


2017

Black Male Probationers' Perceptions of Juvenile Probation Officers' Role in Reducing Recidivism

Fern H. Clarke
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Walden University

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Fern Clarke

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Black Male Probationers' Perceptions of Juvenile Probation Officers' Role in Reducing
Recidivism

by

Fern H.A. Clarke

MA, Clayton State University, 2010

BS, Clayton State University, 2007

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services

Walden University

November 2017

Abstract

The high recidivism rate of Black male juvenile offenders is a problem in the United States that continues to be of great concern. Probation has gained popularity as being a means of addressing and reducing the high recidivism rates of juvenile offenders. However, there is a lack of research regarding Black male juvenile probationers' perceptions of their probation officers' role in reducing their recidivism. This study examined the following: a) the predictive relationships between Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers, their perceptions of the probation officers' job, and their recidivism within 3 years of being placed on probation; and (b) Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers, their perceptions of the probation officers' job, and their ratings of the probation officer's effectiveness in deterring their recidivism. Ecological systems theory was used as the theoretical foundation for guiding this research. Results from a logistic regression analysis showed that Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers and the job of their probation officers did not predict their recidivism. The study has implications for social change because the results provide empirical evidence regarding Black male probationer's perceptions of their probation officers and recidivism. Human services professionals, leaders in the criminal justice field, and policy makers could use findings from the study to advocate for the need to develop training programs for probation officers that foster positive relationship building between probationers and probation officers. The positive relationships may subsequently bring social change by reducing recidivism among Black juvenile male offenders.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my brother Favor Hugh Anthony Victor-Thom (Vor) who passed away in 2004. You have always been the president of my fan club and one of my biggest supporters. Every day that goes by, I miss you more and more and wish that you were here to see the progress I have made. I know that you would have been proud of me. I miss you Vor and this one is for you.

Acknowledgments

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who played a vital role in my success. First I would like to give praises and thanks to the good lord who has been my constant guide and the one whom I call upon every time I sit down to write. Lord you have truly blessed me beyond measure and this would not be possible without you.

To my mother Faye Victor-Davidson, you have been my biggest supporter and motivator. I love you and appreciate you for always reminding me that I can do anything that I put my mind to. Thank you for teaching me to be a go-getter. You are definitely responsible for me being the woman that I am today and I am forever grateful.

To my father Ian Ivor Thom, I remember you telling me on the first day that I migrated to the United States that if I wasn't enrolled in college, I would have to find my own place to stay because your home was only available to me if I was enrolled in school. You have always reiterated the importance of a sound education and your push for me to be enrolled in college was definitely instrumental in my journey and accomplishments. I could not have made it this far without you.

To my husband Elroy Clarke, you have helped me in numerous ways to be successful. I appreciate you paying my school fees when I had to pay out of pocket and buying my books. Thank you for always being there. You are indeed the love of my life, my first and my last, my beginning and my end, my everything...

To my children Favian Victor-Thom and Faeden Clarke, I love you two more than words can ever tell. Thank you for showing great understanding when I had to leave you

on the weekends to go writing. You never complained and I hope that I have been a great example for the two of you.

To my siblings Georgia Simpson, Faith Victor-Thom, Enkeshi El-Amin and Shamayne Braman, thank you for your support and encouragement. Special thanks to Enkeshi for your numerous moments of reviewing my prospectus. You are taking this same journey and I know that you too will be victorious. Love you ladies much and appreciate all you encouragements. Thanks for your unwavering support always.

Thank you to my friends Stacey Forrester, Bridget Strong, Kenyon Brown, Anthony Roberson and Kimberley Bugg. The weekly check-ins, your advice and you taking the time to accept my calls and text when I am writing and need some clarification is unmatched. I am forever grateful to have each of you in my life. A Special thanks to Dr. Smith of Hearts to Nourish Hope and Mrs. Vaughn of Urban League of Greater Atlanta, without you two ladies this definitely would not be possible. Thank you for taking my numerous calls and agreeing to allow me to collect data from your sites. I am forever indebted to you for your generous spirits.

To my Dissertation Committee Dr. Harris, Dr. Jaeckle, and Dr. Hamilton, thank you for your feedback and guidance as I embarked on this journey. This was a long process but the end could not be accomplished without the guidance and support of each of you. Thank you, I am forever grateful.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The juvenile incarceration rate in the United States is higher than any other country with more than two million juveniles being detained annually (Barrett & Katsiyannis, 2015; Upadhyayula, Ramaswamy, Chalise, Daniels, & Freudenberg, 2015). Black juvenile males, while a minority group in the United States make up more than 85% of the juveniles detained at any given time (Barrett & Katsiyannis, 2015; Sickmund, & Puzanchera, 2014; Upadhyayula et al. 2015). Researchers have indicated that more than 40% of Black juvenile males recidivate within 2 years of being released from secure confinement (Boulger, Bostwick, & Powers, 2012; Ryan, Abrams, & Huang, 2014).

The high recidivism rate of Black male juvenile offenders is a problem because the United States spends billions of dollars annually to address recidivism and yet the recidivism rate for Black males continues to increase (Ryan, Abrams, & Huang, 2014; Upadhyayula et al., 2015). Probation supervision is an intervention that has gained popularity in the United States as a means of addressing and reducing the high recidivism rates in juvenile offenders (Morenoff & Harding, 2014). However, there is a lack of research regarding the effect that probation has on recidivism rates for Black male juvenile offenders (Chui & Chan, 2014; James, Stams, Asscher, DeRoo, & Van der Laan, 2013).

This chapter includes a summary of the focus of this study which was to examine Black male probationers' perceptions of their interactions with their Juvenile Probation

Officers' role in reducing recidivism. In this chapter I provide a background of the study, discuss the theoretical framework of this study, identify the proposed research method and design, as well as outline proposed data collection and analysis. At the end of this chapter I provide implications for social change as it relates to Black males under juvenile probation supervision.

Background of Study

Juvenile recidivism has been the topic of research for many empirical studies (Barrett & Katsiyannis, 2015; Peters & Myrick, 2011; Ryan et al., 2014). Scholars in the fields of criminal justice, criminology, psychology, philosophy, and other human and social services fields have continued to study juvenile delinquency and recidivism in hopes of finding answers to and gaining an understanding of factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency and juvenile recidivism (Boulger, Bostwick, & Powers, 2012; Doherty, Cwick, Green, & Ensminger, 2015; James et al., 2013; Ryan et al., 2014; Wodahl, Boman, & Garland, 2015). Findings from past studies have identified variables such as lack of parental supervision/relationships, poverty, education, and environmental dynamics such as the area in which individuals live in conjunction with parental incarceration, as being variables related to recidivism among adolescents (Williams & Small, 2015). Some scholars have also sought to determine what factors can be used to successfully deter young Black males from being repeat offenders (Chui & Chan, 2014; Kroner & Yessine, 2013; Ryan et al., 2014; Williams, Ryan, Davis-Kean, McLoyd, & Schulenberg, 2014).

According to Williams and Smalls (2015), recidivism among Black juvenile males continues to be a topic of interest for criminal justice agencies and policy making officials. Black juvenile males have been the targeted population of interest for studies on recidivism because this population represents the majority of the juvenile justice population in the United States (Williams et al., 2014). Despite the fact that there are more programs and interventions available today than there were some 40 years ago, recidivism among Black males is still a problem (Boulger et al., 2012).

Finding the appropriate interventions for Black juvenile males who have been incarcerated is imperative because those interventions could decrease the likelihood of recidivism (Blomberg, Bales, & Piquero, 2012; Piquero, 2014; Williams et al., 2014). Juvenile courts and juvenile justice agencies have begun incorporating community-based programs to address the issue of recidivism (James et al., 2013; Morenoff & Harding 2014). Lane (2015) indicated that the most prevalent intervention currently used within the juvenile justice system in the United States is probation in conjunction with therapeutic interventions. Probation is the final outcome for 60% of all juvenile court cases. The growing use of probation to address juvenile delinquency and recidivism not only reduces detention population rates, but also cuts costs (James et al., 2013; Morenoff & Harding 2014). For example, Zagar, Grove, and Busch (2013) conducted a meta-analysis to determine which methods were effective at reducing recidivism among juveniles. The findings showed that the use of probation with electronic monitoring reduced the number juvenile detainees in the county from 1,500 to 275. The reduction in

detention population saved the county \$616.00 per day for each juvenile offender who was not detained.

Some scholars have examined the effectiveness of probation for reducing recidivism rates compared to out of home placements (James et al., 2013; Ryan et al., 2014). Findings from research have revealed that probation is a better option than confinement for addressing juvenile delinquency (James et al., 2013; Ryan et al., 2014). Several researchers found that juveniles and young adults who received probation showed lower rates of recidivism compared to those who did not (James et al., 2013; Ryan et al., 2014). Additionally, Jones et al. (2013) found that probation proved to be more effective with older youths than with younger offenders. In another study, Ryan et al. (2014) found that approximately half of the violent, first-time juvenile offenders subsequently reoffended. The recidivism rates for this group of first-time violent juvenile offenders who were placed on probation supervision while remaining in their own homes were 2.12 times lower than the rate for youths who were assigned to out of home placements.

The United States has experienced a nationwide shift from incarceration to probation, which has led to changes in how juvenile recidivism is addressed (Phelps, 2013). The increased use of probation rather than incarceration to address juvenile delinquency and recidivism rates is intended to provide remediation for negative behavior with the intent of reducing or eliminating those negative behaviors. The accomplishment of this goal could subsequently reduce the likelihood of recidivism among the juvenile population (Morenoff & Harding, 2014). Kroner and Yessine (2013) examined how

changes in treatment processes could be used to predict reductions in the recidivism rates of young offenders under probation supervision. Results from the study revealed that when probation supervision focused on changing negative behaviors, and the probation conditions were implemented, the recidivism rates for young offenders were reduced by 57%.

Although several researchers (Chui & Chan, 2014; James et al., 2013; Ryan et al., 2014) have focused on the effectiveness of probation officers in reducing recidivism, few studies have examined probationers' perceptions of effectiveness of probation officers in terms of reducing recidivism. Chui and Chan (2014) conducted a study in which they explored male juvenile probationers' perceptions of their probation experiences and the roles of their probation officers. The findings revealed that the probationers viewed the probation officers as being authoritative or punitive. The probationers' perceptions revealed that their relationships with their probation officers were not conducive to reducing criminal behaviors.

Researchers purport that probation is a violable intervention for reducing juvenile recidivism (James et al., 2013; Kroner & Yessine, 2013; Ryan et al., 2014). However, the growing recidivism rate among young Black males continues to pose concerns (Doherty et al., 2015; Kroner & Yessine, 2013; Ryan et al., 2014). Further investigation is needed on the effectiveness of probation in reducing recidivism among this group. This study is significant to the field of human services because I examined probationers' perceptions of whether probation officers were effective in deterring recidivism. Findings from this study will provide insight into Black males probationers' perceptions

of how their interactions with probation officers during their juvenile probation experience affected their recidivism.

Problem Statement

The recidivism rate for African American males is about six to seven times higher than the rate for the general prison population (Kroner & Yessine, 2013; Ryan et al., 2014). Research has shown the recidivism rates for Black male juvenile offenders to be approximately 40%, and more than two-thirds of those offenders recidivate within a 2 year period of being released from the juvenile justice system (Boulger et al., 2012; Ryan et al., 2014). The high rates of recidivism amongst the Black male population has a negative effect on offenders, as is evidenced by their elevated school drop-out rates, high unemployment rates, and mediocre educational attainment (Anderson, 2014; Upadhyayula et al., 2015). Recidivism of Black males is also costly to society, as Ryan et al. (2014) reported that the United States spends approximately \$75 billion annually to address issues related to recidivism of Black males.

Probation is a criminal justice proceeding that serves primarily as a means of suspending jail stays, and it is an intervention that is used to address recidivism (Morenoff & Harding, 2014). Despite the frequent use of probation as a tool for addressing and reducing recidivism rates, criminal justice policy makers are uninformed as to whether recidivism rates decrease as a result of probation, and there is little research that indicates that policy makers are informed of how probation affects the lives of probationers (James et al., 2013; Wodahl, Boman, & Garland, 2015).

The problem that was the focus of this study was that the criminal justice system uses probation as a means to address recidivism; however there is little evidence to show the impact of probation supervision on reducing recidivism. During my literature review, I found only a few articles that examined former probationers' perceptions regarding the relationship between probation supervision and recidivism. There appears to be a gap in knowledge related to probationers' perceptions of the role that probation officers have in reducing recidivism (DeLude, Mitchell, & Barber, 2012).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the following predictive relationships: (a) Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers, their perceptions of the probation officers' job, and their subsequent recidivism; and (b) Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers, their perceptions of the probation officers' job, and their ratings of their probation officer's effectiveness in deterring their recidivism within 3 years of being placed on probation. I conducted a correlational study using data from adult males between the ages of 18-25 years who were participants in the Urban League of Greater Atlanta and the Hearts to Nourish Hope programs. The targeted males for this study were Black males who were on juvenile probation and had recidivated within 3 years of being placed on probation. This study mirrored a study by Chui and Chan (2014) in which they used the Perceptions of the Assigned Probation Officer (PAPO) and Perceptions of the Job Nature of Probation Officers (PJNPO) surveys to explore how probationers perceived their probation experiences and their interactions with their probation officers. This study expands on Chui and Chan's study

by examining Black male probationers' perceptions regarding the role of probation officers in reducing recidivism. The major difference between this study and the Chui and Chan (2014) research is that, in this study, I looked at recidivism and Chui and Chan only examined participants' perceptions of the juvenile probation officer. In addition, in this study, I focused specifically on Black males.

Significance of the Study

The study is important because results could provide leadership and decision makers of juvenile justice agencies insight into how Black male probationers' perceptions of their interactions with their probation officers during their juvenile probation experience affected their recidivism. Findings from this study could also help probation officers become more aware of how the probationers' perceptions of the juvenile probationer/probation officer interactions affect recidivism. Information from the study could be used to develop a framework for juvenile probation officers to understand how they influence Black male juvenile offenders during the offenders' re-integration process back into the community. This research is unique because it could help to bring about positive social change by assisting probation officers to determine if they may need to adjust their supervisory style in order to develop positive support mechanisms that facilitate the successful transition of Black male juvenile offenders back into the community. Those positive support mechanisms may be instrumental in reducing recidivism among Black juvenile male offenders.

Nature of the Study

This study was quantitative, nonexperimental design using the correlational methodology. I used the quantitative design because it afforded me the opportunity to examine relationship that exists between variables and to use statistics to form generalizations of the findings (Little, 2012; Todd, 2012). I chose the nonexperimental design because the variables of this study could not be manipulated (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Little, 2012; Todd, 2012). The study was a correlational design because I examined the presence of and strength of predictive relationships between the variables (Arthur, Waring, Coe, & Hedge, 2012; Creswell, 2012). I used the survey methodology to gather data from a purposive sample. I chose the survey design because it allowed me to gather numeric data about participants' perceptions and then allowed me draw generalizations about the larger population (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009; Welford et al., 2012). This survey design was advantageous in my research study because it was economical, provided quick access to data, and allowed for the generalizations of traits from a small, representative sample of a large population (Creswell, 2009; Dillman et al, 2009; Osborne, 2012). I chose the purposive sample technique because it allowed me to recruit participants who had the characteristics that were examined in this study (Creswell, 2009; Welford, Murphy, & Casey, 2012).

I recruited participants during a group meeting at The Urban League of Greater Atlanta (UGLA) and Hearts to Nourish Hope Inc. (HTNH). I attended a meeting to announce the study, answer questions and distribute survey packets. I gave the participants information on how to return completed packets. Participants of UGLA and HTNH come from the Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Corrections and

local juvenile courts in their catchment area. The mission of the ULGA is “to enable and empower African Americans and others to achieve their highest human potential and secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights” (Urban League of Greater Atlanta, 2016, Mission Statement). The mission of HTNH is “to create a place where youth and young adults can further their education and develop life and career skills, through innovative programming and service to the community by providing the tools and support needed to become successful, self-sufficient, contributing members of society” (Hearts to Nourish Hope, 2017, Mission Statement). The data collection took place in the form of questionnaires (survey packets) that were placed in privacy envelopes and placed in the common waiting area of both sites. Participants who were Black males between the ages of 18-25 and were previously on juvenile probation were able to retrieve a survey packet from the common waiting areas and return completed surveys to me.

