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An Exploration of the Relationship between Learning Disabilities and Juvenile Delinquency from Parents' Perspectives

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Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

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Torsha Childs

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

An Exploration of the Relationship between Learning Disabilities and Juvenile Delinquency

from Parents' Perspectives

by

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BS, American Intercontinental University, 2011

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

This study addressed the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency from parents' perspectives. This qualitative study was guided by Agnew's general strain theory (GST), which explored the force that stressors have on individuals, such as the impact learning disabilities have on juveniles. The qualitative research approach was used to gather data from 10 parents with children diagnosed with learning disabilities at an early age. Parents responded to 15 open-ended survey questions via SurveyMonkey based on their lived experiences of having children with learning disabilities. Participants remained anonymous. All participants were required to have a child with a learning disability who was diagnosed at an early age. Data were analyzed using NVivo 12. After analyzing data, three themes emerged, revealing a relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency. Juvenile delinquency tendencies can be suppressed with the proper tools, family support, medication, mentorship, and educational support. Most youths in this study with learning disabilities who had mentors could avoid trouble with fewer chances for criminal mischief. Positive social change would provide mentorship opportunities for youth struggling with learning disabilities. Mentorship can be provided through education, churches, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America organizations to provide safe spaces for all youths diagnosed with learning disabilities to keep them out of the juvenile justice system.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to the loves of my life, Jerry, Leola, Kendrick, Eddie Jr., Drake, Chance, Jameshia, and DaneField. Thank you for hanging in with me throughout the many years of research and long nights; I love you to infinity.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Learning disabilities pose substantial challenges for children and adolescents, impacting various aspects of their lives, including academic achievement, social integration, and emotional well-being (Mathewson, 2015). While extensive research has shed light on the struggles faced by individuals with learning disabilities, there remains a need to investigate further the potential link between these disabilities and juvenile delinquency.

The escalating prevalence of learning disabilities among juveniles, as illuminated in a recent study by Abrason (2022), calls for immediate societal attention and action. Running parallel to this surge in learning disabilities is a disturbing trend of increasing involvement of young people in the criminal justice system (Zablotsky et al., 2009-2019). More alarmingly, most of these youths are first-time offenders, many of whom are simultaneously wrestling with mental health disorders. This intricate intersection of learning disabilities, mental health problems, and juvenile delinquency necessitates a comprehensive exploration, addressing the social, psychological, and systemic factors contributing to this complex issue (Nourollah, 2015).

Against the backdrop of this societal challenge, the role of schools and their capability to manage and support students with learning or mental disabilities is under scrutiny, especially in light of the increasing number of school-related violent incidents, including shootings. Schools are not merely academic institutions; they are also crucial spaces for early identification, intervention, and support for students with learning and

mental health problems, which can significantly influence the life course of these students (Mathewson, 2015).

Therefore, this study endeavored to probe deeper into this convoluted matrix of issues. It aimed to explore the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency from parents' perspectives. More specifically, it critically examined the current practices and preparedness of schools, the effectiveness of their intervention strategies, and the impact of societal attitudes and stigma towards learning disabilities and mental health.

Understanding the intricate relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency is paramount for developing targeted interventions and support systems. As primary caregivers and advocates for their children, parents possess unique insights into their children's experiences, challenges, and behaviors. Through their perspectives, our society can understand the factors contributing to the onset of delinquent behaviors among youth with learning disabilities.

Background

According to Rosetti authors Kohli, Sharma, and Padhy (2018), juveniles who display learning disabilities may suffer from academic and social difficulties. Juveniles with learning disabilities also endure lower self-esteem and social isolation. Some children with learning disabilities have increased challenges with the penal system due to a lack of self-advocacy, peer support, and self-acceptance (Falk et al., 2017). In the United States (U.S.), 32% of the student population suffers from learning disabilities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021-2022). Therefore, students with

disabilities have lower grades than those without learning disorders (Daley, et al.,2021). Youths who live in low-income areas are more inclined to display behavioral problems and learning disabilities. There are many challenges low-income communities experience, including neurological vulnerabilities, gun violence, poor nourishment, and proximity to toxins, lead, alcohol, mercury, and nicotine, leading to delayed brain development. Neighborhoods lacking resources to help youth in low-income areas risk costs of developmental disabilities. More research is needed to prevent future harm to children living in poor communities with limited resources (Nature, 2022). To address the problem of low success rates among children with learning disabilities, Congress implemented the No Child Left Behind (NCLB Act). The NCLB Act was introduced into law in 2001 and developed to ensure all children received the same education opportunities. Although students with learning disabilities often receive Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), No Child Left Behind is an added tool to help students achieve in the classroom (Whitney, et al.,2017). Unfortunately, students with learning disabilities believe their learning ability is based on their surroundings, which cannot quickly be observed (Grigorenko,et al,2020). Students with learning disabilities who associate outside forces with academic prosperity are less motivated to comply, often leading to their breakdown. Outside forces are essential to the success of students with learning disabilities. However, internal factors can impair their academic functioning; they include behavioral designs, biological actions, and cognitive. All these elements impact one another (Lucas, 2020). The main goal for youths with learning disabilities is to improve

and enhance their level of learning through skill training. According to authors (Roldan, et al.,2015) students with learning disabilities need more intensive learning instructions.

This study on the relationship between learning disorders and juvenile delinquency used the risk and resiliency theory to structure a survey addressing the impact learning disabilities have on juveniles and their families. The risk and resiliency theory was used to understand the effects of learning disabilities on youths better. This theory allows healthcare specialists to focus on the factors and understand the impact on children's health and learning disorders due to their environment. The researcher sought to understand how learning disabilities affect minors in school, emotional organization, family function, medication, and adjustments they must make into adulthood.

In early childhood education (ECE), there are racial and ethnic disparities (Zinsser et al., 2022). These disparities included the administrative appearance of the curriculum, the curriculum containing funding systems, and the responsibility of power given by the government to run the early childhood education programs. The disparities lead to failure to test African American and Latino children for autism spectrum disorder early, leading to a more severe diagnosis later in life (Hetey, et al.,2018).

Early Childhood Education (ECE) services are offered to all families, publicly funded, mandatory for the youth of a certain age bracket, and run by the Mississippi education department. Pre-K programs are open to all families regardless of income level. However, funding restraints resulted in insufficient funding for underserved communities preventing low-income families from applying (Barnette, et al., 2018). According to Taderera and Hall (2017), families of children with learning disabilities stated that the

educational system had impacted their children's learning—the lack of financial and other resources assisted with learning disability challenges at home and in the classroom. Parents of children with learning disabilities lack services and programs to make their lives easier (Taderera, et al., 2017). Families of children with learning disabilities were impacted by the lack of knowledge from the medical system, which required students to perform more intensive testing to determine the extent of their learning disability and to rule on what medication was needed. Learning disability testing is expensive and time-consuming for parents and the Medicare system (Al-Maherezi et al., 2016).

Mentoring affects learning disabilities positively. However, there needs to be more evidence-based research to prove this. Mentoring helps improve the lives of youth with learning disabilities and helps them achieve success. Nevertheless, post-secondary education research data is limited and requires further analysis (Goldner et al., 2021).

Additional funding is needed to create and implement reading assessments for kindergarten-aged children to help teachers identify students with learning problems early. The new curriculum is needed for children with learning disabilities to address real-life experiences for juveniles and lifelong skills to draw students into the lessons with the ability to understand firsthand what the teacher is talking about (Al-Maherezi et al., 2016).

Problem Statement

There is a problem with the increasing number of juveniles diagnosed with learning disabilities; in 2020, youths increased by 24% for ages 5-11 years and 31% for youth ages 12-17 years (Abrason, 2022). Similarly, about 700,000 youth were processed

through the juvenile justice system, and there seems to be an increase in the number of juveniles facing the criminal justice system (Zablotsky et al., 2009-2019). Most of these youths are first-time offenders who suffer from mental disorders (Nourollah, 2015).

Based on the increased number of school shootings, violence, and the school's lack of preparedness in dealing with students with learning or mental disabilities, more students are entering the criminal justice system at an early age (Mathewson, 2015). There is a higher perception that a child with learning disabilities is more likely to commit criminal behavior. A cause of this problem is the lack of family support for some, lack of public funding for medication or educational assistance, lack of government officials' support and leadership, and insufficient training that helped to understand the experiences of juveniles with learning disabilities better.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study focused on understanding parents' perspectives concerning their children's learning disabilities and their influences on juvenile delinquency. A parent's perspective allowed a deeper understanding of the ramifications of learning disabilities and how they could be a gateway into the juvenile justice system. For this study, 10 participants were selected and interviewed to address the parental perspective on the consequences of parenting children with learning disabilities who may face the prospect of being involved in the juvenile justice system. By exploring the parents' perspectives, the literature gained additional insight into this topic while offering evidence to increase support and awareness for parents raising children with learning disabilities.

Research Question

RQ1: From a parent's perspective, is there a relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was based on the General Strain Theory (GST). GST is a criminological theory that posits negative emotions from strain or stressors that can lead to criminal behavior. The theory was proposed by Robert Agnew in 1992 to explain why individuals commit crimes. The strain the theory refers to can come from multiple sources, including failure to achieve positively valued goals, removal of positively valued stimuli, and presentation of negative stimuli (Brezina & Young, 2017). In addition, GST emphasizes the adverse treatment endured by individuals affected by GST. Delinquents commonly encounter feelings of frustration, depression, and despair when they feel overwhelmed by the strain they experience. These negative emotions frequently contribute to delinquency among young individuals and can even lead to criminal behavior when adults in positions of authority attempt to correct their actions (Brezina, et al., 2017).

Learning disabilities are a stressor that can generate detrimental impulses and suppress positive ones. Stress arises from negative emotions, including anger and depression. In the case of youth with learning disabilities, depression often precipitates delinquent behavior. The General Strain Theory (GST) has been employed to comprehend why specific stressors impede an individual's attainment of materialistic goals, resulting in stress. Not everyone responds to anxiety similarly, as it can elicit

diverse reactions. For instance, research indicates that 5 to 15% of juveniles with learning disabilities interacted with their peers and frequently exhibited aggressive behavior (Zajac, 2015). Therefore, young individuals lacking parental support, mentorship, and medical assistance are less prone to engage in harmful conduct. Individuals experiencing strain exhibit negative emotions such as anger, frustration, depression, and despair, potentially leading to criminal involvement (Agnew, 2019).

Youths affected by General Strain Theory (GST) often attempt to escape challenging circumstances by running away from or skipping school. They may also turn to drug use to alleviate their pain. The experience of strain can contribute to the development of drug addiction, which can, in turn, lead individuals into a criminal lifestyle. Those with significant strain commonly exhibit a lack of social and self-control, making them more susceptible to recruitment by local gangs. These individuals often become deeply entrenched in street culture or homeless (Agnew, 2013). Gang involvement plays a significant role within the framework of GST, particularly because gang members frequently face academic difficulties and become ensnared in a life of crime and substance abuse (Agnew, 2013).

Learning disabilities are associated with deviant behavior. Young individuals with learning disabilities often struggle to adapt to academic success, contributing to social interaction and communication difficulties (Rosello et al., 2018). The strain theory serves as a framework that aids in comprehensively understanding these dynamics. Strain theory incorporates concepts such as adaptation, rebellion, and innovation to change criminal

activity positively. Conforming to societal norms entails adhering to established social standards (Legros, et al.,2019).

Strain theories have been employed to explain how specific strains contribute to the likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior (Agnew, 1992). Individuals who encounter such strains experience negative emotions, including frustration and anger. For instance, they may resort to criminal activities to escape the strain, seek revenge, or achieve psychological well-being. Those who undergo strain are often seeking an outlet or solution. Unfortunately, individuals facing strain are often misunderstood and require assistance and guidance, as they may idealize a life immersed in crime and drugs (Agnew & Brezina, 2019).

Nature of the Study

This qualitative study was based on the lived experiences of parents of youths diagnosed with learning disabilities. The open-ended surveys provided in-depth experiences of parents who lived with children diagnosed with learning disabilities. The phenomenological research design was used to show a more detailed look at the involvement of a parent from the diagnosis of their child's learning disorder to their receiving help, including juvenile experiences in the juvenile justice system. The phenomenon centered on the parent's experiences with juvenile family support, mentoring, medicine, and educational support programs to reduce delinquent behavior.

SurveyMonkey was used to analyze the qualitative study. SurveyMonkey is a web-based survey tool where the respondents are asked various questions to provide

open-ended responses. NVivo qualitative data analysis software assisted SurveyMonkey in analyzing and transcribing all data.

Definitions of Terms

The Constant Effect: A prior respondent negatively affected the researcher. A variable that does not change.

The Halo Effect: A respondent's trait changes the interviewer's discernment—a cognitive bias that keeps an individual from believing a person based on an unfounded belief.

Leniency: Researchers gave high scores due to the shortfall of resolution and judgment - this occurs when a researcher is too optimistic.

Projection: Occurs when the interviewer believes his/her awareness and expertise rely on a respondent - when people place their negative emotions, beliefs, and traits on another person.

Stereotyping: This is a thought that occurs only when the interviewer considers a tie associated with an individual tendency. Stereotypes can be used to justify or sustain a particular group of people being oppressed (Rahman, 2015).

