Juvenile Delinquency and Mentoring in New York City

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between mentoring and juvenile delinquency. A survey was done and juveniles who were enrolled in a mentoring program were asked questions related to their mentoring relationship and how it affects them. A total of fourteen youths participated in the study with ages ranging from eight to sixteen. The study showed that having a mentor has positive outcomes in that youths are able to be more focused on school and be more obedient.
Introduction

This study examines mentoring and juvenile delinquency, and looks specifically at how mentoring influences juvenile delinquency. The issue of juvenile delinquency has been examined from time to time and there have been many attempts at preventing it. Prevention is very important in that it is believed that if not detected early and handled, juvenile delinquency can lead to criminal behavior that extends into adulthood. The primary focus of the juvenile justice system was to rehabilitate juveniles and help them become productive members of their communities and, by extension, of society. The system, however, has been overwhelmed with the large number of cases being brought before the courts; social service agencies have been dealing with large caseloads. There is a need for suitable and effective alternatives to juvenile prison or programs that do not deal with the underlying issues affecting juveniles. Government agencies as well as private entities have done research on existing delinquents and proposed delinquency prevention methods, seeking answers and purporting possible solutions to the problem. In these studies, the researchers try to find out if these programs are effective, and, if implemented, would serve as better alternatives to juvenile prisons and other methods of preventing delinquency (Greenwood, 2008).

Mentoring has become a major part of juvenile delinquency prevention. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) as well as the Federal Government have put much into programs that facilitate this, targeting at risk juveniles, as well as those who have committed crimes. The aim is to reduce delinquency among juveniles and to prevent future incidents of delinquency among at-risk youth. This change came as there was a need to move away from the system of deterrence, retribution, and
imprisonment to a more humane and rehabilitative process which was the initial focus of the juvenile system. Since the focus shifted, there have been a number of mentoring programs and they have received positive feedback and extensive studies have been conducted to see how effective they are. Reports indicate that juveniles benefit quite a lot from mentoring programs; they improve or build on social relationships, their attitude towards school as well as their parents or authority figures change or improve. OJJDP studies have shown that private as well as government mentoring programs have played a significant role in delinquency prevention. Dealing with the problems of delinquency, creating more positive opportunities for our youth, and helping them find strong positive role models in their lives are among the societal goals that can be achieved in part through the implementation of sound mentoring programs (Grossman & Garry, 1997).

**Social Bonding**

The theoretical framework to be used in this research is social bonding theory: the theory brought together elements from all previous control theories and offered new ways to account for delinquent behavior. The theory begins with the general proposition that “delinquent acts result when an individual’s bond to society is weak or broken.” The elements of the theory are attachment, commitment, involvement, and beliefs. The stronger the elements of social bonding with parents, adults, schoolteachers, and peers, the more the individual’s behavior will be controlled in the direction of conformity. The weaker they are, the more likely it is that the individual will violate the law. These four elements are viewed as highly interrelated; the weakening of one will probably be accompanied by the weakening of another (Akers & Sellers, 2009).
Attachment refers to the trust, respect, and intimacy that develop between a child and parents (or their guardians). Attachment comes from the dedicated supervision and guidance that parents give their children whenever opportunities for anti-social acts first arise. Through this initial aspect of bonding, the beginnings of a sense of moral commitment to others start to form. Commitment is the second stage in the bonding process. Through commitment, individuals consciously dedicate themselves to maintaining the existing social order and the preservation of their society’s norms and values. The third stage in the bonding process is called belief. It refers to the inner feeling that children acquire with regard to inherent legitimacy and reasonableness of the boundaries being placed on their behavior by those in authority. The last element is called involvement. It refers to the process of devoting time and energy to socially approved activities and avoiding socially disapproved activities such as crime and delinquency (Ellis & Walsh, 2000).

In looking at delinquency, and, more specifically, juvenile delinquency, the theory can be reduced to two propositions. First, delinquency and social bonds are inversely related. Second, the concept of social bonds has four elements: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief, which independently and in combination restrain criminal conduct. The theory argues that youths could be attached to peers, teachers, and other adults, although relationships with parents are most crucial. Attachment involves an emotional connection to another person. When such a relationship exists, youths will be more likely to care what the other person thinks of them. In turn, when in a situation where the opportunity presents itself, they will be restrained from delinquency if they are concerned that such action will disappoint the other person or disrupt this relationship.
The importance of attachment is that during the teenage years, youths are frequently outside their parents’ watchful eyes. In such instances, parents cannot exert “direct control”—that is, personally supervise their children and punish misconduct when it occurs. They can, however, exert “indirect control” if youths take into account their parents’ preferences (Cullen & Agnew, 2006).

