are more involved in violent crimes than they were a decade ago, and their murder arrest rate is up 64%. Schools that are comprised of a large number of boys carrying weapons are also plagued with girls carrying weapons as well. Boys are more likely to carry a gun to school, whereas girls are more likely to carry knives.

The National Center for Juvenile Justice (1996) noted that juvenile arrests regarding females more than doubled the growth of males between 1989 and 1993. This is reflected in the incidence of violent crimes, which during this period increased by 33% for males and 55% for females. Notably, current trends suggest an increase in adolescent violence among girls' 15-17 years old in the United States.

Weiler (1999) contended that "current research on adolescent violence and delinquency considers how social class, race, ethnicity, and culture interact to cause young women to behave violently" (p. 1).

Astor (1998) stated that, "several opinion polls have suggested that the general public perceives school violence as the top problem facing the U.S. educational system and physical confrontations are the most common type of violent incidents encountered by students and teachers" (pp. 206-7). Yell and Katsiyannis (2001) substantiate this claim by asserting that "violence in and around school has become more common and more serious. Moreover, three million crimes are committed each year on the campuses of American public schools" (p. 86).

The Center for Disease Control (1996) reported that 30.6% of high school girls are having more than one fight that results in medical attention on or around school

grounds. During the last year, violence prone adolescent girls have steadily been arrested on school property for more felony crimes such as aggravated battery and weapon violations than in the past. In addition, these felony charges sometimes carry with them, the charge of murder. Adolescent female aggression has astonished our school systems during the twenty first century and calls for immediate national attention. Several researchers have advocated that girls are becoming increasingly physical in their aggression towards other girls at school and in their communities.

Vall (2002) noted that girls' acts of relational or physical aggression adversely affect the school atmosphere and mores, as well as, the victimized girls' grades and self-worth. The study by Vail also indicated that girls who become targets of relational aggression carry the painful experience into adulthood. As adults, these women relive the hurt and degradation and often times become victimizer's in their new relationships.

Smith and Smith (2006) revealed that the violence that we see in our schools is a direct reflection of our societal ills acted out in everyday life. This study examined how teachers perceived school violence and the results indicated that teacher attrition rates were directly correlated with their perception that the schools or surrounding areas were not safe.

The Cook County Commission on Women's Issues (1998) perceives girl aggression as more than isolated incidences and calls for gender-specific programming that addresses girl-to-girl conflict resolution issues.

The Juvenile Offenders and Victims National Report (1999), noted that the estimated cost for one juvenile who continues to commit crimes at school or who drops

out, and becomes incarcerated is approximately 1.3-1.5 million dollars. In Illinois, a juvenile that is incarcerated for one year can cost the state about $50,000.

Conversely, if that same juvenile were provided with comprehensive program interventions, the cost to the state would hover around $3,500 (Ryan, 2000).

The Juvenile Offenders and Victims National Report (1999) noted that the estimated cost for one juvenile who continues to commit crimes at school or who drops out, and becomes incarcerated is approximately 1.3-1.5 million dollars. In Illinois, a juvenile that is incarcerated for one year can cost the state about $50,000.

On the other hand, if that same juvenile were provided with comprehensive program interventions, the cost to the state would hover around $3,500 (Ryan, 2000).

Urban school districts that deal with serious discipline issues on a daily basis have a difficult time retaining qualified teachers. As administrators continue to downplay the seriousness of adolescent female aggressive behaviors in schools, we will continue to see the culture and integrity of our schools slowly erode (Smith & Smith, 2006).

Adolescent Female Violence Studies

During the past ten years, school officials have become familiarized with the aggression that adolescent females exhibit in and around school grounds.

Larson (2008) reported that assaults committed by girls, on school grounds, have been on the rise since the mid-nineteen nineties but frequently go unreported or unnoticed. Twenty-eight percent of female students have admitted to being involved in physical confrontations and nine percent of the fights have taken place on school property.

Crick (2000) argued that studies have overlooked aggressive behavior in girls because patterns of aggression in girls are different from that in boys. In addition, girls who have previously broken the law and caused school disturbances, were not perceived as a danger to society because they traditionally have been arrested or reprimanded for nonviolent offenses such as truancy, curfew violations, loitering, prostitution, or arrested for substance abuse or threatening their own person.

According to Artz (1999), the vast majority of research on school violence has failed to address girls' violence and has primarily focused its attention on males. Artz theorized that little research has been done with respect to violent females because violence and delinquency are seen to be almost exclusively a male dilemma.

Sharp (2008) contended that adolescent female violence is becoming more apparent to law enforcement officials but school systems are failing to acknowledge, track, and tackle these issues.

Smith and Thomas (2000) argued that the slow response of school districts and law enforcement agencies to aggressive adolescent girls has historically been a result of society viewing girls as victims, not offenders. The true depth of girls' violence has been drastically underestimated by school administrators, teachers, parents, and researchers.

Chesney-Lind and Sheldon (1992) contended that girls engage in a wide variety of antisocial behaviors just as boys do; however, the trajectory to deviancy may differ due to behavioral variations during childhood. Gorman-Smith and Loeber (2005) suggested that three behavioral pathways help identify disruptive behaviors exhibited by girls and boys: 1) The Overt pathway begins with childhood aggression such as

tantrums, manipulation, bullying, and fighting. 2) The Covert pathway begins with acts such as lying, theft, vandalism, arson, animal torture, and property damage. 3) The Authority Conflict pathway involves verbally abusing parents, running away, curfew violations, open disobedience at school and at home, and truancy.

<center>**<u>Possible Causes of Adolescent Female Violence</u>**</center>

Several sociological theorists provide explanations regarding why school violence has become so rampant and why girls are becoming major stakeholders in antisocial behavior. The major premise of each theorist speaks to the point of how society affects behavior and how one reacts to their own social experiences.

Research by Leitz (2003) indicated that adolescent girls who behave aggressively share some common characteristics. Based upon her research, most girls who fight in school come from communities with high index crime rates. Crimes such as drug trafficking, gang violence, murder, robbery, burglary, arson, rape, hate crimes, and aggravated battery are often witnessed by girls who eventually go on to perpetrate violence upon others. Socially defiant girls often have tumultuous relationships within their families and many of the girls' parents suffer from alcohol dependency, narcotic addiction, depression, domestic abuse, and economic hardships.

Leitz (2003) contended that "many of the girls have relatives in jail or juvenile detention centers and over a quarter of the girls' fathers are incarcerated" (p. 25). Girls who show aggressive anger in school frequently identify with other girls who gossip, instigate, and incite fights among other girls.

Goldstein, Young and Boyd (2008) asserted that "highly aggressive girls tend to use relational aggression more often than physical aggression" (p. 643). Relational aggression refers to behavior that intentionally harms another individual through the manipulation of social relationships. Recent examples of relational aggression include intimidation, sarcasm, betrayal, rejection, exclusion, revealing personal secrets through gossip, lying, racial slurs, name calling, cyber bullying, eye rolling, false rumors, and belittling.

Leach and Humphreys (2007) reported that violence by girls is sometimes less overt and physical than that of boys and is ignored or undetected by teachers, school officials, and law enforcement. According to Smith and Thomas (2000), some relationally aggressive girls exhibit oppositional defiant disorders, and suffer from personality disorders such as narcissism or bi polar disorder. Girls who are abused are seven times as likely to develop a conduct disorder and one-third of girls who manifest a conduct disorder will become violent or delinquent at some point during adolescence. Ninety percent of these girls will develop serious socialization problems during their adult lives (Garbarino, 2008).

Crews and Counts (1997) further argued that a lack of parental concern is another factor that fuels school violence. Many parents are viewed as being so engulfed in careers and the outside pressures of life, that they are far less able to commit to the amount of time needed for effective parenting. Parents themselves are fighting harder than ever to maintain adequate income levels, healthy relationships, stable households, and personal time for oneself. Evidence from the researchers suggests that homes which are

characterized by familial chaos are contributing factors to the delinquency and aggression among adolescents. Adolescents who witness their parents physically abuse each other are far more likely to become a bully.

One of the most significant risk factors associated with the early onset of delinquency is poor academic performance (OJJDP, 1998). In past years, girls who have become juvenile offenders at school have reacted to academic challenges by cutting classes or dropping out. Most recently, girls who are academically challenged have now begun to exhibit defiance and rage toward teachers and their peers. Weiler (1999) substantiates this research by asserting that girls' violence and aggression has become a real dilemma due to school failure, as well as, outside issues such as abuse, trauma, and victimization.

Harper and Robinson (1999) researched urban adolescent females in a Midwestern city and found that violence and aggression in school and communities, is directly correlated with gang membership, poor school performance, and high dropout rates. They contend that female gang members have the same potential as their male gang counterparts of exhibiting aggressive and homicidal behaviors. These girls that become a part of this clique often feel powerful and are extremely aggressive toward girls that are non-gang members and branded smart or pretty. This hostile aggression makes it hard for teachers and administrators to minimize school disturbances because the intimidation and attacks often occur outside of the classroom. These beatings may occur in school corridors, cafeteria's, washrooms, and on the way home.

Theories Explaining Adolescent Female Violence

There has been much controversy about whether girls' aggression is as prevalent as male aggression in our schools. While the perception that adolescent female aggression is not a major concern, some research reveals otherwise. Conway (2005) contended that both boys and girls have nearly the same rates of aggression; however, boys tend to exhibit physical aggression more often than girls and girls tend to exercise relationally aggressive behaviors more frequently than boys. Girls are taught at any early age to internalize their anger and that it is shameful for girls to act in a hostile manner. However, research shows that as girls continue to harbor angry feelings instead of releasing them, girls eventually resort to fighting.

Vall (2002) argued that girls are naturally taught to be cultivating and pleasant; however, these social stigmas force them to express their hostility and aggression in undermining ways. Girls who practice relational aggression often seek to damage other girls' reputations without being detected.

According to Artz (1999), today's violent school girl lies, robs, steals, manipulates, sneaks out at night, vandalizes school and home property, cuts school, gang bangs, and threatens parents, teachers and peers (p. 54). Urban and suburban school systems are beginning to recognize that violent high school girls pose a threat to the safety of educational institutions just as violent high school boys have in past years. School leaders, researchers and society must begin to accept and admit the fact that girls are carrying major emotional and psychological issues to school, and are coping with these problems in an unorthodox manner on school grounds. Only then can discussion

commence regarding effective solutions to reduce the number of violent misconduct cases in our schools.

Girl fights are worse than boy fights because girls tend to be more emotional and personalize their rage. Chmelynski (2006) stated, "when girls fight, they won't stop. The pull hair, slap, punch, scratch, use foul language, and kick; they have to be physically overtaken by someone who's stronger than they are to stop fighting- girls will fight right to the death" (p. 38). Most girl fights stem from gossip and false rumor and girls who fight, are encouraged to fight in front of an audience for validation purposes. This study suggests that if administrators and teachers were aware of the "gossip networks" within their schools, they could perhaps prevent many conflicts before girls resort to use of physical aggression.

Lee and Smith-Adcock (2005) revealed that female adolescents develop their social behaviors through their interactions with peers and adults. Adolescent girls', who exhibit delinquent conduct, usually align themselves with other girls who have a reputation of being troublemakers. This social bonding allows troubled girls to feel a sense of acceptance and approval. Lee and Smith-Adcock stated "school settings provide the social opportunities for adolescents to demonstrate their chosen identities, to develop and maintain their reputations, and to signify their memberships in particular groups through their behavior.

Aceves and Cookston (2007) reported that "adolescent girls who exhibited aggressive tendencies feel unwanted, unloved, or afraid" (p. 636). In this study, the researchers examined the correlation between aggression and victimization and found

that girls who have been victims of violence increase their risk of aggressive behavior during adolescence.

Leitz (2003) theorized that girls aggressive behavior is fueled by violent lyrics from gangster rappers coupled with the perceived need to emulate "thug" life. Girls who engage in mob action and embrace gang mentality clearly can identify with rap lyrics that they feel describe scenarios that mimic their own lives. Outside factors that contribute to this surge in female aggression include, but are not limited to, poverty, single parenthood, peer pressure, negative societal stereotypes, poor self-concept, abuse, and repressed anger.

In this study, research indicated that girls' whose parents worked late hours or parents who were oblivious to their child's whereabouts, habitually felt an emotional disconnect from their mothers, fathers or guardians. This emotional disconnect from their parents or adult figure has been cited as a precursor to aggressive and delinquent behavior due to feelings of resentment and anger (Leitz, 2003).

According to Smith and Thomas (2000), adolescents who witness violence within their homes or families are conditioned to believe that aggressive behavior will help them take control of undesirable or threatening situations. Poor parental modeling has been recognized as a major influence between girls and aggression. Studies have shown that girls who observe their mothers and female siblings fight, use foul language, and hold contempt for authority figures are more likely to conduct themselves in the same manner.

