

The Increasing Rate of Juvenile Delinquency: An Exploration of the Intervention Programs

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the effectiveness of intervention programs provided to juvenile delinquents and proposes improvements to better address their needs. Juvenile delinquency is a growing issue, with many minors engaging in criminal activities from a young age due to various socio-economic, familial, and environmental factors. The study identifies that low-income families, dysfunctional family structures, and the influence of peer pressure and drugs contribute significantly to delinquent behavior. The research also highlights the importance of effective rehabilitation programs in reducing recidivism and reintegrating juveniles as law-abiding citizens. Using a descriptive qualitative design, the study gathers insights through interviews and focus group discussions with social workers and staff at Tahanan ng Kabataan, a juvenile rehabilitation center in Cagayan de Oro. Findings reveal that while the institution provides a variety of general intervention programs, there is a lack of specialized programs tailored to individual needs, especially for juveniles involved in drug-related offenses. The study proposes implementing more individualized, specialized programs such as drug education, behavioral counseling, and family-based interventions. Additionally, it stresses the importance of competent staff trained to handle specific issues like drug abuse, emphasizing the need for a holistic, community-based approach to prevent juvenile delinquency and support the rehabilitation of young offenders.

Keywords: *Delinquency, Intervention, Juvenile, Rehabilitation, Recidivism*

INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, researchers have focused on both healthy child development and the development of delinquent conduct to better understand the origins of juvenile delinquency. Individual, social, and community conditions, as well as their interactions, have been proven to influence behavior (Siegel et. al, 2006).

Many children garner the label of juvenile delinquents early, often between the ages of 6 and 12 years old. Many juvenile behaviors during the pre-teen and teenage years may be considered normal for children, as they stretch their boundaries and struggle to develop their self-perception and commit crimes that range from lying, truancy to stealing, rape, physical injury and murder, (Colorado, 2015). The increasing number of juvenile delinquency cases nowadays is very crucial despite the present battle of the government against juvenile delinquency. Based on the reports of the United States of America and other neighboring countries, some offenders are psychotic. Their offenses may range from suicide to mass murder. The ease of access to weapons, drug addiction, unemployment, and economic motives are the more apparent circumstances leading to crime. Still, modern societal stress, breakdown of family life, deviant role models, and the confusion in values, which produce unstable feelings and distorted ideas, all contribute to aggravating violence among youth (Gullman, 2015). In the Philippines, the number of juvenile delinquents increased from 10,388 in 2015 to 11,228 in 2019, with physical injury the most committed crime by minors according to the Philippine National Police (Soriano, 2019).

Moreover, according to Soriano (2019), children, some as young as five years old, commit some of the most brazen crimes in the Philippines, from running drug dens to sexual assault, despite the different strategies and the number of programs provided by the government against juvenile delinquency. The number of recorded crimes ballooned in 2018 to 1,035 cases from just 12 the previous year to five in 2016. It is an increase of 8,525-percent year-on-year increase in 2018, the total number of claims under the City of Cagayan de Oro, including its neighboring provinces. Furthermore, according to Macaraeg (2019), most of the CICL cases recorded were done by children belonging to the age group of 16 to 17 years old, at 53 percent. This is followed by the age group of 12-15, at 32 percent. A crime was recently committed in North Cotabato City for the savage murder of the Maguad siblings by a child in broad daylight. This is one of the most horrible crimes ever perpetrated by a juvenile who confessed her crime in the presence of a lawyer. The suspect reportedly said she did it out of envy and fury, and she has been in the custody of the Department of Social Welfare and Development since then. This has raised the subject of legislation that exempts minors from committing crimes, which has already been raised by various individuals who believe that minors nowadays are no longer innocent and can commit horrible crimes. The cases of juvenile delinquency are one of the critical issues that the government of the Philippines is currently facing because juveniles are one of the most vulnerable individuals who need proper attention and solutions.

Over the past decade, researchers have identified intervention strategies and program models that reduce delinquency and promote pro-social development. Preventing misconduct, according to Greenwood (2008), not only saves young lives from being wasted but also prevents the onset of adult criminal careers and thus reduces the burden of crime on its victims and society. He also added that researchers had identified a dozen proven delinquency-prevention programs. He reviews the methods used to identify the best programs, explains how program success is measured, provides an overview of programs that work, and offers guidance on how jurisdictions can shift toward more evidence-based practices.