According to Akers and Sellers (2009), social bonding theory emphasizes that attachment to parents and parental supervision are important in controlling delinquency and maintaining conformity; but it also stresses that attachment to peers can control delinquent tendencies. Although the phrase “attachment to conventional others” is often used, the theory maintains that to whom one is attached does not determine adherence to or violation of conventional rules.

Delinquency results from many deficiencies affecting juveniles. In order to deal with this issue, mentoring can be a very effective tool in reducing and helping to prevent its increase, especially among minorities, and, more specifically, among males. A closer look at mentoring as it relates to juvenile delinquency will put into perspective and, eventually, into practice effective ways of handling juveniles and reducing delinquency.

**Juvenile Delinquency and Mentoring**

Juvenile delinquency prevention measures have been examined and mentoring has been identified as a viable option. The literature focusing on juvenile delinquency and mentoring consists mostly of studies conducted by the OJJDP and other private individuals. Volunteer mentoring programs have been advocated increasingly as a means of promoting the academic achievement of adolescents who may be at risk for school
failure. Evaluations of volunteer mentoring programs provide evidence of positive influences on adolescent development outcomes, including improvements in academic achievement, self-concept, lower recidivism rates among juvenile delinquents, and reductions in substance abuse (Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000).

Mentoring is the latest in a long line of interventions with disaffected young people that is believed to hold considerable promise. With the expansion of many mentoring schemes, faith-based mentoring has been said to present more merits than others. These programs have been successful in increasing young people’s involvement in education, training, and work, but less successful in reducing offenses. Baldury (2006) conducted a study and used young people who participated in the National Faith-Based Initiative, and the potential benefits of matching high-risk youth with faith-based mentors were examined. Based on the results, it was concluded that mentored youth were less likely to show signs of depression than the youth who were not matched with a mentor. This, in turn, was related to a variety of other beneficial outcomes, including better handling of conflict and fewer self-reported instances of arrest.

Mentoring, like all interpersonal relationships, is transactional, involving two individuals in an interaction in which there is always some reciprocity and interdependence. It is an exchange relationship rather than simply a form of “giving,” involving mutuality, nurturance, caring, and an exchange of resources. While the mentor may be able to contribute more obvious and immediately rewarding resources to the exchange, the protégé has much to offer as well. The rewards of mentoring are shared; so, too, are the personal costs such as time and the social and emotional misunderstandings or frustrations that can be involved. This means that mentoring should
be approached as a developmental relationship, one that looks to social and affective as well as cognitive learning. Thus, it is more than tutoring or imparting a specific set of skills or items of knowledge (Ianni, 1990).

Ianni (1990) continued by stating that mentoring programs should have, as their goal, helping their protégés build a sense of personal and social competence. This means those who design programs must consider how to go about strengthening the social contexts within which mentoring will take place, as well as how to facilitate the affiliative process between mentor and protégé. Program designers must understand the nature of child and adolescent development, but it is equally important to be informed by what we know about the effects of social and cultural environments on their growth, and by what problems and risks they may encounter, and with what possible results.

According to Keating, Tomishima, Foster, and Alessandri (2002), there are many theoretical reasons to expect that mentorship will help troubled youth, mostly within a social framework. Youth who reported lower levels of social support were more withdrawn, hopeless about their future, inattentive, and harmful to others than were youth who reported higher levels of social support. Mentoring may provide some of this social support, and hence, improve youth functioning. In addition, some theories of juvenile delinquency suggest that youth develop delinquent behavior patterns because they have not identified with appropriate role models in their environment. Mentors can serve as models with which youth might identify, leading to increased socially appropriate behavior and reduced delinquent behavior. Over time, informal relationships between learned advisors and younger, less experienced protégés have served as a vehicle for transmitting wisdom, expertise, and support from one generation to the next. During the
past century, social service organizations have attempted to replicate this model by using programmatically created relationships between at-risk youth and caring volunteers as a way to foster personal growth and keep kids out of trouble (Matthews, 2004).

