

JUVENILE DELINQUENTS IN FOSTER CARE

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JUVENILE DELINQUENTS IN FOSTER CARE

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ABSTRACT

Juvenile Delinquents in Foster Care

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Statement of the problem

Foster care facilities are used as alternatives to the incarceration of the children offenders. This is based on the cost-benefit analysis of the option which indicates that foster care facilities are friendlier to the growing children and are also cost-effective. As the number of juvenile delinquency cases increases across the country, there are major concerns on the effectiveness of these facilities in addressing the root causes of juvenile delinquency including the psychosocial and emotional challenges. With close to 500,000 children currently in foster care facilities across the United States, there is a need to address the inadequacies of the system which results to increased cases of the vice (Sim et al., 2015) . Based on the weight and delicateness of the issue, it is important to focus on foster care as positive facilities focused on a positive mission but with challenges that make them ineffective.

Methods of Approach

In order to explore the effectiveness of the foster care system, this study will be based on systematic analysis data involving several studies conducted in a variety of foster care homes across the country. This analysis will be based on the Soft Systems Methodology that will help to focus on each case study independently and to come up with the related themes and concepts. The cases will be selected from peer-reviewed journals with proven credibility and authority. The qualitative and quantitative data from the studies will be analysed based on themes that will be selected to answer the research question.

Anticipated Outcomes

From the case studies, it is anticipated that the research will lead to the identification of the efforts that foster care homes apply to bring about positive results in the delinquent juvenile and the effectiveness of such programs. It is expected therefore that strategies and programs that involve the children, their parents and the rest of the community, thereby addressing the children holistically will be found to be more effective.

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Section-1 INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Foster care plays an essential role in the rehabilitation of the delinquent juveniles. The employment of the foster care as an alternative form of juvenile correction alleviates the cost and the long-term negative effects associated with the incarceration of the minors. However, the effectiveness of the foster care system is dependent on its ability to address the psychological and emotional challenges that cause juveniles to participate in antisocial behaviors. The setting of the contemporary foster care is faced with various challenges which limit the effective rehabilitation of the juvenile delinquents.

This research will make the use of the published case studies to investigate the efficacy of the foster care system as a tool for rehabilitating delinquent juveniles. The research will mainly explore and analyze the positive and the negative components of the foster care system and their impact on the rehabilitation of the juvenile delinquents. Additionally, the research will investigate and analyze the limitations of the contemporary foster care system in the United States. The study will further explore how the deficiency of proper child-caregiver attachment, responsive care, and the commitment to foster care limit the effectiveness of the system in rehabilitating delinquent juveniles.

The research will also make informed recommendations on steps that require to be undertaken to improve the effectiveness of the foster care in the rehabilitation of the juveniles with antisocial behaviors. The research will be critical in analyzing how other researchers have approached the phenomenon being studied and the significance of their findings in furthering the understanding of the role of the foster care system in reintegrating delinquent youths into the

general population. Moreover, the research will be essential in bridging the existing information gap on the effectiveness of the foster care in rehabilitating delinquent juveniles.

THE LIMITATIONS OF FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

The foster care system provides an alternative mechanism for rehabilitating delinquent youths without exposing them to the intricacies of incarceration. The United States foster care system caters to more than 400,000 children at any given time (Roche, Vaterlaus & Young, 2015). The inadequate management of the foster care system in the country has continued to have a negative impact on the rehabilitation efforts of delinquent juveniles which often extend into their adulthood (Roche et al., 2015). Studies show that the limitations of the foster care system cause youths transitioning out of the foster care to experience several hardships such as economic vulnerability, substance abuse, mental health, and educational deficits among others (Roche et al., 2015).

Additionally, the studies show that most of the youths transitioning from the foster care fail to reunite with their families despite the foster care system being designed to enhance family preservation, adoption, and reunification of children with their families (Roche et al., 2015). The release of the unprepared youths from foster care exposes them to several challenges during the transitioning period. The lack of post-foster care support makes it difficult for the transitioning youths to adapt to their new life outside the foster care homes (Roche et al., 2015).

The difficulties experienced by youths leaving the foster care are attributed to inadequate care, attachment, and commitment to the wellbeing of children in the foster care homes.

Kimberly Tyler and Lisa Melander (2010) observes that the inadequacies of the foster care system make it impossible for transitioning youths to adapt to the new environment which increases their susceptibility to homelessness (Tyler & Melander, 2010). Additionally, the

researchers opine that the post-foster care adolescents within the age bracket of 12-17 years have a high likelihood of being involved in alcoholism and illicit drugs (Tyler & Melander, 2010). The researchers attribute the poor rate of rehabilitation of delinquent children to poor services and maltreat in foster care homes (Tyler & Melander, 2010).