I conducted a power analysis for a logistic regression using the G*Power 3.1.7 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2013) to determine a sufficient sample size using an alpha 0.05, a power of 0.80, a large effect size (odd ratio = 2.48) and a two-tailed test. Based on the aforementioned assumptions, the desired sample size was $N = 71$. This sample size should have been large enough to detect true differences in the data if it exists. The sample size was also large enough for me to form appropriate generalizations of the population’s ratings of perception (Osborne, 2012). This sample size allowed for the identification of existing relationships between the variables in this study.

Research Questions

Research questions serve as the foundation for a research study and outline the central purpose of the study (Creswell, 2009; Punch, 2014). In quantitative research, research questions are used to determine if a relationship exists between variables in order to shed light on the issue being studied (Creswell, 2009; Punch, 2014). The independent variables in this study were Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officer and their perceptions of job of their probation officers. The dependent variables were Black male probationers' recidivism and their ratings of their probation officers' effectiveness in deterring their recidivism within 3 years of being placed on probation. The research questions for this study are presented below:

[I have corrected the hypotheses abbreviations below. Please be sure to apply these changes to all usage of hypotheses abbreviations throughout the paper.]

RQ1: How well do probationers' perceptions of their probation officers and their perceptions of the job of the probation officer predict the likelihood of recidivism among young Black males within 3 years after being placed on probation?

H_01 : The independent variables of probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are not statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of recidivism for Black male juvenile offenders within 3 years after being placed on probation.

H_a1 : The independent variables of probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of

recidivism for Black male juvenile offenders within 3 years after being placed on probation

RQ2: How well do the probationers' perceptions of their probation officers and their perceptions of the job of the probation officer predict the probationers' ratings of their probation officers' effectiveness in deterring their recidivism?

H₀2: The independent variables probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are not statistically significant predictors of Black male probationers' ratings of their probation officers effectiveness (measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale) in deterring their recidivism.

H_a2: Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are statistically significant predictors of Black male probationers' ratings of their probation officer's effectiveness (measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale) in deterring their recidivism.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided this study was Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. This theory has been used to explain how features within an environment can significantly impact an individual's behavior (Malott & Fromader, 2010). According to the ecological systems theory, there are five elements of the environment that impact a person's behavior: the *microsystem*, *mesosystem*, *exosystem*, *macrosystem*, and *chronosystem* (Espelage, 2014). The system with which a juvenile has

direct contact is the microsystem and includes juveniles' interactions with family, friends, members of the neighborhood/community, and school. The mesosystem refers to the interaction of the microsystems such as way in which a juvenile's family networks with the community. The exosystem refers to the links between various settings where being in at least one of these settings has a negative effect on the child. The macrosystem refers to social structures and activities with which the juvenile is involved. This system would include the juvenile's interaction with a teacher. The chronosystem refers to the consistent aspects of a juvenile's life that can change and can have an adverse effect on the behaviors and decision making processes that the juvenile employs (Espelage, 2014; Mancini & Bowen, 2013). The element of the ecological systems theory that applies to this study is the chronosystem. The interactions that juveniles have with their probation officers can affect the ways in which the juveniles adjust to their new situation. Additionally, the implementation of probation intervention and policies can also affect the decision making process of the juvenile. The relationship between a probation officer and juvenile significantly impact the likelihood of the juvenile reoffending (Malott & Fromader, 2010; Wright, Kim, Chassin, Losoya, & Piquero, 2014).

The ecological systems theory was applied to this study to investigate whether probation officers serving as an environmental system can significantly impact the lives of juvenile offenders. This theory allowed for an examination as to whether the positive alternatives to delinquent behaviors that probation officer introduce the probationers to can have an impact in the juvenile recidivism rates. Findings from seminal research on recidivism using the ecological systems theory showed that the quality of

relationships and type of interactions perceived between the probationer and probation officer can have an impact on future offending (Malott & Fromader, 2010).

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, *chronosystem*, could be used to investigate whether probation officers are elements of the environment that can have an integral role in reducing recidivism of juvenile offenders by providing a positive probationer/probation officer experience. The positive experience could, in turn, result in decreased recidivism rates.

Definition of Terms

Adolescent: The term used to refer to youth who has experienced puberty but has not reached adulthood (Ryan et al., 2013). For the purpose of this study, adolescent will be used to describing individuals between the ages of 12 and 18. The terms adolescent, youth, juvenile, teenager and young adult are all used synonymously in this study.

Arrest: The detainment for the commission of a criminal act by law enforcement (Ryan et al., 2014).

Black male: An individual of the male gender who is of African American descent (Ryan et al., 2014)

Cognitive behavioral therapy: Therapy which focuses on cognitive patterns, affect and behaviors as a means of changing negative behaviors (Kroner & Yessine, 2013).

Crime: A violation of customs, laws, ordinances and values (Nisar et al., 2015)

Criminogenic acts: Participating in criminal acts (James et al., 2013)

Delinquency: Negative acts committed by a juvenile, whereas if the same act were committed by an adult, it would be a crime (Nisar et al., 2015)

Effectiveness: How the participant answered the question of “My probation officer had an impact on me recidivating.”

Evidence-based practices: Program, treatment and interventions that have been proven to be effective in reducing the likelihood of recidivism (Taxman & Mason, 2013)

Juvenile: A child under the age of 18 (Nisar et al., 2015).

Juvenile delinquency: The commission of acts that would be considered crimes if committed by an adult. This act is committed by a person who is under the age of 18 (Nisar et al., 2015).

Juvenile delinquent: A child or young person who is guilty of the committing an offense or exhibiting anti-social behaviors and is brought before a juvenile court (Nisar et al., 2015).

Non- violent offenses: The commission of offenses in which physical force was not used and there was no physical harm or injury to an individual (Weaver, 2015).

Probation officer: A government employee who is charged with providing supervision to individuals who have committed criminal acts and are released into the community (Chui & Chan, 2014).

Recidivism: The commission of repeated offenses (Mallet et al., 2013). In this study recidivism is used to define the re-adjudication or conviction after an initial adjudication or conviction. This term is also used synonymously with repeated offending and recidivate.

Serious offenses: Offenses heinous in nature and some cases violent in nature. In most cases these offenses are related to gang and drugs and may involve the physical injury of others (Nisar et al., 2015).

Assumptions

I assumed that each participant in this study carefully read all the questions and provided truthful responses. I also assumed that the participants did not reflect selection bias. I also made the assumption that the questions were easily comprehended and understood by the participants. I also assumed that due to the fact that the surveys were not long and was easy to read more participants completely answered the survey questions. To increase the likelihood that the participants would provide accurate responses to the questions, the questions on the instrument were not set up to gather identification information or requested data that could link a participant to their responses. In addition, the participants' responses were anonymous. I also assumed that the survey did measure the constructs of interest of this study.

Scope and Delimitations

In this study, I examined the predictive relationships between Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation experience, their perception of the effectiveness of their interactions with their probation officers and their subsequent recidivism. In order to participate in the study, the probationers must have been placed on juvenile probation at the state and county levels. The scope of this study I focused on was Black males who were between the ages of 18-25 years. These males must have been juvenile offenders who were placed on juvenile probation and recidivated within 3 years

of being placed on probation. These participants must have been participants in the ULGA and HTNH programs currently or in the past.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was that participation in the study was limited to current and past participants of ULGA and HTNH programs only. This restriction of eligibility limited the generalization of the study because there was no way or recruiting other participants. This chosen method of recruiting the sample for this study may limit the generalizability of the findings to other groups. Participants in this study were not randomly selected and that presented some added limitations to this study. The purposive sample selection also limited the degree of trust between me and the participants (Welford et al., 2012). I selected the participants for this study because they participated at ULGA and HTNH and fit the population criteria, the study was limited to forming generalizations based on this particular sample during the period during which this study took place.

In addition, some respondents were unwilling to report any new reoffending behaviors because some of them may have still been under the supervision of the juvenile or adult systems. However, I explained that the study is only interested in knowing whether or not they reoffended and no additional information will be asked. Another limitation was that the survey method restricted the responses of the participants and thus did not provide the opportunity for the participants to elaborate on their responses.

Summary and Transition

The perceptions held by juveniles of their probation experience could be instrumental in preventing the youth from committing new crimes (Chui & Chan, 2014). Despite the implementation and utilization of probation supervision among juvenile offenders, the high recidivism rates among Black males in the United States are still a problem (Morenoff & Harding, 2014). Moreover, the recidivism rates of juvenile offenders cost society through the high costs related to the delivery of probation as well as through detention costs (Upadhyayula et al., 2015).

Although several studies (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015; James et al., 2013; Phelps, 2013; Steiner, 2012) have documented the advantages and disadvantages of probation as an intervention for addressing juvenile recidivism, there is a lack of research regarding the juvenile probationers' perceptions of the effectiveness of probation officers in reducing recidivism. As such, the purpose of this study was to examine the predictive relationship between Black male probationers' perceptions regarding their probation officers, their perceptions of the role of their probation officers, and their ratings of the effectiveness on the probation officer on deterring their recidivism, and their subsequent recidivism. In the following chapter, I examine the current existing literature on juvenile recidivism and recidivism in Black male juveniles. I also present a historical perspective on this issue, current theories with opposing views and address where the evident gaps exist and justify the need for the current study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Juvenile delinquency is a multifarious social issue that has a significant impact on the global population (Jones, 2014; Sinyangwe & Muller, 2014). This issue continues to be under examination by the United States national justice system and receives extensive attention from media and politicians (Sinyangwe & Muller, 2014). Researchers have been working for decades to identify an intervention that can significantly reduce the occurrences of juvenile delinquency, and while several interventions have been credited as having a notable reduction rate, professionals involved in the juvenile criminal justice system are still seeking effective strategies and interventions for deterring recidivism among juvenile offenders (Jones, 2014; Oregon Youth Authority, 2014; Peters & Myrick, 2011).

Juvenile probation is an intervention that is being used to address the issues of juvenile delinquency and reduce the occurrences of juvenile recidivism (Morenoff & Harding, 2014). However, few researchers have investigated how juvenile probationers' interactions with their juvenile probation officers impact their recidivism rates (Chui & Chan, 2014). In fact, there is a lack of studies that have examined the impact that a probationers relationship with a juvenile probation officer has had on the probationer (Chui & Chan, 2014). The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the predictive relationships between Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officer, their perceptions of the job of probation officers, their ratings of the effectiveness

of their probation offices in deterring their recidivism, and the probationers' subsequent recidivism.

In this chapter, I present current literature surrounding the subjects of juvenile delinquency, juvenile recidivism, and current public perceptions of juvenile probation. I also provide a detailed but critical analysis of current literature that is relevant to juvenile delinquency, juvenile recidivism and juvenile probation. The chosen literature in this chapter includes an in-depth examination of the variables of interest in this study and provides justification for its exploration. Section includes information about the processes employed to gather appropriate literature. In section two, I explain the evolution of the juvenile justice system in the United States and the growing juvenile delinquency problem. In section three, I examine the interventions past and present employed by various juvenile justice agencies and systems to address the issue of juvenile recidivism. In the fourth section, I examine the role of probation in reducing juvenile recidivism rates. The final section of this chapter is a summary of the current literature and an in-depth analysis of the need for this study as it relates to contributing to positive social change.

Literature Search Strategy

In an attempt to find articles and studies that I could use to guide this study, I conducted computer searches of existing literature in existing databases using the Walden University library. The databases included my search were PsychINFO, Journal of Criminology, Crime and Justice Journal, and Crime and Delinquency Journal. I also conducted searches using Google Scholar. I conducted the searches using search terms

that were a various combinations of the following terms and phrases: *juvenile recidivism*, *juvenile delinquency*, *black males in juvenile justice*, *juvenile recidivism interventions*, and *juvenile probation*. My search in Google Scholar was confined to studies between the year ranges of 2012-2016. I also located additional articles through the use of the reference lists of previously gathered articles.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical framework that guided this study is Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory was first introduced in the 1970's in a developmental article written by Urie Bronfenbrenner. In an article, Bronfenbrenner set out to describe the developmental psychology of children as a means of explaining their rebellious and delinquent behaviors (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). From this theory child psychology professionals were able to explain how elements in a child's environment impact the growth and development of the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

The ecological systems theory can be used to explain the aspects of the environment that can have a significant impact on the behaviors exhibited by a juvenile (Espelage, 2014; Mallot & Fromader, 2010).

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Bronfenbrenner offered the argument that there are five environmental systems (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, chronosystem) which can significantly influence the behaviors exhibited by a juvenile (Espelage, 2014; Mancini & Bowen, 2013). The system with which a juvenile has direct contact is the microsystem. The microsystem includes interactions with family, friends, members of the neighborhood/community, and school. The mesosystem refers to the interaction of the microsystems. The mesosystem of a juvenile would be the way in which a juvenile's family networks with the community. The exosystem refers to the links between various settings where being in at least one of these settings has a negative effect on the child. An example of exosystem would be the relationship a parent has with the juvenile's school compared to the relationship the parent has with the neighborhood. As such, the way in which the juvenile functions at school may be different from the behaviors exhibited by the juvenile in the neighborhood. The macrosystem refers to social structures and activities with which the juvenile is involved. This system would include the juvenile's interaction with their probation officer. The chronosystem refers to the consistent aspects of a juvenile's life that can change and can have an adverse effect on the behaviors and decision making processes that the juvenile employs. An example of the chronosystem would be the death of a parent or significant family member (Espelage, 2014; Mancini & Bowen, 2013). This might affect the juvenile's decision making processes in that the deceased may have been the financial contributor of the family. The parent's death could cause the juvenile to experience a change in the access to resources which in turn changes their normal life processes. This juvenile may then need to seek

employment to help the family to sustain or may have to adjust to living with someone else.

The element of the ecological systems theory that I applied to this study was the chronosystem. The interactions that juveniles have with their probation officers can affect the ways in which the juveniles adjust to their new situations. Additionally, the implementation of probation intervention and policies can also affect the decision making process of the juvenile. Findings from previous research on recidivism in which the ecological systems theory was used supported the argument that the relationship between a probation officer and juvenile significantly impact the likelihood of the juvenile re-offending (Malott & Fromader, 2010; Wright et al., 2014). In fact, Malott and Fromader (2010) conducted a quantitative, cross-sectional study to investigate the inmates' perspectives of how their access to resources such as positive probation interactions after release might affect their recidivism. These researchers surveyed 102 male inmates from three jails in the Midwest United States. The findings showed that inmates felt that having positive support after being released from confinement would significantly reduce their likelihood of recidivism. The findings of this study are linked to the chronosystem of the ecological systems theory in that positive chronosystems such a probation is linked to a reduction in recidivism rate so the sample of this study. Malott and Fromader (2010) explained that this study had limitations of having a small sample size and the geographical location of the collection sites lacked diversity. These researchers also reported that they were unable to use a random sample due to the unavailability of a large participant pool and time constraints.

In another study, Wright et al. (2014) examined the effects of ecological factors on the continued antisocial behaviors of a sample of 1354 serious adolescent offenders. These researchers conducted a longitudinal study of offenders from Philadelphia and Phoenix who were found guilty of delinquent offense when they were between the ages of 14 and 18. These participants were followed for a period of 7 years, and the findings showed that juveniles who had positive community resources and programs had a lower likelihood of reoffending. The findings of this study is linked to the chronosystem of the ecological systems theory in that they support the tenets of this theory that when an individual is paired with positive support there is a noticeable reduction in their recidivist

Several researchers have found that life changing events, such as incarceration or probation supervision, can significantly impact the decisions a juvenile makes (Chui & Chan, 2014; Malott & Fromader, 2010; Wright et al., 2014). In the study conducted by Chui and Chan (2014), findings showed that juveniles reported that being on probation supervision played an integral part in the decisions they made. For example, when responding to “my probation officer helps to keep me out of trouble with the law,” 67 of the 113 participants answered in agreement. A juvenile’s perception that their probation officer has their best interest at heart is likely to deter them for reoffending.

The principles of the ecological systems theory can be applied to this study to investigate whether probation officers environment play an integral role in reducing the likelihood of the juveniles reoffending. This theory can shed light on how the perceived relationships between juveniles and their probation officers impacts the juvenile offender’s participation in delinquent acts. Additionally, this theory also can also be used

to explain how the perceived relationship between a probationer and a probation officer could potentially contribute to reduced recidivism rates of juvenile offenders.

