

ENROLLMENT CRITERIA AND SUCCESS RATES IN JUVENILE DRUG COURT:
EX POST FACTO RESEARCH STUDY

by

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ENROLLMENT CRITERIA AND SUCCESS RATES IN JUVENILE DRUG COURT:
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ABSTRACT

Minority youth that are charged with drug related crimes may not be privy to juvenile drug court referrals. Many of the minority youth in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court lack the resources to successfully graduate from the program. Data shows that participants who fail to graduate from the program often recidivate. Referral appropriation and specifically program success may be related to ethnicity and locality. The purpose of this quantitative ex post facto research study is to determine the degree to which race and geographic location are able to influence participants' success rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court. These findings can help juvenile drug courts administrators implement strategies to aid participants from urban localities. The study utilized archived data from the Cuyahoga county database of former participants from the years 2013-2018. 193 participants were collapsed into two groups, minority and non-minority; 140 (73%) were non-minority while 44 (23%) were minorities. A 2x2 cross tabulation chi square procedure was performed to determine the level of statistical significance of each of the independent variables of race and geographic location as they pertained to the dependent variable of graduation from the juvenile drug court program. The analysis showed that the geographic location variable had a significant influence on participants graduation rates while the variable of race had no significant effect on graduation rates. Participants from suburban areas had a higher graduation rate than their urban counterparts. The findings suggest that parental support is a key component to participants success in the program.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my friends, family, and loved ones who supported me through this journey. To my girlfriend Lanese, for always encouraging and supporting me when my confidence was shaken. To my mother Doris, a retired teacher who always promoted education and academic achievement. She has always believed in me and inspired me to reach for the stars. Anything is possible with hard work and prayer. I would also like to acknowledge my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for His grace, mercy and favor throughout this process. There were times when things did not look favorably but He never let me waver.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents.....	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Background of the Problem	4
Problem Statement.....	14
Purpose of the Study.....	16
Population and Sample.....	19
Significance of the Study.....	21
Nature of the Study.....	22
Research Questions/Hypotheses	28
Theoretical <u>or</u> Conceptual Framework	29
Definition of Terms	36
Assumptions.....	39
Limitations	39
Delimitations.....	39
Chapter Summary	40
Chapter 2: Literature Review	42
Title Searches and Documentation.....	45
Historical Content.....	45
Current Content	58
Chapter Summary	88
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	89
Research Method and Design Appropriateness.....	89

Research Questions/Hypotheses	90
Population and Sample	91
Informed Consent and Confidentiality	93
Instrumentation	93
Credibility and Transferability <u>or</u> Validity and Reliability	94
Data Collection	95
Data Analysis	96
Chapter Summary	97
Chapter 4: Analysis and Results	99
Research Questions/Hypotheses	99
Data Collection	100
Data Analysis	102
Results	103
Chapter Summary	105
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations	106
Research Questions/Hypotheses	107
Discussion of Findings	107
Limitations	113
Recommendations for Leaders and Practitioners	115
Recommendations for Future Research	116
Summary	119
References	121

Chapter 1

Introduction

Recent research shows a significant rise in juvenile drug related arrests and detention. School administrators are noticing an increase in drug trafficking and drug use among students. This dilemma has caused many school officials to adopt a zero-tolerance policy and employ law enforcement officers on school grounds. Although this zero-tolerance policy was adopted to deter antisocial behavior and drug use one of its flaws is an increase in adolescent contact within the juvenile justice system (Phillips, 2017).

Many of the juveniles charged, arrested, or detained may suffer from chemical dependency addiction or abuse issues necessitating treatment and counseling services. Diversionary programs like juvenile drug court hold participants accountable, empower parents and guardians, and facilitate chemical dependency treatment. Juvenile drug courts have derived as encouraging programs for juvenile offenders with chemical dependency issues (McCollister et al., 2009). Juvenile drug courts integrate chemical dependency treatment with judicial advantage to diminish participants criminal activity and substance use (Long & Sullivan, 2017).

One distinct pattern in the accessible inquiries researched was the significant disparity in recidivism rates for participants who successfully graduated from drug court, relative to participants who fail to graduate (Stein et al., 2013). Various studies have affirmed that conduct patterns of participants evidenced during their tenure in the drug court program are a significant gauge in determining the probability of completing the program successfully and recidivism (e.g. referrals, length of time in the program, accumulating additional charges, number of sanctions, detentions, employment,

educational achievement and attendance, few if any positive urine screens) (Stein et al., 2013).

Furthermore, minority juveniles were less likely to graduate from drug court but more likely to experience increased recidivism (Stein et al., 2015). Juvenile drug court findings substantiate numerous juvenile risk factors affiliated with treatment failure, criminality, substance abuse, and recidivism among juveniles (Stein et al., 2013).

Juvenile diversionary programming is usually city or state funded curriculums designed to reduce the recidivism rates of adolescents (Dembo et al., 2008).

Diversionary programming is generally only offered to adolescents with status offenses or lower level felonies (Dembo et al., 2008). The intent of the curriculum is to deter criminal behavior while improving participant's impulse control (Korchmaros et al., 2015). Diversion programs are devised to decrease juvenile court involvement, reduce costs, and increase system efficiency. These programs are cultivated based on environmental factors associated with the sociopolitical landscape of surrounding communities (Korchmaros et al., 2015).

The goal of these programs is to administer interventions predicated upon evidence-based methodologies (Dembo et al., 2008). According to Champion (2007) diversion, programs were designed to deter or redirect adolescents from the juvenile justice system. The leaders in juvenile justice believed that many first-time offenders have trouble coping with the stress of adjudication or disposition (Gallagher, 2014).

Many community leaders believe that the apprehension adolescents experience during the juvenile justice process would cause more harm than good (Stein et al., 2015). The theory behind diversionary programming is to eliminate the stigma juvenile courts

inadvertently place on first time offenders through community or specialized programming (Stein et al., 2015). Diversionary programming also prevents overcrowding of juvenile detention facilities allowing juvenile courts to process more serious offenders (Gallagher, 2014).

According to statistics from the Ohio Department of Youth Services and The Governor's Council on Juvenile Justice Disproportionate Minority Contact Initiative, African American juveniles were twice as likely to be arrested as Caucasian juveniles were, and Caucasian juveniles were more likely to be redirected than youth of color (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009). The summary of County Assessments discovered that the incessant sources of referral to Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court were: Suburban police (55.3%), Cleveland police (30.3%), and parents or guardians (3.1%) (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009).

The data affirms an overrepresentation of minority youth in the Cuyahoga County juvenile justice system and justifies an examination of concepts that influence these dynamics (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009). The proposed quantitative ex post facto research study will investigate the relationships between the factors of race, and geographic location and determine how these variables might influence the juvenile success rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

A brief summary of the contents of each chapter will serve to outline the framework upon which the arguments from each chapter are built. Chapter 1 will give a detailed overview of the factors that influence disproportionate minority contact and examine how diversion programs like juvenile drug courts may positively circumvent the problems that create this dilemma.

The statement of the problem and the purpose statement specify how the problem was discovered, outlines the issues from which the research process emanates, and indicates the intent of the study and its significance to community practices. Subsequent sections will give a synopsis of the nature of the study and provide a comprehensive explanation of the study's boundaries. The study's research questions, hypotheses, theoretical framework, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations are depicted.

Background of the Problem

The co-occurrence of delinquent behavior and substance use among juveniles presents a significant public safety dilemma (Phillips, 2017). When adolescents enter a stage of juvenility, their search for respect, personal identity, and acceptance is heightened. An adolescent's peer approbation can be significant to their identity and self-esteem. Although consorting with deviant peers may lead to chemical dependency use and delinquency adolescents often affiliate with deviate juveniles to gain access to resources and social status (Jang, 2018).

Juveniles with poor family associations and low self-esteem may feel neglected or abandoned by their parents; weakening their pride and self-worth. Chemical dependency use environments forge a bond among peers, which supplants the feeling of family dissension with peer validation (Jang, 2018). Almost 80% of the juveniles arrested report substance abuse issues, are ascertained for drug law violations, test positive at time of arrest, or are utilizing mind-altering substances when committing an offense (Phillips, 2017).

These statistics show the need to suppress chemical dependency within the juvenile delinquent population affording the juvenile justice system the practicable

opportunity to deter juvenile drug use through rehabilitation and prevention. Diversionary programs cultivate community partnerships, promote educational achievement, and foster family growth, while diminishing recidivism rates and disproportionate minority contact (Phillips, 2017).

Diversionary programs like juvenile drug court help to assess and facilitate treatment related services to participants in need. Once these services are implemented participants are required attend intensive outpatient treatment programs regularly and submit to random urine screens. Each week participants are required to attend a hearing to gauge their compliance with treatment or court protocol (Long & Sullivan, 2017).

Although juvenile drug programs are considered successful in modifying adolescent behavior and drug use many minority juveniles and adolescents from low-income communities may not be privy to these specialized programs. In addition, minority juveniles and juveniles from low-income neighborhoods may not possess the resources necessary to graduate successfully from the program. Participants from low-income residents may be reared in a single parent household, lack community resources, socioeconomic status, and lack the transportation necessary to complete the drug court program successfully (Long & Sullivan, 2017).

The minorities who make up the population of those who receive disproportionate contact in juvenile justice system are comprised of the following ethnicities: Native American, African American, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino's, Pacific islanders, or any non-Caucasian group (Kakar, 2006). Disproportionate minority contact is characterized as the percentage of the portion of the juvenile population that are made up

of minorities relative to the portion of the population that is considered to be the majority (Kakar, 2006).

The following factors are key to creating disproportionate minority contact in juvenile justice: an increased presence by law enforcement officers in low-income communities, poor parental controls, negative peer groups, racial bias by decision makers, community hardship/disadvantage, family structure, educational inaptitude, and poverty-stricken neighborhoods (Lee & Madyum, 2009).

In addition, researchers have noted a failure to implement cultural competency training for law enforcement officers and juvenile justice officials, which may also contribute to the problem (Lilly, 2017). In fact, it has been suggested that officials within the juvenile justice system have a tendency to increase the rate of recidivism among minority offenders because these officials, as well as teachers are failing to differentiate delinquent behavior from normal adolescent mischievousness (Kakar, 2006).

To date, the above factors, which have been identified, which influence a disproportionate minority contact in juvenile justice can be said to fit within the following categories. These include social, educational, systemic, economic, parental/familial, and individual factors (Lilly, 2017). These determinants influence overrepresentation among juveniles of different ethnicities in various ways and can be said to contribute to the embodiment of unfair judicial practices (Lilly, 2017).

These system factors play out in a variety of ways and are influenced by issues such as a lack of resources, racial biases, an increased law enforcement presence in communities of color, a lack of recourse to arrest, inadequate legal representation, and limited access to community programming (Kakar, 2006).

Social factors include hardships such as community instability, inadequate formal control due to authoritarian or permissive parenting, inadequate role models, lack of incentives, limited supervision, and diminished socio-economic status. Individual factors include; cognitive development, inappropriate peer relations, low self-esteem, diminished resources, and a lack of motivation (Larson & Walker, 2005).

Statistics show misconduct increases significantly with adolescents between the ages of 12 to 14 (Larson & Walker, 2005). Their results substantiate the fact that adolescents seek more autonomy and independence from parental controls during their psychological and cognitive development at this age and gravitate towards their peers (Jessor, 2018).

This age period symbolizes more risk-taking behavior because adolescents at this stage of development lack the necessary self-control to resist temptations (Jessor, 2018). During this critical period, adolescents are experiencing character development and interpersonal enrichment, and tend to gravitate toward peers who exhibit social status characteristics (Buchmann & Steinhoff, 2017). These factors gain influence over their impulse control if parental controls are inappropriately decreased. As adolescents exhibit more responsible, behavior parents should lessen controls to promote accountability (Jessor, 2018).

As a result of the research conducted by (Marshall et al., 2005) they have concluded that family structure and dynamics influence adolescent behavior by channeling parenting norms which influence adolescent conduct. Parental controls like appropriate supervision, discipline, and guidance can help youth by modifying the effects of community context on adolescent behavior (Finley & Schindler, 2010).

A community's context is defined as the influence of one's neighborhood, the communal climate, financial stability, and neighborhood alliances that shape and foster the community's social fabric both positively and negatively (Marshall et al., 2005).

Many youths of color live in impoverished communities, lack responsible role models, and raised in crime-riddled neighborhoods (Finley & Schindler, 2010). These youth either have watched or know someone who was a victim of a violent crime, are raised by parents who lack a high school diploma or equivalent, and may look up to law breaking members of his or her community (Finley & Schindler, 2010).

These negative influences serve to foster an environment of instability; promote community disadvantage and juvenile delinquency and are exacerbated by educational factors such as, academic underachievement, disciplinary concerns, truancy, a substandard education, and a lack of collaboration between school officials and positive community leaders (Jessor, 2018).

Many studies in disproportionate minority contact have discovered an alarming trend, which is that over 70% of students drop out of the school once they are forced to repeat the 9th grade and that over 75% of students drop out the first time they are placed in secure detention (Hardy, 2007). Over the last decade, numerous school shootings have been publicized and these isolated incidents have triggered a public outcry for safety and security reforms in both public and private schools' systems (Hardy, 2007).

However, there is a big difference between identifying adolescents who are disenchanting because of home, school and community circumstances; those who have not learned to channel their discontentment appropriately; and those who are unwilling to change their behavior if given the right supports (Buchmann & Steinhoff, 2017).

These disturbing incidents forced many school systems to focus their strategic direction toward ensuring security instead of fostering academic achievement (Buchmann & Steinhoff, 2017). Many of these school systems have adopted a zero-tolerance policy to promote safety and decrease criminal activity. The problem with this philosophy is that many of the students who are arrested or expelled for criminal misconduct are really just exhibiting mischievous behavior (Buchmann & Steinhoff, 2017).

Added to that complexity is the fact that many educators and juvenile officials who are unfamiliar with the ways in which they should relate to minority youth tend to contribute to the problem of disproportionate minority contact (Hardy, 2007). A recent study by (Alltucker et. al., 2006) contends that many youths detained in secure detention across the country also suffer from special education disabilities.

Many schools lack the intake procedures necessary to access these students and the assessments conducted are often too late for the school to develop adequate individualized education plans (IEPs) (Jessor, 2018). Economic factors which have been known to contribute to these rates include; socio economic status, poverty, and decreased employment opportunities, (Kakar, 2006).

Community hardship disadvantage can have a debilitating effect on minority juvenile delinquency rates (Lee & Madyum, 2009). Families that live in low economic communities have limited access to appropriate social networks (Buchmann & Steinhoff, 2017). It is significant to note, that studies have shown that juvenile delinquents from affluent neighborhoods are afforded more resources and opportunities than do their counterparts (Lee & Madyum, 2009).

In fact, not long ago, a nonminority youth from a well to do socioeconomic background killed four people in a drunk driving accident but only received probation due the judge's ruling that he suffered from "affluency" (i.e. not knowing right from wrong because of having few incidents of ever being told "no") (Time Magazine, 2013). These juveniles are also reared in communities that promote participation and collaboration; increasing the depth of relationships between its members (Buchmann & Steinhoff, 2017).

Alternatively, statistics taken from the Ohio Department of Youth Services, (2009) African show that American juveniles from urban neighborhoods were less likely to participate in diversion programs than Caucasian juveniles from affluent neighborhoods. More importantly, the data showed that one urban area that represents one of the largest segments of African American juveniles had fewer diversion opportunities than any other area within Cuyahoga County (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009).

The data bears witness to the fact that youth from suburban communities in Cuyahoga County are privy to more than one diversionary outcome, whereas African American youth from less affluent neighborhoods get one chance to participate in a diversion program (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009). This situation is a cause for concern since most African American juveniles reside in low economic communities, communities that have already been shown to be overwrought with their own problems (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009).

As was mentioned previously, one of the factors that influence juvenile delinquency in impoverished communities are decreased control mechanisms both

internal and external (Lindblad et al., 2013). Youth of color in impoverished communities may lack the informal controls necessary to restrain mischievous behavior (Lindblad et al., 2013). Informal controls like neighborhood watches, parent dialogue, and big brother programs influence adolescent development serve as protective factors by giving adolescents a forum to discuss significant avenues and pitfalls in their maturation process (Lindblad et al., 2013).

Alternatively, juveniles in affluent neighborhoods are monitored with informal control mechanisms that include after-school programs, mentoring programs, community facilities, and consummate role models (Lindblad et al., 2013). Positive role models facilitate adolescent growth and behavior using the buffers of positive community influences and societal norms (Lindblad et al., 2013).

These factors compensate for inadequate parental norms and controls. Discipline, direction, and supervision are important mechanisms in the cognitive development of adolescents (Jessor, 2018). These resources foster social and emotional development in juveniles and reinforce community best practices. Many juvenile justice theorists believe officials within the juvenile justice system show a racial bias against minority offenders during their initial contact, adjudication, and detention (Jessor, 2018).

The perspectives held on class, race and culpable behavior held by law enforcement officials and juvenile justice leaders (Brown, 2007) may influence this overrepresentation of minority youth. Unconsciously, these community leaders and juvenile justice officials may believe that they derive their personal views towards offenders based on offense causation and intent (Brown, 2007).

Unbeknownst to them the media's glorification of violence and drug activity and reporting of the negative activity which occurs in communities of color may have influenced society's fascination with these offenses; triggering juvenile justice strategies that focus on retribution instead intervention (Clark, 2009).

Studies have shown that jurists and probation officers hold disparate stereotypes and perceptions on minority youth based on media propaganda (Ganter, 2001). These erroneous stereotypes and perceptions cause these professionals to develop their own misinterpretation of current legislation, leading to tougher sentencing dispositions for youth of color (Ganter, 2001).

Juvenile justice policy makers are often callous to the plight of over-represented minority offenders in juvenile court hearings (Clark, 2009). These jurists often adopt punitive strategies to regulate behavior instead of creating policies and procedures that foster motivation (Clark, 2009). Although these shareholders are ignorant to the struggle's minority youth face during adolescent development, they often choose public safety over investigation and evaluation (Buchmann & Steinhoff, 2017).

The "zero-tolerance" program adopted by Cleveland Public Schools has increased the arrest rates of African Americans juveniles in Cuyahoga County (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009). This is an alarming concept because this initiative increases the rate of disproportionate minority contact in Cuyahoga County (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009) and contributes to what has been termed the school to prison pipeline.

The current strategy employed by educators, probation officers and juvenile justice officials is to emphasize flaws, problems, and failures even though goal

attainment, enhancing personal strengths, and empathy are more inclined to promote compliant behavior (Gallagher, 2014). The sociopolitical environment in which the juvenile justice system resides is just a microcosm of the larger political environment in which it is politically more advantageous to be considered tough on crime than it is to concentrate on interventions (Gallagher, 2014).