Judy Havlicek, Antonio Garcia, and Douglas Smith (2013) opine that children placed in substitute foster care experience several hardships in their psychosocial functioning which are characterized by behavioral and emotional problems (Havlicek, Garcia & Smith, 2013). The researchers observe that foster care children and youths experience a high rate of mental health issues compared to their peers in Supplementary Security Income and those in the general population (Havlicek et al., 2013). Havlicek, Garcia, and Smith further note that foster youths transitioning into adulthood tend to lag their peers in all markers of growth and development (Havlicek et al., 2013).

A study conducted by Erin Hambrick, Shani Oppenheim-Weller, Amanda N'zi, and Heather Taussig (2016) note that children in foster care are exposed to various risk factors for mental health which increases their susceptibility to psychological conditions such as the Attention Deficit Disorder, disruptive behavior disorder, anxiety disorders, and posttraumatic stress disorder among others (Hambrick, Oppenheim-Weller, N'zi & Taussig, 2016). The researchers further observed that the developmental and social-emotional challenges experienced by children in foster care affect their functional capabilities while at the same time exposing them to early childbearing, incarceration, unemployment, and lifelong substance dependence (Hambrick et al., 2016).

According to Moira Szilagyi, David Rosen, David Rubin, and Sarah Zlotnik (2015), most of the children in foster care experience trauma, multiple adversities, and toxic stress which have

a negative effect on their health and ability to form a new attachment with their caregivers (Szilagyi, Rosen, Rubin & Zlotnik, 2015). The researchers further observed that the excessive exposure of delinquent children to early childhood trauma limits their psychological development. The lack of nurturing and responsive care in most of the foster care homes tends to limit the rehabilitation of delinquent children (Szilagyi et al., 2015). The development of early childhood trauma leads to the development of impulsivity, aggressive behavior, and poor regulation of emotion, hyperactivity, and attention deficit which have a negative effect on the psychosocial development of delinquent children (Szilagyi et al., 2015).

The deterioration of the psychological health of the abused and delinquent children in foster care is often exacerbated by the lack of evidence-based therapy for trauma and other psychological conditions, inadequate funds, and the scarcity of mental health professionals. Erin Hazen (2014) observes that the challenging experiences of the foster care system tend to affect the relationship between the foster children and their siblings, caregivers, and other family members. The writer opines that the failures of the foster care system in the United States exacerbates the psychosocial challenges of foster care children which causes them to engage in delinquent behavior such as drug abuse and risky sexual behavior (Hazen, 2014).

According to a research conducted by Lisa Thibodeau (2013), the multiple placements of children in foster care homes creates uncertainty and has the potential to expose vulnerable children to traumatic, social, and psychological conditions. The lack of stability and certainty in the foster care system which is associated with the frequent change of foster care homes causes children to develop a sense of disconnectedness and worthlessness which has a negative effect on their overall wellbeing (Thibodeau, 2013). The researcher further observes that the removal of children from their proximity to immediate family members and social circles complicates the

prospects of their future wellbeing and subsequently the ability to heal and form new social attachments (Thibodeau, 2013).

In addition, Thibodeau notes that the inefficient methods employed to indoctrinate delinquent children to normal social behavior within the environment of the foster care homes creates more confusion which is deleterious to their effective rehabilitation (Thibodeau, 2013). The researcher attributes the challenges faced in the foster care system to inadequate training, inaccessibility of resources, and the poor understanding of the system by the foster care providers (Thibodeau, 2013). The lack of adequate training and the unavailability of resources deny the foster care providers the tools required to facilitate the effective rehabilitation of the delinquent children (Thibodeau, 2013).

The lack of adequate training denies foster care providers the right techniques and skills required to handle violent children with the history of repeated abuse and maltreatment (Thibodeau, 2013). Studies show that there exists a positive correlation between the level of training and the outcome of the delinquent children in foster care. Therefore, the provision of solid and quality training on issues related to foster care to providers allows them to curb negative behaviors, foster well-being, implement redirection techniques, and offer positive reinforcement to delinquent juveniles (Thibodeau, 2013).

The combination of adequate training and resources such as the support services has the potential to enhance the positive outcome of delinquent children in foster homes. The availability of foundational knowledge on foster care matters and adequate resources enables foster care providers to address the shortcomings of delinquent children (Thibodeau, 2013). Besides, the availability of an efficient support system is essential for enabling foster care providers to overcome the challenges of rehabilitating children with antisocial behaviors (Thibodeau, 2013).