Research by Smith and Thomas (2000) found that increased aggression in girls is a result of countless subliminal messages within our society which suggest that the

female gender is underappreciated, undervalued, and under protected. Girls often witness

harassment and assault by boys and men, as they often see their mothers and other

women beaten or mistreated by their spouses or boyfriends. In this study sample of 213

girls, five reasons were given for their sometimes violent behavior:

    1.) girls reported being victims of abuse

    2.) girls want to appear "hard"

    3.) girls come from dysfunctional families

    4.) girls want revenge on someone

    5.) girls feel the need to protect themselves from someone.

Chmelynski (2006) revealed that girls never learn how to channel their anger

properly thus "fighting is the most reasonable and justifiable line of thought to some

girls. They say if someone disrespects you, you have to set them straight right away; the

idea that fighting isn't ladylike never enters their minds" (p. 38). Unlike boys, girls'

friendships are extremely compromised due to unresolved anger. Relationally aggressive

girls' tend to hold resentment and rage towards other girls or anyone who they perceive

as a threat to them; often times their fury is held well after the initial conflict has taken

place.

Smith and Thomas (2000) stated that girls who watch primetime television are

exposed to more aggressive female images that glamorize female "toughness" than ever

before. These television shows are responsible for almost 15% of viewer aggression.

Research suggests that girls, who continue to observe violent television scenes acted out

by female models, eventually begin to identify with character violence. Television and

movie companies seek to attract younger viewers by using actors and actresses that look youthful, attractive, and heroic; however, these characters are depicting acts of violence and are being applauded for these violent portrayals. Adolescents observe the praise that these characters receive and seek to emulate these images in school and in their communities.

Crew and Counts (1997) believed that schools are reflections of larger society and that schools often mirror the issues that greater society confronts on a daily basis. Some of these issues include, but are not limited to, crime, substance abuse, gang-style beatings, racism, and community violence. They contend that girls are just as capable as boys in carrying out aggressive behaviors; however, girls go about their aggression in a different manner. Girls appear to be more manipulative and not as impulsive when displaying disruptive and violent behavior and often fantasize about the captive audience that may witness their violent behavior. This audience fuels their intensity and seems to validate the violence being bestowed upon their targets.

Artz (1998) theorized that a contributing factor in girls' aggression toward other girls is a general negative view of females based on a low sense of self-esteem and self worth. A study conducted by the researcher, found that adolescent girls who saw themselves as physically unappealing to boys and mainstream society often displaced their anger towards themselves onto other girls that were receiving attention, whether solicited or unsolicited from boys. Many of the girls that took part in the study were themselves victims of emotional, sexual and physical abuse and became victimizers after being victimized.

Harper and Robinson (1999) researched urban adolescent females in a Midwestern city and found that violence and aggression in school and communities, is directly correlated with gang membership, poor school performance, and high dropout rates. They contend that female gang members have the same potential as their male gang counterparts of exhibiting aggressive and homicidal behaviors. These girls that become a part of this clique often feel powerful and are extremely aggressive toward girls that are non-gang members and branded smart or pretty. This hostile aggression makes it hard for teachers and administrators to minimize school disturbances because the intimidation and attacks often occur outside of the classroom. These beatings may occur in school corridors, cafeterias, washrooms, and on the way home.

According to Garbarino (2008), media influences that exalt aggression, contribute to the social toxicity that makes girls' susceptible to violent tendencies in their communities and schools. Social toxicity refers to social and cultural "poisons" that pollute children and youth. Garbarino further asserts that girls and boys who display aggressive/violent behaviors are deficient in their relationship with God. These youths tend to suffer from spiritual despondency, and frequently feel that their lives are worthless and lack purpose. Youths that feel that their lives are hopeless, frequently engage in more risky behavior than those who have a solid spiritual foundation.

Reactive and Proactive Strategies to Lessen Adolescent Female Violence

Scelfo (2005) argued that schools used to be a place where males were routinely cited for bullying and fighting but recent data suggests that girls are the new culprits of violent physical altercations on and around school grounds. This report notes that girls no longer believe in the idea of "femininity" and "passivity" but instead embrace the notion that girls are considered "sheroes" when they express their anger and rage using physical force. School violence, whether perpetrated by males or females has become a major concern and calls for sound discipline policies to address this crisis.

Yell and Katsiyannis (2001) stated that "the national concern over the problem of school violence has led to federal, state, and local efforts to address this issue by creating new laws and policies that include adopting zero tolerance approaches, conducting targeted and random searches of students and their property, using metal detectors, and preventing violence through education" (p. 87).

In 2002, the U.S. Secret Service developed a threat assessment report for public schools all across the country, and found that school officials do not always use "common sense" when it comes to dealing with male and female students who pose a threat to the academic ethos of an educational facility. The Secret Service recommended that school administrators take a more proactive stance with male and female students who exhibit behavioral challenges rather than relying on a single "one size fits all" policy (Stader, 2004).

According to Osher and Quinn (2003), zero tolerance practices have been criticized and viewed as "punitive reactions" that seek to exclude vulnerable students from the public school system.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (1998) , 40% of all public schools within the United States reported the use of "get tough" or "one strike your out" policies such as suspension, expulsion or alternative school referrals, as a means to combat physical attacks or fighting perpetrated by male and female students.

Reactive Discipline Approaches

Zero tolerance policies were primarily developed to keep students and teachers safe in and around the school building after lawmakers and school officials decided that school violence was a real problem. Zero tolerance policies have been largely characterized as district mandates that predetermine penalties or repercussions for behavioral misconducts, regardless of the conditions, gender, discipline record, or age of the student involved. Zero tolerance policies often lead to expulsion, suspension, and incarceration for "problem students" (Stader, 2004).

Holloway (2002) found that zero tolerance policies unsuccessfully decrease school chaos and does not enhance academic achievement. Data from this study also suggested that zero tolerance policies have a negative effect on students' emotional health, intrinsic motivation, and graduation rates.

Saenz (2006) stated that "zero tolerance policies have alienated and criminalized students. Many students have been pushed out of their classrooms or schools to be placed in stigmatizing alternative programs or pushed out of school completely without

obtaining a high school diploma; essentially, zero tolerance policies have served to transfer students from schools to prisons" (p. 189).

Casella (2003) argued that zero tolerance policies may have been a temporary band aid for what was seen as an epidemic of violence in U.S. schools during the 1990's to the present. Furthermore, zero tolerance policies often over penalize students who are poorly educated, live in poverty, come from broken homes, and attend urban public schools.

According to Dogutas (2007), zero tolerance policies fail to deter students from repeating the same acts of misconduct year after year; these policies concentrate on speedy consequences, as opposed to intervention strategies that address the underlying issues of inappropriate behavior.

Proactive Discipline Approaches

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1998), family counseling that focuses on family bonding offers hope to students who come from dysfunctional homes. This approach provides opportunities for at risk students and their parents to work together, build trust, and open honest lines of communication with each other.

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1998), gender-based mentoring programs are beneficial to students who are at-risk for violent or aggressive behavior. Mentoring programs that pair adolescent girls with older peers, give at-risk girls a sense of hope and support.

Brown (2003) found that when adults mentor and encourage girls to surround themselves with other girls who value education, have positive family interactions, are involved in sports or school activities, they develop friendships that are balanced, respectful, non-competitive, and meaningful.

Casella (2003) suggested that schools should begin to develop violence prevention strategies which challenge teachers and administrators to create environments that promote peace and goodwill. Examples of these efforts include metal detectors, hallway patrol by teachers and school security, ongoing communication with parents, consistent implementation of school rules and consequences, and character education classes.

Violence prevention programs such as a bullying awareness program encourages student's to be aware of bullies, report any incidents of bullying with full anonymity, train teachers to teach classes that highlight bullying and strategies to dealing with bullying, and a student watch program for student hallway patrol volunteers (Coy, 2003).

Jones (2001) contended that video surveillance through the use of closed circuit television (CCTV) is one of the most effective and proactive means of deterring inappropriate student behavior in and around school. Jones states "when a suspected student is shown a recording of himself or herself, he or she is likely to admit to a role in the incident even though there may not be enough detail on tape for a positive identification. Additionally, doubting parents often quickly accept their child's role in an incident when shown a videotape of the event" (p. 73).

Crouch and Williams (1995) suggested that mandated participation in school activities encourages student's to take pride in themselves, develop a sense of accountability, boost self-esteem, cultivate respect for others, foster sportsmanship and team building. Dress codes and school uniforms were also considered proactive violence prevention strategies that help reduce conflict that may occur between groups of students who represent certain neighborhoods and cliques.

Patterson (2007) contended that one Chicago area high school has developed a partnership with the Chicago Police Department which allows plain clothes police officers to patrol hallways, the cafeteria, and school grounds to deter students from acts of school violence. This initiative also encourages students to call a "tip" hotline if they have any prior knowledge of pending fights or criminal activity that may occur in or around the school.

Analysis of Aggressive Adolescent Female Sub-Cultures

Within the Chicago Public Schools

Female Gang Members

According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2008), girls constitute 20-46% of gang members based upon a national youth survey. This report noted that gang membership for girls is mostly limited to their adolescent years and early adult years. However, gang activity appears to peak during eighth and ninth grade for girls with peers, authority figures, and abusive family members being their primary targets.

Molidor (1996) argued that adolescent girls', who systematically cause problems at school, have a history of suspensions for fighting or weapon possession on school

grounds. After experiencing some form of academic or social failure, these girls eventually graduate to absenteeism and usually begin to hang out with gangs on a consistent basis, with no attention expressed from the educational system or their families. Molider stated "the young women's experiences while in school sounded more like descriptions of a combat zone rather than a learning environment. Their recollections included knife fights in the halls, intimidation of classmates and teachers, drug use, truancy, and vandalism" (p. 53).

Eghigian and Kirby (2006) noted that based upon a study conducted in 1999, the Chicago Crime Commission estimated that approximately 16,000 to 20,000 female gang members exist in the Chicago area.

Beckom (1994) indicated that female gang bangers can be members of traditional Chicago gangs such as the Blackstone Nation, Gangster Disciple Nation, Vice Lords, Latin Kings, Mickey Cobras, Four Corner Hustlers, and the Satan Disciples. However, Beckless (2000) contended that the female gang members are beginning to organize based upon neighborhood and school affiliation. Female gangs such as the 95 Mob Girls are known to attack and beat other female girls near 95th Street, as well as, invoke fear and mayhem within the surrounding high schools. School affiliated female gangs such as the Lady Dubs, Lady Hobo Girls, Chaotic, the Young Fly Flashy Chicks, and All About Money Girls seem to be wrecking havoc within their communities and high schools quite frequently (Chicago Police Department, 2008).

Gilkey (2001) contended that girls who seek gang affiliation can fall into at least seven categories:

Traditional Types of Female Gang Membership

(a) Auxiliary members of male gangs

(b) Female members of co-ed gangs

(c) Female leaders within co-ed gangs

(d) Autonomous all-female gangs

Alternative Types of Female Gang Activity

(e) Party Crews

(f) Legitimate appearing groups

(g) Wannabes

Auxiliary Members of Male Gangs

Auxiliary members affiliate with the gang through their boyfriends, brothers, or neighborhood in which they grew up or currently live in. Female members are often considered "off shoots" of the male dominant gang. For example, female members of the Brothers of the Struggle (Disciple/Folks Nation) are known as Sisters of the Struggle. Female affiliates have lower status than male members and are often deemed untrustworthy yet submissive. Female auxiliary members are usually responsible for providing sexual favors and alibis for male members, serving as lookouts, lures for rival gang members, and weapon and drug carriers. Auxiliary female members also fight rival female gang members and may carry/use weapons. Most of the female gang members in Chicago fall into this category (Lindberg, 1999).

Female Members of Co-ed Gangs

Female members in these gangs are considered partners to their male counterparts and often have responsibility over important gang operations. These female members frequently acquire houses to help the gang harbor drugs, firearms, and large sums of money. They also try to infiltrate establishments such as law enforcement agencies, government agencies, law firms, and libraries to gain access to private information about potential witnesses, police officers and their families, and rival gang members (Lindberg, 1999).

Female Leaders within Co-ed Gangs

Female leaders within a co-ed gang have authority over other female gang members and their opinions and power are respected by male gang members as well. These females often act or look like males and are sometimes chosen to maintain the daily operations of the gang while a high-ranking male gang leader is incarcerated (Lindberg, 1999.)

Autonomous All-female Gangs

Hardcore all-female gangs who run their own drug rings, carry out hits, and are totally free of male gang influence are very rare in the city of Chicago. However, law enforcement officials predict that this type of gang will be the upcoming threat to Chicago youths as currently seen in Los Angeles, California (Lindberg, 1999).

Party Crews

Party crews consist of females who socialize and party together yet they have no allegiance to any particular gang, ritual, symbol, or hierarchy. However, party crews often have to pay "street tax" to gangs for drug territory. Sometimes party crews develop tension with female gang members due to competition over male gang members. Party crews tend to come together for self-protection and will fight savagely to defend their street territory and way of life (Eghigian & Kirby, 2006).

