



Full Length Review Article

CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW: THE CASE OF STREET CHILDREN IN THE PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

This study generally aimed to assess the implementation of Republic Act No. 9344 otherwise known as the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 in the Philippines and its effects to minors in conflict with the law. Descriptive method was used in this study. Multi-sampling technique was employed due to a relatively large number of population. The respondents of this study were the social workers, police, parents, juveniles, and employees of the department of justice handling cases of juvenile delinquencies particularly children in conflict with the law from the 2nd Congressional District of Quezon Province.

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INTRODUCTION

Cases of Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) have been increasing. Street Children like the so-called “rugby boys” are frequently involved in committing crimes such as attempted murder, frustrated murder, and even murder. Such occurrences usually transpired in a low-income families who search for a living. At a young age, some of the children are driven to work in a junk shop, as a vendor, painter, grass trimmer, and other unskilled labor where they could earn for a living. Some of them even resort to human trafficking, illegal drugs transporting, and other illegal activities where they can earn easy money, hence makes them child at-risks or delinquent. These children are being snatched and robbed of their young age usually due to socio-economic and cultural disparity among others. Children are accorded with rights by our laws one of which is the right to education. But this is not the scenario in some of the low-income families in the Philippines. It is imperative therefore to take a glance on this existing law to be able to reflect for a more effective and efficient policy or governing principles to mitigate and prevent such juvenile delinquency, and ultimately could offer a basis for government intervention.

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Youth nowadays (World Youth Report 2003), regardless of their gender, social origin or country of residence, are being subjected to individual risks. They are exposed to different opportunities— some beneficial but some are potentially harmful. Apparently, those opportunities were taken in a wrong way since it resulted to a commission of various offenses. Some became addicted to drugs and consequently used violence against their peers. Furthermore, statistics indicated that in virtually all parts of the world, with the exception of the United States, rates of youth crime rose in the 1990s. In Western Europe, one of the few regions for which data are available, arrests of juvenile delinquents and under-age offenders increased by an average of around 50 per cent between the mid- 1980s and the late 1990s. The countries in transition have also witnessed an intense surge in delinquency rates; since 1995, juvenile crime levels in many countries in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States have escalated by more than 30 percent. The report relates criminal offenses to drug abuse and excessive use of alcohol. Moreover it is stated in the report that common studies and programs dealing with juvenile delinquency are focused on youth as offenders, without giving regard that minors could also be a victim of criminal or delinquent acts. The unceasing threat of victimization is having a serious impact on the socialization of young men and the internalization of their norms and values to the larger society.

According to data on crimes recorded by the police, more than 80 percent of all violent occurrences are not reported by the victims. Information about the victims allows inferences to be drawn about the offenders as well. Results of self-report studies showed that an overwhelming majority of those who take part in violence against young people are about the same age and gender as their victims; in most cases the offenders are males acting in groups. Those most likely to be on the receiving end of violence are between the ages of 16 and 19, with 91 in every 1,000 in this group becoming victims of some form of crime. Surveys have shown that men are more likely to become victims than women. In the United States, 105 in every 1,000 men become crime victims, compared with 80 per 1,000 women. Men are 2.5 times more likely to be victims of serious assault. Oftentimes older people are less affected since as mentioned in this report, crimes are usually committed by representatives of the same age groups to which the victims belong. Young people who are at risk of committing delinquency often lived in a difficult situations.

Various reasons such as parental alcoholism, poverty, failed marriage, excessive number of family members, abusive conditions in the home, the growing HIV/AIDS scourge, or the death of parents during armed conflicts—are orphans or unaccompanied and are without the means of subsistence, housing and other basic necessities are enough bases why some minors are at greatest risk of falling into juvenile delinquency. The number of children in especially difficult circumstances is estimated to have risen from 80 million to 150 million between 1992 and 2000. The problem of juvenile delinquency is becoming more complex and widespread, and crime prevention programs are either unequipped to deal with the existing realities or do not exist. Many developing countries have done little or nothing to deal with these problems, and international programs are seemingly inadequate. Developed countries are engaged in activities aimed at juvenile crime prevention, but the overall effect of these programs is rather weak because the mechanisms in place are often inadequate to address the existing situation.

