Intervention Techniques and Social Interaction of Rehabilitated Minor Offenders of Davao City: Basis for Policy Enhancement

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Abstract

This study is a descriptive-correlation research that looked into the significant relationship between the extent intervention techniques applied and the level of social interaction of young offenders in two rehabilitation centers of Davao City. The participants were 66 boys and 6 girls as young as 10 to 17 years old that are in conflict with the law and are currently in the custody of psychologists and social workers at Lamdag sa Kabataan for boys situated at Claro M. Recto Street and Tugbok Rehabilitation Center for boys and girls situated at Tugbok, Davao City. These young offenders either committed homicide, parricide, murder, rape, or theft. Since all of these minor offenders were subjected to various interventions the researchers were challenged to conduct an investigation in this regard to personally verify as to whether or not the intervention techniques applied to these juveniles had an impact on the cognitive, behavioral and affective dimensions of their personality and to further verify the degree of effects on their social interaction with other people. The computed r value +0.93 indicated a high correlation between the intervention techniques provided by the rehabilitation centers management, and the social interaction of the rehabilitated minor offenders. The researchers conclude therefore, that intervention techniques and social interactions have a direct relationship; that intervention techniques, when properly applied, will produce a positive impact on the social interaction of the offender.

Key words: Intervention techniques, social interaction, young offenders, juveniles
1. Introduction

Crimes committed by young people less than 18 years of age could indicate a general state of morality, law and order in a country (Loeber & Farrington, 2005). Recidivism has been rampant among young offenders. To combat this, rehabilitation was introduced throughout the 1950’s and 1960’s, and it was seen as a promising approach (Andrews & Bonta, 2007) to reducing recidivism by 50 to 60%. Wormith (2006) emphasized that if a country were to prevent the percentage increase of juvenile crime or if not to totally eliminate it, intervention efforts should involve the entire community including schools, faith-based organizations, business, law enforcement and most importantly, the parents. In juvenile detention, the goal is to rehabilitate and develop the individual where a sense of hope is instilled so that the young offender is not resigned to the fate of a “second class citizen”. Filipino author Bustos (2006) pointed that offenders, like all human beings, are always changing their behaviors as a consequence to environmental demands and through their own deliberate, autonomous, self-directed change. He observed that once the offender’s ability to learn from a rehabilitative intervention is maximized by providing cognitive behavioral treatment and tailoring the intervention to the learning style, motivation, abilities and strengths of the offender, the desired change follows.

In the Philippines, in recognition to the special needs of children, and in affirmation of the principle of special childhood rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was ratified in 1990 in Manila, one of the first cities in the island to do so. The CRC advocates the protection of the rights of young offenders who are in custody of the police or other government institutions. Laws in the Philippines, specifically in article 68 of the Revised Penal Code, mandate that young offenders be given lighter or lesser punishments compared to adults. Thus, the recommendation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1990, in Article 3 (1) is, “In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration” (Sun Star, 2007).

In following the precepts, Davao City now has two rehabilitation centers that are presently caring for young offenders. One is Lamdag sa Kabataan at Claro M. Recto Street with 16 juveniles in detention. This center houses only boys aging from 16 years to as low as ten years old with various crimes committed such as murder, rape, and theft. The other one is Tugbok Rehabilitation Center with 56 young offenders (50 boys and 6 girls in custody) at the date of this study, located at Tugbok district and is supervised by social workers and psychologists. These minor offenders were subjected to various intervention techniques. It is along this regard that the researchers were encouraged to conduct an investigation to personally verify whether the invention techniques applied to these juveniles had an impact.
on the cognitive, behavioral and affective dimensions of their personality. Additionally, to verify the degree of effects vis-à-vis their social interaction with other people.