Legitimate Appearing Groups

All female groups that appear to be an established extra-curricular group such as a dance troupe, singing group, or rap group often times evolve into gangs within school buildings. These groups will wear the same colors, wear group paraphernalia such as jackets or hats; create hand signals, group calls, fight together, and collectively physically attack others (Eghigian & Kirby, 2006).

Wannabes or Groupies

Female gang wannabes are usually too young for gang membership but will hang around with gang members, wear gang colors, have sex with gang members, and may engage in criminal activity to gain acceptance by the gang. However, this female has not been formally initiated into the gang but will often times cause trouble at school to gain the attention of gang members (Eghigian & Kirby, 2006).

Female Gang Initiation Practices

Beckom (1994) contended that females who wish to participate in gangs can be initiated in one of four ways:

(1) Jumped In or Violated In

(2) Sexed In or Rolled In

(3) Mission

(4) Walked In or Blessed In

Jumped In or Violated In

This gang initiation style refers to a prospective female member being physically attacked by a specified number of female gang members from one to seven minutes. Male members are also allowed to participate in the beating. This style of initiation determines a female's ability to withstand pain and shows her toughness, allegiance, and obligation to the gang (Beckom, 1994).

Sexed In or Rolled In

This gang initiation style is the most famous ritual for female gang members, the least common, and the least respected among gang members, both male and female. Females who choose to join the gang through this ritual have extremely low status and are stereotyped as whores or groupies (Beckhom, 1994).

Mission

A female recruit may opt to commit a criminal act such as robbery, battery, or accompany a gang member to a drive-by shooting. The female recruit may even be required to be dropped off in a rival gang's territory to display her gang's graffiti and

ordered get out alive (Beckhom, 1994).

Walked In or Blessed In

This gang initiation style is reserved for female prospects who have had family members that have been loyal to the gang for generations, who have family members in good standing, or who have grown up in the neighborhood and is well-respected. During a blessed-in ceremony, gang literature and prayers may be read and the female may be branded with the gang's symbol (Beckhom, 1994).

Reasons for Female Gang Membership

According to Molidor (1996), females join gangs for two reasons: to feel accepted into a family and the feeling of power. The gang, in their eyes, provides a "surrogate family" motif, as other girls share their lives, experiences, emotions, and even material possessions with them. The protection and power that the gang offers allows these young women to feel respected by others and feared by people who may ordinarily try to victimize them.

Lindberg (1999) reported that females join gangs for financial opportunity, as "they are attracted to the underground economy of drugs and crime and they balk at the idea of working a legitimate job where they expect to make little more than minimum wage" (p. 47).

Eghigian and Kirby (2006) maintained that many girls who join gangs participate for social gratification. Many of these girls are "thrill seekers" and use the gang as a means to party and meet young men. Others join because gangs are a way of life and have been indoctrinated into the gang or street life culture through family members,

friends, or neighborhood acquaintances.

Archer and Grascia (2005) suggested that some young females become involved in gangs due to experiences of early-life trauma such as sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, domestic abuse against a parent, and victimization with their own neighborhoods. A small portion of female gang members become involved in gangs for the chance to act out violent behavior patterns learned within the family unit.

Possible Signs of Female Gang Involvement

According to Williams (1998), adolescent females who choose to join gangs exhibit common identifiable behaviors at home and at school. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, excessive secrecy, poor grades, discipline problems during school, alcohol abuse, use of gang slang, possession of gang literature, nervous, hostile behavior at home, new friends who are hidden from the family, boyfriend who gang bangs, ignoring curfew laws, unexplained amounts of money, drug dealing, sudden change in wardrobe-expensive clothes, shoes, jewelry, electronics, and weapon possession.

Female gang members may also be identified by their gang colors and clothing such as shirts, shoes, pants, bandannas, and outerwear. Female gang members often represent their gang affiliation by sporting tattoos and brands that depict their gang symbols.

Parental Influence on Female Gang Members

Fleisher and Kriener (2004) noted that girl gang members' formative years were repeatedly characterized by single-parent homes, parental misconduct, and abuse. Most gang girls come from homes where the mother or father has been incarcerated, arrested,

and engages in drug use, preferably marijuana.

According to Panko (2005), environmental and biological influences have a direct affect on a child's psyche and behavior. Panko maintained that "children tend to grow up with similar traits to their parents because at a young age they imitate their parents' behavior" (p. 2).

Thornberry et al. (2003) established that there is a strong correlation between negative parental behavior and a child's evolution into antisocial behavior. Negative parental modeling such as yelling, fighting, lying, stealing, drug use, poor impulse control, and negative emotional expression contribute to their children's delinquency. This study examined the concept of linked lives or intergenerational influences that help shape the life-course of adolescents who grow up in households with poor parenting styles. The findings of this study suggested that parenting styles are influenced by the family position in the social structure. For example, parents who experience high levels of poverty, financial stress, victimization, and social isolation have a higher propensity to raise offspring who exhibit hostile behaviors toward society.

Simons et al. (2007) argued that the General Theory of Crime (GTC) asserts that children or adolescents who develop low self-control are generally nurtured by parents or adults who unsuccessfully foster consistent supervision and discipline practices. Children and adolescents who are exposed to cruel, detached parenting are considered to possess an antagonistic, distrusting model of relationships that cause them to approach others with skepticism and hostility. Unloving, unstable, and neglectful homes often cause adolescents to become "angry, belligerent, explosive and create a desire for retaliation

and revenge, thus increasing the risk of delinquency in these youths" (p. 487).

Hunt and Joe-Laidler (2001) affirmed that girl gang members' relationships with their parents and extended family members are intricate and diverse, with some reporting strong family ties, others describing violent confrontations or sexual and physical abuse by a male figure within the home, and others expressing intense hatred for their mothers or fathers due to some kind of maltreatment. The hatred that some of these female gang members have toward their parents or guardians can trigger these girls to become extremely verbally and physically disrespectful towards any adult who appears to hold an authoritative position.

The mother-child dyad, even between mother and daughter relationships that appear to be strained, often proves powerful. Hunt and Joe-Laidler (2001) stated that, "it is their mothers who they turn to in times of need; they rely on them for help in looking after their children, shelter, and even protection. One adolescent recounts a confrontation with an older woman in which she telephones her mother to come and defend her because she just fought a woman older than her, and how her mother having "hunted down" the older woman and kicks her ass" (p. 376). This example seems to highlight how inappropriate behaviors are perpetuated and encouraged by aggressive adolescent females and their mothers.

According to Thornberry et al. (2003), "parents who are aggressive, who have limited human and social capital, and who remain embedded in deviant social networks are less likely to have personal or social resources necessary to effectively discharge the responsibilities of parenthood" (p. 174).

Archer and Grascia (2005) stated "the latest research on female gangs and female arrests statistics indicate a rise not only in violent offenses but also in the willingness of law enforcement to view women as violent offender; this shift in attitude by law enforcement within the last decade is a long-overdue awakening" (p. 38).

Simons et al. (2007) asserted that antisocial youth view their atypical behaviors as appropriate and justifiable and believe that a threatening, confrontational style of socialization is necessary to avoid exploitation by society.

Fleisher and Krienert (2004) suggested that gang or "thug life" has become a coping mechanism for some adolescent females who were victims of childhood trauma perpetrated by their own families, peers, law enforcement, schools, or other adults.

Collins (1997) acknowledged that family degeneration, the lack of positive role models, the ineffectiveness of the church, and the disorganization of the community have all contributed to the rise in female gang membership. As long as these prominent structures remain weak, female gang membership will flourish in most American communities.

<u>Summary</u>

The above literature review highlights the recent studies on adolescent female violence within the United States. The first section of the literature provided a glimpse of how larger society perceives adolescent girls who behave in socially inappropriate ways. The second section provided research that substantiated female violence and the notion that this trend has somehow been overlooked or ignored throughout the past decade. The third section addressed the possible causes of adolescent female violence and how

educational, community, and familial constructs contribute to this phenomenon. The fourth section provided sociological and psychological researcher theories concerning the correlation between societal influences and adolescent female violence. The fifth section explored proactive and reactive discipline strategies that may play a role in the increase of adolescent female violence. The final section provided a detailed description of female gang sub-culture that many times contributes to adolescent female violence in the community and school.

<u>Conclusion</u>

The necessity to highlight the surge and prevalence of adolescent female violence within the school environment is both relevant and of critical significance. In 2003, 20% of females aged 12-17 (2.4 million) reported taking part in one or more serious fights at school or work during the year, a 3.8% increase over the percentage reported in 2002 (NSDUH, 2004).

This descriptive quantitative study is crucial in determining the magnitude to which adolescent female violence exists and the need for school-based interventions to address the fundamental causes of girls' violent behavior before they become incarcerated for their violence. Girls Inc (2004) found that young women 12-17 years of age, especially African –American and Hispanic females, represent 34% of the population but account for 52% of the girls and young women incarcerated for juvenile offenses.

As this study seeks to describe and examine adolescent female misconduct data generated from the Chicago Public Schools archival discipline records, the chance exists

that gender-based comprehensive counseling alliances, mental health facility

partnerships, positive adult mentoring, spiritual development workshops, and future

studies may assist at-risk adolescent females and educators from the findings of this

study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

<u>Introduction</u>

The purpose of this study is to investigate and describe the incidence of

adolescent female violence within the Chicago Public Schools' (District 299). Archival

information provided by District 299 was the data source for the study. Chapter Three

presents the research design, study population sample, confidentiality, data collected, data

analysis used to address the questions posed by the study, and closes with a summary.

Contemporary research focusing on adolescent female aggression and violence is

primarily reported on a national level and does not address individual school districts or

states. While there are studies, reports, newspapers, and journals investigating and

reporting incidents of violence and aggression from across the country, this study sought

to focus only on adolescent female violence within the Chicago Public School (CPS)

District 299. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

RQ1: Is there an increase in adolescent female violence in the Chicago Public

Schools' from 1999-2000 school year to the 2002-2003 school year between the ages 14-

20?

RQ2: What types of adolescent female violence misconducts occur within the

Chicago Public Schools for females ages 14-20?

Research Design

This study used a quantitative descriptive research design that utilizes quantitative

research methods, in order to examine a contemporary phenomenon that addresses the

two research questions posed by this study. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (1999),

descriptive research is essential when little is known about an event. Descriptive research

is based upon facts at a given point in time or changes over a course of time. Gall, Gall,

and Borg (2003) further contend descriptive research is a type of quantitative research

that involves making careful descriptions of educational phenomenon. Descriptive

research is non-experimental, does not have a control group and only seeks to describe

some phenomena. The study is quantitative in nature and numerical data was collected to

answer the questions posed in this study.

Population and Sample

The school district selected for this study is located within the State of Illinois, in

city of Chicago. The district currently enrolls 409,279 students in 675 schools in

preschool through 12th grade (CPS, 2010). The Chicago Public School district is

comprised of students with diversified ethnic backgrounds who come from various areas

and neighborhoods of the city. The majority of the Chicago Public Schools' students are

African-American (45%) or Latino (41%) with 86% of the students from low-income

families and 12.2% limited English proficiency (CPS, 2010).

This study will concentrate on and include all of the 483 females cited for

inappropriate behavior resulting in a misconduct citation over a period of four years.

Students cited for inappropriate behaviors can be suspended, referred for expulsion, or

receive a disciplinary reassignment to an alternative school (CPS, 2010). Misconduct

violations might include: assault, burglary, theft, intimidation, gang activity, sexual

harassment, battery, or sexual activity. Each of the 483 females included in this study had

been cited for misconduct violations and recorded in the CPS database (CPS, 2010). The

sample utilized for this study is a convenience sample or a sample used because access is

granted or it is close to the researcher in location. A convenience sample is a non-

probability sample indicating there is no way calculating each person's chance of being

selected as part of the sample. However, each of the individuals selected for inclusion in

the study had to meet the criteria of: being enrolled in CPS between 1999 and 2003,

female, and having a misconduct citation in the districts' database.

<u>**Confidentiality**</u>

Several safeguards must be considered in an effort to ensure the safety and

privacy of participants involved in the study. The researcher applied many techniques to

ensure that public access to data and information will not compromise the identity of the

population studied. Three techniques used for the purpose of this study include: deletion

of identifiers (names, identification numbers, and referring schools), crude report

categories (age of the population-not the specific birthdates), and anonymity (information

provided does not reveal student identities).

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) note "although researchers know who has

provided the information or are able to identify participants from the information given,

they will in no way make the connection known publicly; the boundaries surrounding the

shared secret will be protected" (p. 62). Statistical data for this study will be kept for two

years and subsequently shredded. As a measure of confidentiality, statistical reporting
gathered data by gender, not individual names. All data was collected anonymously
through the Chicago Public Schools Office of Communications based upon the Freedom
of Information Act (FOIA).

How is Female Violence Documented in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS)?

Adolescent females who violate the Chicago Public Schools Student Code of
Conduct (SCC) handbook are referred to the school disciplinarian or dean of students
whenever an inappropriate incident occurs. Once referred to the school disciplinarian, the
school disciplinarian investigates the misconduct by speaking with potential witnesses of
the incident such students, teachers, security, and other school personnel.

