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The attached seminar paper/educational project proposal, by Samantha Nicole Thiesse, entitled *Juvenile Boys Involved in Gangs and Recommendations to Reduce Delinquent Behavior and Gang Involvement*, when completed, is to be submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Wisconsin - Platteville in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science degree, for which three [3] credits shall be allowed is hereby:

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Paper/Project Advisor

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Juvenile Boys Involved in Gangs and Recommendations to Reduce Delinquent Behavior and
Gang Involvement

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Juvenile Boys Involved in Gangs and Recommendations to Reduce Delinquent Behavior and Gang Involvement

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Youth involvement in gangs has increasingly become an issue among juveniles. Gang involvement among youth is one of the leading causes of juvenile delinquency and is difficult to address. The National Gang Center [NGC] (2014) states that the estimated number of gangs from 1996 to 2012 remained at a national average of 27,000 with the exception of a decrease in the early 2000s. The NGC (2014) also reports that there is a significantly higher number of male youths than female who are involved in gangs.

As the number of juvenile arrests increased through the late 1980s and early 1990s, the number of juvenile delinquency cases also increased along with the number of gang members. The early 2000s is when juvenile arrests, delinquency cases and the number gang members started to decrease. The statistics seem to depict that there is a correlation between juvenile delinquency and involvement in gangs; however, the data gathered regarding the number of gang members did not specify whether it was strictly a juvenile population, and adult population, or both. From 1997 through 2013, juvenile delinquency cases declined 44% compared to the 1985-1997-time period where it was on the rise (62%) (Furdella & Puzzanhera, 2015). Of the 567,827 juveniles that lived in Chicago, in 2012, 22,877 juveniles were arrested, (Kaba, 2014). The NGC's National Youth Gang Survey (2014) stated that there were approximately 850,000 gang members in 2012.

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The biggest impact that gangs have is on the communities in which they preside; more in larger cities than any other community. Howell (2006) explains that smaller communities whose population is less than 25,000 residents, is likely to have a gang problem dissipate as quickly as it developed. Therefore, the largest impact of gangs is on communities in larger cities with high population counts. Howell (2006) cites a study conducted in Orange County, California where residents were interviewed regarding gangs in their communities. The study reported that residents, who lived in gang-infested communities, that they would avoid specific areas of the community because they were frightened of the gangs and the criminal victimization that they could possibly endure. Other residents shared that they would take a different streets or longer routes throughout their community to get somewhere just to avoid gangs that were operating in specific areas. Gangs will often “take over” areas of communities to show their power and control over the community. Gangs will populate themselves in public-housing developments and declare it as their “turf” (Howell, 2006). The criminal activity that gangs become involved in against other gangs produces dangerous violence. Homicides are one of the greatest concerns of several groups of people; including but not limited to law enforcement agencies, social service agencies, and community members. “Youth gangs are responsible for a disproportionate number of homicides. In two cities, Los Angeles and Chicago, over half of the combined nearly 1,000 homicides reported in 2004 were attributed to gangs” (Howell, 2006, p. 3).

There are multiple effective prevention programs listed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP] in an overview on research and programs on gang prevention, including but not limited to: Gang Resistance Education and Training [G.R.E.A.T.], Gang Violence Prevention Project [GVRP], Preventative Treatment Program, , Boys & Girls Club of America, Aggression Replacement Training, Cease-Fire Chicago, CASASTART, and

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Comprehensive Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Model. These programs have been scientifically proven as effective and gang membership rates were on the decline during the 2000s but have begun to rise again since 2012, according to the NGC's National Youth Gang Survey (2014). Government funding allocations have not been provided or used wisely and communities are now starting to see gang membership rates on the rise again.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to explore the topic of juvenile boys that are involved in gangs and the various factors that affect their delinquent behaviors. The research gathered provides insight into the relationship between gang membership and juvenile delinquency. Adolescents who are involved in a gang may not be enrolled or even attend school; they might spend their free time with peers who may be involved in gangs or participate in other delinquent behaviors. More government funding should be allocated to create programs or services in the community and in schools in order to help decrease the chances of adolescents becoming involved in gangs. The goal of this research was to provide a recommendation based on effective programs. For example, a program similar to the G.R.E.A.T. program could include an effective feature of the Preventive Treatment Program (also known as the Montreal Longitudinal Study) – a combination of parent training and childhood skill development. It is great that this information is being taught to kids across the country on how to avoid gang involvement and what the negative consequences are. However, are the parents of these children also educated and understand what their children are being taught? High risk families should be involved in programs to provide support for the parent in keeping their children out of gangs and keeping them involved in positive and prosocial activities. The parent should be able to meet with and

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become involved with the law enforcement officers that are teaching the gang resistance education curriculum as well, since this typically occurs while school is in session and parents are at work.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was to gather information regarding several effective deterrent programs and using the effective fragments of each program to provide a recommendation for a comprehensive program that can be essentially a “super” program that is effective. This study reviews multiple programs that have been proven to be effective in order to compile recommendation for a possible new program.

