

2020

The Effectiveness of African American Male Faith-Based Juvenile Delinquency

Dewaun C. Martin
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), and the [Quantitative, Qualitative, Comparative, and Historical Methodologies Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Dewaun Martin

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Melanye Smith, Committee Chairperson,
Criminal Justice Faculty

Dr. Grace Telesco, Committee Member,
Criminal Justice Faculty

Dr. Daniel Jones, University Reviewer,
Criminal Justice Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2020

Abstract

The Effectiveness of African American Male Faith-Based Juvenile Delinquency

Programs

by

Dewaun Martin

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

May 2020

Abstract

The Southeast region of the United States is experiencing an increase in the amount of crime in the African American community particularly among juveniles. Furthermore, the rate of African American juveniles being arrested is higher than arrest rates among other races. This problem reveals the need for reformation and rehabilitation programs to reduce recidivism in the juvenile justice system. Research indicates that juveniles who have attachments to a conventional institution commit fewer delinquent acts. Although attachments to sports and other programs are positively associated with the social bond theory, it was unclear what aspects of the church program might influence delinquency rates. Therefore, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to determine the effectiveness of the juvenile rehabilitation programs at African American Baptist churches, with the intention of identifying areas of success, as well as weaknesses. Guided by Hirschi's social bond theory, a purposeful sample of 21 African American male juveniles who attend a faith-based program were recruited from one church in the Southeast United States, and data were gathered through the use of semi-structured interviews. Data analysis consisted of a process of inductive coding, categorizing, and interpreting raw data for meaning. The findings revealed that when the restraints of the social bond theory are intact, juveniles are committed to the staff leading the program and to making better decisions about committing delinquent acts. The data provided by this study has implication for social change and may be valuable for policymakers in assessing the effectiveness of church rehabilitation programs and reducing recidivism among African American males in the juvenile justice system.

The Effectiveness of African American Male Faith-Based Juvenile Delinquency
Programs

By Dewaun Martin

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

May 2020

Dedications

This journey is dedicated to my Lord Jesus and my Savior. Without Him, I do not think I could have done this. My late father, Alfred Martin, who guided me through many sports and taught me at an early age about preparation and dedication. My mother, Ossie Trimble, who always preach faith to me, whom I have seen struggle to make my life and my sibling's life more successful, mom, I thank you! To my sister Chakesha and my brother Garri, thanks for allowing me to vent my frustration to you as well as encouraging me. To my son, Mathew, thanks for allowing me to mentor you and you mentor me. To my grandson, Elijah, thank you! To Yanick, thanks for your support. To my young daughters, Leilani and Jalah, every day I wake up, I am inspired to be my greatest. To my wife, Rachel, I started this process over three years ago, and you have provided me the strength. My family, thank you all, this was truly a group effort, and to GOD be the glory.

Acknowledgments

To Dr. Melanye Smith, my mentor, you guided me throughout this process, and sometimes I believed you knew when to call me. I believed you sensed when I was frustrated. Thank you for believing in me. Thank you for always supporting me and providing feedback in a timely matter.

To Dr. Grace Telesco, thank you so much for your guidance and support. Thank you for allowing me to call you, especially when I did not understand what to do.

To Dr. Daniel Jones, your feedback pushed me in the right direction, thank you for being a mentor.

To Dr. Laura McCormick, my editor, thanks for providing me a voice.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Problem	1
Introduction.....	1
Background.....	5
Statement of the Problem.....	6
Purpose of the Study	7
Research Questions.....	8
Theoretical Framework.....	8
Nature of the Study	9
Key Concepts and Definitions	11
Assumptions.....	12
Scope and Delimitations	13
Limitations	14
Significance of the Study	17
Summary	18
Chapter 2: Literature Review	21
Introduction.....	21
Theoretical Framework.....	24
Background.....	26
Juvenile Delinquency.....	34
African American Juveniles in the United States	36

Juvenile Delinquency in Southeast Region, United States	37
Southeast Central Region Delinquency Rates	39
Social and Environmental Factors	40
African American Church.....	44
Studies Using the Social Bond Theory	47
Summary	49
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	52
Introduction.....	52
Research Design.....	52
Role of the Researcher	55
Methodology	57
Population	57
Sample.....	59
Sampling Strategy.....	61
Instrumentation	62
Data Collection	64
Data Analysis	66
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	67
Ethical Procedures	69
Summary	70
Chapter 4: Results	71
Introduction.....	71

Research Setting.....	72
Demographics	74
Data Collection	78
Participants.....	81
Interview Questions	81
Interview Question 1	81
Interview Question 2.....	82
Interview Question 3.....	83
Interview Question 4.....	83
Interview Question 5.....	84
Interview Questions 6 and 7	85
Interview Question 8.....	86
Interview Question 9.....	86
Data Analysis	87
Discrepant Cases.....	90
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	91
Credibility	91
Transferability.....	91
Dependability.....	92
Confirmability.....	92
Results.....	92
Emerging Theme 1: Effective.....	94

Emerging Theme 2: Better Decision.....	97
Emerging Theme 3: Role Model.....	99
Summary.....	102
Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion	103
Findings.....	104
Theme 1: Effective.....	107
Theme 2: Better Decision	107
Theme 3: Role Model	108
Limitations of the Study.....	108
Recommendations.....	109
Implications for Social Change.....	110
Individual Level	110
Family Level	111
Organizational Level.....	112
Societal Level.....	112
Methodological Implications	113
Theoretical Implications	114
Recommendations for Practice	114
Conclusion	115
References.....	117
Appendix A: Flyer	135
Appendix B: Interview Questions.....	136

Appendix C: Interview Protocol	138
Appendix D: Letter of Permission	139

List of Tables

Table 1. Demographic Information	77
Table 2. Themes	88

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Problem

Introduction

African American males' high percentage of arrests has been documented in research for decades. The disparity of arrests between African Americans juveniles and other races is very well recognized in the United States. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2017), in the Southeast Region of the United States, reported that half of the juveniles that have been arrested are African American. This has created a problem in the black community. Although arresting a black juvenile male does not explain the factors that contribute to an arrest or demonstrate the effectiveness of prevention programs, policy-makers must make an effort to combat this issue.

The black church is a significant component, as well as an asset, of the black culture. The African American community has developed a focus on spirituality that influences many aspects of their lives. The church traditionally has served as a protector for many African Americans. Praying to God is seen as a reliance that life will get better when God is a part of the plan. According to Cheney, Geoffrey, Booth, Sullivan, and Stewart (2014), African Americans in the South have higher rates of participation in religious activities. Religious belief has influenced the culture and has provided core morals that are valued in the African American community. Despite the limitations due to the separation of church and state, the black church can offer prevention programs to African American youth that potentially decrease the amount of criminal activity that juveniles commit. According to Travis Hirschi's social bond/social control theory (1969),

individuals participate in a delinquent act when bonds are weakly developed. As a result of weakly developed bonds, Hirschi (1969) believed that humans are fundamentally influenced by desires and crime, which may lead them to seek out their desires. Some research has suggested that programs that share the characteristics of the social bonding theory can impact African American juveniles. Therefore, faith-based programs should provide services containing attachments, commitment, involvement, and belief in order to reduce juvenile delinquency in the African American community.

There are programs provided by the juvenile justice system that include substance abuse, mental health, and sex offenders' programs, among other programs, that foster juvenile delinquency rates. Harvey and Hill (2004) examined programs that included after-school activities, mentoring, church-based activities, social skills training, and substance abuse programs. The authors examined the effects of programs on African American male youth, as well as their parents. The findings revealed that youth participating in substance abuse programs experienced positive outcomes, such as increased self-esteem and effective knowledge about drug use. Harvey and Hill (2004) noted in their research that although the African American churches offer some types of programs to foster African American juvenile delinquency rates, they do not sufficiently address the many factors that contribute to delinquency. These factors include drug use, peer influence, education development, social, and environmental factors. Increased African American church involvement in the lives of African American youth can

enhance the bonding and trust, thus creating a positive outlook on life that can provide a distance between the black youth and juvenile delinquency acts.

The African American church can provide programs to assist the African American youth with better decisions, while helping to reduce the number of African Americans into the adult criminal justice system. The Venable (2015) study found that members of the church should provide some type of support either with the church or through referral efforts made by the church. It was also noted that if the church were to provide the service for African American juveniles, it should only be done after training to ensure effectiveness, as well as provide privacy, for the African American juvenile (Venable, 2015). Furthermore, it was suggested by Venable (2015) that African American families tend to use the church as a safe haven, and the assumption can be made that when an African American juvenile commits a delinquent act, the black church is where they tend to turn for support. Moore, Adedoyin, Robinson, and Boamah (2015) discussed the role of the black church. The main components of this study suggested that the black church has and continues to fill a significant role in the lives of black people. Moreover, sustaining relationships is essential to reducing the rate of incarcerated black juveniles. The church can address the many social and environmental factors that are predictors of criminal activity, especially in low-income areas where delinquency rates tend to be higher than in other areas.

Robinson, Blackmon, and Rhodes (2016) stated that juvenile delinquency in low-income areas has been studied in some literature and remains a problem in the African

American community. Young (2014) suggested that social factors, in particular peer influence and substance abuse, as a link to delinquency. Weatherburn and Schnepel (2015) further stated that family factors such as parent involvement, supervision, and inconsistent or harsh punishment contributed to the causes of delinquency.

Researchers have given much attention to juvenile delinquency, and although the juvenile justice system has evolved, there is still a need to continue to lower delinquency. Keenan and Rush (2015) suggested that juvenile justice policy, currently, is focused on whether juvenile offenders should be transferred to the adult criminal justice system. The juvenile justice system in the United States did not exist before the 1800s, and all juvenile criminal cases were primarily handled in adult criminal court. If convicted in adult court, juveniles were handed the same sanctions as adults (Keenan & Rush, 2015).

In 1899, the United States established the first juvenile court system in Cook County, Illinois (Troutman, 2018). The goal of the first juvenile court in the United States was to divert offenders from punishment and provide rehabilitation based on individual needs (Troutman, 2018). It is time for the policymakers to present another measure that will provide services to reduce the number of juveniles to the adult criminal justice system. In this study I explored how programs provided a barrier for juvenile delinquent acts and, furthermore, how the African American church programs directed the decision-making that halted a juvenile from committing a delinquent act.

This qualitative phenomenological analysis focused on interviews with juveniles about their experiences emphasizing the effectiveness of faith-based initiatives on

delinquent acts. In this research, I examined the effectiveness of programs within the church in order to influence policy. This study took place in the Southeastern region of the United States at facilities located throughout the region. There is a need to study church programs as a preventive measure. The information obtained from this research can help to aid the process of reducing juvenile delinquency.

This chapter includes a summary of the focus of this study, which was to explore the effectiveness of faith-based initiatives through the life experiences of juveniles. This chapter includes a discussion of the background of this study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions that guided the study, the theoretical framework, the nature of the study, and the definition of terms. This chapter also includes a review of the assumptions, the scope of the study, the limitations, and the significance of this study.

Background

The church is a place to provide meaningful help to at-risk youth. The church historically has provided a shelter within the African American community. Venable (2015) reported that African American juveniles' families are more inclined to rely heavily on members and ministers to address the many needs of personal and emotional needs. Therefore, with African American families relying heavily on the black church, this also allows the African American juveniles to rely on the African American church as well. The essential factor in Venable's research is that the church can play a vital role in the rehabilitative process for African American juveniles. Moore et al. (2015)

suggested the responsibility of the black church continues to fill a role in the lives of African Americans.

The African American church can provide for the juvenile, the essential components of Travis Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory, which displays attachments, commitment, belief, and involvement within a program that the church offers. The black church can exhibit these four key restraints and change the conduct of a juvenile's behavior. Mohideen, Anuar, Latiff, Ridzuan, and Kamarudin (2016) believe that the family is key to developing ties within the church, thus allowing the church to help with decreasing criminal activity. Findings from this analysis provide insight into African American juveniles' perceptions of how effective the black church programs are at helping the juvenile refrain from committing delinquent acts.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this research was the high rate of African American juveniles who recidivate within the Southeast region of the United States. Research has shown the arrest rate for African Americans juveniles in the Southeast region of the United States is higher than other counties in this location ("Juvenile Arrest Rates," 2017). In this location, one county is fifth in population, yet leads all other counties whose population is double in that state, in African Americans juvenile arrest rates ("Juvenile Arrest Rates," 2017).

Currently, organizations in the Southeast region of the United States have implemented programs that includes Outward Bound, Thause Educational & Exposure,

Youth Central, and probation and residential substance abuse programs (Department of Juvenile Justice, 2017). The programs offered by faith-based programs focus on mental health, assessment, substance abuse, prevention, and education (Aspire Health Partner, 2017).

Despite the juvenile justice system efforts aimed at rehabilitation for juveniles (Lipscomb, 2013), there are no studies that explore whether the use of a faith-based recidivism prevention program is more effective than those offered by the juvenile justice system. This study may provide data to assist policymakers in evaluating the effectiveness of faith-based juvenile delinquency programs when developing policies that could expand access and funding to the faith-based programs to enhance recidivism reduction efforts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the effectiveness of faith-based delinquency programs through the viewpoint of juveniles, in an effort to reduce juvenile recidivism rates in African American communities. This exploration included interviews with African American juveniles who attended the programs at the black church. This study took place in the Southeast part of the United States. The goal of a qualitative researcher is to explore an issue in depth and to understand better the perception of individuals who are connected to the investigative problem (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Research Questions

The following research question guided this study:

RQ1: What is the perception of participating juveniles regarding the effectiveness of faith-based programs?

RQ2: What outcomes do juveniles expect when they participate in faith-based initiatives?

RQ3: How does social bond theory (i.e., bonds formed with the staff as a result from the programs offered) add to the success of the program as perceived by juveniles?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis for this study was the social bond theory. This perspective provided an explanation that supports preventive measures for juvenile delinquency and served as a groundwork for the importance of religion. The theoretical foundation for this study was Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory. The Hirschi (1969) approach supports the idea that juveniles who have attachments are less likely to commit delinquent acts. The faith-based initiatives in this current study provided informal relationships that postulated positive feelings of attachments while placing higher importance on not committing delinquent acts. Hirsch's (1969) posited control theory suggests that when social bonds that serve as the primary inhibitors to delinquency attachments are not in place, the juvenile is more likely to commit delinquent acts. Therefore, by building relationships with the church, it can decrease the opportunity for delinquency.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study involved a qualitative research method that explored the perceptions of juveniles on whether or not programs within the church are effective in keeping juveniles away from the juvenile justice system. The findings of this study identify the perceptions on whether or not programming helped juveniles not to commit further crimes. The framework was constructed to address the gap in the literature. Qualitative research is ideally a method that attempts to understand perceptions, perspectives, and understanding of a particular phenomenon (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This research used a phenomenological analysis that explored a phenomenon by observing an existing theory. Hollow (2014) noted that exploratory research aims to enhance the understanding in the field by providing further insight into a phenomenon. This study analyzed the faith-based programs as a means for understanding the impact of programs in a religious institution and how it is a better option for the African American juvenile male as opposed to the juvenile justice system. Qualitative research is not intended to prove or test a theory, but rather, to provide an explanation of the social problem.

A phenomenological approach is a branch of qualitative study that focuses on the commonality of live experiences within a particular group and can be used to explore a phenomenon (Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, & Avery, 2011). The phenomenological design is the approach that was utilized, and the focus in this study was in-depth interviews in low socio-economic areas in the Southeast region of the United States. Miner-Romanoff (2012) suggested that qualitative phenomenological data

yields an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences that involves a cyclical analysis. I located a faith-based initiative and conducted 21 interviews at the church using juveniles who attended church and participated in a faith-based program.

According to McGivern (2003), sample sizes of 20 are appropriate to understand interviewees' views on a topic. Furthermore, saturation is reached within this range and themes are developing to see patterns in the data set to determine the effectiveness of the programs offered by faith-based initiatives. In this research study, I developed themes and described accurately common information that indicates success in faith-based programs. The range of participants provided the in-depth details that are in alignment with phenomenological requirements. The first-hand data of the phenomenological study approach increased the understanding about the influence programs have on juvenile recidivism rates. The reasoning for the use of a phenomenological study approach is to record research with details in order to investigate a phenomenon in a real-life environment. For this current research, phenomenological design encouraged the live experience from juveniles that helped recognize how faith-based initiatives are effective in reducing juvenile delinquency rates.

A phenomenological design helps to create understanding of the lived experiences of people and allows the voices of the members to be heard (Groenewald, 2004). Another advantage to using a qualitative phenomenological approach is that themes emerge from the data collected from the participants' viewpoint (Groenewald, 2004). According to Groenewald (2004), the phenomenological method provides detailed

information that concentrates on lived experiences of individuals and can help generate new ideas that will help show different aspects of a person's knowledge. During the interview process with juveniles, I identified patterns and themes that revealed the effectiveness of church programs. I used inductive coding and transcribed the data. Analyzing qualitative data requires an interpretation of a large amount of transcripts in order to find similarities as well as differences within each interview with juveniles. I used HyperTransSCRIBE software to analyze the audio files in order to transcribe the transcript from each juvenile participant.

Key Concepts and Definitions

Adjudicated: The court finds a youth guilty of committing a delinquent act. The court can commit an adjudicated juvenile or place the juvenile on community control (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2012).

African American: Black Americans with African descent per this study.

Arrest: An arrest is made when a law enforcement officer charges an offender with a violation of the law and takes that individual into custody based on probable cause. A juvenile is taken into custody, and once in custody, youth are referred to their local Juvenile Assessment Center (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2012).

Black Church: Defined as a faith-based institution where the members are predominantly African American/Black (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

Delinquency act: Any illegal act committed by a youth under the age of 18 who has not been sentenced as an adult for a felony (Bartollas & Miller, 2015).

Juvenile: A youth most often under the age of 18 (Davis, 2002).

Juvenile court: The process in which juvenile proceeds through the various phases of court (Bilchik, 1990).

Judicial waiver: A process in which a juvenile court judge moves the jurisdiction from juvenile court to adult court (Bartollas & Miller, 2017).

Risk factors: Demographic variables that contribute to juvenile delinquency (Day & Wanklyn, 2012).

Recidivism: Engaging in repeated unlawful behavior (Davis, 2002).

Social bonds: The social relationships between people that connect and bind them to the social norms of those groups to which they are strongly connected (Hirschi, 1969).

Assumptions

It was assumed that all information regarding juveniles was accurately collected in order to provide unbiased research. It was also assumed that each juvenile attended church programs regularly. It was assumed in this research that juveniles would give the best opinion to programs offered by a faith-based initiative (church). I assumed that the answers from the interview questions given by the juveniles about the effectiveness of church programs were provided honestly. It was assumed that the arrest rate in the Southeast region of the United States was accurately documented for African American juveniles. I also assumed that juveniles would understand the interview questions in a safe environment. I assumed that the interviewees would provide accurate data in order to

know how effective the faith-based programs are at decreasing juvenile delinquency rates.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study was limited to examining how African American male juveniles' perceptions of how faith-based initiatives act as a deterrent from delinquent acts. Examining juveniles' perceptions of faith-based initiatives is the next stage of understanding the effectiveness of faith-based initiatives for at-risk African American juveniles. The scope of this current research did not take into account African American juvenile women or other ethnicities. The programs were from a church that offers programs and this study did not focus on programs from the juvenile justice system. The boundaries of this current study were limited to African American juveniles and the participants in this study must have participated in a preventive program offered by a faith-based initiative in the Southeast region of the United States. I considered using the functionalism theory to structure the research, but excluded this theory because certain concepts were not appropriate for the study. Functionalism theory emphasizes values such as adaptability, efficacy, and justice of law (Eskridge, 1998). According to Mooney et al. (2016), functionalism provides a system of interconnected parts that work together to maintain balance in society. Functionalism focuses on reproducing, nurturing, and socializing children by providing education (Mooney, Knox, & Schacht, 2016). Another integral part of functionalism is religion. Religion contributes to the moral guidance and creates an outlet for the worship of a higher power (Mooney et al. 2016). This theory

might help explain certain characteristics of the family, church, and religion, but it does not consider aspects of inequalities such as race.