Republic Act 9344, otherwise known as the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, was sponsored by Senator Francisco Pangilinan and Representative Simeon Datumanong. The enactment of the new law was brought about by the condemnation of the international community after Cable News Network (CNN) featured in a documentary, thousands of children in prison sharing the same jail facilities with adult offenders. The law was passed by Congress on March 22, 2006 and was signed by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo into law on April 28, 2006. It took effect on May 5, 2006, fifteen days after its publication. An immediate effect of this law was the retroactive dismissal of criminal cases filed against thousands of children below fifteen years of age throughout the country. It is the first law that protects the rights of children in conflict with the law. R.A. 9344 provides them the opportunity and chance, through alternative child-friendly measures, to reform and be reintegrated into their family and community as a productive member of society. The aim is to divert children who commit minor crimes out of the formal criminal justice system and to keep them out of jails confining adult prisoners.

The law is anchored on the principle that youth offenders should not be punished in the same way as adult offenders are punished, but instead be made to undergo rehabilitation programs. The objective of the law is to completely protect the rights of “children at risk” and “children in conflict with the law” and make the detention of such children as the last resort. Section 4 of R.A. 9344 defines a child as a person under the age of eighteen years. “Child at Risk” refers to a child who is vulnerable to and at the risk of committing criminal offenses because of personal, family and social circumstances, such as, but not limited to, the following: (1) being abused by any person through sexual, physical, psychological, mental, economic or any other means and the parents or guardian refuse; are unwilling, or unable to provide protection for the child; (2) being exploited including sexually or economically; (3) being abandoned or neglected, and after diligent search and inquiry, the parent or guardian cannot be found; (4) coming from a dysfunctional or broken family or without a parent or guardian; (5) being out of school; (6) being a streetchild; (7) being a member of a gang; (8) living in a community with a high level of criminality or drug abuse; and (9) living in situations of armed conflict. “Child in Conflict with the Law” refers to a child who is alleged as, accused of, or adjudged as, having committed an offense under Philippine laws. Children in conflict with the law are presumed by R.A. 9344 as victims themselves. They are not considered as criminals but as victims of circumstances beyond their control and therefore should be treated as individuals who need guidance and assistance hence need help, not retribution.

Republic Act 9344 has introduced several reforms in the manner by which children in conflict with the law are handled. It establishes a comprehensive system for the administration of juvenile justice, including the rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law, their reintegration into their respective communities and the prevention of juvenile delinquency. The new law enumerates the rights of children in conflict with the law, prohibits their detention in jails and provides for alternatives to detention. It introduces the principle of restorative justice and a system of diversion in dealing with children in conflict with the law. The new law also increases the age of criminal responsibility from nine to fifteen years of age. It exempts children from being prosecuted for certain crimes and decriminalizes status offenses. Moreover, a national council on juvenile justice and welfare was created to ensure the effective implementation of the new law.

Literature Review

The U. N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) broadly provides for the protection of the child but it also lays down the protection for children in conflict with the law. Thus, (1) no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, or sentenced to capital punishment or life imprisonment without release; (2) No child shall be unlawfully or arbitrarily deprived of liberty, detention shall only be a last resort and for the shortest possible time; (3) A child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect, taking into account the child’s age, the child shall be detained separately from adults, and (4) A child deprived of liberty shall have the right to legal assistance and to challenge the legal of his or her detention (Article 37).

As laws for protection and reforms of the children in conflict with the law are necessary, the other pillars of children, vital to their existence and future are equally considered in this study. Baumer *et al.*, (2009); Bursik and Grasmick, (2008) in their study on juvenile delinquency have contended that criminologists have not examined whether juvenile crime at micro place geographic units follows patterns of hot spots concentrations and whether such concentrations vary over time. This is not to say that the location of juvenile crime has been ignored by criminologists. There has long been an interest in the location of where juvenile delinquents live and how that affects the pattern of crime in a city.

One of the most influential studies of juvenile delinquency and geography is Shaw and McKay's (2009) examination of the spatial distribution of delinquency residences across metropolitan urban communities of Chicago. They identified considerable variation in rates of delinquency (as measured by the residences of delinquents) across square mile units of geography, with delinquency heavily concentrated in areas next to the center of the city and less concentrated in more remotely located areas [Shaw and McKay's (2009)]. Moreover, they found that the clustering of residences of delinquents within certain Chicago area neighborhoods was relatively stable over time [Bursik and Webb 2008; Shaw and McKay (2009)].