Assumptions

It is very easily and often assumed that juvenile boys are involved in gangs more often than juvenile girls; this assumption is true in most cases (National Gang Center, 2014). Another common assumption is that all juveniles involved in gangs come from broken homes or are on the low end of the poverty scale. This may be true in a lot of cases; however, juveniles involved in gangs can come from any socioeconomic status. “Gang members are more likely to come from lower socioeconomic status and single-parent families that provide harsh discipline and inadequate supervision and they are more likely to have delinquent friends and to attend schools with members of gangs” (Lahey, Gordon, Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Farrington, 1999, p. 262)

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Limitation of the Study

An important limitation to this particular research is that it includes juveniles which often times can be a difficult population to survey because of liability concerns. When involving a juvenile in research or any other capacity, typically waivers or forms of consent are required to allow the minor to participate. In this case, the use of data from previous years or other research was used to support or oppose certain subject matters.

Another limitation to this research is obtaining demographic or characteristic information regarding a specific city or state as opposed to national information. Without this specific data, it can be difficult to accurately understand the severity of gang involved youth in our communities. Local and/or state law enforcement or social service agencies should consider collecting this data to better understand whether or not gang involved youth is an issue in their community.

Methodology

The methodology used for this research paper was secondary research and statistics that were gathered from multiple sources. Those sources included, but were not limited to, research studies collected from EBSCOhost, government publications, and statistical reports from various agency websites. Additional statistics regarding education and graduation rates among the youth will be used to compare rates across the United States and specifically across Illinois, Cook County, and Chicago.

Review of the Literature

Risk Factors

The big question around gang involved youth is why. According to various research, there are several reasons why an adolescent would join a gang. Based on self-reports from adolescents, found in a study cited by Craig, Vitaro, Gagnon, and Tremblay (2002), they turn to delinquency and gang activity from feelings of alienation from their parents; harsh discipline, lack of a male role model, unstable economic situations, or rejection by the family. Craig, Vitaro, Gagnon, and Tremblay (2002) sought to study the “stability of belonging to a gang in early adolescence, the behavior profiles, family characteristics, and friendships of non-gang and gang members” and their results found gang members had “significantly higher scores than non-gang members on teacher ratings of fighting behavior, hyperactivity, inattention and oppositional behavior and self-reported delinquent activities” (Craig, Vitaro, Gagnon, & Tremblay, 2002, p. 1). They also found that peers rated non-gang members as less aggressive than gang members. Dmitrieva, Gibson, Steinberg, Piquero, and Fagan (2014) were interested in studying self-esteem, psychosocial maturity, and psychopathy as potential factors that contribute to gang membership and are affected by gang affiliation. Researchers found that psychosocial maturity was low among low-level gang members and low temperance was among gang leaders. Lower self-esteem did predict gang affiliation for the future among younger gang members and leaders; however, higher results of self-esteem distinguished between older gang leaders from younger gang members. When adolescents experience any of these feelings, they seek out a peer group (such as a gang) that will be supportive of their delinquent behaviors. Lenzi, Sharkey, Vieno, Mayworm, Dougherty, and Nylund-Gibson (2015) examined how the role of protective and risk factors play a part adolescents’ lives in predicting adolescent gang membership. Researchers

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found that high levels of empathy, academic achievement and being a female was associated with the likelihood of not being involved in gang activity or membership; also, adolescents with high levels of parental support were less likely to be involved in gang activity or membership.

According to the NGC (n.d.), there are five types of risk factors that are linked to youth joining a gang; family, individual, school, peer, and community. The longer the list of risk factors existent in a youth's life, the more likely they are to join a gang (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001). The NGC (n.d.) cited the Seattle Social Development Project [SSDP] study where "seven or more risk factor indicators were 13 times more likely to join a gang than were children with none or only one of these indicators" (p. 1). The NGC (n.d.) cited that the different types of family interactions and interrelationships may or may not predict gang membership. Family risk factors include poor parental supervision, low parent education, family poverty, low family socioeconomic status, pro-violence attitudes, and child maltreatment. A key risk factor for youth joining a gang is living with a member of a gang (National Gang Center, n.d.). Individual risk factors include youth who are involved in "delinquency, violence, and drug use at an early age are at higher risk for gang membership than are other youngsters" (National Gang Center, n.d., p. 1). Other risk factors include mental health problems, experiencing life stressors, trauma from violent victimization, involvement in violence, and aggression. These factors may assist in predicting gang membership among youth. The NGC (n.d.) cited a few other studies regarding the relationship between school performance and gang membership. Both studies found that low academic success is associated with a "low degree of commitment and involvement in school" which can lead to youth turning to gangs for protection (National Gang Center, n.d., p. 1). Youth who often experience suspensions and expulsions in poor-quality schools were also at risk for joining a gang. Peer risk factors are when youth engage with other youth who participate in