The lack of adequate networking among foster care providers, social workers, and the community is billed as a major hindrance for the effective rehabilitation of delinquent juveniles.

LACK OF PROPER ATTACHMENT

The effective psychological development of children is dependent on the quality of relationship between them and their caregivers. There exists a positive correlation between the level of psychological development of a child and the quality of the social attachment between such a child and the caregiver. Most children in foster care have a history of negligence and abuse which induces a negative effect on their social development and subsequently attachment to other people. A study conducted by Kate Moran, Jennifer McDonald, Alison Jackson, Sue Turnbull, and Helen Minnis (2017) observes that the neglect and abuse of children causes the development of attachment disorders which affects their relationships with other people.

The researchers note that children who are exposed to neglect and emotional or physical abuse tend to exhibit reactive attachment disorder and disinhibited social engagement disorder (DSED) which are characterized by inadequate formation of stable attachments (Moran, McDonald, Jackson, Turnbull & Minnis, 2017). The researchers opine that there exists a positive correlation between the maltreatment of children and the development of juvenile delinquency (Moran et al., 2017). The study further notes that there exists a positive relationship between the development of attachment disorders and the occurrence of mental health problems among delinquent juveniles (Moran et al., 2017).

David Tucker and Michael Mackenzie (2012) observe that the inherent weaknesses of the foster care system such as the lack of adequate resources and improper handling of the vulnerable children tend to induce antisocial behavior among the foster children. Additionally, the researchers opine that the extended stay in foster care homes and frequent placement changes

affects the reunification attempts of children with their families and the quality of attachment with their caregiver (Tucker & MacKenzie, 2012). The presence of children from different background in foster homes limits the ability of children to interact with their peers which affects their attachment behavioral system (Tucker & MacKenzie, 2012).

Moreover, the lack of social stability in foster homes limits the ability of children to acclimatize to the new environment which leads to the development of anxiety, defensive misattribution, and defensive exclusion. James Kenny (2014) opine that the inadequate management of the psychosocial problems associated with abused children, prolonged periods in the foster care system, and frustration within the environment of the foster homes induces detachment, aggressive behavior, and the loss of capacity to form intimacy (Kenny, 2014). The inadequate attachment of foster children to their caregiver often leads to stunted empathy and lack of conscience which are some of the risk factors of delinquent behavior such as crime, violence, and substance abuse (Kenny, 2014). Moreover, the exposure of foster children to multiple placements and the prospect of abandonment provide a foundation for the formation of delinquent behavior and adult crime.

The concept of attachment forms a significant component of social bonding which is essential for the healthy psychosocial development of all individuals. Foster children are often characterized by inadequate levels of attachment which limits their consciousness for moral restraint in their engagement with other people. Studies note that the lack of attachment, involvement, belief, and commitment within the social environment of foster children limits their social bonding with their peers, caregivers, and family members. However, the lack of strong relationships and attachments between foster children and their caregivers forms the basis for the onset of juvenile antisocial behavior. Joseph Ryan, Jackie Marshall, Denise Herz, and Pedro

Hernandez (2008) opine that children exposed to frequent foster home placements exhibit weak attachments to their caregivers and are more prone to juvenile delinquency compared to those under permanent foster care.

The proper management of the limitations of the foster care system provides the stakeholders with an opportunity for insulating children with the history of neglect and abuse from the risks of delinquent behavior (Ryan, Marshall, Herz & Hernandez, 2008). The enhancement of the level of attachment between the caregivers and the foster children through the provision of adequate foster care training and services has the potential to alleviate the onset or exacerbation of juvenile delinquency (Ryan et al., 2008). The adoption of effective strategies for managing the unique challenges faced by each delinquent provides the caregivers with an opportunity for customizing the rehabilitation of the foster children (Ryan et al., 2008).

The addition of the number of staffs and trauma specialists in the management of delinquent children can elevate the quality of service provision and the prospects of a positive outcome in their rehabilitation. The formation of quality social attachment between individuals is a process that requires concerted effort to strengthen mutual trust, confidence, and goodwill between two people. The use of bonding activities such as sports provides the caregivers with adequate tools for forming and strengthening long-term relationships with foster children.

The formation of stable relationships and attachment allow delinquent children to have confidence in confiding to their caregivers which facilitates the application of social and psychological therapies. Moreover, shortening the period that children spend in the foster care system and the acceleration of the process of permanent placement has the potential to enhance the social stability of foster children which is essential for creating long-lasting relationships and engagement.