Assumptions

Several assumptions were associated with this study. The first assumption was that children with learning disabilities who did not receive the necessary support and mentoring caused them to become juvenile delinquents. The second assumption was that

family members fundamentally understood the lived experiences of juveniles with learning disabilities. The third assumption was to understand at-risk youths with learning disabilities better. The last assumption was that juveniles with learning disabilities who received the necessary support and mentoring had the highest potential of not entering the juvenile justice system.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope and delimitations were the countenances where the researcher controlled the scope of the study and determined where the boundaries were drawn. The delimitations were the factors managed from the beginning until the end of the study. The researcher controlled the research problem, population, methodology, purpose, variables, and research question. The scope of the study established the topic of research throughout the study and an understanding of the impact of learning disorders on juvenile delinquency. The respondents were chosen from families with children who have learning disorders. The parents selected must have children diagnosed with a learning disability and be twenty-one years of age or older at the time of the study. The youth must live in Mississippi, and one of the parents must be willing to complete the study from start to finish.

Limitations

In order to enhance our comprehension of the real-life experiences of parents raising young individuals with learning disabilities and their families, an open-ended survey was conducted. This research was confined to a specific geographical region in Mississippi, United States, and involved the collection of numerous open-ended survey

responses. However, there were certain limitations associated with the use of open-ended surveys. These limitations included lower-than-expected response rates, difficulties in analyzing the data, challenges in comparing the information provided by respondents, the time-consuming nature of the survey, and the tendency of respondents to provide irrelevant data about the subject matter. Open-ended questions during interviews to obtain in-depth information should be employed to gather comprehensive and valuable insight (Weller, 2018).

The benefits of using open-ended surveys were that the respondents provided more detail, added new and often overlooked unexpected insight and in-depth qualitative evidence, and open-ended surveys added unlimited responses. The reason for delving deep into this research study was to understand at-risk juveniles with learning disabilities receiving the necessary support and mentoring and how that will reduce the potential of these juveniles entering the juvenile justice system (Ponto, 2015).

Significance

This research aimed to foster positive social change by providing Mississippi lawmakers, elected officials, educators, and parents with valuable information by expanding the existing literature on the subject; this study offers additional insights that can aid stakeholders in updating their education and juvenile justice policies. These policy updates are anticipated to decrease the number of students who may find themselves in detrimental encounters with the criminal justice system.

Summary

Equitable and unbiased treatment of juveniles can significantly impact their likelihood of having negative or positive encounters with the juvenile justice system or law enforcement officials. Previous research has indicated the importance of early intervention, including providing essential counseling and support services for both juveniles and their families, particularly in addressing additional challenges within the school environment. It is worth noting that this issue disproportionately affects African Americans. This research aims to serve as a valuable resource for parents, lawmakers, the educational system, and mentors, offering practical insights and guidance in addressing these concerns.

The literature review presented in this study contributes to a better understanding of the research problem. Chapter 2 presented the literature review, including a discussion of the theoretical framework. Drawing on existing literature, the researcher highlighted previous research findings and identified areas for further investigation. This study offers new insights and advances knowledge concerning the topic under examination.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand parents' perspectives concerning their children's learning disabilities and their influences on juvenile delinquency. Learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency are two interconnected areas of concern that have garnered significant attention in research and practice. While studies have examined the association between learning disabilities and various behavioral outcomes, the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency remains a subject of ongoing investigation. Understanding this relationship is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems that address the specific needs of youth with learning disabilities, potentially reducing their involvement in delinquent behaviors.

This literature review was used to analyze behavior in juvenile delinquents and how learning disabilities played a role in their actions in and out of the criminal justice system. The questions presented in this study were guided by the literature review and the interview material provided by parents of juvenile delinquents. Adult juvenile delinquents with learning disabilities and a criminal past have been finding it hard to find employment in recent years (Rahman, 2015). Literature was taken from various sources relevant to juvenile delinquents and how learning disabilities affected families, teachers, the medical field, and the mentors who supported the juveniles during their childhood journey (Benjamin, 2015).

Literature Search Strategy

Chapter 2 exhaustively reviewed the literature using various scholarly resources from Walden University Library and doctoral dissertation databases. The literature was selected by reading the abstract of each academic journal, article, or website to ensure its value to the research. The literature search encompassed reports that both supported and did not support the hypotheses. The research strategy aimed to identify literature published within the past five years, and all the sources used were scholarly and added value to the study, benefiting the research. The literature gathered for this study included sources from SAGE Journals, ProQuest, Criminal Justice & Security, Psychology Education, Public Policy & Administration, No Child Left Behind, Dissertation & Theses@Walden University, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The search engines Google and Google Scholar were utilized to uncover relevant literature on juveniles with learning disabilities. Keywords and phrases used to select juvenile research were learning disorders or learning disabilities or learning problems, juvenile delinquency, or youth crimes.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework employed in this research study centers around the General Strain Theory (GST). The GST provides a unique explanation for delinquency and crime by emphasizing the impact of strain on individuals, specifically focusing on the influence of learning disabilities on juveniles (Agnew, 1992). This theory helps us understand the role of negative emotions and their connection to individuals who adhere to the GST and engage in offending behavior.

The General Strain Theory examines the negative emotions experienced by individuals and explores the adverse treatment faced by those encountering strain. In the context of this study, the negative emotions experienced by delinquents due to GST include feelings of frustration, depression, and despair when they become overwhelmed. These negative emotions often contribute to delinquency among young individuals and can lead to criminal activities when adults in positions of authority attempt to correct their behavior (Brezina & Young, 2017).

Learning disabilities can be considered as stressors that individuals experience. These stressors give rise to harmful impulses while suppressing positive impulses. Stress originating from negative emotions, such as anger and depression, plays a significant role in this process. Specifically, in the case of youth with learning disabilities, depression can contribute to delinquent behavior. The General Strain Theory (GST) was employed in this study to comprehend why specific stressors hinder individuals from achieving materialistic goals, ultimately resulting in stress (Zajac, 2015).

It is important to note that anxiety affects individuals differently, leading to varied reactions. For instance, research indicates that approximately 5 to 15% of juveniles with learning disabilities engage in aggressive behavior when interacting with their peers (Zajac, 2015). Consequently, youths lacking parental support, mentorship, and medical assistance are less likely to engage in harmful behaviors. Individuals experiencing strain exhibit negative emotions such as anger, frustration, depression, and despair, which may contribute to their involvement in criminal activities (Agnew, 2019).

Youths experiencing General Strain Theory (GST) resort to various means to escape challenging circumstances. These individuals may engage in truancy or school avoidance behaviors and use drugs as a coping mechanism to alleviate their emotional pain. Unfortunately, the struggle with strain can lead to drug addiction, further entangling them into a criminal lifestyle (Zajac, 2015).

Those who have endured significant strain in their lives face challenges in social and self-control. Consequently, they become more susceptible to recruitment by local gangs. These individuals often find themselves deeply immersed in street culture, sometimes leading to homelessness (Agnew, 2013). Gang affiliation plays a significant role in GST, particularly because gang members frequently face academic difficulties and become ensnared in a life of crime and drug addiction (Zajac, 2015).

There is a notable association between learning disabilities and deviant behavior among youth. Individuals with learning disabilities often face challenges adapting to the demands of successful academic performance, leading to difficulties in social interactions and communication (Rosello et al., 2018). The strain theory offers a framework for enhancing our comprehension of this relationship by connecting the dots.

The strain theory encompasses various adaptations, including rebellion and innovation, aiming to catalyze changes in criminal activity. Living in conformity, on the other hand, entails adhering to social norms and avoiding their violation (Barbieri et al., 2019).

Strain theories have been employed to elucidate the connection between specific strains and the likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior (Agnew, 1992). Individuals

who undergo these strains experience negative emotions like frustration and anger. Crime becomes an outlet for them to escape from the strain, seek revenge, and achieve psychological relief. Their engagement in criminal activities is driven by a desire to find a way out of their distressing circumstances (Zajac, 2015).

Regrettably, individuals experiencing strain are often misunderstood and need help and guidance. They may idealize the allure of a life immersed in crime and drugs, perceiving it as a means to address their struggles. Recognizing their need for support, understanding, and intervention is crucial to redirect their focus and provide them with alternative avenues for coping and personal growth (Agnew, et al., 2019).

The newer iteration of the General Strain Theory (GST) has emerged in response to criticisms directed at its earlier version, which focused on a limited range of strains and explained why only a fraction of individuals experiencing strain resorted to delinquency and criminal behavior. Recognizing these critiques, researchers have extensively tested the revised GST, and the findings have successfully addressed the limitations, offering promising data for scholars exploring the association between strain and delinquency (Brezina, et al., 2017).

Since its inception, the theory of General Strain has garnered substantial attention from researchers, who have diligently sought empirical support to validate its concepts. This increased focus on empirical research has resulted in significant progress, surpassing the previous constraints, and enhancing our understanding of the theory's application to the study of delinquency and crime (Brezina, et al., 2017).

However, the evolution of GST is an ongoing process, and further testing is necessary to fully realize the theory's potential and achieve the intended goals. Researchers continue to explore and refine the theory, ensuring that it reflects the complexities of real-world situations and provides comprehensive explanations for the relationship between strain and deviant behavior (Brezina, et al.,2017).

The development of General Strain Theory (GST) by Agnew responded to the hostile reception of earlier data that primarily focused on stress as the sole factor. Agnew's contribution to the advancement of GST was rooted in recognizing that individuals experiencing strain also encounter various events and conditions contributing to their distress. Through his research, Agnew identified a more comprehensive array of stressors than previous studies, shedding light on the diverse factors that can lead to strain (Zajac, 2015).

In Agnew's investigations, it became evident that stressors were present across different social classes, irrespective of whether individuals belonged to the middle or lower class. This finding challenged the notion that strain was limited to specific socioeconomic backgrounds and underscored the universality of stressors experienced by individuals grappling with GST (Brezina, et al.,2017).

Agnew's expansion of GST by incorporating a more comprehensive understanding of stressors and their impact on individuals experiencing strain has significantly enriched the theory. This recognition of the complex interplay between events, conditions, and strain provides a more nuanced perspective on the factors

influencing deviant behavior and offers a foundation for further exploration within criminological research (Brezina, et al., 2017).

Within the framework of strain theory, three distinct types of strains hold significant importance. The first type is goal blockage, which occurs when individuals face obstacles that impede their progress toward achieving their desired goals. Goal blockage hinders their ability to attain their aspirations, leading to frustration and strain (Berkman, 2018).

The second type of strain is referred to as negatively valued stimuli. These stimuli encompass experiences where individuals are subjected to treatment from others that they find undesirable. Such treatment may manifest as mistreatment, harassment, bullying, or troubled relationships with parents and teachers. These negative interactions can contribute to the development of strain and, in some cases, even victimization or involvement in criminal activities (Zajac, 2015).

The third and final strain type is the loss of positively valued stimuli. This strain arises when individuals experience the deprivation or removal of something they consider valuable or significant. Examples of such losses include the ending of friendships, the absence of supportive parents, or the termination of a romantic relationship. Losing these positively valued stimuli can generate significant emotional distress and strain (Bailen, 2018).

Recognizing and understanding these three types of strains is crucial in comprehending the pathways to deviance and criminal behavior. By identifying the specific types of strain individuals encounter, researchers and practitioners can gain

insights into the underlying motivations and mechanisms contributing to delinquency and criminal activities (Brezina & Young, 2017).

General Strain Theory (GST) is a social psychological theory that examines the interplay between an individual's social environment and propensity for criminal behavior. Agnew, the proponent of GST, posits that crime is pervasive in various settings, including schools, larger communities, and neighborhoods across the nation, primarily due to social and psychological strain experienced by individuals (Zajac, 2015).

In line with social disorganization theories, GST suggests that communities plagued by high crime rates often lack proper supervision and guidance for young individuals. This absence of adequate social control creates an environment conducive to criminal activities. Additionally, the theory highlights the role of subcultural orientations and dysfunction in social control. It suggests that frustrated and angry citizens are more likely to experience strain within communities with elevated crime rates, which can lead to their engagement in criminal acts (Zajac, 2015).

By examining the relationship between social and psychological strain and the prevalence of crime within different social contexts, GST provides insights into the underlying mechanisms that contribute to criminal behavior. It underscores the importance of addressing strain and improving social control mechanisms to reduce crime rates and foster safer communities (Brezina & Young, 2017).

Paternoster and Mazerolle (1994) conducted early testing of the General Strain Theory (GST) using data from the National Youth Survey to examine the presence of

strain among youth. Their study validated the GST, focusing specifically on various aspects of self-control when confronted with delinquent peers (Zajac, 2015).

The researchers analyzed several factors that contribute to strain in youth, including experiences of bullying, negative relationships with adults, adverse life events, and problems within the neighborhood. Through their analysis, Paternoster and Mazerolle demonstrated that these factors generated strain among youth (Brezina & Young, 2017).

Furthermore, the authors sought to determine if the same students facing strain could pursue higher education or secure good employment opportunities. However, their data did not yield a significant outcome, indicating that strain alone did not strongly predict the subsequent attainment of a college education or successful job prospects (Zajac, 2015).

This early testing of GST provided empirical support for the theory's central premise, highlighting the role of strain in the lives of young individuals. The study emphasized the importance of understanding and addressing the various sources of strain experienced by youth, as they can significantly impact their development and prospects (Brezina, et al., 2017).

In this research, the investigators made a significant observation regarding the impact of the General Strain Theory (GST) on young individuals. The study revealed that youths who experience GST tend to resort to delinquent behavior to alleviate the negative consequences of strain temporarily. However, if left unaddressed, the strain experienced by these youths can exacerbate problems within their relationships with teachers, parents,

and classmates. It is important to note that the most severe cases of GST were found outside of the United States rather than within the country (Brezina, et al., 2017).