Another theory that was considered was the cognitive evaluation theory, which explains the effects of external consequences on internal motivation. This approach focuses on competence and autonomy. Deci and Ryan (1985) noted that methods that promote greater perceived ability will enhance intrinsic motivation. The cognitive evaluation theory may provide information on how African American juveniles' thoughts process. but it was excluded from this study because it does not account for individual experiences.

Simon (2011) suggested that the researcher sets the boundaries, as well as the delimitations in a research study. In this study, the delimitation is the location where the research took place. The site of the location is in a small section of the Southeast region of the United States. The results of this study may apply to other locations where the criteria is limited to African American juveniles and the services are provided by an African American faith-based initiative (church). The sample size for this study was 21 African American juveniles.

Limitations

This research used a qualitative phenomenological method to explore the perceptions of African American juveniles regarding the effectiveness of programs within a faith-based initiative (church). According to Simon (2011), a limitation is a weakness of the study that may impact the results. A limitation associated with qualitative studies is

related to validity and reliability due to the natural setting (Simon, 2011). Furthermore, the natural setting can make it difficult to repeat the research (Wiersma, 2000).

This study is limited to a phenomenological design. The phenomenological approach is the best option to generate answers from the interview questions from the African American juvenile perspective. A limitation of a phenomenological design is subjectivity. Subjectivity is not free from bias influence and may make the findings hard to report. The presence of the researcher may influence the answers to some questions that are asked. Another limitation to this study is that I, as the researcher, am an African American male who may have had similar experiences. Therefore, research bias may be difficult to determine, and the results of the study could be affected.

This research is limited to African American juvenile males who participated in a faith-based program and, consequently, the findings may not be generalized to the whole geographical location, as well as all races. Dependability comprises of juvenile participants evaluating the findings of the research, as well as the analysis of a study to make sure that they are all supported by data received (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The dependability of this study is limited to the truthfulness and accuracy of each African American male juvenile when asked questions during the interviews. This study involved African American juvenile males who elicited their viewpoints about the effectiveness of faith-based programs. However, this study did not provide the perceptions of other ethnicities. This study took place in a church and does not provide information on incarcerated African American juveniles. The information obtained from

African American juveniles who are incarcerated in the juvenile justice system could provide a larger sample size that would produce more patterns and themes that can provide more details about the role of faith-based programs from the perspective of African American juveniles. Furthermore, studying incarcerated African American juveniles can ensure valuable information that can be generalize across regions and ethnicities. Thus, the studying of juveniles from all backgrounds, especially in low income areas, can possibly reduce juvenile delinquency acts. The best method used for this study was a qualitative phenomenological study.

I considered other methodologies for this study. There was a consideration for quantitative research. Quantitative research is a form of analysis that searches for causes, and effects, and predicts possible outcomes (Creswell, 2013). The aim in this study was to generate the information about the effectiveness of faith-based programs from the viewpoint of African American male juveniles. The one main advantage of quantitative research is that the results are based on objective facts, as well as being clear, concrete, and easily measured. Quantitative research does not give an insight into human emotions. Although quantitative research seeks to investigate causes and effects (Creswell, 2013), that was not the aim of this study. I used a qualitative approach to provide insight from an African American juvenile male viewpoint.

Qualitative research provides a deeper understanding and allows the researcher to have firsthand interaction with the participants (Creswell, 2012). The advantage of using a qualitative study is that it provides in-depth analysis and records attitudes, feelings,

behaviors, and the responses from the interview question and can simulate individual experiences while opening up new themes that originally were not considered (Creswell, 2012). Although qualitative research is time-consuming, it provided the appropriate methodology for this study. Another disadvantage is that the results can be influenced by the researcher's own experiences. Silverman (2010) argues that qualitative research approaches sometimes leave out contextual sensitivities, and focus more on meaning and experiences. Policy makers prefer quantitative research due to the results being clearer, as opposed to qualitative results (Rahman, 2016). Also, a qualitative research method usually has smaller sample sizes, which raises the issue of generalizability to the whole population (Rahman, 2016). Nevertheless, a qualitative approach was the best option to answer the research questions and add knowledge to the social science field by exploring the effectiveness of faith-based programs.

Significance of the Study

This research may contribute to the knowledge within the field of social sciences and advancing policy while promoting positive social change. According to researchers, juvenile delinquency in low socio-economic areas remains a problem in the African American community (Robinson, Blackmon, & Rhodes, 2016). The literature has also revealed that social factors affect criminal behavior. According to Young (2014), peer influence and substance abuse are social factors that are a link to juvenile delinquency. A contributing factor is a connection that youths have with their peers and how that relationship influences risky behavior. This study demonstrated how faith-based

programs are effective in reducing delinquent acts. This study's findings could assist in resources being allocated to faith-based programs outside of the juvenile justice system.

The juvenile justice system in the Southeastern part of the United States has always provided programs either within their facilities, or at appointed designations outside of the justice system, to help aid in the treatment of juveniles (Department of Juvenile Justice, 2017). However, according to Lashley (2013), the United States Constitution implemented the separation of church and state, and this has made it challenging to offer funds for faith-based initiatives. Faith-based initiatives are limited to providing services as a subcontractor for the juvenile justice system. This study may contribute to an understanding of successful delinquency prevention methods and may help reduce delinquency rates among the African American communities in the Southeast region of the United States. This study builds upon existing knowledge of what was known about the social bond theory and added new knowledge that was not known about the effectiveness of faith-based programs through the lived experiences of African American male juveniles. Existing research has addressed the church's influence on African American juveniles, but has not addressed the effects faith-based programs have on African American male juveniles. The findings of this study may provide positive social change to the African American community by providing information about another effective option for the success of juveniles.

The impact of positive social change starts with the ability to seek better decision making and presenting options that influence decisions. Incarceration of juveniles can

lead to higher costs especially when a juvenile is transferred to the adult prison system. History has suggested that the existence of juvenile delinquency instigates an interference to social order. Furthermore, crime changes society, and it distorts the community in how trust is reintegrated back into our communities. The impact of programs within the church will allow the juvenile to get back on track and lower the cost of imprisonment, while seeing a reduction in the number of African Americans entering into the adult system.

Summary

Research suggests that there is a disparity in arrests among African Americans as compared to other races. It is assumed that programs in the juvenile justice system provide the same treatment for all races. Despite this concept, African American juveniles account for half of the arrests in the Southeast region of the United States (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2017). According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2017), it was revealed that half of all the juveniles arrested are African American, but the alarming problem continues to be the transfer of African Americans juveniles to the adult court. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2017) reported that two-thirds of African juveniles are transferred to adult prison.

Travis Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory is a philosophy that focuses on building relationships that connect people. The church historically has played a crucial role for African Americans. Taylor, Chatters, and Levin (2004) reported that the black

church had provided spiritual, emotional, and social support for those living in poverty.

Also, the black church has provided an optimistic future through prayer to God.

The sources assisted in comparing the effectiveness of a program offered by a faith-based program to determine the success. Chapter 1 included an overview of the problem driving the study, the purpose of the study, the methodology, assumptions, scope, delimitation, and delimitations. In Chapter 2, I summarize existing literature on African Americans juveniles and church programs that can aid the juvenile in decision making. Specific references are available on factors that influence youth delinquency and how the church can intervene. This literature focuses on the church role concerning African American juvenile recidivism rates. The topics are as follows: background on the juvenile justice system, juvenile delinquency problems, African American juvenile in the United States juvenile delinquency in Southeast region social and environment factors, and church and social bond theory using existing studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In this phenomenological study, I explored the effectiveness of faith-based delinquency programs in the effort to reduce juvenile recidivism rates in African American communities. More specifically, I examined the effectiveness of faith-based juvenile delinquency programs in low-income and low socio-economic areas in the Southeast region of the United States. The problem was that African American juveniles are arrested at a higher rate than their counterparts. African Americans are then transferred to the adult system at a rate of 66%. Faith-based programs within the African American church in the Southeast region of the United States were examined. The African Americans' arrest rate in the Southeast region is at an higher percentage than the next region with the highest number of population within the Southeast region ("Juvenile Arrest Rates," 2017). Despite the juvenile justice system's efforts that are aimed at rehabilitation for juveniles (Lipscomb, 2013), there are no studies that explored if faith-based recidivism prevention programs are more effective than those offered by the juvenile justice system.

Juvenile delinquency is a behavior committed by juveniles usually under the age of 18 that may lead to adult crime. Although status offenses are less serious offenses, they can lead to criminal activity. Shaw and McKay (1942) set out to understand juvenile delinquency and the impact it has on urban areas. The social disorganization theory explains criminal activity based on structure and culture factors (Shaw & McKay, 1942).

These researchers claimed that areas with high rates of delinquency were structurally different from areas of low delinquency rates.

Crime in the United States takes a toll both regarding monetary cost and the loss of quality of life when offenders are incarcerated. Although adult offenders account for the majority of criminal activity in the United States, about 25% of juvenile offenders over the age of 16 will go on to re-offend in their early adult years (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2016; Tennyson, 2009). When effective interventions can be acknowledged and applied to target juvenile offenders, a decrease in the number of adolescents that re-offend as adults should follow. This would result in a better quality of life for both the young delinquent and society (Tennyson, 2009).

According to Bartollas and Miller (2017), medieval traditions influence the shaping of the juvenile system in England after which the United States modeled its justice system. One of the issues dealing with juveniles is the age of responsibility. Children under 7 years of age are generally not adjudicated, and therefore, are not prosecuted. The fixed age of 7 in the United States is used for determining whether youths will be excused from criminal responsibility.

The research questions in this study were used to examine how faith-based initiatives in Southeast region of the United States use programs to reduce recidivism among African American juveniles. The study data are based on juveniles' perceptions, which were collected in face to face interviews. The face to face interviews provided in-depth data to maximize the success of programs.

This chapter includes a historical overview of the juvenile justice system, and arrest rates among African American juveniles, as well as social factors, programs, and faith-based initiatives. Additionally, the theoretical framework is discussed. The social bond theory was used as it applies to the characteristics of treatment for juvenile offenders. In this chapter, I analyze program effectiveness and examine which interventions are most successful in decreasing juvenile recidivism. This review is broken down into four categories: (a) juvenile justice system; (b) juvenile delinquency rates; (c) effects of social factors on juveniles in low socio-economic areas; and (d) the relationship between African Americans juveniles and the church, as well as examining the effectiveness of programs within the church.

The first category of this literature review includes background on the juvenile justice system in the United States. The second category is about juvenile delinquency and African American juvenile delinquency rates in the United States, as well as the Southeast Region of the United States. The third category includes the elements of social factors that cause a juvenile to commit delinquent acts. Next, I discuss church-run programs and how faith-based initiatives programs affect change in the juvenile population. Studies using the social bond concept are examined. The primary emphasis of the literature review is to explore the effectiveness of faith-based programs in the effort to reduce juvenile recidivism rates in African American communities.

To help pinpoint resources for this literature review, searches using the Walden library were done using terms such as: *juvenile offenders*, *juvenile delinquency rates*,

juvenile African Americans, the African American church program, faith-based initiatives, racial disparities, African American juvenile males in the United States, the effects of poverty in the African American community on crime, social media effects on juveniles, and the juvenile justice system. The search using the Walden Library (PsycInfo, and Criminal Justice Database) produced numerous relevant articles connected to juvenile delinquency rates, African American juvenile offenders, and programs.

Theoretical Framework

Many theories have contributed to the causes of delinquent behavior. First, there is the differential association theory which states that those individuals who affiliate with criminals have a higher propensity to become criminals themselves (Church, Jagers & Taylor, 2012) and there is also the strain theory, which offers a perspective that people essentially respond to life's stresses differently. One response to life's stresses is criminal behavior. These two theories explain juvenile delinquency and contribute to the evolution of Travis Hirschi's social bond theory (SBT). Travis Hirsch's SBT functioned as the theoretical foundation for this study.

I employed techniques that explain methods to prevent delinquency. The SBT explains the relationships between the juvenile and informal social control. Furthermore, an attachment is vital to developing a relationship where programs are geared toward making the right decision, autonomy, and being able to adapt. Fagan, Wright, and Pinchevsky (2014) noted in their study that parents are identified as the primary source of social support for children, but attachments to the community are equally as important.

Although their study focuses on substance abuse, Yang and Yang (2017) found that bonds with conventional institutions (such as marriage, family, education institutions, and religious organizations) reduce the risk of negative behavior. The SBT provides a prevention technique for juveniles especially when connected to members of society.

The SBT is the primary prevention method where the church is allowed to form a connection with a juvenile in order to develop a relationship to decrease criminal activity. According to Longshore, Chang, and Messina (2005), Ford and Rigg (2015), and Yang and Yang (2017), weak social bonds are found to be associated with negative behavior and present a risk to juveniles. Hirschi (1969) stated that social bonds involve four components as the restraints of delinquency. The four restraints are attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief (Hirschi, 1969). Research has shown that having a meaningful connection to one's background is an enlightening asset for minority youth. In principle, the SBT argues that the existence of bonds to a convention institution reduces the likelihood of deviant behavior (Hirschi, 1969). The faith-based institutions for African American juveniles present a bond that is, more than likely, the conventional attachment that an African American's family relies heavily on, thus impacting the lives of young African American males.

According to Boakye (2013), external motivators, such as family, play a meaningful role in the development of a child. Furthermore, an African American's family association with the church influences the individual youth decisions and creates attachments that will last a lifetime. The emphasis offered in this theory permits the

members of a faith-based organization to deliver good foundations for the juvenile and will postulate the tools necessary to allow the juvenile to have good external support around them in order to cultivate their intrinsic values.

Background of Juvenile Justice in the United States

Although early medieval civilizations influenced the shaping of the juvenile justice system in England, the common law tradition of England eventually became the basis for the justice system in the United States today. In the 1920s, the idea of a juvenile court spread rapidly through the United States, bringing a refinement of the development of the juvenile court system.

Crime in the United States took its toll both regarding monetary cost and loss of the quality of life when offenders are incarcerated (Reed, Miller, & Novosel, 2017). In fact, according to research, one estimate of the total cost of juvenile crime in the United States currently equates to 5.7 billion dollars annually (Reed, Miller, & Novosel, 2017). This calculation includes medical expenses, lost earnings, and other services for victims as well as the intangible emotional costs of lost quality of life (Reed, Miller, & Novosel 2017; Tennyson, 2009).

Howell, in 2003, suggested that the United States' premise of the juvenile justice court system is that children are not as responsible as adults and should be considered differently. That belief is still in effect today as juveniles are still treated differently than adults. Many theories have suggested an explanation as to why juveniles commit

delinquent acts, but these theories cannot pinpoint with certainty the reason behind juvenile delinquency.

When the American justice system began to develop, there were some treatment options that were used as prevention methods. The doctrine of *parens patriae* provides a foundation for intervention techniques. This doctrine contained provisions that allows the state to intervene when the parents or guardians are not capable of taking care of their youth. These differences allow juveniles to obtain help when a violation of the law has occurred. Rather than seek to punish juveniles for a violation of the law, the juvenile justice system provides rehabilitation as an alternative.

Caldwell (2014) stated that the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (CRC) has made an impact on juveniles under the age of eighteen. CRC provides the best interest of the child, the right to life, survival, and development, as well as respected views of the child (Caldwell, 2014). The United States has been influenced by these core principles that appear to be consistent with the rest of the world.

There are much-supported differences on juveniles about culpability and how well the juvenile understands law while putting great emphasis on treatment. Some of the differences focus on treatment first, while the alternative to treatment is incarceration. The first juvenile court was established in Chicago, Illinois, in 1899 (Troutman, 2018), and yet there are still discussions over the goals and the legal procedures in the juvenile justice system with a juvenile that commits delinquent acts.

According to Blitzman (2015), the original Houses of Refuge in 1825 preceded the opening of the first juvenile court in Cook County, Illinois, in 1899. The House of Refuge was not originally planned to admit African American youth. However, when African American youth were reluctantly admitted, services that were provided proved to be insufficient (Blitzman, 2015). Therefore, treatment was not significant. As a consequence, African American children were disproportionately restrained in adult jails and prisons (Blitzman, 2015). While the juvenile court system developed and the Houses of Refuge resembled prisons, African American youth were disproportionately represented. First, there was exclusion from care; then there was an over inclusion in a system without care.

The question of whether juvenile offenders should be tried and sentenced differently than adult offenders elicits strongly held opinions from citizens, policymakers, and professionals. The juvenile justice system was established on the principle of individualized justice and focused on rehabilitation of youthful offenders (Howell, 2003). Although due process protections were considered significant, they were considered secondary in importance given the court's emphasis on care, treatment, and rehabilitation for juveniles (Howell, 2003; Lawrence & Hemmens, 2008).

In 1899, Cook County established the first juvenile court to extend treatment to juveniles (Troutman, 2018). Illinois legislature enacted the first juvenile code to deal virtually with all juveniles regardless of the seriousness of the offense. The first juvenile court contributed to the concept of *parens patriae* by providing the essential needs of

juveniles. Nevertheless, Cook County provided little direction for the programs that were offered. Despite these inconsistencies, many states followed the Cook County example of juvenile justice (Lawrence & Hemmens, 2008). The juvenile court has advanced from the use of the state taken care of at-risk youth to handle juvenile delinquents and what is best for the juvenile during the nineteenth century.

Although the first juvenile court in the United States was officially established in 1899, many juveniles did not have proper protection. The concern in proper protection was that juveniles who committed crimes were not being treated fairly by the juvenile justice system, even though the concept of rehabilitation remained the same. The case of *Kent v. the United States*, some 67 years later, developed the same due process rights for juveniles as for an adult. Furthermore, the emphasis was still on saving the child through treatment, but *Kent v. the United States* was significant because it established first due process rights for juveniles (383 U.S. 541, 86 S.Ct. 1045 (1966)).

Other juvenile court cases also determine the trajectory of due process within the juvenile justice system. Although the adult criminal system recognizes the right to counsel, the juvenile justice system, even after *Kent v. the United States*, still was in the beginning stages of the due process. The court case involving *Gerald Gault* established the right to notice and counsel. *In re Winship* recognized the due process right, such as proof beyond a reasonable doubt, while *Breed v. Jones* recognized that waived jurisdiction in adjudication hearings is a violation of 5th amendment rights, in particular double jeopardy. Jacobs (2013) and Davison (2015) emphasized that cases such as *Roper*

v. Simmons (2005), Graham v. Florida (2010), and Miller v. Alabama (2012) are the most influential court cases in establishing a foundation for the differences between juveniles and adults.

Davison (2015) maintained in the case involving Miller v. Alabama (2012), the court took the ban of life without the possibility of parole for juveniles a step further. The court held that the Eighth Amendment prohibits a sentencing scheme, as well as constituting cruel and unusual punishment which juveniles are not subject to these type of sanctions (Davison, 2015). The United States is governed by the constitution that gives rights to adults and juveniles.

These cases have stated the purpose of due process rights for juveniles. Treatment, rather than punishment, remains the resolution of the juvenile justice system. Because juveniles are less mature and often unaware of the consequences of their actions, they are held to a less high standard than adults. Furthermore, by giving juveniles protection under the constitution, the juvenile justice system has demonstrated more differences from adults. The belief is that children under a certain age (usually 18) could be held responsible for their delinquent acts, but the focus on treatment and what is the best welfare for the child has been the approach for a long time in the United States. The method of the best interest for the child is still appropriate and effective for the majority of juvenile offenders, whose crimes range from status offenses to property offenses to drug offenses (Howell, 2003; Lawrence & Hemmens, 2008).