With this prevailing information, the researcher aims to conduct this study to explore and identify the effectiveness of the intervention program provided for the juvenile delinquent and to propose or improve an intervention program that would meet and cater to the needs of the juvenile delinquent. The study's goal is not just limited in exploring the different intervention programs that the government provides for the juvenile delinquents, it also includes the possibility of creating or proposing a new intervention program that might be able to help and guide them in escaping and preventing the juvenile delinquents from committing crimes and can be reintegrated back as a law abiding citizens in the society.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The descriptive qualitative design was employed in this study. This approach gathered information about existing conditions and aimed to describe the nature of situations as they existed at the time of the study, as well as to explore the causes of particular phenomena (Bailey, 2014). Descriptive research focuses primarily on description, rather than exploring correlations or associations. It seeks to characterize a scenario, problem, phenomenon, service, or program in a systematic manner, or to provide information on, for example, community living conditions or to describe attitudes about an issue. The researchers investigated the respondents' knowledge of a certain phenomenon. The phenomena the researchers examined had occurred in the past, and the researchers found it difficult to fully express them (Kumar, 2011).

This descriptive qualitative design was used to explore existing intervention programs used to support and guide juvenile delinquents and to identify the success rate of government-provided intervention

programs. This approach aimed to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provided insights into the problem and contributed to the development of ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. The purpose was to gather sufficient information and evidence about the increasing rate of juvenile delinquency. Additionally, the effectiveness of the government's intervention programs was explored to help prevent juvenile delinquents from becoming recidivists or habitual offenders.

The data gathering instrument used in this study was a researcher-made questionnaire, which comprised four parts: Part I contained questions about the background/profile of the juvenile delinquents admitted or confined in the institution. Part II focused on the intervention programs provided by the personnel of Tahanan ng Kabataan to the juvenile delinquents. Part III included questions regarding the effectiveness of the intervention programs and how they helped prevent juvenile delinquents from committing crimes and rehabilitate them to become law-abiding citizens. Finally, Part IV asked about suggestions for additional intervention programs that could improve the situation for juvenile delinquents.

To ensure that all necessary information was gathered, a focus group discussion and in-depth interviews were conducted. During these interviews, the researcher took notes on the informants' responses and recorded them using an audio recorder.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Profile of Juvenile Delinquents

A variety of factors contribute to the development of juvenile delinquency. This section focuses on the profile of juveniles before their admission to the institution, including the factors that lead them to commit crimes and the types of crimes they often engage in.

Participants shared insights about the juveniles' backgrounds prior to being admitted. Most of the juveniles were out-of-school youth from low-income families, raised by dysfunctional parents, and involved in drug-related activities. Key factors identified include:

Low-Income Families

Many juveniles come from impoverished backgrounds, where parents are unable to afford schooling. This lack of education often leads to involvement in illegal activities. One participant noted:

“Due to poverty and lack of support, these youths didn't attend school and spent time with peers who influenced them negatively, leading them to commit crimes” (P1:SS2).

“Others emphasized that parents, preoccupied with providing for the family, fail to monitor their children, leaving them vulnerable to crime” (P2:SS1, P6:SS1).

“In some cases, juveniles from large families also lacked attention and guidance from their parents” (P2:SS4, P4:SS2).

This theme describes the state or status of juveniles and how it affects their behavior as individual and with their families. Poverty and juvenile delinquency are linked because poor children are more likely to become delinquents who commit crimes. Juveniles who are poor are under pressure to survive in low socioeconomic communities that lack resources such as work chances, financial assistance, mental health care, medical services, education, and so on. The absence of resources in these communities makes it difficult for these young people to succeed in a society that rewards those with money. Those who lack financial resources are more prone to be drawn into criminal activity.

The theme was best explained in Strain Theory by Robert Agnew (1984), who argues that delinquency results from the blockage of goal-seeking behavior. Unable to achieve valued goals, individuals become frustrated and may turn to delinquency as a result. He points to another major source of frustration and delinquency, the blockage of pain-avoidant behavior. Adolescents are compelled to remain in certain environments, such as family and school. If these environments are painful or aversive, there is little that adolescents can do legally to escape. This blockage of pain-avoidant behavior is likely to be frustrating and may lead to illegal escape attempts or anger-based delinquency.

In a similar study about poverty in juvenile delinquency, the core of differential opportunity theory is that persons, typically teenagers from low socioeconomic situations, who have little prospects for achievement, will utilize any means available to them to succeed. Subcultures are the terms used to describe the methods. The opportunities we have impact whether we will turn to delinquency or follow more acceptable routes in numerous ways. Young people turn to delinquency, according to Cloward and Ohlin (1960), because they are shut out of more genuine opportunities. When working-class young people can't find a high-paying job or rise to middle-class status, they turn to delinquency to make a better life for themselves.

Socioeconomic status (SES), according to Rekker et al (2015), is one of the most well-documented correlates of juvenile delinquency. Many studies have shown that youths from low-SES families are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior than youths from high-SES families

This study was primarily anchored on the study of Burgess (1952), which, as a result, poverty is simply one of many factors linked to adolescent criminality. This conclusion is supported by statistics as well as the life histories of juvenile delinquents. Other variables contributing to a child's delinquency include bad housing, broken homes, moms working, parental carelessness, excessive severity, over leniency, rejection, boy and girl gangs, delinquent and criminal traditions, and other neighborhood situations.