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delinquent behavior, which is one of the strongest risk factors of joining a gang. Studies cited by the NGC (n.d.) reported that youth who associated themselves with aggressive peers during adolescence and youth who were rejected by ‘popular’ youth were more likely to join a gang. Community or neighborhood risk factors that include high arrest rates, drug use, and disorganization have been shown to predict gang membership among youth in early adolescence. Other risk factors include exposure and access to drugs and weapons, neighborhood youth in trouble, feeling unsafe, and low neighborhood attachment. Heightened availability to drugs/alcohol/weapons leads to higher chances of participating in delinquent behaviors which lead to violence, and unsafe neighborhoods lead to youth joining gangs for protection.

Statistics

For 2010, the NGC (2014) reported in the National Youth Gang Survey Analysis [NYGSA] that there was an estimated 756,000 gang members in the U.S. The number of gang members has remained relatively constant from 1996 to 2012 with some years higher than the average of 776,852 members. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI] (2012), it was estimated in 2011 that for every 1,000 people in Illinois there were at least 6 gang members. The FBI’s (2012) 2011 National Gang Threat Assessment documented at least 35 known gangs just in Illinois. According to the Chicago Crime Commission’s Gang Book (2006) counted 68,000 gang members in Chicago.

The FBI (2012) stated that there has been an increase in juvenile gang members due to the increasing incarceration rates of the adult gang members. Often times, juveniles are recruited to become gang members because of their vulnerability and the improved chances of being given minimal consequences from law enforcement agencies due to their young age. “NGIC reporting

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indicates that juvenile gangs are responsible for a majority of crime in various jurisdictions;” Illinois being one of them (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2012, p. 18).

The National Gang Intelligence Center [NGIC] (2014) reported that a 2010 OJJDP study showed that “45% of high school students assert that gangs are present in their schools while 35 percent of middle-school students report gangs presence in their schools” (p. 38). Juveniles also look to gang membership because they are seeking the comfort and validation from other peers when they cannot find it within their own homes or families. “Juvenile gang members are less likely to reside in two-parent households and are more likely to be raised by a single mother” (Hayward & Honegger, 2014, p. 375)

Demographics

The NGC (2014) stated that every three out of five gang members are adults which would equate that 40% of gang members are juveniles. The United States [U.S.] Census Bureau (2011) reported in the 2010 survey that the U.S. population was 308,745,538 with 53,980,105 individuals between the ages of 5 and 17. With the NGC’s 2010 NYGSA stating that there were 756,000 gang members in 2010, the data collected indicates that there were approximately 302,400 juvenile gang members. When comparing the number of juvenile gang members to the number of individuals between the ages of 5 and 17 in 2010, this indicates that less than 1% of the juvenile population was a gang member. However, this number may be inaccurate due to the difficulties in obtaining exact counts of gang members across the nation. Pyrooz and Sweeten (2014) made the same observation with the available data and decided to conduct a study to obtain more accurate data regarding the number of juvenile gang members in the U.S. between ages 5 and 17. The researchers utilized data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth

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1997 [NLSY97] and based on the first nine rounds of data collection. The data collected included self-reports of gang membership and status. Pyrooz and Sweeten (2014) estimated that there were 1,059,000 juvenile gang members in 2010 and that 2% of the juvenile population was a gang member. “About 1 of every 50 persons between ages 5 to 17 years self-reports active gang membership” (Pyrooz & Sweeten, 2014, p. 3). The data collected by Pyrooz and Sweeten (2014) produced data that was more than three times the data that the NYGSA estimated. The study conducted indicates that the data collected by law enforcement agencies has been inaccurate. However, Pyrooz and Sweeten (2014) stated that law enforcement agencies’ data:

are likely to include gang members who are generally older, more criminally involved and violent, and therefore of greater interest to law enforcement agencies, reflecting a top-down strategy of documenting youth gang members. Youth who briefly experiment with gangs or are peripherally committed to gangs are less likely to be included in law enforcement surveillance systems and instead captured in national surveys, reflecting a bottom-up strategy for documentation. (p. 4)

On average every year, out of 401,000 juveniles who join gangs, approximately 23,000 maintain their gang member status. This statistic is still significant enough that policy makers should be aware of the risks among the juvenile population. Intervention and prevention programs that are implemented or overhauled are important in ensuring the youth of the U.S. are being provided the opportunities to keep their status as a non-gang member. This, in turn, can decrease overall gang member populations and violence rates.