A discipline referral or misconduct form must be completed by a witnessing
member of the school faculty when a male or female is involved in an incident that
violates the student code of conduct handbook. A discipline referral or misconduct form
may be completed by a teacher or school faculty member for any Group 1 through Group
5 incident outlined in the SCC. Discipline or misconduct referral forms must be logged
into the Chicago Public Schools, Student Information Management System (SIM) by the
school disciplinarian or school administrator when a student is deemed disruptive. The
student information management system (SIM) records various identifying information
such as the student name, ID number, gender, discipline violation, disciplinary action
taken by the school, and a detailed narrative description of the incident (Chicago Public
Schools, 2008).

Adolescent females who violate Group 4, Group 5, and Group 6 misconduct offenses are considered to be seriously disruptive to the educational process and must be reported in a different manner than students who violate Group I through Group 3 offenses. A discipline referral or misconduct form must be completed and an incident report must accompany the referral for adolescent females deemed seriously disruptive. The incident report must be recorded in the administrative database and must include a detailed incident narrative, violation code number, and whether or not law enforcement intervention was warranted. Group 5 and Group 6 violations are considered extremely dangerous and require immediate notification of the school principal and the law department. Disruptive students, both male and female who commit any Group 6 violation may be referred for an emergency placement and/or expulsion during their suspension period (Chicago Public Schools, 2008).

Data Collection

Data from each referring school regarding the number of female misconducts, suspensions, and expulsions are collected on a yearly basis and stored in a district-wide computer database. The Dean of Students (disciplinarian) or administrator from each school is responsible for inputting misconduct violations into the computer program. However, human error may contribute to over-representation, under-reporting, or missing data. Reporting from relevant years may not be available if computer programs were not developed or used.

Access to student discipline records is not easily accessible to the general public, as the FERPA law protects against such distribution. The researcher in this study was

only granted discipline record and violent incident statistics, as it pertains to adolescent females by writing a letter to the Chicago Public Schools, Office of Communications requesting the data under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The statistical information provided by the Chicago Public Schools was useful in providing insight into research questions one and two of this research study. The researcher was able to substantiate an increase in adolescent female violence within the Chicago Public Schools and highlight the most prevalent types of incident violations perpetrated by adolescent females.

Secondary source data was analyzed in this research study and documents from the Chicago Public Schools Office of Communications were utilized. These documents include discipline referrals spreadsheets, suspension/expulsion requests, and school discipline program information. School documents such as the Student Code of Conduct handbook for the school district were included. This handbook is a valuable source of information relating to district-wide policy and protocol for students who behave inappropriately.

Sources of data in analytical research can be categorized into two major groups: primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources are original documents or testimonies of eyewitnesses to an occurrence. Secondary sources are documents or testimonies of individuals who did not actually observe or participate in the occurrence. An advantage to using secondary data is that it can be examined over a longer period of time and can be quickly analyzed. One disadvantage of using secondary data is the

limited worth of the documents due to errors that may result when information is

transferred from one person to another (Cohen, Manion, & Morrision, 2000).

McMillian and Schumacher (2001) identify several vital data collection

techniques. Some of these techniques include: questionnaires, participant observations,

field observations, in-depth interviews, and documents artifacts. This study applied an

element of analytical research, as there is use of historical data source documents which

provide descriptions of adolescent female violence within the Chicago Public Schools'.

According to McMillian and Schumacher, "normal statistical presentations are feasible

only for a limited range of historical problems' (p. 52).

Validity

Validity is an important key to effective research as it refers to the accuracy or

inaccuracy of a study produced by research (McMillian & Schumacher, 2001). In order to

establish full validity for this study, the researcher analyzed the empirical data supplied

by the Chicago Public Schools.

Internal Validity

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000), "internal validity seeks to

demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece

of research provides can actually be sustained by the data. In some degree this concerns

accuracy, which can be applied to quantitative and qualitative research. The findings

must accurately describe the phenomena being researched" (p. 107).

Messick (1989) stated, " validity is an integrated evaluative judgment of the

degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support the adequacy and

appropriateness of inferences and actions based on test scores or other modes of

assessment" (p. 13).

Campbell and Stanley (1963) discuss a variety of threats that may compromise a

researcher's internal validity. One of the extraneous factors that can jeopardize a study's

validity is referred to as selection. The threat of selection on a study exists whenever a

group of subjects chooses to volunteer or cannot be assigned randomly. This study

applied controlled procedures to combat the effect of selection as the adolescent females

were not given an opportunity to volunteer for this study, nor were they randomly chosen.

However, adolescent female participants were chosen from various high schools within

the city of Chicago based upon Student Code of Conduct violations outlined by the

Chicago Public Schools' disciplinary database. Repeated measures for participant data

was utilized to ensure internal validity for the design of the study.

External Validity

External validity refers to the level to which the results of a study can be

generalized to a wider population, case, or circumstance. In quantitative research designs,

there are two common types of external validity: population external validity and

ecological external validity.

Population external validity refers to results that can be universally applied to

other people and ecological external validity refers to conditions of the research in which

generalized results are limited to similar conditions (McMillian & Schumacher, 2001).

Campbell and Stanley (1963) discuss a variety of threats that may compromise a

researcher's external validity. One extenuating factor that can jeopardize a study's

external validity is referred to as the Hawthorne effect. The Hawthorne effect is described

as the tendency of people to act differently simply because they know they are subjects in

a study.

The Hawthorne effect threat to this study's external validity is primarily

extinguished since the adolescent female participants are unaware of their participation in

this study; thus anonymity is utilized as a procedural safeguard for this study.

Reliability

McMilliam and Schumacher (2001) stated that "reliability is the consistency of

measurement - the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same

instrument or occasions of data collection" (p. 244). Researchers use data triangulation

"as a form of establishing cross-validation among data sources, data collection, strategies,

time periods, and theoretical schemes" (p. 248). The findings in this study should be

reliable in that a homogeneous selected group of students are participating in a

suspension or expulsion for Group 5 or Group 6 misconducts committed within the

Chicago Public Schools.

Generalizability

Generalizability is often applied research that is utilized by individuals in the

academic setting. Findings and interpretations from a study are usually conducted on a

sample population embodied within a large population. According to McMillan and

Schumacher (2001), generalizability is defined as "the extent to which the findings of one

study can be used as knowledge about other populations and situations-that is to predict"

(p. 17).

Data Analysis

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) described descriptive statistics as "transforming a set of numbers or observations into indices that describe or characterize the data" (p. 206).

This study utilized descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) to examine the characteristics of the data for the targeted population. Data analysis was numerically created by the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Comprehensive results, descriptive statistics, summaries, and tables were used to analyze the data for justification and interpretation.

The scale of measurement of most of the data also indicated descriptive statistics was appropriate as seven of the nine variables were nominal level of measurement (race, free or reduced lunch, special education student, region of the district, unit or school, violation, and year of misconduct). Only age calculated from birth year, and months of punishment were continuous or interval level of measurement. The level of measurement of a variable dictates what statistic may be appropriate as there are assumptions that need to be tested and met prior to being able to use most parametric statistics. Non-parametric statistics do not have to meet the assumption found in parametric statistics.

The descriptive statistics used in the study included frequencies and percentages. These were used to provide an overall view of the data as a total group and by year. The cross-tabulation procedure was used to make comparisons across years. Chi-square is a non-parametric procedure used when data is a nominal or ordinal level of measurement.

Frequency tables and graphs were utilized to highlight the number of adolescent females violated the Group 5 and Group 6 offenses. Frequency distribution was used to record the number of times each score was attained. Means and standard deviations were used with the few intervals or continuous level of measurement variables to calculate an average and standard deviation, examples include age and months. It was also useful to provide a more concise description of the of some variables to group and re-group variables together such as grouping all of the Group 5 and Group 6 offenses together to prepare a more concise view of the offenses committed by the females. The questions posed by the study were descriptive in nature and the study sought to use a secondary dataset to explore the incidence of females with offenses in a school district and used descriptive statistics to describe and explore the data.

Researcher Bias

Researcher bias in a quantitative research study may arise when the researcher fails to minimize the possible sources of bias. According to Hammersley and Gomm (1997), "quantitative research studies may be susceptible to sampling bias in which error in sampling procedures could produce erroneous results if not controlled" (p. 3). A brief discussion of this researcher's experiences and interpretations will help explain how this study may be affected.

This researcher has been an educator for the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) for 14 years. During the 14 years of employment at the Chicago Board of Education, work experiences consisted of teaching students with special needs. Some of the disabilities that these students exhibit include: behavioral/emotional disorders, learning disabilities,

cognitive impairments, autism, and severe/profound disabilities. This researcher currently

works as a special education case manager at a college preparatory high school where the

primary duty of the case manager is to advocate, enforce the federal special education

laws, facilitate services, and secure records, as it pertains to students with disabilities. In

addition to the case manager role, the researcher is an adult mentor for a school-based

program that seeks to help high school girls become productive young women both

socially, academically, and from a community-based standpoint.

This researcher has also worked in an administrative capacity for a number of

years. As an administrator for the special education offices, one of the primary job

functions was to oversee and place students who were suspended or expelled from the

Chicago Public Schools into alternative school buildings and help remediate

inappropriate behaviors. It is during these interactions with aggressive/violent adolescent

females that fueled the researchers' attention to this particular study. The intent of this

study is not to condemn or dishonor the Chicago Public Schools but to examine how

frequently the adolescent females behave aggressively or violently and how the Chicago

Public Schools is dealing with this growing trend.

This researcher's specialized knowledge working with aggressive adolescent

females lends itself to personal views and insights about the nature of inappropriate

behavior in schools and environmental contexts, as it pertains to females. Many of the

adolescent females that this researcher has come into contact with are angry, hostile,

apathetic, exhibit negative attitudes, and experience some form of familial dysfunction.

This researcher's essential belief is that schools are a small microcosm of our

larger society; the issues of aggression and violence in our schools are a direct reflection of our societal problems. This belief in no way justifies the inappropriate behavior that many adolescent females display in our school communities and neighborhoods; however, zero tolerance policies that promote exclusion and punishment do not appear to remediate these problem behaviors within our schools.

This researcher fervently believes that a more comprehensive approach to helping adolescent females who "act out" is warranted due to the issues of abuse, neglect, and violence that these females may be subjected to in their everyday lives. An intervention program that utilizes a mental health and human services component may prove beneficial to these adolescent females who behave badly.

<div align="center">**<u>Summary</u>**</div>

This chapter described the methodology that was utilized in the study. The study utilized a descriptive quantitative analysis of adolescent female violent acts of misconduct within District 299-the Chicago Public Schools. The analysis was based upon four years (1999-2003) of archival data for adolescent females that violated Group 5 and Group 6 offenses in which secondary sources were used to triangulate data.

The data collection methods, confidentiality, data analysis, the measurement of validity/reliability, and researcher bias were discussed in this chapter, as well. It is based upon this background that the criteria used for establishing the frequency of adolescent female misconducts will be presented for analysis in the remaining two chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter Four is to present the analysis of the data collected for the study. The overall purpose of the study was to investigate and describe the incidence of adolescent (ages 14-20) female violence within the Chicago Public Schools (District 299) over a four year period of time. This study addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there an increase in adolescent female violence in the Chicago Public Schools' from 1999-2000 school year to the 2002-2003 school year for females between ages 14 and 20?

RQ2: What types of adolescent female violence misconducts occur within the Chicago Public Schools for females between the ages of 14 and 20?

A dataset covering the four year period was used for the study. The dataset was originally collected as a part of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) data files and records. The results of the data analysis are presented in descriptive statistics to present the characteristics of the study population including frequencies and means where appropriate. As with any dataset, there was missing data for some female high school students with aggressive behaviors and violation citations due to omission by data entry personnel. Only data on high school females between the ages of 14 and 20 were included in the analysis.

Misconduct Group Description

The Chicago Public Schools have a list of violations and the females included in the CPS data collection are grouped into two larger groups, Group 5 and Group 6. As discussed in Chapter Three, Group 5 misconduct offenses include student behaviors seriously disrupting the orderly educational process in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS, 2008). For Group 5 violations, a student will be suspended for five to ten days and may be referred for expulsion or alternative school reassignment. A student in the sixth grade or above, may be recommended by an expulsion officer to the Chicago Board of Education sponsored Saturday Morning Alternative Reach-Out and Teach (SMART) program in lieu of expulsion if he or she has no prior Group 5 violations and has not engaged in behaviors involving violence or the threat of violence within the previous nine months. The SMART program offers students' instruction in character building, conflict resolution skills, mandates parental participation for two sessions, and a community service project component (CPS, 2008).

Group 6 misconduct offenses are characterized as illegal behaviors seriously disrupting the educational process in the Chicago Public Schools that warrant strict disciplinary action. For Group 6 violations, a student will be suspended for ten days, expelled for a period not less than one calendar year, or referred for alternative school placement. An adjustment to this disciplinary action may be utilized if the Chief Executive Officer or designee grants a concession based upon a case-by-case review. First time offenders, in the sixth grade or above committing Group 6 violations may be referred to the SMART program if their violations do not involve violence, the threat of

violence, the use, possession, and/or concealment of a firearm or destructive device, or the sale/delivery of illegal substances. Any student failing the SMART program's mandatory eight Saturday sessions will be expelled from the Chicago Public Schools (CPS, 2008).