According to Schuerman and Kobrin, (2010) the residences of delinquents explain the developmental patterns that ultimately resulted in a community being designated as a high crime area in 1970. Schuerman and Kobrin (2010) found three general patterns that led to high crime rates in 1970. The first pattern is termed "emerging", and refers to those clusters that were relatively crime free in 1950 but had moderate to high crime in 1960 and 1970, respectively. The second pattern, "transitional", refers to those clusters that had moderately high crime in 1950, a higher level in 1960 and an even higher level in 1970. The last pattern is referred to as "enduring" and describes those clusters that had persistently high crime rates at all points in time. The vast majority of census tracts within the clusters were designated as having enduring crime rates over the time span, with fewer census tracts in the transitional and emerging categories. These findings indicate that although there is considerable stability in delinquency at the community level over time, there is also variability, as there were areas that began the time series with few crimes and increased over time.

Despite interest in the geographic distribution of the residences of juvenile delinquents, studies examining the distribution of the actual location at which a juvenile crime occurs are a rarity. We could locate only four studies that examined the area in which the juvenile committed a crime. Two examined the classification of crimes by whether the juvenile lived and offended in the same neighborhood (Burgess, 2008; Lind, 2011). These studies employed an early version of a spatial typology for classifying crimes called mobility triangles (Groff and McEwen 2005; Tita and Griffiths 2005). Burgess (2008) offered an initial description of different types of mobility triangles related to delinquency. Lind (2011), relying on court data, found that the frequency in which juveniles offended in their own neighborhood was

related to the type of crime being committed. Neither study detailed the distribution or concentration of juvenile crime within the city. Stephenson (2009), in his study found that the dispersion of offense locations, as measured by juvenile arrests, was greater than the dispersion of home address locations. Turner (2009) measured the distance juvenile's travel to commit crime, finding that juveniles travel short distances (the median was about a half a mile) from their residence to the location of the crime event. Notably, Turner's work emphasized the importance of examining the location of a criminal event rather than the location of a juvenile residence for understanding crime. He identified areas, for example, where juvenile residency was low but juvenile crime was high (Weisburd, Morris, and Groff, 2009).

According to the Lebanese Union for the Protection of Juvenile Delinquents, 2,995 minors were accused of criminal offenses in 1997. Of the 1,086 convictions, almost 400 children were sent to prison or reform schools. 250 to 300 are in custody at any one time. (Major problems include low age of criminal responsibility, existence and length of pre-trial custody, non-availability of legal assistance and lack of health and education facilities for young detainees. The juvenile judiciary system suffers from lack of magistrates specialized in juvenile matters. Also, there is lack of coordination between judges, lawyers and social workers, preventive delinquency measures and inadequate follow-up procedures). Among the many factors driving children into the streets are the following: The absence of mandatory, free education at the elementary and secondary levels. With school fees so high, families with very limited income cannot afford a formal education for their children, or even afford to send them to vocational trade schools. Thus, there are few options remaining for the youth, and the street is one such option. Studies show that 63 percent of juvenile delinquents can neither read nor write and 37 percent of them have only elementary level academic abilities.

In the poorer sectors of society, families sometimes abandon their role of providing direction and guidance to their children because the burden of sheer survival outweighs all other concerns. The children are forced to find work and in turn become economically self-reliant, thereby finding it unnecessary to heed any direction their families may attempt to provide for them. Instead of gaining moral values from their families, such misguided youth instead turn to movies on television and in the cinema, which are saturated with crime, violence, drugs, and sex and exhibit a total disregard for any and all social and familial values and responsibilities. Frequent relocation seems to be yet another cause for instability in the lives of the youth who end up on the streets of Lebanon, especially when their families move from the rural communities to the bigger cities, suddenly exposing their children to the dazzling and sometimes overwhelming life of the city. Weisburd, Morris, and Groff (2009), studies have shown that crime is concentrated at micro level units of geography defined as hot spots. Despite this growing evidence of the concentration of crime at place, studies to date have dealt primarily with adult crime or have failed to distinguish between adult and juvenile offenses. Their findings suggest that officially recorded juvenile crime is strongly concentrated in hot spots.

They also found that high rate juvenile crime street segments remain relatively stable across the 14 years survey. Finally, confirming the importance of routine activity theory in understanding the concentration of juvenile crime in hot spots, they found a strong connection between high rate trajectory groups and places likely to be a part of juvenile activity spaces. Though place-based crime prevention has not been a major focus of delinquency prevention, their work suggests that it may be an area with great promise. According to the Republic Act 9344 authored by Senator Francis Pangilinan, Juvenile Justice is a criminal law applicable to person not old enough (usually the age for culpability is 18) to be held responsible for criminal acts. The goal the Juvenile Justice System is for rehabilitation. In line with this, juveniles can transfer into adult court if Juvenile court waives or relinquishes jurisdiction.