The NYGSA (National Gang Center, 2014) reports that the majority of gang members are males, however, since 2004, there has been a steady increase in female gang members. In 2010, the NYGSA reported that 92.6% of gang members were male. Female gang members are more common outside of larger cities as it has been reported by law enforcement agencies that almost

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half of the gangs outside of larger cities have female gang members (National Gang Center, 2014). In 2004, females accounted for 6.1% of gang members and in 2010, it increased to 7.4%. According to Barrett, Ju, Ktsiyannis, and Zhang (2015), "...in 1980, the juvenile male violent crime arrest rate was 8 times greater than the female rate, in 2009 the male rate was just 4 times greater" (p. 427). This indicates that males are generally more often arrested for crimes than females, however, the female arrest rate has increased over the years due to increased gang membership. Hayward and Honegger (2014) explain that both male and female juveniles share the same appealing reasons for joining a gang; such as, for fun, protection, or money. Hayward and Honegger (2014) found in their study that on average, males had a higher conviction rate and were more likely to have been convicted of a violent crime than females. They found no significant differences regarding family backgrounds between males and females; however, female juvenile gang members were more likely to have justice system involved siblings than their male counterparts.

Since 1996, a majority of gang members are Hispanic subsequent with African-Americans (National Gang Center, 2014). The percentage rates of race of gang members has remained nearly the same from 1996 to 2011 with Hispanics consistently in the high 40s. African-Americans have consistently ranged from 30 to 36% on average and Whites and other races have consistently remained lower than 13% since 1996. In 2011, the percentages for each race are as follows; Hispanic (46.2%), African-American (35.3%), White (11.5%), and Other (7%) (National Gang Center, 2014). According to the NGC (2014), in 2011, a majority of Hispanic gang members are documented to populate larger cities (45.5%), suburban counties (51%), and smaller cities (53.8%) more than any other race while African-American gang members are documented to populate rural counties (56.8%) more than any other race. White

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gang members are more likely to be populated in smaller cities (11.3%) and rural counties (14.9%) than larger cities (9.7%) and suburban counties (9.1%).

Gang Prevention Programs

The Gang Resistance Education and Training [G.R.E.A.T.] program, founded in 1991, has been one of the most popular and successful programs implemented. The G.R.E.A.T. program is self-defined as an “evidence-based, national and international gang and violence prevention program that has been building trust between law enforcement and communities for almost 30 years” (Gang Resistance Education and Training , n.d.). The idea behind this program is to help prevent juvenile delinquency and violence, and gang membership. The program is intended to target youth the years prior to the prime age for introduction into delinquent behaviors. The program has been designed as a law enforcement officer instructed classroom based in schools around the nation which includes a 13-lesson curriculum for middle school and a 6-lesson curriculum for elementary school. There is also a summer and family curriculum available.

The G.R.E.A.T. program has been evaluated multiple times over the years on its success and has been provided with areas of opportunity in order to grow and continue to be successful. There were two evaluations of the G.R.E.A.T. program conducted by the National Institute of Justice [NIJ] (2012), one from 1995-2000 and the other from 2006-2012. The first evaluation concluded that there were promising results but inconclusive evidence proving effectiveness, which led to the second evaluation. The second evaluation concluded that the program was more effective this time around after the program had been revised due to the original evaluation. In 1999-2000, the program and curriculum was reviewed to “ensure program adherence to the latest

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scientifically supported data regarding prevention and educational research and theory (Gang Resistance Education and Training , n.d.). After the program and curriculum review was completed, an updated curriculum was piloted in select cities and eventually fully implemented across the nation. The second evaluation of the newly implemented curriculum was completed in 2006 (Gang Resistance Education and Training , n.d.). The purpose of the second evaluation was to determine the success of the new program and curriculum. In 2009, the G.R.E.A.T. program was introduced in Central America due to the widespread growth in gangs.

