THE BEAT: BEHAVIORAL CHANGE IN JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER ART WORKSHOPS
By CAITLIN URIE

This paper addresses the experience of juvenile participation in the Beat Within detention center writing workshops and the resulting publication. I hypothesize that juvenile participation in Beat Within workshops causes a change in behavior and interpersonal understanding of self-identity and culture. Data will be collected through an evaluative ethnography triangulated with ethnographic research at the Beat Within office, the distribution of surveys to correctional officers, and interviews with workshop facilitators. This paper will address the broader questions availing this research question regarding Juvenile Halls and their inhabitants, social perceptions of Deviant youth and public policy, followed by a review of literature on existing creative social programs inside of institutions. Social conceptions of incarcerated youth perpetuate increasingly harsh legislation causing a shift from correctional facilities as rehabilitative centers to primarily punitive institutions and it is vital to assess the social structure inside of which this phenomenon exists. A theoretical discussion will be shaped by Durkheim’s study on social deviance and suicide, which led him to the idea that individuals are a reflection of the society in which they live. He also evaluated the effects of the individualist organic society and the prevalence of alienation. In turn, I hypothesize that the breaking down of these barriers should contribute to a change in behavior on behalf of participating juveniles. I also theorize this program to be a contributing factor in the destigmatization of youth as is called for in Shafioe’s theory on labeling as perpetuating deviant behavior through constant negative reinforcement.

Section 1: Introduction

Problem

“It is an illusion to try to use prison to control crime” (Ross & Richards, 2003, 20).

This case study investigates a nonprofit organization called The Beat Within, which hosts writing workshops inside of juvenile detention centers. The Beat facilitates writing through prompts and free writing exercises as well as drawing in a number of facilities primarily in Northern California but also Arizona. The workshops result in a publication of the juvenile's poetry, stories, writings, and drawings coupled with responses from Beat staff, which is in turn distributed throughout the community to judges, probation officers, teachers, and family members.

From 1980 to 2000 the number of people in prison increased 300% from 330 thousand to over 1.3 million (Ross and Richards, 2003) and the juvenile
population continues to grow relative
(U.S. Department of Justice). Although
reports may state that the numbers of
juveniles in custody has begun to drop
this is largely due to the rising number of
juveniles being charged and later held as
adults (Ross & Richards, 2003). According
to the number of incarcerated
persons and rising rates of recidivism it
appears that our current system is se-
verely ineffective. Van Dine, Dinitiz,
and Conrad (Ross & Richards, 2003) did
a study following the implementation of
mandatory minimums to subdue crime
and found that a 5 year minimum would
only decrease crime by 4%; yet, our
public policy justice officials continue to
establish new and increasingly aggres-
sive legislation to appease the masses--
forfeiting potential and overlooking stark
 criminological reports and critiques of
current circumstances (Ross & Richards,
2003).

Legislation and social structures,
as cultural constructs, engage in a dialec-
tic relationship with the societies which
they govern. They are a result of com-
mon understandings and experiences
which mediate how an individual or
group thereof comes to understand the
world around them and find solace in the
resulting order and assumption of norms
or status quos. Under our current sys-
tem, legislation and cultural stigmati-
tions of criminal social groups do not
accurately reflect reality, nor do they
competently address current problem
areas regarding recidivism and rising
poverty and crime rates; Conversely,
policy appears to represent a public ob-
session with illusions of safety and as-
sumed moral norms exacerbated by the
media, lobbyist groups, and political de-
sires for constituent support.

Many authors have studied the
area of criminology, cultural criminol-
yogy, and done studies on social pro-
grams, crime prevention, most of which
focus on social cohesion and the reor-
ganization of community implying that
criminalization and incarceration are in
part due to the external influences of so-
ciety and seek to manifest idioms of cul-
tural taboos. Shaftoe’s (2006) study on
crime prevention advocated an increase
in both social awareness and communal
accountability to create “stake” for the
inmate upon reentry. Hartjen’s (1974)
study on criminalization discusses the
perspective of those opposed to “treat-
ing” people in prison claiming it is a de-
territor; however, he also discusses that
criminality is an antisocial behavior and
requires rehabilitative socialization.