Brief History of the Juvenile Justice System in the United States

Prior to the 1700s, the idea of juvenile justice was nonexistent, and all individuals who committed a crime (adult and juveniles) were subjected to the same judicial considerations and punishments (Mays & Ruddell, 2012; Scott & Steinbery, 2008). These practices came to an end in the 1800s, when Judge Julian Mack began advocating that courts should treat juvenile offenders as a parent would treat his wayward child. Judge Mack's progressive view garnered support from criminologists who believed juveniles should have been receiving specialized sanctions (May, Osmond, & Billick, 2014; Scott & Steinberg, 2008). The juvenile advocates argued that the way juveniles were viewed in the criminal justice system and the types of sanctions imposed upon this unique group should be evaluated. The advocates proposed that juvenile offenders should be given treatment that could redirect their delinquent behaviors (Scott & Steinberg, 2008). The increase in advocacy for juvenile justice separation, coupled with rising offenses committed by juveniles, led to the birth of a new criminal category: juvenile delinquency. This new criminal category subsequently led to the first juvenile court, which was founded in the United States in the state of Illinois in 1899 (Mays & Ruddell, 2012; McCord, Spatz, & Crowell, 2001). Juveniles who committed crimes were held under a different sanctioning system and their punishment differed from those of their adult counterparts primarily (Mays & Ruddell, 2012; McCord et al., 2001).

Evolution of Treatment Attitudes Relating to Juvenile Delinquency

Attitudes toward treating juvenile delinquency have shifted tremendously from the 1800s to 2000s in an attempt to prevent subsequent acts of juvenile delinquency (May et al., 2014; Mays & Ruddell, 2012; McCord et al., 2001). The shift in focus from meeting the needs and interest of the juvenile to the focus of protecting society led to stricter juvenile consequences being incorporated by several states. This new focus was an attempt to decrease the high rising juvenile delinquency cases (McCord et al., 2001). Early attempts at treatment had one major focus, and that was to completely eliminate the rising problem of criminal acts among the youths. With a correctional model (punishment), juveniles were held accountable for their criminal behaviors and there was no way of avoiding punishment (May et al., 2014). According to McCord et al. (2001) in the 1800 and 1900s juvenile delinquents as young as age 7 years of age faced trial, conviction, and sentencing in the criminal justice system. In some instances, the punishment was death for minor criminal acts such as stealing (McCord et al., 2001). However, the 20th century gave rise to a major shift in the juvenile justice model and views on how juvenile delinquency should be addressed changed significantly (May et al., 2014; McCord et al., 2001). The new focus of the juvenile justice model was rehabilitation rather than the punishment/correctional models which were used in the past (May et al., 2014; Mays & Ruddell, 2012). The previously used correctional model was viewed as a major contributor to increased criminal behaviors amongst juveniles and juvenile recidivism (May et al., 2014).

Proponents of community-based treatment efforts argue that long-term confinement/detention stays can impact the reoffending behaviors of juveniles and can be

injurious to the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders (Cox, 2013; May et al., 2014; Peters & Myrick, 2011). Some research from the 1960s to the 1990s showed community based treatment as having an instrumental bearing on the reduction of juvenile recidivism. In addition, the research showed that community treatments increased positive community adjustment for juvenile offenders (Schlossman, 1977). The community based treatment used new sanctions and delinquents faced probation supervision, group homes, and residential placements. This is quite the opposite from the previously used vocational training schools that were popular in the 1800s (Ryan et al., 2014). Researchers in opposition of the community-based model argued that the outcomes for both types of treatment were comparable and the only benefit of the community based treatment was the reduction in cost that they provided (Mays & Ruddell, 2012; McCord et al., 2001).

In the early 1990's the detention rates for juvenile offenders in the United States climbed to an alarming rate of 72%. As a result more juvenile justice agencies began to utilize the community based treatment options as a means of reducing the detention populations (Jones, 2014). In a study conducted in Milwaukee, findings showed that between the 1960's and 1970's more juveniles were sentenced to community based sanctions than seen in the previous years (Schlossman, 1977). While juvenile justice professionals had to be attentive to the rising juvenile detention populations, it was still a responsibility of juvenile justice professionals to be accountable for the safety and security of the community as well (Jones, 2014). As such decisions regarding the utilization of community based treatment efforts had to be balanced; on one hand the

juvenile needed to be referred for services that would provide rehabilitation, while on the other hand, the community needed to be protected from further harm (Jones, 2014).

Recidivism in Juveniles

Recidivism is a term that has been used extensively in research, yet there are several different meanings to this term (Hong, Ryan, Chiu, & Sabri, 2013). However, there is some commonality in the use of this term in academic research (Weaver, 2015). The term recidivism is used generally to describe the “repetition of criminal behavior” (Evans-Chase & Zhou, 2012). Juvenile recidivism is the term used to define the re-adjudication of a child under the age of 18 for the commission of a delinquent act (Evans-Chase & Zhou, 2012). Juvenile recidivism is a problem that is experienced by all states within the U.S (Williams et al., 2014). There are more than 1.6 million youths under the juvenile justice system nationwide, and this number represents a 44% increase from 2007 (Evans-Chase & Zhou, 2012). Even though one of the main principles of the juvenile justice system is to utilize intervention that can reduce juvenile recidivism rates through rehabilitation, these youths find it difficult to escape the criminal social networks that they have formed (costly while detained), and as a result they find themselves caught in the revolving door of recidivism (Brame, Turner, Paternoster, & Bushway, 2012; Chan, Lo, Zhong & Chui, 2015). Some researchers have argued that incarceration is the best intervention for repeat juvenile offenders (Hong et al., 2013). In a quantitative survey study conducted by Chan et al. (2015) findings revealed that most juvenile offenders re-offend within the first year of their first encounter with the juvenile justice system. Data from the study was analyzed using logistic regressions and the results showed a strong

likelihood of the recidivism rates for the participants in this study continuing to increase after the initial release.

Black Males in the Criminal Justice System

The adult and juvenile prison and jail populations have increased significantly from the 1970's primarily due to changes in the penal codes and laws (Morenoff & Harding, 2014). Morenoff and Harding (2014) reported that at the end of 2011, state and federal prison populations were over 1.5 million. Hattery and Smith (2014) have reported that there is an estimated 2,266,832 individuals incarcerated in jails, prisons, and detention centers across the U.S. These incarcerated populations are disproportionately represented by minorities (Morenoff & Harding, 2014). In fact, according to Hattery and Smith (2014), more than half prison of the US population consists of African American men. Of the African American males who are incarcerated, at least one fifth of them were incarcerated before the age of 23 (Doherty et al., 2015). There is a 25% increase in the incarceration rates of African American males today than 20 years ago (Hattery & Smith, 2014).

Research has shown that more than half of the adult male prisoners had a repeated offense within three years of their initial prison releases (Doherty et al., 2015; Ryan et al., 2014; Sickmund, 2012). The rate of recidivism for Black males in the U.S. is 78% and is almost seven times higher than that of the overall prison populations (Durose, Cooper & Snyder, 2014, Kroner & Yessine, 2013; Ryan et al., 2014). In fact, the recidivism rate for Black male juveniles is 40%. Black male offenders have a recidivism rate that is three times higher than their white counterparts, with the repeat offenses occurring on average

within 2 years of release (Boulger et al.; Ryan et al., 2014). The high recidivism rates among young black males accounts for the reason why 1 in 3 Black males between the ages of 20-29 are under some type of sanctioning by a criminal justice agency (Ryan et al., 2014).

The rates of recidivism among the young Black male population have a negative effect on their communities and on the offenders themselves (Mauer, 2011). The effect on the offenders is evidenced through the elevated school drop-out rates, the high rates of unemployment once they are released back into the community and the limited educational attainment that these juveniles accomplish while detained (Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010; Upadhyayula et al., 2015). In fact, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that in 2014 the high school dropout rate for Black males was 7.4 % compared to 5.2% for their White counterparts. Even though this may seem like a small percentage, when looking at this data it must be taken into account that in 2013 Blacks comprised of 16% of the public school students nationwide (males and females included). As such 7.4%, of this number indicates a large number of Black males being high school dropouts. Similarly, the Bureau of Labor statistics report stated that in 2014 the unemployment rate for black males in the U.S was 10.9% compared to 4.4% for white males. The high number of young Black males who are dropping out of high school has led to a low graduation rate for young Black males (Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010). During the 2012-2013 school years the high school graduation rate for young black males was 59% compared to 80% for young white males. Approximately 37% of Black males under the age of 35 who did not complete high school will be incarcerated during their

life time, and 26% of them will be unemployed (Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010; Morenoff & Harding, 2014).

Due to the fact that the recidivism rates are higher for young Black males who are high school dropouts, unemployed or have low educational achievements, the communities in which they live are impacted tremendously. Tax dollars are spent annually to address the issue of recidivism which decreases the resources to address other issues within the communities. Ryan et al. (2014) reported that approximately \$75 billion is spent annually in the U.S to address and find appropriate interventions that can reduce the rates of recidivism (Ryan et al., 2014).

There are many theories as to why the jails and prisons are overpopulated with Black males. Some contend that education is the most influential factor in recidivism, while others posit that living in impoverished neighborhoods is the main cause, and others argue that parental incarceration is the key influence (Males & Brown, 2014; Morenoff & Harding, 2014). Impoverished youths commit the most serious crimes as a means of supplementing family income, and they are more likely to have the least access to economic resources (Males & Brown, 2014; Harding, Morenoff, & Herbert, 2013). Once incarcerated, these youths face the undeniable challenge of being able to secure employment. Black male juveniles between the ages of 20-25 had the lowest employment rates in some years (Aguilar, 2014). This is the case primarily because their incarceration serves as a disqualifying criterion for most employers who see a criminal record as a detriment to the success of their business (Aguilar, 2014; King, 2015; Morenoff & Harding, 2014).

Many scholars have reported that in order to reduce the ongoing rise in juvenile recidivism among the Black male population, it is imperative that we find and utilize resources, strategies, and interventions that effectively deter juvenile probationers from engaging in further criminal behaviors (Mallet, 2014; Morenoff & Harding, 2014; Williams et al., 2014). Thus courts and juvenile justice agencies have begun utilizing probation officers as an intervention for deterring recidivism amongst the juvenile probationers (James et al., 2013).

Strategies and Interventions used to Reduce Juvenile Recidivism

Criminologists and sociologists have embarked on the journey of assessing the effectiveness of treatment programs and interventions designed to reduce juvenile recidivism rates at the global level (Abrams, 2013; Hong et al., 2013; Harding et al., 2013). Identifying the “perfect” intervention or strategy has been a challenge for the juvenile justice arena globally. The available programs and interventions are consistently changing (Hong et al., 2013). Finding effective interventions to address recidivism among juvenile offenders is even more important today than it was 20 years ago due to the increasing rates of repeated offending (Hong et al., 2013). The lack of effective treatment and interventions increases likelihood that the juvenile will not have access to alternative behaviors. The unavailability of intervention for the juvenile offenders can in turn leads to continued delinquent behaviors (Hong et al., 2013). In some cases where the juvenile offender did not receive any treatment or interventions, there is an escalation in delinquent behaviors which is carried over to adulthood (Hong et al., 2013). Furthermore, Hong et al. (2013) reported that youths’ who do not receive treatment or

interventions recidivate at a rate of 60 % to 80%. They did not give a recidivism rate for youths who did receive treatment interventions.

In an attempt to reduce high recidivism rates in juvenile offenders, the U.S. federal government passed the Second Chance Act of 2007 (James, 2015; Jones, 2014). The Second chance act allocates funding to state and local government agencies for the integration of re-entry programming and interventions that can assist both adult and juvenile offenders in maintaining positive and healthy community relationships (James, 2015; Jones, 2014). The Second Chance act also serves as a means of reducing recidivism and encouraging offenders to become law abiding citizens (Jones, 2014). The act provided funding for re-entry treatment and programming for juvenile and adult offenders by providing them with services such as housing, education and job trainings upon their release from restrictive custody so that they can become productive members of society, and thereby diverting them from criminal behaviors (James, 2015). In the U.S, the second chance act has been introduced to the community through the juvenile courts. Approved grant funded programs have been tasked with submitting a re-entry strategic plan for reducing recidivism among both adult and juvenile offenders. The strategic plan must include a long term strategy and detailed implementation plan and must demonstrate progress towards reducing recidivism at least by 10% over a 2 year period (James, 2014; James; 2015). Even though, this program was implemented years ago, data is still being evaluated to assess the effectiveness of the Second Chance Act (D'Amico, Geckeler, Henderson-Frakes, Kogan, & Moazed, 2013). The Second Chance Act allows juvenile workers to access re-entry services as the youth returns to the

community. Through the Second Chance Act Juvenile Probation Officers are able to find positive programs that can address the comorbid issues that the juvenile may be experiencing. As such it allows probation officers to work closely with the youths and families in an attempt to reduce the juvenile's likelihood of reoffending.

Effectiveness of Incarceration for Reducing Recidivism

Incarceration is the most popular intervention used globally to address the issue of recidivism in adults and juveniles (Aguilar, 2014; King, 2015; Lambie, & Randell, 2013; Ryan et al., 2014). However, the debate is ongoing as to the effectiveness of this intervention in reducing juvenile recidivism (King, 2015; Lambie & Randell, 2013; Ryan et al., 2014). Supporters of incarceration have argued that juvenile incarceration is very costly, and this is a cost that is paid by the community (King, 2015; Ryan. et al., 2014). In fact, in the United States the cost to detain a youth in a detention facility in 2009 averaged \$241 while it was only \$68 for their adult counterparts (Petteruti, Walsh, & Velazquez, 2009; Ryan et al., 2014). These proponents claim that incarceration is the best intervention for these juveniles' because juvenile offenders are in need of "swift and certain punishment to preserve public safety" (Liu et al., 2015; Ryan et al., 2014). One study showed that incarceration was appropriate for violent juvenile offenders used in conjunction other therapeutic treatment efforts (Ryan et al., 20147). Some research has shown that the combination of incarceration with therapeutic treatment has been beneficial in addressing the issue of recidivism in juvenile offenders (Liu et al., 2015; Ryan et al., 2014).

The list of arguments opposing incarceration is just as long as the list arguments favoring incarceration. One major argument is that incarceration increases the risk of recidivism. In a study conducted by Sickmund, Sladky, and Kang (2004), findings showed that the incarceration experience made it more likely for the juveniles to continue to engage in criminal behaviors. The youths were able to socialize and communicate with other offenders which increased their access to negative influences (Petteruti, et al., 2009). As a result of the socialization with other delinquent youths while in detention, these juvenile offenders are surrounded by the tenets of delinquency and antisocial beliefs (Lambie & Randell, 2013; Petteruti et al., 2009; Ryan et al., 2014). These associations provide the juveniles with the opportunity to receive feedback and suggestions that reinforce their criminogenic beliefs (Caudill, Morris, El Sayed, Yun, & DeLisi, 2013; Holman & Ziedenberg, 2006; Lambie & Randell, 2013; Ryan et al., 2014). Another argument against the use of incarceration for juvenile offenders is related to the issue of overcrowding in juvenile detention facilities, which hinders the delivery of appropriate treatment services (Caudill et al., 2013; Holman & Ziedenberg, 2006). The inability to effectively provide needed treatment services to youths while detained makes it difficult for the goal of rehabilitation to be accomplished (Dodge, Dishion, & Lansford, 2006; Holman & Ziedenberg, 2006; Petteruti et al., 2009; Jones, 2014). Researchers have also claimed that incarceration does not foster an ongoing relationship between the youth and their families (Dodge et al., 2006; Holman & Ziedenberg, 2006). In fact, what happens is that the juveniles are removed from their communities and do not have contact with their families. These juveniles are later released back into the same communities from which

they were removed at incarceration (Jones, 2014). Returning these juveniles into the same communities from which they were removed without providing the youths and the families with adequate services affects the juveniles' transition back into the community (Holman & Ziedenberg, 2006; Jones, 2014; King, 2015).

Those who oppose juvenile incarceration suggest using community-based treatment, programs, and interventions as suitable and positive alternatives, which ultimately lead to lower recidivism rates (Holman & Ziedenberg, 2006; Jones, 2014; King, 2015; Lambie & Randell, 2013; Liu et al., 2015; Ryan et al., 2014). Petteuti et al. (2009) suggested that community based treatment and interventions that provide a positive alternative to incarceration are Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Aggression Replacement Therapy (ART), Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) and Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) to name a few. Several other researchers have suggested probation supervision as a community based treatment that can help to reduce the number of incarcerated juveniles (James, 2013; Harding et al., 2014; Morenoff & Harding, 2014; Steiner et al., 2012).