In 1974, Congress passed the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) in order to address variations and to improve outcomes for youth and support the safety of society (Blitzman, 2015). The JJDP A provided federal juvenile justice dollars to the states in return for compliance with sweeping reforms (Blitzman, 2015). As noted before, it was common practice before due process rights were given to juveniles, that all children in the juvenile justice system, regardless of the type of their offense, were provided positive guidance. Moreover, the JJDP A agreed that status offenses should be decriminalized. Accordingly, Kunsnetz (2014), Blitzman (2015), and Baglivio et al. (2016) noted the JJDP A's initial core requirements were the deinstitutionalization of status offenders and sight and sound separation from adults (Baglivio et al., 2016; Blitzman, 2015). Another core component of the JJDP A was to reduce disproportionate minority contact (DMC) within the juvenile justice system.

Attention has been given to juvenile delinquency, and the juvenile justice system presently is under a microscope to lower delinquency rates. The juvenile justice system in the United States is often condemned for being unsuccessful. McShane and Cavanaugh (2016) and Mays and Ruddell (2012) pointed out shortcomings and failures within the juvenile justice system. The shortcomings and failures are indicated in the lack of preparation that deals with the individual issue in the juvenile court (individuals waived as adults), the violence within the juvenile justice system, and developmental deficiencies that otherwise would place the individual in a mental health facility.

Caldwell (2014) and Davidson (2015) proposed that the United States is the only country that incarcerates juvenile offenders for life without the possibility of parole. This approach seems to conflict with the concept that suggests juveniles are fundamentally different from adults and should be treated distinctively. With this approach, the United States juvenile justice system is punitive thus allowing youths under the age of eighteen to be waived to adult courts. A juvenile that is adjudicated delinquent can be placed in custody or community supervision (Mays & Ruddell 2012). Juveniles who are transferred, ultimately become prisoners in an adult setting. Mays and Ruddell (2012) and Church, Springer, and Roberts (2014) recognized that the consequences for juveniles transferred to adult courts can have an adverse effect and can cause more problems when returning to society. What could be considered a problem in trying to find solutions is that many states have a difference of opinion when it comes to transferring juveniles to adult court.

Church et al. (2014) stated that public opinion matters when a crime is present, however, the authors warned against transferring juveniles to adult court because it sends the message that society labels youth and, while the juvenile is incapacitated, the issues are still present. Church et al. (2014) further stated that instead of labeling, the criminal justice system should recognize the needs, abilities, and vulnerabilities of a juvenile. Although transfers can manage or control repeat and dangerous offenders, they can also be traumatizing and cause more problems with reintegration into the community once

time has been served (May & Ruddell, 2012). The primary goal of the juvenile court system is to determine whether a juvenile should be adjudicated as a delinquent.

Furthermore, removing teenagers from the juvenile court system reveals a shared certainty that the juvenile is beyond restoration, thus implying a deficiency in trust that juveniles are capable of being treated as the juvenile court system set out to do (Caldwell, 2014). Unfortunately, the system failures have put a strain on law enforcement to deal with child-developmental, mental health issues, and status offenses. Lynn and Sun (2017) noted that law enforcement uses authoritative actions when handling situations which could indicate that the police department is harsh toward juvenile crime. As Howell (2003) claimed in his work, history of the juvenile court in the United States suggested that children are not as responsible as adults and should look to rehabilitate. The authoritative approach should indicate to law enforcement that a supportive method is needed.

McShane and Cavanaugh (2016) also suggest that the goal of the juvenile justice system should include an emphasis on not incarcerating youth for less severe offenses. Therefore, by targeting more severe offenses will allow the juvenile justice system to focus on resources tailored toward serious offenses (McShane & Cavanaugh, 2016). The American juvenile justice system has progressed over the last 100 years with differences that separate juveniles from the adult criminal justice system. Consequently, history suggests that the juvenile justice system made no distinction for youth who broke the law as juveniles and were treated the same as adults.

The 18th century in the United States had no juvenile justice system to treat juveniles. Siegel and Welsh (2009) reported that juvenile offenders were incarcerated like adults and were subject to execution when committing a capital offense. The juvenile justice system has come under increasing scrutiny as a growing number of juveniles are involved in school violence, and gang-related violence (Howell, 2003). The juvenile justice system provides programs that are supposed to treat a specific behavior that a juvenile may encounter. However, despite the fact that juveniles are involved in a proportionately small number of murders each year, violent crime committed by juveniles elicits widespread media coverage (Howell, 2003).

Juvenile Delinquency Problems

The amount of people imprisoned in the United States is overwhelming. Feist-Price, Lavergne, and Davis (2014) stated minorities consistently represent the most significant percentage incarcerated in the United States. Thomas, Thomas, Burgason, and Wichinsky (2014) reported that early contact with the criminal justice system is associated with a persistent offending throughout life. Juvenile delinquency is a recognized social problem across many societies (Boakye, 2013). Juvenile delinquency quickly, in the 1990s developed into a crisis as the governments were presented with increased numbers of delinquent and at-risk youth (Lahlah, Van der Knapp, Bogaerts, & Lens, 2014). Lipscomb (2013) noted that juvenile delinquency has not improved, despite reports suggesting that juvenile arrest has decreased. According to Ferrall (2001), juvenile delinquency rates, beginning in the late 1980s through the early 1990s, began to

surge. During the mid-1990s, delinquency decreased and by 1999 the juvenile delinquency rate increase again (Ferrall, 2003).

Aizer & Doyle (2015) suggested that juveniles' incarceration rates have increased faster than adult incarceration due to reintegrating to the same situations. It is uncertain how the legislation would need to respond to juvenile violence, but action is required. Can holding juveniles to more accountability and having a more severe penalty that looks like the adult criminal justice system reduce crime? What happens when the youth returns to their communities? What happens when the barriers encountered make it difficult for them to engage in positive opportunities? How can the juvenile justice system ensure a decrease in juvenile delinquency if the juvenile returns to the same environment? More than a century has passed since the development of the first juvenile court and the system still faces a bevy of questions and the need for solutions.

Many juveniles do not have a positive role model to guide them away from crime. Therefore, juveniles are often exposed to dysfunctional parents, drugs, and peers that serve as an obstacle (Demeter & Sibanda, 2017). In the United States, juvenile delinquency is a wide-ranging social concern. Juveniles are being charged with criminal violations which, if they were adults, would get probation or nothing at all, depending on the violation. The prevalence of delinquent acts is seen most in urban areas. Ford, Kerig, Desai, and Feierman (2016) along with Reed, Miller, and Novosel (2017) asserted that youth incarceration rates in the United States are considerably higher than in other

countries. Also, Feist-Price et al. (2014) suggested that the United States has the highest rate of incarcerated black males.

Research by Ford et al. (2016) also suggests that young people of color are imprisoned at a disproportionate rate that suggests that more than two-thirds of incarcerated youth are African Americans, Hispanic, or of mix race. Moreover, this statistic is higher than the white youth. Ford et al. (2016) stated that the disproportionate minority interaction with law enforcement has led youth from low socio-economic areas into the U.S. juvenile justice system and has received different responses which have included more arrests and more stringent penalties.

African Americans Juveniles in the United States

According to research, African Americans are disproportionately represented among juvenile arrests in the United States. In research conducted by Evans, Simons, and Simons (2014), it was suggested that African Americans living in poverty reported a much higher level of involvement in delinquency and are much more likely to be arrested than other racial youth. Voisin, Caitlin, Kim, Patel, and Cantara (2016) indicated that African American youth, in particularly low-income areas, are at higher risk for delinquency. Studies by both Boakye (2013) and Voisin et al. (2016) suggested that variables, mainly from the individual and family domains, act as predictors in determining risk factors. Over the past decade, more and more attention has been given to the issues associated with at-risk youth, which includes youth age, crime, violence,

gender, substance abuse, depression, poor academic performance, and other issues that may be detrimental to our youth's survival (Buka & Earls 1993).

Evans et al. (2014) indicated that the presence of behaviors problems in childhood and adolescence is one of the most influential predictors of adult crime. Therefore, childhood and adolescence are very important when explaining the trajectories of a youth's life. Past research has indicated that socioeconomic factors are a contributor to delinquency rates. Many states within the United States have had problems with juvenile delinquency. In 2001, according to the National Center for Juvenile Justice (2017), African Americans juveniles were incarcerated at a rate 4.1 times higher than white juveniles. The National Center for Juvenile Justice (2017) reported in 2015 that the rate increased for African Americans to 5 times more likely to be incarcerated than white juveniles. Although during these years of 2001-2015 juvenile incarceration decreased, there remains a disparity in the United States between African Americans juveniles and white juveniles.

Juvenile Delinquency in the Southeast Region of the United States

One important trend to note in youth population is that the more youth population grows, the growth of juvenile crime, detention, commitment, and recidivism in the Southeast Region is more highlighted. The Southeast Region traditionally managed juveniles under the rehabilitation model of justice (Department of Juvenile Justice, 2012). The aged-out age in the Southeast Region juvenile justice system is 18. Once a juvenile has reached the age of 18, the juvenile is no longer eligible for juvenile justice services.

The juvenile justice services for proceedings related to children were under the umbrella of the Department of Health and Rehabilitative services (DJJ, 2012). The approach under this agency was to provide social services to the child as well as to the family. In 1994, this region shifted the juvenile justice system away from the social services model by creating the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ, 2012). This newly acquired agency was responsible for juvenile delinquency cases and children and family in need of services (DJJ, 2012). Furthermore, the philosophy remained under DJJ by providing treatment rather than punishment that the previous agency approached juvenile justice in the Southeast region of the United States.

The Southeast Region juvenile justice model started to distance itself from the social service model. In the year 2000, the Southeast Region of the United States legislation created a provision related to juvenile delinquency cases known as the Tough Love plan (DJJ, 2012). This plan shifted from the social service model toward a punitive criminal method. The Tough Love plan was not intended to punish the juvenile, but to use redirected behavior through rehabilitation.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2017) in the Southeast Region of the United States reported in the years 2012-2017, a decrease in the overall number of juvenile arrest each year. In 2012-2013, the reported number of youth arrested was 85,495 (63,339 males) youth. The following year 2014, the number decreased by 8% (78,275 overall, 58,862 males). The reported number of arrested youth decreased again in 2015 with a 4% decrease (75,072 overall, 56,712 males). The trend

continued in 2016 (7% decrease, 69,869 overall and 53,601 male youths) and 2017 (7% decrease, 64,824, overall and 49,684 male youths). The overall numbers suggest that juvenile crime rates are on the decline. Although the numbers are correct, there is a disparity in the number of African Americans juveniles that are arrested each year in the Southeast Region of the United States.

For black males in the same years (2012- 2017) there was a decrease in the amount of arrests. According to the Department of Juvenile Justice (2017), compared to other youth in the fiscal year of 2016-2017, of those arrested, 52% (33,470) were black, 33% (21,448) were white, and 15% (9,668) was Hispanic. The disparity is very noticeable despite the decrease in the arrest made over 5-years. The recidivism rates for African American juveniles transferred to adult prisons in this region was 66% in 2017 (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2017).

Southeast Central Region Delinquency Rates

In the Central part of this region during the 5-year span, according to Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2017), the reported number of all juveniles that were arrested in 2012-13 was 36,759; in 2013-14 the number of arrests fell to 34,894; in 2014-15 there was a slight decrease at 34,503; in 2015-16 the number of arrests was at 32,003; and, finally, in 2016-17 the Southeast Region had its most significant drop in 5 years at 28,713. During the same 5-year span, black juveniles did not share the same decrease in the number of arrests. In fact, during this span, in year one, the percentage of black youth arrest was at 46% (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency

Prevention, 2017) This percentage increased over the next three years with the last year remaining the same (48%, 49%, 51%, 51%) for black youth as compared to other races (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2017). There is a need to explore the reasons this disparity exists. Research suggests that social and environmental factors play a vital role in juvenile delinquency.

Social and Environment Factors

Barrett and Katsiyannis (2016) noted in their study that juvenile criminal activity is a significant predictor of adult criminal behavior, and the youth that engages in juvenile crime have a higher propensity to engage in an adult criminal behavior. There is a concern with our youth that has faced more challenges in today's world than ever before. Factors such as social media were not considered in the early 20th century due to lack of popularity. However, by the end of the 20th-century, social media began to gain some popularity going into the 21st century.

Williams, Aiver, Durkee, and Tolan (2014) examined factors that contributed to youth engaging in criminal activity. The authors studied whether stressors such as family stress, discrimination, exposure to violence, criminal offending, maternal education, and ethnicity were factors in engaging in criminal activity. The authors found in their research that for youth living in low-income neighborhoods, the involvement in criminal activity increases when multiple stressors are present.

Many other risk factors increase the chance of a juvenile committing a delinquency act. Voisin et al. (2016) suggested that there is a relationship between family stress and delinquent behavior. The researcher's study reported that youth who reported a high level of family stress were 1.3 times more likely to engage in delinquent behavior (Voisin et al., 2016). These additional risk factors included academic difficulties, impulsivity, daring or risk-taking, empathy, substance abuse use, low religiosity, inadequate supervision, large family size, divorce, peer influence, and family socioeconomic condition. These factors present a likelihood that youths will commit crimes.

With social factors such as family, school, peer involvement, and socioeconomic status in the low-income areas, Weatherburn & Schnepel (2015) added that factors at the parent level such as involvement, supervision, and inconsistent or harsh punishment have also contributed to delinquency. Other social factors such as mental illness, living arrangements, and attendance are likewise predictors related to the causes of juvenile delinquency.

According to Khan (2016), there is a significant association between family structure, social inequality, and peer group as they relate to a juvenile committing delinquent acts. Young (2014) suggested peer influence and substance abuse are social factors that are a link to juvenile delinquency. A contributing factor is a connection that youths have with their peers and how that relationship influences risky behavior.

With low-income areas as a predictor of delinquency in the United States, according to the U.S. Census (2017), and Safiedine & Chung (2018), African Americans have the most significant percentage (22%) of the population living in poverty, which is above the national poverty rate of 12.7% of all Americans living in poverty. Furthermore, African Americans in low-income neighborhoods are among those that are remarkably represented in the criminal justice system (Feist-Price et al., 2014). Overall, in the Southeast Region, residents as of 2017 living in poverty is 14.7%, and African Americans are at 16.9% (U.S. Census Bureau 2017). The Central part of the Southeast region currently has a more significant percentage of African Americans living in poverty at 26.9%, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2017).

The income gap in the United States has significantly over the past 30 years (Bates & Swan, 2018). Poverty influences violence more than any other delinquency. Poverty can lead to extreme levels of stress and drives many individuals to commit violent acts such as robberies, assaults, and other violent acts. Youth living in poverty have less access to excellent schools, and the conditions of the neighborhood lead to negative impacts thus being influenced by street gangs.

There has always been a link between unemployment and poverty and how that relates to crime. However, most importantly, the connection between poverty and crime has been consistent with one another. In other words, where poverty exists, crime also exists. It is also crucial to take into account the primary ethnic groups that live in areas that are impoverished. Williams et al. (2014) also noted that minority youths are more

likely to live in low-income areas and it is believed that the conditions of poverty are a factor to crimes being committed. Shaw and McKay's (1942) social disorganization theory set out to understand the relationship between dwelling place and juvenile delinquency rates (Moore & Sween, 2015). Their study used urban areas in a depressed economy which suffer higher crime rates than neighborhoods with a healthy economy.

Williams et al. (2014) added that 60% of Blacks live in low-income areas and are frequently among the male youth ethnicity that is frequently criminalized and assumed dangerous. Robinson, Blackmon, and Rhodes, (2016) have also studied juvenile delinquency in low socio-economic areas and suggested that it remains a problem in the African American community. The circumstances that surround the low-socioeconomic area is a contributing factor in crimes being committed. In adding to the structure of the community, juveniles that live in this area are assumed to be a criminal.

The fact is, recidivism among juveniles is high in low- socio-economic areas, and something must be done to reduce delinquency. Recidivism has been a persistent and often controversial challenge in our justice system. Aizer and Doyle (2015) noted in their study that once a juvenile is incarcerated, the likelihood of completing high school is significantly lowered. The authors also noted that juvenile incarceration increases the probability of adult incarceration.

Education plays an essential role in delinquency. It can be said that the more time a youth spends at school, the less likely that youth will become a delinquent. There is a concern in low socio-economic areas in the United States that many students are

performing below average in school and delinquency acts have a chance to increase. This is a problem because if a juvenile is not performing well, they tend to engage in things that grab their attention, such as criminal activity. If the parents do not set the example, why would juveniles follow them? In cities that have low rates of graduating youths, results have shown that less education meant more criminal offenses (Jones, 2002).

According to Lawrence (1998), schools have been cited as a source of delinquency. When the attention is diverted into another aspect of life, there can be positive outcomes that can lead to a quality of life. That is why the community is very important in facilitating positive change. The church can assist to provide progress by providing programs geared toward correct decision making. The church role in African American juvenile for the majority has always been a factor in maintaining an attachment.

African American Church

The role of the black church in working with juveniles should provide optimism in the African American community. In the past, research has suggested that black churches do not provide programs (Rubin, Billingsley, & Caldwell, 1994), but Dilulio (1999) argued that black churches' programs would help aid in reducing recidivism. The black church is in a unique position to provide services for the youth. One reason is that there are not many studies that examine programs, let alone spirituality in African Americans, outside of substance use.

The faith-based programs provided by the church need more resources to continue effective treatment in order to offer better services. Dilulio (1999) reported that ministries such as the black church, receive no government assistance. The church has the potential to benefit juveniles by offering skills that teach decision-making. If attention is devoted to addressing factors that contribute to the increased recidivism, then the juvenile is less likely to engage in delinquent behavior.

Research suggests that the African American's religious belief was that cruelty led to the dependence of spirituality as a result of slavery (Hunt & Hunt, 2001). Evans, Cullen, Dunaway, and Burton (1995) reported that religion inhibits some kinds of illegal behavior. Additionally, Evans, et al. (1995) reported that crime rates are depressed in areas where there are many churches. The oppression was generating patterns of faith through prayer, and God would free them from the constraints of the oppressor.

According to Johnson, Jang, De Li, and Larson (2000), numerous researchers concur that the African-American church has been a significant institution in maintaining social control and organization among black Americans (e.g., DuBois, 1898/1903; Frazier, 1963; Lincoln, 1974; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Mukenge, 1983; Nelsen et al., 1971; Paris, 1985; Washington, 1964).

Johnson et al. (2000) addressed in their literature whether an individual's association with a church in mainly African American churches buffers the effects of criminal behavior. What Johnson et al. (2000) found when exploring the buffering effects separately, is that church involvement played a role in providing a defense for criminal

activity. Churches are crucial to the growth of young black juveniles (Barry, Sutherland, & Harris, 2006), but little research is presented on the church providing rehabilitation programs for juveniles that commit delinquent acts.

Despite the remarkable body of literature, one area that needs more attention is how the social bond theory applies to the relationship between juveniles and the church in order to impede criminal activity. There is a need for more faith-based programs in low-income areas. A weak bond between the parent and child will likely result in an increase in juvenile crime. The church can provide the necessary programs aimed at giving young black juveniles another path. Thus, programs can lower recidivism, which is of extreme significance. Hirschi's (1969) SBT suggests that when bonds are attached, crime is least likely to happen. The attachments with the church can provide a positive route that is aimed at giving the juvenile another chance. Hirschi and Gottfredson (1995) suggested that there is a link between bonds and self-control. That is to say, with weak bonds there is low self-control, and with strong bonds, the individual is more likely to have high self-control.