Whereas retribution improves public safety, it fails to address anti-social behavior and usually promotes adolescent and community resentment towards public policy when applied unevenly, thereby creating a self-fulfilling prophecy and a perpetual recidivism cycle (Clark, 2008). Compliance and conformity do not equal transformation; transgressors must want to and can be incentivized to change in order to recognize that these changes lead to reprehensible outcomes (Clark, 2008).

Juvenile justice theorists believe that the key to decreasing the rate of disproportionate minority contact is to create a culture of inspiration (Buchmann & Steinhoff, 2017). Studies have shown that case managers and probation officers who adopt strategies focused on empathy, responsiveness, and consideration motivate adolescents to change their negative behaviors (Clark, 2009).

One of the problems that plague the juvenile justice system is the imbalance between youth rehabilitation and punishment (Lilly, 2017). The imbalance not only contributes to the negative attitudes and behaviors of minority juvenile delinquents, but also increases the racial bias that exists among the shareholders in the system and their disparate perspectives (Clark, 2009).

First time offenders should be afforded the opportunity to attend diversion programs and community-based programming (Korchmaros, 2015). Diversion programs

give juvenile offenders the opportunity to avoid criminal charges, prosecution, and a criminal record. On the other hand, offenders that previously have entered the juvenile justice system could reestablish themselves in their community (Korchmaros, 2015).

Many juvenile delinquents who have been remanded to security detention are not afforded the recourse to re-acclimate themselves (Peterson & Krivo, 2005). Many juveniles return from periods of incarceration and do not have time to adjust psychologically and socially to peers, school, or their community (Peterson & Krivo, 2005). This opportunity is important to their rehabilitation process. Community leaders and juvenile justice officials should implement mentoring programs and step-down processes to help these juveniles reacclimatize themselves to society (Peterson & Krivo, 2005).

Problem Statement

The Cuyahoga County juvenile court is responsible for administering justice, the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents, promoting public safety, and supporting and strengthening families. Despite these efforts, the overrepresentation of youth of color is still an ongoing challenge. According to statistics from the Ohio Department of Youth Services, African American juvenile delinquents in the state of Ohio were five times more likely to be remanded to secure detention than do Caucasian juvenile delinquents while Caucasian juveniles were five times more likely to enter diversion programs, which justify the examination of concepts that influence these dynamics. (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009).

These statistics reveal an overrepresentation of minority youth in the Cuyahoga County juvenile justice system and many juvenile justice theorists believe diversionary

programs like juvenile drug courts can help reduce the probability of delinquents perpetrating future crimes (Dickerson et al., 2012). This is due to their ability to refer delinquent youth to resources that can more accurately assess and treat the underlying problems, which may have led to the drug offenses.

The problem is an overrepresentation of minority youth who are not referred to juvenile diversion programs like Cuyahoga County's Juvenile Drug Court. When minority youth are accepted into the juvenile drug court, many of them lack the support necessary, limiting their chances to complete the program successfully (Long & Sullivan, 2017).

Many of the characters within the juvenile justice system (e.g. judges, magistrates, etc.) and community members (teachers, school administrators, law enforcement officials, and program administrators) to be able to recognize when the flaws and problem areas of minority youth will be better served by diversion programs rather than incarceration (Long & Sullivan, 2017).

Diversion programs have not only a mental health, but also a substance abuse, and an educational component. Having this ability would help to unburden the system and this study is designed to assist in identifying the factors that may be associated to this lack of referral (Long & Sullivan, 2017).

General Problem

The general problem is juvenile drug related crime has increased substantially over the last decade. School districts are adopting a zero-tolerance policy to combat an increase in deviant behavior, drug trafficking, and drug use on school grounds. These

factors have led to a spike in adolescent contact within the juvenile justice system (Yelderman, 2016).

Specific Problem

The specific problem is many of the minority participants charged with drug related crimes may not be privy to juvenile drug court referrals. Many of the minority youth in Cuyahoga County, juvenile drug court may lack the resources (socioeconomic, transportation, single parent households, and structured community-based engagement activities) to graduate from the program successfully. Participants who do not complete the juvenile drug court program successfully are more likely to recidivate than youth who successfully graduate from the program. Referral appropriation and specifically program success may be related to locality and ethnicity (Yelderman, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative ex post facto research study is to determine the degree to which race and geographic location are able to influence participants' success rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court. Race and geographic location are indicators of social stratification and this study hypothesizes that these are significant factors, which are contributing to the disproportionate amount of minority juvenile contact (Lilly, 2017).

Social stratification may unintentionally perpetuate the inability of juvenile justice professionals to understand, connect with, and view minority youth as worthy of diversion rather than over adjudicating from the position of being tough on crime (Tanner-Smith et al., 2016). This study will use a quantitative, ex post facto design and employ data drawn from the Cuyahoga County juvenile justice database. The 2013-2018

archived juvenile justice data will be assessed to determine the race and geographic location of the participants (independent variable).

African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian, and the category of other are the different races, which will be used to establish ethnicity among juveniles. For purposes of the investigation, the categories will be nominally determined to be minority or nonminority. Population data will be used to ascertain the categories of urban and suburban geographic locations.

Juvenile justice departments in the United States have made disproportionate minority contact or confinement a central theme in their strategic initiatives (Tanner-Smith et al., 2016). Youth of color are more likely to be arrested, adjudicated, remanded to secure detention, and reallocated to adult criminal justice systems than non-minority juvenile delinquents (Tanner-Smith et al., 2016). This study is designed to acknowledge and examine whether the variables of race, geographic location, effect the success rates of participants in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court and will add to the knowledge base regarding the previous findings.

Mallet, 2010 submits the following as fact:

1. Although youth of color make up only a third of the total population, they represent more than 70% of total population held in secure facilities in the United States of America.
2. Youth of color are more than five times more likely to be imprisoned than non-minority youth and studies have shown that youth of color are often confined over 60 days longer than non-minority juveniles.

3. Youth of color are more likely to be remanded to secure detention than non-minority youth who have committed the same offense. This data is significant because recent research shows that once youth have been confined in secure detention the chances of them recidivating increases (Mallet, 2010).

The arrest disparities for minority and non-minority offenders are so contradictory to those in the general population that data from 2001 to 2006 indicates minority arrests have increased more than five percent while non-minority youth arrests have decreased nine percent over the same period (Johnson, 2009). Juvenile justice theorists acknowledge this disparity and list several factors that support a disproportionate minority contact in juvenile justice and corroborate the list of factors mentioned earlier (Johnson, 2009).

Offender family structure, socioeconomic status, disparity in offense, implicit or explicit system bias, juvenile justice policies, and racial inequality are several concepts that increase the recidivism rates of minority offenders (Kempf-Leonard, 2007). Disproportionate minority contact can be narrowed in two scopes; disparate youth associations with the juvenile justice system and disparate allotment by key figures within the juvenile justice system (Piquero, 2008).

Juvenile disproportionate minority contact is consequence of the contradictory methods used by school officials, school security personnel, and an increased police presence on school facilities as a method to boost juvenile court referrals for minority students. Many of these referrals were largely based on childish indiscretions that may have been avoided if school administrators had developed collaborations with community

leaders and implemented cultural competency training for school security personnel (Cobb, 2009).

School security personnel and school officials are afforded the discretion to determine which students deserve leniency or intolerance. African American students are often grouped into racial stereotypes and referred to juvenile court for minor indiscretions while their white peers are frequently awarded second chances. When African American students and white students are accused of the same infraction security personnel and school administrators tend to have a jaundiced view of African American students (Cobb, 2009).

This inadvertent policing by security personnel of African American students are commonly referred to as the school to prison pipeline (Moody, 2016). School security personnel and police are often unable to connect positively with youth associations due to their limited interaction with minority students outside of school in neutral environments. These negative interactions are fueled by a communication gap they share with school administrators, along with their lack of cultural discernment (Moody, 2016).

Many juvenile justice researchers believe that disproportionate minority contact is evoked through the perceptions and assessments of juvenile justice personnel (Mulvey & Iselin, 2008). These court personnel decide whether an adolescent deserves a specific charge, a diversionary outcome, or secure detention based solely on intuition and past practice and is solely under their discretion (Mulvey & Iselin, 2008).

Sampling Frame

The pool of participants will be taken from a convenience sample of former participants from Cuyahoga County Juvenile drug court, from the years 2013 to 2018 that

were made available by the court. Participants were not identified by name but were classified by race and geographical location. Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court only permits adolescents from the ages of 14 to 18 years of age.

Adolescent under the age of 13 years of age are considered too immature and callow. Cuyahoga County juvenile court does permit 18-year-old juveniles in the program but only on a case-to-case basis. The majority of the 18-year-old participants in the program started before their 18th birthday. The study used archived data from participant's demographic information found in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court records.

Geographic Location

The quantitative ex post facto study will be administered in a metropolitan community in Cleveland Ohio. The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court is located in urban neighborhood near downtown Cleveland. Although the court is positioned in a blighted neighborhood, the clients of the juvenile justice center derive from several distinct communities.

These communities are disparate in that they are urban, residential, and suburban. Recent statistics show that the current population of Cuyahoga County is 1,280,122. Of the 1,280,122 people currently, living in Cuyahoga County represents Caucasian-65.1%, African American-30%, Hispanic-4.9%, Asian-2.7%, and the individuals with two or more ethnicities-1.9%. The majority of the juveniles that encounter the juvenile justice center are 18 years or younger and they make up 22.3% of Cuyahoga County's population (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009).

Sample

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the relationship between the success rates of juvenile drug offenders based on the independent variables of race and geographic location. The sample will be diverse consisting of youth who have previously participated in the Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court. These participants will range from ages of 14 to 18 years of age. The sample of the current study will consist of participants from both urban and suburban areas in Cuyahoga County who participated in the adolescent treatment program.

Significance of the Study

According to statistics taken from the Ohio Department of Youth Services, (2009) African American juveniles from urban neighborhoods were less likely to participate in diversion programs than Caucasian juveniles from affluent neighborhoods. These statistics reveal that youth from suburban communities in Cuyahoga County are granted more than one diversionary outcome, while African American youth from less affluent neighborhoods get one chance to participate in a diversion program.

This situation is a cause for concern since many African American juveniles residing in Cuyahoga County live in low economic communities (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009). This study will attempt to find some of the factors, which contribute to this fact. When youth of color are not privy to diversionary outcomes, they become susceptible to negative peer groups, crime riddled communities, and the adult criminal justice system (Anne E. Casey Foundation, 2010).

Research shows that diversion programs reduce recidivism rates of juvenile offenders, gives the jurist sentencing alternatives, improves public safety, and increases

the self-esteem of participants (Stein, 2013). Effective diversion programs incorporate high levels of surveillance and therapy to change delinquent behavior. This therapeutic process teaches youth offenders coping mechanisms to counteract peer pressure and mischievous conduct (Hardy, 2007).

Diversionary programs like juvenile drug courts serve a multifaceted population that differs considerably from the adult drug court population (Stein, 2015). Juvenile participants often suffer from peer pressure, are reared in unstable environments that generally require support, and experience problems with addiction that differ from those that inflict adults (Van Wormer & Lutze, 2010).

The reason juvenile drug courts are so successful is because they cultivate a collaborative environment among clinicians, jurists, juvenile justice officials, and community leaders (Marlowe et al., 2006). This study provides a blueprint for jurists, law enforcement officials, and intake officers, to reexamine the standards for the advancement of African American youth in diversionary programming, and thereby find ways to limit the factors that affect disproportionate minority contact (Marlowe et al., 2006).

Nature of the Study

The purpose of this ex post facto quantitative study will be to discover if there are associations between the geographic location, and race of the participants and their success rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile court. The quantitative research method is germane because it assists the researcher in determining what dynamics may influence events (Creswell, 2008). According to Creswell (2008), quantitative research directs how a researcher examines how one variable relates to another variable.

By examining an affiliation among variables, the researcher is interested in concluding which variables may influence other variables (Creswell, 2008). Research suggests Caucasian juveniles are granted diversionary programming, while many minority offenders may not be afforded the same opportunities (Korchmaros, 2015). This research design was chosen because the researcher wants to determine the relationship between geographic location and race on participant's success rates in the Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court program.

Juvenile justice theorists believe forecasting participants success rates will aid juvenile justice leaders in combating recidivism rates and could help decrease disproportionate minority contact in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court (Korchmaros, 2015). A request to examine the data on youth drug treatment program was requested from the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court division. In exchange for permission to use data already gathered on by the County, the researcher agreed to provide a detailed report of the findings to the program.

The purpose of this quantitative ex post facto inquiry is to evaluate the relationships between the independent variables of race and geographic location, and the dependent variable of success rates for minority and non-minority offenders in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Drug Court to determine if there are differences based on these variables. Five years of archived juvenile drug participant records will produce the data necessary to administer a chi square analysis, allowing the researcher to examine the independent variables of race and geographic location and the Cuyahoga County's juvenile drug court participants' success rates.

The foundation of the analysis is to enhance the current information regarding disproportionate contact and how minority and non-minority offenders' accessibility and success rates in Cuyahoga County's juvenile drug court improves outcomes. The CCJC (Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court) accedes the juvenile drug courts procedures are productive. The data collected through the study is essential for juvenile justice leaders because Cuyahoga County's Juvenile drug court has a 97% success rate. Over 90% of the participants that graduate from the juvenile drug court program do not recidivate.

The research methods are appropriate to the objectives of the study because examining relationships among variables help determine specific and directional associations between the independent and dependent variables. An assemblage of independent variables is to be integrated into the study to analyze their effect on the dependent variable. The independent variables will include the race of the participants (minority and non-minority) and geographic location of participants (suburban and non-suburban).

Examining the association of the two independent variables hopefully will further delineate the relationship of the dependent variable with the variables of significance. According to Creswell (2008), hypotheses in quantitative studies allow the researcher to make predictions or estimations based on the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Quantitative research helps researchers justify the need for the study, the research problem, and a depiction of common trends in statistics (Ryals, 2011).

As was forecasted, the data as presented most appropriately lent itself to the use of a quantitative ex post facto research design. An ex post facto research design is defined as a quasi-experimental inquiry that investigates how two or more predictor variables

present in participants preceding the inquiry, influences an outcome variable (Sehic, 2017).

The standard design involves selecting multiple groups that vary on a specific variable of interest and examining their influence on the dependent variable without researcher manipulation (Edmonds, Thomas, & Kennedy, 2017). Ex post facto research is often employed in educational and social research because it affords researchers the capability to examine possible cause and effect associations; utilizing historical data to identify plausible causal factors in a current phenomenon or condition (Edmonds et al 2017).

This research design was chosen because the researcher was still able to determine the relationship between the remaining variables of race and geographic locations and the juvenile participants' success rates in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Drug Court (Creswell, 2008). Casual comparative or (ex post facto) was examined because it is not desirable or possible to manipulate the independent variables of ethnicity and geographic location to cause causal connections.

Many inquiries employ casual comparative designs to investigate disparities among intact groups that are forged on the foundation of such characteristics as educational attainment, gender, or disability type, grouping or independent variables that are not susceptible to experimental control (Schenker, 2004).

Casual comparative designs usually include the utilization of pre-existing or derived groups to investigate disparities among or between those groups on results or dependent variables (Newman, 2009). Frequently, the variables that are investigated in

these inquiries cannot be experimentally controlled for ethical or practical reasons (Sehic, 2017).

A correlational research design was initially considered for this study.

Correlational research reveals the implied association hidden within descriptive research; it stipulates the variable being associated with another variable. Correlational research explores whether changes in one variable are associated with changes in another variable. While descriptive research always examines one variable at a time, correlational research considers at least two variables. One advantage of using correlational research is its ability to give a researcher a clear indication of the associations between two or more variables (Seeram, 2019).

Although correlational research examines the relationships among variables, it does not imply that one variable has a direct effect on another variable. Correlational research examines associations but not informal associations, wherein a modification in one variable does not signify an adjustment in another (Salkind, 2003). Correlational research helps researchers conduct quantitative analysis on a given subject to determine specific details and descriptions (Neuman, 2009).

A correlational research is an effective research design but was not chosen for this inquiry due to the utilization of discreet variables. Although correlational research designs are useful this researcher believes that, an ex post facto square quantitative research design was the most appropriate design for this study because of the utilization of archived data and the current HIPPA laws.

A qualitative research design was also considered for this inquiry. Qualitative research is defined as a continual method in which a revised understanding to the

scholarly community is accomplished by making new influential divergencies culminating from a familiarity with the phenomenon being examined. Qualitative research is multifaceted in focus, including a naturalistic, interpretative method to its subject matter (Aspers & Corte, 2019).

Qualitative researchers investigate things in their natural environment, seeking to interpret, or understand, phenomena and how subjects derive meaning from it. Qualitative research includes the calculated collection and utilization of various empirical materials-visual texts, historical, observational, interactional, life story, personal experience, case study, and introspective-that chronicle precarious and routine meanings and moments in subjects' lives (Aspers & Corte, 2019). A qualitative research design was not chosen because of the current HIPPA laws and Cuyahoga County juvenile courts reluctance to jeopardize client's confidentiality.

A request to examine the data on youth drug treatment program was requested from the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court division. In exchange for permission to use data already gathered by the County, the researcher agreed to provide a detailed report of the findings to the program. Five years of archived juvenile drug participant records will produce the figures necessary to administer a statistical analysis that lead to examinations of the independent variables and Cuyahoga County's juvenile drug court participant's success rates.

The foundation of the study is to enhance on the current information regarding disproportionate contact and how minority and non-minority offenders' accessibility and success rates in Cuyahoga County's juvenile drug court improves outcomes. The study

will use archived data from participant's demographic information found in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court records.

The pool of participants will be taken from a convenience sample of former participants from Cuyahoga County Juvenile drug court, from the years 2013 to 2018 that will be made available by the court. Participants will not be identified by name but will be classified by race and geographical location. Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court only permits adolescents from the ages of 14 to 18 years of age.

Adolescent under the age of 14 years of age are considered too immature and callow. Cuyahoga County juvenile court does permit 18-year-old juveniles in the program but only on a case-to-case basis. The majority of the 18-year-old participants in the program started before their 18th birthday.

The utilization of archived data can help researchers access demographic information on juvenile offenders; identifying early experiential and delinquency related variables (Barret & Katsiyannis, 2016). Assessing archived data on juvenile offenders can help examiners detect academic disabilities, mental health issues, and family related adversities; factors that influence juvenile recidivism. Based on the data as received, in order to answer the remaining research questions, a chi-square non-parametric statistic model will be employed (Barret & Katsiyannis, 2016).

Research Questions/Hypotheses

R1. What is the relationship between the adolescent variable of geographic location and the variable of juvenile graduation rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court?