The doctrine of parents' patronage allows the state to legislate laws for the protection, care, custody, and maintenance of children within its jurisdiction. The federal rule is to fonder the standard setter. The Congress passed the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Control Act in 1968, and in 1972 it was reviewed and renamed Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Act. This supports the state and the local communities in rendering preventive services to the youth in danger of becoming delinquent and it also provides training, services and technical assistance. The act also defines juvenile delinquency as any act that is otherwise a crime, committed by someone under 18. The said act also set rules on how the state must comply with the Juvenile Court procedures and punishment. The law on juvenile delinquents also stated that the "State shall protect the best interests of the child through measures that will ensure the observance of international standards of child protection, to which the Philippines is a party. Proceedings before any authority shall be conducted in the best interest of the child and in a manner which allows the child to participate and to express himself/herself freely. The participation of children in the program and policy formulation and implementation related to juvenile justice and welfare shall be ensured by the concerned government agency".

A juvenile program is not just applied in the Philippines. In fact, other Asian countries have also established systems of juvenile Justice that blend cultural and economic traditions with the influences of former colonial powers. In India, there is a law entitled Juvenile Justice of 2000 which states that juvenile in conflict with the law and children in need of care and protection should be dealt with by providing proper care, protection and treatment by providing their development needs, and by adopting a child-friendly approach in the adjudication and disposition of matters in the best interest of children and for their ultimate rehabilitation. Based on the provisions of Republic Act No. 9344, the Department of Social Welfare and Development is tasked to formulate policies and programs that will lead to the rehabilitation, development, and reintegration of the youth to the society. These programs include livelihood training and development of the youth's moral standards. According to Panganiban (2012) rehabilitation in Tayabas City was undertaken primarily to determine the effects of diversion programs given by the SWD Officer for the juvenile offenders. Specifically, the analysis sought to answer the demographic profile of the

youth conflicted with the law in terms of their age, gender, case involved, and highest educational attainment and as well as the diversion programs given to the youth offenders. The highest percentage of youth offender was garnered by those who belong to the age bracket of 7-9 years old and age bracket of 10-12 years old that registered as 25% of all the respondents. It shows that 7-9 years old and 10-12 years old have the highest percentage of being youth offender. Moreover, the researcher also found out that male is more prone to committing crimes as the researcher noticed that almost all the respondents are male. Statistics shows that the highest percentage of 9 or 75% of respondents have an educational background in grade school, the second to the highest has a percentage of 8.33%, those of whom have an educational background in high school and for those who have not enrolled and lacks education at all with the least percentage of 16.67%. When it comes to the nature of the offense, it shows that the number of juveniles accused of theft have the highest percentage of 83.33% or (10) of the respondents and it was followed by rape with the percentage of 20% or (2) of the respondents. The factors that contribute to this are clearly stated in this study but in the recent survey, poverty is the most common factor to this effect.

Synthesis and Relevance of the Reviewed Literature and Studies

The studies showed how an integrated system for juvenile delinquents are needed as provided in the law. The studies are based on the international and local literature which will support the study. The study of Baumer *et al.* 2008 discussed the juvenile crime and other juvenile delinquencies. While the study of Schuerman and Kobrin (2008) examined the residences of delinquents and other cases of juvenile cases where crimes and at-risks children are the main concerns. Other studies like the one conducted by Stephenson (2009) tackled dispersion of juvenile and crime across the city committed by youth at-risks for violent behavior.

Local studies focused more on students' at-risks for violent behavior and how it has been treated and mitigated. In Philippine setting more emphasis are on children and students' at-risks for a violent behavior. These are based on the existing situations and scenarios with street children who are at-risks of committing crimes. These studies will form the bases on how Implementation of RA 9344 will take effect to minors in conflict with the law. This will help them be rehabilitated and reintegrated. This is a one chance or opportunity for them to change their lives from crimes to "Christ". They will be able to have moral and spiritual healing which is needed by them to heal their lives and sickness of the emotions and social well-being.