LACK OF RESPONSIVE CARE

The process of plucking neglected and abused children from the social circles of their immediate family members and friends tend to be traumatic and unbearable to many foster children.

Moreover, the lack of conducive environments for delinquent juveniles in foster homes fails to meet their psychosocial needs thus thrusting them into an abyss characterized by substance abuse, violence, and criminal activities. The efficient rehabilitation of delinquents requires the adequate provision of physical and emotional care in addition to the enhancement of their attachment needs.

A 2012 policy paper by the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child observes that the deprivation of the responsive care during the formative years of young children and teenagers leads to the development of psychosocial problems with lifelong adverse consequences. Kristin Bernard, Amy Lee, and Mary Dozier (2017) observe that the conditions of the caregiving environment have a significant effect on the psychological and emotional well-being of foster children.

However, the researchers note that the provision of adequate responsive care induces a positive effect on the rehabilitation efforts of juvenile delinquents (Bernard, Lee & Dozier, 2017). The integration of the kinship care within the architecture of the foster care system provides foster children with a close attachment to their family members and adequate responsive care which are essential for the psychological and social development (Bernard et al., 2017). The continued provision of the responsive or sensitive parental care provides children and more so those in foster care with the foundation for the effective development of their social, psychological, and academic wellbeing (Bernard et al., 2017).

Beth Troutman (2011) argues that the lack of responsive or sensitive care in foster homes affects the strength of attachment relationships between foster children and their caregivers. Troutman observes that the quality of the attachment between the foster children and their caregivers is determined by four key factors which include commitment, delight, responsive care, and attachment style adopted by the caregivers (Troutman, 2011). The writer further notes that the lack of sufficient resources and staff in foster homes limits the personalization of responsive care which affects the physical, psychological, and emotional health of the foster children (Troutman, 2011).

A study conducted by Philip Fisher, Megan Gunnar, Mary Dozier, Jacqueline Bruce, and Katherine Pears (2006) observes that the provision of responsive care to children in foster care acts as the therapeutic intervention to their psychological and emotional problems. The researchers further opine that the provision of supportive and responsive care to foster children with a history of physical and emotional abuse enhances their internal stress regulatory system (Fisher, Gunnar, Dozier, Bruce & Pears, 2006). However, the absence of functional responsive and supportive care within the environment of fosters has the potential to induce or aggravate the antisocial behavior among the children (Fisher et al., 2006).

Karen Baynes-Dunning and Karen Worthington (2013) notes that the effectiveness of the responsive care as a tool for remediating the delinquency behavior of foster children is dependent on the ability of the caregivers to personalize their services depending on the gender and cultural background of the children under their care. The understanding of the social, emotional, and psychological needs of boys and girls and their cultural upbringing is critical for taming their exposure to the risk factors juvenile delinquency (Baynes-Dunning & Worthington, 2005). The availability of the responsive and sensitive care in foster homes plays an essential role in

enhancing the health and developmental needs of delinquent children (Baynes-Dunning & Worthington, 2005).

The challenge of inadequate responsive, sensitive, and supportive care within the setup of foster homes can be alleviated by adopting several measures that resonate well with the foster children. Additionally, the responsive and supportive care can be increased in foster homes by encouraging frequent interactions between children and their biological parents, close relatives, and trusted friends. The provision of the responsive care can further be enhanced in foster care system by attending to the needs of the foster children depending on their gender and cultural upbringing.

The personalization of care has the potential to remediate the psychological and emotional challenges experienced by delinquent children due to their exposure to violence and abuse. The realization that the provision of the responsive care has a therapeutic effect on the psychological and emotional challenges of the abused children has the potential to increase its adoption as a tool for remediating delinquent behavior. Moreover, the training of the caregivers on the appropriate strategies to employ to appear sensitive or supportive to a children cues has the potential to improve the quality of attachment and relationships between the delinquent children and their caregivers.

The sensitization on family foster care and kinship care has the potential to accelerate the permanence of children in foster care which provides stability and the right environment for developing beneficial social attachments and relationships between the foster parent and the children. The regular provision of the treatment foster care services in foster homes has the potential to create a therapeutic family environment for the delinquent children with acute psychological or emotional disturbances.