Probation Supervision as an Intervention

More juvenile justice agencies have begun to incorporate probation supervision as a strategy for reducing recidivism (James et al., 2013; Morenoff & Harding, 2014; Phelps, 2013). The argument for the increased use of probation with juvenile offenders is that it provides these juveniles with positive alternatives to incarceration or choosing criminogenic lifestyles (James et al., 2013). Sickmund, Sladky, and Kang, (2013) conducted a study in which they assessed nationwide juvenile courts data in 2009 to

examine the where juveniles are placed and the sanctions being imposed on juvenile offenders nationwide. The data showed that juvenile courts in the U.S. handled 1,504,144 juvenile delinquency cases. 8.9 % of the youths, who were found to be delinquent were placed in out-of-home placements, 36% placed on probation supervision, 32.3 % were released back to the community, and 22.3 % were placed in restitution programs or diversionary programs (Sickmund et al., 2013). This data showed that a majority of the juvenile delinquency probationers were place on supervision. Probation is an intervention that allows offenders to be released back into the community under the direction and supervision of a court or government employee after the commission of a crime/s (probation officer). The probation officer is tasked with applying strict, unwavering conditions as a means of gaining control of the offender's criminal activities while providing them with positive alternatives (Steiner et al., 2012; Suttmoeller & Keena, 2012; Trotter, 2013). Steiner et al. (2012) explained that being on probation controlled the offender's likelihood of re-offending in two ways. First, the offender's behaviors were managed and curtailed through the implementation through the threat of strict punishment for being non-compliant (Steiner et al., 2012). Second, the offender's behaviors were controlled indirectly through the delivery supervision conditions which outline the rules and expectations (Steiner et al., 2012). These conditions are designed to foster pro-social adjustment and compliance (Steiner et al., 2012). These authors further explained that probation forces the offender to conform to the rules with the notion that non-compliance has punitive consequences and therefore deters the likelihood of the offender re-offending (Steiner et al., 2012). However, in order for probation supervision

to be a successful intervention for reducing recidivism rates, Steiner et al. (2012) posited that rules and conditions of probation supervision “applied swiftly, and with certainty, and with progressive severity.” Similarly, James et al. (2013) stated that if aftercare supervision (probation) is tailored to address the individualized criminogenic needs of offenders based on their varying levels of functioning, then it is likely to be more effective at deterring criminal behaviors.

James et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of 22 studies and 5764 participants to assess the impact of probation on recidivism rates in juvenile offenders. The findings from this quasi-experimental showed that aftercare supervision had a small, positive effect on juvenile recidivism rates when compared to rates of youth who were released with no supervision. The overall mean effect size of this study was $d=.12$, $p<.001$. Phelps (2013) conducted a similar study whereby she examined the relationships between the probation supervision rates and the incarceration rates of the U.S. Results from the study showed that the relationship between rates of incarceration and rates of probation varied. Some states showed a reduction in incarceration at the increase in probation and some quite the opposite. However, on average, the findings showed that probation supervision had a small effect on the reduction of incarceration rates nationwide. The findings showed that on average 10% increase in probation rates is associated with 0.9 - 1.5% increase in incarceration rates (Phelps, 2013). The results from research shows that probation’s acceptance in the juvenile justice arena is increasing (Phelps, 2013).

Although probation is a widely used intervention in lieu of incarceration with juvenile population, this strategy is not widely accepted (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali,

2015; Steiner et al., 2012). Some researchers have argued that probation is short-term coercion with short term goals (Steiner et al., 2012). Consequently compliance with probation rules and regulations from juvenile offenders is short term and does not extend beyond the term of the probation supervision (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015; Steiner et al., 2012). However, results from a study by Steiner et al. (2012) revealed that probation forces offenders to make short term changes, and these changes can redirect the offenders to make long-term changes. For example, if a juvenile is on probation and required to make certain graded in school, pass drug screens and be at home by a certain time, then the probation officer will hold them to these expectations. The consistency in repeating these requirements can lead to the juvenile becoming used to them. As such even after probation, the juvenile may still continue with this routine. The tenets of the ecological systems theory would apply to the long-term changes as a result of the short-term practices and requirements.

Diversiory Programs- A Level of Supervision

Many juvenile courts are using diversionary programs in lieu of incarceration with the notion that diversionary programs are consistent with the rehabilitative model under which juvenile justice falls (James et al., 2016; Panuccio, Christian, Martinez, & Sullivan, 2012; Phelps, 2013; Wilson & Hoge, 2013). There are two types of diversion programs used within the juvenile justice courts: formal and informal (Wilson & Hoge, 2013). Formal diversion programs allow the juvenile to be adjudicated for the delinquent offense in lieu of a harsh sentence (incarceration). Participation in formal diversion requires the youth and their family agrees to participate in program/s identified by the

courts (most times supervision for a short period of time) (Petteruti et al., 2009; Phelps, 2013; Sickmund et al., 2013). In most instances, the supervision is provided in conjunction with other services that are needed to deter the juvenile's further involvement with the juvenile justice system (Petteruti et al., 2009; Wilson & Hoge, 2013). On the other hand, informal diversion consists of a warning given to the youth and family by the courts in hopes that the threat of harsher sentences will keep the youth away from the juvenile justice system (Petteruti et al., 2009; Wilson & Hoge, 2013). Both types of diversion usually result in the dismissal of charges after the juvenile successfully completes the stipulated conditions (Abrams, 2013; Wilson & Hoge, 2013). Research has shown that diversionary programs are gaining popularity since diverting low-risk, and in most instance first-time juvenile offenders, steers these youths back onto a path of positivity and healthy choices (Abrams, 2013; Davis, Bahr, & Ward, 2012). Supporters of diversionary programs argue that the programs allow for the delivery of therapeutic treatment in the community, which is more effective than treatment delivered in detention because community-based treatment specifically addresses the criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs of the youth (Davis et al., 2012; Wilson & Hoge, 2013).

Diversionary programs tend to be effective because they provide youth the opportunity to work one on one with a therapeutic provider. The therapeutic provider is able to assess the problems the juveniles are experiencing that may be responsible for the delinquent act, and provide appropriate treatment services that will deter any future court involvement (Davis et al., 2012; Panuccio et al., 2012; Abrams, 2013). In fact, Broner, Mayrl, and Landsbery (2005) found that individuals who participated in diversion

programs after release from incarceration remained in the community and did not recidivate for as long as 12 month after their release.

Critics of diversion programs argue that such programs are just a slap on the wrist and that if the courts imposed stricter consequences from the inception of delinquent behaviors, the likelihood of reoffending would be minimal (Gardiner, Urada, & Anglin, 2012, Sung & Shlosberg, 2013). Scholars have even argued that there is no consistency with these interventions. They reported that the type of services used in diversionary programs make it difficult to assess the true effectiveness in reducing recidivism (Gardiner, Urada, & Anglin, 2012). Furthermore, Abrams conducted a meta-analysis study to examine the relationship between types of diversion programs and recidivism rates. Findings showed that there was no link between the type of diversionary program and the risk of re-offending (Abrams, 2013). Abrams (2013) offered that the efficacy of diversionary programs in reducing recidivism in juvenile offenders is still uncertain. Given that the effectiveness of diversionary programs (a probation program) is still unclear, there is a need for research on the effectiveness of probation in reducing recidivism.

What Effective Interventions Should Look Like

While findings from several studies (Broner et al., 2005; Davis et al., 2012; Wilson & Hoge, 2013) have revealed the effectiveness of some interventions in reducing recidivism, different intervention strategies for reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders, such as evidence-based programs and community based interventions. There is no one intervention that is effective in significantly reducing recidivism. In addition,

there is no one strategy that can be used to address all unique and varying underlying problems that each juvenile may present (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015; Land, 2014; Panuccio et al., 2012). Many criminologists have made recommendations on what effective programs for this vulnerable population should look like (Blomberg, Bales & Piquero, 2012; Fallahi, Pourtaghi, & Rodriguez, 2012; Land, 2014; Piquero, 2014). According to Piquero (2014), it is very easier reach juveniles and correct negative behaviors if the intervention is used correctly because juveniles are not fully emotionally and psychosocially matured therefore their criminal trajectories are unsettled and inconsistent. In order to redirect the criminal behaviors it is imperative that the intervention used targets impulse control and equips the juveniles with skills to identify situations for which they will need to utilize these impulse control skills (Piquero, 2014). The swiftness of probation coupled with mandated skills building provides juvenile offenders with the opportunity to redirect their criminal thoughts and behaviors (Kleiman, 2014).

Furthermore, there are three elements that are necessary in order for an intervention to be effective in addressing the reoffending behaviors of Black males. The intervention should focus on education, employment, and cognitive restructuring (Blomberg et al., 2012; Fallahi, Pourtaghi, & Rodriguez, 2012). However, in order for these interventions to be successful, the probationer must have a vested interest in incorporating these elements into their daily lifestyle (Pearson, McDougall, Kanaan, Torgerson, & Bowles, 2016). Blomberg et al. (2012) explained that having all three components will not necessarily make an intervention effective. He emphasized that the

program must also have the same goal as the juvenile justice system, which is rehabilitation. To be effective, an intervention program must make rehabilitation the focus in conjunction with making an investment in the success of these offenders. Fallahi et al. (2012) pointed out that since juvenile recidivism is most prevalent in Black males, these interventions should be specific to the Black male population. This is particularly recommended since research has shown that many young Black males are under-educated and unemployed. As such education and employment should be addressed as part of a rehabilitation and re-investment treatment plan. In order to reduce recidivism, juvenile probation officers are faced with the overwhelming task of building supervision plans that encompass the essential elements of successful intervention programs as indicated by previous researchers (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Vincent, Guy, Gershenson, & McCabe, 2012).

Juvenile Probation: What is the Ultimate Goal?

The history of Juvenile probation in the United States dates back to the early 1840's when John Augustus, a Boston shoemaker, sought permission from the courts to allow both juvenile and adult offenders to be released under his supervision while they awaited the outcome of their criminal proceedings (Corbett, 2015). Augustus ensured that the released offenders attended school, he found them jobs, and he made sure that they conducted themselves in a manner that was pleasing to the courts. In 1859 when he died, he had provided what is known today as probation supervision to more than 1900 juvenile and adult offenders (Corbett, 2015; Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). In 1899 the U.S witnessed the establishment of its first juvenile court; juvenile probation and the juvenile

justice system were developed as a means of having a clear separation between the youth and adult offenders (Mays & Ruddell, 2012; McCord, Widom, & Crowell, 2001; Merlo et al., 2015; Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). With the establishment of the first juvenile court, the goal was to rehabilitate juveniles and return them to their communities as productive citizens. Treatment services such as warnings, probation, and training school were used in order to accomplish this goal (Mays & Ruddell, 2012; McCord et al., 2001). The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Act of 1907 solidified juvenile justice practices in the US and states began to utilize probation as a means of redirecting negative juvenile behaviors (Mays & Ruddell, 2012; Meng, Segal, & Boden, 2013).

The use of probation as an intervention to target juvenile recidivism continues to increase (Chui & Chan, 2014; McMasters, 2015). Primarily, probation serves the ultimate goal of helping to reintegrate offenders back into the community where they can be responsible, law-abiding individuals (McMasters, 2015; Phelps, 2013). According to the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) (2014), juvenile probation is the center of the juvenile justice system and can be incorporated at any time of a juvenile justice proceeding. In fact, OJJDP (2014) explained that juvenile probation is used as a sanction for delinquent youths and in some instances it is even used as a means of supervising first-time delinquents to deter them from further juvenile justice involvement. The statistics from OJJDP in 2010 showed that probation was ordered for 53% of the 920,000 youth who were found to be delinquent. With its wide-spread use in the juvenile justice system, there is still a lack of understanding regarding the role and the purpose of probation in juvenile justice (Pearson et al., 2016).

Role of Probation Officers

Probation supervision is used as an alternative to detention or incarceration within the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems (OJJDP, 2014). The probation officers are tasked with supervising the offenders in their communities, while ensuring that court orders are followed. The probation officers are tasked with these roles in an attempt to deter juveniles from the commission of new crimes (OJJDP, 2014).

Paparozzi and Guy (2013) stated that the main purpose of probation in the US is to increase the long-term safety of the public by deterring offenders over a short period of time. While deterring the offenders it is hoped that long-term, significant behavioral changes matriculate Paparozzi & Guy, 2013). Bourgon (2013) also stated that the public safety is a goal of probation, but he added that the first goal of probation is to enforce court mandated stipulations/orders. Probation is also imposed to divert offenders and reduce detention populations while rehabilitating offenders (Phelps, 2013).

While most researchers seem to agree that the goals of probation are to secure public safety and enforce court orders (Bourgon, 2013; Paparozzi & Guy, 2013; Phelps, 2013), Chui and Chan (2014) explained that juvenile probation officers are expected to provide assistance, advice, and a friendly discourse to their probationers. These authors stated that juvenile probation officers differ somewhat from adult probation officers because under the juvenile probation model there is an expectation that the juvenile probation officers will utilize social work skills in conjunction with their criminal justice skills. The use of these collective skills should enable juvenile probation officers to tend to the mental, physical, personal, social, and psychological needs of their probationers

while accomplishing the goal of keeping these juvenile offenders from the future commissions of criminal or delinquent acts (Chui & Chan, 2014). According to the OJJDP (2014), juvenile probation officers work collaboratively with families, schools, mental health professionals, and other juvenile social services providers in an attempt to redirect negative behaviors and reinforce positive alternatives.

However, despite the ultimate goals of probation, there seems to be a disconnect between what the public views as the goals of probation officer should be and what the role of a probation officer actually is (Bourgon, 2013). Juvenile probation officers are viewed more as social workers rather than criminal justice officials. There is an expectation that they will provide support and resources to target every problem area that their probationers are faced with (Bourgon, 2013; Phelps, 2013). This makes the job a difficult one and one in which the perceptions of effectiveness differs (Bourgon, 2013, Pearson et al., 2016).

Role of Probation Officers as Described by the Courts

The most important role of the probation officer is to ensure that orders of the court are carried out (Bourgon, 2013; Klingele, 2013). Historically, probation was viewed as a means of allowing low risk and first-time offenders the opportunity to remain in their communities while their movements and interactions were being monitored (Klingele, 2013; Maruschak & Parks, 2011). However, today probation is being used as a weapon to battle the war of mass incarceration (Schmitt, Warner, & Gupta, 2010). In fact, Klingele (2013) reports that in 2011 there were approximately 3,971,300 people in the US under probation supervision and most of them were first time offenders or

juveniles. Today the courts view probation officers as agents of the courts whose role is two-fold (Corbett, 2015; Klingele, 2013). Firstly, probation officers are required to monitor probationer's compliance with court ordered conditions and sanctions for a defined period of time (Klingele, 2013; Phillips, 2009). Klingele (2013) points out that the courts expect probation officers to monitor probationers' "compliance with rules, such as reporting regularly to a probation officer, attending work, classes, or treatment programs; avoiding new criminal conduct; and complying with other restrictions designed to promote rehabilitation and contain risk".

Secondly, the courts view probation officers as modes of connecting offenders with needed services and resources (Champion, 2008; Phillips, 2009). Travis (2005) pointed out that judges rely on probation officers to collaborate with other social services agencies in an effort to identify resources and available treatment options that can increase deterrence. In fact, the courts hold juvenile probation officers accountable for ensuring that the probationer has access to services and resources that are geared towards rehabilitation (Gayman & Bradley, 2013). As such, juvenile probation officers make referrals and collaborate with other agencies to secure jobs, locate substance abuse and mental health treatment programs, monitor school enrollment, and monitor compliance with court orders of their probationers with the hopes of deterring them from re-offending (Gayman & Bradley, 2013). Ultimately the courts view the role of probation officers as necessary in redirecting and targeting every problem that their probationers may be faced with (Bourgon, 2013; Phelps, 2013).

Juvenile Probation Officers' Perceptions of Their Roles

Many researchers have highlighted that probation officers themselves view their role as merely enforcing the court's orders (Bourgon, 2013; Paparozzi & Guy, 2013, Phelps, 2013). As a result, most of their time is spent conducting administrative duties such as documenting contacts with clients, completing and submitting reports to the courts and other juvenile justice authorities, and revoking non-compliant probationers (Bourgon, 2013; Paparozzi & Guy, 2013). However, juvenile probation officers have reported that the roles above are just one aspect of their jobs. In fact results from two studies (Gayman & Bradley, 2013; Miller, 2015) indicated that probation officers have reported that they are increasingly expected to perform social worker roles which include ensuring that the juvenile offender is rehabilitated or in the least, is referred to services that can address all of their presenting problems. These changing roles and expectations of the juvenile probation officer adversely affect the quality of work that the officer performs and the effectiveness in the probationers' rehabilitation treatment plan (Corbett, 2015; Gayman & Bradley, 2013; Haqanee et al., 2015; Miller, 2015).