Since the inception of the General Strain Theory, numerous studies have been conducted to explore its connections with deviant behaviors. The research findings have established a link between GST and various forms of aggressive behavior, including self-harm, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, unethical behavior among prison inmates, and workplace violence (Brezina, et al., 2017).

General Strain Theory (GST) has been extensively employed in various studies investigating participants' decision-making processes in juvenile delinquency. The theory encompasses all the relevant factors and individual considerations that influence decision-making, making it highly suitable for this research. The research questions utilized in this study were derived from the General Strain Approach (GSA) and an open-question survey, which has been a successful combination in previous studies. By employing this theory and qualitative methodology, valuable insights can be gained regarding parents' perceptions of delinquency and their underlying dynamics.

Juvenile Delinquency and Learning Disabilities

Juveniles with learning disabilities face many challenges that can significantly impact their academic, social, and emotional well-being. These challenges can manifest in various ways, including difficulties in reading, writing, math, comprehension, and executive functioning skills. For instance, individuals with dyslexia may struggle with reading fluency and decoding, while those with dysgraphia may experience handwriting

and written expression challenges. Additionally, individuals with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may struggle to sustain attention, organize tasks, and manage time effectively (Leber, 2017).

The impact of learning disabilities extends beyond the academic realm. Many juveniles with learning disabilities experience social difficulties, as they may have trouble understanding social cues, interpreting nonverbal communication, and navigating complex social interactions - this can lead to feelings of social isolation, rejection, and low self-esteem. Moreover, the stress and frustration associated with learning challenges can contribute to emotional difficulties, such as anxiety and depression, further exacerbating their overall well-being (Kapsiak, 2019).

The enrollment statistics under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provide valuable insights into the prevalence of learning disabilities among students in the American Educational System. The data collected from reveals that 9.7% of children aged 6-21 were enrolled under IDEA in 2019 (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019; US et al. Office, 2019). These statistics highlight the significant number of students requiring specialized educational services and accommodations to address their unique learning needs effectively.

It is crucial to adopt a comprehensive and individualized approach - this includes developing and implementing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) that outline specific goals, accommodations, and support services tailored to each student's needs to address the challenges faced by juveniles with learning disabilities. These may include specialized instruction, assistive technologies, and access to support professionals, such

as speech therapists, occupational therapists, and special education teachers (Kapsiak, 2019).

Collaboration among educators, parents, and other professionals is paramount in supporting juveniles with learning disabilities. Regular communication and collaboration ensure that strategies and interventions are consistent across home and school environments, maximizing the student's progress and overall development. Additionally, it is essential to promote awareness and understanding of learning disabilities among peers, fostering a culture of empathy, acceptance, and inclusion (Leber, 2017).

By addressing the unique needs of juveniles with learning disabilities and providing appropriate support and resources, we can empower them to overcome challenges, build resilience, and reach their full potential. These individuals can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally with inclusive educational practices, targeted interventions, and a nurturing environment (Kapsiak, 2019).

Disability Policy and Legislation in Education

According to Leber's study in 2017, youth diagnosed with learning disabilities face many challenges regarding receiving a quality education. These challenges are even more pronounced for certain groups, such as minorities, marginalized individuals, and students already academically disadvantaged within the United States Department of Education. These students often experience a double disadvantage, as their learning disabilities intersect with other factors that hinder their educational opportunities.

One key aspect that unites youth with learning disabilities is the societal perception that they are academically unfit. This perception can lead to stigmatization and limited expectations from educators and peers. Consequently, these students may not receive the necessary support and resources to thrive academically. They may be overlooked or placed in lower-level classes, limiting their access to challenging coursework and opportunities for academic growth (Rahman, 2015).

Students with learning disabilities may also face barriers to accessing appropriate accommodations and support services. In some cases, schools may lack the necessary resources, such as trained special education teachers or assistive technology, to meet the diverse needs of these students. As a result, they may need more individualized attention and tailored instruction to succeed academically (Williams et al., 2019).

However, there is some hope on the horizon. Recent advancements in technology have had a significant impact on the educational landscape for students with learning disabilities. With the increasing accessibility of technology and the implementation of progressive policies, these students now have more significant opportunities to integrate into mainstream educational settings and stay abreast of current research. Assistive technologies, such as text-to-speech software, dictation tools, and adaptive learning platforms, have become more widely available, enabling students with learning disabilities to overcome some of the challenges they face in the classroom.

Furthermore, inclusive educational policies and practices have been implemented to promote equal opportunities and support for students with learning disabilities. These policies aim to create learning environments that embrace diversity and provide

necessary accommodations to ensure the academic success of all students, regardless of their learning differences. For example, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are designed to tailor educational plans to meet the specific needs of students with learning disabilities, providing them with personalized support and accommodations (Rahman, 2015).

Despite these positive developments, it is crucial to recognize that more work needs to be done to address the systemic barriers that prevent youth with learning disabilities from receiving a genuinely equitable education. Continued research, advocacy, and collaboration among educators, policymakers, and communities are essential to ensure that every student, including those with learning disabilities, has access to a high-quality education that allows them to reach their full potential (Kelty et al., 2020).

Moreover, it is crucial to address the intersectionality of learning disabilities with other marginalized identities. Minority students with learning disabilities may face additional challenges due to systemic biases and discrimination. They may encounter language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, or lack culturally sensitive support services. Therefore, considering their unique backgrounds and identities, a comprehensive approach is needed to address these students' specific needs and experiences. To achieve this, educators must invest in professional development to enhance their understanding of learning disabilities and effective instructional strategies (Rahman, 2015).

The relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency from parents' perspective can have implications for disability policy legislation. Understanding this relationship is crucial in shaping effective policies and interventions that address the needs of children with learning disabilities at risk of engaging in delinquent behavior. By examining parents' perspectives, policymakers can gain valuable insights into the challenges faced by families and the gaps in support systems, which can inform the development of targeted policies (Keltz et al., 2020).

Firstly, parents' perspectives can shed light on the factors contributing to the intersection of learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency. They can provide information about their children's specific challenges regarding education, socialization, and access to appropriate interventions. For example, parents may highlight issues such as inadequate educational support, limited access to specialized services, and stigma or discrimination experienced by their children with learning disabilities. Such insights can inform policymakers about the gaps in existing disability policy legislation and guide efforts to address these issues comprehensively (Rahman, 2015)..

Secondly, parents' perspectives can inform policymakers about the impact of current disability policy legislation on the risk of juvenile delinquency among children with learning disabilities. Parents may provide feedback on the effectiveness of existing policies and programs in addressing their children's needs and reducing the likelihood of delinquent behavior. They can also highlight barriers to accessing services or navigating complex support systems. By considering these perspectives, policymakers can evaluate

the strengths and weaknesses of disability policy legislation and make necessary amendments or improvements (Hudson et al., 2019).

According to Rahman (2015), parents' perspectives can also catalyze advocating for policy changes and implementing evidence-based practices. When parents share their experiences and challenges related to learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency, it can raise awareness among policymakers, educators, and the general public. This increased awareness can foster a sense of urgency to address the issues and promote policy reforms prioritizing early intervention, educational accommodations, and support services for children with learning disabilities (Laber, 2017).

The relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency from the parents' perspective is relevant to disability policy legislation as it provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by families and the gaps in support systems. Policymakers can use these perspectives to identify areas for improvement, enhance existing policies, and develop targeted interventions that address the needs of children with learning disabilities who are at risk of delinquent behavior. By involving parents in the policymaking process, legislation can be more inclusive, effective, and responsive to the needs of this vulnerable population (Laber, 2017).

No Child Left Behind

According to The American Bar Association's report in 2011, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy was introduced in 2002 by President Bush as a response to the low expectations and achievement gaps faced by students in poverty, students of color,

disabled students, and English language learners. This study focuses specifically on students of color and disabled students (Claro, et al., 2016).

The primary objective of NCLB was to ensure accountability for states and schools to improve the academic progress of these marginalized student groups. It mandated standardized testing to measure student achievement and held schools accountable for demonstrating Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for all subgroups, including students of color and disabled students. The policy aimed to provide additional resources and support to schools serving these populations through the Title I program (Cunningham, 2018).

However, the effectiveness of NCLB in closing the achievement gap for students of color and disabled students has been subject to scrutiny. According to the author, test scores administered by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed only modest improvements for African Americans, Hispanics, and children with disabilities under the No Child Left Behind Act (Whitney, 2017).

One of the challenges faced by schools in implementing NCLB was the narrowing of curriculum focus. To meet AYP targets, some schools shifted their instructional focus to prioritize test preparation in subjects like reading and math, often at the expense of other essential areas such as science, social studies, and the arts. This narrowing of the curriculum could have unintended consequences for students, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, who may benefit from a more well-rounded education (Bleigerg, 2021).

Moreover, critics argue that NCLB's emphasis on high-stakes testing may have led to teaching practices that disproportionately impacted students of color and disabled students. Some educators raised concerns that the pressure to raise test scores resulted in a focus on rote memorization and test-taking strategies rather than fostering critical thinking and creativity - this could disadvantage students who learn differently or come from culturally diverse backgrounds (Calamille., et al., 2017).

Finally, the report highlights that the resources provided were insufficient to meet the complex needs of students of color and disabled students. Schools serving these populations face challenges such as inadequate funding, limited access to specialized instructional support, and high teacher turnover rates. These factors could undermine the effectiveness of the resources allocated to support the academic progress of these students (Mason-Williams et al., 2019)

According to Childs et al. (2011), the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency from the parents' perspective is connected to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in several ways and was enacted to improve educational outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities. The act emphasized the importance of accountability, standardized testing, and providing equal educational opportunities.

One aspect of the NCLB Act relevant to the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency is its focus on academic achievement and closing the achievement gap. The act mandated that schools meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) targets, which included specific performance goals for students with disabilities. This emphasis on academic performance and accountability can impact students'

experiences with learning disabilities and potentially influence their risk of delinquent behavior (Whitney, et al., 2017).

From parents' perspective, the NCLB Act can be both beneficial and challenging. On the one hand, the act highlighted the importance of providing appropriate educational support and accommodations for students with disabilities. It required schools to assess and address the needs of students with learning disabilities by developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and providing specialized services. This focus on individualized support can positively impact students' academic and social development, potentially reducing their risk of delinquency (Whitney, et al., 2017).

On the other hand, parents may also express concerns about the potential negative consequences of the NCLB Act. The act's emphasis on standardized testing and meeting AYP targets may pressure schools to prioritize test scores over the individualized needs of students with learning disabilities; this could result in a narrow focus on academic achievement and neglect of other critical factors contributing to a student's well-being, such as social-emotional development and support for their specific learning needs. Parents may argue that this narrow focus could increase their children's risk of frustration, disengagement, or stigmatization, potentially leading to behavioral problems or involvement in delinquent activities (Thompson, 2015).

Furthermore, parents may also express concerns about the adequacy of resources and support provided under the NCLB Act. They may highlight the need for additional funding, specialized staff, and professional development opportunities to address the diverse needs of students with learning disabilities effectively. Insufficient resources and

support can hinder schools' ability to provide appropriate interventions and accommodations, potentially leaving some students at a higher risk of academic struggles and subsequent involvement in delinquent behavior (Mason-Williams et al., 2019).

The relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency from parents' perspective is relevant to the NCLB Act. While the act aimed to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities, parents may have perspectives on its potential benefits and challenges. By considering parents' perspectives, policymakers and educators can gain insights into the effectiveness of the NCLB Act in meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities and identify areas for improvement to support their academic and social development better, ultimately reducing the risk of delinquent behavior (Kurth et al., 2019).

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Thompson (2015) highlighted that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is a comprehensive legislation that protects the civil rights of individuals with disabilities. The ADA provides a legal framework to ensure that people with disabilities are not subjected to discrimination and are afforded equal opportunities in various aspects of life, including the perception and management of juvenile delinquency.

Regarding parents' perception of juvenile delinquency, the ADA significantly addresses potential biases and prejudices that may arise due to a parent's disability. The Act emphasizes that a disability should not be a determining factor in assessing a parent's ability to care for, guide, or discipline their child. Doing so promotes a fair and objective

evaluation of a parent's capability to address juvenile delinquency issues (Keenan, et al., 2018).

Under the ADA, employers are prohibited from discriminating against individuals with disabilities, including parents, during the hiring process. This protection is crucial as financial stability and employment opportunities significantly impact a parent's ability to provide a nurturing and supportive environment for their child. By ensuring equal employment opportunities, the ADA indirectly supports parents with disabilities in addressing potential risk factors associated with juvenile delinquency (ADA.gov., 2023).

Furthermore, the ADA guarantees accessibility to government and public buildings, transportation, entertainment activities, and emergency services. This accessibility ensures that parents with disabilities can actively engage in their child's life, access appropriate interventions and support systems, and participate in community activities that promote positive youth development and prevent delinquency. For example, parents with disabilities should have equal access to parent-teacher meetings, counseling services, and community programs to prevent delinquent behavior (ADA.gov.,2023).

In addition, the ADA recognizes the importance of reasonable accommodations for parents with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations may include providing communication aids, modifying procedures, or offering alternative formats for information dissemination. These accommodations enable parents with disabilities to fully participate in discussions and decision-making processes related to their child's

delinquency, ensuring that their perspectives and insights are valued and considered (ADA.gov., 2023).