According to Whitney, Hendricker, and Offutt (2011), mentoring processes are associated with later problem behaviors in different ways. Their study examined naturally occurring mentors by the quality and presence of a mentor, type of mentor, and mentor quality within mentor type. Their results indicated that the effect of mentoring is dependent on the quality and type of mentor, and is different for measured outcomes. They pointed out that high-quality mentoring is significantly related to increasing self-esteem, fewer alcohol problems, and less depressed affect, when compared to low quality mentors. Thompson and Zand (2010) also examined the quality of mentoring relationships. They state that a theoretical model of mentoring identified the modification of youths’ perceptions of their interpersonal relationships as a contributor to positive outcomes.

Juvenile mentoring is defined by the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act as “linking at-risk children, particularly children living in high crime areas and children experiencing educational faire, with responsible adults such as law enforcement officers, persons working with local businesses, and adults working with community-based organizations and agencies.” In this relationship, the adult mentor supports, teaches, and counsels the juvenile offender on a regular basis over an extended period of time (Belshaw & Kritsonis, 2007, p. 3). Juvenile justice mentoring involves the one-to-one interaction of law abiding members of a community with delinquents or juveniles “at risk” of becoming delinquent, with the aim to prevent or reduce the juveniles’
involvement in law-violating behavior. Their most attractive feature is that rather than removing the youth from his environment, they take place in the community where the youth must learn to cope with daily situations that significantly affect their lives. The mentoring relationship takes place in a dynamic setting that greatly increases the likelihood of success or failure. Most programs involve volunteer staff members who see themselves as giving something to or sharing something with the youths who are being mentored (Jones-Brown & Henriquez, 1997).

According to Benard (1992) mentoring offers a set of timely and attractive properties that help explain its emergence as a means to achieving social linkage. Mentoring appears simple; as one–to-one materials state, maybe you can’t change the world, but you can make a difference in the future of at least one young person. Mentoring is direct because the mentor has direct personal contact with a youth, without layers of bureaucracy. Mentoring appears cheap because it uses volunteers and it is perceived as a low-cost alternative to public services. Bernard (1992) also states that mentoring is positively perceived, as popular culture has made being a mentor or being mentored an admirable undertaking.

Through a mentoring relationship, adult volunteers and participating youth make a significant commitment of time and energy to develop relationships devoted to personal, academic, or career development and social, athletic, or artistic growth. Programs have historically been based in churches, colleges, communities, courts, or schools, and have focused on careers or hobbies. The child mentoring movement had its roots in the late 19th century with “friendly visitors” who serve as role models for children of the poor. In 1904, Ernest K. Coulter founded a new movement that used “big
brothers” to reach out to children who were in need of socialization, firm guidance, and connection with positive adult role models. The resulting program, Big Brother/Big Sister (BB/BS) of America, continues to operate today as the largest mentoring organization of its kind (Grossman & Garry, 1997). Anderson (2010) indicated that mentoring programs like Big Brothers/Big Sister (BBBS) focuses on targeting at-risk youth in a preventative effort to increase pro-social behaviors as well as improving one’s confidence, competence, and caring. These factors are important as they are indicative of the types of attachment bonds that insulate juveniles from delinquent behavior.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has supported mentoring in a variety of ways, including the Safe Futures Initiative, whose goal is to prevent and control youth crime and victimization, and the State Formula Grants program, many of whose projects offer mentoring as part of their service delivery. However, OJJDP’s greatest support for mentoring projects has been through the Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP). Part G of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 1974, as amended in 1992, established JUMP. This program provides one-to-one mentoring for youth at risk of delinquency, gang involvement, educational failure, or dropping out of school (Novotney, Mertinko, Lange & Baker, 2000).

According to Belshaw and Kritsonis (2007), in order to potentially lower the juvenile delinquency rate, the mentoring agency must be able to complete numerous goals for a program to be considered successful. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention’s 1998 report to Congress, mentors are expected to achieve one or more of several goals with the children. These include: providing general guidance; promoting growth in personal and social responsibilities; enhancing
participation in and abilities to profit from school; discouraging illegal use of drugs and alcohol; discouraging violent behavior, the use of dangerous weapons, promiscuous behavior, and other criminal, harmful, or potentially harmful behavior; discouraging involvement in gang activities; and encouraging youth to set goals and make plans for the future.