R2. What is the relationship between the adolescent variable of race and the variable of juvenile graduation rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile court?

Hypotheses

Ho1) There is no statistically significant relationship between a juvenile's race and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

Ha1) There is a statistically significant relationship between a juvenile's race and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

Ho2) There is no statistically significant relationship between a juvenile's geographic location and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

Ha2) There is a statistically significant relationship between a juvenile's geographic location and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

Variables

The aim of this study is to determine the level of analysis on two different categorical variables (race and geographical location) Race and geographical location are the independent variables and my inquiry is trying to ascertain if there is a difference between these two variables and the dependent variable (participants success rates). Participants success rates is determined by whether they successfully graduated the Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court program. Since both of the independent variables and dependent variables are discrete two chi square analysis must be performed. One chi square analysis for each of the two independent variables must be utilized.

Theoretical Framework

The particular general systems theory most relevant to this research is Bronfenbrenner's Theory of Ecological Development. In 1979, Bronfenbrenner

instituted a significant ecological approach on the human maturation process (Pleck, 2007). His unique model gained prominence and notoriety with juvenile justice theorists and child psychologists; epitomizing disparate ecological systems which influences youth psychological development (Pleck, 2007).

Beginning from the most endogenous level Bronfenbrenner described these tiers as microsystems. Microsystems are characterized as face-to-face affiliations between adults, teachers and peers (Pleck, 2007). Mesosystems are described as associations among microsystems, such as affiliations between teacher and parents or father and mother. Macrosystems are defined as programs, social policies, and community practices that influencing prior systems (Pleck, 2007).

Bronfenbrenner viewed the systems as interconnected and believed each system had a distinctive effect on an adolescent's maturation process (Pleck, 2007). Prior research in adolescent development only considered an adolescent relationship with their mother while Bronfenbrenner Theory of Ecological Development considers ancillary relationships and practices, adolescent's relationships and relevance with teachers, childcare providers, peers, community-based practices, and societal norms (Pleck, 2007).

Bronfenbrenner's theory is his supposition on microsystem relationships and how they facilitate human development (Pleck, 2007). He believed that human development is created through a process of continuously more composite reciprocal correspondence. These perpetual patterns of environmental interaction are what ultimately propel youth's development (Peck, 2007).

Adolescents environmental systems act as change agents, influencing their psychological development positively or negatively (Garcia & Serra, 2019). The

families in which these youth are reared, and the neighborhoods in which they reside are both small microcosmic systems that fit within Bronfenbrenner's larger macrocosmic system which is represented by both the educational institutions they attend and the juvenile justice court system (Garcia & Serra, 2019).

Another theory that undergirds this research is that of conflict theory. Racial threat assumptions and conflict theory propose that fundamental concepts should encompass research on disparate treatment in juvenile justice (Smith & Smith, 2009). These assumptions suggest that groups, which threaten the prevalent social fabric, are more likely to receive punitive treatment (Smith & Smith, 2009).

Conflict focused theorists suspect that the poor, people of color, and the unemployed pose such a threat (Garcia & Serra, 2019). The racial threat hypothesis suggests that when a majority flock perceives another flock as dangerous, whether it is against economic or cultural power the majority group will dictate and broaden level of communal control over the dangerous flock (Bontrager et al., 2005). Examination of the racial threat assumption has revealed how implications of danger (increased levels of minority populations) effects communal control structures (Bontrager et al., 2005).

Research has shown several disparate types of constraint devices such as: Lynching, increased police department funding, increased size of law enforcement agencies and disparate criminal court decision making are connected to racial proportion within a geographic region (Bontrager et al., 2005). A theoretical framework for recognizing the integral forces that shape the augmentation of juvenile justice in the U.S. was implemented as early as recently as the 1970s (Bontrager et al., 2005).

The general sentiment suggested that the juvenile justice system was created extensively to regulate an expanding population of poverty-stricken minority youth (Bontrager et al., 2005). Research suggests that the current model of juvenile justice concentrates on a punitive strategy that focuses on punishment instead of rehabilitation. Although juvenile crime related offenses and violent crime has diminished over recent years, juvenile justice officials still invoke a punitive stance toward juvenile delinquency (Finley & Schindler, 2010).

New legislation gives jurists the prudence to decide if a juvenile related offense warrants adult criminal court, decreases the age juveniles can be charged as adults for specific offenses, and increases the amount of crimes juveniles can be sentenced as adults (Finley & Schindler, 2010). In fact, a bill making its way through the legislature in the state of Georgia stipulates that minors as young as the age of 13 may be tried as adults (Finley & Schindler, 2010).

The thought that there may be a national trend to reduce the age in which juveniles can be tried as adults is a scary one and other remedies and solutions should be sought after (Finley & Schindler, 2010). Within the community microcosm, hardship and disadvantage undermine the power of family members to employ social control mechanisms to curb criminal behavior (Mowen & Boman, 2018).

Communities epitomized by concentrated disadvantage and social seclusion, foster environments that influence juvenile delinquency and promote risk taking; manifesting disruptive behavior in adolescents (Matsueda et al., 2006). Many communities exasperate juvenile crime through increased formal controls and decreased informal controls. According to Ward et al. (2010), neighborhood disadvantage and

poverty weaken the capability of neighborhoods and community members to employ mechanisms to control culpable behavior.

A lack of family structure, a decrease in male role models, poverty-stricken neighborhoods, and the deterioration of intellectual stability have had a significant impact on resources afforded to minority youth (Ward et al., 2010). This concept has had a debilitating impact on youth of color, increasing their chances of contact with law enforcement officers (Ward et al., 2010).

Many juvenile theorists believe that a pipeline exists connecting the macrocosm of the school system with that of the juvenile justice system (Lewis, 2009). Educational inaptitude and the low academic self-esteem, which culminates because of having had negative experiences with the school authority figures, contribute to juvenile delinquency (Lewis, 2009).

Research has shown that adolescents who drop out of school, experience multiple suspensions or expulsions, or associate with negative peers increase his or her chances of entering the juvenile justice system (Garcia, 2019). Parents, who fail to establish stringent rules and regulations for adolescents may increase disruptive behavior patterns in their children (Garcia, 2019).

Parental practices, such as insufficient supervision, inconsistent patterns of punishment, and those who fail to hold children accountable, influence disruptive behavior (Buchmann & Steinhoff, 2017). These factors leave adolescents at risk to follow negative peers, develop disruptive behavior, and increase their chances of committing criminal activity therefore juvenile justice remedies based on sound research is warranted (Buchmann & Steinhoff, 2017).

Nature versus Nurture and Systems Theory

Researchers have debated the nature versus nurture argument for years. Researchers believe that the current paradigm of nature versus nurture is insufficient. Class, race, genetics, and demographics are not significant factors in determining an individual's cognitive development (Howell et al., 2004). Genetic potential for proficiency and temperament can only become fostered in an environment embodied through stability and support. Research indicates that the environment many children are reared in is full of complexity, chaos, and violence, resulting in unruly behavior (Howell et al., 2004).

Research suggests that genetics and childhood environment are not significant factors in how human beings develop cognitive skills, acquire knowledge, or develop emotional intelligence as adults. According to Howell et al., (2004), human development is determined through the relationships and endeavors they experience as adolescents.

The type of relationship that develops with the authority figures in the home and the school has a bearing on adolescent behavior (Van der Graff et al., 2018). If a negative relationship exists and the degree of severity within it can be a determining factor in juvenile delinquency. Howell et al. (2004) defined proximal processes as structures by which hereditary potential is consummated into conduct. Proximal processes include adolescent-to-adolescent, parent to adolescent activities, group or individual play, learning new competencies, comprehension, problem solving, and performing critical thinking tasks (Van der Graff et al., 2018).

Proximal processes are considered the principal drivers of cognitive development and can be affected by the peer groups that they are associated with as well as the new

competencies that they learn by the associations that are created and maintained in new environments (Van der Graff et al., 2018). The relationships that one develops with their peers in school, and family relationships as well as those with teachers and other educational authority figures can have a profound effect on the level of referrals to the juvenile justice system (Tanner-Smith, 2016).

Juvenile justice institutions have the ability to influence adolescent nurturing positively during this critical period (Stein et al., 2013). A child's fundamental growth (socially, morally, and emotionally) depends on their consistent participation in continually more intricate communal interaction with symbols, objects, and peers in the individual's proximal habitat (Howell et al., 2004).

Research has shown that the number of single parent households have increased significantly over the last few decades; weakening family structure, adolescent self-esteem, and cognitive development (Moody, 2016). This change in family structure can have a debilitating effect on a child's proximal processes; negatively affecting their maturation process (Ward et al., 2010).

Behavioral therapists have been debating child development theories for years. Many psychologists believe a child's cognitive development is enhanced positively or negatively from his or her family structure, while others believe a child's formal and informal controls facilitate development (Moody, 2016). Information gleaned from sound research can be used to affect juvenile justice policy positively.

Heritability is defined as the estimated frequency of what distribution of variables within a specific group is due to heredity (Ward et al., 2010). Heritability helps researchers evaluate environmental forces but fails to gauge the genetic potential that

remains dormant in adolescents living in complex environments (Ward et al., 2010). Adolescents living in unstable environments tend to score alike on examinations, while adolescents from more nurturing environments have increased proximal processes. In these environments, skills and competencies are cultivated and adolescents develop more disparate skill sets (Ward et al., 2010).

For years, researchers have wondered why African Americans tend to score more than 10% lower on aptitude tests than Caucasians (Howell et al., 2004). Research indicates that genetic disposition accounts for more than 60% of performance on aptitude tests, but proximal processes suggest that this gap does not denote true genetic potential. Ganter (2001) believes the current strategy employed by juvenile justice officials to curb recidivism rates is merely crime control.

The current model is designed to correct criminal behavior while deterring potential offenders (Gallagher, 2014). By evaluating the disproportionate minority contact in Cuyahoga County, this study aims to determine what factors influence success rates in diversion programs for both minority and non-minority offenders.

Definition of Terms

Delinquent Findings - are defined as adjudicatory hearings where juveniles are found to be delinquent. Once juveniles are found to be delinquent, they normally move to disposition hearings where they are committed to residential facilities, are placed on probation, or remanded to secure detention facilities (Leve & Chamberlain, 2005).

Proximal processes - are defined as the structures by which hereditary potential is consummated into conduct. Proximal processes include adolescent-to-adolescent, parent to adolescent activities, group or individual play, learning new competencies,

comprehension, problem solving, and performing critical thinking tasks (Howell et al., 2004).

Heritability - is defined as the estimated frequency of what distribution of variables within a specific group is due to heredity. Genetic potential for proficiency and temperament can only become fostered in environment embodied through stability and support (Ward et al., 2010).

Diversion programs - are intervention programs juvenile justice agencies, law enforcement agencies, or community centers employ to help juveniles avoid criminal charges or a criminal record. Diversion programs are designed to help youth prevent prosecution, facilitate education, promote intervention, and help victims seek restitution. Diversion programs often outline these preconditions as a substitute for secure detention, court involvement, or a reduction in charges. Many participants in diversion programs are often required to complete these standards or suffer harsher sentences (Mallett, 2010).

Community Context - can be defined as the neighborhood structure of a presenting community: a neighborhood of individuals who share similar economic disposition, social cohesion, resources, needs, and beliefs. These members usually live in proximity and share common values (Kirk, 2008).

Adjudication - is a judicial method in which a jurist reviews testimony and evidence from victims and defendants; evaluating legal obligations and ramifications (Mallet, 2009).

Recidivism- is defined as the percentage of former convicts or juvenile delinquents who have picked up recent charges (Sloan, John, & Rush, 2004).

Cultural competency training - can be defined as an individual's ability to associate successfully with individuals from disparate backgrounds and cultures. Four principals' compound cultural competence: self-awareness, individual position on cultural diversity, individual assessment of worldviews and cultural climates, and cultural disposition (Primm & Gomez, 2005). Cultural competency training is designed to improve an individual cultural disposition; to help them acknowledge the similarities and differences in people without bias (Primm & Gomez, 2005).

Status Offenses - are actions or conduct perpetrated by juveniles in violation of city, state, or county ordinances. These crimes are only violations because of the adolescent's status as a juvenile. Curfew violations, truancy, and underage drinking are a few examples of status offenses (Zhang et al., 2007).

Expungement- An expungement is a court proceeding in which a first-time offender's prior conviction is sealed; preventing the records from being available through the federal or state repositories (Shlosberg et al., 2014).

Cuyahoga County Juvenile Drug Court Program Criteria - The Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court program is a voluntary court supervised program for youth who are substance abusers. Drug court requires participants to attend regularly scheduled court appearances, meet with a case manager multiple times a week, and submit to regular and random urine screens. Participants are also required to attend treatment for substance abuse and/or other identified concerns. Most youth spend approximately nine to twelve months in the program and upon completion of drug court; all charges will be dismissed, sealed, and expunged.

Criteria for Success in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Drug Court Program -

participants are considered successful when they complete all program requirements. Once participants are deemed eligible for graduation a hearing is held and all the participants' charges are dismissed sealed and expunged on record.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Numerous assumptions govern this research study. The aim of this research study is to evaluate and illustrate the effectiveness of diversionary programming, in decreasing recidivism rates of minority offenders. A supplementary assumption is that each juvenile offender was raised in a disparate community and family structure.

The study proposes to use statistics from Cuyahoga County's Juvenile Justice Center to ascertain if geographic locations, and race, have a significant effect on juvenile drug court success rates. It is assumed that the data mining procedures used in the study are effective and extensive. It is presumed that the independent variables in the study are a valid indicator of juvenile drug court success rates.

Another assumption is that the wrap around services afforded through Cuyahoga County's Juvenile drug court are effective in reducing recidivism rates of minority and non-minority offenders. Finally, it is assumed that youth of color accessibility to juvenile drug court programs may be somewhat limited.

Limitations and Delimitations

A number of limitations may exist within this study. One limitation is the inability to random sample. Random sampling would ensure that every member of the population, meaning all of the juveniles that have ever been referred to Cuyahoga County juvenile

drug court would have had the same chance of being included in the sample which would make for a more representative sample of the total population.

Random sampling will not be possible due to the limitations on the data to which the researcher will have access. This is a limitation since the researcher does not have access to the totality of subjects that have gone through the system. The researcher will also only be able to secure a convenience sample of juveniles within the system. This also means that the research cannot determine any cause and effect.

This study is designed to examine the relationship between race and geographic location and success rates of juveniles referred to the program, which means that no cause and effect scenarios can be determined. Thirdly, because the researcher can only have access to the data as described, the research is delimited to the variables mentioned. The researcher will be unable to determine if some other variables contributed to juvenile success rates.

Chapter Summary

The aim of chapter 1 was to illustrate the current climate of disproportionate minority contact and evaluate how diversionary programs like juvenile drug court can effectively reduce recidivism rates. Many youths of color are not privy to diversionary programming; creating deficiencies in cognitive development and educational inaptitude.

Minority offenders are subject to more scrutiny from law enforcement agencies for mischievous behavior than their Caucasian counterparts; swaying minority adolescents to associate with negative peer associations. In addition, Juvenile justice leaders will have an effective outline to utilize in curbing disproportionate minority contact and improving accessibility to diversionary programming for youth of color.

Chapter 2 will give an analysis of prior research on disproportionate minority contact, historical information on diversionary programming, and literature on the theoretical framework used, childhood risk factors related to delinquency chemical dependency, adolescent drug courts and previous literature related to race and juvenile delinquency.

The chapter ends with a summary of strategies employed in the field of juvenile justice as well as those presently being used in Cuyahoga County. This chapter will utilize the current literature to add credence to the need for the current study to address the dilemma, and to provide a framework, which could outline strategies that may help juvenile justice systems decrease disproportionate minority contact rates through diversionary programming.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Over the last 20 years, the American juvenile justice system has been over representing minority youth (McCarter, 2011). During this span, the juvenile justice system's ideology has changed from a colloquial therapeutic paradigm to a more rigid based on stereotypes. This model has handicapped youth of color during their initial point of contact to their progression through juvenile court proceedings (McCarter, 2011).

The intent of chapter 2 is to review literature that creates a framework for the study of Cuyahoga County's juvenile drug court as an efficient diversion program to disproportionate minority contact in juvenile justice. Choosing an efficient diversion model to secure detention has become a concern for jurists, juvenile justice advocates, and juvenile justice leaders (Harris, 2007).

When an adolescent commits a misdeed or violation, police officers, school officials, and community leaders have numerous options at their disposal: counsel the youth, ignore the misdeed, admonish the adolescent, reach out to his or her parents, refer the adolescent for services, or place the youth in diversionary programming without adjudication (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).

Formal options include citations, issuing charges and releasing the youth to his or her parents, or remanding the youth to a secure detention facility. As the severity of adolescent violations escalates juvenile justice decisions become more punitive (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).

Violent crimes committed by juvenile offenders escalated in the 1980's and 1990's, creating a media and public outcry for more punitive sanctions (Kempf-Leonard,

2007). Juvenile justice leaders change their philosophy of rehabilitation towards more retaliatory ideologies (Khan, 2018). Community leaders called for more aggressive punishments for youthful transgressions. This emerging viewpoint led to state and county juvenile justice agencies to employ amenability hearings (Khan, 2018).

Amenability hearings are bound over hearings used by jurists to prosecute violent juvenile offenders in adult courts. According to Feld (1999), a surge in violent crimes by African American youth attributed to philosophical changes in juvenile justice agencies. Many juvenile justice theorists believed irrespective of age, explicit criminality was attributed to single parent households, racial concentration in communities, and the crack cocaine epidemic (Feld, 1999). This wave of antisocial criminal behavior incited the public and called for a change in juvenile justice policies (Khan, 2018).

After two decades of philosophical changes juvenile justice leaders finally realized that punitive sanctions only increased antisocial behavior in adolescents (Pitts, 2006). Recent statistics have shown that the rehabilitation of juveniles is more adapt at changing behavior than punishment (Pitts, 2006). Diversion programs like juvenile drug court assess the juvenile offender's problem issues and implement wrap around services to stabilize participants and their families (Korchmaros, 2015).

Juvenile drug court was devised to affirm positive behavior through services and graduated sanctions (Pitts, 2006). Juvenile drug courts use a team-based approach to regulate behavior and manage conduct; supporting parental controls and emphasizing educational opportunities (Lilly, 2018). These programs utilize a treatment component to curb chemical dependency use while engaging participants and their families.

Community practices ensure participants curb negligent and irresponsible behavior while promoting accountability (Lilly, 2018).

Although diversion program referrals have increased over the last several years, youth of color are still not privy to diversionary programming at the same rate as their white counterparts (Bryan, et al., 2006). Many community leaders believe if youth of color were afforded the same diversion opportunities as Caucasian juveniles, their secure detention rates would decrease significantly (Bryan, et al., 2006).