Overall, the ADA serves as a crucial instrument in protecting the rights of parents with disabilities and promoting a more inclusive and equitable society. By addressing potential biases and ensuring equal opportunities, the ADA supports parents in understanding, preventing, and addressing juvenile delinquency, ultimately contributing to the well-being and positive development of the child and the family (ADA.gov., 2023).

Learning Disability and Family Impact

Many parents of children with learning disabilities feared their children would be stigmatized. The causes of behavioral norms by youth with learning disabilities (LD) were attributed to many factors (Zagefka, et al., 2020), concluded family theory and family support were imperative to the success of youth with learning disabilities. Several studies over the last decade revealed that treatments for juveniles were challenging to comprehend, making it challenging to determine what services worked. Therefore, unclear what interventions were productive and effective in treating youths suffering from learning disorders (Elleman, et al., 2019).

Parental support is imperative to the success of juveniles with learning disabilities. Research proved neighborhoods were safer when youth bonded with their parents, decreasing gang and criminal activity (Ahmetoglu et al., 2022). An interrelationship between juveniles and harmful behavior reduction was discovered when parents closely supervised youth (Graf, et al., 2021). Evidence proved that youth who did not share a bond with their parents were more inclined to criminal behavior (Gloria, et al.,

2021). Juveniles who dropped out of school, exhibited negative behavior, lied, cheated, and failed to reveal their comings and goings to their parents were more likely to display delinquent behavior (Laursen, et al., 2021).

Grandparent support for juveniles is critical, primarily when the child is raised in a household without parental presence due to extenuating circumstances. In these cases, grandparents become the parents of the youths. Grandparents are imperative to the success of juveniles in situations where parents experience hardships, mental illnesses, the lack of coping skills, stress, and lack of financial stability (Backhouse & Graham, 2012; Bailey et al., 2009; Day & Bazemore, 2011; Van Etten & Gautam, 2012; Williams, 2011).

According to Warr (2007), the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency from the parents' perspective is closely connected to the concept of Learning Disability and Family Impact (LDFI). LDFI refers to the broader impact of a child's learning disability on various aspects of family life, including emotional well-being, social relationships, educational experiences, and overall family functioning. Understanding this relationship is crucial for policymakers, educators, and researchers in developing comprehensive support systems and interventions that address the needs of families and children affected by learning disabilities and reduce the risk of delinquency (Childs et al., 2011).

From a parents' perspective, the impact of a child's learning disability on the family can be multifaceted. Firstly, parents may experience emotional stress, frustration, and anxiety related to their child's struggles with learning, school performance, and

potential involvement in delinquent behavior. The challenges of managing their child's educational needs and advocating for appropriate support can significantly affect parental well-being and overall family dynamics. Parents may face feelings of guilt, blame, or inadequacy, which can further compound the emotional toll on the family (Tiet et al., 2010).

Secondly, a child's learning disability can affect family relationships and social interactions. Siblings may experience strained relationships due to the attention and resources directed toward the child with a learning disability. Parents may also face challenges in balancing the needs of their child with a learning disability with those of other family members. The stress and disruption caused by a child's learning disability can impact family cohesion and communication, potentially increasing the risk of conflict and negatively affecting the overall functioning of the family unit (Childs et al., 2011).

Thirdly, the educational experiences of children with learning disabilities can significantly impact the family. Parents may encounter difficulties navigating the educational system, accessing appropriate interventions and support services, and advocating for their child's needs. The strain of managing the educational demands of a child with a learning disability, including attending Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, coordinating with school personnel, and seeking additional resources, can further contribute to the overall family burden (Tiet et al., 2010).

Moreover, the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency from the parents' perspective can be related to LDFI through the potential pathways and risk factors contributing to delinquent behavior. Parents may identify specific challenges

their child faces, such as academic underachievement, peer rejection, low self-esteem, or social isolation, which can increase the risk of engaging in delinquent activities.

Understanding these risk factors and their impact on the family can inform the development of targeted interventions and support services that address the child's learning needs and the broader family dynamics Henggeler & Sheidow, 2012.

The relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency from the parents' perspective is closely linked to the concept of Learning Disability and Family Impact (LDFI). Parents' experiences and perspectives provide valuable insights into the emotional, social, and educational impact of a child's learning disability on the family. By understanding these impacts, policymakers, educators, and researchers can develop comprehensive interventions and support systems that address the needs of families affected by learning disabilities, reduce the risk of delinquency, and promote positive family outcomes (Tiet et al., 2010).

Learning Disability and Mentor Support

The effects of mentoring youth with learning disabilities were not a widely studied area and only offered a limited amount of data. Youths become successful when caring adults support mentoring (Forde, 2005). Unfortunately, not everyone believes mentor support is helpful for juveniles with learning disabilities. Burgstahler and Crawford (2007) believed mentoring was successful when treating youth with learning issues, and they believed mentor relations generally happened without force. However, students with learning disabilities seldom have an opportunity to meet and develop a mentoring relationship with a positive adult (Brown et al., 2010). Mentoring support is

critical to their success in ensuring students with learning disabilities do not fall behind the learning spectrum (pp. 99-100).

An investigation by the National Council on Disability (NCD) (2019) revealed that after the United States passed the Americans with Disabilities Act, a college education was critical to the success of people with disabilities. According to the data by the NCD, only 19.4 percent of individuals with a severe disability received a college degree, compared to 80.6 percent of non-disabled individuals and 78.4 percent of people 24-29 years of age (National Council on Disability, 2019). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has played a significant role in the twentieth century by offering guidance and inspiration to mentoring organizations that support individuals with disabilities. Organizations like the twelve-step program and Big Brothers Big Sisters have been models for effective mentoring practices. This influence has been precious when considering the application of mentoring in higher education settings for youth with disabilities, where mentoring platforms are crucial for achieving success (Bierema & Merriam, 2002).

These mentoring platforms provide various resources and support systems, including coaches, mentors, peer counselors, peer support, and career sponsors (Bierema & Merriam, 2002). Various types of mentoring approaches have been employed through these platforms, such as community-based mentoring, one-on-one sessions, group mentoring, electronic mentoring, peer mentoring, faith-based mentoring, and senior citizen counseling (Axelrod et al., 2005; Timmons et al., 2006). This diversity allows for tailored approaches that meet the unique needs and preferences of youth with disabilities.

In a higher education setting, staff and faculty members with specialized knowledge and expertise can serve as mentors, offering valuable guidance and support to students with disabilities (Anderson, 2000). These mentors can provide mentorship services within the context of post-secondary institutions, assisting students in navigating academic challenges, career exploration, personal development, and overall adjustment to college life (Bierema & Merriam, 2002).

By integrating mentoring into higher education settings, individuals with disabilities can benefit from the guidance and encouragement provided by mentors who understand their specific challenges and aspirations. Mentoring platforms offer a structured framework for fostering meaningful relationships and promoting the holistic development of students with disabilities. Additionally, these platforms contribute to a sense of belonging and inclusion within the educational community, positively impacting students' academic performance, retention rates, and overall well-being (Axelrod et al., 2005; Timmons et al., 2006).

The ADA has influenced mentoring organizations, providing valuable templates and models for supporting individuals with disabilities. In higher education settings, mentoring platforms are essential for the success of youth with disabilities. These platforms offer a range of mentoring approaches and resources, enabling staff and faculty members to serve as mentors and provide tailored support to students. By embracing mentoring, post-secondary institutions can create inclusive environments that nurture the academic and personal growth of students with disabilities (Bierema & Merriam, 2002).

Learning Disability and the Medical Field

Medical professionals with parental consent must accurately diagnose the juvenile and provide the findings along with a complete analysis to the court with interventions and ways to help the child overcome or maintain a productive life in the areas of emotional, mental health, and educational needs (Felder, 1989; Forde, 2005).

Health professionals must go beyond providing a written diagnosis by testifying before the courts and explaining the findings to the judge advocating for their clients (Felder, 1989). Professionals in the health field are knowledgeable and trained to understand juveniles with learning disabilities, present and past mental health status, behavioral and emotional condition, and educational needs. The medical official must contact the court system when becoming knowledgeable of anything relevant to protect the child's best interest. Health professionals make the time to contact the family when needed, keep the line of communication open with the child, and speak with teachers, school psychologists, probation officers, guidance counselors, psychiatrists, and therapists to help the child deal with everyday life occurrences. Medical experts can provide juveniles and parents with community resources to help them foster positive relationships while enhancing their social skills (Felder, 1998).

Learning Disability and Educational Support

Education was often delayed but accomplished when the juvenile was detained in the penal system. Children with disabilities who ended up in the criminal justice system received an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) as a form of learning behind bars due to the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Educators believed ILPs

were a helpful tool; therefore, educating youth increased the graduation rate behind bars (Burrell & Warboys, 2000; Ford, 2013; Lee, 2018).

Classroom inclusion was ideal for all students but proved to have a higher success rate at the lower grade level when compared to high school. According to Casale-Giannola (2012), inclusive classrooms have good and bad aspects. The positive included teachers connecting with students; teachers related lessons to real-life scenarios; teachers' ability to modify lessons to meet the students where they were educationally, and the use of learning motivated students to learn (Ford, 2013).

There were negative aspects of allowing children with learning disabilities to learn in a regular classroom. The issues included not having enough help in the classroom to assist with the child's needs, some teachers being unaware of the laws and issues that surrounded students with learning disabilities, some teachers lacking control over the classroom, and some teachers lacking the required training needed to identify the necessary skills of students with learning disabilities (Ford, 2013).

Including students in a high school-inclusive classroom was a positive move. However, many teachers needed more training to produce a positive outcome for the students, including the necessary skills to meet the student's needs. To ensure that students with LD succeed, schools must prepare teachers with the tools and resources needed (Ford, 2013).

How do learning disabilities and educational support relate to juvenile delinquency? Juvenile delinquents are frequently associated with learning disabilities. Juveniles with learning disabilities are often stigmatized and labeled by peers and the

educational system (teachers), causing these youth to act out and retreat from educational institutions. Juvenile delinquents with learning disabilities require educational support, and most will fail due to lacking a solid educational foundation. Strategies must be identified to address learning disabilities to avoid youth reentering the juvenile justice system. A learning environment for students returning from the juvenile justice system will be supported by providing a community curriculum, employment opportunities, and extensive educational support (Shandra & Hogan, 2013).

Juvenile delinquents with learning disabilities are often problematic in the educational system, taking on the tough-guy stance and disrupting classes. The juvenile is sent to the principal, who then disciplines the child, which often leads to a suspension, causing the minor to participate in criminal activity (Shandra & Hogan, 2013). Creative ways must be explored to help educators maintain an environment conducive to all students with and without disabilities (Shifrer et al., 2016).

Barriers to Employment

People with learning disabilities often face obstacles when securing employment in the workforce (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). Lindsey (2010) found that young people ages 15-24 are discriminated against when seeking paid employment. The discrimination ranges from the type of disability to the age of the young person requesting the work along with educational level, income level, gender, how many people are in the household, and where the individual lives (U.S. Government, 2011).

Although young people with learning disabilities faced extreme employment challenges, Thomas et al. (2016) discovered that African Americans with learning

disabilities faced even more discrimination when seeking paid work. The authors found that to increase the chances of African American youth with disabilities gaining employment, transitional employment programs were needed to boost their self-esteem.

In the technology field, Burgstahler (2003) found that disabled students exposed to electronic and information technology had the potential for great career opportunities. However, career counselors must ensure all students with disabilities are exposed to this technology before it can make a difference and open the door to money-making career opportunities for all students interested in the technology field.

Empirical Review

Struggling Academically

Learning disabilities pose notable challenges to various facets of academic performance, encompassing difficulties in areas such as organization, memory, and information processing (Shifrer et al., 2016). As critical observers of their child's educational journey, parents frequently witness the ensuing struggles. These struggles manifest as their child's arduous attempts to keep pace with classroom instruction, encountering hurdles in completing homework tasks and grappling with the overwhelming demands imposed by academic expectations. Consequently, these academic difficulties can engender profound frustration, perceived failure, and a negative attitude toward school (Rola, et al., 2020). In turn, such negative affective states may heighten the likelihood of delinquent behavior as an adaptive response aimed at escaping

or circumventing the stressors and perceived inadequacies inherent in academic settings Huijsmans, et al., (2018).

It is important to note that the impact of learning disabilities on academic struggles and subsequent delinquent behavior is a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by intricate interactions between various factors. These factors intricately shape the academic experience of individuals with learning disabilities. The specific nature of the learning disability is a critical determinant, as it varies widely in terms of its characteristics and manifestations. Learning disabilities can encompass a range of conditions, including dyslexia, dyscalculia, and auditory processing disorders, each with its unique impact on academic performance Snowling (2020).

Furthermore, the severity of the learning disability plays a significant role. Some individuals may have mild learning difficulties that can be effectively managed with appropriate support, while others may experience more profound challenges that require more intensive interventions and accommodations (Shifrer et al., 2016).

Co-occurring conditions are also influential. Many individuals with learning disabilities also have attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), further complicating the learning process. ADHD symptoms, such as difficulties with attention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity, can significantly impact the individual's ability to focus, stay organized, and complete tasks, thereby affecting academic performance Giannola (2012).

According to Shifrer et al. (2016), access to appropriate educational accommodations and support services is crucial for students with learning disabilities -

this includes individualized education plans (IEPs), specialized instruction, assistive technologies, and additional time for exams or assignments. Access to these resources can level the playing field for students with learning disabilities, enabling them to fully participate in the educational process and demonstrate their true abilities.