Research has shown that African American juveniles have a relationship with African American churches. Molock and Barksdale (2012) reported in their study that when compared to Caucasian youth, African American youth place greater importance on religion and are more likely to attend church and engage in prayer. Venable (2015) noted that African Americans rely heavily on the church for faith and guidance. Venable (2015) also suggests that the role of the religion can provide an attachment that advises

juveniles. Molock and Barksdale (2012) stated that there is a link between attending church and juvenile delinquency rates decreasing, but it is not significant enough to make a difference. If the faith-based programs are receptive to the juvenile's need, it is possible that the impact of the juvenile justice system would have a decrease of African Americans detained. The opportunity that the church has in the African American community can provide a sense of respect and status that could enhance the social skills, and the results could impact the juvenile's trajectory.

Studies Using the Social Bond Theory

The purpose of this current study was to explore how effective programs are at keeping juveniles from criminal activity. Through faith-based initiatives, this study examined how bonds are formed through relationships and how those relationships sustain the juvenile from committing future crimes. The social bond theory, according to Travis Hirschi (1969), implies that when bonds are attached, offenders are less likely to engage in criminal activity. This theory posits that attachments could impact behavior, thus creating a reduction in criminal activity among juveniles. Spruit, Van Vugt, Van der Put, Van der Stouwe, and Stams (2016) researched sports effects on juvenile behavior. The study examined Hirschi's (1969) SBT and applied the elements of SBT to sports. The study found that youth who are participating in sports have an attachment and are less likely to get involved with delinquent behavior. This study builds upon previous studies that have implemented the social bonding theory that posits the four restraints that

Hirschi (1969) suggested. The four restraints used to understand how relationships form bonds are attachments, commitments, involvement, and belief (Hirschi, 1969).

Yang and Yang (2017), in their study about nonmedical drugs, suggested that bonds with conventional institutions, such as religious institutions, have been shown to reduce the risk of substance use. Yang and Yang's (2017) research confirmed that stronger bonds with conventional institutions did reduce the risk of substance use. Longshore, Chang, and Messina (2005) performed a study that included the evaluation of treatment programs and found that juveniles that reported offending tended to have weaker conventional bonds with greater peer association. The result of the Longshore et al. (2005) study was found to be in line with other research that juveniles with weak bonds are more likely to get involved in delinquent behavior which, as a result, lack ties to the conventional institution.

Gilmore, Rodriguez, and Webb (2005) used the social bond theory to understand the importance of social bonds in juvenile drug court programs. They found that social bonds did have an impact on juveniles completing the drug program. This study suggests that when social bonds are present (e.g., family, peers, religion, and work), the juvenile is more likely to complete a drug program. Existing research has demonstrated that juveniles with strong social bonds to conventional institutions are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior, thus supporting studies that provide programs in order to rehabilitate individuals (Devall, Gregory, & Hartmann, 2012).

Summary

Throughout history in the United States, the juvenile justice system has faced numerous changes in order to treat juveniles who are at-risk. These attempts have included due process rights that have, in some shape, reformed the juvenile justice system. Other modifications have occurred in the form of treatment. Although the reformation has made some changes in the right direction, many questions still exist.

Although history has seen a growth of community-based programs, there is still a need for more programs with people to whom the youth can trust. Although the church is ideal, the public needs to be aware of the benefit of programs offered by a faith-based institution. The concern for African American juvenile crime continues to grow. This review of the literature has shed light on many factors that play a role in juvenile delinquency.

The family plays the most important role in the development of a youth's life. The social learning theory suggests that you learn from those who are closest to you. The development of a bond should be there from day one, and when there is a break in attachment, it can lead to a juvenile becoming delinquent. The issue is: what role should the parent and juvenile justice system play in a youth's life? The issue with parents who are single, or not involved in a youth's life, increases the likelihood of a juvenile becoming a delinquent. It is essential for parents to be involved especially if that juvenile has a prior criminal history.

There is a long tradition of study that documents the critical role that religion has on African Americans. Hunt and Hunt (2001) reported that the black church represents a sanctuary due to a history of oppression. The church is a community that represents hope. Crime offers a way in which impoverished people can obtain material goods they cannot attain through legitimate means. Often, threat or force helps them acquire even more goods, encouraging them to commit more violent acts such as robbery and rape.

For many poor people, the pleasure that crime generates may outweigh the risk of being caught. The disparity of the number of African American juveniles incarcerated is alarming. Such factors as poverty, race, employment, and education, play a role in juvenile delinquency. Treatment in the juvenile justice system has been an option, but not as effective as needed.

In 1994, legislature in the Southeast region of the United States enacted the Juvenile Justice Act of 1994. This act created many programs and included a reorganization and redefinition of the juvenile justice system regarding efficiency. This legislation clearly defined the responsibility of the public school system in prevention, education, and community reintegration of juvenile offenders.

The sources in Chapter 3 assisted in comparing a program offered by the juvenile justice system and with a faith-based program to determine the effectiveness. This chapter included a discussion, the research design and methodology. African American male juveniles were interviewed. Included in this chapter is the methodology of the study, the role of the researcher, how participants were recruited, ethical protection, and

data collection. The types and sources of data include conducting different kinds of interviews such as face to face, and telephone interviews, as well as examining and comparing secondary data on juvenile delinquency rates.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I discussed the research design, method, setting, sample size, data collection, and the analysis. Measures were taken to ensure validity, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations that help complete the examination strategy. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the effectiveness of faith-based delinquency programs in the effort to reduce juvenile recidivism rates in African American communities. More specifically, I examined the effectiveness of faith-based juvenile delinquency programs in low-income and low socio-economic areas in the Southeast region of the United States.

In the Southeast region, the age of eighteen is considered to be adult, and therefore, under the age of eighteen is considered a juvenile. Therefore, I interviewed youths between the ages of 10-17. I used face to face interviews with juveniles who have participated in church programs to obtain a more in-depth analysis into the degree of how the SBT contributes to the effectiveness of programs. The results of this study may improve prevention techniques that can influence policymakers to evaluate the effectiveness of faith-based juvenile delinquency programs when developing policies.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research questions guided this study: (a) What are the perceptions of the participating juveniles regarding the effectiveness of faith-based programs?; What outcomes do juveniles expect when they participate in faith-based initiatives?; and (b)

how does SBT (i.e., bonds formed with the staff and resulting from the programs offered) add to the success of the program as perceived by juveniles?

Qualitative research is suitable for queries that explore the significance of individuals connecting to their experiences (Gilgun, 2005). Creswell (2009) maintains that qualitative researchers conduct investigations that produce common themes. The use of a phenomenological design allowed for an in-depth understanding of the juveniles' experiences of a program, as well as the role programs play in reducing recidivism. Research has shown that studies involving the church while applying the SBT are limited, but there are similar studies that have applied the SBT in their study. An extensive review of the literature provided evidence that frequently supported both quantitative and qualitative research design. Maxwell (2013) stated that qualitative research focuses on a specific situation or people.

Qualitative research as explained by Ravitch and Carl (2016), seeks to discover and describe people and what their actions mean to them. This current study requested the perspectives about the program's effectiveness for the use of helping juvenile recidivism rates. Qualitative research can be cost effective. Qualitative research also allows the researcher to have firsthand interactions with the participants. Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggested that qualitative designs are used for the researcher understanding, as well as the background in which the participants have an issue (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Babbie (2015) discussed how qualitative studies involve examining social research data that is not converted into numerical analysis.

In an effort for this study to offer the proper prevention method for African American juveniles, face to face interviews with juveniles provided a meaningful insight about the programs that are offered. A qualitative phenomenological approach was used in this study in order to explain how effective the programs are in achieving prevention. There are many integral parts of qualitative studies that can be used to support this current research such as case studies, ethnography, phenomenological, and grounded theory. Phenomenological studies research can be used to describe how people experience a particular situation in order to address the problem. Although the integrity of the research limits phenomenological studies due to the primary data collection, the strengths that are produced from a phenomenological approach outweigh the limitation. Phenomenological studies can generate rich and complete descriptions of a phenomenon being research. Another advantage is that it is most often conducted in the natural setting. This helps describe the data in the natural environment and helps capture real-life responses to a certain situation. The limitations of a phenomenological study are often associated with bias views that may influence the results of the study. Yin (1984) discussed case studies as being labeled as being long and not being able to generalize the case.

Phenomenology research can be used to explain events in order to gain a more in-depth understanding. This approach describes how people experience certain situations. One of the advantages of qualitative phenomenology research is that it attempts to set aside biases and assumptions and I believe that phenomenological research can be used to

explore, explain, or describe a phenomenon. Phenomenological research design was chosen method for this study.

The research questions were designed to further the understanding of faith-based initiatives through the juvenile's experiences with the programs that are offered by the church. No qualitative research focuses on the experiences of African American youth in the Southeast region of the United States concerning faith-based programs. The research provided a voice for African American youths in order for policymakers to have another option and to gain valuable insight. I recognized a significant area of concern in the lack of studies involving programs within the church. Ethnography research offers a narrative approach by eliciting the participant to tell a story based on their experiences (Creswell, 2012). Given the objectives presented in this study, an ethnographic research method was used.

Role of the Researcher

I have worked with the juvenile population in some capacity for two years at the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and this population was designed to work with individuals who at the time of their appearance in court, were incompetent to proceed to trial. This facility provided therapy and programs geared toward competency. The commitment to a DCF facility provides competency restoration services to juveniles who have been charged with a felony. My job experiences have allowed firsthand knowledge and have motivated my interest in understanding the lack of effectiveness that programs provide. This study allowed juveniles to offer their perceptions on treatment

programs that can help reduce the ongoing problem of recidivism. The role of a researcher is to have face to face interviews and observe the group meetings.

Researchers must promote trust with the participants to boost correct responses (Oplatka, 2018). The role of the researcher is to avoid biases. According to Ellefsen (2017), bias is defined as any deviation from the validity and the position that the researcher takes towards the influence of the outcome of the study. Biased thoughts could have influenced the outcome of this study if I held preconceived impressions about the effectiveness of the program, or did not select participants who were most appropriate to provide the necessary information. Another type of bias that can occur is interview bias. Therefore, the interviewer should not devise interview questions that promote specific emotion and disrespect others (Oplatka, 2018).

Oplatka (2018) suggested that interviewers must know the questions that are asked may be susceptible and the participant might not be very comfortable talking about their feelings. Furthermore, the researcher should not develop a bias based on the information that the participant may or may not give. It is important to note that bias can be controlled by not including personal feelings throughout the research process and by presenting all information to the participants about the purpose of the study. More importantly, the researcher has to remain blind to any result of the study.

The qualitative phenomenological approach as an interviewer allowed information to be gathered directly and indirectly respectfully. The primary task of a researcher is not to allow personal feelings or values to influence the outcome of the

study. A research study has to be authentic, and the results should reflect unbiased information. Research has shown that African Americans have placed an emphasis on religion. This study gave voice to an alienated group of juveniles and their respected communities they embody to be understood. In this study, I examined the effectiveness of programs within a faith-based institution that detailed the perspectives of juveniles that describe the effectiveness of preventive programs based on their experiences with the programs being offered.

Methodology

Population Selection

African American male youth are arrested at a higher rate than any other race in the Southeast region of the United States. The population consisted of juveniles who have participated in faith-based programs offered by the church in the Southeast region of the United States. The recruitment started with a recruitment flyer that addressed the parents first, and then the juvenile second, that listed details about who is eligible, the location of the research, how to contact the researcher, and the purpose of the current study. The age of each participant ranged from 10-17-years-old. The parents of the youth contacted me per the flyer instructions.

During the initial contact with the parents, I reiterated the purpose of the study and the significance of the study. All questions on the flyer were asked to the parent about their child's eligibility to determine participation. I also told the parents during the initial contact that this current study was confidential and that no medical, educational, or

any specific criminal activity would be asked of their child. There was a statement to the parents and the participating youth about withdrawing from the study at any point during the interview. After gaining verbal permission from the parents to talk with their child, this researcher then spoke to the juvenile about the current study and asked if they had any questions, comments, or concerns.

I assured all participants that all information gained from this research would not be given to anyone outside of Walden University per IRB policy. This researcher also stated that names would not be used. Protection in this study was as follows: a private room in the church center, names were not used in the current study, and the information collected during the data collection stage will be password protected and stored in a fireproof safe.

After the initial contact, a date for the interviews was set. During the interview process, this researcher had parents sign the parent consent form consenting to allow their child to participate in this research study. The parents were also able to view the assent form for their child and sign the assent form with the participant. I again provided the information about the purpose of this research as well as the risk of the study. This researcher then lists some of the risks associated with this study.

I obtained signed consent forms from the parents in order to start the data collection process. After the signatures of the parents were obtained, then this researcher told the juveniles about the current study, risk associated with the study, and provided information about confidentiality. The parent and assent forms also provided information

about the present research, and both parent and their child signed each form. Subsequently, during the interviews, this researcher restated the purpose of the study, confidentiality, risk associated with this study, and the withdrawal procedures. All juvenile participants were recruited based on their interaction with the church youth programs. The idea is to see if the social bond theory, through a preventive program offered by the church, can serve in reducing recidivism. I used purposeful sampling to enlist twenty-one African Americans who participated in church initiatives.

Sample

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), the qualitative research method is an in-depth design that attempts to understand people or phenomena in their natural settings in ways that are reflected by the meaning that people make out of their own experiences. Saturation is an important factor in qualitative research. The sample size must have an adequate number of participants.

Juveniles in this study provided the best source of information by providing good answers based on their viewpoint of the program's effectiveness. The phenomenological design is the approach that was utilized, and this designed focused on in-depth face to face interviews with juveniles located in the Southeast region area of the United States. There was one faith-based initiative (Church) examined and this researcher conducted twenty-one face to face interviews with juveniles at this location. The reason for interviews with the juvenile population is that the youth's perception of faith-based programs elicited open discussions that provided a good description of their experiences

with the faith-based program. I believe in order to gain thick, rich, and meaningful perceptions of faith-based initiatives, interviews with juveniles provided the best answer for the research questions.

To overcome bias in sampling, the researcher did provide a good definition of the purpose of the study to the target group, eliminate prejudgment, and make sure that the recruitment group is accessible. As a researcher, personal biases must be placed aside for the integrity of this study and keep an open mind when collecting data. Additionally, bracketing was used to eliminate research bias or undesired influences in order to make sure that the juveniles are allowed to express their viewpoint without interruption. Furthermore, a researcher should not allow their level of understanding or experiences on a particular subject affect the study. More importantly, I allowed research participants to review transcripts from the interviews in order to check for accuracy.

The sample size of twenty-one interviewees is suitable according to McGivern (2003) who suggested that sample sizes of twenty are appropriate to understand interviewees' perception on a topic. Furthermore, saturation is reached within this range and themes are developing to see patterns in the data set to determine the effectiveness of the programs offered by faith-based initiatives. This research study developed themes and accurately describe common information that indicated success or lack of success in faith-based programs. Phenomenological study affords the researcher an opportunity to examine significant statements that may help policymakers have a better understanding of programs being placed in a church.

A letter was submitted to the pastor of the church explaining the purpose of the research and the request was approved by the pastor of the church. A letter was submitted to the parents of each juvenile who participates in the study. Consent forms was distributed to obtain written permission from each participant. Before the interview process started, a verbal explanation was explained indicating the purpose of the study. The consent form allowed the participants to make a sound decision about participating in the research. I was permitted permission from the Institutional Research Board (IRB) to start recruiting the participants.

Sampling Strategy

A sampling strategy allows the researcher to select participants from a population. The faith-based organization provided the participants (juveniles) for this study. The sampling technique that was used in this study will be purposeful sampling. Patton (2002) provided a definition that states that purposeful sampling is selecting information-rich data cases that allow insight into the problem. Determining a research setting is essential in establishing a relationship. Participants are most comfortable in familiar settings and can provide their best answer to the research questions.

The study location was in the Southeast region of the United States at a place that was comfortable to the participant. The most preferable location is the African American Baptist church where the programs take place. The target group are juveniles who participate in programming with their respected church. This study included face to face interviews about the perception of each juvenile participant's view on programs offered

by the church, and the effects these programs have on recidivism. According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select the number of members that will help the purpose of the research. For this study, purposeful sampling was defined as juveniles from the age of ten years or older. The target number of participants will be twenty-one. According to Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013), 21 participants is a target number in range for data saturation. Each participant was asked open-ended questions in order to have a better understanding of the effectiveness of faith-based programs. For this research, saturation transpired when no further information added to the exploration.

Instrumentation

I designed an interview data sheet that was used in collecting data. This study consisted of face to face interviews at one African American church and used open-ended questions. I used a digital recording device with extra batteries and had a backup recording device available in case of a problem with the first recording device. The interview questions are designed to collect the necessary knowledge and experiences of the participants. In order to ensure credibility, I did enact record keeping of the juveniles' verbatim description of the program, in order to ensure the analyses of data is dependable and transparent to support the findings. Moreover, inviting juveniles to comment on the interview transcript did create validation.

The foundation for this qualitative phenomenological approach was the juveniles' responses to the interview questions. The interview questions that was asked are as follows:

1. How long have you attended church programs?
2. What has been your experience while attending church programs?
3. When you first started the program, what was your expectation about the program?
4. Now that you have been in the program, what is your expectation now?
5. In your experience and knowledge with the church programs, are church programs helpful in keeping you from committing delinquent acts? If so, how?
6. Describe your relationship with the church staff that provides the program services.
7. Are the church staff important to your success in not committing crimes?
8. Describe how the church program allowed you to overcome challenges and problems that may have played a role in your decision making?
9. Based on your knowledge, is there anything else that would be useful to this current research?

During the interview, some participants were not able to provide meaningful responses, therefore, probing questions follow the interview question. The probing questions was asked to the juvenile participant. Examples of the probing questions are:

(a) can you to express to me more information? (b) can you give an example, and (c) why are you feeling this way?

Data Collection

The interviews were face to face within the African American Baptist churches and lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. 21 participants were used for this research. During the data collection process, this researcher used a recording device, as well as take notes. The recording device is in place for more details that may have been missed during the note-taking. Rubin and Rubin (2012) suggested that in-depth qualitative interviewing researchers are better able to explore in detail the perspectives of others who may not have the same viewpoint. Interviews also help to reconstruct events by putting together descriptions from different interviewees which aid in creating a picture (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). There are benefits of face to face interviews, such as developing trust with all participants, which will help when follow-up questions are asked in order to obtain more information from the respondent. I did used follow-up questions to obtained more information about church programs.

The semi-structured interviews took place at the church impact center in the Southeast Region United States. I asked each participant nine questions about church programs. Each questions were asked in the same order to each individual. The interview lasted about 20-30 minutes. The interview questions help to facilitate a more in-depth discussion of each juvenile perspective regarding church programs. At the conclusion of

the conversation each participant was appreciated for their participation in this study. The follow-up procedures were explained to each individual upon the conclusion of the interview if I needed more information.

Interview Protocol

The main goal of this research was to gather information through interviews about the live experiences of twenty-one African American, male offenders. The protocol for the interview consisted of nine open ended questions for each participant to answer. All participants were given the same amount of time with no pressure to answer each questions. The interview questions were designed to act as a guide to ensure a researcher gather the in-depth responses that qualitative research are designed. Due to juveniles being a vulnerable population, the research was conducted in a private area, one on one interview, and recorded using an audio tape recorder to record their responses to the interview questions. The use of telephone interviews was an option for each participant. For this study, telephone interviews were not needed as all participants participated in face to face interviews.

For this study, a full disclosure was provided. All participants were given an abundant amount of information about the research during recruitment and before each individual partook in the interview process. The informed consent form consisted of the choice to voluntarily participate or not, the capacity to understand the information, and the withdrawal process. The risk identified with this study was the painful experiences of no one caring and the potential of maxing out of the program at the age of eighteen. The

risk provoked feelings of being alone, anxiety, and discomfort. The participants overall believe that the program at the church gives them hope and they do not want to disappoint the church staff who provides the programming. It is important to note that the juvenile population is a protective and vulnerable group therefore, any identifiable information was not nor will be disclosed. A list of community resources was provided to the participants should they need counseling.