Cone and Foster, (2001) recommend the use of the funnel approach to help writers analyze and integrate literature. The funnel approach aids researchers in describing and defining voluminous concepts at the beginning of the literature review. The review of literature begins by giving readers a comprehensive assessment of the risk factors minority youth face in their community and academic institutions, the strategies employed by juvenile justice systems, factors that influence disproportionate minority contact, and discrepancies in the adjudication of Caucasian and minority offenders (Cone & Foster, 2001).

The following literature review reviews and sheds light on system bias by juvenile court officials, and a historical perspective of disproportionate minority confinement, the historical perspective of diversionary programming, adolescent development, drug court policy and chemical dependency. The literature review will give a basic approach to evaluating disproportionate minority contact through the use of germinal theories and evaluate how participation in diversion programs like Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court differ for minority and non-minority offenders.

Title Searches and Documentation

This research study will be governed by these subsequent research questions:

1. What is the relationship between the adolescent independent variable of geographic location and the dependent variable of juvenile success rates in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Drug Court?
2. What is the relationship between the adolescent independent variables of race and the dependent variable of juvenile success rates in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Drug Court? The literature review will give a comprehensive assessment of the factors that influence disproportionate minority contact and how juvenile drug court curbs juvenile delinquency.

Historical Content

The Historical content section will give an extensive review of the formation of diversionary programming and a detailed summary of the strategies currently employed in juvenile justice. In addition, this section will analyze why programs like Cuyahoga County's juvenile drug courts are effective deterrents to disproportionate minority contact.

Diversionary programming is a strategy juvenile justice leaders employ to deviate away from the traditional juvenile justice approach by customizing procedures to fit a specific population or background (Campbell & Retzlaff, 2000). Diversion programs incorporate a multitude of program components: intervention strategies, recreation, educational and vocational training, mentoring services, and individual and group counseling, and the implementation of wrap around services to resolve participant's problems (Tanner-Smith et al., 2016).

When juvenile justice facilities adopted diversionary programming, the goal was to give adolescents and their families the option between minimal sanctions (diversionary programming) or the ambiguous outcomes of juvenile court hearings (Dembo et al., 2006). Historically, juvenile justice systems developed diversionary programming to decrease juvenile related crime and recidivism rates (Dembo et al., 2006).

Although some form of the juvenile diversionary processes was prevalent since the formation of juvenile justice systems, systematic diversionary programming was genuinely formulated in the 1960's (Cocozza et al., 2005). Juvenile justice systems devised and cultivated diversionary programming to combat the ineffectiveness of juvenile justice system approach to juvenile-related crime (Cocozza et al., 2005).

Although juvenile justice agencies implemented tactics to curb juvenile delinquency, juvenile justice theorists questioned the value of juvenile justice policies and secure detentions (Cocozza et al., 2005). Criminologists believed that the current juvenile justice strategy was useless and inept, leaving adolescents with inadequate constitutional safeguards. Juvenile justice advocates believed that the juvenile justice system needed significant reforms to decrease the costs associated with secure detention placements and to improve upon system inadequacies (Stein et al., 2013).

As criticisms and juvenile-related crime, increased, juvenile justice advocates began considering other alternatives to counter juvenile delinquency (Cocozza et al., 2005). This conflict led to suggestions by President Johnson's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice in 1967, to discover therapeutic substitutes for mischievous adolescent behavior thereby changing the traditional approach employed in juvenile justice (Cocozza et al., 2005).

The commission believed secure detention placement did more harm than good, swaying adolescents toward negative behavior instead of rehabilitation (Cocozza et al., 2005). Juvenile justice leaders also viewed secure detention placement negatively because of the stigmatizing effect on young offenders and its propensity to diminish youth offender self-esteem (Cocozza et al., 2005).

The recommendations steered nonviolent offenders toward programs that focused on community service instead of punitive sanctions (Cocozza et al., 2005). The commission also established youth service agencies to promote diversionary programming as an alternative to juvenile court processing (Cocozza et al., 2005).

In 1976, the Special Emphasis branch of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention instituted a 10-million-dollar funding proposal to increase diversionary programming (Stein et al., 2013). This initiative led to the implementation of 11 diversion programs in Puerto Rico and the U.S. In fact, this project stimulated the infusion of diversionary programming funding in the 1970's. State and county youth service bureaus were organized and through increases in federal funding to widened the scope and latitude of diversionary programming across the U.S (Stein et al., 2013).

Diversion programs are significantly different from traditional juvenile court proceeding in a number of ways namely; the way charges are administered (i.e. expungement, postponement of adjudications, and sentencing held in abeyance), the point of reference (i.e. probation, court hearings, and law enforcement agencies), and the target populations (e.g. status offenders, misdemeanors, and (PINS) Persons in Need of Supervision) (Hodges et al., 2011)

Diversion programs are designed to implement intervention strategies that combat the geographical location as well as the social political cultures participants that the youth are embedded (Hodges et al., 2011). Restitution, justice, and treatment-based interventions are cultivated through evidence-based practices including those that improve self-esteem and cognitive behaviors (Taxman, 2010). Although many of these programs are designed to be deterrents to disproportionate minority contact, numerous diversion programs fail to decrease recidivism rates (Taxman, 2010).

Recent statistics show that more than three times as many juveniles enter diversion programs than secure detention (Taxman, 2010). Some diversion programs are intended to be surrogate punishments instead of focusing on juvenile specific behaviors (Taxman, 2010). Diversion programs like juvenile drug court target adolescent's distinct behaviors through case management techniques. Face to face, contacts are theoretical prototypes of supervision case managers used to deter subsequent offending and improve participant outcomes (Taxman, 2010).

One of the most significant and successful diversionary programs for adolescents is juvenile drug court. Juvenile drug court was devised to limit the duration, intensity, and extent adolescents experience in the juvenile justice process (Pitts, 2006). Juvenile drug court programs minimize the stigmatization adolescents experience by reducing secure detention remands, implementing wrap around services to adolescents and their families, and expunging the records of successful participants (Pitts, 2006).

These programs also conduct sedulous assessment procedures to determine participant's needs. The goal of juvenile drug court programs is to design comprehensive strategies supported through community-based services (Stein, 2015).

Family Adaptation and Juvenile Delinquency

The precursors of violent crime appear to be consistent across ethnicities and derive from the structural differences among neighborhoods, communities, and districts in family and economic composition (Kirk, 2008). Community hardship and disadvantage undermine the power of families and members to employ social control mechanisms on criminal behavior (Peterson & Krivo, 2005). Communities epitomized by concentrated disadvantage and social seclusion influence cultural adaptations that manifest disruptive behavior in adolescents (Matsueda et al., 2006).

Family structure components: Marital status, socioeconomic status, family size, and configuration influence adolescent delinquency. Recent studies have shown that family configuration characteristics influence adolescent behavior by guiding family processes (discipline, supervision, direction) (Matsueda et al., 2006). These family characteristics determine and modify the effects of community context on adolescent behavior (Kirk, 2006).

Gray-Ray and Ray, (1990), acknowledge three types of parental controls that promote an overrepresentation of minority youth in juvenile justice; parental rejection, family structure, and parental supervision. Kendrick and Arbuckle, (2006), believe families of African American and Hispanic American youth experience frustration navigating through the obstacles of the juvenile justice system.

The influence African American men model as head of household cannot be forsaken. Though black males manage only two % of African American households, studies have shown black males play an active role in child rearing as members of the

extended family (Gray-Ray & Ray, 1990). George et al. (1996) believe children from single-family households are far more likely to engage in criminal behavior.

When nonresident fathers provide encouragement, companionship, guidance, and structure to their children deviant behavior diminishes (George et al., 1996). According to Bilchik, (2008), adolescents of color are prone to reside in poverty, withdraw from school, dwell in crime-riddled communities, and drop out of school.

In order to reduce the disproportionate minority, contact in juvenile justice leaders must analyze the life experiences of specific groups, create target objectives, and develop milestones to improve the recidivism rates of minority offenders (Bilchik, 2008). Over 58% of the adolescents placed in foster care in 2005 were youth of color, while only 42% of the adolescent populations in the U.S. were youth of color (Bilchik, 2008).

Over 30% of the children in foster care in the U.S. were black, although black youth made up only 15% of the U.S adolescent population. These statistics are significant because African Americans have lower rates of child maltreatment than individuals of European descent (Bilchik, 2008).

Various studies have shown juveniles who have experienced problematic behavior as adolescents have an increased risk to enter the adult judicial system (Juon et al., 2006). The Woodlawn study that represented 1242 African American adolescents in first grade found that a juvenile's delinquency status is a leading indicator on how they will develop as adults (Juon et al., 2006).

Female adolescents who exhibited reoccurring punishment for transgressions as first graders were most likely to adopt criminal behavior, while boys raised in mother-only families were more likely to exhibit criminal behavior as adults (Juon et al., 2006).

Two important classifications of cultural risk factors for delinquency and crime are indicative of childhood unruly behavior (hyperactivity, opposition, impulsivity, and aggression) and parental practice (family type, parental discord, parental deviance, parental rejection, poor supervision, and insufficient supervision) (Juon et al., 2006).

Childhood unruly behaviors may imply an intrinsic underlying propensity that manifests itself from adolescence to adulthood (Juon et al., 2006). These rebellious behaviors may consummate and influence interactions with negative peer groups in the community and during educational interactions. Parents or guardians who are negligent or fail to establish consistent patterns of punishment increase their child's propensity for delinquency (Van der Graff et al., 2018).

The relative structure, size, income, and maternal education have a correlating effect on delinquency and recidivism rates (Van der Graff et al., 2018). These findings suggest that a compilation of childhood risk factors as a whole are more significant in understanding antisocial behavior than examining each risk factor alone (Juon et al., 2006).

Childhood Risk Factors

Juon, Doherty, and Ensminger, (2006), believe the presence of aggression in adolescents is a key attribute that manifests juvenile delinquency regardless of its juncture with other sentiments. Lord and Mahoney's (2007) longitudinal study on the association between children of early education and their exposure to criminal behavior in their prospective neighborhoods found that low income disadvantaged youth face significant risks during after school hours.

During the time period, which occurs after disadvantaged youth leave school, many parents and guardians, are working which places inner city youth in compromising positions (Lord & Mahoney, 2007). During the time, adolescents leave school and their parents leave work, the tempestuous victimization of adolescent's triples. This period symbolizes peaks in gang activity, juvenile delinquency, and violent crime (Lord & Mahoney, 2007).

Adolescents reared in communities that harbor female-headed households, violent crime, educational inaptitude, and poverty were found to have decrease levels of academics compared to youth in communities with less crime and increased socioeconomic opportunities (Lord & Mahoney, 2007).

After school, time care arrangements are a significant deterrent to adolescent exposure to neighborhood crime and juvenile delinquency (Moody, 2016). These findings suggest that adolescent's exposure to increased rates of neighborhood violence is commonly and perpetually associated with adolescent functioning (Moody, 2016).

Youth accustomed to increased levels of self-care and involved in extracurricular activities were found to have higher grade point averages than youth not involved in these activities, but this effect had limited bearing when their parent's socioeconomic status was included as a variable (Lord & Mahoney, 2007).

Decreased supervision in high crime neighborhoods facilitated poor self-efficacy and decreased levels of social adjustment for youth than in neighborhoods with lower crime rates (Lord & Mahoney, 2007). Children are vulnerable to neighborhoods with increased levels of crime due to their after-school arrangements, cultivating poor developmental outcomes (Lord & Mahoney, 2007).

According to statistics taken from the U.S department of Education over 8% of children from 6 to 12-year old in low income, households were exposed to self-care as their fundamental arrangement during after school hours (Lord & Mahoney, 2007). This arrangement influences youth social and academic functioning for families with poor socio-economic status. After-school programs (ASPs) provide a secure arrangement for children of low economic communities by providing a safe haven to crime and deviant peers (Lord & Mahoney, 2007).

According to Barret et al. (2006), youth who recidivate account for the bulk of delinquency and over 10 percent of juvenile delinquents commit over seventy five percent of juvenile crime. The youngest adolescents at the time of offense were most likely to recidivate, while youth whose first offense was a status offense were more likely to recidivate than youth with more serious offenses (Barret et al., 2006).

Barret et al. (2006) believe that jurists and prosecutors are more deliberate in judgment when administering consequences to juveniles who are more likely to recidivate. Alltucker et al. (2006), suggest youth's age at first arrest is a precursor to criminal behaviors and youth who have experiences with the juvenile justice system before the age of 14 are seventy-five percent more likely to enter the adult correction system. Juvenile delinquents are lumped into two main categories; late starters (who are juveniles whose first arrest occurred after the age of 14) and early starters (who are adolescents whose first arrest occurred before the age of 14) (Alltucker et al., 2006).

Evidence exists that early starters in juvenile delinquency go through a sequence of steps over several years that manifests over time (Alltucker et al., 2006). Family,

negative peer associations and the types of communities in which they reside are leading factors that place adolescents in significant distress. Childhood maltreatment, abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse are correlating factors that influence violent crime (Alltucker et al., 2006).

In 2001, there were approximately over 900,000 thousand victims of neglect and child abuse in the United States of America, while over 250,000 children were placed in foster care (Alltucker et al., 2006). Most of the children placed in foster care in 2001 were younger than 7 years old and many of them were involved in multiple placements. This concept can have a negative effect on child functioning leading to educational inaptitude, antisocial behavior, diminished mental health, and juvenile delinquency (Alltucker et al., 2006).

Family criminality is considered a precursor to juvenile delinquency. This concept is not well understood, but researchers believe that decreased family functioning and poor parental quality increase the likelihood of juvenile transgressions (Alltucker et al., 2006). Youth offenders were found to have special education disabilities with upwards of 30% cases documented, compared to less than 15% of the general population (Alltucker et al., 2006).

Of the 30% documented cases, over 40% percent were diagnosed with learning disabilities and over 45% percent war found to have behavioral/emotional disabilities (Alltucker et al., 2006). Adjudicated juveniles with former experiences in foster care were 4 times more likely to exhibit criminal behavior than youth from traditional families and youth whose family members were previously incarcerated were twice as likely to enter the juvenile justice system (Alltucker et al., 2006).

Current juvenile justice theorists believe that identifying the avenues experienced by juvenile delinquents may help reform the present policy and procedures in juvenile justice (Alltucker et al., 2006). Lee and Madyum's (2009), study on the neighborhood disadvantage on the Black-White Achievement Gap noted that individuals living in the neighborhood disadvantage gap are more at risk for continued self-replication of deficiency than other at-risk characteristics (i.e. family composition, socio economic status, and minority status) because neighborhood disadvantage is a ramification of larger social components beyond the control of individuals.

Whereas, individuals who can facilitate change in their private and professional lives have the propensity to alter or stabilize neighborhood disadvantage (Lee & Madyum, 2009). Although people with neighborhood disadvantage have intentions to rise beyond their current circumstances, hardship psychologically promotes individuals to develop an alternative culture to survive existence in a destitute world (Lee & Madyum, 2009).

Lee and Madyum, (2009), have noted an alarming cycle: African Americans are more likely to reside in highly segregated neighborhoods despite occupational status, income, or academic achievement. Urban planners and real estate agents must accept most of the blame for not combating restrictive zoning practices, concentrating poverty, and increasing racial prejudice (Khan, 2018). These factors have a debilitating effect on adolescent behavior, prompting youth to follow negative peer influences instead of their parent's guidelines. When adolescent lose faith in parental controls community controls gain prominence (Khan, 2018).

Two forms of neighborhood social controls are formal and informal. Formal controls are formulated through law enforcement and community leaders (city officials and pastors) (Lee & Madyum, 2009). Informal controls consist of interpersonal networks formulated to maintain destructive behavior. These informal controls could stretch from parental dialogue to neighborhood watches (Lee & Madyum, 2009).

Neighborhoods composed of single-family households leads to decreased male role models, limited supervision, and diminished socio-economic status. Increases in poverty rates facilitate a decrease in expectations and norms (Lee & Madyum, 2009). This decreased control leads to less participation and poorer quality relationships among community members. When neighborhood members lower community expectations and standards and then fail to enforce communal norms, neighborhood context weakens (Lee & Madyum, 2009).

According to Morse (2003), adolescents learn empathy, reciprocity, and trust from the primal relationships they develop with their parents. Eliminating these fundamental relationships has an adverse effect on adolescents as well as their community. Recent statistics have revealed that adolescents raised by single parents are more likely to perpetrate future crimes and many adolescents raised in single-family households have difficulty learning fairness, empathy, self-command, and reciprocity (Morse, 2003).

Morse (2003) believes these nurturing traits are extremely important in promoting well-rounded individuals. When adolescents are not privy to these lessons, society is compelled to manage their behavior through secure detention. Diversionary programs

like juvenile drug courts facilitate these life lessons through support, case management, and graduated sanctions (Morse, 2003).

According to Lee and Madyum, (2009), family support, most notably that of grandmothers during the child rearing years is beneficial to Black youth development and is critical to developing important child functioning behaviors. Evidence indicates that many African American teenage mothers and many disadvantage youths reside in low economic communities and supportive family networks provide both supplementary resources and adaptive strategies. Many minority teenage mothers use grandmothers for guidance, direction, and support during child rearing years and as an informal control during adolescent development (Lee & Madyum, 2009).

Blacks residing in low economic communities have fewer positive social networks than individuals who hold college degrees, limiting their individual development. This cycle can have a lasting effect on its residents by lessening the opportunity to use these resources than individuals in more upscale communities (Lee & Mayum, 2009). African American and Hispanic American families tend to employ more informal networks than institutional resources from political or public agencies when faced with diminished socioeconomic resources (Lee & Mayum, 2009).

Researchers have found that African Americans and Hispanic Americans tend to join in neighborhood activities when they reside in poverty-riddled communities and gang infested neighborhoods. This concept would lead many to believe that increased community involvement contributes to successfully managing at risk youth (Khan, 2018).

Lee and Mayum, (2009) believed that community familiarity based on close knit ties does not necessarily abolish resident's gang involvement, although it does play a

significant role in establishing barriers to criminal behavior and juvenile delinquency (Lee & Mayum, 2009). The purpose of this research is to determine if there are disparities in how the juvenile justice system dispenses justice, a factor that may be contributing to these issues rather than alleviating them.

Current Content

Over the last decade research has been conducted that show racial disparities in the juvenile justice system regarding intervention, diversion, adjudication, and sentencing guidelines for youth of color (Smith & Smith, 2009). Brown (2007) states that many conventional juvenile justice theorists believe a transposed relationship exists between class and reprehensible behavior. Previous studies have shown as status increases delinquent behavior decreases.