In a study conducted on behalf of the OJJDP, Novotney, Mertinko, Lange and Baker (2000), evaluated the progress of OJJDP’s mentoring program. It was indicated that the fundamental aspect of any mentoring project is the ability to match youth with compatible mentors so that mutually satisfying relationships can develop. The projects have reported that there were 7,422 youth enrolled. More than sixty percent of these youth are enrolled in projects that were founded in 1997. Although mentoring has been used as an intervention with youth (both formally and informally) for many years, proof of its effectiveness is just beginning to be evidenced by the data. It is logical that if mentoring can support positive youth development, it can also affect progress toward the JUMP goals, namely reduction in delinquency and gang involvement, improvement in academic performance, and reduction in school dropout rates.

In another study also conducted on behalf of the OJJDP, Grossman and Garry (1997) sought to determine whether a one-to-one mentoring experience made a tangible difference in the lives of these young people. The researchers considered six broad areas that mentoring might affect: antisocial activities, academic performance, attitudes and behaviors, relationships with family, relationships with friends, self-concept, and social and cultural enrichment. The findings presented were based on self-reported data obtained from baseline and follow-up interviews or from forms completed by agency
staff. The most noteworthy among these findings is that these mentored youth were forty-six percent less likely than controls to initiate drug use during the study period. An even stronger effect was found for minority Little Brothers and Little Sisters in the Big Brother and Big Sister Mentoring Program, where seventy percent were less likely to initiate drug use than similar minority youth. The quality of their relationships with their parents was better for mentored youth than with controls at the end of the study period, primarily due to a higher level of trust between parent and child.

In examining mentoring, Jackson (2002) highlighted that most mentoring programs usually differ in the length, type, and quality of mentoring relationship; however, there is a general agreement that mentoring is meant to be a helping relationship. At one extreme, those relationships may be short-lived, simple coaching. For example, they may involve helping someone of lesser skill acquire or improve on a specific skill. At the other end, the mentor may be enlisted for a long period of time, directing a youngster to self-awareness and development in a variety of areas.

The United States Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program, authorized under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, section 4130, is a competitive federal grant program managed by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. Addressing a lack of supportive adults in the lives of at-risk students, the Student Mentoring Programs provides funds to schools, communities, and faith-based organizations to create school-based mentoring programs targeting students in grades 4-8. While the legislation does not mandate specific mentoring activities, it states that supported activities are those designed to improve interpersonal relationships with peers, teachers, other adults, and family members; increase personal responsibility and community involvement;
discourage drug and alcohol use, use of weapons and other delinquency involvement; reduce dropout rates and improve academic achievement (Burnstein, Dun Rappaport, Olsho, Hunt & Levin, 2009).

Although mentoring is not a panacea, there is evidence to suggest that mentoring programs can effectively make a difference in the lives of “at-risk,” even “high-risk,” youth. Society at large can reap the benefits of that difference if we are willing to let go of our retributive mindset. Shifting the focus of juvenile justice from social control to social support can result in significant gains in the areas of delinquency prevention and/or reduction, academic performance, personal development, and peer and family relations (Jones-Brown & Henriquez, 1997).

Since the concept of mentoring became popular, there have been many programs that have been implemented to facilitate helping juveniles who were already being delinquent or those at risk of becoming delinquent. Much of the literature examines mentoring programs, what they do, and if they work. They place much emphasis on the many problems that juveniles face, from academic to social issues that lead to or contribute to delinquency. The result shows very positive outcomes that indicate that these mentoring programs, if planned and carefully executed, can serve as an alternative to juvenile corrections or a strategy of juvenile justice.

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between mentoring and delinquency. This study will also try to find out if mentoring reduces juvenile delinquency. This study will add current and more direct information about delinquency and the influence that mentoring may have on its existence. It will also serve as a starting point for others to examine, in depth, other alternatives that address delinquency and
other juvenile justice issues. For the purpose of this study, the following hypothesis will be tested: there is a negative relationship between mentoring and juvenile delinquency among adolescent boys. The study will examine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The independent and dependent variables are mentoring and delinquency, respectively. Mentoring is a process where an individual with skills, resources, and expertise serves as a model who guides another person about life or about a particular situation or job. This will be measured by asking individuals (who have had a relationship where they have served as mentors or who are currently serving as mentors) about what was involved in the mentoring process. Delinquency is defined as behavior of an individual that is contrary to societal norms and conventions. This will be measured by asking juveniles or delinquents questions about the number of times they have done things that are against societal norms and conventions.
Method

Sample

A random sample of adolescents who are a part of a mentoring program was selected. A Mentoring Program in the Bronx, New York, was used. The program was used because it was in close proximity to the researcher. An equal number of participants with mentors and those without mentors was selected.