School administrators may suspend students with disabilities and stop educational services for a total up to 10 consecutive or cumulative school days in one calendar year. If a student's behavior is a manifestation of the disability, an expulsion may not occur. If the student's behavior is not a result of the disability, the student may be expelled and placed in an alternative education setting addressing the special education needs. Students with disabilities may be placed in a temporary alternative placement for up to 45 days if the student is a danger to others and themselves (CPS, 2008).

Study Participants

All of the participants in the study were females between the ages of 14 and 20 enrolled in the Chicago Public Schools for the school years between 1999 through 2003. Only high school female students (N=483) were included in the CPS discipline database; however, there was some missing data due to incomplete reporting or human data entry errors. The number of incidents reported in the database may be less than actually occurred because of omission in the discipline database and records for a particular time frame or school year. Students with misconduct violations ranged in age from 14 to 20 (M=16.56, SD=1.22). There were 483 (100%) female high school students cited for Group 5 and Group 6 violations. African-American females were the most predominant group (n=381, 79%) in the dataset, followed by Hispanics (n=76, 16%), Whites (n=23,

.04%), and Asian/Pacific Islanders (n=3, .01%). The majority of the female students did not have a disability (n=430, 89%); however, (n=53, 11%) of the female students did have a disability such as learning disabled (LD), emotional or behavioral disability (EBD), and a cognitive impairment (CD).

Data Analysis

The first and second research questions posed by this descriptive study are:

RQ1: Is there an increase in adolescent female violence in the Chicago Public Schools' from 1999-2000 school year to the 2002-2003 school year for females between ages 14 and 20?

RQ2: What types of adolescent female violence misconducts occur within the Chicago Public Schools for females between ages 14 and 20?

Table 2 represents the number of violations for all categories committed by females found in the Chicago Public Schools' discipline database over a four year period of time (1999-2003).

Total Violations – All Categories

Table 2

Total Number and Percentage of Adolescent Female Misconducts by Violation

(1999-2003)

Violation Number	Abbreviated Name	Number of Female Students Committing Offense = N (%)	Abbreviated CPS Definition
5-1	Aggravated Assault	19 (3.9%)	Assault with a deadly weapon
5-2	Burglary	3(.6%)	Entering or remaining within a building or vehicle with intent to commit a felony or theft
5-3	Theft	3(.6%)	Exerting unauthorized control over the personal property of another
*5-4	Use of Intimidation, severe bullying	35(7.2%)	Repeated acts of manipulation, teasing, hitting, threatening, cyber bullying
5-5	Gross Disobedience toward school authority	13(2.7%)	Unreasonable act toward teachers or adult staff that provokes a breach of the peace
*5-6	Gang Activity, overt display of gang affiliation	28(5.8%)	Any act, of recruitment, intimidation, assault, battery or overt display of gang signs, symbols or clothing
5-8	Engaging in illegal behavior	8(1.7%)	Any behaviors that interfere with the educational process
*5-12	Battery	27(5.6%)	Act of causing bodily harm or unwanted bodily contact
*6-1	Use, possession or firearm concealment	93(19.3%)	Destructive device such as handgun, rifle, automatic weapon, bomb or incendiary devices

6-2	Intentionally causing CPS network to become inoperable	43(8.9%)	Network unable to perform at a level of functionality intended
6-3	Arson	1(.2%)	Act of knowingly damaging by means of fire or explosive
6-4	Bomb threat	2 (.4%)	A false indication of a bomb
6-5	Robbery	30(6.2%)	The taking of personal property from another using force or threatening the use of force
*6-6	Use, possession, sale delivery of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, narcotics, or "look alikes"	55(11.4%)	Act of using, selling or distributing alcohol, illegal drugs, look-alikes, narcotics or controlled substances for the purpose of intoxication or profit
*6-8	Aggravated battery	88(18.2%)	Any battery that causes great harm with a deadly weapon or is done by someone who conceals his/her identity or physical force against school personnel
Total		**483 (100%)**	

*Denotes most prevalent misconduct for Group 5 & 6 violations.

Table 2 also provides abbreviated descriptions of the most frequent violation. As seen in Table 2, violation 6-1 (*n*=93, 19.3%), the use of a destructive device such as a handgun, rifle, automatic weapon, bomb or incendiary devices was the most frequent Group 6 violation. This was followed by violation 6-8 (*n*=88, 18.2%), any battery causing great harm with a deadly weapon or is done by someone who conceals his or her identity

or physical force against school personnel and violation 6-6 (*n*=55, 11.4%) an act of using, selling or distributing alcohol, illegal drugs, look-alikes, narcotics or controlled substances for the purpose of intoxication or profit.

During the four school years included in the study, there were fewer Group 5 offenses committed by high school females. Violation 5-4 (*n*=35, 7.2%) intimidation and severe bullying was the most frequent Group 5 offense. This was followed by violation 5-6 (*n*=28, 5.5%) gang activity and gang affiliation and violation 5-12 (*n*=27, 5.8%) battery or causing bodily harm or unwanted bodily contact. There were a total of 136 Group 5 offenses (28.2%) and a total of 347 Group 6 offenses (71.8%). There were more than two and a half times as many more serious Group 6 offenses as there were Group 5 offenses.

Table 3

Violations by School Year

	1999-2000 *N*	2000-2001 *N*	2001-2002 *N*	2002-2003 *N*
Violation 5	18	16	47	55
Violation 6	85	62	84	116
Total	103	78	131	171

N=represents number of violations
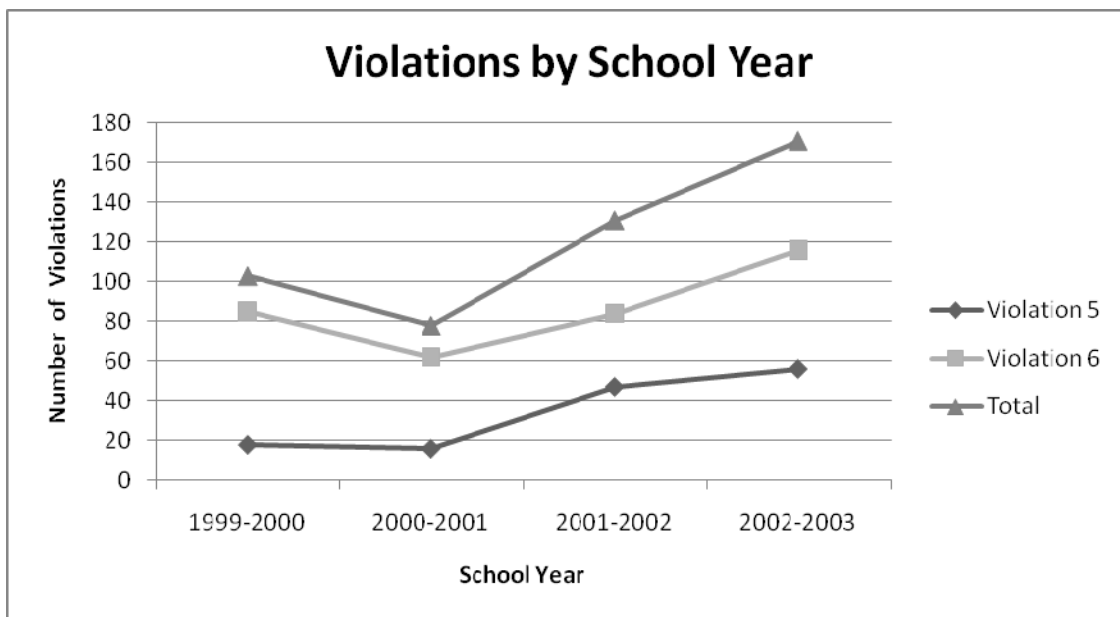
Figure 1. Violations by School Year

Table 3 represents the number of high school females who violated Groups 5 and 6 violations during a four year period of time from 1999-2003. As can be seen in Table 3, female offenses have increased from 103 in the 1999-2000 school year to 171 in the 2002-2003 school year, an increase of 68 offenses over this time period. Figure 1 illustrates the increasing trend in Group 5 and 6 violations committed by high school females from 1999-2003.

Table 4

Comparison of District Female Enrollment by Year, Race, Number of Violations, and Percentage of District Enrollment

|	White			African American			Asian			Hispanic		
Year	Dist	Viol	% Dist Enrol	Dist	Viol	% Dist Enrol	Dist	Viol	% Dist Enrol	Dist	Viol	% Dist Enrol
99-00	5457	8	10.7%	28862	79	56.5%	1906	1	3.7%	14819	15	29.0%
00-01	5444	1	10.8%	27835	63	55.1%	1970	0	3.9%	15257	14	30.2%
01-02	5555	4	10.8%	27965	106	54.2%	2050	1	4.0%	16055	20	31.1%
02-03	5501	10	10.4%	28213	133	53.3%	2115	1	4.0%	17079	27	32.3%
Total	21957	23	10.7%	112875	381	54.8%	8041	3	3.9%	63210	76	30.7%
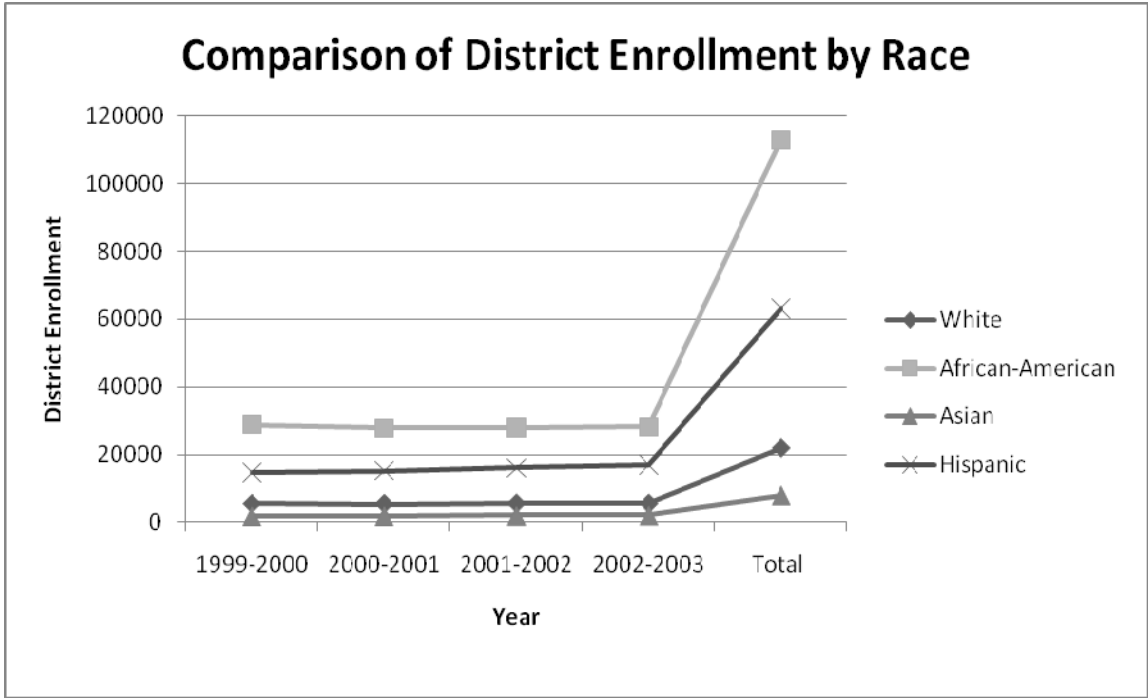
Figure 2a. Comparison of District Enrollment by Race

Table 4 represents a comparison of district enrollment by race, school year, and number of violations committed by high school females from 1999-2003. Figure 2a illustrates and highlights African-American females' largest district enrollment, followed by Hispanic females, white females, and Asian females.

Total Percentage of Female District Enrollment by Race
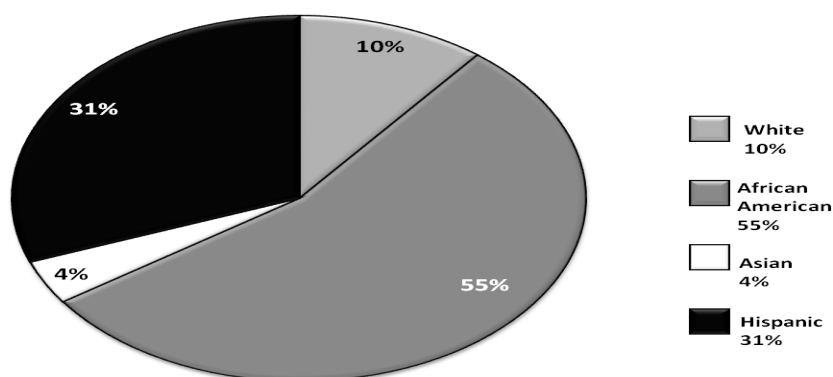
Figure 2b. Total Percentage of Female District Enrollment by Race

Figure 2b illustrates the total percentages of female district enrollment by race. The total percentage of district enrollment for White females is comprised of 10.7%, African-Americans 54.8%, Hispanic females 30.7%, and Asian females 3.9%. Although African-American females only comprise of 54.8% of the total district enrollment, they committed 79% of the Group 5 and Group 6 violations.