Protective factors also come into play. Positive relationships with teachers, peers, and family can foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Early intervention is vital, as identifying and addressing learning disabilities can lead to better outcomes and prevent academic and emotional difficulties later in life. Supportive school environments prioritizing inclusion, understanding, and tailored support for students with learning disabilities can significantly enhance their academic experience Giannola (2012).

The academic journey of individuals with learning disabilities is influenced by several factors, including the specific nature and severity of the disability, the presence of co-occurring conditions like ADHD, access to appropriate accommodations and support services, and the impact of protective factors such as positive relationships, early intervention, and supportive school environments. By addressing these factors comprehensively, we can create an inclusive and empowering educational experience for individuals with learning disabilities (Shifrer et al., 2016).

Social Isolation and Peer Pressure

According to Ayar (2022), children with learning disabilities often encounter specific difficulties in social situations that can significantly impact their daily lives. These challenges can stem from various underlying factors related to their learning

differences, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), dyslexia, or executive functioning deficits.

One common hurdle is the need to understand and interpret social cues accurately. Nonverbal cues, including facial expressions, gestures, and body language, may be challenging for children with learning disabilities to decode. As a result, they may have difficulty discerning others' emotions, intentions, or social expectations, leading to misinterpretations and potential social missteps (Rice, 2017).

Furthermore, children with learning disabilities may struggle to express themselves and communicate their thoughts and feelings effectively. Difficulties with language processing, verbal expression, or organizing thoughts coherently can hinder their ability to engage in meaningful conversations, share experiences, or articulate their needs and preferences. These communication challenges can impede their social interactions and make it challenging for them to initiate and sustain friendships (Richter, 2018).

In addition to communication barriers, children with learning disabilities may struggle with self-regulation skills. Difficulties in managing emotions, impulsive control, or problem-solving can lead to social difficulties and conflicts. They may have trouble navigating social conflicts, resolving disagreements, or adapting to unexpected changes in social dynamics, which can strain relationships and hinder their ability to form and maintain positive connections with peers (Rice, 2017).

The impact of these social challenges goes beyond isolated incidents of rejection or bullying. Chronic social difficulties and the resulting social isolation can have a

profound psychological and emotional toll on the child. Feelings of loneliness, low self-esteem, and a sense of not fitting in can contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression (Harandi, et al., 2017).

Moreover, the absence of strong social support networks can leave children with learning disabilities susceptible to negative peer influence. Desperate for acceptance and belonging, they may be more prone to engaging in risky behaviors or succumbing to peer pressure, further jeopardizing their well-being and development (Harandi, et al.,2017).

Recognizing the unique social needs of children with learning disabilities is crucial for fostering inclusive and supportive environments. Implementing targeted interventions, such as social skills training, individualized support plans, and inclusive educational practices, can empower these children to navigate social situations more effectively. By promoting understanding, empathy, and acceptance, we can create a nurturing environment that enables children with learning disabilities to thrive socially and academically (Rice, 2017).

Emotional and Behavioral Issues

According to Slaviša , (2021), academic studies have extensively explored the relationship between learning disabilities and emotional and behavioral issues, shedding light on the complex interplay between these factors. Research has shown that individuals with learning disabilities often experience heightened anxiety due to educational challenges. The persistent difficulties they encounter in acquiring and applying knowledge can lead to feelings of frustration, helplessness, and low self-esteem.

Moreover, the emotional distress associated with learning disabilities can manifest in various behavioral patterns. Some individuals may exhibit frequent mood swings, experiencing rapid shifts in emotions that can be challenging for the individual and those around them. Outbursts of anger or aggression may also occur, as these individuals may struggle to communicate their frustrations or cope with their pressures effectively (Atkinson, 2015).

In addition to these outward manifestations, individuals with learning disabilities may withdraw from social activities. They may feel embarrassed or ashamed about their learning difficulties, leading them to isolate themselves from social interactions that could potentially highlight their struggles. This withdrawal can further contribute to feelings of loneliness and exacerbate their emotional distress (Benjamin, 2015).

Recognizing the potential consequences of these emotional and behavioral challenges is essential. The strain experienced by individuals with learning disabilities can make them more vulnerable to engaging in delinquent behaviors. In an attempt to cope with their emotions or communicate their frustrations, some individuals may resort to acting out or engaging in disruptive behaviors. These behaviors are outlets for their pent-up emotions and can be viewed as desperate attempts to assert control or alleviate their emotional turmoil (Atkinson, 2015).

Understanding the intricate relationship between learning disabilities and emotional and behavioral issues is crucial for parents, educators, and healthcare professionals. Recognizing the signs of emotional distress and providing appropriate support, interventions, and accommodations can help individuals with learning

disabilities navigate their challenges more effectively and promote their overall well-being (Daley, et al., 2020).

Parenting Factors

Parents of children with learning disabilities face many additional challenges in their parenting journey. One of the primary hurdles they encounter is advocating for their child's educational needs within the complex and often overwhelming educational system (Alshenqeti, 2014). This advocacy process involves actively seeking appropriate resources, accommodations, and support services to ensure their child receives the necessary tools for academic success. It may require frequent communication with teachers, administrators, and specialists, attending meetings, and staying updated on relevant educational policies and procedures (Kapsiak, 2019).

The increased demands and stressors placed on parents of children with learning disabilities can significantly impact their ability to fulfill their parenting roles effectively. The constant juggling of advocating for their child, managing appointments, and coordinating educational interventions can leave parents with limited time and energy for other aspects of parenting - this can compromise their ability to provide consistent discipline, supervision, and emotional support, further intensifying the challenges their child faces (Kutscher, 2019).

Moreover, the emotional toll on parents cannot be understated. Raising a child with learning disabilities can evoke a range of emotions, including frustration, sadness, guilt, and even isolation. Witnessing their child's struggles and setbacks can be deeply

distressing, and parents may experience feelings of helplessness or worry about their child's future. These emotional reactions can further strain the parent-child relationship, as parents may inadvertently project their stress and frustration onto their child, leading to increased tension and a communication breakdown (Kapsik, 2019).

The cumulative effect of these factors can contribute to a higher risk of delinquent behavior in children with learning disabilities. The strained parent-child relationship, coupled with the challenges faced by parents, can create an environment of heightened stress and tension within the family. Children may internalize this stress and frustration, potentially leading to behavioral issues as a means of expressing their emotional turmoil or seeking attention and validation (Leber, 2017).

It is crucial to provide comprehensive support systems for parents of children with learning disabilities to address these challenges. This support can include access to educational resources, such as workshops or training sessions on advocacy and navigating the educational system. Additionally, providing parents with opportunities for respite, counseling, or support groups can help alleviate the emotional burden they experience, enhancing their ability to provide a nurturing and supportive environment for their child (Kutscher, 2019).

By recognizing and addressing parents' unique challenges, we can effectively support families in navigating the complexities of raising a child with learning disabilities. Through collaborative efforts between parents, educators, and healthcare professionals, we can promote positive parent-child relationships, reduce stress levels,

and create an environment that fosters the overall well-being and success of children with learning disabilities (Leber, 2017).

Protective Factors

It is crucial to acknowledge that not all children with learning disabilities are prone to engaging in delinquent behavior. Many factors can contribute to mitigating the risk and promoting positive outcomes for these children (Paul, et al., 2015).

Access to early intervention services is paramount. Early identification of learning disabilities and timely intervention can significantly improve academic performance and well-being. These services may include diagnostic assessments conducted by psychologists, speech-language pathologists, and educational specialists. Based on the assessment results, a comprehensive intervention plan can be developed, which may involve targeted interventions, individualized instruction, and specialized therapies. By addressing academic challenges early on, children with learning disabilities can develop essential skills and strategies to navigate the educational system successfully (Kapsiak, 2019).

Specialized educational support is another critical aspect. It involves creating Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 plans that outline specific accommodations and modifications tailored to each child's unique needs. These accommodations may include preferential seating, additional time for assignments and tests, visual aids, assistive technology, and alternative assessment formats. Moreover,

specialized instructional strategies, such as multisensory approaches and differentiated instruction, can cater to diverse learning styles. Educators can create an inclusive learning environment that fosters academic growth and self-confidence by providing this support (Atkinson, 2015).

Positive relationships with parents, teachers, and peers are influential protective factors against delinquency. Collaborative partnerships between parents and teachers facilitate regular communication to address concerns, share progress, and adjust strategies as needed. Parents can also actively participate in their child's education by advocating for necessary accommodations and attending school meetings. Additionally, fostering a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where peers understand and accept individual differences promotes a sense of belonging and reduces the risk of social isolation. Peer tutoring programs or buddy systems can further facilitate positive interactions and academic support among students (Benjamin, 2015).

Involvement in structured extracurricular activities offers numerous benefits. Participation in sports, clubs, arts programs, or community service enhances physical fitness and skill development and promotes socialization, teamwork, self-discipline, and time management. These activities provide children with learning disabilities with opportunities to explore their talents, build confidence, and develop a sense of belonging within a supportive community. Schools and community organizations can collaborate to ensure that extracurricular offerings are inclusive and provide necessary accommodations or adaptations to meet the needs of all participants. Additionally, trained mentors or

coaches can guide and support children with learning disabilities, helping them develop their skills and fostering a sense of accomplishment (Leber, 2017).

Building resilience, self-esteem, and self-advocacy skills is essential for empowering children with learning disabilities. Resilience helps them navigate setbacks and challenges by developing problem-solving skills, adaptability, and a positive mindset. Teaching coping strategies, such as stress management techniques and goal-setting skills, can enhance resilience. Nurturing self-esteem involves recognizing and celebrating their strengths and achievements, fostering a sense of self-worth and confidence. Educators and parents can provide constructive feedback, encouragement, and opportunities for success to boost self-esteem. Equipping children with self-advocacy skills enables them to effectively communicate their needs, seek support, and actively participate in their education and personal growth; this can include teaching them how to articulate their learning styles, request accommodations, and seek assistance when needed. Additionally, involving children in decision-making processes regarding their education and goals can enhance their sense of agency and self-advocacy (Kutscher, 2019).

It is worth noting that the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency is not deterministic, and each individual's experience is unique. The presence of a learning disability does not necessarily mean a child will engage in delinquent behavior. Multiple factors shape a child's development and behavior, including individual characteristics, family dynamics, and community influences (Atkinson, 2015).

Recognizing the diverse needs of children with learning disabilities and implementing comprehensive support systems can significantly improve their academic performance, reduce the likelihood of delinquent behavior, and empower them to thrive in all aspects of life. Through early intervention, specialized educational support, positive relationships, and extracurricular engagement (Benjamin, 2015)

Summary

Chapter 2 of the study examined the existing literature concerning juveniles with learning disabilities. It explored its implications for various forms of support, including family support, mentor support, medical interventions, and educational assistance. A qualitative research method was deemed most suitable for this investigation to ensure a comprehensive and in-depth understanding. The study's primary objective was to address gaps in the available data regarding the experiences of families and young adults in this context.

The analysis delved into how family dynamics, mentor organizations, educational support systems, and medical interventions influenced the outcomes for juveniles with learning disabilities. The study aimed to shed light on how these support structures either helped prevent their involvement in the criminal justice system or contributed to their entry into the juvenile justice system.

By employing qualitative methods, the research sought to capture the nuanced experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in the lives of these juveniles. This approach allowed for a deeper exploration of the complexities and intricacies surrounding the support systems available to them.

The information gathered through the study encompassed a range of factors, including the role of families in providing emotional, financial, and practical support to juveniles with learning disabilities. It also examined the impact of mentor organizations in offering guidance, positive role models, and opportunities for personal and social development.

Furthermore, the study considered the significance of educational support in terms of accommodations, individualized instruction, and specialized interventions tailored to the unique needs of juveniles with learning disabilities. The role of the medical field in providing diagnoses, treatment, and ongoing healthcare for these individuals was also examined.

Ultimately, the research aimed to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between various forms of support and the outcomes for juveniles with learning disabilities. By examining how these support systems either facilitated positive trajectories or potentially led to involvement with the juvenile justice system, the study aimed to inform the development of more effective interventions and support mechanisms for this vulnerable population.

Chapter 3 of the study provides an in-depth discussion of the research design and methodology employed to generate the findings. The chapter outlines various critical aspects of the examination, including the role of the researcher, participant selection procedures, ethical considerations for participant protection, the chosen research methodology, and the data collection process.

The role of the researcher is clearly defined to ensure transparency and rigor. The researcher's involvement in the study, such as their positionality and potential biases, is acknowledged and accounted for to maintain the integrity of the research process.

The chapter also details the process of participant selection. The criteria and procedures used to identify and recruit participants for the study are explained, ensuring the representation of a diverse range of perspectives and experiences. Additionally, ethical considerations, such as informed consent and confidentiality, are highlighted to protect the rights and well-being of the participants throughout the research process.

The chosen research methodology is thoroughly described, providing a clear understanding of the theoretical framework and approach adopted to address the research questions. Whether it be a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approach, the rationale behind the methodology selection is explained to justify the research design.

Furthermore, the chapter elaborates on the data collection methods employed during the study, including interviews, surveys, observations, or document analysis. The details of the data collection tool, techniques, and protocols are provided to ensure transparency and replicability of the research process.

