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Delinquency and Solutions

The rate of teenager delinquency is increasing in recent years, which can cause many severe problems to the society and hinder the development of society. Jang (2006) points out that the main theories about teenage crime focus on how the relationship between young people and their immediate environment impacts their behavior (p.644). Moreover, the three most important social environments for adolescents are family, school, and peers. Since adolescents spend most of their time in these environments, their development depends on developing relationships with the people involved in these environments (Jang, p.644). Therefore, Agnew (2012) claims that the teenage criminal behaviors can be caused by influences of family, school, and peers (p. 35). Nonetheless, while the main cause of increasing rate of juvenile delinquency remains unknown, analyzing and examining the efficiency and limitation of each scheme are important in understanding how society can best reduce teenage crime. There are three solutions and recommendations that have been agreed upon by public: promoting education, stressing healthy peer interaction, and encouraging good family condition. Being a correlated issue, some people believe that promoting school education is the most effective solution to address teenage crime, while some others are insisted on strong bond with good peers; however, providing teenager with a better family environment is potentially the best solution.

Acknowledging that there are various kinds of teenage delinquency, each of them can cause severely negative results to society and individuals. Chowdhury (2012) states that a study conducted on thirty teenagers who have criminal behaviors shows that about forty percent of them keep arms or involve in stealing and drug addiction (p. 5). Moreover, families of delinquent youth will be labeled as delinquent families, and when juvenile offenders get out of reform center, they will be still involved in criminal activity (Chowdhury, p.5). Consequently, comparing solutions for addressing high rate of juvenile delinquency is important and necessary because they are often ineffective and negatively impacts teenager’s personal development, their family, and the construction of a harmonious society.

With respect to the solution for reducing teenage delinquency rate, promoting school education and management is a common solution. The teenager's involvement in school already reflects their tendency to crime. Li et al. (2011) claims that relative to their peers, students who enter adolescence with lower levels of behavioral and emotional engagement tend to be more likely to begin substance use and delinquency, or more likely to begin such behaviors later in life, than adolescents with higher levels of school engagement (p. 1189). Therefore, regardless the degree of school engagement of teenagers, it is always better to encourage more young people to attend school.

To be more specific about the benefits of being educated in school, the school's living arrangements are reasonable and healthy, and students are given information about the disadvantages of bad habits. Cassel & Russel (2001) states that the school system will ensure that students have good eating and sleeping habits, and that every student is aware of the disadvantages of using substances that are harmful to health, like alcohol and tobacco (p. 428). Thus, teenagers attended in school can at least have the healthy living habits and informed with basic information about bad substance. Moreover, schools can provide many extra-curricular activities to help young people develop a better personality and will. Cassel et al. (2001) point out that in school, if teens cannot keep up with their studies, they will not be able to keep up behind them either, so they will become negative or even have deviant behavior (p. 249). Cassel et al. explain that participating in extracurricular activities gives them a chance to express themselves and release their emotions (p. 249). Besides that, in a group or team, a teenager's victory won by inferior means are not favored, which can develop a sense of fairness in young people (Cassel et al, p. 248). In additional, school gives teenagers an opportunity to spend time with successful people, which is beneficial for them. Wilkinson (2019) observes that teachers and administrators can be good role models for students, so spending time with them can reinforce their pro-social behavior (p. 9). Considering how promoting school education and management positively functions on teenagers’ personal development and living habits, it is reasonable to believe that this method will help reduce rate of teenage delinquency to a certain degree.

Encouraging teenagers to go to school will help teenagers have better character and habit and thus decreases their tendency to crime, but it additionally has potential dark side. Promoting school education means make more teenagers to live and study with each other. McCord et al. (2020) claims that schools can become places where youths who are likely to have criminal behaviors are gathered, and school control may not work on them, which will have a negative impact on other young people and even lead to criminal tendencies as well (p.17). Since teenagers need to live with each other in school most of the time, their behaviors are more likely to be influential to each other by frequent interactions. Khanhkham et al. (2020) state that the National Education Statistics Center claims that in U.S., more than half of the public schools have records about personal attack and assaults, and other researches reports that 90% of high schools have records about violence. (p. 933). More interaction between teenagers and their peers can result in more conflicts that are likely to be criminal behaviors. Therefore, although promoting school education can reduce rate of teenage crime in a certain degree, other factors, like negative peer influences, can be brought by this measure and may cause the teenage crime rate to increase, which makes it not very effective.

