

7-27-2018

Predictors of Incarceration for African American Males Aging out of Foster Care

Marlean.Wrotten Wrotten
Walden University, marywrotten@aol.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/symposium2018>

Recommended Citation

Wrotten, Marlean.Wrotten, "Predictors of Incarceration for African American Males Aging out of Foster Care" (2018). *2018 Program & Posters*. 1.
<https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/symposium2018/1>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Research Symposium at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2018 Program & Posters by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Predictors of Incarceration for African American Males Aging out of Foster Care

Marylean Wrotten, PhD

Problem

African American males who age out of foster care group homes often experience incarceration and other unfavorable outcomes because they are unprepared for transitioning into independent living.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the predictive relationships between connection to adults, educational attainment, homelessness, and the likelihood of incarceration of African American males within 3 years after aging out of group foster.

Significance

This study is unique because it addressed an under-researched area of connections to an adult, highest educational level, and homelessness of emancipated youth affect the likelihood of criminal involvement for African American males after aging out of foster care group homes.

Results from this study provides information which could be used to emphasize the need for foster care agencies to develop strategies that will equip child welfare practitioners to deliver meaningful transitional services to adolescents aging out of care.

Social Change Implications

Findings from this study could impact social change by assisting African American males with employment opportunities for economic success which could prevent criminal activities and contribute to safer communities. In addition, supportive relationships in the community can help them achieve their personal goal as well as develop partnership to advocate for the needs of the community. When this happens, they will have a sense of meaning for their lives and may empower others to change.

Bridges transitional model rests on the notion that people experience change in three stages: ending(loss), neutral(uncertainty) and the beginning stage(starting over).

For African American males aging out of foster care means that they will experience loss(ending stage). Loss of relationships, guidance and provisions(shelter, food, finances and clothing). Because of their losses, African American males may become uncertain(neutral stage) about their future or what steps to take next. However, African American males may accept and adapt to new changes and start planning for a brighter future.(Bridges, 2002).

Relevant Scholarship

African American males aging out of foster care group homes unprepared can lead to poor outcomes such as the following (Katz & Courtney, 2015; Krinsky, 2010; Pecora, 2012).

- Incarceration (Miller et al. 2014; Stott, 2013; Yates & Grey, 2012).
- Unemployment due to low educational attainment (Mares, 2010; Miller et al., 2014),
- Homelessness because of lack of stable housing (Okypch 2015).
- Lack of stable relationship due to the loss of an adult support (Dion, 2015; Graham, Schellinger & Vaughn, 2015).
- Poor educational outcomes(Cunningham, 2013; Osgood et al.; Quest et al., 2012; Weinberg, Oshiro & Shea, 2014).
- Criminal activities(Lee et al., 2014; McMahon & Fields, 2014; Stott, 2011)

Research Question

How well does connection to adults, educational attainment, and homelessness predict the likelihood of incarceration for African American males within 3 years after aging out of foster care group home?

Participants

- Selected records were used from the National Youth Transitional Database(NYTD) for analysis through a nonprobability purposive sampling procedure
- Participants were deliberately chosen based on age, race , gender and city.
- Sample size consisted of 504 participants.

Procedure

- Design: Quantitative, non-experimental, correlation study.
- Data Collection: Data for the independent variables connection to adults, highest educational attainment, and homelessness as well as the dependent variable incarceration were obtained from National Youth Transitional Database (NYTD) for this study.
- NYTD is a collection of survey responses relating to outcomes encountered by youth post aging out of the foster care system.

Analysis

- Descriptive statistics and binomial logistic regression were used.

Findings

- Findings indicated a high percentage(95%) of African American males were incarcerated despite having a supportive relationship, completing high school/GED, and having stable housing.
- Findings also suggest that there may have been other variables not included within this study which could had influence the high rate of incarceration,

Acknowledgements

Committee Chair: Dr. Sandra Harris
Committee Member: Dr. Jennifer Melvin
University Reviewer: Dr. Shari L. Jorissen

Interpretation

The results of this study found that the lack of not having or having supportive relationships, high school/GED and stable housing had no bearing on African American males incarceration after lagging out of foster care.

Further work needs to be done to determine if they are other issues which may contribute to the high rate of incarceration of American males 3 years post aging out of foster care.

Limitations

Limitations included

- Limited only to foster care group homes.
- Limited only to New York State.
- Limited to on self-reported data
- Limited to secondary data

Recommendations

For Future Research

- Additional studies should be conducted to confirm the results of my study
- Include other races and gender.
- Expand study to include to countries such as China, which has a high population of youth in foster care.
- Conducted a qualitative study to get youth perspective on what variables may contribute to the high incarceration rate after aging out of foster care.
- Expand study to include other types of facilities such as campus style residences, and secured foster facilities.

For Practice

- Develop a follow-up plan with youth prior to aging out.
- Develop a peer mentoring for those preparing to age out.
- Preventive services could be put in place to address problems that could lead to incarceration.