“Results one-year post-program showed a 39% reduction in odds of gang joining among students who received the Program compared to those who did not and an average of 24% reduction in odds of gang joining across the four years’ post-program” (Gang Resistance Education and Training, n.d.). Esbensen, Peterson, Taylor, Freng, Osgood, Carson, and Matsuda (2011) reviewed the 1994 NIJ evaluation of the G.R.E.A.T. program. The cross-sectional study suggested positive outcomes, however, there were some differences between the program’s students and controls, which showed that none of the programs behavioral goals were achieved. Esbensen, et al. (2011) explained that:

G.R.E.A.T. students had lower levels of victimization and risk-seeking tendencies, more prosocial peers, more negative views about gangs, and more positive views of law enforcement; however, there were no differences between G.R.E.A.T. and non-G.R.E.A.T. students in levels of delinquency, violence, or gang membership. (p. 55)

The review of this program shows that there is some success in certain aspects of the program but not any overall effectiveness when compared to non-G.R.E.A.T. students.

Pyrooz and Sweeten (2014) conducted research to determine the frequency, prevalence, and turnover in gang membership between the ages of 5 and 17 in the United States. The data utilized was from the first nine rounds of interviews conducted by the NLSY97, which represents

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the youth born between 1980 and 1984. Pyrooz and Sweeten (2014) used the cross-sectional sample in their study, in which 6,748 completed an interview. Study participants were asked a series of questions in relation to their gang membership. The results of the study concluded that the participants who reported gang membership, and those that did not, that gang members are “significantly more likely than their nonmember peers to be male, Hispanic, and nonwhite” (Pyrooz & Sweeten, 2014, p. 3). Pyrooz and Sweeten (2014) explained that economically underprivileged minorities are represented notably higher statistically in gang populations than in the general population, however, “most youth gang members are still non-poor and white, and 30% of them are female” (2014, p. 3).

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP] began supporting a project in 1987 to reduce and prevent youth gang violence. The project was known as the Spergel Model of Gang Intervention and Suppression, later renamed and now known as the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model [CGM]; which is comprised of five strategies for dealing with gang-involved youth and their families: community mobilization, opportunities provision, social intervention, suppression, and organizational change and development (National Gang Center, n.d.). Community mobilization is the involvement of community members, former gang members, community groups and agencies. Opportunities provision is the “development of a variety of specific education, training, and employment programs targeting gang-involved youth (National Gang Center, n.d.). Social intervention includes the various members of a multidisciplinary team that works together with youth gang members and their families. The team may consist of but is not limited to schools, outreach workers, social workers, or law enforcement agencies. Suppression includes formal and informal social control methods with law enforcement agencies, the criminal justice system, community based agencies, and schools.

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Organizational change and development refers to the “development and implementation of policies and procedures that result in the most effective use of available and potential resources to better address the gang problem” (National Gang Center, n.d.). The CGM was a preliminary version of the Gang Violence Reduction Project in 1993 and later tested in five other cities in 1995.

The GVRP was implemented from 1993 to 1997 in a Chicago neighborhood known as Little Village. The GVRP is a “comprehensive, community-wide program designed to reduce serious violence in Chicago’s gang-ridden Little Village neighborhood” whose main objective was to reduce the high gang violence activity (National Institute of Justice, 2012). In the Little Village neighborhood, there were two predominant gangs present: the Latin Kings and the Two-Six. The program first wanted to focus on individual youth gang membership and then at the community level. The GVRP is a variation of the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model that shares the same five essential strategies; community mobilization, social intervention, provision of social opportunities, suppression, and organizational change; it assumes that gang violence is a result of social disorganization. The program believed that an integrated, team-oriented approach would help to reduce chronic gang violence; including but not limited to, law enforcement and social welfare agencies. The GVRP focused on gang members ranging from age 12 to 24 years old. “Youth, age 17 to 24 years, accounted for 70% of the serious gang violence; youth 16 and under were responsible for 20 percent of the serious gang violent crime” (Spergel, Grossman, & Ming Wa, 1998, p. 5). Spergel, Grossman, and Ming Wa (1998) documented 428 gang involved youth were receiving some form of program contact and 192 gang involved youth were provided intensive services. Spergel Grossman, and Ming Wa (1998) stated that 100% of the Latin Kings gang members and 86.3% of the Two-Six gang members

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were provided with contacts and services. They found that at their first data collection, only 30.6% were currently employed and 27.8% had received their high school diploma or GED while at their second data collection, 47.2% were currently employed and 46.2% had their diploma or GED. Spergel, Grossman, and Ming Wa (1998) determined that the GVRP was a remarkable success and had a national impact. “Based on finding derived from the community surveys and from individual-level and aggregate-level police data, the Project appeared to be effective in the reduction of gang crime, especially gang violence” (p. 625); however, the success of the GVRP was not enough for survivability and institutionalization (Spergel & Ming Wa, 2003). It was also tested in five other cities once it was up and running for a few years in Chicago; [1] Bloomington-Normal, Illinois, [2] Mesa Arizona, [3] Tucson, Arizona, [4] Riverside, California, and [5] San Antonio, Texas. If the GVRP would have received more attention and resources from the Chicago Police Department, the program may have been able to survive and continue to be successful in reducing gang violence.