Research Method

This study utilized the descriptive-evaluative type of research. This method examined current scenario and described what was happening in the place of sustained interest. Using this method, the study has the opportunity to look at the current status of the implementation of Republic Act No. 9344 otherwise known as the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 and its effects to minors in conflict with the law.

The researcher used survey questionnaire as an instrument in gathering data from the respondents. Multi-stage sampling was utilized due to a relatively large number of population. The respondents of this study were the social workers, policemen, parents, juveniles, and employees of the department of justice handling cases of juvenile delinquencies particularly children in conflict with the law from the 2nd Congressional District of Quezon Province. The social workers are the Municipal Social and Welfare Development worker in the place, the policemen are the Philippine National Police members who are in charge of cases of juvenile delinquencies, the employees of the DOJ are the implementers of RA 9344, the parents are the guardian of the children, and the children in conflict with the law are the juvenile delinquent that need rehabilitation, intervention or diversion. The PNP, DSWD, and DOJ employees are in charge of rehabilitating the children to prevent them from further commission of crimes.

Summary of Findings

This presents the result and discussions on the factors that influence/affect children to commit crimes at their young age, the level of awareness of the respondents on the provisions of RA 9344 and, the level of effectiveness on the implementation of RA 9344.

Both cultural factors and delinquent identities got the same weighted mean of 3.79. These posited that the use of alcohol and illegal drugs by juveniles make them commit crimes like theft to support their substance used, and violence and conflicts are the elements that make up delinquent identities. Offenders and victims got the weighted mean of 3.74. This shows that the likelihood to becoming a victim is attributed to a person, social role which provokes criminal behavior, personal and logistical characteristics can determine victimization. On the otherhand, urbanization registered a weighted mean of 3.72. Urban environment is epitomized by population density, degree of heterogeneity, and numbers of people found in the urban contexts. Following is exclusion with the weighted mean of 3.64. This implicated that the exclusion of some people is gradually increasing with the promotion of obstacles, damaged social ties, unemployment and identity crises. Finally, migration got the weighted mean of 3.47. This exemplified that urban population foster deviancy to immigrants.

Level of Awareness of the Respondents on the Provisions of RA 9344

Based on the data, respondents have a High Level of Awareness on the Provisions of RA 9344 with a general weighted mean of 4.11.

Table 1. Factors that Influence/Affect Children to Commit Crimes at their Young Age

NO.	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1	Economic and Social Factors	4.06	Agree	1.5
2	Cultural Factors	3.79	Agree	5.5
3	Urbanization	3.72	Agree	8
4	Family	4.06	Agree	1.5
5	Migration	3.47	Fairly Agree	10
6	The Media	3.85	Agree	4
7	Exclusion	3.64	Agree	9
8	Peer Influence	3.94	Agree	3
9	Delinquent Identities	3.79	Agree	5.5
10	Offenders and Victims	3.74	Agree	7
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN		3.81	Agree	

The respondents posted a degree of agreement on the factors that influence/affect the children to commit crimes at their young age as children in conflict with the law with a general weighted mean of 3.81. The results of the study showed that both economic and social factors and family yielded the highest weighted mean of 4.06. These were affected by rampant unemployment, low level of income and social status, and non-education that caused the commitment/involvement to criminal activity by the young with a weighted mean of 4.26, and weak parental authority, poor imbibing of values to children, and inability to nurture the young effectively closely associate with juvenile delinquency with the weighted mean of 4.31. Second is peer influence with the weighted mean of 3.94.

The failure of the family and the school to teach good values and moral virtues continually increase some threat of assault, oppression, harassment or extortion on the street or at school having the weighted mean of 4.16. Third is the media with the weighted mean of 3.85. The indicator reflected that television creates psychological effects (such as violent acts) to the children who watch it, instigating for a delinquent behavior that may lead to a commission of a crime.

The highest mean is 4.35, which states "The family shall be responsible for the primary nurturing and rearing of children which is critical in delinquency prevention." The respondents positioned the statements "Schools shall provide adequate, and individualized educational schemes for children manifesting difficult behavior and children in conflict with the law" and "Media practitioners have the duty to maintain the highest critical and professional standards in reporting and covering cases of children in conflict with the law." in the 2nd and 3rd rank, with a weighted mean of 4.29 and 4.19 respectively. The statements "Children in conflict with the law shall undergo diversion programs without undergoing court proceedings" and "There shall be a specially trained prosecutor to conduct inquest, preliminary investigation and prosecution of cases involving a child in conflict with the law." have the same weighted mean of 4.18 and falls on the same rank. According to the Republic Act 9344 authored by Senator Francis Pangilinan, Juvenile Justice is a criminal law applicable to person not old enough (usually the age for culpability is 18) to be held responsible for criminal acts. The goal of the Juvenile Justice System is for rehabilitation. In line with this, juveniles

can transfer into adult court if Juvenile court waives or relinquishes jurisdiction.