Another study done by Ross & Richards
(2003) discusses crime myths and how
they, along with stereotypes and political
propaganda, are perpetuated. He claims
these crime myths perpetuate fear and
cultural stigmatization and in effect the
problem is magnified, paralyzing our
reflexive aptitude, and negating our abil-
ity to see a viable alternative outside of
the current system.

Purpose of the Study

The Beat within hopes to elicit a
change in behavior and enhance critical
communication skills through facilitat-
ing writing workshops which subse-
quently appear in the Beat Within publi-
cation; This study will address whether
the Beat is meeting these goals by look-
ing for a relationship between juvenile
participation in the Beat Within work-
shops and a resulting change in behav-
ior. According to the Beat Within mis-
sion statement and personal goals of
staff members, participation in this

Culture Society & Praxis
workshop is geared towards creating an increased sense of community, which according to social theories such as labeling and social control (Shaftoe, 2006) should elicit a change in behavior (the dependent variable). The resulting publication with responses from Beat staff should also contribute to a sense of shared experience socially constructed through an exchange of ideas as is discussed by Benedict Anderson (1991) in *Imagined Communities*. This research has been conducted at the nominal level asking participants to determine among a variety of yes or no, more or less, and better or worse choices furthered by qualitative self-explanations.

The research methodology designed to evaluate this program was a triangulated methodology including ethnographic research at the Beat office in San Francisco, the distribution of surveys to correctional officers in a participating juvenile hall collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, and a content analysis of the Beat Within magazine. The majority of this research has been conducted at the nominal level asking participants to determine among a variety of yes or no, more or less, and better or worse choices as well as qualitative self-explanations. This methodology was chosen because it allows for a more extensive grasp of the program itself and resulting publication; however, this methodology is also most effectual as the researcher sought to rule out bias present in surveying only one party, or primarily those directly affected by the results or with stake in the outcome thereof. There are many disadvantages to the collection of data in this manner though, the primary one being that this topic is largely intangible and depends upon the perceptions of others who are involved and self-report, which are largely influenced by personal stake and bias.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this study a change in behavior is defined as a perceived shift in attitude or socialization as reported by corrections officers. Participation means that a juvenile attended at least one Beat workshop and contributed at least one piece to the publication. Recidivism is used in reference to any juvenile returning to Juvenile Hall without merit to the reason or degree of offence. Most importantly the researcher uses criminal, deviant, and delinquency interchangeably to refer to one who engages in and is in turn apprehended for conduct deemed illegal or socially undesirable without bearing on the degree or frequency of offence.

**Delimitations and Limitations**

Although this case study is largely linked to incarceration rates and public policy, the researcher will not give an in depth analysis of these nor make suggestions or pose alternatives to current policies. Instead the researcher draws from existing literature on policies as cultural constructs depicting norms, and contrastingly taboos, to discuss the social implications of the problem of juvenile incarceration and in effect, Beat Within workshops. Further, despite the personal, demographic, and familial commonalities among juveniles participating and content analysis of their writing, the researcher will not discuss causes of deviant behavior or later influences of criminal relapse upon reentry despite the relevance of this to the pro-
gram's efficacy. These topics remain outside the scope of this research and the researcher suggests more intimate and longitudinal studies to assess long-term effects of participation in correctional facility social programs especially in regard to criminal behavior, causes, and reentry conduct.