Low socioeconomic status, according to Jarjoura et al. (1988), does not appear to be the most important factor in adolescent criminality. However, it is one of several underlying variables that contribute to delinquency. Children in disadvantaged neighborhoods, for example, are more likely to encounter gangs, slums, cliques, and a criminal community as a whole. As a result, they are more vulnerable to criminal activity.

Furthermore, most scholars and well-known personalities agree that poverty is the basis of all evil. This is due to the fact that poverty prevents a child from obtaining essential life necessities such as good education and physical nourishment. A child's mental capacity deteriorates if he or she is unable to attend school because no adult is available to rectify their blunders; they frequently mix up right and wrong. Their only way of learning is through the experiences that they encounter in their environment, which may either bring out the worst or the best in them.

Dysfunctional Families

Family dynamics play a significant role in juvenile behavior. Many juveniles are raised in dysfunctional families, often with single parents or in large households where resources and attention are stretched thin. As one participant explained:

“Due to financial struggles and the size of the family, children receive little emotional support, which drives them to seek attention from peers who influence them toward crime” (P4:SS2).

“Children raised by single parents or relatives often face behavioral issues due to economic instability and insufficient parental involvement” (P8:SS1).

“Lack of parental guidance was repeatedly cited as a primary cause of juvenile involvement in crime” (P10:SS1, P10:SS2).

The quality of the interaction between parents and their children influences the child's personality and behavior. The participants said that their parents' family structure, such as single parents, dysfunctional parents, large families, and a lack of parental support, has an impact on their children's behavior and development.

This theme also conformed to Knoester and Haynie (2005) study which states that the loss of fathers' and mothers' capacity to be responsible for the children they bring into the world cause the loss of affection and guidance at the most personal levels of marriage and family has far-reaching societal implications for children and the broader community. The empirical evidence suggests that too many young men and women from broken families have a significantly poorer sense of community and are more likely to exploit their members to satisfy their unmet needs or aspirations. This adds to the loss of a feeling of community, as well as the breakdown of communities into social instability and violent criminality.

Furthermore, Gray (1987) also stated that it is generally agreed that the family has a much greater influence on delinquents than on adult criminals. Thus, many of the factors associated with delinquent behavior may be a result of poor family relationships. It is not only the family structure or socioeconomic status that has an effect on youths' behavior, but also the relationships that exist among parents and their children. Hence, parental affection, love, attention, supervision, and control of their children are just as important as socioeconomic status when assessing the causes of delinquency. Therefore, it is assumed that family structure and relationships have a significant impact on the degree to which youths conform or deviate.

Boccio and Beaver (2019) in their study suggests that parental divorce is linked to a variety of negative outcomes, such as psychiatric issues, poor mental health, poor scholastic performance and achievement, and greater engagement in juvenile delinquency because of the negative implications of parental divorce, some researchers believe that parental divorce during childhood or adolescent is linked to adjustment and behavioral difficulties, including criminal behavior, throughout the rest of one's life.

As a result, parental attachment may be a major element in explaining adolescent criminality and delinquency. Winokur et. al (2008) looked at the impact of several "family variables" on the etiology of juvenile delinquency, with a focus on parental self-reports on their children's behavior. Family structure, inadequate parenting traits, household factors, and parent-child connections were some of the possible explanations for delinquency in this study. They discovered that maternal attachment was the biggest predictor of delinquency among these characteristics.

Children from broken homes have been found to be involved in a significantly higher number of delinquent acts than children from intact homes. Both male and female children from broken homes were found to be negatively affected by parental absence. For instance, girls from a single-parent household (emphasis on paternal absence) have been associated with delinquency issues related to vandalism and auto trespassing, run away, incorrigibility, and sexual deviancy (Parks, 2013).

Influence of Drug Use

Drug use was identified as a major factor in the crimes committed by juveniles in the institution. Common offenses included drug use, drug trafficking, theft, and violent crimes like rape and murder. Participants highlighted the following:

“Most of the juveniles admitted here are involved in drugs. Their crimes, such as theft, are often a result of the need to feed their addiction. Drugs also lead to other offenses like rape and murder” (P1:SS6).

“The influence of peers and the widespread availability of illegal substances were also significant factors in the juveniles' criminal behavior” (P6:SS6).

Another participant emphasized that drug use often escalates into more serious crimes:

“Drugs lead to a range of offenses, from theft to murder, as they become more involved in criminal activities” (P2:SS5).

In conclusion, the profiles of juveniles admitted to the institution reveal a complex interplay of poverty, dysfunctional family structures, and the influence of drugs and peers, all contributing to the path toward delinquency.