Procedure

The mentoring program was contacted and permission was requested to interview adolescents in their mentor program as a part of a study being conducted for a Master’s thesis. Once permission was granted, the adolescents were given a letter asking their parents or guardians for permission for them to participate in the study. They were also given an assent form to sign if they agreed to participate in the study.

The questions examined the relationship between their mentoring relationship and lack of mentoring relationship, and whether or not it played a role in their engagement in delinquent acts. The questions were reviewed with the program coordinator and all concerns about the questions were also addressed.

The questionnaires were then administered by the program coordinator. She distributed copies to the participants. The completed questionnaires were left at the office and collected by the researcher at a later date.
Results

There were fourteen (14) participants, eight (8) males and six (6) females. The ages of the participants ranged between 8 and 16 years old, with 50% falling in the 11 to 13 age group. All of the participants were currently enrolled in a mentoring program, but only 79% had mentors and 64% of the respondents had been with their mentors for at least one month and a maximum of six months.

Seven percent (7%) of the participants had done something delinquent, 91% of the respondents with a mentor agreed that they do not get in trouble because they have a mentor (see Figure 2). Figure 7 shows that, of the participants who did not have a mentor, 33% agreed that they stayed out of trouble even though they did not have a mentor, and 67% remained neutral. Eighty-two percent (82%) also agreed that because they spend time with their mentor, they do not get into trouble. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the participants agreed that they listened to their parents more because they had a mentor (see Figure 1), while 67% indicated they were unbiased (see Figure 6).

Fifty-five percent (55%) of the participants indicated that they met with their mentors twice a week, 27% stated that they met with their mentors once a week (see Figure 4). The participants also indicated that they were able to do several things with their mentors. Figure 5 shows the activities with 73% stating that they have been to the movies and the park, and that they received help with their homework. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the participants agreed that they were able to talk to their mentors about anything, 36% strongly agreed with the statement (see Figure 3). Thirty-three percent (33%) of the participants without mentors agreed that event though they do not have a
mentor, they do not stay out past curfew, and they listen to their teacher (see Figures 8 & 9).
Discussion

The aim of mentoring is to help youths who are at risk of becoming delinquent by pairing them with positive role models who are a part of their communities. These role models can use their maturity and experience to impart effective problem-solving skills to adolescents. This relationship can have a lasting effect on how youth view themselves and others. Developing a trusting relationship with a mentor can have a positive effect on youths. They will be more inclined to adhere to rules and stay out of trouble. Ninety-one percent (91%) of the participants agreed that having a mentor helps them stay out of trouble; another 82% also agreed that because they spend time with their mentors, they do not get in trouble. This relationship increases their attachment to positive role models, thereby decreasing the likelihood of delinquency.

The bonds that they developed over time help them to not only form an attachment with their mentor, but also to become attached to other individuals who are positive. This trusting relationship was evident because 36% of the mentored youths strongly agreed that they are able to talk to their mentors about anything; 64% also agreed with the statement. Positive role models are important in the youths’ lives to the extent that they enhance their ability to engage in more positive activities. While this is true, there is also some evidence to suggest that whether or not there is a mentoring relationship, youths are still able to stay out of trouble. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the unmentored youth agreed that even though they do not have a mentor, they stay out of trouble; 67% were impartial.

It is of paramount importance that this relationship between mentor and youth begin at an early age. Children who are able to form attachments with individuals who
are helpful will continue to form other positive attachments as they get older. Allowing the formation of this relationship facilitates an extraordinary partnership between adult and child. The mentor is able to be more than an authority figure. This will allow the mentor to have a lasting effect on the juvenile, imparting not just positive values and attitudes, but also an increasing positive attitude towards their parent and peers. The participants’ ages ranged from 8 years old to 16, with 7% falling in the 8-10 age group, 50% in the 11-13, and 43% in the 14-16. The development of their identities and sense of self occurs during this sensitive stage. This range is vital in that during this period they begin to identify with others in society in developing their identities. Having a mentor will help them along this path. Using their mentor as a measurement, adolescents in this age range would be able to form positive relationships with peers who share the same values as they do.

