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THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN ALAMINOS CITY, PANGASINAN

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INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency continues to be a significant social issue in many parts of the Philippines, including Alaminos City, Pangasinan. Youth involvement in criminal behavior such as theft, drug use, physical assault, vandalism, and truancy poses a threat not only to the community but also to the future of the young individuals involved. In recent years, there have been growing concerns among local authorities, educators, and parents regarding the increasing number of reported cases involving minors in anti-social and criminal activities.

The family, as the most fundamental social institution, plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's character and behavior. It is within the family that children first learn values, norms, discipline, and emotional regulation. However, when the family environment becomes dysfunctionaL. Due to poverty, neglect, abuse, separation, or lack of parental supervision. Children may become vulnerable to external influences and negative peer pressure.

Understanding the specific role of family-related factors in the development of juvenile delinquency within the local context of Alaminos City is necessary for crafting effective community-based interventions. By identifying the patterns and influences within family settings that correlate with youth offending, local government units, schools, social workers, and law enforcement agencies can collaboratively address the problem at its roots.

Numerous local and international studies emphasize the family's role in juvenile delinquency. In a study by Reyes (2020) conducted in Central Luzon, findings indicated that children from broken homes or households where both parents work overseas are more susceptible to delinquent behavior due to emotional neglect and lack of supervision. Similarly, a 2020 study by Garcia explored how economic stress and family disintegration increased involvement in gang-related activities among urban Filipino youth.

In a broader context, international research mirrors these findings. A longitudinal study in the U.S. by Loeber and Farrington (1998) concluded that poor parental monitoring, inconsistent discipline, and family conflict were significant predictors of juvenile offenses. Moreover, a UNICEF report on child protection in the Philippines (2019) emphasized the importance of family resilience and parental engagement in preventing youth involvement in crime and violence.

In the case of Alaminos City, while empirical studies remain limited, anecdotal evidence from barangay reports, school guidance counselors, and social welfare offices suggests that many delinquent youth come from families experiencing conflict, poverty, or emotional neglect. Understanding these family-related variables within the local context is essential to addressing juvenile delinquency holistically and effectively.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between family-related factors and juvenile delinquency in Alaminos City, Pangasinan.

The descriptive aspect of the research aims to provide a detailed account of the family profiles of the youth involved in delinquent behavior, including family structure, parenting styles, supervision practices, economic conditions, and emotional support. It also describes the common types of delinquent behavior exhibited by juveniles in the area.

The correlational aspect seeks to determine whether there is a significant relationship between these family-related variables and the incidence of juvenile delinquency. By using statistical analysis, the study will assess how strongly family conditions influence youth behavior and identify patterns that may predict or explain delinquent actions.

This design is appropriate for the study because it allows the researcher to explore real-life situations without manipulating the variables. It also supports the identification of associations between family factors and juvenile behavior, which can inform the development of targeted interventions and policies.

The research will involve the use of surveys and interviews with selected respondents from various barangays in Alaminos City, as well as consultations with school officials and social workers. The data gathered will be analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

RESULTS

This study investigated the role of the family in juvenile delinquency in selected barangays in Alaminos City, Pangasinan, using a survey questionnaire distributed to 10 respondents per barangay. The main objectives were to determine the influence of family structure, parenting style, communication, and support on the likelihood of juveniles engaging in delinquent behavior.

Key Findings Include

1. Demographic Profile:
   - Most respondents were aged 15–17 years.

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- The majority were male and from nuclear or single-parent households.
- Most families had monthly incomes below ₱10,000.

2. Family Environment and Parenting:
   - Discipline was mainly given by mothers, using verbal warnings.
   - Communication was sometimes open, and quality family time was inconsistent.
   - Parental involvement in education was moderate.
3. Risk Behaviors and Peer Influence:
   - Common delinquent behaviors included drinking alcohol (35%) and skipping school (25%).
   - A quarter of respondents reported no involvement in risky activities.
4. Family Awareness and Support:
   - Parents were only partially aware of their children's peer groups.
   - Most youth felt supported but expressed a desire for more emotional connection and understanding.
5. Preventive Suggestions from Youth:
   - Stronger communication, emotional support, consistent discipline, and quality time were identified as key solutions.

DISCUSSION

The family plays a crucial role in shaping the behavior and development of children, and its influence can be particularly significant in the context of juvenile delinquency. In Alaminos City, Pangasinan, understanding the relationship between family dynamics and juvenile delinquency is essential for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies.

The demographic profile of the respondents reveals that most were aged 15-17 years, male, and from low-income households. This suggests that adolescents from vulnerable socioeconomic backgrounds may be more susceptible to delinquent behavior. The family environment and parenting style also play a significant role in shaping adolescent behavior. The study found that discipline was mainly given by mothers, using verbal warnings, and that communication was sometimes open, but quality family time was inconsistent.

The prevalence of delinquent behaviors, such as drinking alcohol and skipping school, underscores the need for targeted interventions. The fact that a quarter of respondents reported no involvement in risky activities suggests that some adolescents may be more resilient to peer influence. However, the study also reveals that parents were only partially aware of their children's peer groups, which may contribute to the prevalence of delinquent behavior.

Despite these challenges, most youth felt supported by their families, but expressed a desire for more emotional connection and understanding. This highlights the importance of nurturing relationships within families and providing adolescents with the emotional support they need to thrive. The respondents' suggestions for stronger communication, emotional support, consistent discipline, and quality time underscore the need for families to prioritize relationship-building and effective parenting strategies.

The findings of this study have significant implications for policy and practice. Family-based interventions that focus on strengthening family relationships, improving parental involvement, and promoting effective discipline strategies may be effective in preventing juvenile delinquency. Parenting education programs that educate parents on effective parenting strategies, such as consistent discipline and emotional support, may also help reduce delinquent behavior among adolescents.

In conclusion, the family plays a critical role in shaping the behavior and development of adolescents in Alaminos City, Pangasinan. By addressing the family dynamics and parenting factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency, stakeholders can develop targeted interventions to support families and reduce the risk of delinquent behavior among adolescents. Ultimately, strengthening family relationships and promoting effective parenting strategies can help prevent juvenile delinquency and promote positive outcomes for adolescents in the community.

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