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Explorative Study on Recidivism Factor of Gang Violence in Malaysia

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Abstract

The number of crimes continues to rise high every year despite the imposition of punitive and harsh punishments. Gang violence is a one of the parts of the crime that occurs in Malaysia. Gang violence is described as a violent phenomenon involving a group of people whose primary purpose is to engage in aggressive and delinquent behavior. Criminals who are involving in gang violence are substantially more likely to reoffend after being released than offenders who are not members of gangs. The objective of this study is to discuss the recidivism factors of gang violence in Malaysia. The Library Research approach was used in this study, where information and related statistics were gathered from a variety of sources. The psychological factors and criminogenic factors are the main factors of gang members return to the prison. The factors which are discussed in this study can help people to know the reasons gang members who are involved in violence return to prison.

Keywords: *Gang violence, crimes, factors, recidivism, prison*

Introduction:

The use of the concept of recidivism is used to understand the pattern of recidivism of an individual's crime. Recidivism is re-engaging in crime after receiving punishment or intervention (King and Elderbroom, 2014). Tenibiaje (2013), says that recidivism is the tendency to return to past patterns of criminal behavior and it results in re-arrest, re-conviction, or imprisonment again.

The crime rate is increasing day by day in Malaysia despite the prison authorities imposing harsh sentences on offenders. This statement is supported by the study of Rahim et al., (2016) who say the number of crimes continues to rise high every year despite the imposition of punitive and harsh punishments. According to Thomas, Hurley and Grimes (2002), recidivism not only increases crime rates but increases societal concerns about personal and national safety, increased economic costs of crime and the cost of rehabilitative treatment provided by the criminal justice system.

In the community and in prisons, gang violence is a major source of safety and security problems (Di Placido et al., 2006). Gang violence is described as a violent phenomenon involving a group of people whose primary purpose is to engage in aggressive and delinquent behaviour (MacMaster, 2010).

Criminals who are involving in gang violence are substantially more likely to reoffend after being released than offenders who are not members of gangs (Huebner, Varano & Timothy, 2007). According Huebner, Varano & Timothy (2007), 45% of gang members who are involve in violence, reoffend within 33 months of entering the community compared to non-gang members. The range of gang violence recidivist in Malaysia is higher (Shankar, 2017). In Malaysia, the re-entry of gang-related crimes by violent gangs, including as gang-motivated murder cases, armed gang robberies, gang fights, and drug-related offences, have spurred increased serious reactive and proactive operations against these unlawful gangs (Ahmad Zahid, 2014). So, in Malaysia, the gang violence is a part of the crime.

Problem Statement:

Despite the jail officials imposing heavy punishments on offenders, Malaysia's crime rate continues to rise daily. Gang violence is a one of the parts of the crime that occurs in Malaysia. Criminals who are involving in gang violence are substantially more likely to reoffend (Guay, 2012). Criminals who're related to in gang violence are extensively much more likely to reoffend after being launched than offenders who aren't individuals of gangs (Huebner, Varano & Timothy, 2007). So, it shows that the gang violence members have more chance return to the prison. In Malaysia, the number of gang offenders who return to the prison is increasing (Ahmad Zahid, 2014). So, in this research, researcher explore about the recidivism factors of gang violence.

Objective of Study:

The objective of this study is to discuss the recidivism factors of gang violence in Malaysia.

Literature Review:

Di Placido et al., (2006), assess the effectiveness of gang member therapy in terms of minimizing institutional misconduct and recidivism in society. The study is retrospective-prospective research of the effectiveness of the therapies of gang members. Age of index conviction, length and type of index conviction, number of prior nonviolent and violent convictions, and race were used to match the four groups: untreated gang members, treated gang members, untreated non-gang members, and treated non-gang members. In the sample, there are twenty-eight gangs. After treatment, the treated gang members who relapsed violently received much shorter sentences than their untreated matched controls. Untreated gang members were substantially more likely than the other three groups to commit major institutional offences.

Durairaja, Mat Saat and Kamaluddin conducted a study on 2019. This study aimed to explore psychological and criminogenic factors behind gangsterism among Indians in Malaysia. The goal of this study was to look at the psychological and criminogenic elements that contribute to gangsterism among Indians in Malaysia. A non-experimental research design was used in this study. This is a qualitative study that employs an exploratory approach based on a mixture of subjectivism and interpretivism ideologies. Six former gangsters and four police officers were questioned. This study discussed psychological factors and three criminogenic factors that contributed to gangsterism. The findings of this exploratory study add to the expanding body of information on gangsterism in Malaysia, and they can help community leaders and law enforcement authorities organize effective gangsterism intervention, preventive, and suppression initiatives.

Wood (2014), discusses an outline of the way sure organization strategies which might encourage youngsters to enroll in a gang violence. It then actions directly to bear in mind how as soon as they're gang members, organization have an effect on youngsters to undertake and cling to gang norms. Wood (2014), explains how organization strategies feature to persuade the improvement of gang members' social cognitions to reduce the recidivism. This study focuses how institution techniques deserve closer research attention due their ability for informing extra correct gang interventions to discourage ability contributors and to reduce involving in gang related crime.