Assumptions

Although deviance is not a mono-causal occurrence in this study it is assumed that any reported change in behavior is reported both truthfully and as a result of participation in Beat workshops. It is also assumed that the study accurately measured through surveys and informal interviews the changes in behavior as intended. Another assumption is that during ethnographic research, the days studied were indicative of the environment and social interactions as they typically are. In effect, it was assumed that the ethnographic research is representative of the Beat Within office. The facility surveyed is also assumed to be indicative of the sentiment from other facilities where the Beat Within hosts workshops.

Importance of the Study

Studies such as these are important because they discuss the social perspectives and cultural interpretations of crime, punishment, and rehabilitation and the disjunct between these perspectives and future prospects as well as reality. 

Hypotheses

H1: Corrections officers will report a perceived change in behavior among juveniles who participate in the Beat Within workshops.

Summary

To summarize, this study is a triangulated, non-directional, case study evaluating juvenile participation in a writing workshop hosted by a nonprofit organization, which results in a publication of their writing. The researcher hypothesizes that surveys distributed to corrections officers inside of a host facility will report an observed change in behavior as defined by a perceived change in attitude. This study is important as a component for the much needed assessment of how correctional these facilities actually are and to address whether social programs are in fact beneficial, meeting their goals, and effectively serving a marginalized population despite
spikes in incarceration and recidivism rates.

The purpose of this study is to determine if The Beat Within is meeting its goals and objectives. The independent and dependent variables for this study are participation in Beat Within workshops and a change in behavior as perceived by corrections officers and Beat Within representatives. The dependent variable, change in behavior, will vary depending on the effectiveness of the independent variable, participation in the Beat Within workshops. Data is collected on the perceptions of correctional officers as reported on surveys distributed to correctional officers working in a juvenile detention center which hosts Beat Within workshops. The independent variable will be measured as attendance in one or more Beat Within workshop. Both variables are measured at the nominal level. The research design used in this study is an evaluative ethnography comprised of surveys, content analysis, and participant observation. This design was selected, because this is the most effective methodology to understand the efficacy of the Beat Within programs. According to Leedy (2005, p. 137), the advantages of this design are the ability to gain an understanding and insight to a particular culture (in this case that of a social service within a state correctional institution catering to minors in California) that may not be available otherwise. Ethnography allows the researcher to establish rapport with informants, which is especially vital in the instance of such an intimate sharing of ideas, feelings, and experiences, while surveys allow for an anonymous self-report on how participants are perceived, and a content analysis for how participants perceive and portray themselves.

Section 2: Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine if The Beat Within is meeting its goals and objectives. The independent and dependent variables for this study are participation in Beat Within workshops and a change in behavior as perceived by corrections officers and Beat Within representatives. The dependent variable, change in behavior, will vary depending on the effectiveness of the independent variable, participation in the Beat Within workshops. Data is collected on the perceptions of correctional officers as reported on surveys distributed to correctional officers working in a juvenile detention center which hosts Beat Within workshops. The independent variable will be measured as attendance in one or more Beat Within workshop. Both variables are measured at the nominal level. The research design used in this study is an evaluative ethnography comprised of surveys, content analysis, and participant observation. This design was selected, because this is the most effective methodology to understand the efficacy of the Beat Within programs. According to Leedy (2005, p. 137), the advantages of this design are the ability to gain an understanding and insight to a particular culture (in this case that of a social service within a state correctional institution catering to minors in California) that may not be available otherwise. Ethnography allows the researcher to establish rapport with informants, which is especially vital in the instance of such an intimate sharing of ideas, feelings, and experiences, while surveys allow for an anonymous self-report on how participants are perceived, and a content analysis for how participants perceive and portray themselves.

The Data and Treatment of the Data

Leedy (2005) suggests the format used in this section.

The Data

The research is of two kinds: quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data is on one kind: primary data. There is one category of primary data.
The qualitative research data is of one kind: primary data. There is one category of primary data.

Quantitative Data

The primary data.

The response by correctional officers at Juvenile Detention facilities to questions on the survey developed for this study comprise one type of primary data.