2. Literature Review

Contributing factors to child delinquency are numerous and varied and family is foremost: The level of parental supervision, the way parents discipline a child, conflict or separation, abuse or neglect, and the quality of the parent-child relationship. Secondly, the individual psychological or behavioral risk factors (Farrington, 2005) such as intelligence, or impulsiveness where children who perform poorly at school are linked to offending. Impulsiveness is seen by some as the key aspect of a child’s personality that predicts offending, while the Strain Theory presupposes that poor educational attainment could lead to crime as children were unable to attain wealth and status legally.

One of the most of the common characteristics observed among delinquent children is the dislike of school and teachers. Klinteberg, Anderson & Magnusson (2007) underscored the importance of meeting the interests and needs of children and adolescents at their levels of development. That once these needs are met inside the classrooms, children will have a rich and varied opportunities for self expression, increased flexibility and sense of adaptation thereby discouraging aversion and passive indifference toward school.

The General Strain Theory pointed to aversive atmosphere at home and school as the major causes of juvenile delinquency. It stressed that emotional atmosphere, hostilities, and inadequacies in the parent-children relationships do greater injury to the child than physical hurts. From the preventive point of view, then, it seems clear that the greatest hope for discouraging delinquency must lie in efforts to improve the quality and harmony (Myers, 2002) of the family system. Aranas (2004) observed that in the Philippines, those who come into conflict with the law are often street youth, drug users, and those with interrupted education, who have limited access to the family and societal structures that are supposed to protect them.

In cases where young offenders are arrested, their rehabilitation should be the primordial remedy. According to Farrington (2005) that in America, punishment rather than rehabilitation is being emphasized for juveniles who commit crimes. The FBI reported that 62% of juveniles arrested in 1992 were referred to juvenile courts, five per cent to a criminal or adult court, two per cent to a welfare agency, and one per cent to another police agency. Young offenders who are confined together with adults in a regular prison cell are less likely to survive, and if they do they are more likely to become repeat offenders. In the UK, according to Andrews (2005), the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 enables some criminal convictions to be ignored after a rehabilitation period. This is primarily because the
government does not want to create a stigma in the life of the minor offender. For young offender (under 18) the rehabilitation period is generally half that for adults.

In the Philippines, however, child offenders are charged with criminal liabilities only if they are found to have committed the crime with discernment. Children in conflict with law (CICL) who are detained in the city and municipal jails and other penal institutions are released and turned over to DSWD to undergo diversion programs like counseling, capacity building, training and socio-civic work under DSWD supervision (Sun Star, 2007) as mandate in Republic Act 9344.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

The primary intent of this study was to determine whether or not the intervention techniques applied to the young offenders in two rehabilitation centers of Davao City significantly influenced their social interaction or social dealings with others.

Questions raised in this study tried to look into the following: The profile of the rehabilitated minor offenders of Davao City; the extent of intervention techniques applied on the rehabilitated minor offenders in terms of their cognitive, behavioral, and affective dimensions; the level of social interaction demonstrated by the rehabilitated minor offenders in terms of their perception, actions, influence, exchange, and relations. The researchers used questionnaire and in depth interviews in order to answer this question.

3.2 Theory Base

This study is anchored on two theories which are believed by the researchers to be supportive of the study being conducted.

First, the Social Learning Theory of Albert Bandura as mentioned by Arnold T. (2007) postulated that human learning is a continuous reciprocal interaction of cognitive, behavioral, environmental, and affective factors. Being used as an intervention technique, and sometimes called observational learning this type of learning as supported by social learning theory focuses on behavior modeling, in which the child observes and then imitates the behavior of adults or other children around him or her, which may affect his mind or his cognitive domain, his body or his behavioral dimension and his emotion or his affective dimension.

Second, the Social Bond Theory, also known as Social Control Theory was devised by Travis Hirschi in the 1960s. According to his theory, as reported by Hunt (2002), several bonds an individual must make to determine whether or not, he will commit criminal offenses: His attachment or his interest in another human being; his commitment towards mores and social laws; his involvement in positive activities which would prevent from having time to criminal acts; and his belief. Hirschi believed than when a person does not live
in an area that holds the same values, or when he believes the law is unfair, he tends to rebel and commit criminal acts.