The majority of the cases committed by juveniles admitted to the institution include drug possession, usage of illegal drugs, and drug selling, according to the participants. Academic challenges, health-related problems, including mental health, poor peer connections, and engagement with the juvenile justice system are all common problems for young people who consume substances on a regular basis. There are also consequences for family members, the neighborhood, and the entire society. They commit further crimes when under the influence of drugs. Drugs cause them to commit theft since this juvenile requires the support of their vices, which is why they steal. That is why the majority of them are focused on drugs, since narcotics allow them to commit theft, rape, murder, and a range of other crimes along with murder and rape which is the reason of the influence of drug.

This theme of the relationship between substance abuse and delinquency is visible throughout the city. Arrest, adjudication, and involvement by the juvenile justice system are unavoidable results for many children who use alcohol or other drugs. It cannot be stated that substance abuse causes delinquency or that delinquency causes substance abuse. The two activities, however, are inextricably intertwined, and they usually result in school and family issues, as well as interaction with undesirable peer groups, a lack of social controls in the area, and physical or sexual abuse (Wilson and Howell, 1993).

Adolescents who use drugs are more likely to experience social issues, sadness, suicidal thoughts, and violence (Johnson, 2009). Those who abuse drugs are more likely than teens who do not abuse drugs to participate in delinquent behaviors such as fighting and stealing, according to a recent poll by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

A teen may use drugs for a variety of reasons. It's often a type of peer pressure, and the fear of being labeled "unpopular" at school if one doesn't participate. To improve their ability to concentrate and raise their grades, several teenagers turn to study aid medicines like Adderall. Others turn to medicines to help them cope with sadness, anxiety, or other types of mental illness because the intended adverse effects usually subside within a few hours; it is difficult for youngsters to comprehend the long-term hazards of drug use. Not to mention, most teens exaggerate the dangers of specific activities and believe themselves to be invincible. Repeated patterns of drug use, on the other hand, have the potential to produce substantial harm over time (Winokur et. al, 2003).

Lastly, according to Banaga (2004), drug addiction is another aspect that contributes to a child's criminal mindset because of their lack of self-control; young children are at risk of becoming hooked on these narcotics. Controlling one's own ideas and actions should begin at an early age. These dangerous chemicals have a significant impact on cognitive thinking and reasoning, allowing children to engage in illicit acts.

B. Intervention Programs for Juvenile Delinquents

The institution provides various intervention programs aimed at preventing juvenile delinquency, reducing the likelihood of youth becoming serious offenders, and alleviating the burden of crime on society. These programs are designed to aid the personal growth and development of juveniles and offer tailored support to address their specific needs.

Programs for Juvenile Delinquents

Participants highlighted that the institution implements a range of programs to support the juveniles' rehabilitation. These programs focus on personal growth, substance abuse education, family counseling, educational support, and youth sheltering. However, some participants expressed challenges in providing specialized interventions due to the varied needs of the juveniles.

Participants' shared:

"Everyone here has mixed backgrounds, and we don't have specific programs for different issues. It would be better if drug-related cases were handled by specialists, while behavioral issues should be addressed by a psychologist" (P1:SS14).

"The lack of specialization in handling specific cases, like drug-related offenses, leads to repeated admissions after release" (P1:SS15).

"Therapeutic Community model, which focuses on behavior improvement through tasks and community involvement. They implement regular evaluations, "pull-ups" for rule violations, and learning experiences for juveniles to understand their mistakes" (P2:SS7).

"Educational Programs like the Alternative Learning System (ALS) and TESDA are available, allowing juveniles to continue their education while in the institution" (P3:SS24).

"Various other programs, including industrial, agricultural, recreational, and spiritual activities, are also offered based on the juveniles' interests" (P4:SS6).

The institution understands the necessity of providing resources to delinquency prevention, which includes substance abuse education, treatment, family counseling, youth mentorship, parenting education, educational support, and adolescent sheltering.

The participants stated that they use numerous programs for juveniles to help them grow and develop personally. The participants clearly instilled that there is no unique intervention program for the specific requirements of the juvenile; instead, they implement whatever program is available in the institution, making it impossible to analyze and respond to the needs of the juvenile. One participant stated that one of the most difficult issues they faced was that their facility is mixed; regardless of familial background, they hope to be different people who will manage different clients with different problems, such as if it's all about drugs, a drug educator should manage it, and if it's a behavioral problem, a psychologist should manage it.

This theme was best explained in the study of Aala (2013), which states that despite the increase in government efforts to minimize juvenile criminality, the number of cases has climbed. There has been debate about how to treat juvenile offenders, with some saying that they should be treated similarly to adult offenders. In order to combat this tendency, the government has taken into account both public safety and the need to rehabilitate young offenders through various programs that are provided by the government.

In addition, a program that reaches youngsters at a young age can lay the groundwork for delinquent behavior in the teenage years and beyond. The process of developmental criminology has proved that children with behavior problems at a young age are more likely to continue down the wrong road

unless some form of intervention is made in the child's life (Elrod & Ryder, 2014). Most children exhibit some form of negative conduct at some point, but they have a system in place to remedy it. Parents, family members, instructors, and even community members can serve as these tools.