Standards of Acceptability of Admissibility of the Data

Only the survey constructed for this study was used in data collection.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

This research study uses one self-report inventory, a survey for data gathering (see Appendix A).

The Survey

In order to gather information and perceptions from the corrections officers, the principle investigator developed a survey for data collection. The survey is comprised of 11 questions and statements appropriate for persons with Basic English reading level of 8.2 and comprehensive skills (see Appendix A). The survey asks respondents to answer a series of questions on their observations of juveniles who participate in Beat Within workshops compared with juveniles who do not. There are questions both of change in behavior, attitude, and changes in socialization. Following these questions are further qualifiers to determine if change is generally considered good, or if more social, does this also mean causing less trouble. The last questions on the interview ask for the respondent's opinion on creative programs as rehabilitative and as a positive addition to this facility.

Specific treatment of the data for the research problem

Research Problem

This study seeks to determine the efficacy of the Beat Within writing workshops as a contributing factor in behavioral change and social reintegration for juveniles in detention centers.

Hypothesis: Correctional officers will report a positive change in behavior among juveniles who participate in Beat Within workshops.

The Data Needed

The data needed for the solving of the research problems are (a) the responses from correctional officers on the survey, (b) content analysis of the Beat Within magazine, and (c) data from participant observation research at program headquarters to better understand the program and access publication.

The Location of the Data

The responses were collected on surveys sent by U.S. mail to and from the participating juvenile hall in Alameda County. The data is stored in the office of Dr. Carlos, Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, 100 Campus Center, 86C, Seaside, CA 93955.
The Means of Obtaining Data

The researcher contacted the superintendent of the Alameda County juvenile hall and discussed the research goal and purpose of the research as well as need. The superintendent requested to screen the survey but otherwise agreed. In effect a package containing 125 surveys, a return addressed and pre-stamped envelope for completed surveys, and a cover letter reiterating the study of the purpose and expressing appreciation for participation (see Appendix B), was sent to the juvenile hall care of the superintendent, Ron Johnson.

The Treatment of the Data

The Methods used to Screen the Data

The principle investigator screened the completed surveys returned by the respondents to eliminate those documents where the respondent had provided more than one answer to a question.

The Analysis Process

Part 1. The survey data is treated in one way. The relationship between the two variables will be shown using the frequencies or relative frequencies of the dependent variable for each value of the independent variable.

Research Method

Quantitative Sample

The researcher took a purposive sample of Corrections Officers comprised of both men and women who were full-time employees of the Alameda County detention center. No demographic identifying traits were used to select the sample.

Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data was collected using a survey developed for this study. A survey about perceptions of juvenile participation in Beat Within Workshops were mailed to the Juvenile correctional facility for Alameda County after consent to participate was given by the superintendent of this facility. An envelope containing surveys for each correctional officer was mailed to the participating institution and included self-addressed stamped envelopes to return the surveys in. The number of surveys sent was 125. Each institution received a cover letter explaining the purpose of this study and asking correctional officers to volunteer to complete a survey (see Appendix B).

Qualitative Data

The primary data

Observations from participant observation ethnographic study as well as observations from a content analysis of the Beat Within magazine comprise the primary data.

Standards of Acceptability of Admissibility of the Data

Only observations made directly by the researcher are included as data.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

This research study did not require the use of any instruments.

The Survey
In order to collect data from a sample of Beat Within employees, the principle investigator worked Fridays throughout the semester in the Beat Within office in San Francisco. The collection occurred over the course of 12 workdays with excursions for lunch and coffee with individual employees. To gather information pertaining to the study the researcher asked questions regarding background, interest in work, and experiences.

Specific treatment of the data for the research problem

Research Problem

This study seeks to determine the efficacy of the Beat Within art workshops as a contributing factor in behavioral change.

Hypothesis: Correctional officers will report a positive change in behavior among juveniles who participate in the Beat Within art workshops.