The requirement to perform dual roles causes probation officers to experience stress and burnout, which also impacts the effectiveness of the probation supervision (Lewis, Lewis, & Garby, 2013). Subsequently, there are high recidivism rates where probation officers report high job stress and burnout (Lewis et al., 2013). Several studies provided data in which probation officers reported low job satisfaction, emotional fatigue, and high job stress as mitigating obstacles to them being effective in performing their probation roles (King, 2013; Lewis et al., 2013; Miller, 2015). In fact, some officers reported that their workdays were often extended beyond their scheduled hours. Most of

the extended time was spent completing paperwork, which they saw as an unnecessary request from agency administration (Skowronski, 2015). In addition, most officers reported that their work stress was elevated by their worry about being able to adequately take care of their households due to their low wages and lack of annual salary increases. Workers voiced that they were underpaid and over worked, and in some instances they neglected their families in order to perform work duties (Lewis et al., 2013; Salyers, et al., 2015). Most officers reported having the inclination to quit and explained that once they found a better paying job, they would leave. The high stress that has been identified to come with the job of a juvenile probation officer has led to the juvenile probation officer job being one with a high turnover rate and a very low retention rate (Gayman & Bradley, 2013; Salyers et al., 2015; Skowronski, 2015). As such, the juvenile offenders do not receive consistent, progressive, supervision skills and strategies from the juvenile justice system (Gayman & Bradley, 2013; Salyer et al., 2015; Skowronski, 2015; White, Aalsma, Holloway, Adams, & Salyers, 2015).

Juvenile probation officers view their effectiveness of the job as being directly tied to the internal dynamics of the courts and juvenile justice agencies (Lewis et al, 2013; White et al., 2015). The unfavorable factors such as long work hours and low wages within these entities matriculate to and negatively impact the quality and level of supervision and services received by the probationers (Miller, 2015; White et al., 2015). Ultimately, the perceptions held by the probation officers on the effectiveness of their roles affect the overall effectiveness of the probation program (Miller, 2015; Salyers et al., 2015; White et al., 2015). The effectiveness of the probation officers in their roles

can affect the quality and level of supervision being given to the probationers which in turn can impact the decisions made by the probationers (Miller, 2015). Probation officers serve as supporters of change for the probationers and their failure to provide adequate supervision supports can impact the change that the probationer makes (Mallot & Fromader, 2010).

Overall Effectiveness of Probation Programs

During the past three decades the U.S has experienced a widespread use of probation as a means of increasing the opportunities for juvenile offenders to turn away from crime and find positive alternatives (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Corbett, 2015; James et al., 2015). However, the effectiveness of probation programs is linked to many mitigating factors. Some of these factors are the measures employed by the probation officers, the receptiveness of the juvenile offender and their parents and the rapport that the probation officer builds with the family (Bosker, Witteman, & Hermanns, 2013; Miller, 2015). The findings from some studies show that the reliability of the treatment is an important factor in determining the overall effectiveness of probation programs (Goense, Boendermaker, Van Yperen, Dtams, & Laar, 2014; James et al., 2013a; James et al., 2015b). Some researchers have reported that the effectiveness of a probation program is tied to the probationers being solution seekers for their problems and the probation officers being supportive change agents (Shaplan, Bottoms, Farrall, McNeil, Priede, & Robinson, 2012).

Farrall (2002) conducted a study where the findings showed that 58% of probationers who took the lead in fixing their problems and making positive changes

individually were successful. However, 78% of those probationers who accepted the support from their probation officers and worked collectively with their probation officers showed successful positive changes (Farrall, 2002). Shapland et al. (2012) claimed that probationers who worked with their probation officers were more successful because they had a wider access to a larger array of resources and problem solving advice to address their myriad of underlying problems which may have contributed to their delinquent behavior. However, not all probationer's find their probation experience to be a rewarding one. In fact, some probationer's view their probation officers as being tough and unsupportive (Chui & Chan, 2014; James et al., 2013, Shapland & Bottoms, 2010).

The "get tough on crime" practices that are being implemented by juvenile probation officers ultimately affect the measures utilized. More juvenile probation officers have begun to utilize punitive and authoritative measures to deal with high risk offenders. These punitive measures have a negative impact in the effectiveness of the supervision because the strict sanctions cause a strain on the development of a positive relationship between the probation officers and the juvenile probationer (Bosker et al., 2013). Miller (2015) suggested that instead of using the traditional supervision model to work with juvenile offenders, juvenile probation officers should seek more input from the youth's and their families. King, (2013) conducted a study in 2007 in Scotland with young probationers to assess the impact probation had in deterring crime in young probationers. In this qualitative study, which utilized semi-structured interviews to collect data, young people on probation were interviewed for 30-90 minutes. The participants ranged in demographics with the exception that they were all males. The data collected

was analyzed using thematic network analysis. The probationers reported that they built a good rapport with their probation officers and that the probation officers served as positive role models and support systems for them. Limitation of this research was in the selection process since the participants were selected by the probation officers. King (2013) further noted that some probation officers were ineffective in their supervision because they were reluctant to assist the juvenile offenders with meeting other needs such as improving family functioning, locating employment, and finding treatment to address mental health issues. Similarly, findings from a Shapland and Bottoms (2010) study of male probationers revealed that probationers felt that they did not spend significant enough time with their probation officers for the meeting to be helpful. In fact, 90% of the males in the study reported that they spent an average of 5-30 minutes with their probation officers at each visit. One-third of the sample of males in this study reported that they found their probation experience to be a helpful and positive one (Shapland & Bottoms, 2010).

Perceptions of Juvenile Probation Officer/Probationer Relationship

Despite the fact that there is extensive research (Baglivio, Jackowski, Greenswald, & Howell, 2014; Bradford, 2014; Jackson & Gau, 2016; Warren, 2014) on juvenile delinquency and the public's attitude towards juvenile crime, the current research on the perceptions held by juveniles about their probation experience, their perception of the effectiveness of the interaction with their probation officers, and their subsequent recidivism is a subject that is very much under-studied. In preparation for this study very few studies were located in which probationers' perceptions of their

probation experience was investigated. I only located four recent articles which focused on the perceptions of juvenile offenders as the basis of the study.

Research regarding the relationship between the juvenile probation officer and the juvenile probationer highlight the impact that positive relationships can have in deterrence of criminality for juveniles (Chui & Chan, 2014, Cox, 2013, King, 2013, Vidal, Ouderkerk, Reppucci, & Woolard, 2013). King (2013) conducted a study to examine the impact probation supervision has on probationers' desistance of criminal acts. The researcher conducted 20 semi-structured interviews with individuals who were under probation supervision. The findings from this research indicated that probation officers played a significant part in fostering and developing the motivation and self-confidence to of the probationers to make positive changes and not re-offend. Additionally, the connection with the probation officers fostered social and emotional skill building which impacted the likelihood of the probationers' re-offending.

Vidal et al. (2013) conducted a 5 year longitudinal study with 140 females who were in juvenile detention facilities. Interviews were also conducted post release. The researchers set out to examine the perceptions of juvenile females on parole of their parole officers and their parole experience. These researchers found that when a young female perceived the relationships with their PO to be meaningful and supportive, the youth was more likely to achieve positive outcomes. The findings suggest that while on community supervision, the interpersonal relationships that the youths built which promoted trust, motivation, and encouragement proved to be invaluable in assisting delinquent girls' opportunity with positive alternatives during reintegration. According

to Trotter (2013) juvenile probation supervision can help juvenile offenders to be successful and make positive lifestyle changes, and thereby contribute to reducing juvenile recidivism rates. However, the supervision must encompass a balance of the probation officers' use of authority, positive examples, and reinforcement of positive behaviors. In addition, there must be equal participation of probationers and probation officers in the development of problem solving ideas (Trotter, 2013). These practices help to solidify a positive probation officer/probationer relationship; a relationship that can help to reduce the youth's likelihood of re-offending. However, in order to promote positive change the youth must perceive the probation officer/probationer relationship to be a positive one (King, 2013; Vidal et al., 2013).

Despite the numerous articles that highlight the positives of probation for young probationers (Chui & Chan, 2014, King, 2013, Vidal et al., 2013) there is still a lack of research that examines the role of probation in reducing recidivism. In fact, Burk-Garcia (2013) pointed out that juvenile offenders feel that probation is just a means of the courts telling them what to do. Juvenile offenders who are on probation reported that not having a voice gives them a feeling of hopelessness, which causes them apprehension about being compliant and desisting from future criminal acts (Burk-Garcia, 2013, Vidal et al., 2013).

Summary and Conclusion

Juvenile delinquency continues to be a social issue with significant global impact (Jones, 2104). Significant research has been done for decades to identify an intervention that can reduce the high rates of crimes committed at the hands of juvenile offenders

(Dodge, Bierman, Coie, Greenberg, Lochman, McMahon, & Pinderhughes, 2014; Jones, 2014; Ryan et al., 2013). The criminal justice system in the US utilizes several measures of community supervision such as diversion programs and probation to reduce detention populations. However, the criminal justice system relies extensively on probation as a means of deterring juvenile crime, while simultaneously reducing the rising juvenile detention rates nationwide (Morenoff & Harding, 2014).

The courts have begun to rely on juvenile probation heavily because it is deemed as a means of connecting offenders with needed services, treatment and resources (Champion, 2008, Phillips, 2009). The probation officers are expected to monitor the probationers' while in the community to ensure that they are following the courts orders and are not engaging in future criminal acts (Klinge, 2013). However, as a juvenile probation officer there is an expectation that juvenile compliance with the courts order will be monitored and referrals will be made to secure treatment measures and services that can help to address the holistic needs of the juvenile (Gayman & Bradley, 2013). In most instances this includes helping the juvenile offender and their families with employment, educational resources, identifying and securing mental health services and in some case family support services (Gayman & Bradley, 2013).

Strategies such as community supervision may be employed that can help juvenile offenders to be successful in the community after release from secure confinement (Phelps, 2013). These strategies may however be ineffective if the probation officers and the probationers do not have a positive relationship. Therefore it is imperative that the probation officer/probationer relationship is one of positive interactions and

communication. Researchers (Cox, 2013; King, 2013) suggest that the attitudes of probation officers impact the interaction between the probation officer and the probationers which in turn impact the compliance of the probationers. This study will investigate whether the perceptions held by Black male probationers of their probation officer has an impact on their recidivating.

The literature on juvenile recidivism is extensive and covers various research areas (Ryan et al., 2014; Upadhyayula et al., 2015). There have been many interventions such as incarceration, diversionary programs and probation used in an attempt to reduce the recidivism rates of juveniles (Jones, 2014; Morenoff & Harding, 2014; Peters & Myrick, 2011). In this chapter a critical analysis was done of the current literature on juvenile delinquency, juvenile recidivism and juvenile probation. Chapter 3 will describe the research methods, design and strategies of this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the predictive relationships between Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers, their perceptions of the job of probation officers, their ratings of the effectiveness their probation officers in deterring their recidivism, and their subsequent recidivism. The impetus behind this study is the high recidivism rates of young Black males after being supervised on juvenile probation (Ryan et al., 2014).

In this chapter I provide a description of the research design along with my rationale for choosing the design and methodology. In addition, I discuss the targeted population for this study as well as the procedures that I used for sampling. This chapter includes the procedures that I used for recruitment and data collection and an explanation how they relate to the study that I mirrored. In this chapter, I discuss the instrumentation and operationalization of constructs extensively. The data analysis section provides a detailed, step-by-step description of how I analyzed the data. There is a discussion on threats to internal and external validity and the ethical processes that I employed in this study.

Research Design and Rationale

The three independent variables in this study were Black male probationers' ratings regarding their perceptions of their probation officer, their perceptions of the job of their probation officer, and their ratings of the effectiveness of their probation officers. The two dependent variables were the likelihood recidivism of Black male juvenile

offenders within 3 years after being placed on probation and their perceptions of their probation officers' effectiveness as a deterrent to their recidivism. I used a quantitative, nonexperimental, correlational design to address the research questions for this study. The use of the quantitative analysis allowed me to determine whether a relationship existed between variables and allowed for statistical descriptions to be formed (Creswell, 2009; Welford et al., 2012).

The quantitative research design allows researchers the opportunity to establish facts, validate the study by addressing ambiguities that can compromise the study, test hypotheses, and make predictions for the future (Bernard, 2013). According to Creswell (2009), statistical analyses of quantitative data provide researchers with an opportunity to determine whether significant relationships exist between variables. As a result of statistical analyses, researchers can form generalizations of traits from a small, representative sample to a larger population. The quantitative research design was appropriate for my study because the purpose of this study was to examine the predictive relationships between Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers, their perceptions of the job of probation officers, their ratings of the effectiveness of their probation officers, and their likelihood of recidivating.

Welford et al. (2012) explained that when conducting a quantitative research study, the researcher has to choose from either an experimental or a nonexperimental design. Researchers can use the nonexperimental research design to assess predictive relationships between variables (Welford et al., 2012). Nonexperimental studies do not allow for the predictor variables to be manipulated. The examination of the predictive

relationship and the forming of conclusions is based solely on observations and interpretation of data, which allows the researcher to form generalizations to a larger population (Welford et al., 2012). In addition, the participants are not randomly selected in nonexperimental designs, which allow the researcher the opportunity to purposefully select participants who meet the specific criteria of the issue under examination (Creswell, 2009).

Welford et al. (2012) further explained that the correlational design is used to examine relationship between two or more variables in order to form predictions about the relationships based on statistical analysis. Taking into consideration that the purpose of my study was to examine the predictive relationships between the independent and dependent variables, the correlational research design was appropriate for this study.

I also utilized the cross-sectional, survey design to gather data from participants. The cross-sectional design is geared toward collecting data from a sample at a defined time (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). The focus in cross-sectional studies is to draw inferences from differences people may have as those differences relate to a certain problem (Hall, 2009).

The cross-sectional design was appropriate for this study because I examined the existence of a relationship between the variables and described the strength of the existing relationship (Arthur, Waring, Coe, & Hedge, 2012; Creswell, 2012). The survey methodology for data collection was advantageous in my research study because it was economical, provided quick access to data, and allowed for the generalizations of traits from a small, representative sample to a large population (Creswell, 2009; Welford et al.,

2102). The survey design was chosen because it allowed me to gather numeric data about participants' perceptions and draw generalizations about the larger population (Creswell, 2009; Welford et al., 2012). This survey design was also advantageous for my research study because it allowed me to collect data from participants without assistance from others (Creswell, 2009; Welford et al., 2012).

Methodology

Population

The targeted population for this study was adult males between the ages of 18-25 years who were current and past participants in the Urban League of Greater Atlanta and Hearts to Nourish Hope Programs. The Urban League of Greater Atlanta is a nonprofit organization that provides community re-entry services, such as employment and job skills, to teenagers and adults who have had interactions with the criminal justice system. Hearts to Nourish Hope is a community-driven nonprofit that provides high quality programs to identify and develop the internal resources of youth aged 18-24 in Clayton, Fayette, and Gwinnett Counties. This program provides the young people of these three counties with educational, residential, vocational, workforce and life skill.

The targeted males for this study were Black males who were previously on juvenile probation and recidivated within 3 years of being placed on probation. The Urban League of Greater Atlanta was chosen as the recruitment site because the program requires that all participants have previously been under probation supervision. Hearts to Nourish Hope was chosen as a recruitment site because the participants of this program are young people between the ages of 18-24. Most of the participants of HTNH come

from the referrals from the local criminal justice agencies. Participants from these sites met the criteria for the targeted population of this study, and the participants held the potential to provide appropriate data on the issue being examined in this study.

Sampling Procedure

In this study I utilized the purposive sampling strategy to recruit participants. I chose the purposive sampling method because it allows the researcher to choose participants for the study based specifically on them fitting the sample criteria (Creswell, 2009; Punch, 2014). This sampling method allowed me to choose participants specifically because they have been on juvenile probation and recidivated within 3 years. The purposive sampling strategy also gave me the ability to recruit participants from the Urban League of Atlanta and Hearts to Nourish Hope programs specifically. This sampling method allowed me to make generalizations about the larger population based on the study of the participating sample (Creswell, 2009; Punch, 2014). Black males between the ages of 18-25 who have been on juvenile probation were asked to participate in this study.