It is important to note that there were more males than females, 57% and 43%, respectively, and they dominated the 11-13 and 14-16 age-groups. Boys during this important stage identify with their peers and may be swayed to engage in delinquent acts if they are not given other alternatives. A mentored male means that the likelihood that he will take part in any delinquent act will be significantly reduced. Learning more about positive interactions and behaviors increases their endorsement of the values and norms that exist in society. They are more likely to conform to these values. Mentoring also has a significant impact on girls; having someone to look up to as a role model will impact the types of relationships in which they get involved. Mentoring relationships convey a set of values to both boys and girls that enable them to desire and pursue conventional goals as opposed to delinquent avenues.
Mentoring has led to a deeper commitment to the academic pursuits of juveniles. The need and drive to attend school more often, pay attention in class, and do their homework was seen. Eighty-two percent stated that they attend school more because they have a mentor, 91% listened to their teacher more during class, and 91% did their homework because they had a mentor. The focus of mentoring is to help juveniles become better members of their communities. Being deeply involved in school and focusing on their work is a result of having a positive relationship with their mentors. Juveniles who are focused on academic achievement are less likely to engage in delinquent acts. Having a mentor strengthens academic commitment and this is seen in the responses in which 73% stated that that was one of the things they did with their mentor. On the other hand, 67% of the respondents who were not paired with a mentor remained unbiased, while 33% agreed that even though they did not have mentors, they still went to school, did their homework, and listened to their teachers.

Mentoring relationships are also effective in helping youth to build and maintain relationships with authority figures, parents, and peers. Having someone who cares and who listens is an important part of a successful relationship. Seventy-three percent (73%) of the participants who were paired with a mentor felt that their mentor really cared about them, and 55% thought that their mentor was a good person. The time spent with mentors saw youth reporting that they stayed out of trouble. The participants with mentors reported that they visited the museum, the park, restaurants, and the movies. They also stated that they got help from their mentors with their homework, went shopping, and played basketball. Being involved in social activities will help the development of their social skills and motivate them to get involved in other social activities.
The relationship that has been formed between the mentor and the juvenile has helped tremendously. Eighty-eight percent (88%) felt that having a mentor has helped them to listen to their parents more. A strong relationship with parents or guardians is important, because it, too, can reduce the chances that youth will get into trouble. Youths are able to consider what parents, mentors, and other adults may think of their actions before engaging in anything delinquent. Parents are able to set rules and guidelines that regulate their child’s activities and be confident that they will follow them. All of the participants with a mentor agreed that they do not stay out past curfew because they have a mentor. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the participants who were not paired with a mentor demonstrated that they were unaffected by having mentoring relationships because they still listened to their parents and did not stay out past curfew. This may be attributed to the fact that being enrolled in a mentoring program does place a certain expectation on the youth that may influence their decisions in positive ways. The positive outcome of mentoring or having a mentoring relationship was seen in the response that was give by all respondents with mentors because when asked if they liked having a mentor and if they would remain in the program until it was time to leave, 100% agreed with both statements.

It is evident that mentoring influences juvenile delinquency in a number of ways. Mentoring relationships are effective in helping juveniles form positive attachments with adults who are positive role models. The data showed that having a mentor has helped them be more focused on their schoolwork. They are also more attentive in school. They have also indicated that they are more obedient to their parents and even conform to the rules that their parents make.
There are several limitations that must be taken into consideration. While the research calls for a sample that is a true representation of the total population, this was not achieved due to the fact that only one mentoring program was used. The researcher experienced difficulty in gaining access to other programs that would have been able to furnish the request to use youths in their program. A number of programs were contacted. In some cases, there was no response or the program was on a break. Some of the programs did not run during the summer holidays, and this limited the sample size tremendously. Using only a mentoring program also limited the data collection and comparative aspect of the study. The program used had little or no delinquents; therefore, getting a different perspective was not possible, and this would have assisted with comparing youths who were in a mentoring program as opposed to youths who were not. More time was needed to contact mentoring programs in order to gain access to participants.