Level of Effectiveness of the Implementation of RA 9344

The implementation of R.A. 9344 among the children in conflict with law in the 2nd Congressional District of Quezon Province is effective. This was affected by the intervention/prevention program that includes counseling, education, skills training, psychosocial interventions, character building, and other activities that enhanced the child's psychological, emotional and psychosocial well-being" which obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.19. This is followed by the statements "The program, which should take the form of an individualized treatment program, should include counseling, education, skills training, psychosocial interventions, character building, and other activities" and, "Within a period of fifteen days after the conduct of assessment, the social worker shall submit a Report to the court having jurisdiction over the case," that falls under rank 2 and 3 having a weighted mean of 4.11 and 4.06, respectively.

Two statements tied in the same rank having a weighted mean of 4.05, which states "It is in the best interest of the child to be released, the court shall immediately dismiss the case against the child and order the release of the child to his/her parents, to a duly registered non-governmental or religious organization, a barangay official or a member of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), a local social welfare and development officer, or the DSWD" and, "Otherwise, the child shall continue the rehabilitation program" with a weighted mean of 4.03. The statement "If based on the assessment of the social worker, it is in the best interest of the child to undergo intervention/prevention program before being released, the court shall order that the child should undergo to an intervention/prevention program" falls under the 6th rank. Furthermore, the statements.

"The court shall likewise order the immediate transfer of the child to a youth rehabilitation center run by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or Local Government Units (LGUs or NGOs) Non-Government Organizations duly accredited by the DSWD", "The Local Social Welfare Development Office (LSWDO) shall include community-based services designed to facilitate social reintegration, prevent re-offending and make the child a productive member of the community.", and "If based on the assessment of social worker, it is in the best interest of the child to be released, the court shall immediately order the release of the child to his/her parents, guardians or nearest relatives." shared the same rank after obtaining similar weighted mean of 4.02. The respondents generally consider the implementation of RA 9344 as Effective, attaining a general weighted mean of 3.94.

According to Panganiban (2012) there is a policy study on the Partnership between the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Community Social Worker and Development (CSWD) on Juvenile Delinquency: Rehabilitation in Tayabas City undertaken primarily to determine the effects of diversion programs given by the SWD Officer for the juvenile offenders. Specifically, the analysis sought to answer the demographic

profile of the youth conflicted with the law in terms of their age, gender, case involved, and highest educational attainment. Aside from that, the study also sought to give an analysis of the diversion programs given to the youth offenders. The highest percentage of youth offender was garnered by those who belong to the age bracket of 7-9 years old and age bracket of 10-12 years old that registered as 25% of all the respondents. It shows that 7-9 years old and 10-12 years old have the highest percentage of being youth offender. Moreover, the researcher also found out that male is more prone to committing crimes as the researcher noticed that almost all the respondents are male. Statistics shows that the highest percentage of 9 or 75% of respondents have an educational background in grade school, the second to the highest has a percentage of 8.33%, those of whom have an educational background in high school and for those who have not enrolled and lacks education at all with the least percentage of 16.67%.

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Conclusion

The evaluation of the respondent on the factors that influence/affect the children to commit crimes at their young age did not elicited a strong agreement seemingly because of the felt need to review the existing law if not a need for a more effective and efficient implementation on the part of the government. A strict implementing rules and regulations in partnership with the local government and other concerned organization in the community may be of great help to initiate innovative intervention to mitigate and prevent juvenile delinquency therefore would decrease children in conflict with law.

The five group of respondents in this study posed a high level of awareness on the provisions of Republic Act (RA 9344). However mere awareness does not guarantee for an effective implementation of any law for that matter since it is affected by a lot of factors such as the processes of its implementation as well as harmony of its implementation among the implementers and other stakeholders. The result of this assessment which yielded an effective implementation of the above mentioned law rather than very effective rating is an indication that there are still some loopholes on the part of the implementers and other stakeholders on the processes of handling the problems concerning the children in conflict with the law. A thorough review of the processes and the law itself could be the solution to attain its desired goal.

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