Sample Size

I conducted a power analysis for a logistic regression using the G*Power 3.1.7 in order to determine the appropriate sample size needed to have adequate power for conducting the statistical analysis (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2013). This calculation was done using an alpha 0.05, a power of 0.80, large effect size (odds ratio of 2.48) and two-tailed test. Based on these criteria, the desired sample size was $N = 71$.

This sample size increases the likelihood of detecting differences that are due to variations in the data (Creswell, 2009).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

An important aspect of this study was to receive approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) from Walden University. Research scholars have highlighted the importance of gaining appropriate approval to conduct a study as a means of ensuring that the study does not pose any threats of ethical violations (Creswell, 2009; Smale, 2010). In addition, it is important that necessary consents are received from program administration of the collection site and participants alike (Creswell, 2009; Smale, 2010). As such I submitted a request to the Walden IRB seeking approval to conduct this study (IRB Approval # 08-17-0199031). This request included a detailed description the proposed study, the proposed data collection processes, the selection and protection of participants, samples of proposed instruments and permission to use the existing instrument.

I also submitted a request and gain approval from the administration of Urban League of Greater Atlanta and Hearts to Nourish Hope Inc. in order to recruit participants for the study. After I received permission from the Walden IRB and from the program administration of Urban League of Atlanta and Hearts to Nourish Hope, I contacted the administration of ULGA and HTNH to schedule a time when I could meet to recruit participants.

I visited the ULGA and HTNH sites to announce the study, answer questions, and to distribute survey packets. The packets included information on how to return them

once completed. The survey packets that was available to potential participants for this study included informed consent, a statement detailing the purpose of the study, and an explanation of the importance of the study as a contribution to social change.

I collected the data for this study by distributing survey packets to the two collection sites with instructions on how to return completed packets. I used the Perceptions of the Assigned Probation Officer (PAPO) and Perceptions of the Job Nature of the Probation Officer (PJNPO) Scales to collect the data in this study. I measured the Probationer's perceptions of the effectiveness of the probation officer in reducing recidivism by using a 5-point Likert Scale. Once I announced the study at the sites, I left survey packets sealed in privacy envelopes in the common waiting areas of each sites accessible to potential participants. Each survey packet included a cover letter that described the study extensively, informed consent forms, and the actual survey instrument for collecting the data. I reminded the participants that their participation was voluntary, and that they had the option to decline participation at any time. There were not any follow up sessions with the participants.

Due to the slow return of completed surveys after the verbal announcement at ULGA and HTNH I posted recruitment fliers at UGLA and HTNH. I posted recruitment flyers twice at the collection sites and provided information regarding the study and the need for participants. This announcement included directions on how interested participants could contact me to participate in the study.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

I used the PAPO and the PJNPO Scales to collect data for this study (Chui & Chan, 2014). The scales were developed by Chui and Chan in 2013. These researchers explained that they developed the surveys to explore the views held by juvenile probationers about the overall role and work of their probation officers. The scales used in this study was developed in Hong Kong and used primarily with juvenile males who were court ordered to stay in a residential setting. I did not utilize this instrument in the same way because the participants of this study were Black males who were previously on juvenile probation. I received permission from the developers of the PAPO and PJNPO scales to utilize these scales in this study. A copy of the permission is in Appendix A.

The PAPO Scale measures probationers' views of their assigned probation officers on each of nine item descriptors. Participants rate their level of agreement with each question on the instrument using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *1=strongly disagree*, *2= disagree*, *3= Neutral*, *4= agree* and *5= strongly agree*. The ratings in the seven items are summed together to yield a total score. The scores on the PAPO can range from 7-35. The higher scores on this scale indicated a stronger agreement with the questions.

The PJNPO Scale measures the probationers' perceptions of the overall work of the probation officer. This scale has 7 descriptors and respondents use the same 5-point Likert scale to respond to each of the 7 items. The scores on this scale can range from 7-

35. These two scales were appropriate for this study because they specifically measure the juvenile probationers' perceptions of the jobs of probation officers.

The PAPO and the PJNPO Scales do not measure recidivism among the probationers. As such, I added two items to measure recidivism in order to fully answer the research questions. The two items added are: a) have you recidivated within 3 years of being released from juvenile probation? and b) my Probation Officer had an impact on reducing the likelihood of me recidivating. Participants indicated their level of agreement with these two questions using a yes or no answers for "Have you recidivated within 3 years" and a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1=*strongly disagree*, 2=*disagree*, 3=*Neutral*, 4=*agree* and 5=*strongly agree* for "My probation officer has an impact on reducing the likelihood of my recidivating." The ratings were all are summed together to yield a total score.

Validity of the PAPO and PJNPO

The construct validity of the PAPO and the PJNPO was assessed by Chui & Chan (2014) using the exploratory factor analyses (EFA) and principal components extraction. They used two factors extracted from the PAPO Scale. The internal consistency estimate for this scale produced a Chronbach α value of 0.80 which confirmed the homogeneity of the items in this scale. Three factors were extracted from the PJNPO Scale. Cronbach's analysis yielded a α value of 0.73 with the coefficients for each factor ranging from 0.47 to 0.66. Items selected for these scales were those items that loaded at least 0.45 on their own factors but on other factors at less than 0.30. The internal consistency estimates for the *PAPO and PJNPO* were tested using the Cronbach's alpha. Results produced

coefficient alphas of 0.80 and 0.73 respectively. The data from the EFA confirmed the construct validity of the instrument because it showed good fit for the study. In addition, the Scales had good internal consistency and convergent validity. In order to assess the content validity, the researchers carried out a varimax rotation for both scales. Those items that had 0.45 on their own and 0.30 on another factor was selected as appropriate for the study. However, if an item cross-loaded highly on other factors ($r = .30$ or higher) it was rejected and not used in the study (Chui & Chan, 2014).

Reliability was also assessed by reporting inter-correlations between items on each of the scales. These estimates of inter-correlations were above 0.70 which is the estimate that is considered to be acceptable and confirms the reliability of data collected by the instrument (Chui & Chan, 2014). The results of the tests indicated that the instrument had good content validity and that the instrument collected data that were reliable.

I attempted to locate other studies that used the PAPO and PJNPO in an effort to gain information about the types of validity and reliability; however I was unable to locate any previous researcher studies that utilized this instrument. In order to assess the reliability of the PAPO and PJNPO Scales for this study, I conducted a reliability analysis using SPSS software. Chui and Chan (2014) used Chronbach's alpha to report the reliability when they developed this instrument, I also used Cronbach's alpha to determine the internal consistency of the information gathered from this sample of participants. I used the baseline value of Chronbach $\alpha = 0.70$ to judge the adequacy of the reliability estimates obtained from data collected in this study according to guidelines

from previous research (Harris, 2013). The results of the Cronbach's alpha were used as an indicator of the reliability of the data collected by the scales for this study.

Data Analysis Plan

One important requirement of a valid quantitative research study is that the data analysis which is conducted be statistically sound (Bernard, 2013). Bernard (2013) explained that in order for the data analysis to be statistically sound, it is imperative that the analysis is determined by deductive reasoning. The data collected in this study was assessed using two methods to address missing data. This assessment was done because it is absolutely impossible to avoid missing data in a research study and the presence of missing data can ultimately impact the validity and reliability of the research results and the generalizations formed (Harris, 2013; Sterne, White, Carlin, Spratt, Royston, Kenward, Wood, & Carpenter, 2009). Taking into consideration the impact missing data can have on this study, this researcher reviewed each completed survey instrument to determine if any questions were not answered or skipped. No surveys were excluded from this study since all returned surveys contained less than 15% of missing information (Harris, 2013). Additionally, the means imputation procedure was used to replace missing information. Sterne et al., (2009) describe the means imputation process as a statistical approach which allows the researcher to account for the ambiguity of missing information by utilizing several different reasonable imputed data sets and analyzing the results from each set jointly. In this research, this researcher inserted item means in areas where there were missing values in the survey items. The use of the imputation approach

helped to increase the amount of available data to form generalizations and reduce the threats missing data would cause (Harris, 2013).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1: How well do probationers' perceptions of their probation officers and their perceptions of the job of the probation officer predict the likelihood of recidivism among young Black males within 3 years after being placed on probation?

H₁₀: The independent variables of probationers' perceptions their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers scores on the PJNPO) are not statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of recidivism for Black male juvenile offenders within 3 years after being placed on probation.

H_{1A}: The independent variables of probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of recidivism for Black male juvenile offenders within 3 years after being placed on probation

Regression analysis was used to test the null hypotheses for the research questions. Regression analysis is used to evaluate whether independent variables predict the dependent variable (Nathans, Oswald & Nimon, 2012). Logistic regression was used to assess the predictive relationships among variables for Research Question 1. The independent/predictor variables for the first question were probationers' perceptions of their probation officers and their perceptions of the job of probations officers. The dependent/criterion variable was likelihood of recidivism in Black male juvenile

probationers' within 3 years after being placed on probation. The dependent variable was a binary variable where $1 = yes$ and $0 = no$, therefore logistic regression was the appropriate statistical analysis. The Nagelkerke R^2 and the coefficient r were used to establish the statistical power, and measurement reliability. The statistics that are reported in Chapter 4 include the significance level, the odds ratio, the classification accuracy of the regression model, and the reduction in errors due to the regression model.

RQ2: How well do the probationers' perceptions of their probation officers and their perceptions of the job of the probation officer predict their ratings of their probation officers' effectiveness in deterring their recidivism?

H₂₀: The independent variables of probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are not statistically significant predictors of Black male probationers' ratings of their probation officers' effectiveness (measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale) in deterring their recidivism.

H_{2A}: Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are statistically significant predictors of Black male probationers' ratings of their probation officer's effectiveness (measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale) in deterring their recidivism.

Multiple linear regression (MLR) was used to test the null hypothesis for the second research question. The independent variables for the second research question were probationer's perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their

perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO). The dependent variable was probationers' ratings of their probation officers' effectiveness in deterring their recidivism. The DV was measured using on a 5-point Likert-type, interval scale (*1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree*). The MLR procedure is used when the DV is measured on an interval or ratio level, and was the case with this dependent variable. As such this was the appropriate statistical procedure for assessing the predictive relationships among variables for the second research question. R-squared was used to assess the amount of variance in the dependent variables that was accounted for by the independent variables (Nathans et al., 2012). In order to determine the significance of the predictors, the t-test was performed. In addition, beta coefficients were utilized to assess the degree of prediction for the independent variables (Nathans et al., 2012).

Threats to Validity

External Validity

External validity refers to the degree to which conclusions formed from results of a study would generalize to results of other studies conducted in different places at different times (Garcia-Perez, 2012). The threats to external validity in a quantitative study are: testing reactivity, interaction effects of selection and experimental variables, specificity of variables, reactive effects of experimental arrangements, and multiple-treatment interference (Ihantola & Kihn, 2011). Testing reactivity refers to the effect pre-testing can have on the generalization of the study results on an untested population (Ihantola & Kihn, 2011). Testing reactivity does not pose a threat to this study because a

pre-test was conducted as such this lessens the likelihood of the participants responding based on previous clues. Interaction effects of selection and experimental variables refers to the effect that some of the variables of the study can have on the results of the study being applicable to other populations (Ihantola & Kihn, 2011). This threat did not affect this study because the sample was a purposive sample, the participants were not randomly chosen and they fit the criteria of the study (Creswell, 2009). Specificity of variables refers to the variables in a study being specific to a population or location. This means that the specific variable may not be used to form generalizations for every population. Variable specificity did not pose a threat to this study because this study was nonexperimental and the variables of this study can be used in other studies with other populations and settings. Reactive effects of experimental arrangements refer to the reaction of the participants of the study simply due to their knowledge of the ongoing experiment. Since this study was nonexperimental and the data was collected during a single session, the threat of reactive effects of experimental arrangement is reduced. Multiple treatment interference describes research subject being administered multiple treatments and the effects of the first treatment may still be present and affect the result of the other treatments (Ihantola & Kihn, 2011). Since this study is nonexperimental there was no threat of multiple treatment interferences as no treatment was administered to the participants.

A primary concern with external validity is being able to form generalizations that can be extended to other settings, care should be given to ensure that there are not biases are not present as a result of the new setting(Garcia-Perez, 2012). Taking this into

consideration, the data used in this study was gained from two sites and all the participants were residents of Atlanta during the data collection phase. This criterion minimized the possibility of location biases that can impact the results of the study. However, the fact that the sample for this study was recruited using purposive sampling; it increased the possibility of threats to the external validity of the study. In order to reduce these bias external threats possible by purposive sampling, this researcher used participants who meet the study criteria (inclusion and exclusion criteria). In addition, I worked to increase participation rate and decrease dropout rate by making sure that the survey was not too long, the questions are easy to read and understand and that the participants were aware of the survey in advance (Schober & Conrad, 2015). I tried to accomplish this by making sure that the survey doesn't take more than 15 minutes to complete and by announcing the study and leaving the survey packets in the common waiting rooms to be access by potential participants at their will. In addition, having a large sample size also diminishes the threats to external validity (Garcia-Perez, 2012). The threat of having a small sample size was present in this study. As such, I was cautious not to draw conclusions based on insufficient data and not to make generalizations to a larger population based on the findings.

Internal Validity

Internal validity refers to the tenets of integrity, purity, control, and precision of the conditions of a study (Garcia-Perez, 2012). There are eight common threats to internal validity in quantitative research. These eight threats are: history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, statistical regression, selection of subjects, experimental

mortality, and selection-maturation interaction (Cook & Campbell, 1979). History was not a threat to this study because all the data were collected for a specific period of time. This study did measure various periods of time and so history was not a threat. Maturation did not pose a threat to the internal validity of this study because all the participants are close in age and are considered young adults. Since the data were only collected once there was no chance for the responses to change as the participants matures. Due to the fact that this study was nonexperimental, this study did not investigate a causal relationship between the variables. As such this study did not have a pre-test or post-test. Each participant responded to the survey questions only once, thereby eliminating testing threats. The instrumentation of this study did not pose a threat to the internal validity since the each participant answered the questions on the same survey instrument. In addition, the survey was announced, distributed, and scored by the researcher only. This was done to ensure that participants' clarification questions were answered the same and that the survey interactions were the same for all participants (Schober & Conrad, 2015). Ensuring consistency in the data collection practices removes any likelihood of testing threats.

Another possible testing threat was a difference in study location. In order to eliminate this threat, all data recruitment was done at the sites. There were no statistical regression threats to the internal validity of this study since this is a nonexperimental study and there was no grouping of participants. In order to eliminate the threat of selection, all participants selected for this study met all the characteristics for inclusion. In order to reduce the threat of experimental mortality, the instruments chosen contained

less than 25 items. The small number of questions minimized the likelihood of the participants becoming bored, tired or inattentive and not answering all questions. In addition, this researcher did not make any predictions about the existing relationship between variables. In order to reduce the threat of selection-maturation interaction, this researcher asked the participants not to discuss their responses and ask that they answer the questions based on their own personal experiences.

Statistical Conclusion Validity

Conclusion validity refers to the validity of the conclusions formed about the existing relationships of variables in a study (Cook & Campbell, 1979). Threats to statistical conclusion validity can lead to the researcher concluding that there is no relationship when in actuality there is a relationship or seeing a relationship that does not exist (Cook & Campbell, 1979). In order to address the issues of statistical conclusion validity, various processes were employed by this researcher. In regression analysis the degrees to which the assumptions of regression are met affect the statistical conclusion validity of the results. There are separate assumptions for logistic regression and MLR.

Assumptions for logistic regression: The basic assumptions associated with logistic regression are binary dependent variable, outliers, independence of errors, and multicollinearity (Field, 2009; Lin, Foster, & Ungar, 2011; Mertler & Venetta, 2005). The dependent variable for this study was the likelihood of recidivism among young Black males. Secondly, logistic regression assumes that $P(Y=1)$ is the probability of the event occurring, it is necessary that the dependent variable is coded accordingly. In this study likelihood of recidivism was the outcome of interest. Therefore, the dependent

variable was coded as $1 = \textit{participant recidivated within 3 years of release}$ or $0 = \textit{participant did not recidivate}$. Therefore the assumption regarding the level of measurement for the dependent variable was met for this study.