According to Davis and Flannery (2001), gang participants inside correctional centers pose massive demanding situations for institutional remedy staffs. Whether former participants of avenue gangs or latest converts to safety chance businesses inside a facility, those inmates frequently have histories of bodily and sexual abuse, substance abuse, psychiatric disturbances,

post-disturbing pressure disorder, cognitive deficits, terrible self-esteem, and different problems. Despite the reality that lots of those offenders are extraordinarily tough to treat, the item urges correctional centers to try and provide suitable remedy for individuals who are open to such interventions. Further, in treating gang members, institutional staffs have to bear in mind their assets, consisting of own circle of relatives and community, in facilitating long-time period change. There are some of promising treatment programs to be had for constrained gang members to reduce the recidivism. The study states that it deliberately did not have no longer recognition on positive varieties of mental treatment which includes character psychotherapy, which, even as extensively used, tends to be eclectic and as a result tough to document.

Methodology:

The Library Research approach was used in this study, where information and related statistics were gathered from a variety of sources. The why, what, and how questions, as well as the justification and proof, can be generated from a review and study of current literature. Because this research involves police forces, data for the study can be found in newspapers or on the internet. The method of gathering information centres on reading and referencing recidivism books, journals, papers, and articles. In order to create his study, the researcher will use all of the material gathered. The library technique is used by researchers to look through reading materials and previous studies on data are generated.

Discussion:

There are two main factors that encourage gang members return to the crime in Malaysia. The first is psychological factors. Many studies have discovered that psychological factors have a significant role in gang participation (Alleyne & Wood 2010). According to Thornberry et al., (2003), Aggression, lack of self-control, and impulsivity are all psychological triggers connected to gang participation. When describing the actions of gangsters, the majority of ex-gangsters expressed negative emotional responses. Aggression was one of the most prominent negative emotional responses displayed by the ex-gangsters.

Mohammad Rahim (2014) addressed hostility as a source of violence and crime. Aggression is one of the most common psychological traits found among Malaysian convicts, and it is strongly linked to other negative psychological factors. Thornberry et al., (2003) discuss that one of the psychological elements associated to gang membership is aggression. Gangs and gangsters are aggressive, according to the police officers in this study. Physical aggression was admitted by the ex-gangsters interviewed as a problem-solving approach as well as a weapon to dominate and inspire terror in others.

Studies by Hay and Forrest, (2008), Payne, Higgins and Blackwell, (2010) and Mohammad Rahim et al., (2015) explained that low self-control is a constant, possible, and prominent trigger for both criminal and violent behavior. One of the psychological aspects associated to gang participation is a lack of self-control. Some of the ex-gangsters interviewed stated that leaving the gang took them several years because they were too committed to the group and its members. They also stated that their lack of self-control led them to become involved in gang-related activities in order to earn unlawful money.

Ex-gangsters admitted to having trouble regulating their aggressive tendencies. Ex-gangsters' earlier episodes of unpredictable physical hostility terrified and distressed others around them. This was interpreted as a technique to demonstrate dominance and exert control over others (Higgins and Blackwell, 2010). High impulsivity can make it difficult for someone to follow social norms and rules, to demonstrate a reckless disdain for the safety of others, and to feel little or no regret for mistreating others in the pursuit of instant enjoyment (Shankar, 2017).

Second is Criminogenic Factors. In general, criminogenic factors are key changing risk factors for criminal conduct that do not include signs of mental diseases and can predict recidivism in diverse ways (Prins et al., 2015). Criminogenic factors have an important influence in gang membership and gangster-related actions (Laws, 2016). According to Wood (2014), by adhering to group standards, gang members' social cognitions such as moral detachment and acceptance for offensive acts can be nurtured.

Mohammad Rahim et al., (2015) It was discovered that having antisocial friends has an impact on crime and gang activity among ex-gangsters. The ex-gangsters claimed to have formed a tight bond with antisocial peers whom they had known from infancy. Their proximity to antisocial peers created an atmosphere in which they shared similar values, beliefs, intentions, attitudes, and interests, encouraging them to join gangs and commit crimes. This shows that the number of antisocial peers, the closeness of the relationship, and the amount of time spent with antisocial peers influence juvenile gang participation and delinquency (Mohammad Rahim et al., 2015).

According to Wortham (2015), antisocial peers can inspire teenagers to do things they wouldn't typically do, the majority of which are bad, such as having sex at a young age, consuming alcohol, smoking, and abusing drugs. Young, Fitzgibbon, and Silverstone (2013) peer pressure increased the number of minor gang actions, which could lead to more serious gang participation. Sharp, Aldridge, and Medina, (2006), explained antisocial peers and pressure from these peers increases the risk of gang participation.

Multiple challenges, such as financial hardship, family separation, bereavement, domestic violence, jail, and alcohol and substance abuse, appear to contribute to an individual's negative, damaging patterns of thinking and behavior. Youths may join gangs because of supportive aspects that they cannot acquire in their own homes, according to McNeil, Herschberger and Nedela (2013) and Gilman et al. (2014). In several cases, older adult family members were the driving force behind youths joining gangs (Robb, Featherstone, Ruxton, & Ward, 2017). As a result, dysfunctional family situations or relationships may make young family members more vulnerable to developing friendships with delinquent or antisocial classmates.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the psychological factors and criminogenic factors are the main factors of gang members return to the prison. The factors which is discussed in this study can help people to know the reasons gang members who involve in violence return to the prison. This study also enhances the knowledge of gang violence. One of the suggestions in this study is, researchers can do more research to understanding the psychological and criminogenic factors that contribute to gang violence. Second, in future need to explore other factor that underlie gang violence in Malaysia. There are two limitations in this study. First, this study only focusses on gang violence and used library research method. Besides that, this study only focused two factors which is psychological factors and criminogenic factors.

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