Ketchum, (2008) believes leaders in juvenile justice condemn blatant racism yet ignore an offender's right to equality of opportunity. Bridges and Steen, (1998) suggest that disparate assumptions about offense causation reflect race and sentencing sanctions. Although research on racial biases in juvenile justice has been conducted for more than 30 years, few have analyzed the mechanisms by which race affects the assessment of juveniles and their cases. Jurists, probation officers, intake officers, and law enforcement officials' perceptions of juveniles and their transgressions may have a significant impact on case outcomes and can lead to racial biases (Bridges & Steen, 1998).

Jurists and probation officers often develop their own interpretation of current legislation, often abandoning rehabilitation for regulation (Ganter, 2001). The current reform movement adopted by the juvenile justice system is inspired by media propaganda. Mainstream media's fascination with drugs, gangs, and homicide leads to an

overrepresentation of African American and Hispanic American youth (Ganter, 2001).

According to Ketchup (2008), African American and Hispanic communities are debilitated economically, mentally, and culturally, leaving these communities etiolated, yet the juvenile justice system maintains does not always provide for ways to decrease these effects. Clark (2009) believed actors in juvenile justice are callus to the plight of minority offenders. These actors fail to discover what truly motivates minority youth and the circumstances that influence their transformation from youth to juvenile delinquents.

A racial bias is not the only significant contributor to racial disparities in sentencing (Bridges & Stern, 1998). Juvenile justice theorists have also proposed that access to resources is another threat that affects juvenile delinquents of color. Psychiatric resources, legal aid, and environmental conditions all add to discrepancies in sentencing guidelines for white juveniles and juveniles of color (Bridges & Stern, 1998). Jurists may develop a mental picture of minority youth, which results in racial stereotyping. This condition is often based on similarities the jurist may see in the youth and juveniles they may have sentenced in the past (Bridges & Stern, 1998).

Research has shown that probation officers generally portray African American youth and white youth differently in their written reports (Khan, 2018). Their characterization of white youth more frequently stresses the youth's social fabric as a cause of their transgressions, while their depictions of black youth often portray them with unfavorable attitudes and personalities (Bridges & Stern, 1998).

Studies suggest that the perceived negative internal attributions of minority youth have as much influence on sentencing as the severity of the crime or the youth's crime history (Bridges & Stern, 1998). Additional studies are necessary to determine if jurists

and law enforcement officer's personal philosophies of treatment form specific systems of classification that prevent diversionary outcomes (Bridges & Stern, 1998).

One of the most significant factors reinforcing racial disparities has been the disparate treatment in relationship to drug activity (Smith & Smith, 2009). Research has proven that even when all legal variables are controlled youth of color generally experience more stringent treatment within the juvenile justice system than their white counterparts do (Smith & Smith, 2009). Racial disparities have been found to be more apparent in drug cases, while contextual or community forces have been shown to impact diversification in disposition severity (Smith & Smith, 2009).

The state of Florida's juvenile justice system suspends adjudication on juvenile delinquents as a form of leniency for juveniles new to the justice system. Smith and Smith's (2009) multilevel examination on race and racial context effect on withholding adjudication in drug cases found that youth of color were less likely to have their adjudication suppressed than white youth (Smith & Smith, 2009).

Withholding adjudication can have significant repercussions on an adolescent's future. Many states use this method to deter youth from being controlled more formally (Smith & Smith, 2009). These youth are afforded diversion programs rather than experiencing graduating sanctions (Smith & Smith, 2009). Formal control has been shown to effect imminent involvement in the juvenile justice system (Bernburg et al., 2006).

African Americans are evaluated differently predicated on perceptions and stereotypes that they may pose a threat to their surrounding community. Albonetti, (1991), describes a "bounded rationality" as disparate differences in the juvenile

outcomes of children of color and white youth due to the notion that black youth associate with destructive groups. Decision-making in juvenile justice does not happen consistently across jurisdictions, and geographic areas. Research is necessary to explain these fundamental contradictions.

According to Armstrong and Rodriguez, (2005), it is apparent that drug activity in poverty-stricken areas, especially by young, African American youth, signifies a danger to conventional society. This point of view embodies that youth of color will be responded to more harshly and these disturbing racial disparities will be even more predicated in areas where there is a significant population of African American residents, indicating racial inequality and a concentrated disadvantage (Armstrong & Rodriguez, 2005).

Theoretical Framework Literature

Studies have shown court personnel in juvenile justice systems may demonstrate a racial bias during assessment, classification, and placement, which is likely to influence the rate in which minority offenders recidivate (Finley & Schindler, 2010). Although juvenile crime related offenses and violent crime has diminished over recent years juvenile justice officials still invoke a punitive stance toward juvenile delinquency. According to recent statistics, less than 2 percent of juvenile offenders commit violent crimes a year, but more than 40 states have adopted legislation to prosecute juveniles in adult courts (Leiber & Fix, 2019).

Many civic leaders believe that the reason why states have taken such a punitive stance with juvenile delinquency is due to the media's glorification of violent crime (Leiber & Fix, 2019). This endless propaganda has fueled a public outcry for harsher

punishments as a deterrent to crime related offenses. In fact, many crimes that go unsolved and the fact that the number of victims has increased year after year has influenced juvenile strategies that promote punishment instead of intervention or diversion (Clark, 2009).

The new legislation, which gives jurists the prudence to decide if a juvenile related offense warrants adult criminal court, decreases the age juvenile delinquents can be charged as adults for specific offenses, and increases the amount of crimes juveniles can be sentenced as adults (Finley & Schindler, 2010). Research conducted in the states of New Jersey, Florida, and New York has shown an increase in recidivism rates for juvenile delinquents housed in adult facilities.

The average number of juvenile delinquents remanded to secure detention increased significantly from 1980 to 1990 (Scanner, 2009). During this period, juveniles housed in secure detention rose from an average of 13,000 housed daily to 28,000 youths nation-wide. To combat this phenomenon, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private charitable organization committed to improving the lives of disadvantaged youth developed the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) to help deter punitive practices (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010).

The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) monitors confinement conditions, employs improved admissions screening, and reforms current case processing times to decrease the number of juvenile delinquents housed in secure detention; improving the plight of minority offenders (Ganter, 2001). Ganter, (2001), believes the current strategy employed by juvenile justice officials to curb recidivism rates is merely crime control. The current model is designed to correct criminal behavior while deterring

potential offenders.

The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) is a system adopted by more than 110 juvenile justice jurisdictions to improve the process of screening youth while developing fundamentals to support rehabilitation (Leiber & Fix, 2019). The current JDAI Model promotes collaboration and cooperation from community organizations, jurists, intake staff, and probation departments to develop rehabilitation and restoration strategies (Leiber & Fix, 2019).

The model also promotes knowledge acquisition and dissemination among juvenile justice leaders to improve incarceration alternatives, decrease rates of secure detention, and increase flexibility (Scanner, 2009). (JDAI) monitors confinement conditions, employs improved admissions screening, and reforms current case processing times to decrease the number of juveniles in secure detention; improving the plight of minority offenders (Scanner, 2009).

Juvenile justice researchers have discovered an alarming trend; juvenile justice systems and schools are doing children a disservice by gearing their strategies toward public safety instead of rehabilitation (Hardy, 2007). Every year over 500,000 thousand juvenile delinquents enter the juvenile justice system and more than 70% are not nonviolent offenders. A study conducted by Johns Hopkins University found that 75% of freshman high school students drop out or withdraw from school once they have been incarcerated in juvenile detention facilities and 75% of ninth grader students drop out once they are forced to repeat a grade (Hardy, 2007).

The strategies employed by schools and juvenile courts are so maligned that nonprofit organizations like the Catherine T. MacArthur, and the Annie E. & John D.

Casey foundations have instituted small-scaled innovative facilities to promote rehabilitation over punishment (Hardy, 2007). Many juvenile justice theorists believe the key to preventing recidivism is by increasing academic achievement. Education inaptitude often leads to disruptive behavior and incarceration (Moody, 2016).

The phenomenon is often referred to as the school-to-jail pipeline. These theorists believe academic underachievement is the gateway to juvenile delinquency. Youth, who are left back, participate in special Ed programs, or have a history of suspension are often marginalized (Hardy, 2007). These children end up being suspended, pushed out, or even expelled, leaving them prey to crime-riddled neighborhoods (Moody, 2016).

In 1992, the Annie E. Casey Foundation implemented (JDAI) to decrease the rates of secure detention for non-violent offenders (Espinosa et al., 2007). The organization conducted studies that reported a 72% increase in crime for juvenile delinquents from 1985 to 1995. The studies also showed that only 30% of the juvenile transgressors held in secure detention in 1995 were violent offenders. Many of the youth held in juvenile detention facilities were remanded because they did not comply with sanctions on status offenses (Espinosa et al., 2007).

Non-profit organizations like the Annie E. Casey foundation understand the key to effective rehabilitation is stability (Hardy, 2007). Stability is formed through intervention, diversion programs, and molding partnerships with social services, law enforcement agencies, and community services. The collaboration among these agencies is extremely important to combat recidivism and increase educational opportunities (Moody, 2016).

Juvenile justice theorists have questioned why juvenile courts emphasize failures, problems and flaws when empathy, strengths, and goals promote compliant behavior (Clark, 2009). Disruptive behavior is noteworthy and definitely needs attention, but failure does not contain directions on how to improve unsatisfactory decision-making (Garcia & Serra, 2019).

The current model of juvenile justice seems to concentrate on retribution, instead of promoting intervention and treatment, thereby increasing the recidivism rates (Garcia & Serra, 2019). In fact, confrontational approaches foster resentment and evasiveness on the part of the youth, in essence undermining true rehabilitation. The goal of retribution is to administer punitive responses to criminal behavior (Clark, 2008).

Remanding adolescents to secure detention support the need for public safety but fails to vanquish anti-social and pro social behaviors (Garcia & Serra, 2019).

Employing punitive actions to deter criminal behavior is the essence of deterrence theory. Fundamental deterrence is the presumption that sanctioning delinquents will discourage other members of the community from perpetrating crimes (Garcia & Serra, 2019).

Studies have proven that punitive actions fail to stimulate change efforts in juvenile delinquents (Clark, 2009). Compliance and conformity do not equal transformation, transgressors must want to change and recognize changes lead to desired outcomes (Clark, 2009).

Clark, (2009), believes increasing the motivation of juvenile delinquents facilitates the youth's readiness to change by implementing a climate of inspiration. Probation officers and case managers who support juvenile delinquents through responsiveness, attention, and encouragement motivate transgressors to change their

behavior (Leiber & Fix, 2019). Motivation is not a fixed characteristic like hair color or shoe size; it can be enhanced or reduced. Individuals who give equal credit to juvenile achievements and transgressions are cast off as having become too personal with the youth and having lost their edge (Leiber & Fix, 2019).

The juvenile justice system has had problems managing violent offenders for years; recently a national social policy agenda was implemented to decrease the costs associated with housing these delinquents in secure detention (Schaeffer & Borduin, 2005). Research has shown successful outcomes for violent offenders who participated in multisystemic therapy (MST) on a long-term basis (Schaeffer & Borduin, 2005).

In fact, recent research has reported a 63% reduction in recidivism rates after a four-year follow up in MST. Juvenile justice theorists have noted that multi-systemic therapy is a successful method for the treatment of violent antisocial behavior in juvenile delinquents (Schaeffer & Borduin, 2005). Violent offenders need extensive follow-ups of MST to reduce the rate of detention. Longer term MST has been shown to reduce secure detention rates by 62.4 days annually, saving juvenile justice facilities over 50,000 dollars for each juvenile delinquent, compared to the 5,000 dollars required to administer MST (Schaeffer & Borduin, 2005).

Spiwak, (2007) believes that the players within the juvenile system (mental health officials, community leaders, school officials, jurists, parents and law enforcement officers) could benefit from cultural competency training to help them distinguish juvenile delinquency from common adolescent behavior. Many juveniles are unnecessarily placed on juvenile justices' dockets for simply exhibiting youthful behavior (Spiwak, 2007).

Many youths are simply displaying mischievous behaviors that generally occur with adolescents, but this behavior is erroneously labeled delinquency (Spiwak, 2007).

Researchers in juvenile delinquency now believe parents, school officials, and community figures are too quick to refer adolescents to the juvenile justice system, when less disruptive and more appropriate methods could efficiently address the needs of adolescents (Spiwak, 2007).

These researchers also believe members of law enforcement need to familiarize themselves with cultural norms that affect youth, possibly taking more appropriate actions to curb youth indiscretions (Spiwak, 2007). Adolescents, parents, guardians, and law enforcement agencies would benefit from training on how to handle police and community interactions. Police departments across the country fail to grasp the severity of the situation and law enforcement officers may benefit from more congenial interactions with community members (Spiwak, 2007).

Such interaction would help them comprehend the dynamics surrounding low economic communities, creating improved collaboration, cooperation, and respect between community members and law enforcement officers (Spiwak, 2007). City officials acknowledge a division between police, parents, school officials, juvenile court representatives and adolescents. Once these members understood the dynamics involved, they could focus on community care and academic achievement, promoting rehabilitation, not confinement (Spiwak, 2007).

Chemical Dependency

Juveniles who are dependent on drugs and alcohol generally represent a significant portion of the adolescent remanded to secure detention yearly. This situation

presents economic problems for themselves, their families, their neighborhoods, and society as a whole (Henggeler et al., 2006). To combat the role chemical dependency has on adolescent incarceration states began adopting drug court programs as early as the 1980's. Although the success of drug court programs has received minor attention, numerous factors have revealed that drug courts are more proficient than traditional juvenile court system at reducing chemical dependency risks (Henggeler et al., 2006).

Juvenile drug courts are more successful because of the unique collaboration between juvenile court representatives and chemical dependency clinicians thereby increasing retention in treatment, supporting more extensive supervision, decreasing chemical dependency issues, and minimizing costs associated with the judicial process (Henggeler et al., 2006).

There is a plethora of treatment tools used by juvenile drug courts to address a multitude of issues associated with chemically dependent adolescents (Riestenberg, 2007). These include family counseling (to increasing parental controls), individual counseling (helping youth to develop drug refusal skills), school functioning (enhancing academic achievement), and community relations (improving interpersonal skills) (Riestenberg, 2007).

Many of the strategies employed by juvenile drug courts are consistent with effective behavior change. Examples include random urine screens for all participants, consistent and immediate sanctioning for negative behavior, and providing rewards for positive behavior (Henggeler et al., 2006).

Multi-systemic therapy in connection with juvenile court practices has proven to reduce chemically dependency, decrease disruptive behavior, and improves parental

authority (Henggeler et al., 2006). MST therapy emphasizes changes within peer, school, and family structures that accompany chemical dependency, rather than concentrating on drug use per se (Henggeler et al., 2006).

Juvenile Drug Courts

Juvenile drug courts are successful because they employ and integrate various components to cultivate and improve adolescent development (Van Wormer et al., 2010). The goal of juvenile drug courts is to implement chemical dependency services, establish intervention strategies, and provide structure to the lives of chemically dependent youth (Van Wormer et al., 2010).

Drug court programs accomplish this process through consistency, structure, and discipline. The aim of the program is to enhance psychosocial functioning, curb drug use, and implement skill building to augment adolescent development (Van Wormer et al., 2010). Within this context however, it is unclear whether or not minority youth are being given the diversion opportunities in equal numbers as nonminority youth which is what this research is designed to show (Van Wormer et al., 2010).

Juvenile drug courts are designed to promote accountability and strengthen families of drug involved youth. Many of the youth in juvenile drug programs often suffer from issues unrelated to chemical dependency (Van Wormer et al., 2010). Juvenile drug court practitioners regularly encounter youth who suffer from underlying developmental and psychosocial issues such as negative peer associations and the increase in risk taking behaviors. Since many of the clients have major weaknesses in multiple areas it is important for drug court personnel to devise tailor made

comprehensive strategies to help these youth become successful (Van Wormer et al., 2010).

The aim of juvenile drug courts is to determine each client's specific need, recognizing and decreasing deficiencies and distinguishing each client's strengths from their weaknesses (Stein, 2013). Once adolescents' inadequacies have been determined, wrap around services are implemented to enhance opportunities for future development (Pitts, 2006). Wrap around services allow case managers and clinicians the creativity to customize and surround troubled adolescents with diverse services rather than secure detention (Stein, 2015).

These services may include: MST, individual educational plans, intensive outpatient therapy, residential therapy, home detention, mental health assessments, community service programs, alcoholics anonymous programs, and narcotics anonymous programs (Bryan et al., 2006). The purpose of wrap around services is to improve psychological functioning, refine parental controls, promote positive peer associations, reform community relationships, and increase each client's maturation process (Bryan et al., 2006).

The drug court model emphasizes therapeutic relationships, encouragement, and the collaboration between all of the providers. These standards form the foundation of juvenile drug courts and promote both motivation and participation by adolescents (Bryan et al., 2006). The key to sustained success in juvenile drug court is a well-formulated aftercare program. Aftercare programs help monitor the progression of drug court members and ensure social adjustment once adolescents graduate (Bryan et al., 2006).

Juvenile drug court practitioners have identified several long-term goals for the continued success of drug court participants including the development of community-based substance abuse prevention, along with opportunities for youth to acquire social, vocational, and academic skills, peer recovery support, along with the development of life management skills, and impulse controls (Bryan et al., 2006).

Participants that graduate from the drug court program usually have improved self-esteem, increased psychological development, and decreased recidivism rates (Tanner-Smith et al., 2016). Juvenile drug court graduates should recognize that bad decisions lead to negative outcomes (Tanner-Smith et al., 2016).

For juvenile drug court programs to accomplish its long-term goals, they must implement short-term objectives (Pitts, 2006). Although the stabilization of family structures and the suspension of criminal activity are two important objectives juvenile drug courts promote. Abstinence might be unrealistic at this point; curbing drug use is extremely important to the participant's stability and continuity (Pitts, 2006).

Although managing and maintaining client's progress is extremely important to their fundamental development (Pitts, 2006). The goal is to keep participants focused on their treatment needs and phase movement within the system. Clients that fail to complete chemical dependency treatment, stop attending scheduled drug court hearings, and fail to establish positive community alliances are eventually terminated from the drug court program (Pitts, 2006).

Clients terminated from drug court are required to attend traditional juvenile court hearings; sacrificing a chance at expungement and all the benefits that the drug court provides (Marion & Oliver, 2006). Juvenile drug court is structured to give

adolescents a holistic therapeutic setting, a culture and climate traditional juvenile court does not provide. Traditional court is more antagonistic than diversionary programming (Marion & Oliver, 2006).

Adolescents often view traditional court as suspicious and adversarial. Adolescents assigned to traditional dockets are often viewed as untrustworthy and incredulous; hindering any therapeutic benefit (Marion & Oliver, 2006).