In order to ensure that the error terms were independent we must ensure that each observation is independent. The error terms need to be independent in this study as well as the variables need to be linear (Nathans et al., 2012). In order to determine that the error terms are independent in this study residuals were plot against time variables.

Multicollinearity was not found between the predictor variables. Coefficient r measured the strength of the interrelatedness of the variables of the study. Utilizing these processes outlined, helped to ensure that the statistical interpretations formed about the relationship between the variables in this study were reasonable and statistically sound.

Assumptions for multiple linear regression: The basic assumptions associated with linear regression are linear relationship between variables (ordinal, inteval/ratio), multivariate normality, multicollinearity and homosecdasticity (Beckstead, 2012; Nimon & Oswald, 2013). The independent variables for research question 2 are *probationers' perceptions of their probation officers and perceptions of the job of probation officers* and the dependent variable is *ratings of their probation officers' effectiveness*. These variables are ordinal which meets this assumption of linear relationship between variables. It is also important to check for outliers since multiple linear regression is sensitive to outlier effects. The linearity assumption was tested using scatterplots. In addition multiple linear regression analysis requires that the error between observed and predicted values (i.e., the residuals of the regression) normally distributed. This was

checked by plotting residual values on a histogram. Multicollinearity was checked using VIF with $VIF=1.32$ which finds no multicollinearity between the predictor variables. A Scatter plot was used to check for homoscedasticity and the error terms along the regression line were found to be equal. These processes have confirmed that the statistical procedures and interpretations formed in this study in assessing the variables were appropriate and statistically sound.

Ethical Procedures

In order to ensure that there were no ethical violations throughout the conducting of this study, an IRB application was submitted to the IRB department of Walden University seeking permission to conduct this study. The IRB application included a detailed description of the plans to collect data, the processes that were put in place to protect the participants, and samples of the consent for and details of the processes to ensure confidentiality. I gained written IRB approval to collect data for this study (Approval number 03-08-17-0199031; see Appendix E). Prior to the collection of data, all participants were given informed consent forms and informed that the return of the completed survey instrument would serve as their informed consent. The informed consent form explained the purpose and processes of the study. Through the use of the informed consent the researcher hoped that the participants' fully understood the process and felt comfortable in agreeing to participate in the study. Participants were reminded in the consent forms that their participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participants were advised that all forms containing their personal information will be kept confidential in a locked, fire proof file cabinet that will only be accessible to the

researcher. These forms will remain secured for 5 years after which they will be shredded. The research instrument did contain any personal information on the participants. This researcher had full control of all the completed survey instruments.

The confidentiality of the participants is very important in any study and so it is necessary to have a confidentiality agreement. This agreement assured the participants that the information shared will not be used outside of this study and will not be share with anyone except the researcher. Participants were advised of their right to opt-out of the study at any time. Even though the participants of this study assessed their juvenile probation officer and their juvenile probation experience, each participant was over the age of 18 so as not to have participants of a vulnerable population, and eliminating the need for parental consent. In addition, no question asked the participant to share personal or contact information for their juvenile probation officer. Permission was also granted by the developers of the instruments that were used to conduct this study and were added to the appendix of the final dissertation document. A copy of the permission letter is included in Appendix A of the final dissertation.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the predictive relationships between Black male probationers' perceptions of their juvenile probation officers, their perceptions of the job of probation officers, their ratings of their probation officers effectiveness in deterring their recidivism, and their subsequent recidivism. This chapter provided detailed descriptions of the research methods, process, statistical test, validity and reliability of this study as well as possible threats to this study. In addition,

the rational for chosen research methods and processes was explained. Chapter four provides the results of this study and identifies any existing relationship amongst the variables of this study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In this study, I examined the following predictive relationships: (a) Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers, their perceptions of the probation officers' job, and their subsequent recidivism; and (b) Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers, their perceptions of the probation officers' job, and their ratings of their probation officer's effectiveness in deterring their recidivism within 3 years of being placed on probation. This chapter includes the results of this study from the data analysis.

The chapter is divided into three sections to present the findings of this study. The first section of this chapter includes the data collection process. Section two includes the results of the data analysis. The final section of this chapter includes a discussion of the results of the data analysis. The discussion of the results provides descriptive statistics that characterized the sample as well as an evaluation of the statistical assumptions and the statistical analysis findings. The research questions and hypotheses that guided this study are presented below:

[Please be sure to make the corrections to the questions and hypotheses that I modeled above. The questions and hypotheses must match throughout the paper.]

Research Question 1: How well do probationers' perceptions of their probation officers and their perceptions of the job of the probation officer predict the likelihood of recidivism among young Black males within 3 years after being placed on probation?

Null Hypothesis (H_{10}): The independent variables of probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are not statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of recidivism for Black male juvenile offenders within 3 years after being placed on probation.

Alternate Hypothesis (H_{1A}): The independent variables of probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of recidivism for Black male juvenile offenders within 3 years after being placed on probation

The second research question and associated hypotheses are presented below:

Research Question 2: How well do the probationers' perceptions of their probation officers and their perceptions of the job of the probation officer predict the probationers' ratings of their probation officers' effectiveness in deterring their recidivism?

Null Hypothesis (H_{20}): The independent variables probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (cores on the PJNPO) are not statistically significant predictors of Black male probationers' ratings of their probation officers' effectiveness (measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale) in deterring their recidivism.

Alternate Hypothesis (H_{2A}): The independent variables of probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the

job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of recidivism for Black male juvenile offenders within 3 years after being placed on probation.

Data Collection

I recruited Black males between the ages of 18-25 who had been on juvenile probation to participate in this study. I met with potential participants at ULGA and HTNH to announce the study and answer questions. I placed survey packets in the common waiting rooms of both sites with information on how to return the packets to the researcher. I went back to the data collection sites twice after the initial announcement of study and posted study flyers (Appendix D) in the waiting rooms with information on how to contact me if a potential participant was interested in participating in the study. I collected data for 10 weeks, and 61 surveys were returned via USPS mail to me.

Discrepancies in Data

I found a discrepancy between the original data collection plan and the actual data that was collected. I originally planned to have a sample size of 71 participants. However, after 10 weeks of data collection, that sample size was not achieved. The small sample size will be addressed in the limitations of section of Chapter 5.

Demographics

I ran a frequency count for the variables to get descriptive statistics for the demographic data. Table 1 displays the frequency counts for the demographic variables. The ages of probationers ranged from 18 to 25. The median age is 20.5 years. Almost all probationers had recidivated within 3 years of being placed on probation supervision

(90.2%). Twenty-four probationers (39.3%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their probation officer had an impact on their recidivism.

Table 1

Frequency Counts for Demographic Variables (N = 61)

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Age ^a	18-19	27	44.3
	20-21	17	27.9
	22-23	14	23.0
	24-25	3	4.9
Length of Probation Order ^b	Under 1 year	9	14.8
	1 year	29	47.5
	2 years	19	31.1
	3 years or more	4	6.6
Sex of Probation Officer	Male	31	50.8
	Female	30	49.2
Recidivism within Three Years	Yes	55	90.2
	No	6	9.8
Probation Officer Had Impact	Strongly Disagree	5	8.2
	Disagree	19	31.1
	Neutral	13	21.3
	Agree	18	29.5
	Strongly Agree	6	9.8
Probation Officer's Perceived Unfairness	Very fair	8	13.1
	Fair	33	54.1
	Neutral	15	24.6
	Unfair	3	4.9

^a *Mdn* = 20.5 years.

^b *Mdn* = 1 year.

Table 2 provides a summary of the psychometric properties for the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for the two aggregated scale scores. Both scale scores had acceptable levels of internal reliability ($\alpha > .70$) (Table 2). The results from the reliability analysis were consistent with values reported by the author of the instrument. Chui and Chan (2014) reported a Cronbach alpha score for the PAPO of 0.80. In this study the Cronbach alpha score for PAPO was α value of 0.83. These findings both suggest homogeneity of items. Similarly, Chui and Chan reported Cronbach's alpha for the PJNPO of 0.73. The Cronbach alpha scores for the PJNPO in this study yielded an α value of .80. These instruments were not used by other studies and so there was no way of comparing the reliability score from this study and the authors of the instruments with other studies.

Table 2

Psychometric Characteristics for Aggregated Scales (N = 61)

Scale	Number					
	of Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Low	High	α
PAPO-Probationer's Perceptions of the Probation Officers	7	3.07	0.74	2.00	5.00	.83
PJNPO-Perceptions of the Job of Probation Officers	7	3.54	0.60	2.00	5.00	.80

Testing Statistical Assumptions

In order to ensure that the data collected were appropriate for statistical analyses using logistic and multiple linear regression, I tested the assumptions for regression. I assessed the data for outliers, multicollinearity, and missing data prior to the regression analyses (Fields, 2009; Nimon & Oswald, 2013).

Missing Data and Outliers: I assessed the data set for missing data and I did not find missing data in the dataset. I also assessed the data sets by visually reviewing each item for missing data. As for outliers, I conducted a check using boxplot. The dependent variables of recidivism and effectiveness had no outliers.

Multicollinearity: I used the bivariate correlation procedure to evaluate for multicollinearity among the variables. I did not find multicollinearity between the predictor variables based on the variance inflation factor (VIF). The VIF equals 1.32. (Table 5).

Table 3

Spearman Correlations among the Primary Study Variables (N = 61)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. PAPO-Probationer's Perceptions of the Probation Officers	1.00			
2. PJNPO-Perceptions of the Job of Probation Officers	.38 ***	1.00		
3. Recidivism ^a	.12	.08	1.00	
4. Probation Officer Had Impact ^b	.10	-.11	-.28 *	1.00

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$.

^a Recidivism: 0 = *No* 1 = *Yes*.

^b Impact: 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

Table 3 displays the Spearman correlations among the primary variables in the study. I used Spearman correlations instead of the more common Pearson correlations because the dependent variable was coded at the binary level. Results showed that the PAPO score was positively related to the PJNPO, $r_s = .38, p = .003$. Therefore, the scores of perceptions held by probationers' of their probation officers were significantly related with the scores of perceptions ratings on the job of their probation officers. In addition, recidivism was negatively related to the probation officer's impact rating, $r_s = -.28, p = .03$. As such the results showed that when probationers' felt that their probation officers had an impact deterring their recidivism, they were less likely to recidivate (Table 3).

Results

The data in this study was analyzed based on the two research questions and the related correlations. I used statistical testing to analyze the data and present the findings. Tables are included in the results section to illustrate the findings of the data after data analysis using the SPSS software.

[Research questions and hypotheses must be written consistently throughout.

Please see my modelling above.]

Research Question 1: How well do probationers' perceptions of their probation officers and their perceptions of the job of the probation officer predict the likelihood of recidivism among young Black males within 3 years after being placed on probation?

Null Hypothesis (H_{10}): The independent variables of probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are not statistically significant predictors of the

likelihood of recidivism for Black male juvenile offenders within 3 years after being placed on probation. The null hypothesis indicates that in the population, the odds that changes in the IVs would lead to an increased likelihood of the DV, recidivism, is zero. The equation for the null hypothesis is expressed as presented below:

$$H_{10}: \beta_1\chi_1 + \beta_2\chi_2 = 0 \text{ where: } \chi_1 = \text{PAPA and } \chi_2 = \text{PJNPO}$$

Alternate Hypothesis (H_{1A}): The independent variables of probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of recidivism for Black male juvenile offenders within 3 years after being placed on probation. The alternate hypothesis indicates that in the population, the odds that changes in the IVs would lead to an increase in the likelihood of the DV, recidivism, is not zero. The equation for the alternate hypothesis is expressed as presented below:

$$H_A: \beta_1\chi_1 + \beta_2\chi_2 \neq 0 \text{ where: } \chi_1 = \text{PAPO and } \chi_2 = \text{PJNPO}$$

I used logistic regression to answer Research Question 1 and test the null hypothesis. A summary of the model is presented in Table 4. Results indicated that the overall model was not statistically significant ($X^2=1.07$, $df = 2$, $p = .59$), and neither of the two individual odds ratio was significant at the $p < .05$ level. Additionally, the Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 indicated that the model only accounted for 3.7% of the variance in the DV. The Cox and Snell R^2 further indicated that the model accounted for only 1.7% of the variance in the DV. The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test was not significant ($p = .20$) which indicated that the model was a good fit for the data.

Table 4

Logistic Regression: Predicting Recidivism (N = 61)

Variables	Coefficient	Wald	<i>p</i>	Exp (<i>B</i>)
PAPO-Probationer's Perceptions of the Probation Officers	0.68	0.87	.35	1.98
PJNPO-Perceptions of the Job of Probation Officers	-0.07	0.01	.93	0.93
Constant	0.46	0.03	.87	1.59

Note. Full Model: $\chi^2 (2, N = 61) = 1.07, p = .59$.

Note. Base classification model = 90.2%. Final classification model = 90.2%.

Note. Model summary statistics: Nagelkerke pseudo $R^2 = 3.7%$; Cox and Snell $R^2 = 1.7%$; Hosmer and Lemeshow Test ($p = .20$)

The results of the 2X2 classification table for the logistic regression model can be found in Table 5. Findings indicated that the model correctly classified 90.2% of all probationers. Six probationers' reported that they did not recidivate, however the baseline model predicted that all probationers' recidivated. The base classification rate was 90.2% and the final model classification rate remained at 90.2% This combination of findings provided support to retain the null hypothesis (H_{10}): The independent variables of probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are not statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of recidivism for Black male juvenile offenders within 3 years after being placed on probation.

Research Question 2: How well do the probationers' perceptions of their probation officers and their perceptions of the job of the probation officer predict the probationers' ratings of their probation officers' effectiveness in deterring their recidivism?

Null Hypothesis (H_{20}): The independent variables probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (by scores on the PJNPO) are not statistically significant predictors of Black male probationers' ratings of their probation officers' effectiveness (measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale) in deterring their recidivism. The null hypothesis indicates that in the population, the linear combination of IVs in the regression model will not predict the DV, effectiveness. The equation for the null hypothesis is expressed as presented below:

$$H_0: \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 = 0 \text{ where } X_1 = \text{PAPO and } X_2 = \text{PJNPO}$$

Alternate Hypothesis (H_{2A}): The independent variables of probationers' perceptions of their probation officers scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of recidivism for Black male juvenile offenders within 3 years after being placed on probation. The alternative hypothesis indicates that in the population, the linear combination of IVs in the regression model will predict the DV, effectiveness. The equation for the alternative hypothesis is expressed as presented below:

$$H_{2A}: \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 \neq 0 \text{ where } X_1 = \text{PAPO and } X_2 = \text{PJNPO}$$

The MLR procedure was used to test the null hypothesis for the second research question. The overall two-variable model was not significant ($p = .55$) and accounted for only 2.0% of the variance in effectiveness. Inspection of the individual beta weights found neither independent variable to be significant at the $p < .05$ level. These findings provided support to retain the null hypothesis for Research Question Two (Table 5).

Table 5

Probation Officers' Effectiveness Based on Perception Variables (N = 61)

Predictor VIF	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	
Intercept	3.57	0.92		3.86	.001	
PAPO-Probationer's Perceptions of the Probation Officers	0.17	0.24	.11	0.74	.46	1.32
PJNPO-Perceptions of the Job of Probation Officers	-0.31	0.29	-.16	-1.06	.29	1.32

Full Model: $F(2, 58) = 0.60, p = .55. R^2 = .020$.

Conclusion

This chapter provided the results from data analysis for this study. Data from survey responses of 61 probationers were used to answer the two research questions. The data was used to examine the predictive relationships between Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers and of the job of the probation officer with rates of probationers' recidivism (Research question 1). The data was also used to examine the predictive relationships between Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers and of the job of the probation officer with probationers' ratings of their own probation officer's effectiveness in deterring their own recidivism (Research question 2).