In the 1999-2000 school year, white females represented an enrollment total of 5,457, African-American females 28,862, Asian females 1,906 and Hispanic females 14,819. As Table 4 represents, in the 2000-2001 school year white females represented an enrollment total of 5,444 and African-American represented an enrollment total of 27,835 indicating a decrease in enrollment by white and African-American females. In addition to female enrollment decreasing for the 2000-2001 school year, it is interesting to note there was a decrease in violations reported in the CPS discipline database for the 2000-2001 school year (n= 78) as represented in Table 3 and in the Figure 1 illustration. As seen in Table 4, an increase or decrease in district enrollment appears to have a direct

correlation to the increase or decrease in the number of violations that high school females committed during the 1999-2000 and the 2000-2001 school years.In the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 school years, African-American, Asian, and Hispanic female district enrollment showed a steady increase as represented in Table 4. During those school years, the number of Group 5 and 6 violations increased by 209 violations which indicate a significant increase in female violence as represented in Figure 1.

Table 5

Violations by Race

	White *N*	African American *N*	Asian/Pacific Islander *N*	Hispanic *N*
Violation 5	6	105	0	15
Violation 6	17	276	3	51
Total	23	381	3	76

N=represents number of violations
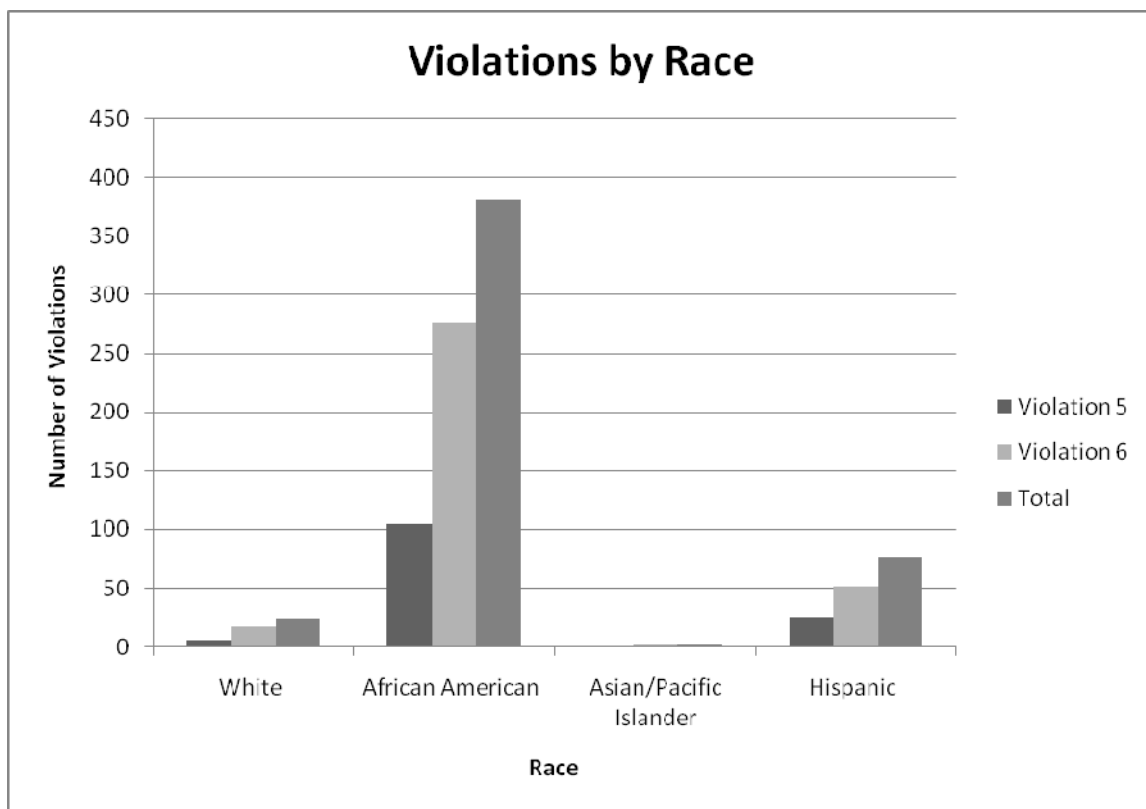
Figure 3. Violations by Race

Table 5 represents the number of high school females with Group 5 and Group 6

violations by race over the four period of study (1999-2003). Figure 3 illustrates that

African-American females (n=381, 79%) committed the largest number of Group 5 and 6

violations across all four years, Hispanic females (n=76, 16%) committed the second

highest number of Group 5 and 6 violations, white females (n=23, .04%) committed the

third highest number of Group 5 and 6 violations, and Asian females (n= 3, .01%)

committed the least Group 5 and 6 violations. The predominance of African-American

females during the four years (n=206,083) reflects their overall enrollment in school

district of 55% (CPS, 2008). African-American females comprise only about half of the

school district enrollment but committed (n=381, 79%) of Group 5 and Group 6

violations as noted in Table 5 and Figure 3.

Table 6

Violations by Special Education Disability

_____

	No Disability *N*	EBD *N*	LD *N*	CD *N*
Violation 5	113	5	12	6
Violation 6	317	8	18	4
Total	430	13	30	10

_____

N=represents number of violations

  Table 6 represents the number of high school females who committed Group 5

and 6 violations and whether they were or were not classified as having a special

education disability. The majority of the high school females (n=430, 89%) in CPS

discipline database did not have a special education label; however, (n=53, 11%) of the

high school females did have a special education classification. It is interesting to note

that 30 of the high school females had a learning disability (LD), 13 were categorized as

having an emotional or behavior disorder (EBD), and 10 were categorized as having a

cognitive impairment (CD). It is also important to note that a student who has been

classified as having an emotional or behavior disorder may not be held accountable for

his or her acts of violence if the aggressive behavior is deemed a manifestation of his or

her disability (CPS, 2008).

Table 7

Violations by Age Group

_____

	Age 14-16		Age 17-20	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
Violation 5	106	80.9	25	19.1
Violation 6	252	77.1	75	22.9
Total	358	78.2	100	21.8

_____

The CPS discipline database provided information on the females' birth year. Age was calculated by subtracting the females' birth year from the year in Table 7. The range of age of misconduct was from 14 to 20 and the mean was 16.56 (*SD*=1.22). The 14-16 year olds committed the largest number of Group 5 and Group 6 violations and the 17-20 year olds committed more Group 6 violations than Group 5 violations. It is interesting the majority of the females committed the more serious Group 6 violations regardless of age group.

Table 8

Frequency of Months Out of School by Violations 14-20 Year Old Females
_____

	Group 5 N	Group 6 N
One month	1	2
Four months	7	25
Six months	82	173
Twelve months	29	104
Eighteen months	1	1
Twenty-two months	2	22
Total	122	327

_____

Table 8 highlights high school females in the CPS discipline database who spent

between 1 and 24 months being expelled, suspended, or in alternative placements. Table

8 represents the amount of time Group 5 and 6 students were in placements other than

school. The largest number of Group 5 females were in alternative placements for six

months (n=82, 67%) or 12 months (n=29, 24%). Group 6 females over the four year

period were also out of their school for six months (n=173, 53%) or 12 months (n=104,

32%). However, two of the Group 5 and 22 of the Group 6 females had been out of

school or in alternative placement for a period of 24 months.

Table 9

Number of Students Participating in the Lunch Program

_____

	Group 5 N	Group 6 N	
Free Lunch	86	218	
Reduced Lunch	12	24	
No Lunch	28	94	
Total	126	336	

_____

Table 9 represents lunch program categories that were included in the CPS

discipline database to provide information on the socio-economic status (SES) of the

students. The majority of the students (n=304, 66%) were classified as receiving free

lunch in school or reduced cost lunches (n=36, 8%). However, there were also a number

of students not receiving free or reduced lunches (n=122, 26%). Approximately 75% of

the females with violations met the guidelines for receiving a free or reduced lunch based

on family income and number of family members.

Chicago Public Schools by Cluster

Since CPS is a large school district with over 400,000 students, the district is

divided up into geographic sections. At various times, the district has been divided into

six regions or areas and both were found in the CPS discipline database. For the purpose

of this study, regions and areas are grouped into cluster locations to provide compatibility

of data over time. The cluster locations are grouped as follows: Cluster 1 (Far North),

Cluster 2 (North), Cluster 3 (West), Cluster 4 (Central), Cluster 5 (South), and Cluster 6

(Far South). It was of interest to ascertain whether one cluster had more offending

females than did another and how the clusters did differ in female descriptive data.

Table 10

Frequency of Violations by Cluster and School Year

	1999-2000 N	2000-2001 N	2001-2002 N	2002-2003 N	Total N
Cluster 1	18	18	24	33	93
Cluster 2	0	1	1	48	50
Cluster 3	33	17	48	22	120
Cluster 4	16	18	22	3	59
Cluster 5	22	9	20	27	78
Cluster 6	14	15	16	38	83

N=represents the number of violations
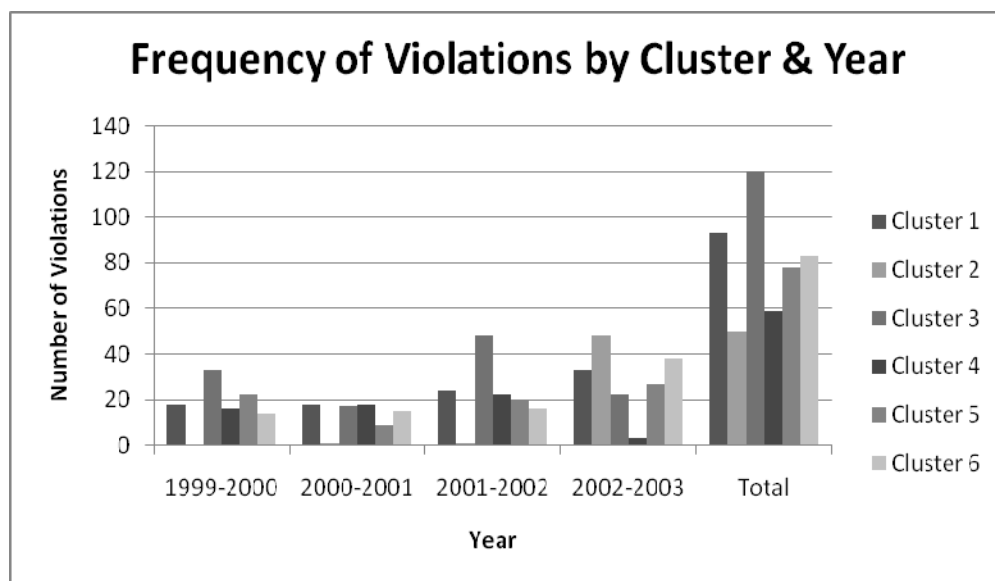
Figure 4. Violations by Cluster and School Year

Table 10 presents the total frequency of high school females committing

violations by cluster during the four year time period from 1999-2003. As illustrated by

Figure 4, Cluster 3 (West) had the highest number of violations with (n=120, 25%)

followed by Cluster 1 (Far North) (n=93, 19%), Cluster 6 (Far South) (n=83, 17%) and

followed by Cluster 5 (South) (n=78, 16%). There were fewer violations across the four

years in Clusters 2 and 4; however the number of offenses did increase over the four

years included in the study. It is important to note that clusters 3 through 6 are comprised

of a high concentration of the African-American population within the city of Chicago.

Clusters 1 and 2 have a low concentration of African-Americans but are comprised of a

large concentration of the Hispanic and white population within the city of Chicago.

As seen in Table 10, a vast increase in violations took place in Cluster 2 (North)

during the 2002-2003 school year. This increase in north side violations may be a result

of attendance boundary changes, school area changes, and high school turnaround

closings due to the Renaissance 2010 mandate spearheaded by former CEO Arne Duncun

(Karp, 2009).