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the parent's perspectives concerning their children's learning disabilities and their influences on juvenile delinquency. The qualitative methodological approach was used to see if there was a negative impact on the parent, caretaker, or juvenile due to a learning disability. To better understand the effects of learning disabilities on youths, the risk and resiliency approach was used to understand how learning disabilities affected minors in school, emotional organization, family function, medication, and the adjustments they made into adulthood to parents. According to Park (2021), using a risk resiliency study protocol for collecting data is appropriate for testing and summarizing the procedures related to the documented research question. The risk and resiliency study research design allowed me to comprehensively investigate a contemporary phenomenon in a realistic and applicable setting and to extract data related to the research question from parents who have raised youth with learning disabilities. The general strain theory (GST) identified forces related to this research in children with learning disabilities and how stressors impacted parents raising these juveniles with learning disabilities to identify why crimes seemed to be associated with GST.

This chapter encompasses various aspects of the research study, including the research design, paradigm, researcher's role, sampling techniques, and sample methods. Furthermore, it provides a comprehensive overview of the data collection procedures and data analysis methods employed in the study. Additionally, the chapter delves into

research trustworthiness and highlights the measures taken to protect the participants' rights in the study.

Research Question:

RQ1: From a parent's perspective, is there a relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency?

Research Design and Rationale

The selected research design, phenomenology, was deemed appropriate for this study as it aimed to delve deeply into the firsthand experiences of parents raising youths with learning disabilities (Yin, 2015). As a qualitative research approach, phenomenology focuses on understanding individuals' subjective meaning and lived experiences within a specific phenomenon or context. In this case, the goal was to gain rich insights into the challenges, emotions, and perspectives of parents navigating the complexities of raising children with learning disabilities.

By adopting a phenomenological study design, the researchers sought to create an environment that allowed participants to share their stories, perceptions, and interpretations of their experiences. In-depth surveys were the primary data collection method, allowing participants to express themselves fully and provide detailed accounts of their lived realities.

The data analysis process involved a rigorous examination of the participants' narratives. By carefully reviewing and coding the responses, the researchers aimed to

identify recurring themes and patterns that emerged from the data. These themes served as critical indicators of everyday experiences, concerns, and perspectives shared by parents in this context.

An essential aspect of this research was validating the need to mitigate potential adverse interactions between youths with learning disabilities and the juvenile criminal justice system. The study aimed to shed light on the significance of implementing proactive measures to reduce the likelihood of such encounters by learning about the parent's answers, understanding their challenges, and recognizing their perspectives. The findings of this research could potentially inform policy and intervention strategies aimed at promoting a supportive and inclusive environment for youths with learning disabilities, reducing their vulnerability to adverse outcomes within the criminal justice system (Lewis, 2015).

Role of the Researcher

I was diligent in collecting information about the development of identifying variables and common themes while actively monitoring and preventing personal biases (FitzGerald, et al., 2019). I was responsible for creating a safe and non-judgmental environment for participants to freely express their thoughts and experiences without any concerns about the study's implications (Varkey., 2021). Given my identity as an African American woman, there was a potential for my perceptions of how young African American males are treated, misunderstood, or marginalized to be perceived as biased. To mitigate this perception, I solely relied on participant responses as the basis for my analysis. Additionally, formulating research questions and gathering peer-reviewed data

contributed to the research process's ability to identify and eliminate potential biases (Moon, 2016).

To ensure the integrity of the results, I took great care to avoid any bias by keeping my thoughts, views, and perceptions separate from the collected study data. Furthermore, I actively participated in the research process and engaged professionally with the respondents. I conducted interviews, which played a pivotal role in data collection. In addition, I facilitated the research process by carefully evaluating the participants' perceptions. The analysis of the data equally considered the perspectives shared by the participants and adhered to the best research practices. Notably, there was no conflict of interest in this study, as I were not involved in any business or employment with state or local social and health services departments.

Data Collection Procedures

The data for this study was collected through open-ended interviews. The interview questions were carefully designed to be relevant to the study, aiming to eliminate respondent bias and enable participants to express their perspectives on the research topic. The questions selected fostered in-depth conversations, yielding valuable qualitative data that addressed the specific needs of youth with learning disabilities. Moreover, these interviews provided insights into the social justice challenges these individuals and their families face. The target population for the interviews consisted of eight to twelve caretakers residing in Mississippi who were responsible for the care of a child with learning disabilities.

An interview was the most suitable research tool to explore complex issues and gather comprehensive insights. These guides enabled me, as the researcher, to ask probing questions that delved deeper into the participants' perspectives. In addition to addressing the study questions, I also paid attention to non-verbal cues, expressed attitudes, and gained a profound understanding of the phenomenon under investigation without explicitly posing follow-up inquiries.

All participant responses were diligently recorded to facilitate a thorough analysis. The data were meticulously coded using NVivo, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software. Response categorization was based on their similarities, enhancing the accuracy of the analysis. The objective of content analysis was to systematically organize and evaluate all recorded responses, allowing for the identification and differentiation of various levels of observed content.

Participants Selection Logic

The selection of participants identified relevant characteristics in classifying a specific population and demographic (Doyle, 2020). I established the necessary parameters to select the participant pool based on the process. Once completed, I reviewed all surveys and allowed all participants to review their interview transcription for accuracy. Participants for the study appeared to be from all walks of life, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic and racial backgrounds. The broad view better understood the impact of learning disorders and juvenile delinquents.

Data Analysis Plan

The primary objective of this study was to gain insight into the real-life experiences of the selected population, focusing on a specific phenomenon of interest. A survey was administered to adults aged 21 and above with children diagnosed with a learning disability. This survey aimed to explore the effects of family mentoring, medication, and educational support and determine whether these factors contributed to reducing criminal behavior. The survey responses were analyzed and categorized based on identified themes and comparative analysis using SurveyMonkey and NVivo software. The SurveyMonkey platform facilitated data collection from eligible participants and enabled the coding and identifying themes from the survey responses (Mishra, et al., 2022). The surveys were subjected to initial coding, which involved identifying recurring phrases and words and aligning thoughts and expressions to identify themes accurately.

The data analysis commenced by thoroughly reviewing the gathered information and considering all potential outcomes. Subsequently, the data was carefully examined multiple times, considering the participants' knowledge of the subject matter while ensuring anonymity. During the data analysis phase, I approached the task with an open mind, consciously setting aside any preconceived notions or expectations. The primary objective was distributing at least ten surveys to parents of children with learning disabilities. All survey data was securely stored on a private laptop and a dedicated hard drive. The interview data underwent coding and characterization, with themes and comparisons being identified. Additionally, the study utilized NVivo as a data analysis tool.

In this study, both content analysis and thematic analysis models were employed—the content analysis aimed to organize and evaluate all recorded responses, distinguishing various levels of observed content. Thematic analysis, on the other hand, was utilized to generate themes and core ideas from the diverse levels of observed content, including latent content derived from contextual information incorporated in the analysis.

Instrumentation

To successfully retrieve data associated, open-ended survey questions were used to question interviewees, allowing an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of the interviewees. The questions were developed by reading similar qualitative research studies and evidence-based articles. The SurveyMonkey program captured the interviewee's responses to questions and ensured the validity and creditability of the interview transcription.

Credibility

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), credibility symbolizes the findings they were intended to describe. Credibility is vital in a study; it provides the trustworthiness of the material to be credible or believable. To ensure the credibility of this study, I used SurveyMonkey. Credibility was enhanced through thematic analysis when identifying the themes through the data collected from the respondents. Identified themes emerged from all ten sources, which minimized the chances of bias from individuals to prevent individuals from accidentally tainting the findings. SurveyMonkey provided security to all 10 participants and encouraged them to be upfront and honest with their responses.

The security feature removed all doubt of the respondents' names being exposed to the public and me.

Transferability

Transferability was an essential aspect of research as it allowed the findings from one study to be applied to other contexts and populations. According to Sutton and Austin (2015), transferability was limited if the study's small sample size could not be applied to other people and contexts. However, small sample sizes are standard in qualitative studies. To enhance transferability, I described the study's organizational setting and the criteria for participation in the purposeful sample allowing the audience to assess the transferability of the findings when reading the study. Providing detailed and thick descriptions of the data and using multiple sources of evidence helped to enhance transferability.

Dependability

Dependability occurs when the data collected is sound enough to be dependable and repeated. Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that it is considered dependable when the same research can be copied again with the same settings but at a different time. The same research data collection instrument collected the data to ensure each participant's favorable and accurate outcome. In this study, coding was utilized to highlight the dependability allowing future studies like this one to develop similar or the same result. I analyzed past research on this subject matter and what was discovered during coding.

Confirmability

Confirmability can be achieved only when participants' views reflect the data and not the researcher's view (Amin et al., 2020). Only participants' views and opinions were documented during the process to avoid any biases that may surface during the data collection. The documentation served as a record to ensure the participant's views were written down correctly and used as a point of reference to ensure the words printed were those of the respondents and not my own. Confirmability was achieved through quoting verbatim the comments and direct quotes shared by the respondents, therefore, revealing the findings from the data provided. Once the study was complete, the readers had the information to compare my explanation to early data on this subject matter to assess confirmability independence.

Issues of Trustworthiness

According to Rudestam and Newton (2015), reliable and valid measurement of characteristics requires structured measures with a specific coding instrument (p. 131). The interviews' trustworthiness depended upon the participants' accuracy and honesty. The researcher implemented checks and balances when interviewing all participants to mitigate potential biases.

Throughout the study, I maintained strict adherence to the highest ethical standards. The confidentiality of the data was safeguarded, and no alterations were made to manipulate the research outcomes. The participants could remain anonymous to foster openness and honesty in the interview responses. Moreover, great care was taken to ensure that the data was collected from the appropriate respondents, thereby enhancing

the validity of the results. The individuals included in the sample were required to provide reliable and verifiable information. To prevent any distortion, the data collected was handled with utmost integrity, even during the transformation process from one format to another. Additionally, proper acknowledgment was given to all sources utilized in the study.

Ethical Procedures

The Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and researcher certification of the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research on Protecting Human Research Participants was followed. Each participant received a copy of the informed consent. The study sought out children with special needs families to help address this study's interviewing participants (Rudestam & Newton, p. 313).

Before the process, the participants received information about the study's procedures. I practiced confidentiality and anonymity when protecting all respondents' names and any information that may reveal their identity. Finally, I used the best confidentiality practices and anonymity to safeguard all respondents' names and information guarding their identities.

Protection of the Participant's Rights

The participants were duly informed of their voluntary participation rights, with the option to decline involvement if desired. It was emphasized that their responses would be exclusively used for the study and would not face any negative consequences due to their participation. No rights of the participants were violated during the study. Prior permission to collect, transmit, and store the participants' data and responses were

obtained from Walden University in compliance with the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Participants provided their informed consent by signing a consent form to confirm their voluntary and non-coerced participation.

Participants

The sampling plan included retrieving data from families in Mississippi, U.S. A 3-question qualifier vetted the participants to determine if the respondents met the qualifications to participate in the survey. After the participants completed the questionnaire, a National Hotline for mental health was provided if additional help was desired, and a thank you were delivered for their participation. Additionally, purposeful sampling addressed the research question using a group of participants that met distinct criteria.

Participants must meet or exceed the following criteria to participate in the study: All participants must have a child 21 years and over, the child must have been diagnosed with a learning disability, and the parents are willing to complete a web-based survey.

Sampling

The population comprised ten families from Mississippi, U.S., with children 21 years and older diagnosed with a learning disability. Each family participating in the study met the guidelines for participating. The family selected to participate offered a rich account of youth diagnosed with a learning disability and its relation to juvenile delinquency. The families chosen to participate received an invitation letter and an email to remind them to complete the web-based survey before the deadline. A web-based questionnaire was designed to ensure enough data was available to address the research

questions sufficiently. Lastly, after the research data was gathered, all participants received a transcript and follow-up instructions via email.

Summary

The researcher conducted an in-depth qualitative study to understand parents' experiences with children diagnosed with learning disabilities. The study was conducted in Mississippi, United States, and data was collected from a carefully selected sample of 10 families residing in the region. These families were specifically chosen based on the criterion that their children were diagnosed with learning disabilities at an early age and are currently 21 or older, allowing for a retrospective exploration of their experiences.

To ensure the ethical integrity of the study, the researcher meticulously adhered to the rules and regulations of Walden University and obtained the necessary approvals from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Before the recruitment process commenced, the researcher sought permission to conduct the study and provided detailed information about its purpose, objectives, and anticipated timeline to each participating family. Informed consent forms were distributed to the participants, clearly outlining their rights, including the right to privacy and the freedom to withdraw from the study at any stage without facing any adverse consequences. The researcher placed utmost importance on creating a safe and supportive environment for participants, fostering open and honest sharing of their experiences while maintaining confidentiality and privacy throughout the study.

Data for this study was gathered using a web-based survey consisting of 15 open-ended questions developed based on the comprehensive literature review presented in

Chapter 2. Participants could review their responses before submitting the survey to ensure accuracy and completeness. In cases where data required transcription, it was meticulously analyzed using SurveyMonkey and NVivo software, facilitating efficient organization and interpretation of the collected information.

Following the study's conclusion, the data was securely stored for five years, adhering to standard data retention protocols - this ensured the preservation of the data for potential future reference or verification while maintaining the participants' confidentiality. After the designated retention period, the data was responsibly and permanently destroyed to protect the privacy and anonymity of the participants.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This qualitative study explored the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency from the parent's perspective. The study was guided by a single research question: "From parents' perspectives, is there a relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency?" To answer this question, I provided detailed descriptions of the participant's demographics, the setting in which the research was conducted, the methods used for data collection and analysis, measures taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the results, and the results themselves.