Wilson (2000) in his study found that effective intervention plays an essential role in any strategy designed to diminish the rates of juvenile delinquency. Intervention is an important component of dispositional sanctions administered in juvenile cases by individuals who work in the juvenile justice system. This is especially true for the treatment of significant, violent, and chronic serious juvenile offenders, who have the potential for long and damaging criminal careers and are likely to recidivate while still at the age of peak offending if appropriate interventions are not implemented. The participants stated that they use numerous programs for juveniles to help them grow and develop personally.

Total Transformation of Juveniles

The institution's programs have led to noticeable transformations in juvenile behavior. Participants observed that many juveniles show significant changes during their stay, with some fully rehabilitated by the end of the program.

One participant noted:

"The majority of the juveniles do not return once they complete their program. Out of 20 juveniles, only about 10% return, and even fewer end up in jail" (P9:SS14).

Another added:

"There are visible changes in their behavior, such as accepting responsibility when they violate rules" (P10:SS6).

This suggests that the institution's intervention programs are effective in facilitating behavioral improvement and rehabilitation.

The use of a variety of programs for juveniles' personal development and progress. The juveniles admitted to the institution have been completely converted and will no longer return since they have been transformed as a result of the intervention program given in the institution. Some juvenile delinquents only return to the institution because they are recidivists or have been involved in drug-related crimes. Most juvenile delinquents return to criminality because they are out-of-school youth who are driven by their peers, yet they all agreed that there has been a considerable shift in the juveniles' behavior after admission to the institution. Furthermore, they have already noticed improvements in the juveniles' conduct as a result of the institution's intervention program.

The rehabilitative paradigm focuses on the treatment of the offender, assuming that treatments such as probation supervision, work preparation, training, cognitive skills training, and behavior therapy will improve behavior and reduce the number of juvenile offenses (Bradshaw & Roseborough, 2005). Rehabilitation is critical for juvenile delinquents and their reintegration into mainstream society because it lays the groundwork for them to live a healthy lifestyle in the community once they are released from the juvenile justice system.

When it comes to positive youth development, the efficacy of a juvenile rehabilitation program can be measured. One of the factors is the transformation of their negative behaviors into positive behaviors. This is in line with the positive youth development principle, which emphasizes the importance of developing individual assets such as inner strengths. These internal strengths include cognitive strength, emotion, and conduct, all of which help to improve the internal aspect (Lerner et al., 2005).

Individuals working in the juvenile justice system use a variety of intervention techniques as a key component of the dispositional punishments imposed on juvenile cases. This is especially true for major, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders, who have the potential for long and damaging criminal careers and, in the absence of appropriate treatments, are likely to recidivate while still in the prime of their offending years (Odera, 2013).

Court's Discretion

The court holds the authority to determine the length and appropriateness of the intervention programs for each juvenile. The institution can recommend extensions or early terminations based on its assessments, but the final decision lies with the court.

Participants explained that if a juvenile shows insufficient progress, the institution can request an extension of their stay to continue their rehabilitation. However, if significant improvements are observed, they may recommend the termination of the intervention program (P2:SS8, P6:SS10, P10:SS8). Ultimately, the court decides whether to extend or cease the juvenile's treatment based on the institution's recommendations.

In conclusion, the intervention programs provided by the institution are varied and aim to address the specific needs of juvenile delinquents. These programs focus on education, behavior reform, and personal development, while the court retains the final authority on the length and type of intervention provided.

The court has sole discretion to determine the amount of time that the juvenile will be enrolled in an intervention program and to choose the most appropriate program for the juvenile.

The true challenge has now shifted to the government in the study of Banaga (2004). In dealing with so-called children in confrontation with the law, our court system has alternated between a punitive and a rehabilitative approach over the years (CICL). Repeated misbehavior by these delinquents is frequently the result of poor juvenile court outcomes. Such indifference has contributed significantly to the rise in juvenile-related crimes, posing a serious threat to both youth development and the preservation of a safe environment for everybody.

When a juvenile is suspected of breaking criminal legislation, the methods employed in adult criminal court are quite different. The police, prosecutors, juvenile court intake personnel, and juvenile court judges, for example, all have broad latitude to take additional informal actions in the case. As a result, many juvenile offenders never face a formal adjudication hearing. Similarly, the constitutional rights of minors differ from those of adults who have been charged with a crime (Eduardo, 2016). The participants stated that the court has exclusive power and authority to decide how long the juvenile will be in the intervention program and to choose and apply the right program for the juvenile. If they do not observe any substantial improvements in the child's conduct, the participant mentioned that they can write a letter or make a request to the court to continue the juvenile intervention program to give learning experiences that would help and lead them to change.