3.3 Data

The data used for this study were the responses from the questionnaire and the result of the in-depth interviews conducted. There were seventy-two young offenders (or Children in Conflict with the Law).

The survey instrument consisted of three parts. Part I dealt with the general information about the participants. Only relevant data needed in the study were gathered. Part II was about the extent to which the 25-point intervention techniques were applied to the rehabilitated minor offenders. It has three dimensions: Affected, cognitive, and behavioral. Part III was a 50-item questionnaire on social interaction of young offenders pertaining to their perception, actions, influence, exchange, and relations. All 72 participants completed the questionnaire thereby resulting to a 100% response rate.

4. Results and Discussion

A. The most salient aspect of the results is the high percentage (61.39%) of the crime committed by children with ages 10 to 14 years old. It was found out in the study that theft and illegal possession of firearms (comprising to 21%) was the most common crime committed by these child offenders under custody by the two rehab centers in Davao City. About 17% were charged with murder and the violation of RA 9165, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. About 14% were charged with rape; 11.11% were charged with juvenile delinquency. Other offenses are minimal with 4.17 per cent on homicide and 2.78 per cent on parricide. Around 35% of these child offenders have stayed in the rehabilitation center between two to four years; 15.28% between three months to one year; and only about 14% stayed for more than five years. Some of them have stayed for more than their term for two major reasons: they had no more homes and families to welcome them when they go out, and they found comfort and care inside the rehabilitation center. It was also found out the almost 60 per cent of them were living with their families when they committed the crime and 43.06% of them claimed they were the second child in the family.

B. When the responses were analyzed, the results revealed that the extent of the intervention techniques applied on the rehabilitated minor offenders of Davao City is high in all three dimensions: Cognitive, with a mean score of 3.63; behavioral, with a mean score of 3.63; and affective, with a 3.64 mean score. Likewise, the level of social interaction of the rehabilitated minor offenders is high, as shown by their mean score of 3.72. The mean scores in all four indicators revealed a high level of social interaction of these minor offenders: Social action with a mean score of 3.72; social influence with a mean score of 3.73; social exchange got a mean of 3.68; and social relation is high at a mean score of 3.77.

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By looking closely at the data and taking the indicators separately, it was revealed that the affective dimension (counseling approach, family systems therapy, and self-efficacy) of the intervention techniques is the one that highly impacts the social interaction of the child offenders, specifically on their level of perception and relation with other people.

C. The computed r value of +0.93 indicated a high correlation between the independent and dependent variables. The computed r value conveyed a significant relationship of these variables, which means that the intervention techniques provided by the rehabilitation centers management have been effective in increasing the level of social interaction of the rehabilitated minor offenders.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The goal of this study was to verify the relationship between intervention techniques and level of social interaction of the rehabilitated minor offenders in Davao City. The study also looked into the profile of these minor offenders. For these goals to be achieved, the researchers used a survey questionnaire that would determine the extent of the application of the intervention techniques, and that would also assess the level of social interaction of the participants. In-depth interviews were also conducted with the participants.

The researchers in this study would like to interject that children are no longer the “innocent ones” that most societies perceived to be. Felonies are not anymore confined to adults and the male populace. This study asserts the vital role of family in shaping the values of children. The study made obvious the fact that when parents fail to do their duties of responsible parenting, children become wayward.

The data rejected the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the extent of intervention techniques applied to the rehabilitated minor offenders and the level of social interaction of these minor offenders.

This study concludes that with the right and proper intervention techniques child offenders can be helped to live normal lives. The researchers, therefore, would like to recommend that Local Government Units (LGUs) should increase their budget in financing the plans and projects of the rehabilitation center personnel for the welfare of these young juveniles. It is further recommended that DSWD should make a policy requiring the parents of the rehabilitated minor offenders to attend family counseling services, so that when their children are ready to go home from the rehab they can readily accept them and they would know how to guide them.

References