Being an authority figure for the participants, the program coordinator’s presence may have influenced the way in which the participants answered the questions. Based on the data collected and analyzed, there is evidence to suggest that mentoring does have an influence on juvenile delinquency. For future studies, it would be highly recommended that the study be conducted over a longer period of time so that sufficient data may be collected to make a more concrete and comprehensive analysis. In the future, more than one program should be used so that a comparison can be made between youths who are being mentored and youths who are not.
Conclusion

This research sought to find out if mentoring had an effect on juvenile delinquency. It can be concluded that youths who were enrolled in a mentoring program and who had been paired with an adult mentor agreed that it made a difference in whether or not they engaged in delinquent acts. It can be noted, too, that the majority of the juveniles who were without a mentor saw no difference; these youths may not be directly influenced by mentoring, but being enrolled in the program may play an essential role on whether or not they decide to get involved in delinquent acts. Mentoring relationships, according to this study, provided additional support for youths in that they are able to depend on their mentors for a number of things outside the home. Knowing that this support exists can severely decrease the juvenile’s associations with other juveniles who are delinquent or at risk of becoming delinquent.

The results have indicated that having a mentoring relationship can help youths build and maintain positive relationships with their parents as well as their peers. Having a positive and successful relationship with parents/guardians helps parents as they are better able to guide their children along the right path. This mentoring relationship can be effective in helping juveniles, who are delinquent or are at risk of becoming delinquent, become productive members of their communities.

Preventing and handling juvenile delinquency may lie in the foundation and practice of mentoring. Dynamic individuals can be helpful in providing the assistance that mentoring programs need with youths. Providing youths with positive alternatives in the form of support outside the home may prove successful in preventing delinquency. Building a relationship with a child during their formative years may help them make
sound decisions that allow them to become productive members of their communities and, by extension, of society.
References


relationships: The role of the mentor-youth bond. *Youth and Society, 41*.

mentoring relationships, problem behaviors and emotional well-being. *Mentoring 
and Tutoring: Partnerships in Learning, 19*. 
Appendix 1: Request Letter

April 12, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am Janeth Benjamin, a Criminal Justice Masters Student at Monroe College. I am doing my Master’s thesis on Juvenile Delinquency in NYC. I am seeking permission to interview youths at your facility.

I wish to interview youths in your program about juvenile delinquency and mentoring. Only questions required for the thesis will be asked, the participants will remain anonymous, and the information given will be kept confidential. Consent from a parent or guardian is also required if they are a minor.

If you are interested and willing to grant permission, I may be contacted at (646) 479-0928 or via email at jbenjamin6181@monroecollege.edu or janethbenjamin@gmail.com. If you need additional information, you may contact Dean Basil Wilson at The King Graduate School at (718) 933-6700 or bwilson@monroecollege.edu. Or you may contact my advisor, Dr. Christopher Charles, at (718) 933-6700 ext. 8677, or via email at ccharles@monroecollege.edu.

I await your response and look forward to working with your organization in completing this assignment.

Sincerely,

Janeth A. Benjamin
Appendix 3: Assent Form

I am Janeth Benjamin. I am a graduate student in Criminal Justice at The King Graduate School, Monroe College, and the investigator of the project, “Juvenile Delinquency and Mentoring in New York City.” This research is being conducted to understand the influence of mentoring on youth. I would like your permission to interview you about the mentoring relationship that you are in.

The interview will take about 15-20 minutes. The information on the questionnaire will only be seen by me and my advisor. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I and my advisor will have access. At any time you can refuse to answer any question or end the interview.

I foresee no potential harm for participating. Potential benefits of this research are to understand the best practices of successful mentoring.

I may publish the results of this study, but names of people or any other identifying characteristics will not be used in any of the publications. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at (646) 479-0928 or via email at jbenjamin6181@monroecollege.edu or janethbenjamin@gmail.com. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Dean Basil Wilson at The King Graduate School at (718) 933-6700 or via email at bwilson@monroecollege.edu. Or you may contact my advisor, Dr. Christopher Charles, at (718) 933-6700 ext. 8677, or via email at ccharles@monroecollege.edu.

Thank you for participating in this study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

I agree to participate in the interview (please circle one): Yes      No

_________________________________________  __________
Participant’s signature                     Date

_________________________________________  __________
Investigator’s signature                    Date
Appendix 4: Consent Form

I am Janeth Benjamin. I am a graduate student in Criminal Justice at The King Graduate School, Monroe College, and the investigator of the project “Juvenile Delinquency and Mentoring in New York City.” This research is being conducted to understand the influence of mentoring on youth. I would like your permission to interview your child about the mentoring relationship that they are in.