Results from logistic regression showed that the independent variables of probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (scores on the PJNPO) are not statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of recidivism for Black male juvenile offenders within 3 years after being placed on probation (Tables 4). Results showed that the independent variables probationers' perceptions of their probation officers (scores on the PAPO) and their perceptions of the job of probation officers (by scores on the PJNPO) are not statistically significant predictors of Black male probationers' ratings of their probation officers' effectiveness (measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale) in deterring their recidivism (Table 5). Overall, the results showed that when black males perceived their probation officers to be effective their recidivism rates were likely to be lower. In the final chapter, these findings will be compared to the literature, conclusions and implications for social change will be drawn, and a series of recommendations will be suggested.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In this quantitative, correlational study, I examined the following predictive relationships: (a) Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers, their perceptions of the probation officers' job, and their subsequent recidivism; and (b) Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers, their perceptions of the probation officers' job, and their ratings of their probation officer's effectiveness in deterring their recidivism within 3 years of being placed on probation. Results from the logistic regression analysis indicated that the perceptions held by Black males of their probation officers' and the job of their probation officers' were not significant predictors of their subsequent recidivism. The results also showed that the Black male probationer's perceptions of their probation officers and their perceptions of job of their probation officers' did not predict their ratings of their probation officer's effectiveness in deterring them from recidivating within 3 years of being on probation. Additionally, findings showed that when probationer's perceptions of their probation officer increased, their likelihood of reoffending decreased.

In this chapter I summarize the findings of this research study to the research questions. In the first part of this chapter I will discuss the interpretations of the findings in the context of the theoretical framework and the existing literature. I address the limitations of the study next. In the limitations of study section, I discuss the generalizability, validity and reliability of the study. I will end this chapter with the recommendations for future research and the implications of the study for social change.

Interpretation of Findings

This section includes a discussion of the two central findings of this study within the context of existing literature. In this section I also present findings relative to the theoretical foundation used to ground this study.

Probationer's Perceptions of Probation Officers and Recidivism

The first research question for this study addressed probationers' perceptions of probation officers and its relation to predicting their subsequent recidivism. Results revealed that the Black male probationers' perceptions of their juvenile probation officers and their perceptions of the job of their juvenile probation officers' did not predict their subsequent recidivism. Results from this study support findings from other research that showed that positive relationships between probationers and probation officers is related to lower likelihoods of recidivism. The negative correlation between the probationers' perceptions of the probation officer and recidivism supported this finding. The inverse relationship between the variables suggests that as probationers' perceptions of their probation officer increased, their likelihood of reoffending decreased. A summary of some of those studies which support the findings of this study are presented below.

Chui and Chan's (2014) research showed that juveniles reported that being on probation supervision played an integral part in the decisions they made. The juvenile probationers who perceived that their probation officers had their best interest at heart were least likely to recidivate. Similarly, the findings from a research study conducted by King (2013) revealed that the connection probationers had with their probation officer fostered social and emotional skill building that impacted the likelihood of the

probationers' reoffending. James et al. (2013), in a study on aftercare supervision on juvenile recidivism rates, found that aftercare supervision had a small, positive effect on juvenile recidivism rates when compared to rates of youths who were released with no supervision.

The argument for the increased use of probation with juvenile offenders is that it provides these juveniles with positive alternatives to incarceration or choosing criminogenic lifestyles (James et al., 2013). The results from a study conducted by Steiner et al. (2012) revealed that probation forces offenders to make short term changes, and these changes can redirect the offenders to make long term life changing behavioral implementations. This argument is further supported by the findings from Vidal et al. (2013). These researchers found that when a young female perceived the relationship with their probation officer to be meaningful and supportive, the youth was more likely to achieve positive outcomes.

Probationer's Perceptions of Effectiveness of Probation Officers and Recidivism

The second research question addressed probationers' perceptions of the effectiveness of probation officers and its relation to their subsequent recidivism. Results revealed that the Black male probationers' perceptions of their juvenile probation officers and their perceptions of the job of their juvenile probation officers' did not predict their subsequent ratings of their probation officers' effectiveness in deterring recidivism. Results from this study showed a recidivism/classification rate of 90.2 % and predicted that all probationers in this study recidivated. This finding supports the findings from

previous studies on juvenile probation in which the findings showed that there is no evidence that effective probation supervision deters recidivism (Wodahl et al., 2015).

In a study conducted by DeLude et al. (2012), findings showed that there is no way of determining the role probation officers having in reducing recidivism. In fact, some researchers have argued that probation is short-term coercion with short-term goals (Steiner et al., 2012). Consequently, compliance with probation and regulations from juvenile offenders is short term and does not extend beyond the term of the probation supervision (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015; Steiner et al., 2012).

The theoretical framework that guided this study was Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. Studies have used this theory to explain how features within an environment can significantly impact an individual's behavior (Malott & Fromader, 2010). Findings from previous research on recidivism in which the ecological systems theory was used supported the argument that the relationship between a probation officer and juvenile significantly impacts the likelihood of the juvenile reoffending (Malott & Fromader, 2010; Wright et al., 2014). The findings of this study are linked to the chronosystem of the ecological systems theory in that they support the tenets of this theory that state that when an individual is paired with positive support, there is a noticeable reduction in their recidivism (Wright et al., 2014).

Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of this study was the low survey response rate. For this study, 61 Black males between the ages of 18-25 completed and returned the surveys to this researcher. In addition, the fact that the participants were self-selected affects the

results of this study. The fact that a participant decided to participate in this study may be due to having some inherent bias. As such, self-selection bias may affect the truthfulness of participants' responses. Having a larger sample may have led to different results.

Another limitation of this study is that I chose the purposive sampling with specific inclusion criteria to recruit participants. This sampling method limited the age and race of participants, thereby limiting the number of people who could participate in the study. Black males between the ages on 18-25 were the target sample of this study which made it impossible for females, as well as individuals of other races to participate in study. In order for this study to be replicated, it is imperative that it be done under the same circumstances and conditions. If this study were to be replicated at other geographic locations, or with a different race, age, or gender of participants, the results yielded could be quite different. Therefore, caution should be used when using the findings of this study to make generalizations about other geographical locations, ethnic groups, and or different genders.

Another limitation of this study is that in this study I examined the recidivism rates of Black male juvenile probationers up to 3 years after being placed in juvenile probation. Conducting this study using a longer or shorter period of probation supervision may yield different results. It is quite possible that the probationers' perceptions of their probation officers may be different if the time period examined is different. Therefore caution should be taken when making generalizations about this study and the impact of time on probation may have on deterring recidivism in Black male juvenile probationers.

This study was also limited in the definition used for recidivism. In this study, recidivism was defined as readjudication or conviction after an initial adjudication or conviction. However, there may have been some participants who committed new crimes but were not apprehended and or processed through the system. Additionally, recidivism within 3 years of being placed on probation may not be a sensitive enough of an indicator for the effectiveness of probation officers in their roles.

Recommendations

This study provided results that showed that when Black male juvenile probationers held perceptions that their juvenile probation officers' were effective; they were less likely to recidivate. My first recommendation would be to replicate this study in different settings. When replicated, the research must encompass a larger sample of participants. In replicating this study one is recommendation is that the data be collected for more than 10 weeks. A longer data collection period may yield more responses, increasing the sample size of the study. In addition, it would also be beneficial to conduct online surveys to get a larger study sample.

This study should also be replicated in studies that can assess the perceptions of the probationers' and the actual job duties of the probation officers. This may yield findings that can address why probation officers operate in the way in which they do. Additionally, the replication of this study should be done with emphasis on the types of services rendered by probation officers and the effectiveness of those services. The replication of this study using this focus could shed light on probation services and may help to further answer how probation services impacts recidivism.

A repeat of this study should also be conducted with an examination of whether probation officers are actually authoritative and the impact of this approach on probationers' subsequent recidivism. This new focus may help researchers to better understand the impact that their personality and interactions with probationers can have on their subsequent recidivism.

This study should also be repeated using participants from different geographical locations, age ranges, races, and genders. This replication could offer additional findings from which generalizations could be drawn if the results are aligned. Future studies could also change the definition of recidivism to include crimes for which the offender was not caught. This inclusion may increase the sample size as well as shed light on the probationers' perceptions of their probation experience as it relates to their subsequent recidivism. However, participants' may be hesitant in reporting criminal activities for which they did not receive criminal sanctions and this may affect their responses.

Implications

The findings from this study have implications for social change. Findings from this study could extend the existing literature and research on juvenile recidivism by providing evidence that the positive relationship between a probation officer and probationer is an important factor in reducing recidivism. The results from this study revealed that a positive interaction between probation officers and probationers reduces the likelihood of recidivism.

Based on the findings from this study, the leadership of juvenile probation agencies could propose the implementation of a quarterly open forum in which probation

officers and probationers can give feedback on their interactions. Leadership and decision makers of juvenile justice agencies can utilize the findings of this study to support the need for the development of continued trainings for juvenile probation officers highlighting the importance of their interactions with their probationers and the effect probation officer interactions can have on probationers' recidivism (Morenoff & Harding, 2014). This could be done by having quarterly trainings on probation officer skills building in which they highlight appropriate probation officer/probationer interactions. These trainings can improve the knowledge of probation officers regarding the role their relationship with their probationers plays in their subsequent recidivism. In addition, these training can also help probationers to feel more comfortable and open when interacting with their probation officers.

The reduction in recidivism rates of juveniles could result in the widespread use and acceptance of probation services. In addition, a reduction in recidivism rates among juvenile offenders could also give these offenders better outcomes for their future (Chan, 2014; Chui & Chan, 2014; Mallot & Fromader, 2010; Wright et al., 2014). Research has shown that it is quite costly to detain a juvenile (Zagar et al., 2013). The results from this study could help states to realign their budget spending on incarceration rates. Research has shown that high recidivism rates impacts offenders educational and employment attainment (Anderson, 2014; Upadhyayula et al., 2015). However, research has also shown that when there is a perception of a positive relationship with the probation officer, the youth was more likely to have positive outcomes (Vidal e al., 2013). As such it is very crucial that management and leaders of juvenile probation agencies develop and

incorporate strategies in which the relationship between probationers and probation officers can be positive.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the following predictive relationships: (a) Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers, their perceptions of the probation officers' job, and their subsequent recidivism; and (b) Black male probationers' perceptions of their probation officers, their perceptions of the probation officers' job, and their ratings of their probation officer's effectiveness in deterring their recidivism within 3 years of being placed on probation. As more and more juvenile justice agencies rely on probation as an intervention to target juvenile delinquency and recidivism, it is important to understand the effectiveness of this intervention in achieving these goals (James et al., 2013; Morenoff & Harding, 2014). The results of this study show that the positive relationship between the probation officer and the probationer can likely reduce the recidivism.

Overall, the results from the study did not support the null hypotheses. The results showed that none of the perception scales were significant in predicting recidivism. However, the findings showed that when the probationers' perceived the probation officer to be effective, they were less likely to recidivate. As such, juvenile justice policy makers and leaders should consider developing trainings and procedures that can improve the effectiveness of juvenile probation officers in their roles. Improving the effectiveness of juvenile probation officers in their roles working with juvenile probation officers may

contribute to noticeable reduction in juvenile recidivism rates, specifically among young Black male probationers.

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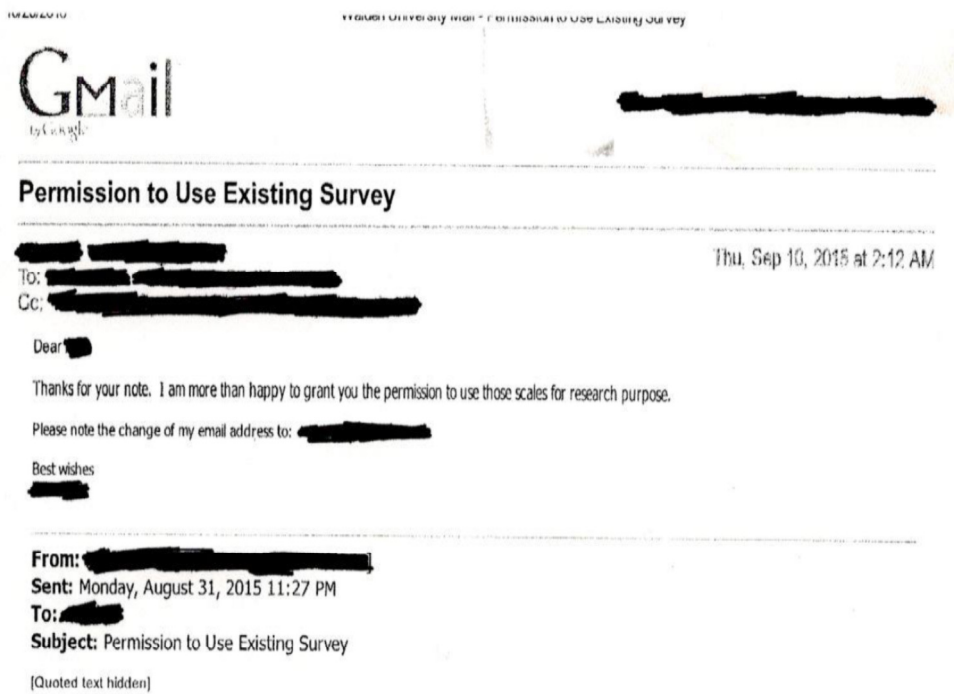
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Appendix A: Permission to Use Survey



Appendix B: Survey

 **PsychTESTS**[®]

doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t37913-000>

Perceptions of Probation Officers Scale

Items

Juvenile probationers' views of their probation officer

Factor 1: Perceived working relationship with the probation officer

1. My probation officer always gives order to me.
2. I feel stressful working with my probation officer.
3. My probation officer has strict control over me.
4. My probation officer would punish me if I could not complete the assigned tasks.

Factor 2: Perceived authoritarianism of the probation officer

1. My probation officer requires me to completely obey his/her command.
2. My probation officer would make the decision for me, no matter how small the matter would be.
3. My probation officer has the final say.

Juvenile probationers' views of the overall job nature of probation officers

Factor 1: Perceived primary job function of probation officers

1. The primary concern as a probation officer is to monitor the offender's compliance of the probation order.
2. The role of a probation officer is like a police officer.
3. The function of a probation officer is most closely approximate the function of law enforcement.

Factor 2: Perceived probation officers' expected relationship with the probationers

4. The probation officer's most appropriate role is as a supervisor to the offender.
5. The most important aspect of a probation officer's job is to engage in offender surveillance.

Factor 3: Perceived probation officers' mode of operation in offender rehabilitation

6. The primary obligation of a probation officer is to enforce supervisory condition of the offender.
 7. The most effective way for a probation officer to change an offender's behavior is through punitive sanctions.
-

PsychTESTS[™] is a database of the American Psychological Association

Appendix C: Letters of Cooperation to Conduct Study



Urban League of
Greater Atlanta

Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.

November 30, 2016

Urban League of Greater Atlanta
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Dear [Redacted]

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Black Male Probationers' Perceptions of Juvenile Probation Officers' Role in Reducing Recidivism within the Urban League of Greater Atlanta's Empowerment Center. As part of this study, I authorize you to utilize your survey "Juvenile Probationers' Views of their Probation Officer". Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion. Additionally, participants' identity will be kept confidential adhering to HIPAA requirements.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: Providing African American male participants that may be currently on juvenile probation or with previous participants that have completed juvenile probation and the classroom for survey to be completed. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "L. A. [Redacted]".

[Redacted]
Program Manager, Youth Services
Urban Youth Empowerment Program
[Redacted]

CC: [Redacted] Director Youth Services



Hearts to Nourish Hope, Inc.

[Redacted]

February 19, 2017

Dear [Redacted]

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Black Male Probationers' Perceptions of Juvenile Probation Officers' Role in Reducing Recidivism within the Hearts to Nourish Hope Center. As part of this study, I authorize you to utilize your survey "Juvenile Probationer's Views of their Probation Officer." Individuals participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion. Additionally, participants' identity will be kept confidential adhering to HIPPA requirements.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: providing African American male participants that may be currently on juvenile probation or with previous participants that have completed juvenile probation and an office space for the survey to be completed. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Associate Director of Education and Data
Hearts to Nourish Hope

[Redacted]

Appendix D: Recruitment Flyer

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

- Are you a Black male between the ages of 18-25?
- Were you on probation as a juvenile?
- Would you like to share your perceptions about your probation experience?

If you answered yes to the following questions I would like to invite you to participate in a research study for my dissertation examining **Black male probationers' perceptions of Juvenile Probation Officers' role in reducing recidivism.**

Your participation in this study is **voluntary** and your responses are **confidential**. If you have 20 minutes to spare and would like to take a survey about your juvenile probation experience please feel free to reach out to me. If you think you are eligible and would like to participate I would be happy to talk with you and get a survey instrument to you. I can be reached via email at [REDACTED]

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

This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University. The IRB study # is _____. The Walden IRB has reviewed this study to ensure that the researcher treats each participant within the legal requirements of the state of Georgia and that all participants are treated in an ethical manner.