Data Analysis

Data analysis should always contain a complete and precise document that is written exactly like you are going to read the transcript (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Preparing a transcript allows more information to support the research questions. More importantly, trying to remember information can be time-consuming. Transcribing is defined by Hesse-Biber (2010) as written notes, field notes, recordings, and visual data, as well as any other supporting documents. This research focused on participants providing their perception on the effectiveness of the programs that the church provides for youth. In this study, I explored whether juveniles feel that programming helps them not to commit crimes. Information that is provided by the respondents' interview can provide in-depth, rich data. Rich data can reveal feelings and action through interviews and can assist in providing data about the effectiveness that programs have on recidivism.

Hesse-Biber (2010) suggested that the researcher is the data collection instrument when interviewing participants. During the interview process for this study, codes and themes develop. There are numerous ways in which a researcher can code the data in a

qualitative study. I used inductive coding. Hesse-Biber, (2010) suggest that inductive coding is a type of qualitative data in which codes emerge from the content of the raw data. The data was coded by the interviewer's transcript as well as from the notes, with the goal of using the data to answer the research questions presented in this study.

The method I used was open-ended interview questions. The information collected was managed and stored on an USB flash drive. The data included interviews generated from the interviews. All information from the interviews was coded, listed and group into categories. A daily binder was kept of every meeting with each participant that included the data site location, the date, time, and any additional comments as well as concerns the participants asked. More overly, all data collected was stored in a fireproof safe and combination lock. I used HyperTRANSCIBE software to organize the audio files. HyperTRANSCIBE allows the researcher to listen to the audio during transcription and type notes while the audio is playing (Hesse-Biber, 2010). This software also allows a researcher to record the time of occurrence and add shortcuts to speed up the transcription process (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Patton (2002) and Arsovska (2008) suggested that triangulation is used to obtain confirmation of findings through the convergence of different perspectives in order to improve the credibility of the research. Creswell & Miller (2000) identified strategies for validity: prolonged engagement and persistent observation, triangulation, negative case analysis, clarifying, member check, rich, thick description, external audits, and peer

review and debriefing. Triangulation was used in this research to corroborate information from different participants' perspective.

Member checking allows the participants to verify the accuracy and credibility of the study (Creswell, 2012). According to Stake (1995), member checking plays a very important role that should allow participants an active role during the research. Member checking was included in this research in order to allow participants to review the interview document to ensure the accuracy of all the information that was given. After each interview, participants were allowed to view the transcript and make the appropriate changes.

A detailed description of a research finding enables readers to transfer information to other settings (Polit & Beck, 2012). Lincoln & Guba (1985) discussed the responsibility of the researcher to provide a rich, thick description in order for the reader to apply the findings of a study to a specific setting. In this study, I used transferability to enable readers to transfer information to other settings. This study provided a clear description of the selection process, background of the study, as well the setting.

Confirmability is established when the data accurately reflects the information provided by the participants (Polit & Beck, 2014). This allows the results to be corroborated by other researchers. Confirmability was addressed in this study to ensure the accuracy of the participants' responses. I also conducted crosschecking of codes from the transcripts.

Ethical Procedures

I acquired approval to conduct this current analysis from Walden University Institutional Review Board before data collection began. Walden University's approval number for this current study is 07-30-19-0682489. This research was conducted on the premise that African American youth requires some type of intervention in order to reduce the recidivism rate in the Southeast region of the United States. The thought before conducting this research was that more information is needed to examine programs in the church. In this case, juveniles who participate in the faith-based programming at the church was interviewed and they provided their perception of the effectiveness of the programs within the church. I used the phenomenological approach and reduced researcher bias by including the participants to collaborate information and provide feedback during the interviewing process. A fireproof safe and combination lock that will house the interview recording, interview transcript, and a flash drive with a protected-password will ensure the privacy of each individual interview. Walden University has a 5-year IRB requirement to keep all data. After the minimum amount of time has been met, I will remove all data from the flash drive, as well as interviews.

I followed the American Psychological Association (APA) 6th edition Manual and the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies and procedures during this research. This study identified the purpose and the measure taken for the protection of the participants. The guidelines set forth by Walden University IRB, as well as the APA 6th edition Manual, were used in this study to confirm ethical procedures. For

informed consent, this researcher followed the APA and IRB principles during the recruitment stage. A good researcher will include in the informed consent an explanation of the objective of the study, the risk, and how the data will be collected. This researcher used informed consent. The participants' and their parents' signatures solidified the agreement to take part in the study. Oral consent was also a part of the ethical standards for participation. More importantly, an explanation of the right to withdraw from participation at any time was covered. All participants in this research was assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Also, all interviews were recorded using a tape recorder to describe the perception of each response accurately.

Summary

The purpose of the research was to discover how effective the faith-based initiatives are in reducing recidivism among African American male juveniles. The study explored African American juveniles' perception in order to determine whether or not faith-based initiatives are effective at reducing recidivism. This study used a qualitative phenomenological study approach utilizing Travis Hirschi's social bond theory as a theoretical foundation. The purpose of this chapter was to provide a detailed methodology that discussed the research design, method, data collection, and analysis. In this chapter, I provided the role the researcher fulfilled, as well as the necessary precaution to ensure the validity, confidentiality, and protection of each participant participating in this research study. In Chapter 4, the analysis of the face to face interviews is presented.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the faith-based initiatives from the lived experiences of juveniles who are attending the programs to see the effectiveness that church programs have on youth committing delinquent acts. In this examination, I examined whether church programs affect whether or not juveniles commit delinquent acts. Twenty-one African American males shared their lived experiences about church programs. This research may lead to positive social changes by emphasizing the impact of church programs have on reducing juvenile delinquency. The research questions were the following: “What is the perception of participating juveniles regarding the effectiveness of faith-based programs?” “What outcomes do juveniles expect when they participate in faith-based initiatives?,” and “How does SBT (i.e., bonds formed with the staff as a result of the programs offered) add to the success of the program as perceived by juveniles?”

The data were examined and linked back to the research questions to illustrate the perceptions of the twenty-one African American males regarding their participation in church programs and how the programs impact their decision not to commit delinquent acts. This chapter includes a discussion of the research setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results, summary, and transition to Chapter 5. I used HyperTranSCRIBE to analyze the information contained in this research. HyperTranSCRIBE was also used to code the data to help identify themes,

phrases, patterns, and provided insight into the participants' perspectives about whether church programs aid in them not committing delinquent acts. Similarities among themes and categories from the interviews transpired and afforded insight on church programs.

Chapter 4 includes a description the research setting in which the research was conducted. I discuss the demographics of twenty-one participants. Moreover, I present a description of the data collection process as well as the analysis procedure, including themes, codes, and categories that arose from the data. Trustworthiness was established in this research and is outlined in this study. Lastly, I address the research questions and provide evidence to support the findings.

Research Setting

This church location is in the Southeast region of the United States which is the 5th largest area in this state. This church is intended to provide programs for the youth in order for them to be successful. This church has about 40 youth participating in programs. Youth members are considered to be between the ages of 10-17. The research tool used to gather data included nine open-ended interview questions that captured the live experiences of juveniles who volunteered to share their thoughts:

1. How long have you attended church programs?
2. What has been your experience while attending church programs?
3. When you first started the program, what was your expectation about the program?
4. Now that you have been in the program, what is your expectation now?

5. In your experience and knowledge with the church programs, are church programs helpful in keeping you from committing delinquent acts? If so, how?
6. Describe your relationship with the church staff that provides the program services.
7. Are the church staff important to your success in not committing crimes?
8. Describe how the church program allowed you to overcome challenges and problems that may have played a role in your decision making?
9. Based on your knowledge, is there anything else that would be useful to this current research?

Interviews took place at the church located in the Southeast region of the United States. First, I sent an email to the youth pastor in the Southeast United States to discuss the proposed research study. A meeting with the youth pastor was set up to discuss the investigation. The youth pastor approved, and a flyer was displayed at the church facility in the Southeast United States asking for a juvenile participant to participate in this research study (see Appendix A). The interview room where the interviews took place was very private, quiet, and free from interruption. The lighting in the private room was very well lit. The tables that the church provided were round and very sturdy, with no noise.

I conducted 21 face to face interviews and asked the same nine questions that were previously emailed to the juveniles. I also had extra copies if the participant needed

another copy. All conversations were recorded using a Sony digital Voice recorder. Each participant was reminded that a transcript of the written interview would be available to them once transcribed.

Demographics

The participants were recruited based on their involvement with African American church programs, and self-identifying as a juvenile and African American male. I set up a meeting to discuss the necessary consent methods and implementation strategy with the pastor. A subsequent meeting was set up with the pastor to post a flyer to recruit juvenile participants. This church has about 40 youth participating in programs. Youth members are considered to be between the ages of 10-17. The research tools used to gather data included nine open-ended interview questions that captured the live experiences of juveniles who volunteered to share their thoughts.

To begin the study, I posted invitation flyers in the church's rectory because of the potential participants' ages. Participants were able to contact me by email or by phone per the instruction on the flyer. After approximately two weeks, parents of the potential participants contacted me through email. I had a brief discussion through email to ensure that participants were eligible based on the criteria for the study. Once eligibility was established, the parent and the participating juvenile and I worked on possible dates for interview sessions, which were convenient for participants in terms of cost and time. Participants were available on late evenings and weekends since all are attending school.

Before the interview process began, the parents signed a consent form to allow their child to participate. I ensured protection from pressure to participate by telling each participant (also written on the consent form and the assent form) they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time even during the interview with no question ask. The flyer also indicated that participation is on volunteer bases in which the parent of the participant will only respond to the flyer if they want to participate. All participants were reassured that all information would be confidential and that their response to any question would not be released to anyone outside of Walden. Additionally, the participants were also assured that all information would be in a fireproof safe, and the information is password protected.

The parents were also able to view the assent form for their child and sign the assent form with the participant. This researcher again provided information about the purpose of this research as well as any risk associated with this current study. I then expressed some of the risks associated with this study to both the parents and their child. After all information was explained about this study, the interview process started.

Participants were eager to share their stories and told me that they were willing to participate. Based on my observations, there were no apparent personal problems experienced by participants that affected or influenced the outcome of the study. Participants did not share any current stories that indicated that they were experiencing any negative personal issues that affected them from recalling and sharing their thoughts about their juveniles' program participation. All participants participated in this study,

and no one removed themselves from the study. I reiterated at the end of the interview to all participants that all information attained from this research would not be given to anyone outside of Walden University per IRB policy. The safeguards for this study are that all data collected in this study will not be distributed to any external source per Walden University IRB policy.

I used purposeful sampling to enlist 21 African Americans who participated in church initiatives. I did interview 5 participants who were 10 years of age, 3 participants age 11, 1 participant 12-years-old, 3 participants 13 years of age, 3 participants 14 years of age, 3 participants 15 years of age, 2 juvenile 16 years of age, 2 participants 16 years of age, and 1 17-year-old. Creswell (2013) noted that studying individuals who experienced the same phenomenon works well with purposeful sampling.

I also stated that there is a gift card provided to them for their time and contribution. I also explained to each participant that they could withdraw from the study at any time during the interview. There was also an explanation about refusing to answer any question that made each participant feel uncomfortable. To maintain privacy, I used pseudonyms: I collected demographic information on a form to enhance the interview process.

Table 1

Demographic Information

Age	Program length	Single or two parent	Parent
P1 14	5 months	Single	Mother
P2 12	3 months	Single	Mother
P3 13	1 year	Single	Mother
P4 14	1 year	Single	Mother
P5 15	1 year	Single	Mother
P6 16	9 months	Single	Mother
P7 11	3 months	Single	Mother
P8 10	4 months	Single	Mother
P9 10	6 months	Single	Mother
P10 15	7 months	Single	Mother
P11 16	8 months	Two	Mother, Father
P12 11	7 months	Single	Mother
P13 10	3 months	Single	Father
P14 13	9 months	Single	Mother
P15 13	11 months	Single	Mother
P16 11	10 months	Single	Mother
P17 15	10 months	Single	Mother
P18 10	7 months	Two	Mother, Father

P19 10	2 months	Single	Mother
P20	1 year 2 months	Single	Mother
P21	1 year 3 months	Single	Mother

Data Collection

Participant recruitment occurred over a two-week period from November to December. Participants were recruited for this study through a recruitment flyer that was posted at the church in November. The data collection process initially started with each participant contacting this researcher either with a call or through email displayed on the flyer. The parents consented first, and then the juvenile agreed to participate in the interview process. I desired to gain an understanding of church programs and how these programs affect juvenile decisions. The original plan was to perform this current research at three different faith-based church program locations. Although three churches gave this researcher a verbal commitment, this researcher was not able to get written permission. I had trouble obtaining consent from churches in the Southeast region of the United States. I was able to get permission from the current researched church. All participants that contributed to this study also participated in a faith-based initiative provided by this church.

I did not start the data collection process until the Walden University IRB granted approval. This researcher provided information about the study in person before beginning the interview, and I allowed the participants to voice any concerns before

proceeding. I thanked each participant before and after the meeting. I asked each participant the same interview questions with the same order. The interview questions (Appendix B) empowered the participants to provide as much information as needed. The extent of the interviews was between 20-30 minutes. During the data collection process, none of the juveniles withdrew from the study at any point during the interview process. During the interview, fourteen participants combine their answers for some of the questions. This researcher was able to perform each meeting without interruptions. Each participant only interviewed once.

I was able to form a relationship with each participant during the initial contact period for this research and during the interview procedure. During the interview process, I took handwritten notes to record their facial expression as well as their body language. Furthermore, I analyzed each interview to determine similarities between each participant. Some conversations were combined in the participant profile section. Three sets of interviews were similar in thoughts; moreover, this researcher labeled each individual as follows: (ex: P5 and P7, P4, P3, and P10, P15).

The church provided a private, convenient, and comfortable setting to help each juvenile feel safe. The programs offered by this church uses a model called STEAM. The STEAM concept allows the minor to find power in self-discovery by combining mentoring with educational goals. The program is focused on developing critical thinking skills, cognitive skills, and problem-solving skills. Through this creative process, the juveniles understand how to be a learner and a leader with the idea of becoming an

innovator. The program aims to keep its participants out of trouble. During the interviews, twenty-one juveniles express their desire to focus on the three concepts (critical thinking, cognitive and problem-solving skills) to succeed in the present and future. Each youth was able to speak freely about church programs and how it affects their decisions. All interview questions were provided to each participant on a sheet of paper. Each participant answered the question on paper first and then responded again during the interview process. The purpose of writing their answers out is to make each participant feel relax and confident without having the pressure to answer a question that they have not seen. During the interview, each participant was able to give more information about each question than what was written on paper. The participants were able to provide an excellent answer to each question. A total of nine questions were asked, with each response of the participants being recorded. All information collected was stored and locked in a fireproof cabinet for five years, according to Walden's IRB policy.

When all the data was collected, I began to transcribe all the information. During the transcription stage, this researcher read over the notes, listened to the interviews of the participant, listened again, and reread notes several times to highlight significant statement that was relevant to each participant experience. Each significant account was color-coded to represent a possible theme. Next, I made a list of phrases that provided a representation of each participant's feelings. The phases provided an understanding of how the participants experienced church programs. Data saturation and shared themes

were attained from the 21 participants, with similar experiences and perceptions documented to demonstrate stability in the data.

Participants

I conducted a study that captured the experiences in the Southeast Region of the United States of juvenile's view of church programs and how the church programs affect decision making. All twenty-one participants shared their thoughts about the program and about the staff that teaches the program. To provide a new understanding of the qualitative phenomenology design and add further information to the field of behavior science, I provided each perspective by asking juveniles nine questions about the program and staff. The staff consists of the pastor, the youth pastor, and three staff members that work daily to ensure that the needs of the juveniles are met. This study provided protection and confidentiality; therefore, if needed, the names will be referred to as a participant and a number (P1, P2, P3, example). During the interview procedure, themes develop from each participant interview. The program hours are from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm Monday –Friday. I conducted twenty-one meetings at the church facility in a private room.

Interview Questions

Interview Question 1

How long have you attended church programs?

I interviewed twenty-one participants, and all participants answered this question. Each participant number of months or years ranges from 3 months to 15 months (one

year and three months). The age range of each participant is between 10 -17. All but two of the participants live with a single parent (19), and of the juveniles live with a single parent, one lives with his father only. All participants participated in answering their longevity in church programs.

Interview Question 2

What has been your experience while attending church programs?

Out of the twenty-one participants, eighteen participants reported that the experience has been great and that the church programs give them a sense of hope. The participants also reported that the programs provide them with some power to do better. To sum up all the thoughts of the participants concerning this interview question, participants reported that the church cares about their well-being as well as their future. P1 stated, "My desire to be better has changed despite my own family not wanting to have anything to do with me because I have made bad choices." Other participants reported similar phrases such as "My experience has been wonderful," "Effective" "Challenging me to be good," and "I can't wait for school to be out so I can come here." The two participants reported the experience as either okay or not harmful. P4 is a 14-year-old male that has attended the program for about 4 months. P4 suggests that his experience has been up and down. He stated that "While I believe that the church program is helpful, I just believe that it is the person. I do know that people help others become better, but as for me, it does not make a difference. I do have some fun sometimes".

Interview Question 3

When you first started the program, what was your expectation about the program?

This interview question was asked to all twenty-one participants, and each juvenile answered the question. seven participants said that they did not have an expectation but were open to what the program had to offer. P3 stated that "When I first started the program, I did not know what to expect. I just saw a bunch of new people telling me about the programs that they were giving us". 10 participants reported that they hoped to learn something that can help them be successful. four participants suggested that they did not know what to expect, or they did not have an opinion about the program but was told some of the things that they would do, and the four participants said that they still did not know what to expect. P9 is a 10-year-old male juvenile and has attended the church program for 6 months. He said that "I didn't know much about what I thought when I first got here, but I did like some of the things they said." I asked P9 what things? He said the "technology part they mention. They said, "we would get to play games the last day of each week if we do good."

Interview Question 4

Now that you have been in the program, what is your expectation now?

12 participants reported that they believe that the programs are working because they are staying out of trouble in school as well as not committing any illegal acts even after they become an adult. For example, P21, a 17-year-old juvenile male who reported

that he had been given a second chance, suggested that sometimes people in his family give up on him because he has been in trouble a lot. He stated, "the staff continues to provide programs that even when I mess up they still are they trying to teach me". His initial feelings about being in the program was that he had hope to learn something that will help his decision-making as he moves forward through the program, he expects to keep learning, and he expects the staff to keep pushing him in the right direction. P20, a 14-year-old male juvenile, stated that "I have been in the program for about 1 year and a couple of months, and I have learned so much, so I just want to keep coming because I have fun and it keeps me out of trouble". P1 stated that "I hope that the program goes on for a long time because I can come here instead of home." nine participants suggested, although they expect the message in the program to be effective in keeping them from making bad decisions, ultimately, it is the staff that they expect to be effective when teaching the programs.

Interview Question 5

In your experience and knowledge with the church programs, are church programs helpful in keeping you from committing delinquent acts? If so, how?

All participants reported that the church program they attend is beneficial in their decision not to commit delinquent acts. For example, P2 is a 12-year-old juvenile male, and he stated, "the church programs make me a believer in myself, and I am happier when I am here. I like not getting into trouble, and the program teaches you how to solve the problem and have fun doing what is right". P6 is a 16-year-old male juvenile who

provided a similar thought as P2. He stated that "I don't like coming every day, but the program is good because it teaches us how not to give in to peer pressure and be the best we can be."

Interview Questions 6 and 7

Describe your relationship with the church staff that provides the program services. Are the church staff important to your success in not committing crimes?

