Juvenile Delinquency, the General Theory of Crime, and ART Curriculum

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• Juveniles have been engaged in delinquent behavior for years now.
  • Juvenile delinquency is defined as “the violation of a law of the United States, committed by a person prior to his eighteenth birthday, which would have been a crime if committed by an adult; juvenile delinquency is generally thought of as misbehavior by children” (18 USCS § 5031).
  • Juveniles that have been arrested and adjudicated are often placed in a detention center, residential placement program, or are required to participate in a community-based program.
Aggression Replacement Training (ART) is proven to be effective in reducing recidivism rates.

The ART curriculum consists of three essential parts: skillstreaming, anger control, and moral reasoning (Amendola & Oliver, 2013 pg. 48).

This prospective study demonstrates how ART group therapy reduces recidivism rates amongst juvenile delinquents in placement at Adelphoi Village.

Juvenile delinquency can be explained by using Gottfredson and Hirschi’s General Theory of Crime which correlates levels of self-control with crime rates.

Although the theory assumes that levels of self-control remain constant throughout the life course, implementing Aggression Replacement Training (ART) can help increase levels of self-control within the individual; therefore, leading to lower rates of recidivism amongst this population.

**Introduction**
Youth that are chronically aggressive are characterized as having a “life history in which, from their early years on, aggression was frequently used, and used successfully by family, peers, media figures, and others constituting the youth’s real-world environment” (Goldstein, 1999, pg. 20).

Two forms of deviance; a product of personality disturbances or emotional conflict within the juvenile and a result of a deviant sub-culture where the juvenile learns deviant behaviors instead of law-abiding behaviors. (Matza & Sykes, 1961)

Juveniles often commit crimes for the “thrills” or “kicks”.

Push to reform problematic behavior into prosocial behavior as soon as it begins.

Delinquency can span from legally punishable behaviors such as felonies or misdemeanors such as theft and assault to socially unacceptable behaviors such as deviance, recklessness and sin (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).
Within the delinquent population, “the tendency to criminal behavior is a consequence of low self-control” (Wickert, 2019).

- According to research, “a lack of self-control occurs when parent’s do not adequately supervise their children, do not recognize deviant behavior in their children, or do not respond appropriately” (Wickert pg. 1, 2019).


- Level of self-control is established by the age of 7 or 8.
- As “self-control develops and increases over time during the first decade of life, so too does deviance decrease during the same time period” (Vazsonyi & Huang, 2010, pg. 245).
- The actions performed by individuals with little self-control are described to be “short-lived, immediately gratifying, easy, simple, and exciting” (Gibbs & Giever, 1995, pg. 232).
ART Curriculum to establish self-control

Although the theory states that an individual’s level of self-control is established by the age of 7 or 8, employing ART curriculum can help the individual achieve higher levels of self-control.

ART curriculum addresses the “socio-emotional” needs of juveniles.

- The core curriculum of ART includes skillstreaming, anger control, and moral reasoning.

This allows youth to “gain the capacity to make better choices and enhance their own insight into situations that may lead to negative outcomes” (Viglione, Amendola, & Oliver, 2015 pg. 37)
Group IV: Skill Alternatives to Aggression

1. Asking permission
2. Sharing something
3. Helping others
4. Negotiating
5. Using self-control
6. Standing up for your rights
7. Responding to teasing
8. Avoiding trouble with others
9. Keeping out of fights

**ART Curriculum**

- Skillstreaming focuses on “prosocial behavioral skills” (Amendola & Oliver, 2013 pg. 57).
- A skillstreaming set from Adelphoi is attached below (Adelphoi, 2012).
ART Curriculum

- Anger control training focuses on emotional, and coping skills.
- This training teaches what not to do in certain scenarios (Amendola & Oliver, 2013).
ART Curriculum

- Moral Reasoning training helps youth to develop a conventional value system.
- This training steers the youth away from more egocentric, self-serving behaviors.
- They learn “justice, fairness, and become concerned with the needs and rights of others” (Goldstein & Glick, 1994, pg. 11)
- An example of a moral reasoning scenario is provided on the next slide.
Alonzo's Problem Situation

Alonzo is walking along a side street with his friend Rodney. Rodney stops in front of a beautiful new sports car. Rodney looks inside and then says excitedly, “Look! The keys are still in this thing! Let’s see what it can do! Come on, let’s go!”

What should Alonzo say or do?

- Should Alonzo try to persuade Rodney not to steal the car? (circle one)
  - should persuade
  - should let steal
  - can’t decide

- What if Rodney tells Alonzo that stealing a car is no big deal, that plenty of his friends do it all the time? Then what should Alonzo do? (circle one)
  - should persuade
  - should let steal
  - can’t decide
ART and a General Theory of Crime

Each component of the ART curriculum works on increasing levels of self-control.

This potentially could enforce higher levels of self-control that the child may not have received through their parents.

“Skillstreaming targets behavior, anger control training focuses on emotions, and moral reasoning is a cognitive intervention” (Amendola & Oliver, 2010, pg. 48).