The Data Needed

The data needed for the solving of the research problems are a) data collected in the office during participant observation research, and b) content analysis of the Beat Within magazine.

The Location of the Data

The data from ethnography was collected at the Beat Within office at 275 9th St in San Francisco. The field notes were developed at the Beat Within office located at 275 9th St. in San Francisco.

The content analysis was done at the researchers home in Santa Cruz.

The Means of Obtaining the Data

A sample of convenience was selected from the Beat Within office comprised of those employees who were willing to converse and those who were closest in proximity to my workspace throughout the day. The principle investigator conducted informal interviews during normal business hours and observed the employees at the Beat Within office during the hours of 10 to 5 o’clock. The researcher also obtained the magazines necessary for content analysis from the Beat Within office and evaluated these at home.

The Treatment of the Data

The Method used to Screen the Data

The principle investigator screened the data by including all data disclosed in conversation during ethnographic research as applied to study for each subject. The principle investigator screened the observation data by including all field notes developed during the observation of the Beat Within office and program.

The Analysis Process

Part 1. The survey data is treated in two ways. The field note data is treated in one way. The observations are categorized according to specifications (how many employees previously incarcerated. How often gang references transcribed). The content analysis data is treated in one way. The observations are categorized according to specification (expression of remorse, change, identity, gang or street references).
Research Methods

*Qualitative Sample*

The sample of convenience, Beat Within employees, included in this study were all of the employees that were present on days when research was conducted. The researcher primarily had rapport with two employees, yet engaged with other employee informants when possible. The sample consists only of males, however, not due to sampling bias but because the staff consisted only of males.

*Qualitative Data Collection*

Qualitative data was collected using observation. For a period of 12 weeks on Fridays the researcher volunteered at the Beat Within headquarters, which is located at 275 9th St. in San Francisco for the day. The researcher was transcribing the juvenile writing from workshops the day prior into the computer, sometimes writing responses. There was not an allocated area for volunteers so the primary investigator was able to move throughout the day to different workstations, which allowed for interactions with many people. The researcher worked from 10 o’clock in the morning until the afternoon when done transcribing with a break around noon during which time she usually went for a walk with a coworker to get a cup of coffee.
Section 3: Results

Chart 1

*Observed Attitude Change as a result of participation in Beat Within workshops*

The results above indicate that more than half of the respondents reported that they observed a change in attitude as a result of participation in the Beat Within workshops.
Chart 2

*Observed attitude changes reported to be more or less positive*

Chart 2 illustrates that of those who reported an observed change in attitude, 93% of them found this change to be a more positive attitude.
Table 1

Frequency Cross Tabulation of observed change in behavior and observed differences between contributors and non-contributors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed difference between contributors and Non-Contributors</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Change as a Result of Participation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of people observed that there is both attitude change and an observable difference among those who contribute to the publication and those who do not contribute to the publication.
Chart 3

*Do participants receive more letters, phone calls, or visits?*

Chart 3 illustrates that of those surveyed 71% believe that Beat Within participants associate with people outside of the institution more.
Table 2

*Correlation between a change in attitude and socialization*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Change as a Result of Participation</th>
<th>Observing differences between contributors and Non-contributors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Resulting Sociability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Resulting Sociability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this we may conclude that nearly half of the respondents agree that there is a difference between those who contribute and those who do not, which often manifests in a change in attitude and may be observed in increased sociability.
Chart 4

*Juveniles who participate in Beat workshops cause less trouble*

This chart shows that more than half of contributors make less trouble as a result of participating in the Beat workshops as opposed to those who do not.
According to Chart 5, opinions on workshops as rehabilitative are not especially significant: one view does not appear to be significantly more common than the other.
Section 4: Analysis