Another short-term objective of juvenile drug court program is identifying educational constraints and implementing a comprehensive strategy to correct their deficiencies. The aim is to return them to their traditional school environment or at least steer them towards their general education development certificate (Bryan et al., 2006). Juvenile drug court practitioners believe unconventional academic programs like day treatment programs are detrimental to participants; by promoting negative behavior instead of decreasing it (Bryan et al., 2006).

These nontraditional academic environments exacerbate the potential for adverse peer associations, which oftentimes reinforces the conduct that the juvenile drug court program would like to diminish (Bryan et al., 2006). Although juvenile drug court programs are designed to epitomize a blanket of wrap around services, a portion of clients referred are simply not compatible. Juvenile drug court programs are getting referrals for adolescents that need more services than these programs can provide (Bryan et al., 2006).

Many juveniles referred to juvenile drug court programs suffer from mental health conditions that have never been diagnosed or treated. This is one reason why juvenile drug court practitioners believe assessment procedures are extremely important to the

success of participants and their families (Stein et al., 2013).

Assessment procedures are a critical component of juvenile drug court programs; helping case managers resolve issues affecting participants and their families in the home, at school and in their communities (Bryan et al., 2006). Many case managers have to make mental health referrals. Several of the juveniles referred to juvenile drug court programs are exhibiting mental health concerns that exceed the scope of juvenile drug court programs (Bryan et al., 2006).

Another important short-term objective for juvenile drug practitioners is the mobilization of parental support (Bryan et al., 2006). Parents and caregivers help contribute to the success of their children by providing sedulous support; promoting drug court doctrine and transporting their adolescents to treatment sessions, alcoholic anonymous meetings, and drug court hearings (McCollister et al., 2009).

Parents and caregivers are important keys to compliance, direction, and stability to their children (Bryan et al., 2006). Short term objectives help build the participants foundation; stimulating cognitive development, improving psychological adaptation, and elevating effective coping skills. The goal is to help juveniles enhance life management skills; increasing their maturation process so they can become critical thinkers (Bryan et al., 2006).

These objectives help formulate the infrastructure needed to maintain successful juvenile drug court programs (Stein et al., 2015). Feeble short-term objectives have a tendency to weaken drug court programs procedures and tactics, thereby debilitating the effective processes that lead to successful outcomes. Juvenile drug courts employ a

number of therapeutic activities to ensure the success of its short term and long-term goals (Stein et al., 2015).

The primary therapeutic interventions, which facilitate a participant's progress, are structure, consistent urinalyses, and graduated sanctions (Marion & Oliver, 2006). Most if not all of the participants in juvenile drug court programs have never experienced social structure. The regularity of the interventions and discipline promote responsible decision making in young adults. Regimented routines increase self-awareness and decrease risk-taking behavior (Stein et al., 2015).

The goal is to nurture cognitive development and social responsibility in adolescents by improving their behavior and impulse control (Stein et al., 2015). Juvenile drug court practitioners believe the implementation of advantageous recreational activities relieves participants stress, increases the success of long-term objectives, and prevents negative influences from reestablishing control (Marion & Oliver, 2006).

Activities such as basketball, bowling, and trips to the movies reduce complacency and foster achievement (McCollister et al., 2009). Down time often promotes drug use and negative peer interaction in drug court participants, so it is important to replace these instances with responsible choices (McCollister et al., 2009).

Rewards and sanctions are important behavior modifiers that educate youth on the consequences of negative behavior; emphasizing accountability and obedience (McCollister et al., 2009). Additionally, juvenile drug court programs use phase promotion, applause, praise, recognition, and gift certificates as rewards for participants (Marion & Oliver, 2006). Sanctions may include: community service, home detention with electric monitoring, detention and written essays (Marion & Oliver, 2006).

Drug court staff also may ground participants by holding their driver's license, laptops, cell phones, iPods, and decreasing curfew times (Marion & Oliver, 2006). Participants are usually court ordered to complete and turn in job applications, college entrance applications, and alcoholic anonymous appointments. Case managers, social workers, and treatment providers are encouraged to think outside the box; deviating from the normal drug court protocol when normal drug court curriculum is ineffective (Marion & Oliver, 2006).

Therapeutic activities in the drug court framework are designed to foster both short term and long-term objectives (McCollister et al., 2009). These interventions help integrate juvenile drug court principles and form the basis for chemical dependency treatment. Another important component of juvenile drug court program are community resources (McCollister et al., 2009).

Community resources are important to the success of juvenile drug courts by aligning participants with supportive services (Bryan et al., 2006). Disciplinary resources establish program continuity and order. The public defender's office assists participants by advocating for their rights. Law enforcement agencies aids drug court programs by referring juveniles with misdemeanors, reinforcing curfews, and regulating community ordinances (McCollister et al., 2009).

Chemical dependency resources provide support and teach clients intervention strategies; alleviating triggers and bolstering impulse controls (Bryan et al., 2006). Treatment providers, mental health professionals, and alcoholic anonymous staff members work in unison to cultivate a kinship of trust. These relationships allow juvenile drug court case managers the capacity to uncover vital information about clients and their

families; creating and developing alternatives to secure detention. The Food bank, Red Cross, and the animal protective league provide excellent community service opportunities (Korchmaros, 2015).

Each adolescent referred to juvenile drug court programs has his or her own difficulties that hinder progress. Many of the juvenile drug court participants are products of dysfunctional families and most have a parent or loved one with substance abuse issues (Bryan et al., 2006). Some of the parents are enablers and several others have little to no involvement in their child's upbringing. These concerns are significant because it encourages poor decision-making, absenteeism, and impulsivity (Bryan et al., 2006).

Although juvenile drug court programs are designed to provide wrap around services to adolescents with need, many participants are either misdiagnosed or suffer from traumatic events from their past (Bryan et al., 2006). This cycle of events impedes juvenile drug court success and promotes self-esteem concerns in adolescents. When adolescents have family members committed to transportation, the treatment process, and implementing the principles of the juvenile drug court program the participants' chances for success increase (Bryan et al., 2006).

Several environmental factors can influence the success of juvenile drug court program participants positively or negatively. The school that a participant attends either influences an adolescent's growth or diminishes their development (Pitts, 2006). Many schools have adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards discipline. These academic institutions refuse to review or examine code of conduct with students because they do not have the budget, time, or personnel to review student's behavior on a case-to-case basis (Pitts, 2006).

Numerous school officials understand the difference between harmless adolescent behavior and juvenile delinquency (Moody, 2016). These schools are more flexible and work more collaboratively with juvenile drug court programs than others. Peer pressure is another environmental factor that affects participants in a positive or negative manner (Pitts, 2006). Negative peer pressure can promote substance abuse, risk taking behavior, and adverse decision making; while positive peer pressure may improve participants commitment, self-esteem, and responsibility (Moody, 2016).

Law enforcement's knowledge of and views related to juvenile drug court practices can positively or negatively influence drug court participant's referrals and placement thereby influencing participants success or failure (Pitts, 2006). Many law enforcement agencies are familiar with juvenile drug court programs; often referring adolescents with substance abuse problems. Although law enforcement agencies can positively influence juvenile drug court programs, many law enforcement officials are unaware of juvenile drug court practices (Pitts, 2006).

Law enforcement agencies often over indict juveniles for mischievous behavior; preventing or hindering their entry into juvenile drug court programs. If these law enforcement officials understood the benefits of juvenile drug court programs, they could promote its practices and principles to community members and leaders (Pitts, 2006).

Cuyahoga County Juvenile Justice Strategies

According to statistics taken from the Ohio Department of Youth Services and The Governor's Council on Juvenile Justice Disproportionate Minority Contact Initiative, African American juveniles in 2008 were five times more likely to be remanded into secure detention than Caucasian juveniles and Caucasian juveniles were five times more

likely to have their cases diverted than African American or Hispanic American juveniles (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009).

Almost five percent of Caucasian juveniles arrested in Cuyahoga County cases resulted in delinquent findings while almost 23 percent of African American juveniles arrested in the county resulted in delinquent findings (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2008). It is possible that drug detentions are contributing to the numbers of overall detentions, the numbers of which might be lessened if more appropriate drug court diversionary opportunities were afforded minority youth in equal numbers as are nonminority youth (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009).

In the early 1990s, the juvenile correction system of the state of Ohio was consistently overcrowded and struggled to incarcerate juvenile delinquents with felonies. Leaders of the juvenile justice institutions of Ohio decided to implement the RECLAIM program (Reasoned and Equitable Community and Local Alternatives to the Incarceration of Minors) (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009).

The RECLAIM Ohio program is a nationally renowned funding project for juvenile delinquents that promotes juvenile justice strategies by employing community-based adjudication principles (Miller & Liotta, 2001). Local juvenile courts in Ohio had a monetary incentive to commit adolescents to state facilities prior to the implementation of RECLAIM Ohio.

In the past state and county funds were not strategically aligned. In fact, the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) was allocated independent funding outside of Ohio's various counties (Ohio Department of Youth Services, 2009). This concept influenced how county juvenile courts placed adolescent offenders. Many county courts

placed non-violent first-time offenders in state facilities to save money (Miller & Liotta, 2001). The RECLAIM program has established a collaborative partnership between juvenile courts and the state juvenile correctional system that provides funds for diversion programs and community-based support programs (Miller & Liotta, 2001).

Under the program, counties are allocated funding that was previously allocated to fund the state correctional institutions (Miller & Liotta, 2001). The average number of felony adjudications it has compared to the state's average number of felony delinquents during the previous four years determines the county's allocation amount. The funds are used for probation, community service, day treatment, electronic monitoring, chemically dependency prevention, and diversion programs (Miller & Liotta, 2001).

The RECLAIM program has increased jurist's flexibility in sentencing; community-based programming, educational services, restitution/community services, and clinical assessments (Miller & Liotta, 2001). The program has also improved collaboration between jurist, county commissioners, state universities, and community leaders to improve rehabilitation measures for juvenile offenders (Miller & Liotta, 2001).

Ten other states have adopted the RECLAIM program to establish variety in sanctioning lower level offenders (Miller & Liotta, 2001). The implementation of the RECLAIM program has had a corresponding effect on disproportionate minority contact in juvenile justice in the state of Ohio. Prior to the implementation of the RECLAIM program African American youth accounted for over 55% of the DYS population, after the program's inception that number has dropped 46.1% (Miller & Liotta, 2001).

Methodology Literature

Bryan, Hiller, and Leukefeld (2006) utilized focus groups favorably to investigate participant contentment with chemical dependency treatment. When focus groups are administered along with drug court team members, they have been proven to be a productive approach for investigating the concealed concepts that link participants results to treatment principles. Researcher guided group dialogue can evoke significant practical concepts of drug court programs that may hinder or cultivate the advancement of proposed outcomes (Bryan et al 2006).

The proficiency to present a comprehensive understanding of the program's objectives while distinguishing which drug court procedures bolster these objectives is crucial for cultivating preferred outcomes. This concept may help the researchers pinpoint significant attributes of participants, households, and neighborhoods that impact participant outcomes and program strategy (Bryan et al 2006).

The study's data collection centered around proposing questions to induce responses pertaining to the programs target population, short term and long-term objectives of the program, neighborhood resources to improve services, participant attributes, program services that may deter participate outcomes, and curative activities implemented to augment the programs goals (Bryan et al 2006).

Campbell and Retzlaff (2000) study on juvenile diversion interventions focused on 32 programs in the state of Colorado that afforded intervention to offenders. Their inquiry was administered to examine three concepts of diversionary programming: categories of interventions afforded to juveniles through programming, classification and judicial history of offenders in each program, and intervention results. Data collection

was acquired through the use of a juvenile diversion client termination form (Campbell & Retzalaff, 2000).

The client termination document was completed by departmental staff at each diversion location for every youth offender accepted into their program. The termination document contains four types of data: outcome, programmatic, legal, and demographic. Demographic data acquired comprised last grade youth completed, age at intake, race, and gender. Legal data collected comprised: violent felony arrests, prior felony arrests, violent misdemeanor arrests, prior misdemeanor arrests, age of initial contact with police, the agency that referred the youth to diversionary programming, and the period in the judicial system when the youth was afforded diversion (Campbell & Retzalaff, 2000).

The study utilized a sample of 5865 juvenile offenders who were afforded diversionary programming from 1995-1996. Multivariate and univariate applications were administered, and the findings detected specific patterns of intervention appointment. The findings also implied that participant characteristics, specifically history of arrest, were more pertinent to diversion outcome than the absence or presence of an intervention (Campbell & Retzalaff, 2000).

Van Wormer and Lutze (2010) noted that previous research has concentrated on effective programming and persuasive chemical dependency models for juveniles, finite research has been administered on the significance of developing a substantial collaborative infrastructure that juvenile drug courts can sustain over time. This infrastructure emerges during the implementation and planning phase and must be fortified throughout the completion of the program.

The researchers contend that what is specifically unique about juvenile drug court programs is they are able to cultivate a collective progressive dynamic among clinicians, judicial, and juvenile justice officials which most likely contributes to the effectiveness of the program. They contend, that no uniform processes or tools exist to quantify team synthesis and acknowledge that drug courts are in demand of such an instrument (Van Wormer & Lutze, 2010).

The researchers noted that previous research did not focus on mixed method designs. This is a result of small sample sizes, weak research designs, and the fact that the expansion of juvenile drug courts promptly outgrew research provisions. Contemporary studies have shown statistically significant disparities between juvenile drug court participants and equivalently matched control groups while previous research attempts failed to detect disparities. This concept led the researchers to conclude that more prominent comprehensive inquiries of juvenile drug courts must be produced (Van Wormer & Lutze, 2010).

Tanner-Smith, Lipsey, and Wilson (2016) employed an extensive search strategy that was utilized to detect inquiries that met inclusion criteria. The researchers utilized a meta-analysis that synthesized results from 46 controlled evaluation inquiries to investigate the effects of juvenile drug courts on chemical dependency use and recidivism.

The meta-analysis utilized a controlled quasi-experimental and experimental evaluation including inclusion criteria. Studies that were suitable for inclusion had to: appraise a juvenile drug court program that referred juvenile participants to chemical dependency services, involve a comparison condition (a prior probation history),

measure criminal behavior post juvenile drug court acceptance, establish a target sample of participants, was published post 1989, operate in either Canada or the United States, monitor youth through random drug screens, utilize both sanctions and rewards, and utilize an acceptable research design (Tanner-Smith et al 2016).

Acceptable designs comprised those where quasi-experiments utilized statistical measures to adapt to baseline disparities in youth offending or chemical dependency use, participants were randomly appointed to conditions, and quasi-experiments that included enough data to afford calculation of effect sizes indexing baseline disparities in chemical dependency use or participants offending patterns. The researchers eliminated inquiries that distinguished one juvenile drug court program to another of comparable intensity (Tanner-Smith et al 2016).

According to Pitts (2006) the first juvenile drug emerged in 1995 and encountered numerous challenges. Confidentiality concerns, parental chemical dependency use, negative influences, gang involvement, lack of community resources, participants ever evolving needs, neighborhood instability, and naivete of participants to chemical dependency concerns are challenges juvenile drug court programs encounter on a daily basis.

Pitts (2006) employed a mixed methodological approach to identify the scope of juvenile drug courts to their strategic intentions. The aim of the study was to determine the level of strategic efficacy on its stated objectives. The researcher administered in depth interviews with juvenile drug court team members and employed focus groups. The research design utilized a multi-faceted qualitative and quantitative data collection application dependent on participant level data drawn from case files (Pitts, 2006).

The research comprised a historical outcome inquiry utilizing a comparison group of youth who never participated in the juvenile drug court program. The study involved participants who departed the juvenile program from 2001 to 2003. Results of the study suggest that participants of the drug court program recidivate less often than the youth in the comparison groups, whether they successfully graduated or not (Pitts, 2006).

Although participants who did not successfully complete the program length of stay was six months on average, the gap between the mean length of stay of non-graduates and graduates is usually four months. This proposes some residual benefit of participation in drug court activities even among participants who failed to complete the program (Pitts, 2006).

Research Design Literature

Cosden and Koch (2015) study on Changes in Adult, Child, and Family Functioning among Participants in Family Treatment Drug Court investigated 76 adults and 62 families that participated family treatment drug court (FTDC). The subjects either resided in an outpatient or residential setting. The participants were evaluated for psychosocial functioning by calculating a reliable change index for child, adult, and households (Cosden & Koch, 2015).

The researchers noted a substantial enhancement in family functioning and that were related to increases in child development, increasing the likelihood of a reintegration of the original family structure. The analysis involved chi-square analyses and paired-sample t-tests that were dependent on reliable change indices classification (Cosden & Koch, 2015).

The RCI was utilized to ascertain if each subject experience substantial advancements in function throughout the treatment process. Subjects with an RCI higher than 1.96 ($p < .05$) were classified as having a substantial change, while those with that did not reach that threshold were classified as not making substantial change. Two disparate forms of change were investigated: The number of participants who made substantial improvements as determined by the RCI and; group changes analyzed through paired t-tests (Cosden & Koch, 2015).

The RCI was utilized to establish a dichotomous change variable, which was entered into a chi square analyses to evaluate the association between improvements in child, family, and adult functioning, and reintegration. In addition, disparities in results as a function of entering residential or outpatient treatment, as the impact of period of treatment, were investigated (Cosden & Koch, 2015).

Child and McIntyre (2015) administered a study on family drug court program compliance and Child welfare outcomes. The researchers note that research exists that favorably lists the achievements of family drug court participants but there is limited literature on the relationships between successful reunification of children with their families and parent compliance (Child & McIntyre, 2015).

Their study reviewed data from over 200 families participating in a Sacramento county, California family drug court. The researchers investigated four compliance measures collectively and individually, after controlling for participant characteristics, utilizing logistic regression models to ascertain how family drug court participation objectives influence child reunification (Child & McIntyre, 2015).

According to the researchers the most impactful predictors of reunification were negative urine screens and attending support group meetings. These results signify that approaches intended to address the challenges affected by chemical dependency use and child maltreatment should consider and support both participation in informal neighborhood-based activities and formal clinically driven interventions (Child & McIntyre, 2015).

The researchers utilized hierarchal logistic regression to evaluate disparities in the probability of an adolescent being reunified with their parent based on performance on each compliance measure after controlling for primary substance of choice, race/ethnicity, age and sex. The influence of individual compliance measures on reunification were first examined separately to investigate which, if any, were predictive of child reunification (Child & McIntyre, 2015).

Compliance measure shown to be significant predictors of child reunification, after controlling for parent demographics, were included in the comprehensive hierarchical multivariate logistic regression model utilized to determine the relative predictive strength of compliance measures on child reunifications (Child & McIntyre, 2015).