THE LACK OF COMMITMENT TO FOSTER CARE

The lack of commitment to the welfare of foster care system by both the federal and the state governments has a significant negative effect on the rehabilitation of delinquent juveniles. A study conducted by Hun-Soo Kim and Hyun-Sil Kim (2008) observe that the inadequate funding of the foster care system in North Carolina creates a population of throwaway children who are susceptible to homelessness, substance abuse, violence, and crime. The two writers attribute the high rate of juvenile delinquencies among teenagers transitioning out of the foster care system in North Carolina to lack of material and human resources and the commitment to assist the abused and neglected children out of their emotional and psychological miseries (Kim & Kim, 2008).

The lack of adequate funding for the foster care system limits the rehabilitation of the delinquent children and the adequate integration of the transitioning youth into the general population. A study conducted by Kristyn Zajac, Ashli Sheidow, and Maryann Davis (2015) established that the lack of federal and states governments to the welfare of the foster care system in the United States limits the rehabilitation of juveniles with mental problems. The researchers note that the inadequate government support makes it impossible for the foster care system in the country to address the emotional and psychological challenges faced by delinquent children in foster care (Zajac, Sheidow & Davis, 2015).

The failure of the foster care system to address the psychological and emotional needs of the delinquent children tends to exacerbate their antisocial behaviors which tend to persist into adulthood (Zajac et al., 2015). The lack of a comprehensive health care program for foster children with mental health disorders makes it difficult for transitioning youth to access health

care services for managing their lifelong disruptive behavior disorder (Zajac et al., 2015). Studies show that the inadequate management of the mental health problems among children in foster care and transitioning youth exposes them to lifelong alcoholism and substance abuse (Zajac et al., 2015).

Additionally, the scarcity of resources and the limited scope of the foster care system make it impossible to aid the transitioning youths to meet their social and financial needs which are essential ingredients for successful integration into the general population (Zajac et al., 2015). Peter Leone and Loise Weinberg (2012) opine that the inadequate funding of the foster care system in the United States limits its ability to address the education needs of the children in foster care which denies them the academic and economic empowerment. The researchers opine that the lack of financial and material resources in foster homes limits their ability to provide special education to children with psychological problems and those exhibiting the dysregulation of emotions and responses (Leone & Weinberg, 2012).

Moreover, the lack of proper funding and commitment to the welfare of the children in foster care limits the ability of the caregiver to personalize the education of the maltreated children who exhibit language and speech delays in receptive and syntax vocabulary (Leone & Weinberg, 2012). Furthermore, the lack of commitment to the welfare of the children in foster care affects the ability of the caregivers to address the psychological, socioemotional, relational, cognitive, and physical challenges that affect school functioning and readiness of children with a history of maltreatment (Leone & Weinberg, 2012).

Rebecca Colman, Do Kim, Susan Mitchell-Herzfeld, and Therese Shady (2008) observes that the neglect of delinquent foster children exposes them to the risks of recidivism and possible maltreatment of their children once they attain the child-bearing age. The writers note that the

continued neglect of the foster care system limits the ability of the foster care homes to address the cause of the delinquent behavior adequately and to insulate the affected children from graduating into criminals and other social misfits (Colman, Kim, Mitchell-Herzfeld & Shady, 2008).

The scarcity of the foster parents committed to the permanent adoption of the children under their care when the reunification efforts with their biological parents fail curtails the effective rehabilitation of the delinquent juveniles (Colman, Kim, Mitchell-Herzfeld & Shady, 2008). As noted before, the frequent placement of the foster children creates a sense of uncertainty which causes stress and trauma that is detrimental to their emotional and psychological well-being (Colman et al., 2008). The acute deficit of individuals will to undergo the rigorous processes of training and license foster parents hampers the government's effort to rehabilitate delinquent children within the conditions of the family environment (Colman et al., 2008).

The lengthy process of acquiring license causes eligible foster parents to opt out which increases the burden of rehabilitating maltreated children to a few individuals. The lack of commitment to foster care system in the country can be alleviated by sensitizing policymakers on the need to align the available laws and regulations on foster care and adoption to the reality on the ground. The policymakers should be sensitized on the need to formulate laws that strengthen the funding of the foster care system to meet the social, academic, and psychological needs of the vulnerable children. Moreover, the public commitment to foster care system can be enhanced by incentivizing the foster care and the adoption process with financial rewards.

The regular training of the foster parents and caregivers on the management of antisocial behavior has the potential to elevate their confidence in fostering and subsequently their

commitment to the system. The recruitment of professionals trained in children psychiatry, responsive care, and early childhood education may facilitate the effective rehabilitation of delinquent children thus increasing the public confidence in the foster care system. The encouragement of the concurrent planning, where the adoption process occurs simultaneously with the foster care, has the potential to increase the public commitment to the foster care system.