Providing a more effective outcome than school education promotion, stressing healthy peer interaction is better to reduce the rate of teenage delinquency. Peers influencing is a more essential way for teenager’s behaviors to be impacted, since teenagers spend much time with pees in their age stage. Liu (2000) states that when peers are supportive and predisposed to delinquent behavior or are already delinquent, young people are more likely to have criminal behaviors by themselves (p.511). Teenager’s behavior can be influenced regardless the kind of peers’ behavior. Young and Meerman (2013) claims that according to social learning theory, adolescents will adapt to the behavior of their peers or adhere to the beliefs of their peer group, even if it is wrong (p. 338). In addition, adolescents will try to gain status in the group by engaging in behaviors that they believe will be valued by their peers and by abandoning behaviors that will be ridiculed and rejected by their peers. In this way, the adolescent's community and ideas are assimilated by peers, leading them to engage in delinquent behavior when their peers do as well (Young & Meerman, p.338). Therefore, since peers’ behaviors can deeply influence teenager’s behaviors, keeping teenagers away from peers that have criminal behaviors or tendency to crime can effectively prevent teenager from learning criminal behaviors and thus reduce the rate of juvenile delinquency. Moreover, if teenagers can be aware of the importance of having healthy peer interaction, they are able to have better personal development in school even if there are many peers who have criminal tendencies living with them. For this reason, stressing teenager to have heathier peer interaction is a better solution for reducing teenage criminal rate.

Having better peer interaction is capable of reducing rate of juvenile delinquency; however, encouraging better family environment and condition is the most promising solution for addressing increasing teenage criminal rate, because it can solve the more fundamental problem and is critical for teenagers to have time with better peers. By improving the condition of family environment, the possibility for teenager to conduct criminal behaviors can be decreased effectively. Intact families lead to better development for teens. Petts (2009) claims that two-parent families can give teenagers better social support and control (p. 480). Nonetheless, single-parent families do not provide children with a suitable environment to learn social behavior, resulting in harm to their social and psychological development (Isir et al., 2007, p.126). Therefore, it can be confirmed that providing teenagers with an intact family can ensure teenagers have a healthier development.

To be more specific about the importance of the attachment between teenagers and their parents, Hoeve (2012) states that the parent-child relationship is created through very complex interactions, and a meta-analysis shows that the higher the child's attachment to the parent, the lower the probability that they will commit a crime (p. 781). Teenager who lives with two parents reduces the probability of a family member smoking marijuana by 70%, thus providing a better home environment for them (Kuhl, et al., 2016, p.16). Given the data and research results, improving family environment can effectively reduce rate of teenage delinquency in a certain extend by providing teenagers with a better personal development.

In addition to the negative outcomes in teenager’s personal development incomplete family can bring, the discordant family environment can also make teenagers to be influenced by peers’ improper behaviors easier. Mowen and Boman (2018) state that family conflicts have a strong connection with young people and their peers who commit crimes (p.286). Moreover, lack of control from parents can also lead high interactions between teenagers and their delinquent peers. Keijsers et al. (2012) point out that if parental control of the adolescent does not match the needs of the adolescent's personality development, contact with peers will be increased and therefore these adolescents are more likely to come into contact with delinquent peers (p. 662). If parents have good relationship with each other, they can spend more time on regulating teenagers instead of having conflict with each other. Henneberger et al. (2013) claim that parental supervision of adolescents can advise them on making friends and steer them away from contact with delinquent peers (p. 1657). Therefore, the measure of requiring teenagers to stay away from bad peers cannot be achieved unless society improve teenager’s family condition first. It also implies that providing teenager with a better family environment can be more effective in reducing the rate of teenage delinquency, since it can ensure teenagers have a better personal development as well as heathier peer interaction.

For society to reduce the rate of juvenile delinquency, three measures have been examined. Promotion of school education has been considered, but its effectiveness can be reduced by negative influences from peers in school. Stressing healthy peer interaction has also been suggested, but it cannot be utilized unless teenagers have healthy and intact family environment first. It seems that, after considering the various possible measures that have been offered and compared for the problem of efficiency, improving teenager’s family environment is the most workable solution for society to reduce rate of juvenile delinquency.

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