The plan for collecting and analyzing data is outlined in Chapter 3, including open-ended survey questions designed to allow parents of children with learning disabilities to share their lived experiences. In the chapter, I presented an in-depth analysis of the trustworthiness of testimonies and study results. The data provided by respondents were carefully reviewed and coded to determine if parents shared similar experiences with youth diagnosed with a learning disability. The chapter concluded with a concise summary of the findings.

Setting

I collected data from parents of children with learning disabilities anonymously through SurveyMonkey.com. The population selected from the snowball sampling was provided with a link to the survey. All participants were given a timeframe to complete the survey at their earliest convenience. Throughout the data collection process, no unexpected organizational conditions occurred that influenced the trajectory of the data

outcome. The data collection was described in Chapter 3. Therefore, no deviations occurred and tainted the process.

Demographics

I carefully chose a sample of ten families to participate. Each family had a child over the age of 21 years and diagnosed with a learning disability. All participants were required to pass a set of qualifying questions before being allowed to complete the fifteen open-ended survey questions. The participants answered the survey questions honestly and candidly. No personal information was collected that could reveal their identity to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Data Collection

On August 18, 2022, an informed consent invitation was sent to all families to participate in a study addressing the research question. All families agreed to participate by providing information about their child diagnosed with a learning disability. A survey containing two qualifier questions and 15 open-ended survey questions was sent to each family and was available for two weeks, ending on September 1st, 2022. Before the end of the two weeks, all ten families had completed the survey. The data was then coded and analyzed on September 7th, 2022. No unusual circumstances occurred during the data collection process.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the SurveyMonkey survey was downloaded and analyzed using NVivo 12 computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software. The analysis followed the six-step procedure outlined by Terry et al. (2017). The first step involved

reading and rereading the data to familiarize myself with the information collected. The second step involved coding the data to identify phrases and groups of words that were relevant to the research question. These phrases were then assigned to NVivo nodes for further analysis. During the initial coding process, nodes were labeled and given descriptive phrases to represent the data accurately. Over 200 responses were assigned to 30 codes during the coding process. The related codes were then grouped into themes (Terry et al., 2017). The themes were named and defined to demonstrate their relevance to the research question. The final step involved sharing the data by writing a chapter with a tabular and chronological delivery, allowing readers to follow the analysis process easily.

Credibility

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), credibility symbolizes the findings they were intended to describe. Credibility is vital in a study; it provides the trustworthiness of the material to be credible or believable. To ensure the credibility of this study, I used SurveyMonkey. Credibility was enhanced through thematic analysis when identifying the themes through the data collected from the respondents. Identified themes emerged from all ten sources, which minimized the chances of bias from individuals to prevent individuals from accidentally tainting the findings. SurveyMonkey provided security to all 10 participants and encouraged them to be upfront and honest with their responses. The security feature removed all doubt of the respondents' names being exposed to the public and me.

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Study Results

The data was analyzed and organized under three significant inductive themes that addressed the research question. These themes were: (1) Changes in behavior that parents noticed in their child after he or she began taking medication, (2) Behavior that parents noticed in their children before they engaged in delinquent activities, and (3) Programs that helped reduce their child's juvenile delinquent behavior.

Theme 1: The parents noticed changes in their child's behavior since he/she began taking medication.

After receiving a diagnosis of a learning disability, all parents in this study were presented with the option of medication for their children. However, out of 10 families, three parents chose not to use medication. The parents who decided to use medication saw it helpful in helping their children focus and remain calm. However, some reported side effects, such as sleepiness and zombie-like trance. Despite these side effects, most parents felt that the benefits of the medication outweighed the adverse side effects - this highlighted the importance of considering individual circumstances and weighing the

potential benefits and risks when making decisions about medication for children with learning disabilities.

Seven of the parents indicated they decided to medicate their child. Participant 1 suggested: “Since taking the medication, she seems to complain about her stomach hurting all the time, lack of sleep, and her eating habits have changed. She went from having a healthy appetite to not wanting to eat. However, the school calls less because the medication is helping her to focus and get in trouble less.” Participant 4 stated, “When he takes his medication, he is much calmer, hopeful, and loving. However, when he is not on the medication, he gets into trouble, and the school calls me constantly to check if his dad or I forgot to give him the medication for the day.” Participant #10 reported: “My child is calmer. The patterns of bad behavior have stopped. Since being on medication, he has been more attentive most of the time. At first, I was reluctant, like most parents I know whose child was diagnosed with a learning disability. However, looking back at my decision to medicate, I still believe his father and I made the right decision.” Participant 7: “My son is like a zombie when he is drugged and not himself, although he seems to complete his classwork and get into trouble far less.”

The parents who opted not to take medication shared their thoughts on why the drug was not an option for them to utilize. Participant 2: “I never used medication for my child; I heard more negative information than positive from the parents whose child took the medication.” Participant 6: “My daughter is exhausted and sleepy throughout the day and, at times, unable to focus due to the medication effects. Therefore, the medication is not a good fit for my son. My daughter is shy and sometimes acts out, and as his mother,

I thought medication would help. However, I was wrong.” Participant 8: “I chose not to medicate my son. I did some research and found that when I deleted certain food from his daily diet, it had a positive outcome in misbehavior, for example, caffeine and excessive sugar.”

The decision to medicate a child is a personal one all parents in this study had to make considering their child’s well-being. Medication is not the right choice for everyone, and even among parents who chose to use medication, some had successful outcomes while others did not. Some children in this study experienced adverse effects from the medication, such as becoming sick or emotionless. However, for some parents, the benefits of the medication outweighed the adverse side effects, leading them to continue its use; this highlighted the importance of considering individual circumstances when deciding on medication for children with learning disabilities.

Theme 2: Behavior parents noticed in their children before engaging in delinquency.

Parents in this study believe negative behavior in their children is problematic. However, most parents experienced problems at home before the behavior spilled over into the classroom setting. Participant #1: “My son’s behavior is inconsistent and tends to be bad at home and school, no matter how much I speak to him before he goes to school daily.” Participant #3: “My daughter would never do her homework. When I would help her, she would say the answer, and the next minute she would not remember anything I had just taught her. Now that I think about it, she was aggressive and wanted to fright everyone instead of trying to work things out by talking.” Participant 4: “First thing I

noticed was his grades dropping in school. He was not talking much anymore, not to mention he started hanging with the wrong group and getting picked up by the police for petty theft.” Participant #5: “My child would be aggressive at home with his siblings and threaten bodily harm on his teacher and classmates just because the teacher would not let him have his way.” Participant #10: “An increase in depression was the first thing I noticed. He became antisocial and constantly fought with his sister at home for no real reason. He would often lie about little things and take things that did not belong to him.” *Participate #2*: “I noticed he became antisocial and withdrawn around everyone, including family members. No matter what I did, he always felt targeted, and no one loved him outside his friends who were known gang affiliates.” Participant #9: “I noticed my child had become withdrawn and antisocial, he would never go outside anymore, and all he wanted to do was play with BB guns.”

Several parents reported changes in their children’s behavior after starting medication. Some observed improved behavior, while others reported that the medication made their children sick. Despite this, some parents decided to keep their children on medication because the benefits outweighed the adverse side effects. These parents may have weighed the medication's pros and cons and determined that its positive impact on their child’s behavior was worth the potential side effects. It highlights the importance of considering individual circumstances when deciding on medication for children with learning disabilities.

Theme 3: Programs that helped curtail their child's juvenile delinquency behavior.

According to the parents interviewed in this study, all ten believed that programs were necessary to help their children curtail delinquent behavior. Many families utilize community and religious programs to address their child's behavior. However, some families could not access these services due to limited availability highlighting the need for more programs and resources to support children with learning disabilities and help them avoid delinquent behavior.

Participant #2: "The programs my son was involved in helped very little. The program my family and I liked the most was a church mentoring program, although he failed to comply or participate with the men of the church. The other program he attended was Weems Mental Health Center." Participant #3: "I would say not just one program helped my daughter; it was a combination of several programs that helped my daughter realize her actions were inappropriate and needed to be changed for her betterment." Participant 4: "Our church family and his youth group have been an intricate part of his life and have positively impacted his behavior." Participant #6: "My daughter attended a mentoring program with dance as part of the curriculum. The art of dance brought my daughter out of her shell and enabled her to be expressive, a real lifesaver. My daughter also played the clarinet and was a different child during the hour of instruction." Participant 8: "Not sure which program helped, but he attended church programs and after-school activities since I worked late during the week. My son enjoyed both programs and looked forward to attending whenever the programs were available."

Not all parents had access to mentoring programs in their area. Some communities in the Southern Region were underserved and had limited resources for their children's educational or mental health services, making it difficult for parents to find the support their children needed to succeed academically and socially.

Participant #10: "There are no programs in my area for children with learning disabilities. I was told to call the Big Brother organization, but they had a limited number of slots, and the youth on the program last year had a higher priority. I did not have any help from any organization, and the school did not have any answers. My son does not have after-school services while I am working; therefore, he hangs out with known gangs and drug dealers in the neighborhood, creating trouble for himself. I was told to call the Big Brother organization, but they had a limited number of slots, and the youth on the program last year had a higher priority. I did not have any help from any organization, and the school did not have any answers. My son had no choice but to go out and create trouble for himself."

In some areas of the Southern Region, limited programs were available to assist children with learning disabilities. These programs often have limited space and give priority to students who were enrolled in the previous year. As a result, new students who requested services may be placed on a waiting list and may not have access to programs for that year, leaving children with learning disabilities without the support they need to succeed academically and socially. It highlighted the need for more programs and resources to be made available to support children with learning disabilities in these areas.

Summary

The study aimed to understand the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency from a parent's perspective. The research question addressed the connection between these two factors. The first theme that emerged was that parents noticed changes in their child's behavior after starting medication. All ten families were advised their child needed medication, but 3 out of 10 refused after researching its effects on children. Of the seven families who gave their children medication, they experienced positive behavior changes, although some reported stomach sicknesses. 2 unmedicated children had serious encounters with law enforcement, while four medicated youth experienced criminal mischief.

The second theme in this qualitative study was the behavior parents noticed in their children before engaging in delinquency. 6 out of 10 families noticed delinquent behavior in their children, including aggressive behavior, hanging out with the wrong crowd, antisocial behavior, and fighting in school and with siblings at home. The third theme was the availability of programs that helped curtail juvenile delinquency behavior. Parents reported that the Southern Region had limited programs for children with learning disabilities, resulting in long waiting lists. Available programs included after-school activities such as dance classes, STEM, theater, and debate. Places of worship also offered mentoring programs to address adult supervision gaps when parents were unavailable. Some parents admitted that not having a program for their children led to trouble due to a lack of adult supervision at work. Chapter 5 addressed the interpretation of these findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

I aimed to dig deeper into the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency from a parent's perspective. I constructed this qualitative study to allow parents of children with learning disabilities to reveal their lived experiences telling the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency. Parents who live in the Southern Region with young adults diagnosed with a learning disability at a young age were recruited for this study. Parents with lived experiences who decided to participate in this study revealed how family support, medication, school support, and mentoring organizations in their community worked to prevent their children from entering the juvenile justice system.

Today, a limited amount of data exists from parents with children diagnosed with a learning disability early on. Unfortunately, very little information on this topic provided minimal direction for parents of children who were diagnosed with a learning disability. However, alarming data did exist concerning youth dropout rates, children entering the juvenile justice system, and community outcries for parents to keep their children off the streets without parental supervision. Single parents often could not supervise their children while at work, leaving the child to spend much time alone, adding to youth dropout rates and children entering the juvenile justice system.

Teachers are overwhelmed and underpaid, the size of classrooms has increased, and many teachers who work for the education department are not certified to teach children with learning disabilities. Therefore, schools are placing children with learning

disabilities in classes with more advanced children in hopes that they will learn despite the circumstance. Parents do not have time to attend PTA meetings. As a result, they are unaware of their child's grades and progress, not knowing if they are passing or failing. Nevertheless, teachers continued to contact parents concerning their child's behavior and how it affected their grades to no avail. Parents sought outside help from grandparents, doctors, community organizations, churches, and medication to help their children maintain in the classroom without threats and fears of the police being called.

This study was conducted due to learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency that have taken a toll on families, communities, schools, and the country. However, there is a limited amount of data that gives a parent's perspective or a young adult's firsthand experience. Therefore, to better understand the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency, it was essential to conduct an explorative study to know from a parent's perspective the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency.

Data was collected for the qualitative study using a researcher-developed survey of 15 open-ended questions. The survey was conducted online with the assistance of SurveyMonkey.com, with responses given anonymously. The participants for the study consisted of 10 parents of children diagnosed at an early age with a learning disability. The parents selected spoke candidly about their lived experiences with having a child diagnosed with a learning disability and what kept their child from, and what helped or did not help them from entering the juvenile justice system.

A detailed thematic analysis of the data using NVivo 12 software was conducted. The analysis revealed three key themes that directly addressed the research question. The first theme indicated that parents observed significant changes in their child's behavior after administering medication. The second theme highlighted specific behaviors parents noticed in their children before engaging in delinquent activities. The third theme identified programs effectively reduced juvenile delinquent behavior in their children. In this chapter, I provided a comprehensive interpretation of the study's findings, including a discussion of its limitations and recommendations for future research. Additionally, I explored the study's implications for promoting positive social change. I concluded with a summary of the study's contributions to the field and a conclusion that highlighted its significance.