Table 11

Frequency of Violations by Cluster

	Violation Group 5 N	Violation Group 6 N
Cluster 1	30	63
Cluster 2	16	34
Cluster 3	37	83
Cluster 4	16	43
Cluster 5	25	53
Cluster 6	12	71

N=represents the number of violations
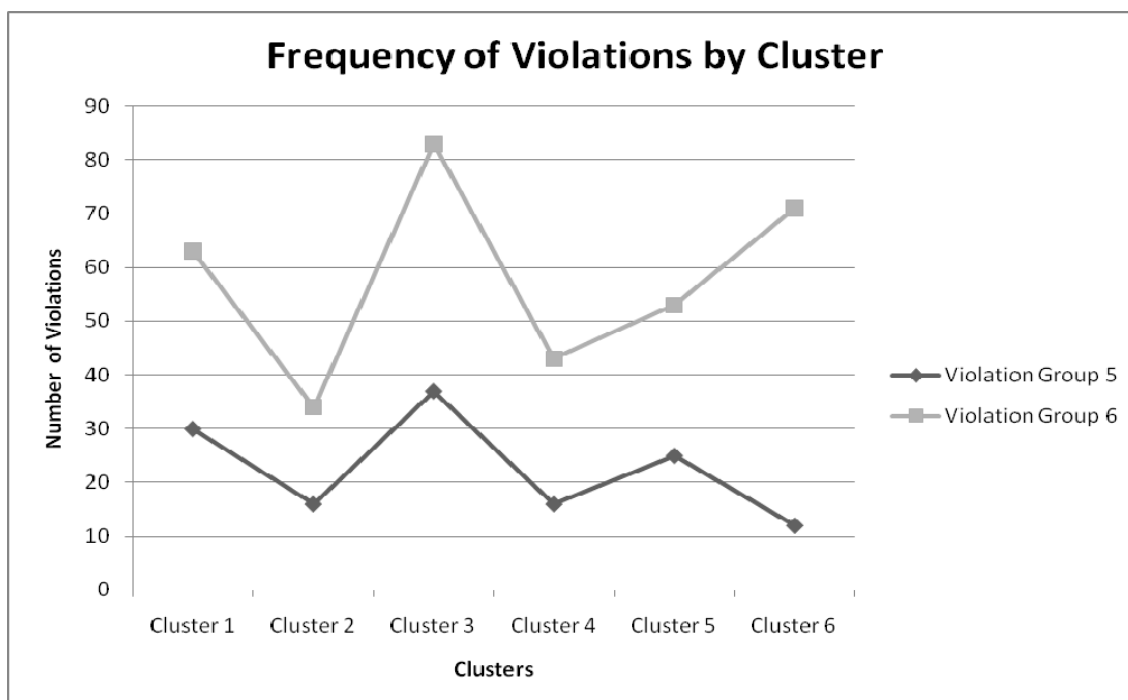
Figure 5. Violations by Cluster

Table 11 represents the Group 5 and Group 6 violations committed by high school females based upon cluster location over a four year period. Cluster 3 (West) had the highest number of females (n= 120, 25%) who committed of Group 5 and 6 violations, followed by Cluster 1 (Far North) with the second highest number of females (n=93, 19%) who committed Group 5 and 6 violations, and Cluster 6 (Far South) had the third highest number of high school females (n=83, 17%) who committed Group 5 and 6 violations. Figure 5 plainly illustrates that the clusters that have the highest number of Group 5 and Group 6 violations are located west and north of the city of Chicago.

Table 12

Violations by Race and Cluster

_____

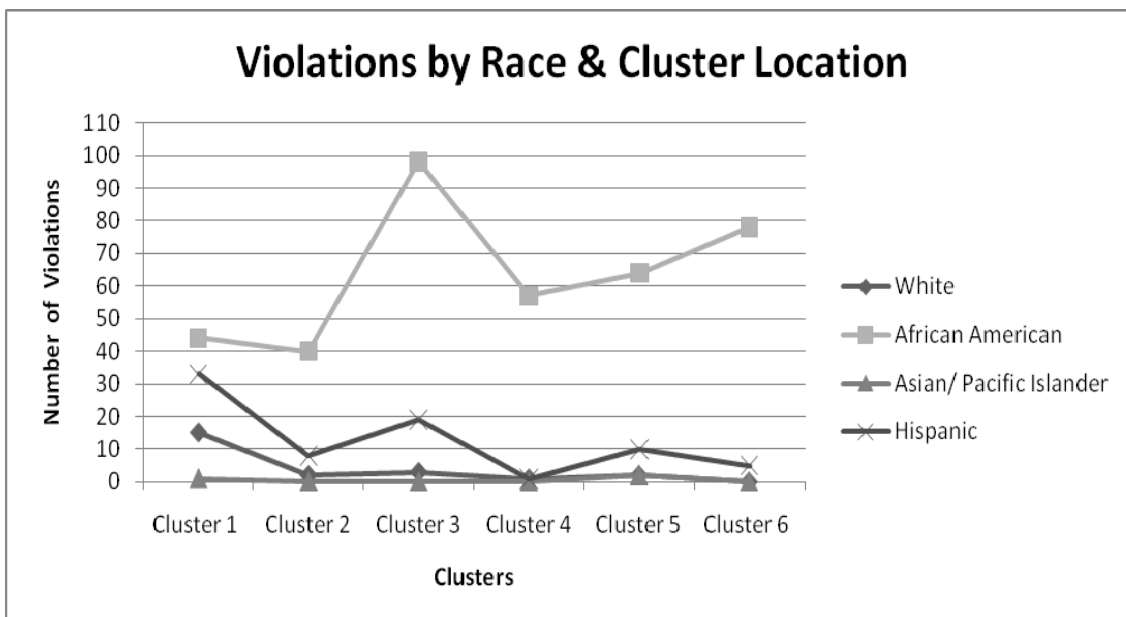|	White N	African American N	Asian/Pacific Islander N	Hispanic N
Cluster 1	15	44	1	33
Cluster 2	2	40	0	8
Cluster 3	3	98	0	19
Cluster 4	1	57	0	1
Cluster 5	2	64	2	10
Cluster 6	0	78	0	5

_____

N=represents number of violations

Figure 6. Violations by Race and Cluster

Table 12 represents the number of the high school females' who committed Group 5 and 6 violations by race and cluster location. The majority of violations were committed by African-American females (*n*=98) in Cluster 3 (West), followed by Hispanic females (n=33) in Cluster 1 (Far North), and white females (n=15) in the Far North Cluster. It is interesting to note African-American females in each cluster account for the largest number of females who commit violent Group 5 and 6 violations. Figure 6 clearly illustrates that African-American female's commit more serious misconduct violations than any other race of high school females.

Table 13

Age Means and Standard Deviations by Cluster

	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
Cluster 1	16.87	1.13	14	19
Cluster 2	15.86	1.53	14	20
Cluster 3	16.533	1.13	14	20
Cluster 4	16.30	1.05	14	18
Cluster 5	16.67	1.15	14	19
Cluster 6	16.77	1.24	14	20

Summary

Chapter Four presented the data analysis based upon the results of the study participants' four year period increase in violent behaviors and the types of misconduct violations reported by the Chicago Public Schools. The research questions addressed in this study were as follows:

RQ1: Is there an increase in adolescent female aggression/violence in the Chicago Public Schools' from 1999-2000 school year to the 2002-2003 school year for females between the ages of 14 and 20?

RQ2: What types of adolescent female violence misconducts occur within the Chicago Public Schools for females between the ages of 14 and 20?

Chapter Four results indicated there was an increase in adolescent female violence each year, except the 2000-2001 school year. The differences between the 2000-2001 school year and other years may be a result of decreased female enrollment and violations during that school year. The major findings of this study revealed African-American adolescent females committed more Group 5 and Group 6 violations in the Chicago Public Schools and at a higher rate than their White, Hispanic, and Asian counterparts over a time period of four years from 1999-2003.

Table 14

Summary of Major Findings

Total Sample Population: 483	Number of Students	Percentage
Race: Total		
African-American	381	79%
Hispanic	76	16%
White	23	4%
Asian	3	1%
Location: Total		
West Side	120	25%
Far North	93	19%
Far South Side	83	17%
Socio-Economic Status: Total		
Total- Free Lunch	304	66%
Total-Reduced Lunch	36	8%

Based upon Table 14, African-American females between the ages of 14-16 years of age, who reside on the west and far south side of Chicago, have a greater propensity to exhibit violent behaviors within the Chicago Public Schools. Hispanic females, ages 14-16, who reside on the far north side of Chicago were the second largest group to exhibit violent behaviors within the Chicago Public Schools. Most adolescent females committing Group 5 and Group 6 violations qualified for free lunch, did not have a disability, and were primarily from the west side, north side and south side of Chicago. Adolescent females with serious Group 5 and Group 6 violations were expelled from the Chicago Public Schools for a period of six to 24 months. Chapter Five will discuss the

findings of the analysis in relationship to previous literature; provide implications for

practice, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action"- (Albert Bandura, 1977)

Summary of the Study

The literature and theoretical perspectives provided by social learning theorists, sociologists, criminologists, and educational researchers offer insight into the underlying causes of adolescent female anger, rage, community and school-based violence. Statistical data that highlights the prevalence of violent incidents committed by adolescent females is exposed and examined in this study. Violence among adolescent females has become an increasing trend within the Chicago Public Schools - of the 483 sample participants in this study, approximately 100% (483) were suspended and expelled for committing violent Group 5 or Group 6 violations within the four year study period (1999-2003).The Chicago Public school district currently enrolls 409,279 students in 675 schools in preschool through 12th grade (CPS, 2010). The Chicago Public School district is comprised of students with diversified ethnic backgrounds who come from various areas and neighborhoods of the city. The majority of the Chicago Public Schools' students are African-American (45%) or Latino (41%) with 86% of the students from low-income families and 12.2% limited English proficiency (CPS, 2010).

Limitations of the Study

The proposed quantitative descriptive study is limited based upon the following criteria:

- The findings may be limited to the extent that the sample population may not represent or be reflective of a broader population.

- The findings are limited to the extent to which school personnel may experience data inputting errors when recording incidents of violence.

- The proposed study is further limited by the fact that school administrators may not accurately report violent acts of misconduct in the school district's database for fear of district reprimand or school sanctions.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there an increase in adolescent female violence in the Chicago Public Schools' from 1999-2000 school year to the 2002-2003 school year between the ages 14-20?

RQ2: What types of adolescent female violence misconducts occur within the Chicago Public Schools between the ages 14-20?

Major Findings and Conclusions

The major findings of this study revealed African-American adolescent females committed more Group 5 and Group 6 violations in the Chicago Public Schools and at a higher rate than their White, Hispanic, and Asian counterparts over a time period of four years from 1999-2003.

In this study, I found the following: African-American females between the ages of 14-16 years of age have a greater propensity to exhibit violent behaviors within the Chicago Public Schools. Most adolescent females committing Group 5 and Group 6 violations qualified for free lunch, did not have a disability, and were primarily from the west side and south side of Chicago. A majority of adolescent females with serious Group 5 and Group 6 violations were expelled from the Chicago Public Schools for a period of six to twenty-four months.

When examining this study, several variables indicated that a significant relationship exists between race, female enrollment, socio-economic status, location, and the incidence of adolescent female violence in the Chicago Public Schools between the years of 1999-2003. This deduction was based upon adolescent female misconduct data for the 483 high school female participants of the study.

It is important to note that Group 5 and Group 6 misconduct violations perpetrated by adolescent females continued to increase over the four year period within the Chicago Public Schools despite the difference between the 2000-2001 school year and other years. As the total district enrollment decreased for African-American adolescent females in the year 2000-2001, the number of violent misconducts decreased as well. A difference of this nature could indicate that there is a practice of underreporting, or data input errors that limit the extent to which adolescent female violence is highlighted within urban school districts.

The conclusion drawn from the data is that race, female enrollment, socio-economic status, and location significantly impact the frequency of adolescent female violence in an academic setting.

<u>Discussion</u>

The current study attempted to expose and describe the prevalence and nature of violence perpetrated by female adolescents, 14-20 years of age, within the Chicago Public Schools during the four period of 1999-2003. The most alarming results of this study was that of the 483 high school females cited for serious Group 5 and 6 violations that included (firearm use or possession, the use, sale, or possession of alcohol or illegal drugs, aggravated battery, assault, gang activity, and intimidation or bullying), 381 (79%) were of African-American descent and (75%) were from low-income neighborhoods on the west and south side of Chicago. African-American female district enrollment during 1999-2003 constituted 55% of the total high school female population, Hispanic females constituted 31%, Caucasian females constituted 11%, and Asian females constituted .03%. Chapter Four findings reveal that African-American adolescent females are disproportionately cited for committing serious acts of violence and being suspended and expelled from the Chicago Public Schools' as a result of their inappropriate behaviors.

These results give rise to the following question: Why are African-American adolescent females increasingly exhibiting violent behaviors within the Chicago Public School's as opposed to their Hispanic, Asian, and Caucasian counterparts? One could speculate into possible causes of this phenomenon; however, to completely answer this question, one must examine the overall picture and draw inferences from a number of

theoretical sources. As explained in Chapter Two, social and criminology theorists discuss major social and environmental factors that may contribute to the violent prone behaviors seen in adolescent females.

One theory that can help formulate the investigative framework for this study, and explain why African-American females from low-income neighborhoods disproportionately act out in violent ways is established in a social behavior perspective offered by social learning theorist Albert Bandura. Bandura (1976) conducted the Bobo doll experiment in which children witnessed an adult attacking a plastic clown with a mallet, kicking it, punching it, and subsequently receiving positive reinforcement for the negative behavior. The children were later placed in a room with the same doll and 88% of the children imitated the violent behavior witnessed and 40% of the same children continued to reproduce the violent behavior observed in the experiment several months after the initial exposure to violence.