The Preventive Treatment Program [PRP] (also known as the Montreal Longitudinal Study [MLS]) is a prevention program that was implemented by a multidisciplinary team in 1984 in Montreal to focus on disruptive behavior in kindergarten boys, aged 7 to 9, and their parents from low socioeconomic statuses. The goal of the program was to reduce short and long term antisocial behavior, such as delinquency, substance use, and gang involvement, through providing home-based training for the parents and school-based training for the boys. “Parents received an average of 17 sessions that concentrated on monitoring their children’s behavior, giving positive reinforcement for prosocial behavior, using punishment effectively, and managing family crises (National Institute of Justice, 2013). The boys received 19 sessions in which the training was implemented in small groups of disruptive and non-disruptive boys

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focusing on problem-solving skills, life skills, conflict resolution, and self-control (National Institute of Justice, 2013). The boys' training utilized "coaching, peer modeling, self-instruction, reinforcement contingency, and role playing to build skills" (National Gang Center, n.d.)

The program was originally deemed not effective based on a review of the program in 1995; however, the program was given a new rating of 'promising' based on a second and third review in 2007 and 2013. Tremblay, Pagani-Kurtz, Masse, Vitaro, and Pihl (1995) found the results to be varied regarding the effectiveness of the program; they found that there were some short-term effects that had a positive impact on the boys but no positive long-term effects. Researchers found that once the boys were in high school, both the treatment and control group were in regular level high school classes. They also found that there were overall significant differences between the treatment and control groups regarding self-reported delinquency. Lastly, Tremblay, Pagani-Kurtz, Masse, Vitaro, and Pihl (1995) found that 3.3% of the total sample was deemed a delinquent by law; however, was not statistically significant between the treatment [9.3%] and control [7.4%] groups (National Institute of Justice, 2013). Boisjoli, Vitaro, Lacourse, Barker, and Tremblay (2007) found in their review that the treatment group had a significantly higher high school graduation rate than the control group. The treatment group was found to have a 45.6% graduation rate while the control group had a 32.2% graduation rate. They also found that the control group [32.6%] had a higher rate of criminal records than the treatment group [21.7%] (National Institute of Justice, 2013). Vitaro, Brendgen, Giguere, and Tremblay (2013) found in their review that there was no statistical difference between the treatment and control group with regards to personal violence; however, found that the treatment group reported lower property violence than the control group throughout the three

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developmental periods [early adolescence, mid-adolescence, and late adolescence] (National Institute of Justice, 2013).

Another popular program that has been proven effective is the Boys & Girls Clubs of America [BGCA]. The BGCA originated in 1906 and was designed to help disadvantaged children in communities to develop the skills necessary to lead productive and meaningful lives. The BGCA lives in five regions across the country; Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, and New York; with its national headquarters in Atlanta (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2000). The BGCA has Clubs at several locations, such as schools, public housing, rural areas and inner cities. They have multiple locations so they are able to reach as many youths as possible who are at risk for joining a gang or participating in other delinquent behaviors. The BGCA has been so successful in improving the lives of young at-risk children across the U.S. that the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the U.S. Department of Justice have and continue to provide millions of dollars to support children and establish new clubs in communities. The BGCA provides youth with a “safe place to go after school and during the summer as well as a positive outlet for their energy” (Boys & Girls Clubs of America, n.d.). The clubs have various programs that youth can participate in to empower them to excel in school and their futures. Some of the programs are as follows; sports and recreation, education, the arts, health and wellness, career development, and character and leadership. The programs are created based on age groups so that they are closely aligned with the developmental needs of all participating adolescents (Boys & Girls Clubs of America, n.d.). There are also local programs that are built around the needs of the communities.

The BGCA (n.d.) explains that 1 in 5 youth will not graduate on time and reported that 90% of Club alumni earned a high school diploma or equivalent. There is an abundant of

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research available that has shown the effectiveness of the BGCA, however, little research was found in regard to ineffectiveness of the BGCA program.