The adoption of the concurrent plan provides an adequate room for both the children and their potential adoptive parents to form a lasting relationship. However, the main objective of the concurrent plan is to seek the dedication of the foster parents to the psychological and emotional needs of the maltreated children before adopting them. The concurrent plan provides a yardstick for measuring the commitment of the potential adoptive parent to the wellbeing of the foster children.

Section-2 Literature Review

Courtney/Kools

According to Courtney (1995), despite the existing media attention being focused on the extensive failures of young charges in foster homes, foster care remains a poorly studied and understood social service program in the contemporary society. The old Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program of 1961 was the first federal assistance that focuses on helping states make maintenance payment for children who were under the care of child welfare agencies. Courtney (1995) explains that the foster care is intended to provide a lifeline for children who are no longer safe in their homes. However, the intention is not being achieved efficiently and effectively because of the sheer number of children who need help swamps the system. Also, the system is not functioning as desired because of the expensive and numerous special needs of the

children. Studies suggest that 60% of children in foster care suffer from moderate to severe mental health problems and approximately 40% of the children have physical problems that need to be addressed.

Hammond

Hammond (2004) explores how the state of Missouri has been able to use foster care to help delinquents. According to the scholar, the state has realized that providing troubled teenagers with respect, warmth, and concern works well in turning the life of the teenagers around. Overcrowding in foster care has been the basis of the facilities not achieving the desired outcomes efficiently and effectively. The state of Missouri applies the concept of thinking small to achieve a significant difference for correction of youths. States are preferring reforms that involve residential treatment over prison sentences for juveniles involved in crimes.

According to Hammond (2004), the state of Missouri operated large state training schools, but the outcomes were not satisfactory. The large state training schools for troubled juveniles were shut down as the state experimented with smaller correctional programs. The focus of the program was to house delinquent teens closer to their families by converting abandoned schools, large residential homes, and convents into foster homes. The new model reduced the costs the state used in youth corrections compared to other states. The costs for the program were approximately \$94 per day compared to the costs incurred by other states, which was \$140. Studies suggested that only 85 of 1400 teenagers who were released in the year 1999 ended up committing crimes and ending in adult prisons. The rate of recidivism in the state is as low as 11% while almost 70% of youths who go through foster care are not recommitted to any correctional program.

Kools (1997) in her study explored the influence of foster care on teenagers who are taken through the program. The findings suggest that foster care has a negative impact on adolescents. Foster care affects the identity development of teenagers negatively. Identity development of the teenagers is affected negatively because of the institutional structure of group foster care, existing stereotyping view of foster children, and diminished status experienced by the teenagers. The teenagers devalue their self-worth compared to others who have not gone through the foster care program.

Testa and Rock

Testa and Rolock (1999) compare the outcomes of professional foster care programs and specialized programs and the implications they have on the teenagers. The findings suggest that professional foster care programs outperformed specialized programs because they provided stability, the restrictiveness of care, sibling placement, and proximity to the community of origin. However, specialized programs offered permanent living situations, while professional foster care programs struggled to move children to adoptive homes. The authors suggest that the lack of stability in the foster programs concerning providing long-term families for the children have negative emotional and psychological impacts on the children.

Crary

Crary (2010) argues that the foster care system in the United States has a mixture of heartache and happy endings. States like New York are focused on reducing populations in their foster care systems because of the negative implications resulting for high populations in the system. Swann and Sylvester (2006) suggest that several factors have contributed to the

increased caseloads in foster care. The factors include high rates of female incarceration and reductions in cash welfare benefits. The scholars suggest that the country should consider implementing child welfare policies specifically tailored to children of incarcerated parents to reduce the caseloads that end up in foster care systems.

Frenzel and Gray

According to Frenzel and Gray (2004), stories from foster children are life-changing. Despite foster care providing life-saving refuge for children from abusive homes and those who are neglected, the long-term implications it has on the children are negative. The children languish in the foster care systems because they are moved from one temporary home to another. The children are kept in a state of anxiety because they do not know when they will be moved to another home. Stone (2014) supports such a view by pointing out that foster care in the United States is a solution that is flawed and leads to long-term problems for the country. Children placed in foster care face difficulties that will limit their future quality of life and the perception they have concerning the environment around them.

Section 3 – Theoretical Framework

FAAR

In relation to foster home, the Family Adjustment and Adaptation Response (FAAR) offers a plausible theoretical framework that could be applied for this research. Megahead & Soliday (2013) shared that contemporary model of family adjustment like the goodness of fit model and ecology conceptual framework give limited application for the complexities of foster family systems. On the other hand, the Family Adjustment and Adaptation Response (FAAR)

model presents itself as a viable model for both clinical and research applications for family foster placement.