Participants were asked to describe their relationship with the church staff and how the church staff guides their decision-making in not committing crimes. Twenty participants reported that the team cares a lot about them, and in return, they do not want to disappoint the staff workers. It was also reported that they see the staff as a role model who prays for them, love them as well as telling each participant when they are wrong. For example, P1 is a 14-year-old who stated, "The staff is very helpful and very caring about the people that are here." He further noted that "if there were not a program, I would still come to this church because the staff cares about saving my life spiritually as well as keeping me out of jail."

P17 is a 15-year-old male juvenile that stated, "I really like coming to the church programs for the most part. Sometimes I do not want to come because I want to hang out with my friends but other than that, I spend hours with the staff here and they treat me like they really care, so I love coming because I want to be somebody in the future. I was not use to all the attention from adults". All participants reported that staff is very important to their success in not committing crimes. P15 and P18, for example, described

their success as having a go-to place instead of hanging outside doing bad things. Overall, the staff is very important to the success of the juveniles.

Interview Question 8

Describe how the church program allowed you to overcome challenges and problems that may have played a role in your decision making?

Nineteen participants reported that the programs and the staff help them overcome challenges. P11, a 16-year-old male juvenile, stated that “the church staff explains each program each day, which allows me to understand what is needed to be successful. I’ve had programs like this before but not explained like this. I think it is because they really like what they are doing”. P6 is a 16-year-old male juvenile who has attended the program for nine months. He reported, “I like coming to this program because there is a lot of things to do that in some ways have made me think better. To be honest, I think before I act, I could not say that before I started. I like that the staff incorporates a day of fun; it gives us something to work for”. Overall, the participants believe that both programs and the staff play an essential role in decision-making.

Interview Question 9

Based on your knowledge, is there anything else that would be useful to this current research?

Twenty-one participants were asked to add more information that they think would be useful. 13 participants added more information, and eight participants did not have anything else to add. P21 said that “I enjoy programs such as technology, and I

really believe that the staff is important to all of our success. I believe they love what they are doing”. P14, a 13-year-old male juvenile, stated, “I now believe I can make a difference, and it’s what the staff tells me every day. I come to the programs, and I do learn how to control my anger”. The participants reported that the programs are effective in teaching them how to deal with problems and how to overcome those problems in order to have a better life.

Data Analysis

In this research, I used the process of inductive coding based on patterns identified during the interview process. The data collected were used to identify themes. I examined the information by listening to each interview numerous times while transcribing the data. To protect the identity of each participant, this researcher assigned a code that identifies each participant. The codes I used are P1-P21. I transcribed the audiotaped interview using HyperTRANSCIBE, which allows the researcher to listen to the audio during transcription and type notes while the sound is playing (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

The coding process resulted in 12 themes in which this researcher combined some of the themes which resulted in nine sub-themes. Creswell (2009) provided for the coding process (a) organize and prepare. (b) read through all data and (c) a detailed analysis using the coding process. Each theme summarized the meaningful statements identified by each participant. The juveniles in this study provided their views based on their experiences attending church programs and their relationship with the staff members. The

themes were centered around the participant's relationship with the staff members, and the effectiveness of the church programs have on their decision to commit delinquent acts. The research questions aligned with the themes.

I asked the participants a total of nine questions about their perception of the effectiveness of church programs, their relationship with the staff, and how the staff help contribute to their success of not committing delinquent acts. In this study, a revelation was added not only what the participants' opinion of the church program but how their perception was established. There were themes, patterns, and connections that materialize. The main theme is listed first with the sub theme to follow. It is important to note that the juveniles used similar words to describe the sub-themes in which I used to develop the main theme. Through this process, I group the short phases into categories. Three main themes emerged from the data: 1) Effective, 2) Better decisions and 3) Role model.

Table 2

Themes

Themes	Research Questions
Effective	RQ1: What are the perception of the participating juveniles regarding the effectiveness of faith-based programs?
Helpful	RQ1: What are the perception of the participating juveniles regarding the

	effectiveness of faith-based programs?
Staying out of trouble	RQ1: What are the perception of the participating juveniles regarding the effectiveness of faith-based programs?
Peer Pressure	RQ1: What are the perception of the participating juveniles regarding the effectiveness of faith-based programs?
Better decision	RQ2: What outcomes do juveniles expect when they participate in faith-based initiatives?
To be help	RQ2: What outcomes do juveniles expect when they participate in faith-based initiatives?
To overcome	RQ2: What outcomes do juveniles expect when they participate in faith-based initiatives?
Successful	RQ2: What outcomes do juveniles expect when they participate in faith-based initiatives?
Role Model	RQ3: How does social bond theory (bonds formed with the staff) add to the success

Not a disappointment to the staff	of the program as perceived by juveniles? RQ3: How does social bond theory (bonds formed with the staff) add to the success of the program as perceived by juveniles?
Life Saver	RQ3: How does social bond theory (bonds formed with the staff) add to the success of the program as perceived by juveniles?
Encouragement	RQ3: How does social bond theory (bonds formed with the staff) add to the success of the program as perceived by juveniles?

Discrepant Cases

A discrepant case aims to offer a deviation or revision of what is being studied (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). In this case, the phenomenon studied were the live perspectives of juveniles on the effectiveness of church programs. There was no discrepant evidence during the interview process, or inconsistent findings were found in the data. This researcher viewed each statement from the participants as having equal value.

All repetitive statements for each interview were only considered if it brought meaning to the question otherwise were remove. There were 210 comments that was

made which resulted in three main themes and nine sub-themes. Sub-themes are secondary to the main theme. In this current study, this researcher aimed to use the sub-themes to provide a much meaningful statement that describes the main theme. I targeted the participants' experiences to ensure phrases and similar themes consisted of each participant interview.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

I used all procedures portrayed in Chapter 3 to maintain the integrity of the research during the data collection and analysis stage. Triangulation was used in this research to corroborate information from different participants' perspectives. I accomplished credibility through member checking. During the initial interview, this researcher asked for clarification to safeguard that all information reflected, was done so correctly. After the interviews were finalized, I reviewed the audio recordings, read each transcript carefully for precision, and sent each transcript to the participants for member checking. None of the participants provided any corrections.

Transferability

In Chapter 3, I explained the procedure for transferability that included a thick and rich detailed description of the research finding. Lincoln & Guba (1985) discussed the responsibility of the researcher to provide a rich, thick description for the reader to apply the conclusions of a study to a specific setting.

Dependability

To establish dependability, this researcher reviewed the documentation to ensure accuracy. I recorded interviews by audiotape and then transcribed them. This researcher adhered to Walden University's standards and guidelines. I reported details on all levels during the data collection process as well as the findings of this study. In addition, participants reviewed the transcript to check their statements.

Confirmability

Polit and Beck (2014) stated that confirmability is established when the data accurately reflects the information provided by the participants. I develop confirmability by reflecting on the perceptions and thoughts offered by each participant as they described their experiences during the interview process. Confirmability was addressed in this study to ensure the accuracy of the participants' responses.

Results

This phenomenological qualitative study was conducted to examine the lived experiences of twenty-one African-American males regarding their perception of church programs. A flyer was displayed at the church with the brochure showing who qualifies to participate in this study. The interested parents and their child contacted this researcher through email first. After the initial contact through email, and I did a brief interview to see if the juvenile qualified. The short interview consisted of questions from the flyer. 24 youths responded to the invitational flyer, and only twenty-one qualified to participate in this current study. The participants that qualified, a date, and a time for the interview was

set up. Before the interview process, this researcher obtained consent from the parents first, then the youth. Both parents and their child was very cooperative during the collection stage. This researcher provided all the information to the parents and their child about the purpose and nature of this study.

The interview room where the interviews took place was a private setting at the church center. The only two people that were included were the researcher and the juvenile. The parents and church staff were not involved because this researcher did not believe that the youths would provide truthful answers. Parents' presents may have affected the way the participants answered, and the juveniles may not have elaborated on follow-up questions. A church official was present at the facility during the interview process for all participants.

Presently, an understanding was gain on how juveniles view the effectiveness of church programs. There were themes, patterns, and relationships that emerge from this study. More importantly, trends arose that capture the essential factors that make this program effective.

I examined three working themes as a result of the nine interviews question that was asked of each participant. The emerging themes supported the three research questions that guided this assignment. The three working themes are in categories one thru-three and sub-categories (a-i) to support the main theme. For example: (1) effective; (a) helpful; (b) staying out of trouble; (c) peer pressure; (2) better decision; (d) to be help;

(e) to overcome; (f) successful; (3) role model (g) not a disappointment to the staff; (h) lifesaver; (i) encouragement.

Emergent Theme 1: Effective

The theme effective emerged throughout the first research question. The terms staying out of trouble, helpful, and peer pressure was deemed to be effective, and these concepts aligned with the first research question; what are the perceptions of the participating juveniles regarding the effectiveness of faith-based programs? The concept of effective means that each juvenile desired an intended result from the program. The church program's specific purpose was to help youths with the desired outcome. The participants believed that the program is effective by stating the program allows them to stay out of trouble.

The first term used was staying out of trouble. This term was used by six participants. The juvenile described the term "staying out of trouble" as not doing anything wrong. These participants stated that the programs' message teaches them a lists of courses that provide them with problem-solving skills. The participant also stated that being in the program is a time taker, nonetheless, they do not have time to hang with friends. Moreover, the program's message allows the juvenile to use tools to stay out of trouble. Thus, this term was used to mean the program is effective.

An example of effective within this program is that the program's objective is a way to convince the juveniles an appropriate, more efficient way of doing things. P20

suggested that the program keeps him out of trouble. He said that his friends hang out at the park, and at the park, drug deals, fights, and shooting goes on. Some of his friends are drug dealers. Nevertheless, this program has provided a substitute for his routine. P1 also provided similar thoughts by saying he would rather be at the program instead of home. His home life is not very positive. P1 stated, "I live in the hood, and in the hood, anything goes. My friend drops out of school to sell drugs, and now he is in the juvenile corrections center". However, the definition of effectiveness can be articulated using many words. Therefore, the use of this term was deemed appropriate for the foundational question that guided this concept. The overall perception from the viewpoint of the juveniles is that the effectiveness of the program is effective in providing what the juveniles need to not commit delinquent acts.

The second concept that emerged out of the theme effective is helpful. This term was used by seven participants. The participants suggested that the program provides them hope. P2, P6, and P12 all provided similar thoughts such as the program "makes me a believer," "I do the right thing now," "It gives me hope," and "I'm happier." More thoughts on helpfulness suggested that juveniles are shown a better way through the teachings of the program. The reporting juveniles described helpful in various ways. The participants used this term to mean that the program is helping them in multiple ways. The seven participants found that the program is helpful, which means they were reporting that their perception of the programs' effectiveness was partly due to the staff's eagerness to help. This allowed the participant to benefit from the services and allowed

them to be more opened to receive what the program was offering. More importantly, it was reported by the participants that when they are able to learn information, they are also able to find the information useful, thus, making the program effective.

The third concept that emerged out of the theme effective was peer pressure. This term was used by eight participants. Regarding the first research question, the participant perception was that the program allowed them not to be swayed by peer pressure. The reporting juveniles described peer pressure as a reason as to why they make bad decisions. The minors feel that the faith-based program is teaching them how to make better decisions. Meldeum, Miller, and Flexon (2013) reported that juveniles who perceive a favorable response from peers are more likely to engage in that behavior. P6 stated that one of the focus of the program is "being in control and the best you."

The eight participants also reported that their connection to the program and the staff is the reason they keep coming back to seek help. Furthermore, this peer pressure concept was group with effectiveness due to the support of the program in keeping each participant from making a wrong decision. The program was effective because it produced a desired result for the participants. Participants continuously praise the idea of the program teachings that involved peer pressure. The programs' effectiveness allows the participants not to give in to peer pressure. Overall the program helps with staying out of trouble, being in control, and assisting the juveniles with hope and excitement.

Emerging Theme 2: Better Decisions

The theme better-decisions emerged throughout the second research question. The terms to overcome, to be help, and successful were used with the theme, better-decisions. The research question; what outcomes do juveniles expect when participating in faith-based initiatives? The participants believe that the program allows them to be help. P6 suggested that "I think before I act, I couldn't say that before I started the program." More importantly, P6 expects the program to continue to stress the thinking before acting concept in order for him to make better decisions. P12, when asked the same question, suggested that "I hope the program helps me make better choices so that I won't end up dead or in jail." The other participants use terms like they hope the program outcome for them to "overcoming difficult situations" such as delinquent acts when they are not attending the program, and "not being afraid to do what is right" when not attending the program. Overall, the participants want to be successful not just with the program's outcome but in life as well. P11 stated that "I hope the church program can teach me how to be successful, make better choices and not get mad every time something doesn't go my way.

The term that was used by ten participants was "to overcome." The juveniles believed that the program allows them to succeed in dealing with difficulty situations. They also believed that the staff teaching them techniques, contribute to their success. According to Merriam-Webster (n.d.), overcome means to get the better of or to gain the superiority of a situation that may be difficult. One of Hirschi's (1969) component of the

social bond theory relates to an individual's level of belief in shared social morals and rules. If the juvenile shared this component, then they are also less likely to engage in bad behavior. The teaching of the program allows the juveniles to believe as if they are able to overcome any difficulty circumstance. The program teaches the moral compass in various ways. One way that the program engages the youth is by allowing them to write short paragraphs about their feelings. These writings include the overall day, and if something upset them today, they also write about that. The writings also suggest how they handle any problematic situations. Another way that they are able to overcome is through responsibility. The staff as reported by the participant, always preach taking responsibility for your action. The participants also reported that part of responsibility is always being honest. Overall, the term to overcome was used to describe making better decisions, and through the program's teaching, they believe that they can overcome.

The second term that was used by seven participants was, "To be help." According to Merriam-Webster (n.d.), the term help means to do something by offering one's services or resources. The participants that used this term seek to be help in many ways. One outcome of this program that the participant expect is through support. The participants believe that through support, they will be able to make the correct decisions. These seven participants reported that the teachings of the program make it easier for them to make better decisions. Another element of Hirschi's (1969) theory is that when large amounts of time are spent in a socially approved activity such as the church

programs, it reduces the time available for deviance. Overall, the term to be help was themed into the category of making better decisions.

The third and final term that was used by four participants to describe better decisions was "successful." The participants believe that being successful in the program will allow them the capability to make better decisions. Although successful, according to the research question for this current research, is desirable, the juveniles noted that they first must be successful with the learning, and by learning, they would be able to make a better decision thus, the outcome would be successful in their everyday life.

Emerging Theme 3: Role Model

The role model concept was themed from the terms that were used to describe this concept. Words such as lifesaver, caring, encouragement, and not wanting to disappoint the staff. The third question, which was used to guide this research study; how does Social Bonds Theory adds to the success of the program as perceived by juveniles? A participant describes their relationship with staff using various terms. P1, for example, stated that the staff is "very caring about the people in that are here." This participant describes the relationship by suggestion he would still come to the church without a program because he believes the staff cares about his life. P17 also stated a similar statement by saying, "I spend hours with the staff, and they treat me like they care." P15 and P18 described the staff as a lifesaver. P14 added to this research by stating that the staff encourages him through the programs. P14 noted that "I now believe I can make a difference, and it's what the staff tells me every day." The participants also stated that the

staff is someone they could look up to. They do not want to disappoint the staff because they believe they care about their well-being.

Vaughan, Bouffard, and Piquero (2017) stated that strong bonds demonstrated higher perceived salience of cost that they would consider in determining whether or not to commit a criminal act. Gilmore, Rodriguez, and Webb (2005) used the Social Bond Theory to understand the importance of social bonds. This study suggests that when social bonds are present (e.g., family, peers, religion, and work), the more likely the juvenile will not commit a delinquent act. The theoretical foundation of this current study suggests that a youth that is attached to staff is more likely not to commit a negligent act. The juvenile does not want to disappoint the people who show that they care as well as work with them on a daily base.

The first term used by nine participants to describe role model was the term "life saver." According to Merriam-Webster (n.d.), lifesaver is defined as a thing or service that saves one from a difficult situation. These participants explained that the staff cares about our life. The juveniles also reported that the staff wants the youth to care more about their life. When the staff cares more, it shows in their actions as well as their teaching. These nine participants believed that they would not be in a good place if it had not been for the staff members teaching the programs, showing that they care, and checking on them even when the program is not going on, thus saving them from making a decision that could lead to juvenile corrections or adult prison. Nonetheless, the participants believe that the staff cares by referring to the staff members as lifesaver.

The second term used by six participants to describe role models was the term "encouragement." The juveniles reported that the staff often encourage them using many terms, such as "being the best you," not given in to bad desire," "wanting more out of life," and "your life has more value." The action of giving someone hope is encouragement (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The participants reported that they look forward to the staff teaching of the programs. The juveniles explained that within the learning, there is always a message that has meaning to their life. Some youths are reporting that they find themselves, at home, on the phone, or at school, doing the same thing to their friends that the staff does, encouraging others. Additionally, the staff provides encouragement that allows the juvenile to imitate that behavior. This term is aligned with the definition of a role model.

The third and final term used by six participants to describe role models was the term not "wanting to be a disappointment." This phrase describes a role model as not wanting to disappoint because of the staff/youth connection. The participating youth explained that they do find themselves thinking about staff when they are faced with decisions that may cause them to commit delinquent acts. They also reported that they usually would not think before making a wrong choice, but because the juveniles have been spending more time with the staff, they feel obligated to at least give some thought to their decision making. Whether or not the juvenile makes a bad decision, the juvenile at least is thinking about their decision.

Summary

In this study, I examined the programs from the viewpoint of juveniles. The population included twenty-one male youths that gave their perception of the effectiveness of church programs. This researcher conducted an in-depth, face to face, nine open-ended interviews to acquire information on the lived experiences of juveniles. The research questions that guided this research were (a) what are the perceptions of the participating minors regarding the effectiveness of faith-based programs? What outcomes do youths expect when they participate in faith-based initiatives? and (b) how does Social Bond Theory (i.e., bonds formed with the staff and resulting from the programs offered) add to the success of the program as perceived by juveniles? To analyzed the data, this researcher used an audio recording, and this researcher transcribes all information by using a qualitative software called HyperTranscribe. There were three significant themes that arose from the interviews. There were nine sub-themes that this researcher also used to describe the main themes in detail. This researcher discussed the results of the research, which were based on the responses from the participants during the interviews.

In this chapter, I provided an explanation of the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, and the results of this study. I also provided evidence of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In Chapter 5, the purpose and nature of the study are reiterated. Chapter 5 also includes the interpretation of the study's results, limitations, recommendations, and implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendation, and Conclusions

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the findings, the recommendation, and the conclusions. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the effectiveness of faith-based delinquency programs have on a juvenile decision whether to commit delinquent acts or not. More importantly, the goal was to gain an in-depth understanding of the extent to which the effectiveness of church programs which included the juvenile perception of the staff. I also sought to understand how effective the church program has on the youth.

The research question that guided this research were (a) “What are the perceptions of the participating juveniles regarding the effectiveness of faith-based programs?; “What outcomes do juveniles expect when they participate in faith-based initiatives?; and (b) “How does SBT (i.e., bonds formed with the staff and resulting from the programs offered) add to the success of the program as perceived by juveniles?”

There are many programs within the juvenile justice system that focuses on rehabilitation that includes mental health and sex offenders' programs (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2012). Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (2012) reported that their programs are contracted out. These programs include prevention and victim services, probation, and residential programs (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2012). These programs services are provided by a multi-disciplinary team that includes a probation officer, social worker, mental health, and educators that offers a plan

for the youth (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2012). The church is a key factor within the African-American community. Venable (2015) reported that African American juveniles' families rely heavily on the church to address the many issues that arise.