Carruthers and Busser (2000) studied the outcomes of the adolescents' involvement in the BGCA, whether there was congruence between the Clubs' mission statement and the goals of the club's staff members, and the parents' perceptions of the Clubs' impact on their children. The Club that was evaluated was in a large Southwest city serving over 10,000 youths aged 7 to 18. The data was collected over a 30-week span where collection procedures included participant observations and semi-structured interviews. Carruthers and Busser (2000) identified three major themes related to the outcomes and/or the impact of the Club; [1] "club members developed relationships with others that cared about them and for whom they cared"; [2] "they learned positive behaviors"; and [3] "they cultivated skills and abilities in a variety of areas" (p. 57). Of the three major themes discovered by Carruthers and Busser (2000), four additional, ancillary themes were identified in relation to the impact of the Clubs: nurturing environment, positive behaviors, and competence/self-esteem and goal congruence. Researchers found that the overall evaluation of the Club seems to have a positive impact on the lives of adolescents who are club members; however, the study did discover that the Club's articulated goals and the goals articulated by staff members were discrepant.

A program such as the BGCA is important to have in communities that encompass at-risk youth, especially one-parent families. These clubs are a place that parents can feel assured that their child is safe and is staying out of trouble. This is also a beneficial program to adolescents who may only have one parent raising them because they will often look for outlets to feel loved and supported when they feel they aren't getting that at home. The program allows for them to build relationships with positive peers/mentors and other adolescents like themselves.

Theoretical Framework

Differential association theory, defined by Edwin Sutherland, is the “learning of behaviors and norms from the groups with which we have contact,” (Bates & Swan, 2014, p. 89). Sutherland’s model of differential association included nine propositions which can be easily applied to juvenile behavior and the learning of delinquency. Kissner and Pyrooz (2009) cite two studies where differential association was measured among gang members as a predictor of gang membership. The results of these studies concluded the researchers’ hypotheses of differential association. Kissner and Pyrooz (2009) wanted to extend the literature surrounding differential association and gang membership. Their study measured the comparative effects on differential association and gang membership in terms of strength and significance. The data for their sample was acquired from a random collection of sample of inmates housed in a large California city jail facility. The sheriff’s department provided researchers 2,800 inmates available, of which 10% were randomly selected. Of the 10% randomly selected for the study, 72% responded which provided the researchers with 200 inmates for their sample. The data was collected from the inmates via interviews over a six-week period from December 2005 to January 2006. Participants of the study were asked a series of questions regarding their gang membership, self-control, and gang membership among family members. Results of the study concluded there was no significance among the multiple variables; self-control, differential association, and familial gang membership. However, there was significance for differential association among gang-involved friends and relatives. Kissner and Pyrooz (2009) provided an example that:

Gang friends measure corresponded with a 26% greater likelihood of having reported former gang membership, and a unit increase in the gang-involved older relatives measure corresponded with a more than four-and-one-half

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time greater likelihood of having reported a former gang membership. (p. 483)

Differential association theory is a great example of how youth become easily involved in gang life. Haynie (2002) explains that youth who report that their friends are delinquent tend to report higher levels of delinquency than those with fewer or no delinquent friends. Sutherland's first proposition explains that delinquent behavior is learned due to the other youth they're involved with, or the environment that they are exposed to. Youth who have delinquent friends are more likely to take after the behavior that they see which is the quintessential definition differential association theory.

Social disorganization is a theory that was constructed by researchers Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay in the 1940s while researching high crime rates in Chicago neighborhoods despite the high population turnover. The theory explains "the nature of the relationship between the distribution of delinquency and the pattern of physical structure and social organization" (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Shaw and McKay (1942) based their logic on the fact that communities and their united efforts directly contribute to problems that exist in the community, and that the more interconnected the community is, the less problems there are to identify and fix (Madyun, 2011). Madyun (2011) explains that the social disorganization theory consists of four factors for whether a community had the ability to "socially control and pass on the norms, expectations, and values that lead to acceptable successful outcomes by diluting modes of socialization" (p. 24). The four factors included family composition (the number of single-parent households), residential mobility, racial diversity, and poverty. Social disorganization theory was originated to predict delinquency in urban areas; however, there have been studies that have examined the theory in rural areas. Moore and Sween (2015) sought to expand the limited research that has put social disorganization to the test in rural areas. They based their study off the framework of

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a previous study conducted by Wayne Osgood and Jeff Chambers in 2000. Moore and Sween (2015) found that factors such as; residential instability, ethnic diversity, and female-headed households were significant in explaining juvenile delinquency in rural areas, whereas factors such as; poverty rate, population density, and unemployment; did not. “The current analysis demonstrates that social disorganization theory cannot be applied fully to youth crime in rural areas, but that parts of the theory can be applied while other parts have no association” (Moore & Sween, 2015, p. 58). The results that Moore and Sween (2015) found are important for policy makers to take note due to the significance of some factors. Social disorganization can be associated with differential association; because of the unfortunate factors, as previously stated, that youth live through they are nearly forced to become involved with other peers in their communities. Without two-parent supervision in communities, it is difficult to lead youth in the right direction during their adolescence.