Within the framework of FAAR, it is proposed that the family's adaptation to stress such as the possible family stability branches out from the following elements: family resources, stressors and family members' individual perceptions of resources and stressor (Megahead & Soliday, 2013). The interaction of these elements affects how the families adjust to the notion of 'fostering.' As a product of these elements, family instability is a product of both the resources and stressors.

Family Stressors

Further, family stressors are rooted from life events or circumstances that bring sufficient magnitude that cause drastic change in the overall dynamics of the family. On the other hand, stressors are identified as crisis-provoking/triggering occurrences. These crisis-triggering circumstances can potentially invoke change within the family system. Consequently, family resources also affect the adjustment to fostering. These family attributes are needed in order to balance the crisis causing family stressors. In relation to this, when family stressors are balanced with the help of resources, therefore, the family is stable. However, if the stressor becomes more compared to the resources, then the family system is susceptible to instability.

If this theoretical framework is applied to foster families particularly in stressors such as fostering a child, the stressors within the foster family system interacts with the stressor caused

by the foster child. Stressors related to the foster child may include the age of the child, the behavior of the child and probable health issues. These issues can trigger the stressors related to foster family systems including impaired authority in relation to the relationship to the child (Megahead & Soliday, 2013).

Balancing Stressors

In theory, balancing these stressors is necessary to ensure the efficiency of the general foster system. It is important to keep in the overall characteristics of the parents such as their morals, religious belief, resources and emotional health. Outside of these characteristics, the parent must also be willing to foster the child in order to avoid future issues. This is to make sure that there will be no family crisis. A crisis within the family involves the occurrence of a situation or extreme stressor that will require the family to immediately respond through the use of available resources in order to pacify the situation. If there are adequate resources, then it will not be an issue for the foster family to meet to demand of the circumstance, however, the opposite is expected if the family lacks readily available resources.

As stated in the aforementioned framework, it is crucial for foster family systems to take into consideration the resources. If not, lack of resources will add to the stress of fostering a child. It will become extremely difficult for the family to adjust to their new dynamics.

Particularly since the family is dealing with a complex situation of caring for delinquents. This alone is enough to bring issues within the family and lack of resources will aggravate the family's stability.

Section- 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The use of the line graph to compare data collected from the selected foster homes allowed the researcher to have a better understanding of the causes of all challenges in the above study of foster care in relation to non-violent juvenile delinquents. This has underpinned the basis of formulating the following recommendations along with reference to other literature (Frenzel & Gray, 2004; Hammond, 2004; Kools, 1997; Levine, 2006; Lips, 2007; Mahoney, 2006; Stone, 2014; Testa & Rolock, 1999; Valicenti-McDemott & Demb, 2008; Wetzstein, 1997; Williams-Mbengue, 2013; "Woes Win out", 2012)

MANAGEMENT OF LIMITATIONS

The proper management of the limitations of the foster care system provides the stakeholders with an opportunity for insulating children with the history of neglect and abuse from the risks of delinquent behaviour. The enhancement of the level of attachment between the caregivers and the foster children through the provision of adequate foster care training and services has the potential to alleviate the onset or exacerbation of juvenile delinquency. The adoption of effective strategies for managing the unique challenges faced by each delinquent provides the caregivers with an opportunity for customizing the rehabilitation of the foster children.

ADDITIONAL STAFF

Further, the addition of the number of staffs and trauma specialists in the management of delinquent children can elevate the quality of service provision and the prospects of a positive outcome in their rehabilitation. The formation of quality social attachment between individuals is a process that requires concerted effort to strengthen mutual trust, confidence, and goodwill between two people. The use of bonding activities such as sports provides the caregivers with adequate tools for forming and strengthening long-term relationships with foster children.

The formation of stable relationships and attachment allow delinquent children to have confidence in confiding to their caregivers which facilitates the application of social and psychological therapies. Moreover, shortening the period that children spend in the foster care system and the acceleration of the process of permanent placement has the potential to enhance the social stability of foster children which is essential for creating long-lasting relationships and engagement. The challenge of inadequate responsive, sensitive, and supportive care within the setup of foster homes can be alleviated by adopting several measures that resonate well with the foster children. Additionally, the responsive and supportive care can be increased in foster homes by encouraging frequent interactions between children and their biological parents, close relatives, and trusted friends. The provision of the responsive care can further be enhanced in foster care system by attending to the needs of the foster children depending on their gender and cultural upbringing.