Chen, Propp, DeLara, and Corvo (2011) administered a study on child neglect and its association with subsequent juvenile drug and alcohol offenses. The inquiry presented empirical findings about the association between childhood neglect and adolescents' subsequent involvement in alcohol and drug related offenses from of 251 neglected children and their community matched control (N=502) from a 17-year period longitudinal data set (Chen et al 2011).

Results affirmed that children of neglect were at greater risk of being arrested for post juvenile alcohol and drug offenses than children who were not neglected. Being male, Caucasian and a victim of domestic violence also substantially contributed to increased risks of being apprehended for juvenile alcohol and drug offenses (Chen et al 2011).

The researchers utilized STATA 10.0 to administer the analyses for this study. Univariate analyses were conducted to produce a profile of the inquiry's participants. Bivariate analyses were administered to compare the disparities between the control group and neglected group on later involvement with juvenile alcohol and drug offense (Chen et al 2011).

Tobit regression analysis was conducted to analyze future juvenile alcohol and drug offenses only for the neglect group given that parent information about the control group was not available in the data set. The researchers employed Tobit analysis because juvenile alcohol and drug offenses were relatively rare for the majority of juveniles in the data set; most of the juveniles had a value of zero for this variable (Chen et al 2011).

Juvenile alcohol and drug arrests represent severe and repetitive juvenile alcohol and drug abuse behaviors that elevate the chances of arrest for these offenses; another rationale for employing the Tobit model. The Tobit model is appropriate to gauge the effects of the predictors on this latent dependent variable. Logistic regression was not utilized because if the numbers of juvenile alcohol and drug offense were converted into a dichotomous variable to represent whether an arrest for juvenile alcohol and drug violation occurred, the variability in the original data would be lost resulting in a loss of information (Chen et al 2011).

Conclusions

Currently 100,000 thousand juveniles are remanded to secure detention annually in the United States of America. Research is being conducted on juvenile delinquency, mental health issues, chemical dependency, and alternatives to secure detention, but few studies have been conducted on how juvenile drug courts implement wrap around services to influence positive behavior (Bryan et al., 2006).

Research suggest that many people who exhibit disruptive behavior as adolescents will continue having problems as they mature, in school, at work, and in future endeavors. It is the contention of this researcher that many of the juvenile delinquents released from secure detention will return to the juvenile justice system. These youth will fail to obtain any form of academic achievement and will have difficulty adjusting to a competitive work environment.

Bullis et al. (2004) suggest that juvenile court systems should implement intervention programs that emphasize academic achievement, structured learning, and job readiness to decrease the recidivism rates of minority offenders.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Chapter 3 contains a discussion of the methods used in this study, the setting in which the study will be completed and a detailed description of the participants. This chapter also provides a detailed review of the data collection procedures.

Research Method and Design Appropriateness

Quantitative research directs how a researcher examines how one variable relates to another variable. By examining an affiliation among variables, the researcher is interested in concluding which variables may influence other variables. This study will examine two nominal categorical variables (race and geographic location) and one other nominal categorical variable (success rates) which is measured based on whether the participant graduates or not to ascertain if there is a relationship between race and geographic location as they relate to the participant's success rates within Cuyahoga County's juvenile drug courts.

At the outset of the research it was determined that a multiple linear regression analysis would be an appropriate statistic to answer the research questions, however since it has been determined that the success rate will be measured by whether or not a participant graduates from the program or not (yes or no) multiple linear regression could not be used.

The response variable was participants' success rates, while the control variables were race and geographic location. However, due to the nature in which the data was made available, multiple linear regression statistics could not be used as the data violated

the norms necessary for use with this statistic. As was forecasted, the data as presented most appropriately lent itself to the use of a quantitative Ex Post Facto research design.

Qualitative research was not considered for this study because of its inability to provide a statistical analysis among the variables. The literature helped chronicle the issues germane to this study's decision to determine the relationships of participants' success rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court to their race and geographic location.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

The study will evaluate whether geographic location and race of youth offenders would be significantly related to the participant's success rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court. The research questions spearheaded this quantitative study:

RQ1. What is the relationship between geographic location and a juvenile's participant's graduation rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court?

RQ2. What is the relationship between race and a juvenile's participant's graduation rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court?

The response variable will be participants' success rates, and the controlled variables will be race and geographic location. The participant's success rates will be determined by whether or not the juvenile graduated from the Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court. Race will be determined by each participant's ethnicity. Geographic location will be determined based on each participant's residence. Many of the participants in the drug court program reside in urban or metropolitan neighborhoods on the east and west side of Cleveland, Ohio and some reside in the surrounding suburbs.

Q Ho1: There is no relationship between a juvenile's race and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

RQ Ha1: There is a relationship between a juvenile's race and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

Ho2: There is no relationship between a juvenile's geographic location and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

Ha2: There is a relationship between a juvenile's geographic location and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

Population and Sample

To gather a sample of participants for the study, permission will be gathered from the Chief Executive Officer of the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Drug Court program. Once permission is granted, the pool of participants will be taken from a convenience sample from the total population of former participants from Cuyahoga County Juvenile drug court, from the years 2013 to 2018 that will be made available by the court.

Participants will not be identified by name but will be classified by race and geographical location. Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court only permits adolescents from the ages of 14 to 18 years of age. Adolescent under the age of 14 years of age are considered too immature and callow. Cuyahoga County juvenile court does permit 18-year-old juveniles in the program but only on a case-to-case basis. The majority of the 18-year-old participants in the program started before their 18th birthday. The study will use/used archived data from participants' demographic information found in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court records.

The purpose of this study will be to ascertain the relationship between the success rates of juvenile drug offenders based on the independent variables of race and geographic location. The sample of the current study will consist of participants from both urban and suburban areas in Cuyahoga County who participated in the adolescent treatment program.

Geographic Location

The quantitative study will be administered in a metropolitan community in Cleveland Ohio. The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court is located in urban neighborhood near downtown Cleveland. Although the court is positioned in a blighted neighborhood, the clients of the juvenile justice center derive from several distinct communities.

These communities are disparate in that they are suburban and non-suburban. The majority of the juveniles that encounter the juvenile justice center are 18 years or younger and they make up 22.3% of Cuyahoga County's population. The archived documents will show that the sample of juveniles were from both urban and suburban neighborhoods.

Race

The sample will consist of male and female participants who were adjudicated through the Cuyahoga County juvenile justice system. The breakdown of the participants by ethnicity from 2013 to 2018 consisted of 40 % Black or of African descent, 1.3% Hispanic, 3.4% Native American, 57% White, and 3% of students who considered themselves as part of an "Other" category.

Due to the small numbers of juveniles who represented the Hispanic, Native American, and Other categories which violated assumptions of normality necessary for

certain statistical procedures, the ethnicity variable was recoded to include the categories of minority vs. non-minority status. Approximately 40% of the participants were minority while 57% of the participant population represented the non-minority category

Instrumentation

The data utilized for this study will encompass a review of archived data from Cuyahoga county juvenile drug court records. The data collected will consist of either successful or non-successful juvenile drug court participants from the years of 2013 to 2018. The data will include both demographic information and program criteria information (whether the participants were terminated and/or successfully graduated from juvenile drug court).

Juvenile drug court participants who successfully graduated from the program: demonstrated a period of abstinence from mind altering substances and alcohol, successfully completed programming or chemical dependency treatment, completed an educational or vocational plan, completed drug court program requirements, and demonstrated stability in the community. Participants who were terminated from the juvenile drug court program: were noncompliant, recidivated, AWOL for 30 days or more, or committed a serious program infraction.

Informed Consent and Confidentiality

Although participants and their families are required to sign a consent to receive services form before starting the drug court process, they were not required to sign an informed consent or confidentiality agreement. Only juvenile drug court participants demographic information and program outcomes will be utilized in the study. Permission to use premises and permission to use data was granted by Cuyahoga County juvenile

court leadership. Data sets will be saved on the researcher's personal laptop computer and password protected. Once the statistical analysis of the data sets is administered and the study concluded, all data will be deleted.

Instrumentation

Describe any instrumentation to be used to collect primary data such as qualitative questionnaires, interview protocols, or surveys. Include a table to indicate how the instrumentation items align to the research questions or hypotheses. Refer to appendices such as the instrumentation.

Credibility and Transferability or Validity and Reliability

Validity is achieved when the instruments designed to measure a phenomenon actually does so (i.e. when it measures what it purports to measure) (McQuitty, 2018).

This quantitative study will use data, which describes the demographic characteristics of race and geographic location of the participants, and the archival data collected data derived a secondary data source.

As such, no surveys or instruments shall be used. This ex post facto design will use archived participants demographic data taken from Cuyahoga County Juvenile Justice Center database. This data ensures demographic data is both accurate and precise.

Reliability is defined as the extent to which tallies are repeatable, consistent, and dependable, while validity denotes whether a study assesses what it is presumed to assess. In this case, the data as gathered from the secondary data sources is presumed to be both reliable and valid.

Data Collection

The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court database will be used to extract data and statistics on juvenile justice initiatives, diversionary programming, juvenile drug court, and minority and non-minority contact. The researcher also interviewed several juvenile justice officials, jurists, case managers, and treatment providers to gain access to current juvenile justice policies and the wrap around services employed by juvenile drug court programs.

A request to examine data on youth drug treatment program will be requested from the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court division. In exchange for permission to use data already gathered by the County, the researcher agreed to provide a detailed report of the findings to the program. The purpose of this quantitative ex post facto study will be to evaluate the associations between the independent variables of race and geographic location, and the dependent variable of success rates for minority and non-minority offenders in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Drug Court to determine if there are differences based on these variables.

Five years of archived juvenile drug participant records will produce the data necessary to conduct a chi square analysis of the independent variables and Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court participant's success rates. The foundation of the study is to enhance on the current information regarding disproportionate contact and how minority and non-minority offenders' accessibility and success rates in Cuyahoga County's juvenile drug court improves outcomes.

The CCJC (Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court) accedes the juvenile drug courts procedures are productive. The data collected through the study is essential for juvenile

justice leaders because Cuyahoga County's Juvenile drug court has a 97% success rate. Over 90% of the participants that graduate from the juvenile drug court program do not recidivate. This chapter summarizes the study's research method, design, instrumentation, data collection, sample size, and data analysis. Chapter 3 also evaluates whether these elements are valid and reliable.

This section must include a complete description of the processes to be used to collect any primary or secondary data. Include discussion of how any participants will be recruited for participation and describe any permissions required to collect these data. If data will be collected in phases, such as during a Delphi study with two or more rounds, a case study with multiple sources of data, a study with a stratified sample, a quantitative study with more than one survey instrument, or a mixed-method study, describe each phase of data collection process clearly.

Data Analysis

Juvenile drug court participant data will be utilized to ascertain the relationships between the independent variables of geographic location, and race, and the dependent variable of participant's success rates. The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Justice Center records juvenile drug court participant's demographic information in a directory-style format. Participant's demographic information will be transferred on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for the quantitative study. The quantitative study will consist of descriptive statistics and a chi-square analysis of the relationships between the independent variables and juvenile drug court participant's success rates.

Chi-Square Statistic

The aim of descriptive research is to display an illustration of the specific particulars of a social setting, or situation (Ivey, 2016). When researchers want to examine more than just a mere theme, they employ particular research approaches that examine the relationships between certain variables and a particular outcome (Creswell, 2008). This ex post facto design was chosen because the nominal nature of all of which included race and geographic locations and their relationship to the nominal variable of juvenile participants' success rates in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Drug Court.

Based on the data as received, a Chi-Square non-parametric statistical model had to be employed. Chi-square measures the relationship between what are considered string or nominal independent variables and a string or nominal dependent variable. Chi-square is effective because it specifies a quantitative assessment of the extent of covariation between a group of independent variables and a dependent variable.

Chi-Square is a non-parametric statistical test that describes the magnitude of discrepancy between the observed data and the data expected to be obtained based on a specific hypothesis (Sharpe, 2015). In this case, the Chi-Square statistic will be used to determine whether the success rates as observed as they relate to one's race and geographic location are significantly different from that which would have been found by chance. Although the Chi-Square statistic examines the relationships among variables, it does not imply that one variable has a direct effect on another variable (Sharpe, 2015).

Chapter Summary

This ex post facto quantitative study will assess adolescent demographic data from Cuyahoga County Juvenile Justice Center. Data from 2013 to 2018 was derived

from the organizations database on former juvenile drug court participants. The study will then compare the observed data frequencies through the expected data frequencies to determine if there are significant differences in graduation rates based on race and geographic location.

Chapter 3 presented the demographic information of the participants along with analyses of the reasons for the discontinued use of the parametric tests initially proposed and an explanation of the switch to the nonparametric tests used to address the research questions. The chapter concludes with the results of the research findings. It was noted that both the variables of geographic location and race/ethnicity are still appropriate for the analysis.

Chapter 4

Analysis and Results

The purpose of this ex post facto study was to ascertain impediments that may influence the graduation rates of juvenile drug court participants. This inquiry was developed to determine if the race or geographic locations of participants had any adverse effects on their rate of success in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court program.

Archived data was gathered from the Cuyahoga County juvenile court data base on juvenile drug court participants from the years 2013 till 2018. The demographic data of participant's geographic location and ethnicity was utilized to administer a chi square analysis to examine if these independent variables positively or negatively affected graduation rates. The content of this chapter consists of the research questions and hypotheses, the data collection method, participants demographics, data analysis, the results of the study, and a chapter summary.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

R1. What is the relationship between the adolescent variable of race and the variable of juvenile graduation rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court?

R2. What is the relationship between the adolescent variable of geographic location and the variable of juvenile graduation rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile court?

Hypotheses

Ho1) There is no statistically significant relationship between a juvenile's race and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

Ha1) There is a statistically significant relationship between a juvenile's race and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

Ho2) There is no statistically significant relationship between a juvenile's geographic location and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

Ha2) There is a statistically significant relationship between a juvenile's geographic location and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court

Data Collection

The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court database was used to extract data and statistics on juvenile justice initiatives, diversionary programming, juvenile drug court, and minority and non-minority contact. A request to examine data on youth drug treatment program was requested from the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court division. In exchange for permission to use data already gathered by the County, the researcher agreed to provide a detailed report of the findings to the program. The purpose of this quantitative ex post facto study was to evaluate the associations between the independent variables of race and geographic location, and the dependent variable of success rates for minority and non-minority offenders in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Drug Court to determine if there were significant differences based on these variables.

Five years of archived juvenile drug participant records produced the data necessary to conduct a chi square analysis of the independent variables and the Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court participants' success rates. The foundation of the study was to enhance on the current information regarding disproportionate contact and how minority and non-minority offenders' accessibility and success rates in Cuyahoga County's juvenile drug court improves outcomes.

The researcher received permission from Cuyahoga County deputy director of probation services to collect archived data from the juvenile court data base and administered an ex post facto quantitative study. Archived data on previous juvenile court participants was provided from the years 2013 to 2018. The extracted data consisted of the participants' race, residence, whether they successfully graduated from the program, or were terminated from the program (i.e. the participant stop attending, refused to adhere to program objectives, or picked up additional charges while participating in the program) and any participants who initially participated in the program but were eventually transferred to another specialized docket.

Although participants and their families were required to sign a consent to receive services before starting the drug court process, they were not required to sign an informed consent or a confidentiality agreement. Only juvenile drug court participants demographic information and program outcomes were utilized in the study. Data sets were saved on the researcher's personal laptop computer and password protected. Once the statistical analysis of the data sets was completed and the study concluded, all data was deleted.

Demographics

Demographics based on the number of participants included a total number of 193 participants. The 193 participants included of the following ethnicities; African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, and East Indian. The numbers for the Hispanic and East Indian were quite small, which prompted the researcher to collapse the ethnicities into two groups, minorities and non-minorities.

As a result, the category of non-minorities was made up of Caucasians, while the collapsed groups were made up of non-minorities which included African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, and East Indian. Of the total participants 140 (73%) were non-minority while 44 (23%) were minorities. Of the 193 participants, there were 14 different communities from which the participants were drawn, but for sake of analysis each of the 14 communities were collapsed into the two categories of suburban and non-suburban. Of that total, 152 (79%) participants were from suburban communities while 32 (17%) were from urban communities.

Data Analysis

The study examined the archival data provided by the Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court. Of interest to the researcher was if in fact there were statistically significant differences in the graduation rates of juvenile drug court participants based on their race or where they resided. The chi-square test served to determine if there was a significance statistical difference between the variables.

A 2x2 cross tabulation chi square procedure was performed to determine the level of statistical significance of each of the independent variables of race and geographic location as they pertained to the dependent variable of graduation from the juvenile drug court program. The null hypotheses asserted that the variable of race did not have a statistically significant difference on the number of participants who graduated from the juvenile drug court program.

The alternative hypotheses asserted that the race variable did have a statistically significant difference on the number of participants who graduated from the program.

The Null and Alternative Hypotheses for race was H01: There is no statistically

significant difference in the number of participants who graduated from the juvenile drug court program during the years 2013 to 2018 based on race. HA1: There was a statistically significant difference in the number of participants who graduated from the juvenile drug court program during the years 2013 to 2018 based on race.

For research question number one, a goodness of fit (chi-square) analysis, was performed on the data concerning the frequencies of participants who graduated and those who did not graduate by race. In each case the degree of association between the frequency of the number of cases of minority participants those who graduated from the program versus the number of non-minority participants who did not graduate from the program was examined.

A chi-square goodness of fitness test showed that the number of minority participants who graduated from the drug program $n = 41$ (21%), was not statistically significantly different from the number of non-minority participants who did graduate from the program $n = 117$ (61%), $\chi^2(2, N = 193) = 3.58, p = .167, V = .167$. The results of the chi-square test ($N = 193$) as it relates to the dependent variable of race produced an expected count of 113 for the number non-minority participants who graduated from the juvenile drug court program.

The actual count for the number of non-minority participants who graduated from the program was 117. The results of the chi-square test ($N = 193$) as it relates to the dependent variable of race produced an expected count of 45 for the number minority participants who graduated from the juvenile drug court program, while the actual number of minority participants who graduated from the program was 41. This resulted in a statistically non-significant difference between the expected and observed values for the

variable of race, which allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypotheses (H01) and accept the alternative hypotheses (HA1) for question number one.

For research question number two, a goodness of fit (chi-square) analysis, was performed on the data concerning the frequencies of participants who graduated from the program and those who did not graduate based on their geographic location. In each case, the degree of association between the frequency of the number of cases of participants those who graduated from the program who lived in urban areas versus the number of participants who graduated from the program who were not from urban areas was examined.

A chi-square goodness of fitness test showed that the number of participants who graduated from the drug program who lived in suburban areas $n = 134$ (69%), was statistically significantly different from the number of participants who lived in urban areas who did not graduate $n = 24$ (12%), $\chi^2(2, N = 193) = 3.58, p = .021, V = .245$. The results of the chi-square test ($N = 193$) as it relates to the number of participants from suburban areas produced an expected count of 127 for the number of suburban participants who graduated from the juvenile drug court program.