The interview will take about 15-20 minutes. The information on the questionnaire will only be seen by me and my advisor. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I and my advisor will have access. At any time you can refuse to answer any question or end the interview.

I foresee no potential harm for participating. Potential benefits of this research are to understand the best practices of successful mentoring.

I may publish the results of this study, but names of people or any other identifying characteristics will not be used in any of the publications. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at (646) 479-0928 or via email at jbenjamin6181@monroecollege.edu or janethbenjamin@gmail.com. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Dean Basil Wilson at The King Graduate School at (718) 933-6700 or via email at bwilson@monroecollege.edu. Or you may contact my advisor, Dr. Christopher Charles, at (718) 933-6700 ext. 8677, or via email at ccharles@monroecollege.edu.

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in this study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

I agree to allow my child to participate in the interview (please circle one): Yes    No

Parent/Guardian’s signature     Date

Investigator’s signature     Date
Appendix 5: Questionnaire

I am a Criminal Justice Graduate Student at Monroe College. I am doing a study on the effects that mentoring has on juvenile delinquency in New York City. I am seeking your assistance in answering the following questions. Please do not write any personal information other than what is required. All answers will be kept confidential.

Please circle one of the following:

1. What is your age?
   a. 8-10 years old  b. 11-13 years old  c. 14-16 years old  d. 17 and over

2. What is your gender?
   a. Male  b. Female  c. Other (please state)__________________

3. Are you enrolled in a mentoring program?
   a. Yes  b. No

4. If no, why not? (Please state.)
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

5. If yes, how long have you been enrolled in this program?
   a. less than a month  b. 1-6 months  c. 6 month-1 year  d. over a year

6. Do you have a mentor? (If yes, answer questions, 6a-6c.) (If no, go to question 7.)
   a. Yes  b. No

6a. How long have you had a mentor?
   a. less than a month  b. 1-6 months  c. 6 month-1 year  d. over a year

6b. How often do you see your mentor?
   a. once a week  b. twice a week  c. once a month  d. every other week
   Other (please state) __________________________

6c. What are some of the things you do with your mentor?
   a. go to the movies  b. go to the park  c. get help with my homework
d. visit the museum  Other (please state)__________________________

7. Have you ever done anything delinquent?
   a. Yes  b. No

7a. If yes, what have you done? (Please state.)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

7b. What were the consequences? (Please state.)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

8. If you are in a mentoring program, was this before entering the program?
   a. Yes  b. No

Please check the response that best describes your answer if you HAVE A MENTOR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. I go to school more because I have a mentor</td>
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<td>10. I do my homework more because I have a mentor</td>
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<td>11. I do not stay out past curfew because I have a mentor</td>
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<td>12. I listen to my parents more because I have a mentor</td>
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<td>13. I pay attention in class more because I have a mentor</td>
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<td>14. I listen to my teacher more because I have a mentor</td>
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<td>15. I do not get in trouble because I have a mentor</td>
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<td>16. I can talk to my mentor about anything that is bothering me</td>
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<td>17. My mentor is very friendly</td>
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<td>18. I think my mentor really cares about me</td>
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<td>19. I think my mentor is a good</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
20. Because I spend time with my mentor, I do not get into trouble
21. I will stay in the program until it is time to leave
22. I like having a mentor

Please check the response that best describes your answer if you DO NOT HAVE A MENTOR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. I go to school even though I do not have a mentor</td>
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<td>24. I do my homework even though I do not have a mentor</td>
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<td>25. I do not stay out past curfew even though I do not have a mentor</td>
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<td>26. I listen to my parents even though I do not have a mentor</td>
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<td>27. I pay attention in class even though I do not have a mentor</td>
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<td>28. I listen to my teacher even though I do not have a mentor</td>
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<td>29. I do not get in trouble even though I do not have a mentor</td>
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</table>

Thank you for your time
I listen to my parents more because I have a mentor

![Chart 1]

I do not get in trouble because I have a mentor

![Chart 2]
I can talk to my mentor about anything that is bothering me

How often do you see your mentor?

Fig. 3

Fig. 4
What are some of the things you do with your mentor?

- go to the movies
- go to the park
- help with my homework
- visit the museum
- other - Restaurant, Shop, play basketball, walk around

Fig. 5

I listen to my parents even though I do not have a mentor

Fig. 6
Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Fig. 9