PERSONALIZATION OF CARE

The personalization of care has the potential to remediate the psychological and emotional challenges experienced by delinquent children due to their exposure to violence and abuse. The realization that the provision of the responsive care has a therapeutic effect on the psychological and emotional challenges of the abused children has the potential to increase its adoption as a tool for remediating delinquent behaviour. Moreover, the training of the caregivers on the appropriate strategies to employ to appear sensitive or supportive to a children cues has the potential to improve the quality of attachment and relationships between the delinquent children and their caregivers.

The sensitization on family foster care and kinship care has the potential to accelerate the permanence of children in foster care which provides stability and the right environment for developing beneficial social attachments and relationships between the foster parent and the children. The regular provision of the treatment foster care services in foster homes has the potential to create a therapeutic family environment for the delinquent children with acute psychological or emotional disturbances.

POLICY MAKERS

The policymakers should be sensitized on the need to formulate laws that strengthen the funding of the foster care system to meet the social, academic, and psychological needs of the vulnerable children. Moreover, the public commitment to foster care system can be enhanced by incentivizing the foster care and the adoption process with financial rewards the regular training of the foster parents and caregivers on the management of antisocial behaviour has the potential

to elevate their confidence in fostering and subsequently their commitment to the system. The recruitment of professionals trained in children psychiatry, responsive care, and early childhood education may facilitate the effective rehabilitation of delinquent children thus increasing the public confidence in the foster care system.

The encouragement of this kind of concurrent planning, where the adoption process occurs simultaneously with the foster care, has the potential to increase the public commitment to the foster care system. With the adoption of the concurrent plan provides an adequate room for both the children and their potential adoptive parents to form a lasting relationship. However, the main objective of the concurrent plan is to seek the dedication of the foster parents to the psychological and emotional needs of the maltreated children before adopting them. This as a concurrent plan will provide a yardstick for measuring the commitment of the potential adoptive parent to the wellbeing of the foster children.

Section-5 SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

The stakeholder theory in the assessment of the data that has been gathered from case studies about different foster care programs in Illinois. The analysis looked at how the data shows that an unstructured problem exists in foster care programs that fail to understand and employ proper attachment, responsive care, and commitment to foster care that are fundamental to the kind of specific care for rehabilitation of non-violent juvenile delinquents. The subsequent conclusions and recommendations arise from a variety of literature (Courtney, 1999, Crary, 2010; Duesing & White, 2013; Farr, 2007; Phillips, 2004).

The extent of the stakeholder theory (Duesing & White, 2013) applied to the analysis then considered the value of the data that had been derived from the use of case studies as a

methodology for meeting the purpose of the study. The analysis therefore, had determined the inadequacy of most foster care systems to meet the specific needs of the non-violent juvenile delinquent.

CONCLUSION

The process of plucking neglected and abused children from the social circles of their immediate family members and friends has shown to be traumatic and unbearable to many foster children. Moreover, the lack of conducive environment for delinquent juveniles in foster homes fails to meet their psychosocial needs thus thrusting them into an abyss characterized by substance abuse, violence, and criminal activities. The efficient rehabilitation of delinquents requires the adequate provision of physical and emotional care in addition to the enhancement of their attachment needs.

A 2012 policy paper by the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child observes that the deprivation of the responsive care during the formative years of young children and teenagers leads to the development of psychosocial problems with lifelong adverse consequences. Kristin Bernard, Amy Lee, and Mary Dozier (2017) observe that the conditions of the caregiving environment have a significant effect on the psychological and emotional well-being of foster children.

While the intention of the foster care system is to provide an alternative mechanism for rehabilitating non-violent delinquent youths without exposing them to the intricacies of incarceration, the fact is they rarely do among the more than 400,000 children in the U.S. foster care system. The research findings have collaborated with the literature on how inadequate management of the foster care system in the country has continued to have a negative impact on the rehabilitation efforts of non-violent delinquent juveniles which often extend into their

adulthood. Other studies have revealed how the failings and limitations of the foster care system has caused youths transitioning out of the foster care to experience several hardships such as economic vulnerability, substance abuse, mental health, and educational deficits among others.

In addition, the research has shown that most youths transitioning from the foster care have failed to reunite with their families despite the foster care system being designed to enhance family preservation, adoption, and reunification of children with their families. The release of the unprepared youths specific to the non-violent juvenile delinquent from foster care has exposed them to numbers of challenges during the transitioning period. It has been this lack of post-foster care support that the research has shown how it is difficult for the transitioning youths to adapt to their new life outside the foster care homes.

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