The actual count for the number of suburban participants who graduated from the program was 134. The results of the chi-square test ($N = 193$) as it relates to the dependent variable of geographic location produced an expected count of 30 for the number of urban area participants who graduated from the juvenile drug court program while the actual number of participants from urban areas who graduated from the drug program was 24. This resulted in a statistically significant difference between the expected and observed values for the variable of geographic location, which allowed the

researcher to reject the null hypotheses (H01) and accept the alternative hypotheses (HA1) for question number two.

The null hypotheses asserted that the variable of geographic location did not have a statistically significant difference on the number of participants who graduated from the juvenile drug court program. The alternative hypotheses asserted that the geographic location variable did have a statistically significant difference on the number of participants who graduated from the program. The results showed that there was indeed a statistically significant difference in the dependent variable of graduation rates from the juvenile drug program as it relates to the independent variable of geographic location, allowing the researcher to reject the null hypothesis.

Chapter Summary

Chapter IV presented the research questions, the hypothesis, the data collection procedures, the demographic information of the participants along with a detailed analysis of the non-parametric tests used to address the research questions. The chapter concludes with the results of the research findings.

It was noted that the independent variable of race was limited in its ability to determine the rate of graduation of participants in the juvenile drug program. However, the findings also revealed that the independent variable of geographic location was indeed statistically significantly related to the graduation rates of participants from the juvenile drug court program.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Juvenile drug courts were formulated because youth need disparate, more informatively centered, treatment than adults. Statistics have shown that juvenile drug courts can help mitigate recidivism and antisocial behaviors, while accentuating prosocial behaviors and community integration. Although, most participants generally graduate from the program the youth who do not successfully complete the program still gain additional benefits from curriculum (Yelderman, 2016).

The two primary goals of juvenile drug courts are to promote diversion and spur rehabilitation. These programs utilize juvenile drug court officials to identify at risk youth who are in need of diversion and assess chemical dependency issues these youth encounter. The objective of juvenile drug courts is to maintain equity among disparate demographic groupings. Whether these youth differ in ethnicity, race, locality, or socioeconomic standing juvenile drug courts are designed to provide participants with wrap around services and prevent reoffending. Despite juvenile drug professionals' idealistic intentions gender, race, and economic status biases recur (Carter & Barker, 2011).

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which race and geographic location are able to influence participants' success rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court. This chapter will consist of an introduction of the study's objectives, the research questions and hypotheses, a discussion of the study's findings, the unforeseen limitations the researcher encountered, recommendations to leaders and

practitioners, recommendations for future research, and a summary of the chapters content.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

R1. What is the relationship between the adolescent variable of race and the variable of juvenile graduation rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court?

R2. What is the relationship between the adolescent variable of geographic location and the variable of juvenile graduation rates in Cuyahoga County juvenile court?

Hypotheses

Ho1) There is no statistically significant relationship between a juvenile's race and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

Ha1) There is a statistically significant relationship between a juvenile's race and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

Ho2) There is no statistically significant relationship between a juvenile's geographic location and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court.

Ha2) There is a statistically significant relationship between a juvenile's geographic location and their graduation rate in Cuyahoga County juvenile drug court

Discussion of Findings

The aim of this study was to examine the juvenile drug court graduation rates based on the participants geographic location and ethnicity. The study's findings showed that geographic location had a significant impact on participants graduation rate while race did not affect participants' graduation rates.

Race

This study's findings showed no statistically significant difference in the number of participants who graduated from the juvenile drug court program during the years 2013 to 2018 based on race. Although Howards (2016) study utilized a multilevel logistic regression model to examine how the independent variables of education, employment, and race affected participants graduation rates, once neighborhood-level variables were applied, education and employment still remained significant indicators of graduation rates, but the significance of the participants race although significant was smaller. Unlike the findings of Howard (2016) the findings of this study showed that race was not a significant variable in the graduation rates of juvenile drug court participants.

The most noteworthy finding in this study is the complete intercession of the ethnicity effect by neighborhood-level variables. Although the results of this study indicated that race had no influence on participants graduation rates other studies showed that ethnicity was a significant determinant to juvenile drug court success; white participants were more likely than black participants to graduate even adjusting for employment, education, and geographic location (Bellair & Kowalski, 2011; Finigan, 2009; Brown et al., 2009).

Villagrana and Lee (2017) study explored ethnic and racial disparities in acceptance to drug abuse treatment and in the source of referral in treatment admissions. Their study showed that racial and ethnic inequalities are a major factor in access to chemical dependency treatment. In fact, Heflinger, Chatman, and Saunders (2006) investigated the utilization of chemical dependency services for adolescents aged 12 to

17, found that African-American adolescents were less likely than their non-Hispanic White peers to utilize substance abuse services.

In comparison, Cummings, Wen, and Druss (2011) study reported that Hispanic and African-American adolescents were less likely to receive chemical dependency treatment (8.5% and 6.9%) compared to white youth (10.7%). These results are congruent to this study's findings because they give credence as to why the variable of race may be a determining factor in participants successful completion of the juvenile drug court program.

Ruiz et al (2009) study evaluated a juvenile drug court model in Southern Arizona. The study's population consisted of 51% non-white white participants and 49% white participants. The majority of the participants reported using marijuana (85%) and alcohol (82%) 90 days prior to treatment. The most significant finding from this inquiry is that positive improvements in substance-related problems, engagement in crime and justice, and sexual risk taking were evidenced over time, regardless of gender and race/ethnicity. In addition, the results showed that white adolescents sustained declines in chemical dependency from baseline to six months and a significant decline from baseline to three months was found in non-white adolescents; generating minimal improvements at six months (but still below baseline) (Ruiz et al 2005).

This data may suggest that adolescents respond differently to disparate forms of judicatory involvement (e.g. moderate vs intensive) which may signify opportunities to administer disparate forms of interventions based on time (e.g. distal vs immediate) (Ruiz et al 2005). These finding are congruent to this study's results because the variable of race was utilized to gauge juvenile drug participants progress in the program. Although

race was not a significant variable in participants success in the juvenile drug court program this study's results found race to be determining factor in their chemical dependency effectiveness (Ruiz et al 2009).

Geographic Location

Criminologists, sociologists, geographers, and psychologists have long understood that behavior patterns, attitudes and desires, and perceptions of others' actions are influenced by their environment. The results of this study showed that the geographic location variable did have a statistically significant difference on the number of participants who graduated from the program. Utilizing a nationwide sample of prosecutors from communities surrounding schools participating in the nationally representative Tracking the Future survey, Terry-McElrath et al (2005) performed an exploratory analysis of prosecutor-reported juvenile disposition severity, both by individual drug charge and neighborhood context.

Their results showed a strong variation in the severity of the disposition within and between drugs, as well as evidence of differential effects of both prosecutor case load and community features, including community income, race, and environment. This data shows that the enforcement of drug policy, perhaps particularly for juveniles, differ widely across local communities. The findings showed that both the predominant population race and median household income are essential components of the understated results of the juvenile justice system, consistent with a wide range of previous studies (Colker, 2004; Johnston et al 2004; Kane, 2003).

In particular, overwhelmingly white neighborhoods were found to predict lower risks of imposing severe penalties for juvenile drug offences. Minimal neighborhood

response was much more likely than community-based corrections. The findings revealed that both the predominant ethnicity of the population and the median household income are significant components of the understated outcomes of the juvenile justice system (Terry-McElrath et al 2005).

In fact, the community's response may only involve labeling and an insignificant social reaction. In terms of social stigma, the distinction between community service, informal probation, and court ordered probation (with or without treatment) may not be seen as substantially different. White affluent communities, overwhelmingly culturally homogeneous, may be more likely than others to diminish initial engagement in the juvenile justice system by relying on responses that de-emphasize the regulation of the official system. One of the unique features of the current study was that the variable of geographic location had a significant effect on participants graduation rates and this study postulates this supposition (Terry-McElrath et al 2005).

Lockwood, Harris, & Grunwald (2019) study investigated how the densities inside neighborhoods of adult and juvenile drug offenders may be connected to the chances of juvenile recidivism due to drug possession and drug sales. The findings suggest that the underlying culture is strongly linked to the chances of juvenile recidivism due to drug sales, but not because of drug possession. This data further supports the correlation between the context of the environment and recurrence by showing that juvenile recurrence (in particular because of drug offending) is spatially concentrated (Harris, Mennis et al., 2011) and that higher rates of juvenile recurrence in adjacent communities can increase the risk of young offenders reoffending themselves (Mennis & Harris, 2011).

We could predict that juveniles who have recently committed a drug offense will continue to do so, based on the prior literature and the theoretical perspectives of differential association and offense specialization, and particularly as the density of adult and juvenile drug offenders increases (Lockwood, Harris, & Grunwald, 2019). By comparison to the current study a juvenile drug court participants geographic location was found to directly influence their chances of program completion. Participants from more affluent suburbs graduated at a higher rate than their urban counterparts. The results of this study confirm the influence of an adolescent's geographic location on their rate of recurrence.

Grunwald et al study investigated the effects of community context on juvenile recidivism in order to assess whether neighborhoods affect the risk of reoffending, this research investigated the impact of neighborhood background on juvenile recidivism. Current research has similarly concluded that not only is the disadvantage at the group level positively correlated with adolescent recurrence, but also that concentrated income decreases the risk of young people reoffending (Baglivio, Wolff, Jackowski, & Greenwald, 2017).

The findings suggest that an important indicator of juvenile recidivism is social context, in the form of concentrated deprivation and social capital; drug reoffending. Similar processes defined by social disorganization theory are supportive of the important effects of environmental variables reflecting group processes. As a result, this research may be said to have found evidence for the impact on juvenile drug recidivism through social disorganization (Lockwood, Harris, & Grunwald, 2019).

Increased levels of concentrated disadvantage increase the probability of drug recidivism, consistent with the theory of social disorganization, whereas increased levels of social capital minimize the likelihood of drug recidivism (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). These results propose that it is unlikely that the criminal justice system will make changes by disciplinary action or the temporary expulsion of these adolescents from their home environments. Any approach to minimize juvenile recidivism should include community and family backgrounds (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). These findings further strengthen the current study's results as to the influence of community context to adolescent's probability in altering their current deprivations.

Limitations

This study focused on two very important variable that may have influenced the graduation rates of juvenile drug court participants, yet several limitations may have hindered the findings of this inquiry. One possible limitation was the numbers of ethnicities that were reported in the study. The small numbers of participants of various races meant that the variable of race (e.g. White, Black, East Indian, and Hispanic) had to be collapsed into the two categories of minority and non-minorities. This may have skewed the number of participants in each category thereby effecting the non-significant results.

Similarly, there were many suburban neighborhoods, that although are considered to be suburbs have in recent years taken on the characteristics of urban areas (e.g. drugs, and violence). Therefore, the data may have been affected by this subtle change in neighborhood characteristics and the actual numbers of participants who were labeled in each category may have been better served to be labeled in the urban category. The study

was confined to the tangible data provided by Cuyahoga County juvenile court database. The ex post facto context of this study limited viable subtleties that may have lent more depth to factors that affect the success rates of juvenile drug court participants.

The utilization of archival data gave an accurate account of the participants demographic information but limited the scope of the study. The use of wrap around services in participant's treatment plans essentially individualizes each youth's path in the program. This complexity in treatment strategy necessitates quantitative measurables and promotes qualitative implications.

Although demographic data gives a snapshot of each youth it fails to include other aspects of youth's maturation process. Family dynamics can play a huge role in the youth's chemical dependency, mental health, and community integration evolution; giving youth the support needed to comply with juvenile drug court practices. Failure to explore participant's family dynamics prevents an actual assessment of juvenile drug court graduation rates.

The population sample consisted of 384 former juvenile drug court participants. Although the chi square analysis produced valid results an additional investigation with a more substantial population size would help verify the findings and expand concepts that hinder the graduation rates of drug court participants. If the study utilized a collection of drug court programs across the state of Ohio or the United States of America, the additional data might have produced more than just a fundamental understanding of concepts that thwart participant outcomes in juvenile drug court.

Lastly, the majority of the minority participants were African American with only a few Hispanic and East Indian participants. This forced the researcher to collapse these

ethnicities into just one grouping; minority. This suppressed the diversity of the sample and prevented a valid representation of Hispanic and East Indian participants achievements in the juvenile drug court program.

Recommendations to Leaders and Practitioners

The findings of this study may advance the knowledge base of juvenile justice leaders and improve the policies and procedures of juvenile drug courts. The study developed to examine if the independent variables of geographic location and race had any effect on the dependent variable of graduation rates. According to the results of the study geographic location was a significant factor in the graduation rates of juvenile drug court participants. The participants who lived in suburban neighborhoods graduated at a higher rate than the participants from urban areas.

The majority of the suburban participants were from nuclear families where they lived under the same roof as both of their biological parents. Many of the participants from urban areas were either raised in single family households or by guardians. This culmination suggests juvenile justice leaders should evaluate participants family dynamics and should include strategies to thwart these impediments.

Single family or guardian led households suffer from economic and time restraint issues. To neutralize these obstacles community members, former drug court graduates, or NA/AA sponsors should be utilized as mentors to provide an additional support system. These individuals would have to sign confidentiality agreements to contribute to drug court mandates.

In addition to providing support to participants these mentors could attend hearings or provider meetings when parents or guardians are not able to attend, act as

liaisons to drug court officials, and inform drug court case managers of potential challenges that may affect participants treatment goals.

The findings of this study show that parental support is the key to participants success. Therefore, the solicitation of alternative funding can help benefit these families by providing capital for rideshare, uber, or childcare services; eliminating burdens and fostering uniformity. Participants from single family households would gain the stability and structure needed to enhance their development.

Partnerships with organizations could provide participants with unlimited opportunities. Internships with local organizations would give youth the opportunity to increase their self-esteem, gain real life work experience, explore potential career choices, foster relationships with mentors who work in their chosen field, and learn trades giving them access to apprenticeships. In addition to developing long term skills a large number of participants could increase their potential for employment after graduation.

Recommendations for Future Research

Juvenile drug courts have expanded rapidly over the last two decades due to their team-based approach, structure, wrap around services, and high success rates. Although numerous studies have been conducted on the predictors of participants graduation rates further research on the effects of parental support is needed. Juvenile drug courts customarily require more parental support than many of the other diversion programs in juvenile court. Recent statistics have shown that parental participation was key factor in participants recidivism reduction and graduation proficiency (Alarid, Montemayor, & Dannhaus, 2012).

This study concluded that geographic location did have a statistical difference on the number of participants who eventually graduated from the program. The participants that resided in suburban localities had a higher graduation rate than the participants from urban areas. Typically, the participants who resided in the suburbs were members of nuclear families where both parents lived under the same roof whereas many of the urban participants were from single family households.

This conundrum is significant because it leads to socioeconomic, employment, and time management issues for single-family households that are not shared by their suburban counterparts. Participants from single family households did not have the same degree of parental involvement as nuclear families.

These parents or guardians are likely employed or preoccupied during programming hours; acquiring participants younger siblings from school or prosocial activities. Additionally, these parents did not share the same economic stability as nuclear families and transportation was an issue (i.e did not own a motor vehicle or have the currency for public transportation) (Elkington, Brooks, Watkins, & Wasserman, 2020).

These momentous issues generally placed participants from urban areas at a significant disadvantage. They lack the parental support necessary to make discernible changes to their behavior, chemical dependency use, and academic achievement. Many juvenile drug participants were also required to attend chemical dependency treatment as part of their JDC treatment plans. Chemical dependency facilities often solicit parental reinforcement through provider meetings and classes. These requirements challenge single parents or guardians time management; creating burdens and promoting anxiety.

Future research could benefit from an examination of cultural biases in juvenile drug court. Numerous studies have been administered on racial biases in juvenile justice, but a further examination should include the disparate treatment of minorities in juvenile drug court and how group identity influences participant behavior. Previous studies have confirmed when youth are coordinated with others who are characterized as representatives of an in-group, these individuals are more likely to honor those in-group individuals for rules of conduct (Depew, Eren, & Mocan, 2017).

Many minority participants have had interactions with the criminal justice system before their initial arraignment in juvenile court. African Americans and Hispanic Americans youth involvement with the criminal justice system routinely begins at an early age through neglect, custody, or dependency hearings which creates an embedded bias among these youth and juvenile court officials (Vergara, Kathuria, Woodmass, Janke, & Wells, 2016).

Considerable factors precipitate the variance, including conduct and impressions of the officials embroiled in juvenile justice decision making. A study in Virginia showed that, once apprehended, African American youth in the state were more than 1.5 times more likely to be imprisoned when controlling for family structure, number of prior misdemeanors, urbanicity, severity of crime, whether or not the adolescent had repeated a grade in school, and income level (Mallet, 2018).

An additional qualitative study showed that more than 50 percent felt that race influence decisions in case proclivity. Recent studies have shown that case managers or probation officers characterized African American adolescents differently from Caucasian adolescents in detailed reports. For African American youth, the court officials

fixated on a sensed personal characteristic. For Caucasian youth, these officials fixated on the youth's negative peer influences and family predicaments. Additionally, minority youth are experiencing discrepancies in systemic policies and procedures, socioeconomic stressors, and are subject to the viewpoints of officials who provide the services (Vergara et al 2016).

Another recommendation that deserves further examination is minorities cultural sensitivity towards mental health services. Participants from densely populated areas are often exposed to violence at an early age. Many of them have either witnessed domestic or neighborhood violence at an early age and have developed depression or misanthropic behaviors similar to post traumatic disorder symptoms (Schmidt, Heffernan, & Ward, 2020).

These trauma related experiences leave them repressed and unwilling to embrace or except treatment; especially forms of mental health evaluation. Culturally African American and Hispanic Americans have been taught that individuals who receive mental health counseling for illnesses like depression or anxiety are considered weak. This stigma places these minorities at a systematic disadvantage; prohibiting emotionally, spiritual, physical, and mental growth (Kapke & Gerdes, 2016).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if the independent variables of geographic location and race influenced the graduations rates of juvenile drug court youth. Chapter five is designed to give an overview of the conclusions and recommendations for the inquiry. Race was not considered to be significant deterrent to

successfully completing the program curriculum whereas, geographic location was a strong predictor of participants graduation rates.

Chapter five introduced a discussion of the findings and current literature that added depth to the study's results. Several studies were reviewed and contributed to the results of this study. The chapter also detailed unforeseen limitations the examiner encountered and follows with recommendations for juvenile justice leaders to mitigate dilemmas in program completion. Although this study yielded an influential analysis of predictors that may hinder participant success a discussion on aspects that might be further explored through additional research.

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Appendix A

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

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