In Republic Act No. 9344, the court shall impose the appropriate disposition measures in consideration of the various circumstances of the CICL. Upon recommendation of the social worker who has custody of the child, the court shall dismiss the case if it finds that the objectives of the disposition measures have been fulfilled. After conviction and upon order of the court to serve his/her sentence, a CICL may, in lieu of confinement in a regular penal institution, serve in an agricultural camp and other training facilities that may be supervised by the Bureau of Corrections, in coordination with the DSWD. Family Courts have exclusive jurisdiction over cases involving children in conflict with the law. Jurisdiction is vested with the Regional Trial Courts in places where there are no family courts.

C. Effectiveness of the Intervention Program in the Rehabilitation of Juvenile Delinquents in Cagayan

de Oro City

The institution provides various intervention programs designed to rehabilitate juvenile delinquents and break the cycle of recidivism. The effectiveness of these programs is crucial in preventing these juveniles from engaging in adult criminal activities.

Length of Stay of Juveniles

The length of a juvenile's stay at the institution largely depends on their progress in the intervention programs. Violations of rules and regulations can lead to an extension of their stay, allowing more time for rehabilitation.

One participant noted:

"The minimum duration for intervention is six months to one year. If a juvenile exhibits significant behavioral issues, we recommend extending their stay. However, the final decision rests with the court, not us" (P8:SS11).

"Extensions are based on violations such as physical altercations or failure to adhere to rules, using these as learning experiences rather than punishments (P7:SS18).

"The responsibility for determining whether the intervention should continue or cease lies with the social workers and house parents, who provide reports and observations to the court, which makes the final decision" (P6:SS12).

This theme expresses that the juveniles stay in the institution will be determined by their good attitude toward the juvenile's intervention program. The program will be extended due to their violation of the institution's norms and regulations.

Numerous scholars have looked at the impacts of a wide range of juvenile justice interventions on recidivism; few have focused solely on the effects of lengths of stay or duration of juvenile justice interventions on recidivism. The outcomes of the studies that have looked into this relationship have been mixed and inconclusive. Neither Winokur et. al.'s (2008) study of teenagers charged with robbery or burglary found that lengthier periods of incarceration reduced eventual recidivism.

Treatment programs that are effective are essential for the successful reintegration of youth into their homes and communities. Winokur et. al (2003) revealed that when compared to youth who did not participate in any institutional or community program during their stay at the institution, recidivism rates dropped by as much as 25%. Evidence-based treatment programs, on the other hand, are the most effective, as they can cut recidivism by up to 80%.

In the study of Eduardo (2016), one of the goals of the transition from institutional to community-based treatment is to better utilize institutional treatment as a stepping stone to assist offenders in becoming self-sufficient and productive members of society. In the short term, the goal is to assist offenders in transitioning from an institution-based treatment program to a community-based treatment program with minimal service disruption during their stay at the center.

Generalized Programs

While the institution offers various programs, many participants felt these programs were too generalized, lacking a specific focus on the individual needs of the juveniles.

Participant mentioned:

"It is impossible to say that any program is completely effective, but we try everything available to help the juveniles. We can only hope that these programs, when repeated, lead to positive change" (P8:SS16).

“The Therapeutic Community (TC) is a foundational program for all juveniles, regardless of their specific issues. This program focuses on monitoring behavior, with daily check-ins to ensure that juveniles are adhering to the rules” (P9:SS8).

This theme expresses that the program provided for the juvenile has no specific approach that would cater to the specific needs of the juvenile. The institution has provided programs that are general and applied to all juveniles admitted to the center.

This theme was linked in the recent study evaluations have found that some intervention programs reduce recidivism among young offenders, the studies primarily looked at whether intervention is beneficial in general (Hoeve M. et al., 2009). There has been little systematic attention paid to the effectiveness of therapies with different sorts of offenders, and there has been minimal intervention research explicitly focused on serious offenders.

Researchers have identified a dozen “proven” delinquency-prevention programs, according to Greenwood (2008). Twenty to thirty more “promising” programs are still being evaluated. Greenwood examines the methodologies used to find the best programs, discusses how program effectiveness is measured, provides an overview of successful programs, and offers advice on how jurisdictions might move toward more evidence-based policies in their practices.

In addition, according to Saminsky (2010), there are numerous types of programs available nowadays. Those who become involved with the delinquent after deviant activity has occurred have a lower success rate, as antisocial tendencies have already evolved. Prevention programs are more effective because they act before the initiation of delinquent conduct and prevent it. Early involvement in the lives of children can successfully reduce eventual crime.

Suitability for the Juveniles

Several participants emphasized the need for programs that cater to the unique needs of each juvenile. They suggested that the current programs, like the Therapeutic Community, may not fully address these needs.

Participant noted:

“The TC is a good program, but it’s still lacking. We need new, more tailored programs to address the specific needs of each child. The TC program has been in place for two years, and it’s time to consider new methods” (P1:SS19).