Routine activities theory consists of three elements: motivated offenders, suitable targets, and the absence of capable guardians against a violation (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Cohen and Felson (1979) stated that

The lack of any one of these elements is sufficient to prevent the successful completion of a direct-contact predatory crime, and that the convergence in time and space of suitable targets and the absence of capable guardians may even lead to large increases in crime rates without necessarily requiring any increase in the structural conditions that motivate individuals to engage in crime. (p. 589)

Miro (2014) referenced Gottfredson and Hirschi’s 1990 *A General Theory of Crime* stating that the motivated offender is most likely to be “a young man, without stable employment, who has failed in school, and who has a record of traffic accidents and emergency room visits” (p. 2). Adolescents who are in the presence of each other without any adult supervision are likely to

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engage in deviance as explained by the three elements of routine activities theory conceived by Cohen and Felson. Hughes and Short Jr. (2014) explain that research has shown that adolescents who spend time with their peers increases the risk of deviant behaviors; including but not limited to underage sexual activity, substance use, crime, and violence and aggression. Gang members often spend a lot of time together in various locations; however, are not all together at the same time and spent a majority of their time in smaller cliques (Hughes & Short Jr., 2014).

Recommendation

High risk families with children, specifically boys, should be involved in government funded programs to provide support for the parent(s) to keep their children out of gangs and involved in positive, prosocial activities. There have been several effective programs implemented over the years; however, gang membership rates are still relatively high and on the rise again. In order to continue having successful and effective programs, new ideas need to develop. This research paper has provided the foundation needed to make a recommendation for future gang prevention among adolescents.

The foundation for this recommendation is based off of effective components of other successful programs. The basis of this program recommendation will derive from the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model's five strategies; community mobilization, opportunities provision, social intervention, suppression, and organizational change and development. It is important that a multidisciplinary team is formed and fully understands the CGM and its implementation process. This program recommendation will also include the successful basis of the G.R.E.A.T. program; law enforcement officer taught curriculum in schools. It is important to teach and provide adolescents with vital information on what it means to be a gang member and the

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negative consequences that may follow. The curriculum based idea is supportive as it allows adolescents to ask professionals questions regarding gangs. The education they are being provided can be very helpful in an adolescent making the right decision to stay away from gangs and associating themselves with gang members. The parent(s) would be able to meet and become involved with the law enforcement officers that are teaching the gang resistance education curriculum to their child(ren), since the curriculum occurs while students are in school and parents are at work. The GVRP's essential program feature was providing outreach services to gang members and families at risk. It is vital to provide such services so individuals and families understand that there are services to be utilized to support them. The program idea would be for parents to meet after school hours with the law enforcement officer who is teaching the curriculum in their child's school and also with the social worker who is providing the at-home parent training. Any other professional involved in the family's prevention/intervention and training would be beneficial to meet with the other professionals to work together. It is also important for a community to come together to support the prevention and intervention of gang involved youth. The PRP or MLS program is believed as a promising program due to the fact the training would be provided to both parents, for monitoring their child's behavior, and adolescent boys, for their disruptive behavior. It is important to have services or training such as this available to families because every parent is a first-time parent at some point in their parenthood and they may not know how to monitor and course correct their child's undesirable behavior. Pulling together all of the successful features of each program can allow for a more successful program. It is imperative to learn and understand various programs that have been implemented. By understanding each programs achievements and opportunities, criminal justice professionals can come up with newer programs based off of previous programs' outcomes.

Conclusion

Involvement in gangs has been an issue among adolescents and is on the rise again. Gang involvement is one of the leading causes of juvenile delinquency. The NCG (2014) reported that there were approximately 850,000 gang members in 2012. The FBI (2012) identified that there has been an increase in youth gang members due to the increasing incarceration rates of adult gang members. The NGIC (2014) reported that in a 2010 study, 45% of high school and 35% of middle school students assert that gangs are present in their schools. A majority of gang members are reported to be male; however, there has been a steady increase in the number of female gang members (National Gang Center, 2014).

Some programs that have been successful in gang involved youth prevention are the G.R.E.A.T. program, the Comprehensive Gang Model, the Gang Violence Prevention Project program, and the Preventive Treatment Program. Each of these programs has a specific focus on how to prevent adolescents from becoming involved in gangs. They range from education, training, or social services. It is necessary that all levels of government understand that these types of programs are essential in ensuring the successful futures of adolescents and preventing gang membership and violence.

The purpose of this research was to explore the topic of juvenile boys involved in gangs and the various factors that affect their delinquent behaviors in order to make a recommendation to the criminal justice field on future program implementation.

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