Isom (1998) stated that Albert Bandura believed that children learn aggressive behaviors primarily through observational learning. Observational learning is also known as imitation or modeling; in this process, learning occurs when individuals observe and imitate others' behavior. He argued that children learn to act aggressively when they model their behavior after violent acts of adults, especially parents or other family members. Slavin (1997) cited Bandura in his development of the four components that influence an observer's behavior to repeat the same actions following exposure to the modeled behavior. These components include: attention, retention, motor reproduction, and motivation. The attention phase refers to an individual perceiving or attending to the

important features of the modeled behavior (i.e., words, actions, gestures). The retention phase refers to coding the modeled behavior into long-term memory (i.e., information retrieval processing). The motor reproduction phase refers to the observer being able to reproduce the modeled behavior (i.e., possessing the physical capabilities to reproduce violent acts). The motivation phase refers to the observer's expectation to receive positive reinforcement for modeled behavior (i.e., praise, recognition, acceptance, punishment avoidance).

Based upon Bandura's social learning theory, African-American adolescent females who act violently in the school setting must be pre-disposed to violence through the family structure, perceive violence as a normal behavior, be physically capable of duplicating acts of violence, and expect positive reinforcement for their negative behavior from peers or adults.

Social learning theorists' affirmed that a person's environmental experiences can be a secondary influence of violence exposure and violent behavior. Sociologists maintain that a youth's exposure to violence through their community has a direct correlation to acts of violence seen in schools. The ancient roman philosopher Marcus Aurelius declared that "poverty is the mother of all crime" and for the last 35 years, child welfare experts have cautioned that persistent poverty, negative parenting, sexual abuse, drug abuse, domestic abuse, child abuse, absentee fathers, media violence, urban music lyrics, gun access, underemployment, social isolation, and racial discrimination all help create an atmosphere of violence in many of our schools and communities. The American Psychological Association (APA) concluded that a major predictor of youth violence is a

history of previous violence and the lack of parental supervision. The stressors of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and single parenting contribute to the parental apathy seen in households were violent youths reside (Sautter, 1995).

Isom (1998) reported that individuals that live in high crime areas are more likely to act violently than those who live in areas with little or no crime, as these high crime areas seem to primarily exist in inner city communities that are heavily populated by minority groups, especially African-Americans. Social disorganization theorists' recognized that crime in neighborhoods with high concentrations of unemployment; large public housing projects, high residential turnover, and non-homeownership directly contribute to the incidences of violence seen in schools. Schools' located in neighborhoods that are notorious for chronic gang and criminal activity often face persistent student behavior concerns. Youth that come from these neighborhoods often project the negative behaviors and practices onto school peers and authority figures that they observe in their ecological environments (Walker, Colin, & Ramsey, 1995).

According to Payne (2003), many students who reside in high poverty, crime, and dilapidated communities view physical fighting as the only way to resolve conflict because they lack the ability to negotiate conflict through reason, expressive language, or non-threatening gestures. Youth exposed to violence in their families and communities often view violence as a conventional, suitable, and practical method of coping with conflict.

Adolescent females' willingness to fight and skill in fighting are two possible ways that females feel they can gain acceptance and status in schools and communities

that offer little protection or opportunities to develop their academic, social, or financial potential. Reputation and respect are important to girls who are willing to fight because these girls are honored by friends and not viewed as weak and as a potential targets within their communities or at school. Thus, positive reinforcements such as community and school respect are awarded to those who can physically defend themselves (The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2008).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory may help explain why many adolescent females believe that they need to fight or behave violently to protect themselves or resolve disputes. Maslow (1954) put forth the notion that safety and security needs are important to survival. He went on to explain that basic security needs such as the need for steady employment, health coverage, shelter and safe neighborhoods from the environment help develop and positively shape the whole person (Slavin, 1997). The lack of basic safety needs often lead to undesirable behaviors as a mechanism for coping and surviving in adverse conditions.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2008), a 2005 longitudinal study conducted in Chicago found that adolescent girls were more likely to commit violence if they had previously been victimized (i.e., sexual harassment, bullying, rumor targets, assault) and if they lived in neighborhoods with high poverty and murder rates. The study further noted that parents who are themselves coping with disorganized, underprivileged neighborhoods and low-income may lack the ability to shield the negative environment and violent behaviors from their daughters (U.S. Department of Justice, 2008).

Several theoretical concepts have been written by researchers and reporters that seek to explain the phenomenon of adolescent female violence within the Chicago Public Schools'. Some of these theories speak to the issues of sweeping policy reform and district administrative changes that have negatively impacted many of the high schools across the city. Duffrin (2006) reported in the Chicago Catalyst that since school closings began in 2002, more than 8,000 students have been displaced from 23 local schools, and have been forced to enroll in schools far away from home in unfamiliar and hostile areas. In some cases, these students find themselves in rival gang territory. These dangerous factors often lead to an exacerbation of school and community violence, poor attendance rates, and high drop out rates. Thus, high schools with displaced students, whether male or female, have reported increasing violence as schools struggle to handle safety and discipline issues. Kelleher (2006) of the Chicago Catalyst, reported that as the chief education district administrator (CEO) persists in turnaround mandates or school closings, attendance boundaries continue to be re-defined; thus causing high school students to be shifted into neighborhoods of the city that may exploit racial, ethnic, and gang tensions- all of which often leads to episodes of violence.

Former Chicago Public School CEO Arne Duncan adamantly disputed the correlation between school closings, attendance boundary changes, and school violence in a 2009 journal article featured in the Chicago Catalyst ; however, adolescent female violence on or around school grounds continues to increase. Karp (2009) reported in the Chicago Catalyst that violent incidents inside or on the grounds of Chicago high schools

rose by almost 20% and 43% of high schools saw an increase in the number of Group 5 and six violations in 2008.

Implications for Practice

Educators and administrators must seek to find ways to remediate violent behaviors exhibited by adolescent females in the school and community context so these inappropriate behaviors will not continue to perpetuate themselves and disrupt the academic environment. Educational researchers offer several suggestions that may help parents, teachers, counselors, and principals deal with and prevent adolescent female violence within the school system. Several sociological researchers contend that the social and emotional disconnect between positive female role models such as a mother, a teacher, or mentor may contribute to the aggression and violent behaviors among adolescent females.

The following educational research principles seek to offer insight to assist adults in combating adolescent female violence: First, parents must encourage their daughters to behave in socially appropriate ways and establish a mother-daughter alliance that allows the adolescent female to feel comfortable confiding in her mother or another adult about possible peer violence. Second, teachers must participate in professional development workshops that focus on the stages and warning signs of school violence. Third, counselors must seek to unravel the root causes of adolescent female violence, be empathetic to the challenges that confront high-risk urban youth, and work with teachers and administrators to develop a safe environment for all students. Fourth, principals must seek to recognize that adolescent females are just as capable as males in committing acts

of physical violence at school and pursue methods to minimize or eradicate these behaviors (Boyer, 2008). School officials must begin to be cognizant of the fact that the trajectory of girl on girl victimization is different from boys, as girls usually begin aggressive behaviors in school with indirect social assaults such as eye rolling, the spreading of rumors, verbal insults, and social isolation of their victims. Even though the pathway to violence for a girl begins with non-physical force, the escalation into physical violence can occur quickly.

During the past decade, many school administrators have been oblivious to the fact that the twenty-first century female is tough, often has gang affiliation, harbors anger or rage, and is fully capable of committing violent acts in or around school property. According to Limbos and Casteel (2008), poor school leadership, disorganization, indifference, low academic expectations, inadequate student support, and ambiguous policies and rules are associated with higher rates of student misconduct and student, teacher victimization. In an effort to curtail adolescent female violence, school officials must begin to adopt and implement school safety plans that are designed to identify and address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of violent students. The school safety plan must incorporate ways to create educational and social opportunities for these at-risk youth and enlist parental, community, student, and teacher support.

As schools pursue violence prevention strategies and safety plans to address inappropriate female behaviors, this study's analysis of school-based practices gives rise to the following question: What has been the Chicago Public Schools' approach to handling violent adolescent females? To help answer this question, Chapter 1 examined

the standard and innovative ways that the Chicago Public Schools' has sought to address this problem. Traditionally, the Chicago Public Schools' along with many other urban school districts have used punitive, reactive measures such as suspension, expulsion, and alternative school placement to deter adolescent female violence. These exclusionary practices remove violent adolescent females from the academic setting but fail to address and rectify the underlying social, emotional, environmental, educational, and psychological issues that fuel these girls' anger and violent behavior. Suspension and expulsions require that these volatile girls return back to their negative environments for extended periods of time; thus reinforcing the at-risk females' exposure to systemic violence and deviant behavior as substantiated by Albert Bandura's social learning theory.

The Chicago Public Schools' has developed proactive, inclusive female mentoring clubs over the last five years to assist girls in improving their self-concept and social development; however, these clubs generally recruit and retain adolescent females who desire to conform to rules, social mores, and socially acceptable behaviors. The mentoring clubs' program design seems to address topics that appeal to non-violent young ladies and their popular interests such as college selection, job readiness, proper dress, etiquette, dating, health, peer mentoring, and conflict resolution skills; nevertheless, these mentoring clubs fail to provide the intense mental health and counseling models that aggressive females need to help uncover the root causes of their anger and violent behavior. This current Chicago Public School program mentoring

model would prove ineffective in dealing with violent adolescent females due to the programs lack of comprehensive psychological and social safeguards.

Comprehensive Program Designs for Violent Adolescent Females

It is critically important that schools begin to offer school-based comprehensive programs to help diminish the risk factors (exposure to violence, low-income households) associated with violent adolescent females and their families. Gender based violence prevention programs such as GIRLS LINK and Project RENEW sponsored by the juvenile justice system may serve as a model for urban school districts. These gender specific programs often incorporate theory-based intervention strategies offered by organizations such as the American Psychological Association (APA) and the American Sociological Association (ASA), as they study the developmental and socio-cultural risk factors related to disruptive behavior in youths.

These comprehensive programs provide at- risk adolescent females with mental health agency partnerships, individual and family counseling opportunities, job coaching, job opportunities, and after school activities such as leadership skill building workshops, spirituality discussions, conflict resolution strategies, parenting classes, sex education classes, dating violence seminars, supportive, empowering connections with other peers, professional women mentors, and reputable community figures (Sautter, 1995).

Research indicates that adolescents who develop positive relationships with caring adults, help protect themselves against negative influences and behaviors, even when dysfunctional family and community exposure exists (Ludwig, 2009). Program mentors in these gender -based programs seek to foster positive healthy relationships with

adolescent females who exhibit violent behaviors by establishing trust, encouraging honest yet respectful dialogue, helping the girls make sound decisions, building their sense of worth through modeling and positive affirmations, teaching girls to handle potentially hostile situations in a civilized and graceful manner through role playing and visual simulation activities. (Cook County Commission on Women's Issues, 2006).

The comprehensive gender-based models serve to benefit violent adolescent females by offering some protective factors that have been absent from the family and community structure. These protective factors such as safety and security, pro-social adult-youth relationships, encouragement of positive racial & gender identity self-confidence building strategies, strong parenting models, positive community relations, and pro-social peer relationships all help to improve the behaviors of maladjusted female adolescents and alter their negative life course trajectory. As schools begin to develop comprehensive gender- based programming and develop nurturing relationships between teachers, parents, neighborhoods, and students, a reduction in school-based violence committed by adolescent females may begin to decline (Axelman, 2006).

Recommendations for Further Research

Findings gained from this study may benefit school administrators who seek to address the specific needs of violent adolescent females within the school context. Therefore, the subsequent recommendations are being suggested to holistically address and manage the needs of violent adolescent females. The following recommendations are made for further study:

1. Urban school districts should develop proactive gender-based violence prevention programs to address the prevalence of adolescent female violence

2. Urban school districts consider offering a mental & emotional health component to school violence prevention programs tailored to violent adolescent females

3. School administrators, teachers, and disciplinarians participate in continuous professional development training in the area of school violence as it pertains to females

4. Researchers must investigate the correlation of CEO shifts, school closings, attendance area changes, and school violence

5. Further research studies should examine the impact of environmental and familial influences on violent adolescent females

APPENDIX A

FOIA RESPONSE LETTER

CPS
CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Communications · 125 South Clark Street · Chicago, Illinois 60603
Telephone 773/553-1620 · FAX 773/553-1621

December 3, 2003

Ms. Marian Dozier
1212 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60605

Dear Ms. Dozier:

The enclosed documents are in response to your Freedom of Informtion Act (FOIA) request
dated November 13, 2002, for statistics on violent incidents and intervention programs used in
schools to reduce violence.

I trust this information will meet your needs. If I can be of further assistance, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Sarah B. Thompson
Freedom of Information Officer

Enclosures

Copy to: Joi Mecks

Children First

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The Dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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