“This concern about the suitability of existing programs was reiterated by another participant, who stressed that programs should go beyond general offerings and address the real, diverse needs of the juveniles” (P1:SS20).

This theme expresses that the programs should suit the needs of the juvenile admitted at the institution and focus on improving the program, especially on catering to the specific needs of the juvenile.

This theme was linked in the work of Sepehri et. al (2016), which focuses on the lack of consistency in how analysts analyze the research base, making it difficult to compare programs, which is an issue in identifying effective programs. When it comes to what works and what doesn't, different critics often come to very diverse judgments. Because they focus on various outcomes or employ different criteria in screening programs, they publish separate lists of “proven” and “promising” programs in evaluating suitable programs for juvenile delinquents.

This study, according to Tonidandel et. al (2009), focuses on the challenges and unknowns faced by practitioners who desire to appropriately estimate the hazards and treatment needs of juveniles. When selecting and administering instruments, local juvenile justice systems and community prevention

programs should consider the following issues when selecting and administering instruments: the instrument's purpose, gender-based performance, strength-based instruments (which emphasize positive factors on which to build development), local validation, and cost.

Recommendations for Improvement

Participants suggested that one of the most effective ways to improve rehabilitation is to enhance the programs to better meet the specific needs of the juveniles. Tailoring programs to the individual would ensure more effective rehabilitation.

Participant explained:

“To rehabilitate a child effectively, the program needs to be enhanced to provide the right operations for each juvenile. The key is focusing on programs that truly fit the needs of the children” (P6:SS20).

While the institution offers a variety of intervention programs, there is a general consensus that the programs should be more tailored to the specific needs of each juvenile. The length of stay depends on the juvenile's progress and behavior, with extensions given for continued violations. The effectiveness of the programs is an ongoing challenge, as current interventions may not fully address individual needs. Improved, more personalized programs are necessary to ensure that juveniles receive the right support for lasting rehabilitation.

D. Proposed Intervention Programs for the Betterment of Juvenile Delinquents

To enhance the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents, the institution has evaluated and assessed appropriate intervention programs aimed at molding juveniles into law-abiding citizens. The following proposed programs are designed to meet the diverse needs of the juveniles and improve their rehabilitation process.

Learning Experiences of Juveniles

Rather than using traditional punishment, the institution employs "learning experiences" to help juveniles understand their mistakes and improve their behavior. This approach focuses on teaching responsibility and accountability.

Participants emphasized the importance of these learning experiences:

“If a juvenile breaks the rules, they are reminded of the cardinal rules, and after five violations, they may receive a haircut as a form of reprimand. This is not a punishment but a learning experience that signifies change, and you can see their transformation when their hair starts growing” (P4:SS8).

Another participant added:

“We use tasks such as cleaning rooms or mopping the floor as a way of teaching juveniles accountability and discipline. If they violate the rules, their tasks are increased, which helps them focus on better behavior” (P5:SS8).

“This approach has proven effective, especially for juveniles who are hard-headed and need constant engagement” (P6:SS15).

Programs for Juveniles

The institution uses a variety of programs designed for the personal development and improvement of juveniles. These include behavioral modification strategies and holistic approaches to discipline.

Participant shared:

"Therapeutic Community (TC) is a key strategy used here, focusing on behavioral modification. The TC approach helps juveniles discipline themselves and learn how to interact with others positively. It fosters acceptance, gratitude, and positive communication" (P7:SS21).

Additionally, one participant recommended that the community play a larger role in the rehabilitation process:

"Communities should hold seminars for parents to educate them on handling and guiding their children, especially to prevent juvenile delinquency. It's essential that the whole family understands their role in the child's behavior" (P10:SS17).

"The Homeline Services approach was also mentioned as a way to observe the juveniles' daily routines and ensure they follow a structured schedule, which helps instill discipline and improve their character" (P7:SS11).

Rehabilitation Programs

Participants identified the need for more specialized programs that cater to the specific needs of juveniles, especially those involved in drug-related offenses or other serious crimes.

One participant argued that current programs are too generalized and should be tailored to individual needs:

"Currently, the programs are not specific. For example, if a juvenile is involved in drugs, there should be a program focused on drug education. For juveniles involved in violence or immorality, there should be a program designed to address those issues specifically" (P5:SS19).

Another participant echoed the need for specialized programs:

"We often treat all juveniles the same, regardless of their issues. For those involved in drug offenses, we lack specific drug education programs. It would be beneficial if the staff handling such cases were trained to address drug-related issues" (P1:SS15).

Additionally, one participant emphasized the need for competent staff to handle cases involving drugs:

"I've worked with juveniles involved in drug cases, and we need more knowledgeable staff to explain the effects of drugs and provide proper guidance. Without proper knowledge, it's hard to help these juveniles effectively" (P1:SS16).