Findings

The study's findings are in alignment with the literature review in Chapter 2, research questions, and the theoretical foundation, SBT. The studies related to the SBT are consistent with this current study. When the four restraints (attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief) are intact, the juvenile is less likely to engage in delinquency activities. The church programs posit the primary inhibitors that decrease the opportunity for delinquency acts. In principle, Hirschi (1969) stated that the existence of bonds to a conventional institution reduces the likelihood of delinquent acts.

The participants in this study expressed that the church program and the relationship with the staff, play an essential role in their decision not to commit delinquent acts. The findings also support prior results by Spruit et al. (2016) that applied the SBT to sports. These authors suggested that youth attachment to sports are less likely to get involved in delinquent behavior. The results of Yang and Yang's (2017) study also confirmed this current study's finding by suggesting that youth that forms bonds with a conventional institution such as the church reduces the risk of delinquent behavior such as substance use.

Like previous studies, this research identified restraints that support the relationship between the staff and the juveniles that provided a positive outcome.

However, the study also found that successfulness has more to do with the staff more so than the program alone. Moreover, the learning process, along with the shared bonds with the staff does impacts decision-making. This study also extends on the knowledge within the discipline by identifying key contributors associated with the program, such as not wanting to let the staff down by committing delinquent acts. Furthermore, the findings add to the knowledge of the discipline by identifying the themes that are connected with the social bond theory.

This study contributed to filling the gap within the literature by exploring the juveniles' live experience and perception of programs within the church. This study also strengthens the understanding of how effective the church programs are at reducing the negative decision-making among juveniles. In this approach, this study expands on the knowledge of conventional institutions that is suggested in previous studies. Based on the present review, I explained the participants' perceptions and experiences of the church program's effectiveness on whether or not the juvenile desires to commit delinquent acts.

The SBT approach provided an appropriate lens of the juveniles. The SBT perspective was beneficial in interpreting the identified themes, such as the program being effective, making a better decision, and seeing the staff as a role model. The SBT also allowed me to form sub-themes that lead to primary themes. The sub-themes are from the viewpoint of the juvenile. The concepts are that the program is helpful, staying out of trouble, and resisting peer pressure.

Additionally, other concepts are the outcomes that are expected, such as to be help, to overcome, and the participants want to be successful when not attending the church initiatives. Finally, the theme role model is linked to terms that describe the relationship with the staff. These terms include the juvenile not wanting to disappoint the staff member, the staff member being a lifesaver, and lastly, the staff member encouragement.

The fact that positive ties to the church and staff members are most significant in reducing recidivism. This finding supports the theory of Travis Hirschi (1969) that the youth's attachment to conventional institutions such as the church, deters delinquent acts. The youth envisions their "helpers" response to their actions when enticement surfaces. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) published their version of self-control. They argue that rational individuals are likely to decide to perform criminal or deviant acts when an opportunity presents itself because they cannot foresee the long-term consequences of their actions (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). In the authors' view, individuals with low self-control are most associated with poor parenting practices.

The data collected suggested that the most essential and practical strategies to reduce recidivism are to provide church programs to juveniles. The participants' responses supported the approach of the social bond theory that suggests that when bonds are present, the less likely the youth will commit delinquent acts. A staff-child relationship is a useful tool in preventing juvenile delinquency acts.

The concept of the theme's effectiveness, including peer pressure, helpfulness, and staying out of trouble, provides a contextual understanding of how participants view the success of church programs. Newstorm and Davis (2013) defined the term effective and suggested that it is goal-attainment and how the constituencies view the program. Several scholars have documented how social bonds lower criminal behavior. Rizzolo, Gore, Ratsimbazafy, and Rajaonson (2017) noted that, when attachments between individuals and groups, are weak, formal strategies such as enforcement, sanctions, education) can consequence in unintended opposite effects.

For juveniles, Yonder and Bovard-johns (2017) noted in their study that religion and spirituality could influence youth development by promoting morals and values that affect delinquency. According to Baier and Wright (2001), religion has been demonstrated to be a protective factor that combats the effects of delinquency. This current study has demonstrated that social institutions such as the church can provide a positive impact that halts delinquent behavior by allowing the juvenile to think about their actions; thus, leading to better decisions.

Making better decisions for participants in this study resulted from the interview when the juveniles use terms to describe church programs. Russell and Manske (2017) suggested that there is a growing body of research that indicated that decision-making could be improved with increased accuracy and fewer errors. This research supports the idea of juveniles making a better decision by allowing the agenda of the program to serve a positive influencer that opposes terrible behavior. Hirschi (1969) noted that the more

conventional institution invests in the individual, the less likely that individual break the bond. Yonder and Bovard-johns (2017) revealed that religiosity before and after the arrest was associated with less sexual criminality among youth.

The concept role model arose during the interview when the participants use terms to describe this concept. According to Merriam-Webster (n.d.), a role model is a person looked to by others as an example. Research has suggested that religion and spirituality are the fundamental aspects of human experience (King & Furrow, 2008). The role model term is in alignment with the social bond theory because it represents all the elements of attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. This current research found that the juvenile look to the staff for guidance. That guidance goes beyond programming. The findings by Cheney et al. (2014) found that African Americans in the south region have a higher rate of participation in religious activities. Moore et al. (2015) suggested that sustaining relationships is essential to reducing the rate of incarcerated black youth.

The concept of the themes, effective, better-decision, and role model all describes the experiences of the participating juveniles in church programs. I concluded that church programs are a significant part of the growth of the juveniles. All participants described their perception of how effective the programs. I allowed all participants to express their views freely.

Limitations of the Study

The goal of this study was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the perception of the juveniles about the effectiveness of church initiatives have on delinquency. There

were various limitations heading into this study. The lack of experience conducting a phenomenological study, the sample size and the restriction to the Southeast United States made this study challenging. This study did not take into account peer to peer interaction while attending the church program. While this researcher believes that having the youth who have similar issues that they are faced with daily may have had an impact, this researcher chose not to consider peer interaction as a possibility because this study focus was on church programs and the relationships with the staff that is formed during the teaching of programs. Wooditch, Tang, and Taxman (2014) stated that having a close relationship with deviant peers affects criminal involvement. Meldeum et al. (2013) reported that juveniles who perceive a favorable response from peers are more likely to engage in that behavior. Furthermore, a juvenile who engage in good behavior is more likely to engage in that behavior.

Recommendation for Future Study

Based on the results of this qualitative phenomenological study, I recommend future research on other ethnicities as the results may differ in different church and location settings. Another recommendation for future research is to examine the perception of young youth girls who need church programs, especially those who have experienced the juvenile justice system programs. Finally, another area for future examination is to look at church programs for juveniles from the viewpoint of the church staff. This viewpoint can look at their bond with the juveniles and how the staff sees

growth with the youth. The study can also look at how the different stories from the juvenile effects the way they provide services.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this study may affect positive social change by providing the key factors that help juveniles succeed. The recommendations from this current study may provide different aspects of how to deal with the problem of juveniles' decision to commit a delinquent act or not. The findings of this study emphasized how effective the church programs are through the experiences of the juvenile. Various empirical research has examined rehabilitation programs that are associated with the juvenile justice program. However, juvenile programs in an African American church setting has not been explored in terms of how they relate to the decisions to commit delinquent acts.

To effect positive social change, it starts with the policymakers allocating resources to churches that lack funding. The social change should start with this region, making an effort to reduce inequalities in low-income areas. Changing the separation of church and state could put the focus back on the juvenile justice system to avoid the high arrest rates among African Americans. One key finding in this current research is that a juvenile respond positively to the staff, which makes an effort to spend time, care for them, and pick them up when they have failed.

Individual Level

Recidivism has become a serious problem, and these rates differ between states. According to Juvenile arrest rates (2017), juveniles that are arrested, 50% are African

Americans, and 66% are transferred to the criminal justice system. Williams et al. (2014) examined factors that contribute to juveniles engaging in illegal activity. These authors noted that youth living in poor neighborhoods increased when a stressor is present. According to Safiedine and Chung (2018), African Americans have the most significant percentage of the population living in poverty. The U.S. Census (2017) noted that African Americans make up about 12.7% of the population. Furthermore, African Americans in low-income areas are among those that are represented in the criminal justice system (Feist-Price et al., 2014).

According to this current research, black juveniles can benefit from attending church programs. This particular group, according to Venable (2015), relies heavily on the church, and the role of religion can provide an attachment that does decrease delinquency rates. The impact of reducing African American delinquency rates goes far beyond the individual level. It can provide a blueprint for other ethnicities across the globe that struggle with juvenile behavior.

Family Level

Research has noted that there has been discrimination and injustice rooted in African American culture that has led to increased incarceration rates (Coats, 2015). However, family factors have been identified as a risk factor for juvenile delinquency as well (Tolan, Gorman-Smith, & Henry, 2003). Hirschi's (1969) theory suggests that conventional institutions play a role in reducing delinquent acts. If the family lacks family bonds, the church can be relied upon to provide the structure that Hirschi

describes in his SBT. The family structure in a black household is not always the best. If there were other options such as a conventional institution (Church programs), the church can be proactive in its' approach and save the juvenile male from entering into the juvenile justice system or possibly the adult system. This suggestion could lead to families staying together and building a better future family structure for many years.

Organizational Level

The juvenile justice system has experienced growth despite numbers saying otherwise (Lipcomb, 2013). The increase could be due to incapacitation that allows for longer sentencing. Lipscomb (2013) suggested that the juvenile justice system has programs in place that are aimed at rehabilitation for juveniles. However, faith-based programs could alleviate the juvenile justice system by allocating funds to the church. Based on this current research, the long-term goal should be to provide preventative programs that affect the rates of juvenile delinquency, in particular, African Americans. A common strategy to reduce the severity of arrest in the black community without compromising the safety of the public may be achieved through the means of the church programs. Saving a generation of black juveniles from prison by implementing a preventative program like the church could remove the risk factors that they face.

Societal Level

In recent years, there has been an increased number of incarceration rates that have led to the construction of more prisons that have increased the amount of money spent (Orrick & Vieraitis, 2015). According to Orrick and Vieraitis (2015), a surge in

"tough-on-crime" policies shifts the focus of the criminal system has increased violent crime rates. There have been consequences associated with the increase in incarceration rates, such as a rise in the cost of crime as well as the cost of prison. Austin and colleagues (2007) summarized three core recommendations that they conceived will reduce the prison population without having a significant effect on crime rates: (a) reducing time served, (b) eliminating parole or technical probation violators, and (c) decriminalizing victimless crimes.

When these concepts are reduced, it reduces the cost of money being spent thus, reducing taxes from the citizens. Orrick and Vieraitis (2015) suggest that more states are redirecting cost to preventative programs. Redirecting cost to the church could provide a shift in the right direction, such as policy changes and reducing the rates of African Americans incarcerated. Such a policy shift is limited unless the lawmakers or policymakers support the church programs.

Methodological Implications

In Chapter one, I stated that this current research is limited to the lived experiences of African American male juveniles. This research allowed the juvenile participants to provide information on the effectiveness that church programs have on delinquency rates. The data collected and analysis process used provided a more in-depth description from the perspective of black juveniles. Miner-Romanoff (2012) suggested that qualitative phenomenological data yields an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences that involves a repeated analysis. According to Groenewald (2004), the

phenomenological method provides detailed information that concentrates on the lived experiences of individuals and can help generate new ideas that will help show different aspects of a person's knowledge.

Theoretical Implications

A significant framework of this study was the SBT, which can be employed to enhance the theoretical understanding of how African-American juvenile males, bond with those who care and how they relate their lived experiences when accessing important components of the church programs. The data used in this study on the lived experiences of African-American juvenile male united with the theoretical framework can develop an alternative to the juvenile justice system and policies. This framework can help combat racial injustices and black juvenile arrest rates that effects incarceration rates of African-American males. Implications from this research are likely to contribute to the field of academia and possibly serve as a blueprint to understanding how the church programs play a key role in an African-American juvenile male's decision to commit a delinquent act.

Recommendations for Practice

The juveniles in this study provided valuable information on how church programs have affected their decision-making. The data from this current research can provide policymakers and the justice system with knowledge as to how effective church programs are at effecting change in our youth. The purpose of this research was to bring attention to other alternatives other than the juvenile justice system programs. The

lawmakers of this region must acknowledge that African Americans rely heavily on the church. The church could provide a safe haven for our black youth. Preventative strategies that can save citizens money must be looked at for a better quality of life for African American juvenile males. The justice system, as well as the policymakers, owe it to the black community to help out any way they can by making the system more correct. Treatment rather than incarceration and policymakers reforming the justice system to allow black churches the opportunity to provide services for our black youth can reduce delinquency rates.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the effectiveness of faith-based initiatives have on African Americans' juvenile male decisions to commit delinquency acts. This research gave 21 individuals a voice to contribute to the growing problem that suggested that 50% of juveniles who are arrested are black youth. This problem then contributes to two-thirds of black juveniles being transferred to the adult system. Furthermore, this issue has impacted the African American community by separating young black men from their families, which impacts the community.

The findings from this study are consistent with the theoretical framework based on Travis Hirschi's (1969) (SBT). Social bonds theory examines the strong relationships to conventional society or institutions. Furthermore, this theory relies on the 4 restraints that link the individual to society. Hirschi (1969) suggested that when social bonds are

weakened, the more likely the degree of deviant behavior goes up. SBT is important to youth that formed a relationship with a convention institution.

The participants in this current research detailed description are supported by Yang & Yang (2017), Ford and Rigg (2015), and Spruit et al.'s (2013) examination of the bond theory. Those individuals that do not have the parental bonds have the church as a source. The church staff understanding how and why the participants commit delinquent acts are an essential part of the relationship with the black juvenile. This research shows that there may be differences in the church programs and the juvenile justice system. African Americans indicated greater importance on relationships with the staff members regarding whether or not they choose to engage in delinquent behavior.

This study adds to the existing literature that suggests that attachments with conventional institutions affect delinquency rates. In this research study, I used the lived experiences of African American juvenile males to determine whether or not the church programs are effective in reducing delinquent acts. Arresting and locking up juveniles places an economic and social tension on the rest of the family. If the trend continues, it weakens the community, strains the family and friend's dynamic and, it will place a strain on future black youth. The current structure of juvenile programs within the juvenile justice system has not worked despite the efforts. However, if the policymakers begin to acknowledge the church as a preventative program institution, then the African American community, as well as the juvenile, can benefit most.

References

- Arsovska, J. (2008). Interviewing serious offenders: Ms. egghead meets Mr. gumshoe. *Trends in Organized Crime*, 11(1), 42-58. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s1217>
- Aizer, A., & Doyle, J. J. (2015). Juvenile incarceration, human capital and future crime: Evidence from randomly-assigned judges. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 130(2), 759-803. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w19102>
- Aspire Health Partners. (2017). Programs and services. Retrieve from <https://aspirehealthpartners.com/programs-and-services>
- Austin, J., Clear, T., Duster, T., Greenberg, D. F., Irwin, J., & McCoy, C. (2007). *Unlocking America: Why and how to reduce America's prison population*. Washington, DC: JFA Institute.
- Babbie, E. (2015). *The basics of social research* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.
- Baglivio, M. T., Wolff, K. T., Piquero, A. R., Bilchik, S., Jackowski, K., Greenwald, M. A., & Epps, N. (2016). Maltreatment, child welfare, and recidivism in a sample of deep-end crossover youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 45(4), 625-654. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1007/s10964-015-0407-9>
- Baier, C. J., & Wright, B. R. E. (2001). “If you love me, keep my commandments”: A meta-analysis of the effect of religion on crime. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 38, 3–21. <https://doi:10.1177/0022427801038001001>.

- Barrett, D. E., & Katsiyannis, A. (2016). Juvenile offending and crime in early adulthood: A large sample analysis. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 25*(4), 1086-1097. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1007/s10826-015-0304-6>
- Barry, A. E., Sutherland, M. S. and Harris, G. J. 2006. Faith-based prevention model: A rural African-American case study. *American Journal of Health Studies, 21*(3/4): 148–157. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315257341-9>
- Bartollas, C., & Miller, S. (1994). *Juvenile justice in America*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bartollas, C., & Miller, S. (2017). *Juvenile justice in America* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Bates, K. A., & Swan, R. S. (2018). *Juvenile delinquency in a diverse society* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bilchik, S. (1998). A juvenile justice system for the 21st century. *Crime and Delinquency, 44*, 89-92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128798044001009>
- Blitzman, J. D. (2015). Are we criminalizing adolescence? *Criminal Justice, 30*(1), 22-28.
- Boakye, K. E. (2013). Correlates and predictors of juvenile delinquency in Ghana. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice, 37*(4), 257-278. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01924036.2013.792149>
- Burka, S., & Earls, F. (1993). Early determinants of delinquency and violence. *Health Affairs, 12*(4), 46-64. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.12.4.46>

- Caldwell, B. (2014). Globalization and juvenile life sentences: creating meaningful opportunities for release for juvenile offenders. *Journal of the Institute of Justice and International Studies*, (14), 1-VI.
- Cantora, A., Iyer, S., Restivo, L. (2016). Understanding drivers of crime in East Baltimore: Resident perception of why crime persists. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 41(4), 686-709. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvr43jjg.14>
- Cheney, A. M., Curran, G. M., Booth, B. M., Sullivan, S. D., Stewart, K. E., & Borders, T. F. (2014). The religious and spiritual dimensions of cutting down and stopping cocaine use: A qualitative exploration among African Americans in the south. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 44(1), 94-113. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2014.05.012>
- Church, W., Jagers, J. & Taylor, J. (2012). Neighborhood, poverty, and negative behavior: An examination of differential association and social control theory. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34, 1035-1041. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.02.005>
- Church, W.T., Springer, D., & Roberts, A.R. (2014). Waivers and transfers of juveniles to adult court: treating juveniles like adult criminals. In M. Deitch, and N. Ayra (Eds.), *Juvenile justice sourcebook* (pp. 242-257). Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Coats, T. (2015, October). The Black Family in the age of Mass Incarceration.

- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mix methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J.W. & Miller, D.L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 124-130.
- Crowe, S., Creswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A., Sheikh (2011). The case study approach: *BMC Medical Research Methodology*. doi:10.1186/1471-2288-11-100.
- Davis, M.S. (2002) *The Concise Dictionary of Criminal Justice*. Sage.
- Davidson, S. L. (2015). The relationship between childhood conduct disorder and antisocial personality disorder in adulthood: An argument in favor of mandatory life sentences without parole for juvenile homicide offenders. *Law & Psychology Review*, 39, 239-252.
- Day, D., & Wanklyn, S. (2012). Identification and operationalization of the major risk factors for antisocial and delinquent behaviour among children and youth. Retrieved from www.publicsafety.gc.ca/npc
- Deci, E. L. (1975). *Intrinsic motivation*. New York, NY: Plenum.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4613-4446-9>

Deci, E., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior. New York, NY: Plenum. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-2271-7>

Demeter, L. A., & Sibanda, N. (2017). Neighborhood risks and resources correlated with successful reentry of youth returning from Massachusetts detention centers. *Journal of Juvenile Justice*, 6(1), 15-32.

Department of Economic & Social Affairs. (2003). *World youth report*. New York: United Nations.

Department of Juvenile Justice. Bureau of data and research (2017). Program statistics. Tallahassee, Fl.

DeVall, K. E., Gregory, P. D., & Hartmann, D. J. (2012). The potential of social science theory for the evaluation and improvement of drug courts. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 42(4), 320-336. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022042612461767>

DiIulio, John J. (1999). Supporting black churches: Faith, outreach, and the inner city poor. *Brookings Review* 17:42-45. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20080848>

DuBois, W.E.B. (1898). Some efforts of the American Negroes for their own betterment. Atlanta, GA. In E.F. Frazier's *The Negro Church in American*, 1963. P.6.