Interpretation of the Findings

The information in this section was designed to contextualize the study conclusion within the conceptual framework and the relevant preceding literature. The theoretical framework used for this study was Agnew's (1992) Strain Theory. The juveniles in this study had stressors that impacted their learning disabilities. In addition, the strain theory affected the children of the parents interviewed for this study. According to Agnew (1992), children tested at an early age and diagnosed with a learning disability are stressors. According to their parents, the stressors they experienced led to negative emotions, anger, and depression. Agnew's (1992) Strain Theory is the force stressors have on individuals. In this study, Agnew's theory (1992) highlighted that learning disabilities (stressors) hurt young people, according to the parents.

Agnew (1992) explained that stressors can produce harmful impulses eliminating positive impulses. Stress comes from negative emotions, anger, and depression that can bring in youth diagnosed with a learning disability. In research, the General Strain Theory was developed to understand why specific stressors (learning disabilities) prevented individuals from achieving a goal, resulting in stress.

The balance of the interpretations was arranged by analyzing and describing the thesis in this analysis.

Theme 1: Changes in Child Behavior After Starting Medication. All participants (parents) reported that medication was offered as an option after their child was diagnosed with a learning disability. Of the 10 cases, three families decided against medicating their children, while 7 chose medication to address behavioral issues or lack of concentration in the classroom. Some parents observed positive changes in their children's behavior after starting medication, such as improved focus and reduced impulsivity, despite reports of side effects. Overall, the parents interviewed felt the benefits of medication outweighed any side effects or negative stereotypes associated with ADHD medication. They believed medication was crucial in supporting their child's academic and social development.

The findings of the first theme were consistent with existing research that suggested that youth who experienced stressors may be negatively impacted. Considering this, it was recommended that parents seek help from medical professionals through medication to help mitigate the harmful effects of learning disabilities (Agnew, 1992). Most participants in this study reported experiencing stressors, which can trigger

dangerous impulses and suppress positive ones. As a result, doctors offered medication to all families, regardless of whether they chose to medicate their children. Many participants emphasized the importance of medication in managing their child's condition. They noted that when children failed to take their medication, teachers often contacted parents to inquire about the reason for the missed dose, and this highlighted the critical role medication could play in supporting the well-being of youth with learning disabilities.

When interviewed, several parents agreed that ADHD medication made their children sick. The side effects included loss of appetite, stomachache, headache, trouble sleeping, and mood swings. One parent explained that her child went from having a healthy appetite before starting the medication to refusing to eat. The child's loss of appetite happened only when she was on the pills. The hunger was average on weekends when the parents did not administer medication.

Parents who decided not to medicate their child stated that it would not be a deterrent and that there are other ways of dealing with a learning disability other than medication. Other parents who decided not to medicate researched the side effects and decided not to risk their child's health on something ineffective. The families (3) that settled against medicating opted for other ways of dealing with their children, although they were engaging in delinquency. Delinquency included physically assaulting their siblings, fighting at school, talking back to their parents and teachers, stealing, and leaving the house without permission. These acts displayed by children in this study were stressors, as stated by Agnew (1992), due to the diagnosis of a learning disability.

Theme 2: Behavior parents noticed in their children before engaging in delinquency. All participants (parents) interviewed noticed stressors in their children at an early age and decided to have them tested for a learning disability. In Agnew's (1992) findings, he reported that stressors contribute to the strain theory. The stressors, parents said, are anger, depression, fighting with siblings, poor grades, and inconsistent study habits. The author's framework (Agnew, 1992) strain theory stated that depression in young people with learning disabilities can encourage delinquent behavior. However, before becoming aware of delinquent behavior at school, the parents observed negative behavior at home. The children fought way beyond normal sibling rivalry with aggressive behavior against parents and other adults in authority. The parents were overwhelmed by their children's behavior, leading them to seek medical advice from a psychiatrist for answers. Unfortunately, the responses the parents received were medication, making some parents use their discretion to seek out other means as a deterrent to prevent their children from engaging in delinquent behavior. According to Agnew (1992), individuals who suffer from the Strain Theory may become addicted to medication, which also causes them to fall into a criminal lifestyle. Unfortunately, youth who experienced the general strain theory had a higher chance of engaging in a gang lifestyle, mainly if they were associated with gangs (Levesque & Girgen, 2020). Gang members are usually academically challenged and addicted to a life of crime and drugs.

Several parents reported depression in their youth since being diagnosed with a learning disability. According to Agnew (1992), learning disabilities can be stressful. Stressors can produce harmful impulses eliminating positive impulses. Stress also comes

from negative emotions, anger, and depression. Depression in those with learning disabilities can encourage delinquent behavior. A few parents reported antisocial behavior in their children before engaging in delinquency. According to Underwood and Washington (2016), youth with depression have a greater possibility of delinquent behavior. Underwood and Washington also reported that 15 to 30 percent of the juvenile justice youth locked up suffer from depression.

Theme 3: Programs that helped curtail their child's juvenile delinquency behavior. According to all parents interviewed, programs are essential to keeping children out of the juvenile justice system. However, many mentoring programs exist, including church outreach and Big Brothers Big Sisters. Unfortunately, Mississippi has limited space. Therefore, not all parents interviewed could secure a spot with a mentoring program for their child. Three out of the ten families were unsuccessful in finding a mentoring program. A national study was conducted on behalf of The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) on youth in the juvenile justice system and mentoring programs. The findings concluded that 51% of the children could not participate because they did not have access to mentoring programs (DuBois, 2021).

Most parents held religious programs in high esteem. The parents who received a placement for their children in a mentoring program reported positive reviews. The findings indicated that parents liked the programs geared toward their religious beliefs, although they felt all programs had something positive to offer their children. However, the results showed that the parents who failed to secure a spot for their children in a mentoring program were disappointed and angry. The anger comes from the inability to

get the help they desperately need from their children to suppress the urge to act out at home and school (Cauda-Laufer, 2017).

The remaining parents provided a different point of view than the parents who did not access a mentoring program. Most notably, 7 out of 10 parents found a mentoring program and reported they were pleased with the progress and that it keeps their child off the streets and minimizes their contact with the juvenile justice system. The perspective represented in this discrepant data does not align with the literature and may be noted as continuing literature. However, the discrepant evidence discovered in this study did not contradict the literature presented. The contextualization of the discrepant data expressed in previous studies indicated the critical qualifier; although the families found the mentoring program helpful, it was not enough to keep their children out of the juvenile justice system (State Board Education, 2023).

Limitations

The data for this study was collected from respondents on the condition of anonymity to protect their privacy and ensure the children involved would not be identified. This measure was intended to create a safe and confidential environment for participants to share their experiences openly and without fear of being recognized. However, despite assurances of anonymity, some respondents still expressed anxiety about their identity being revealed - this may have limited their willingness to disclose the full extent of their experiences and impacted the richness of the data collected. However, to address this concern, additional measures were taken to ensure the participants' confidentiality and build trust with them.

One limitation of the study was that future researchers' ability to gain interchangeability could be limited by the obscurity of the research collected in this study. Another limitation was that self-reported data was limited to various biases. The parents could have selective memory and exaggerated experiences, knowing this information cannot be independently verified. Therefore, to ensure the study was sound, I decided to place anonymity over confidentiality to receive the best possible accurate, precise data from the pool of respondents. The limitations of transferability assessments were associated with not collecting any demographic data other than the region where the participants live. The researcher ensured the respondent's comfort by providing a safe space to speak their truth without harming their families.

Another limitation of this study was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ability to conduct face-to-face interviews. Data were collected through open-ended surveys to address this challenge. However, some surveys were returned late due to illness among respondents or their family members. Additionally, using surveys meant I could not ask follow-up questions to clarify or expand on participants' responses, which may have limited the depth of the data collected.

The last limitation was the small pool of qualified participants - this may have been due to several factors, including delayed diagnosis of learning disabilities in some children, reluctance among some parents to accept their child's diagnosis and privacy concerns. Despite these challenges, the findings from this study can provide valuable insights for parents of children diagnosed with learning disabilities. The results can help

inform future research in this area and contribute to a better understanding of how to support children with learning disabilities and their families.

Recommendations

Future research on this topic is recommended and needed to address the limitations discussed in this study. The analysis should include in-person interviews and archival data from parents of children diagnosed with a learning disability. More data from parents is needed to help future parents, schools, the juvenile justice system, and communities understand the effects of learning disabilities and how to suppress criminal behavior. Many populations have replicated this study by interviewing teachers, the juvenile justice system, doctors, and parents. However, there is no data from young adults diagnosed with a learning disability revealing what helped or did not help keep them out of the criminal justice system. I recommend using a valid questionnaire instrument for a qualitative research study to determine if the findings are generalized. However, use a more significant number parent pool.

To gain more support for this study's findings, I recommend interviewing parents of children with learning disabilities in other parts of the country. Parents in the North, West, and East might offer a different perspective from parents with youth diagnosed with learning disabilities where services are readily available. The recruitment process should include recruiting parents from schools designed to recruit low-performance youth, youth courts, and mentoring organizations. To gain access to parents, the researcher can use a questionnaire or the snowball sampling method to recruit via social media to cast a wider net of participants. Social media is a tool that houses many online

groups with parents who come together and offer advice to each other about their children with learning disabilities.

Implications

The suggestions are to create a harmonious relationship between the schools, juvenile justice system, parents, and mentoring organizations to impact social change. Once a child becomes a problem for the community, the juvenile justice system and the parents should contact mentoring organizations for assistance. The assistance provided would provide the child with an organization that will assist in getting him/her on the right track. Children with learning disabilities must be a priority. Therefore, a policy is needed for children with learning disabilities to help them become vital to the community. The policy would provide children diagnosed with a learning disability with the appropriate support services tailored to meet their specific deficiencies.

The positive social change would resonate with the community members as they would see youth with learning disabilities as regular members of society instead of outcasts. The adage rings true, "it takes a village to raise a child." Therefore, the communities would provide a safe environment and a non-judgment zone. An effective policy would bridge the gap between the community and the mentoring organizations, making youth with learning disabilities a priority instead of a problem. Positive social change would disrupt the interactions between youth and the juvenile justice system. Kids should be in mentoring organizations instead of gangs. Effective mentoring organizations would severely diminish the chances of children with learning disabilities entering the criminal justice system when they are older. The objective is to

prevent children diagnosed with learning disabilities from entering the juvenile justice system. Therefore, according to DuBois (2021), 70% of high-risk youth who attended a mentoring origination graduated from high school compared to 40% of youth who did not. The recommendations, scholarly research, and lived experiences benefit social change and provide awareness for all invested stakeholders.

Summary

The qualitative study was conducted to understand parents' perspectives concerning their children's learning disabilities and their influences on juvenile delinquency. The research reveals how family support, mentoring, medicine, and educational support identify potential criminal behavior. The literature indicated that mentoring programs were practical tools when readily available and implemented with fidelity (DuBois, 2021). The literature also suggested that medication was only effective when taken and from the data collected from parents. However, all parents were offered medication for their children, but not everyone felt medication was a necessary tool. Family support is an essential tool and, when not given, leaves the gang an opening in the lives of the youth in search of family and love. The last influence on children is educational support. According to the literature, children with learning disabilities enter regular student classrooms due to the lack of space and teachers with the skill set to teach youth with special needs.

The benefit of this study seeks to enhance parents' understanding of the unique needs and opportunities afforded to them by having children with learning disabilities. In addition, this study addressed the research question. Finally, it allowed parents to share

their experiences of having children with learning disabilities and what did or did not help keep their children out of the juvenile justice system.

The findings from this study expanded the research on the relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency, proving that not all youth with learning disabilities end up in the juvenile justice system. According to the data, some parents who give children medication still face phone calls from school and experience deviant behavior from their children. In other instances, some youths who do not have the opportunity to attend a mentoring program end up getting into trouble hanging out with the wrong crowd and ending up in the juvenile justice system.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

The following open-ended survey questions, along with qualifier questions, are designed to engage parents:

1. Do you consent to participate in this survey?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - a. If yes, the respondent will move on to Question 2.
 - b. If no, the participant will not be allowed to participate in the survey by being moved to the closing page.
2. Are you a parent of a child with a learning disability?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Are you over the age of 21?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - a. If the response is No to any of the above questions, the respondent will be moved to the closing page and not allowed to participate in the survey, as they are not eligible to do so.

b. If the responses are Yes to all the questions above, the consent form will be the title page of the survey. The final sentence will instruct the participant to answer Question 1 if they consent to participate in the survey

1. Have you noticed an impact on your child due to his/her learning disability?
 - a. Textual response
2. How did you feel when your child was diagnosed with a learning disability?
 - a. Textual response
3. What changes in behavior have you noticed in your child since he/she started participating in the mentoring programs?
 - a. Textual response
4. What impact do you believe your child's learning disability has on his/her juvenile delinquency behavior?
 - a. Textual response
5. What mentoring programs have your child participated in?
 - a. Textual response
6. What changes in behavior have you noticed in your child since he/she began taking medications?
 - a. Textual response
7. What information have you shared with your child about his/her disability?
 - a. Textual response

8. What additional actions have you taken to help your child understand his/her disability?
 - a. Textual response
9. What do you find most troubling about your child's disability?
 - a. Textual response
10. What behaviors did you notice in your child before engaging in delinquency?
 - a. Textual response
11. What are your main concerns about your child's learning disability?
 - a. Textual response
12. What do you do to help your child when he/she is overwhelmed?
 - a. Textual response
13. Have you noticed that your child understands that his/her behavior may be delinquent?
 - a. Textual response
14. What specific programs help your child curtail his/her juvenile delinquency behavior?
 - a. Textual response
15. How does your family support your child with his/her learning disability?

Textual response