Proposed Intervention Programs:

1. Specialized Drug Education Programs:

These programs would focus on educating juveniles about the dangers of drug use and offer therapeutic interventions specifically designed for drug offenders. Staff members with expertise in addiction and drug-related behaviors would handle these cases.

2. Behavioral Counseling and Psychological Support:

For juveniles with behavioral problems, more individualized counseling and psychological support should be provided. These programs would aim to address the root causes of delinquency, such as family issues or trauma.

3. Family-Based Intervention Programs:

Seminars and counseling sessions for families, especially parents, would help improve their understanding of juvenile behavior and provide guidance on how to support their children effectively. This community involvement would be crucial for long-term rehabilitation.

4. Holistic Approaches to Rehabilitation:

Programs like Therapeutic Community (TC) should be enhanced to include individualized therapy sessions, group discussions, and other activities that help juveniles process their actions and learn how to behave positively. The holistic approach would involve not just behavioral correction, but also emotional, social, and educational development.

5. Recreational and Vocational Programs:

The institution could further expand its offerings in areas like agriculture, industry, and recreational activities. These programs would be tailored to the interests and talents of the juveniles, providing them with skills and positive outlets to focus on their growth and development (P4:SS6).

To achieve better outcomes in the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents, the institution should implement more specialized, tailored programs. The current system of generalized interventions can be improved by introducing targeted programs that cater to the specific needs of each juvenile. With a focus on behavioral modification, educational support, and family involvement, the institution can provide more effective rehabilitation, ultimately helping juveniles reintegrate into society as law-abiding citizens.

CONCLUSION

The majority of the juvenile delinquents are coming from single-parent or dysfunctional families, where the parents cannot give full attention to their children since they are busy working to provide for the family. The children who are unattended are seeking love and attention from their peers, which influences them to commit crimes. The community where the child resides also affects the child's behavior since they are being influenced by their peers and friends to be involved in illegal activities. This is the manifestation anchored on the Social Disorganization Theory by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay, which closely relates juvenile delinquency to the social disorganization of society as dictated by the ecological aspects surrounding society. They define social disorganization as the inability of a society to organize itself in a more socially acceptable manner that perpetuates harmony and the general social well-being of society because of ecological changes within a society (Becroft, 2009).

The juvenile delinquent emphasizes that their lack of supervision and attention from their parents drives them to seek attention and love from their peers. Peers are more likely to persuade a juvenile to engage in unlawful activity. The institution also provides intervention programs for juvenile delinquents. However, participants underline the need for social workers or house parents to have adequate expertise to cater to the special requirements of juvenile delinquents in supporting their growth in child behavior. Personnel in charge of the juvenile delinquent intervention program should have extensive experience dealing with a wide range of difficulties in juveniles. The team should be well-versed in dealing with a wide range of issues. The sentence or stay of the juvenile delinquent at the institution is based on the decision of the court, who evaluate the evidence and behavior of the juvenile delinquent with the recommendation of the house parent.

Finally, understanding and knowing the significance of rehabilitative techniques will assist in choosing which methods have the highest chance of rehabilitating juvenile delinquents. In this study, therapeutic communities such as group therapy, group living, agriculture, spiritual guidance, vocational education, and family counseling will be studied as rehabilitative procedures. The study will concentrate on

rehabilitation measures such as vocational and skill training. The goal of this study is not to criticize all rehabilitative procedures, but to highlight the most widely used rehabilitative strategies with juvenile delinquents and enhance the intervention program provided by the government through the skills and capabilities of the social workers and house parents.

Recommendations

Based on findings and conclusions, this study recommends two (2) main areas in order for the Philippine government to fight against the increasing rate of juvenile delinquency.

The first is to address the main cause of juvenile delinquency. The government should address the poverty aspect of this country, as it is one of the main causes of juveniles engaging in illegal activities.

The Department of Social and Welfare Development (DSWD) should also formulate a program of assistance for a new program that will handle cases of juvenile delinquency. Aside from it, a comprehensive program dissemination together with the Philippine National Police (PNP) should be conducted to fight and prevent juvenile delinquency.

Poor educational attainment of the community should also be addressed well. It was found out to be one of the causes of juvenile delinquency; the government should maximize its resources in promoting free education in the country, since most of the juvenile delinquents are out-of-school youth. They should also provide seminars and proper guidance to the parents to educate them on how to train and guide their children despite their busy schedule.

Secondly, in order to encourage existing juvenile delinquency to exit and stop their illegal activities, the government may consider forming a working committee that will thoroughly study, investigate, and eventually apply the “*KKK or Karunungan tungo sa Karapatan ng mga Kabataan Program*” as the study suggests for an Intervention Program. This is only attainable if the government utilizes its resources from different schools, Local Government Units, up to the different departments such as DSWD, DepEd, and PNP.

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