Ellefsen, R. (2017). Taking sides? issues of bias and partisanship when researching socio-political conflict. *Critical Criminology*, 25(2), 231-244.

Eskridge, W. N. (1998). Relationships between formalism and functionalism in separation of powers cases. *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*; Cambridge, England: 22(1), 21-29. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-017-9355-x>

- Evans, T. D., Cullen, F. T., Dunaway, R. G., & Burton, Velmer S., Jr. (1995). Religion and crime reexamined: The impact of religion, secular controls, and social ecology on adult criminality. *Criminology*, 33(2), 195.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1995.tb01176x>
- Evans, S. Z.; Simons, Leslie G., & Simons, Ronald L. (2014). Factors that influences trajectories of delinquency throughout adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 45(1), 156-171.[https:// doi: 10.1007/s10964-014-0197-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-014-0197-5)
- Fagan, A. A., Wright, E. M., & Pinchevsky, G. M. (2014). The protective effects of neighborhood collective efficacy on adolescent substance use and violence following exposure to violence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 43(9), 1498-512. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260513505150>
- Faircloth, B. (2012). Children & marital conflict: A review. Casemakers: Source of Information about early childhood & family support practices, 1-5.
- Federal safety net. (2017). U.S. poverty statistics.
- Feist-Price, S., Lavergne, L., & Davis, M. (2014). Disability, race and ex-offender status: The tri-vector challenge to employment. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 45(4), 25-34. <https://doi.org/10.1891/0047-2220.45.4.25>
- Ferrall, B. R. (2001). Juvenile crime, juvenile justice--panel on juvenile crime: Prevention, treatment and control. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 91(4), 1154-1155.

- Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. (2012). *Glossary of terms* [On-line]. Available:
<http://www.djj.state.fl.us/reference/terminology/html>
- Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. (2012). History. Retrieve from
www.djj.state.fl.us/about-us/history.
- Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. (2017). Florida programs & facilities. Retrieve
from www.djj.state.fl.us/programs-facilities.
- Ford, J. A., & Rigg, K. K. (2015). Racial/Ethnic differences in factors that place
adolescents at risk for prescription opioid misuse. *Prevention Science*, 16(5), 633-
641. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11121014-0514-y>
- Ford, J.D., Kerig, P.K., Desai, N., & Feierman, J. (2016). Psychosocial interventions for
traumatized youth in the juvenile justice system: Research, evidence base, and
Clinical/Legal challenges. *Journal of Juvenile Justice*, 5(1), 31-49.
- Frazier, E.F. (1963). *The Negro church in America*. Schocken Books, New York.
- Gendreau, P., Little, T., & Goggin, C. (1996). A meta-analysis of adult offender
recidivism: What works! *Criminology*, 34, 575–607.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1996.tb01220>
- Gilgun, J. F. (2005). Qualitative research and family psychology. *Journal of Family
Psychology*, 19(1), 40-50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/096364-10903132987>.
- Gilmore, A. S., Rodriguez, N., & Webb, V. J. (2005). Substance abuse and drug courts:
The role of social bonds in juvenile drug courts. *Youth Violence and Juvenile
Justice*, 3, 287-315. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541204005278803>

- Gottfredson, M. R., & Hirschi, T. (1990). *A General Theory of Crime*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(1). Article 4.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690400300105>
- Harvey, A. R., & Hill, R. B. (2004). Afrocentric youth and family rites of passage program: Promoting resilience among at-risk African American youths. *Sodai Work*, 49, 65-74. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/49.1.65>
- Hesse-Biber, S. (2010). *Analyzing qualitative data: With or without software*. Chestnut Hill MA: Boston College.
- Hirschi, T. (1969). *The causes of delinquency*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Hirschi, T. & Gottfredson, M. (1995). Control theory and the life-course perspective. *Studies on crime and crime prevention* (4)131-142.
- Hollow, M. (2014). Money, morals, and motives: An exploratory study into why bank managers and employees commit fraud at work. *Journal of Financial Crime*, 21(2), 174-190. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jfc-02-2013-0010>
- Howell, J.C. (2003). *Preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency: A comprehensive framework*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Hunt, L. L., & Hunt, M. O. (2001). Race, region, and religious involvement: A comparative study of whites and African Americans. *Social Forces*, 80(2), 605-631. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2001.0098>
- Jacobs, R. (2013). Waving goodbye to due process: The juvenile waiver system. *Cardozo Journal of Law and Gender* 19 (1), 898-107.
- Johnson, B. R., Jang, S. J., De Li, S., & Larson, D. (2000). The 'invisible institution' and black youth crime: The church as an agency of local social control. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 29(4), 479-498. <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1005114610839>
- Juvenile arrest rates. (2017). Office of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention. <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime/jar.asp>.
- Keenan, S. J., Rush, J. P., & Cheeseman, K. A. (2015). Judicial waiver Decisions in Two Southern States: A Study of Judicial Perceptions. *American Journal of Criminal Justice: AJCJ*, 40(1), 100-115. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-0988-2.ch041>
- Khan, H. U. (2016). Socio-economic factors affecting juvenile delinquency: A study in Borstal Jails, Punjab. *International Journal for Social Studies*. 2(10), 220-234.
- King, P. E., & Furrow, J. L. (2008). Religion as a resource for positive youth development: Religion, social capital, and moral outcomes. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, S, 1, 34-49. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.40.5.703>
- Kusnetz, D. (2014). Addressing structural racism in juvenile justice through experimentalism. *Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems*, 47(3), 245-284.
- Lahlah, E., Van der Knapp, L. M., Bogaerts, S., and Lens, K. M. (2014). Ethnic

- differences in the effect of perceived parenting on juvenile violent delinquency of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. New York 23(2), 333-346. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022113480041>
- Lashley, A. M. (2013). Governing from the pulpit: How the first circuit in ACLU of Massachusetts V. U.S. conference of Catholic bishops failed to prevent a government agency from unconstitutionally contracting its duties to a religious institution. *American University Law Review*. 63(2), 607-647.
- Lawrence, L., & Hemmens, C. (2008). *Juvenile Justice: A text/reader*. Sage. Thousand Oaks, CA
- LeCompte, M. & Preissle, J. (1993). *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research*. (2nd Ed). San Diego: Academic Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.392006110>
- Lincoln, C.E. (1974). *The black experience in religion*. Anchor Books, New York.
- Lincoln, C. E., and Mamiya, L. H. (1990). *The Black Church in the African American Experience*. Duke University Press, Durham.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lipscomb, L.M. (2013). African American female adjudicated delinquents and the predictive influences on spirituality and quality of family relationships. Morgan State University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. 3587787.

- Longshore, D., Chang, E., & Messina, N. (2005). Self-control and social bonds: A combined control perspective on juvenile offending. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 21(4), 419-437. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-005-7359-2>
- Lynn Skaggs, S., & Sun, I. Y. (2017). Policing juveniles in rural communities. *Policing*, 40(2), 244-264. <https://doi.org/10.1108/pijpsm-03-2016-0030>
- MacKenzie, D., Farrington, D. (2015). Preventing future offending of delinquency and offenders: What have we learned from experiments and meta-analyses? *Springer Science Business Media Dordrecht*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-015-9244-9>
- Marshall, B., Cardon, P., Poddar, A., & Fontenot, R. (2013). Does sample size matter in qualitative research? A review of qualitative interviews in research. <https://doi.org/10.11114smc.v2i2.570>
- Maxwell, J. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mays, G. L., Ruddell, R. K. (2012). Do the crime, do the time: Juvenile criminals and adult justice in the American court system. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Overcome. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved February 23, 2020, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/overcome>
- McGiven, Y. (2003). *The practice of market and social research: An introduction*. London, England, Prentice Hall.
- McShane, M. D., & Cavanaugh, M. R. (2016). *Understanding juvenile justice and delinquency*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

- Meldrum, R. C., Miller, H. V., Flexon J. L. (2012). Susceptibility to peer influence, self-control and delinquency. *Journal of Sociology Inquiry*, 83(1). [https://doi: 10.1111/j.1475-628x.2012.00434.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-628x.2012.00434.x)
- Miner-Romanoff, K. (2012). Interpretive and critical phenomenological crime studies: A model design. *The Qualitative Report*, 12(27), 1-32.
- Mohideen, Rosilawati S., Anuar, Nurliyana K. K., Latiff, Dzaa I., Ridzuan, Abdul R., & Kamarudin, Fazlul H. (2016). Social factors that contribute juvenile delinquency at Melaka. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 3, 93-98.
- Molock, S. D. & Barksdale, C.L. (2013). Relationship between religiosity and conduct problems among African American and Caucasian adolescents. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 22(1), 4-14. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-012-9584-2>
- Mooney, A., Knox, D, & Schacht C. (2016) *Understanding social problems*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.
- Moore, S. E., Adedoyin, A. C., Robinson, M. A., and Boamah, D. A. (2015). "The Black Church: Responding to the Drug-Related Mass Incarceration of Young Black Males: 'If you had been here my Brother would not have died!'" *Social Work and Christianity* 42(3): 313-331.
- Moore, M. D., & Sween, M. (2015). Rural youth crime: A reexamination of social disorganization theory's applicability to rural areas. *Journal of Juvenile Justice*, 4(1), 47-63.
- Mukenge, I. R. (1983). *The Black church in America: A case study in political economy*.

- University Press of America, Inc., Lanham, MD. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3511962>
- National Center for Juvenile Justice. (2017). Easy access to the census of juvenile in residential placement. www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/State_Race
- Nelsen, H.M., Yokley, R. I., and Nelsen, A.K. (1971). *The Black church in America*. Basic Books. New York. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3164256>
- Newstorm J. W., & Davis, K. (1993). *Organizational behavior* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.
- Orrick, E. A., & Vieraitis, L. M. (2015). The cost of incarceration in Texas: Estimating the benefits of reducing the prison population. *American Journal of Criminal Justice: AJCJ*, 40(2), 399-415. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12103-014-9265-3>
- Oplatka, I. (2018). Understanding emotion in educational and service organizations through semi-structured interviews: Some conceptual and practical insights. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(6), 1347-1363.
- Paris, P. J. (1985). *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches*. Fortress Press. Philadelphia, PA: <https://doi.org/10.1086/487541>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* 3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage.
- Polit, D. F. & Beck, C. T. (2012). *Nursing research: Principles and methods*. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

- Polit, D.F. and Beck, C.T. (2014) *Essentials of Nursing Research: Appraising Evidence for Nursing Practice*. (8th Edition). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Rahman, M. S. (2017). The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches and Methods in Language “Testing and Assessment” Research: A Literature Review. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(1), 102–112. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v6n1p102>
- Reed, D. K., PhD., Miller, N., M.S., & Novosel, L. C., PhD. (2017). Vocabulary instruction to support the career readiness of juvenile offenders. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 68(1), 32-51.
- Rizzolo, J. B., Gore, M. L., Ratsimbazafy, J. H., & Rajaonson, A. (2017). Cultural influences on attitudes about the causes and consequences of wildlife poaching. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 67(4), 415-437.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1007/s10611-016-9665-z>
- Robison, S. B., Blackmon, B. J., & Rhodes, J. L. F. (2016). Variations in juvenile offending in Louisiana: Demographic, behavioral, geographic, and school-related predictors. *Journal of Juvenile Justice*, 5(2), 31-49.
- Rubin, H., Rubin, I. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing* (3rd ed): The art of hearing data. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Rubin, R. H., Billingsley, A., & Caldwell, C. H. (1994). The role of the black church in working with black adolescents. *Adolescence*, 29(114), 251-66.
- Safiedine, S. S., & Chung, K. J. (2018). The price for justice: The economic barriers that contribute to an unfair and unjust criminal justice system. *Criminal Justice*, 32(4), 40-44
- Sago, R. (2017). A quick explainer: What to take from Orange County's juvenile arrest rate. WMFE Journalistic Ethics Code:
- Simon, J., (2011). Assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and scope of the study. Retrieved from <http://www.disertationrecipes.com/2011//Assumptions-Limitation-Delimitations>.
- Shaw, C. R., & McKay, H. D. (1942). *Juvenile delinquency and urban areas*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Siegel, L.J., & Welsh, B. C. (2009). *Juvenile delinquency theory practice and law*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Silverman, D. (2010). *Qualitative research*. London: Sage
- Spruit, A., van Vugt, E., van der Put, C. van der Stouwe, T., & Stams, G. (2016). Sports participation and Juvenile Delinquency: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 45(4), 655-671. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-015-015-0389-7>
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Tanenhaus, D. S., & Drizin, S. A. (2002). "Owing to the extreme youth of the accused": The changing legal response to juvenile homicide. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 92(3), 641-705. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1144240>
- Taylor, R. J., Chatters, L. M., & Levin, J. (2004). *Religion in the lives of African Americans*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Taylor, M, and Spang, T. (2017). "I'd prefer an applicant who doesn't have a delinquency history": Delinquents in the labor market. *Journal of Juvenile Justice*, 6(1), 67-81.
- Tennyson, H. R. (2009). Reducing Juvenile Recidivism: A Meta-Analysis of Treatment Outcomes (Doctoral dissertation, Pacific University).
- Tolan, P. H., Gorman-Smith, D., & Henry, D. B. (2003). The developmental ecology of urban males' youth violence. *Developmental Psychology*, 39, 274–291.
[doi:10.1037/0012-1649.39.2.274](https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.39.2.274)
- Thomas, J. M., Thomas, S. A., Burgason, K. A., & Wichinsky, L. C. (2014). Early contact with the criminal justice system and intellectual functioning as risk factors for violent and chronic adult offending. *Western Criminology Review*, 15(1), 34-50.
- Troutman, B. (2018). A more just system of juvenile justice: Creating a new standard of accountability for juveniles in Illinois. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 108(1), 197-221.

- Vaughan, T. J., Bouffard, J. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2017). Testing an integration of control theories: The role of bonds and self-control in decision making. *American Journal of Criminal Justice: AJCJ*, 42(1), 112-133.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1007/s12103-016-9340-z>
- Venable, V. M. (2015). Black church members' perspectives on the role of the black church in the rehabilitative process of juvenile sex offenders. *Social Work and Christianity*. 42(3), 350-368.
- Voisin, D. R., Elsaesser, C., Kim, D. H., Patel, S., & Cantara, A. (2016). The relationship between family stress and behavioral health among African American adolescents. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 25(7), 2201-2210.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-016-0402-0>
- Washington, J.R., Jr. (1964). *Black religion: The Negro and Christianity in the United States*. Beacon, Boston. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/8.1.122>
- Weatherburn, D., and Schepel, K. (2015). Economic adversity and crime: old theories and new evidence. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 50(1), 89-106.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1839-4655.2015.tb00336.x>
- Wiersma, W. (2000). *Research methods in education: An introduction*. Boston, MA. Allyn and Bacon.
- Williams, J. L., Aiyer, S. M., Durkee, M. I., & Tolan, P. H. (2014). The protective role of ethnic identity for urban adolescent males facing multiple stressors. *Journal of*

Youth and Adolescence, 43(10), 1728-41.

doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1007/s10964-013-0071-x>

Wooditch, A., Tang, L. L., & Taxman, F. S. (2014). Which criminogenic need changes are most important in promoting desistance from crime and substance use?

Journal of Criminal Justice Behavior, 41(3), 276-299.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854813503543>

Yang, X. Y., & Yang, T. (2017). Nonmedical prescription drug use among adults in their late twenties: The importance of social bonding trajectories. *Journal of Drug*

Issues, 47(4), 665-678. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022042617722563>

Yin, R.K., (1984). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Yin R. K. (2009) *Case study Research: Design and methods*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yoder, J., & Bovard-johns, R. (2017). Religiosity and therapeutic alliance among youth who commit sexual crimes. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 46(1), 119-135.

doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1007/s10566-016-9371-0>

Young, J. T. N. (2014) "Role magnets"? An empirical investigation of popularity trajectories for life-course persistent individuals during adolescence. Springer Science & Business Media, New York, NY. 43(1), 104-115.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-013-9946-0>

Appendix A: Flyer

RESEARCH JUVENILE PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Parents, I would like to invite your child to participate in my study that examines the effectiveness of church programs and how the church programs are effective at reducing delinquency rates. The Pastor of this church has granted me permission, to conduct my research at your church. Participation for your child is based on the following questions below:

- **Do you currently participate in your youth church programming?**
- **Are you between the ages of 10-17?**
- **Have you been involved with the juvenile justice system?**
- **Do you have a desire to make a difference in the juvenile justice system?**
- **Would you like to share your thoughts about how effective youth church programs are at reducing juvenile delinquency?**

If you answered yes to the following questions, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that examines how the church programs are effective in reducing juvenile delinquency.

Your participation in this study is *voluntary*, and your responses are private. If you have between 15-30 minutes to spare and would like to provide your experience with participating in a church program, please feel free to reach out to me.

Thank you, and I look forward to talking to you soon.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Dewaun Martin, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of faith-based delinquency programs through the viewpoint of the youth, in the effort to reduce juvenile delinquency rates. This study is not about whether a youth have been in the system but how church effect decision to commit a crime or if they have committed a crime how the church effect decision not to commit further crimes. I believe through God the church is an effective tool.

A list of Interview Questions:

1. How long have you attended church programs?
 2. What has been your experience while attending church programs?
 3. When you first started the program, what was your expectation about the program?
 4. Now that you have been in the program, what is your expectation now?
 5. In your experience and knowledge with the church programs, are church programs helpful in keeping you from committing delinquent acts? If so, how?
 6. Describe your relationship with the church staff that provides the program services.
 7. Are the church staff important to your success in not committing crimes?
 8. Describe how the church program allowed you to overcome challenges and problems that may have played a role in your decision making?
 9. Based on your knowledge, is there anything else that would be useful to this current research?

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary.

Benefits of participating in the study: The benefits of this study will be that information obtained during the research could lead to an in-depth understanding of

programs in a faith-based setting. Another benefit of this study is the possibility that the church could pursue grant funding that may be available through a government program.

All information collected is confidential and will not be distributed out.

I hope I am able to get your blessing with this research so that I can contribute to the solution.

Let me know either way if you choose to allow me or not. Thank you and hope to hear from you soon.

Best,

Dewaun Martin Walden University Doctoral Program

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Date:

Place:

Interviewer: Dewaun Martin

Interviewee: Participant.

Participant Code: P1 –P21

Hello, I want to thank you for accepting my invitation to contribute in this research study. This interview will last about 15-30 minutes; is this time okay with you? Remember you can withdraw from this study at any time. Your identity will be secure; I will be the only person with access to your information, which will be destroyed at the end of this study. I will be recording your answers using an audio tape recorder; I will take note to make sure I get your perception accurately. The recorded information will be transcribed by me, the researcher into a research document. You will have the opportunity to read this document to ensure the accuracy. You can add or delete information from this document that is not accurate. If you would like a copy of the findings of the research study, I send it to you via mailed, or emailed. You are free to tell your perspective without stoppage. Is there any question before we start?

Appendix C: Letter of Permission

November 7, 2019

Finding the Lost Sheep, Inc.

Dear Mr. Martin,

Based on my review of your proposal, I hereby grant you permission to conduct the research entitled "Examination of the Effectiveness of African American Faith-Based Juvenile Delinquency Programs in South Region, United States." I also give you permission to interview juveniles for the purpose of data collection. Your approval number of 07-30-19-0682489 is reference as a statement that the IRB has given you permission, pending a letter of cooperation from this organization.

As part of the study I understand participants will be asked a series of questions concerning youth programs within the church. I understand the researcher will audiotape and transcribe the information from the interviews. Each participant will have the opportunity to review their interview transcripts and make any changes necessary. Participation will be voluntary and the participant can withdraw at any time with no objection from the researcher.

I confirm as the youth pastor that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that data collection will not be provided to anyone outside of research team.

Sincerely,