By participating in this training, the juvenile can increase their levels of self-control, and refrain from deviance and crime.
A Prospective Study

The data for this research study was collected by official records from Adelphoi Village. Adelphoi Village is a court ordered juvenile placement facility.

- These juvenile delinquents were sent to Adelphoi village for committing various crimes.

The pre-test and post-test scores were evaluated to test the effectiveness of ART curriculum on recidivism rates.

It was found that 82% of the ART participants did not recidivate.

This is a preliminary look using frequency and descriptive statistics.
Methods

• The dataset used for this study was for youth in their community-based programs within two counties in Pennsylvania.
  • Prior to the start of the ART cycle, the youth were each given a pre-test to evaluate their initial levels of aggression control.
  • After the cycle finished, the youth were given a post-test to evaluate their levels of aggression control after receiving the training.
  • Adelphoi gets notified if the juvenile had gotten arrested, violated probation, or had been sentenced to complete another placement program (Adelphoi, 2018).
• Frequency and Descriptive statistics were used to find preliminary results.
The question being researched is if there is a relationship between aggression replacement training (ART) completion, partial completion, and recidivism.

The null hypothesis is that there is no difference between ART completion, partial completion, and recidivism.

The alternative hypothesis is that there is a difference between ART completion, partial completion, and recidivism.

It is expected that ART will reduce recidivism rates amongst juvenile offenders.
The sample of the study was 40 people aged 12-20.

This data was collected from the 2018 year.

These individuals visited a community-based treatment facility in Butler or Washington County, Pennsylvania.

Out of the 40 participants, 91% had a successful discharge from the program.

After being discharged, 82% of the participants remained out of care.
Variables

The dependent variable of the study is recidivism.

- Recidivism is conceptualized as if a client gets arrested or adjudicated for a crime after release.

The first independent variable is ART completion.

- ART completion is conceptualized as if a client had fully completed the requirements of the ART program.

The second independent variable is partial ART completion.

- This is conceptualized as if a client partially completes the requirements of the ART program.
The initial step in the research process is selecting and defining the variables.
• The dependent and independent variables are conceptualized and operationalized.

The second step is selecting the sample. To choose participants, there must be a target population.
• The target population of this study is adjudicated juvenile delinquents in community-based programs through Adelphi Village.

The manager of clinical services was contacted in order to retrieve their records.
• Records indicate age, race/ethnicity, pre-test and post-test scores, and if the juvenile recidivated.
• The pre-test and post-test scores are then compared to see if their scores have improved.

Once the client is released, Adelphi keeps track of them for a year.
## Recidivism Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ART 2018 OUTCOMES DATA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Butler</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male <strong>1</strong> Age 14 1 Positive Discharge 17 Total Discharge 19 Remained out of Care 94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 8 Age 15 4 Positive Discharge 17 Total Discharge 19 Remained out of Care 94%</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 5</td>
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<td>17 3</td>
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<td>18 5</td>
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<td>19 2</td>
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*One Male participated twice. Once when 15 and once when 16.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Washington</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male 16 Age 12 1 Positive Discharge 18 Total Discharge 20 Remained out of Care 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 4 Age 13 2 Positive Discharge 18 Total Discharge 20 Remained out of Care 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 3</td>
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<td>16 6</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Total</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male 28 Age 12 1 Positive Discharge 35 Total Discharge 39 Remained out of Care 83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 12 Age 13 2 Positive Discharge 35 Total Discharge 39 Remained out of Care 83%</td>
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<td>14 2</td>
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Limitations

- the ART cycle is not always utilized at Adelphoi.
- Adelphoi was the only organization utilized.
- Adelphoi only will track released juveniles for a year.
- The data from Adelphoi only accounted for the year 2018.
- The juveniles can lie about their answers.
- There is no way to perfectly test self-control.
Implications for Future Research

Explore the data of other placement institutions.

This could make the data more generalizable.

Further research could also add to ART curriculum.

If there are common trends in offenses being committed after completing the training, there could be another section added to the training to prevent those types of offenses.
Policy Recommendations

At the most basic level, to decrease juvenile delinquency parental figures must monitor their child and identify, as well as, correct their child’s bad behavior.

However, if the youth did not have proper parental management and developed lower self-control, then ART training should be employed.

Their evaluation found that “ART is effective and promotes skills acquisition and performance, improves anger control, decreases the frequency of acting-out behaviors, and increases the frequency of constructive and prosocial behaviors” (Goldstein & Glick, 1994, pgs. 24-25).
Conclusion

Juvenile delinquency continues to be an issue today.

At any given time, there are nearly 60,000 youth in juvenile detention in the United States ("America's Addiction to Juvenile Incarceration: State by State")

There is a relationship between ART training and higher levels of self-control based on empirical evidence within the pre-tests and post-tests given before and after the training.

Applying the ART curriculum in the lives of juvenile offenders can reduce their likelihood of reoffending.
References

• 18 USCS § 5031

• Adelphoi (2012). *Adelphoi aggression replacement training manual.*

• Adelphoi (2018). *ART dataset for pre-test and post-test scores.*


References


References


References


References