Interpretation

My hypothesis, that corrections officers would report a perceived change in behavior among juveniles who participate in the Beat Within workshops, was supported as more than half of the respondents reported that they observed a change in juvenile's attitudes as a result of participation; however, much more than this may be drawn from the results listed prior. Of the respondents who reported an observed change, 93% of them observed this change to be positive. 59 people (68%) reported that participants became more social. Of these, 41 (69%) also viewed participants as having a shift in attitude and observed a difference between contributors and non-contributors. From this we may conclude that nearly half of the respondents agree that there is a difference between those who contribute and those who do not, which manifests in a change in attitude and may be observed in increased sociability. Another implication of these results is that greater than half of those surveyed (69%) agree that there is a change in attitude, which may be observed in correlation to increased sociability. This shows that the majority of correctional officers also observed a change in attitude, which also displays a difference within the group among those that do contribute as opposed to those that don't. Although there was no qualitative data collected in this area, I wonder if the circumstances or benefits of attending the workshop cause this differential or if it is due to the intimate sharing of writing through the publication to a wider outside population as opposed to a refusal to move to the intra-personal with pieces composed. A large majority of those surveyed also reported that participants cause less trouble than those that do not participate. However, it is not conclusive that this is a result of the Beat Within workshops, as it could be that those who are interested in making a change, or participating in positive activities are already causing less trouble or would despite participation. Although these are plausible reasons for these findings, it remains that this is a commonality among participants in Beat workshops, and this is significant alone regardless of cause.

Responses to increased communication with the outside among participants showed that 71% of participants were perceived to receive more contact from the outside world. From this we may infer one of four conclusions, that a.) Beat Within participants are more social, b.) That the Beat Within creates an imagined community through institutional walls, c.) That Beat participants are more closely affiliated with either family, friends, or other social networks outside of jail which encourages them to participate or allows them to feel more positive and comfortable in participating, or that d.) Participants are more closely linked with the community, which motivates them to participate so they may be published and read by family, friends, or advocates. This also illustrates that letters are most likely the most common form of communication, touching on the difficulties of communication through institution barriers due to expensive collect calls, and the remoteness of most correctional facilities and resulting difficulty in arranging visits.

In response to creative workshops as rehabilitative the majority reported either no or no answer leaving the 46% who answered yes the majority to negative or ambiguous answers. I feel this is indicative of the controversy on this area, however, may also lend to the
honesty of answers despite bias of program initiatives as a whole. It is interesting to have many aspects be reported in such a positive light; yet reflective of common contemporary understandings of rehabilitation and corrections, the idea of social programs being creative is not commonly accepted.

These results correspond with the existing literature, which advocates educational and creative programs inside of institutions as mobilizing activities. These results also, however, correspond with existing mores that oppose social programs inside of institutions as rehabilitative reflecting the contemporary ideology assigning diagnoses to the individual. Although the respondents agree with the literature previously cited that participation does correspond with a more positive attitude and observed change in behavior-most likely due to an internal shift of perspective, self-worth, or restructure of self-identity as discussed by many scholars (e.g. Charles Terry), the results seem equally ambiguous in regard to a definitive opinion towards the program as a whole.

Along the lines of findings by Veroff (2002) and Heritage (2004), participation in creative classes or workshops may allow for increased sociability. As some scholars found, (e.g. Merriam, 1998), this may be a result of an increased sense of containment for feelings of anxiety and the sharing of intimate expression diminishing a sense of extreme isolation and desperation. Or, this increased socialization may be due to, as found by Adams (2000), an increased sense of purpose and community or the mediation of thoughts and ideas by an intermediary. The writing and in turn publication may in fact be the instigating force in from inter-personal to intra-personal and in turn create a change in behavior. However, in accord with those who become less social, perhaps this is a result of refraining from participating in labeling and endorsing negative reinforcement; in light of this framing, less sociability may prove to be more substantial and more common among those who make lasting changes in behavior. Despite a lack of knowledge in regard to reasons why this works, as corresponds with the literature and the social cohesion provided in Shaftoe and Durkheim's theoretical propositions for future prospects in dismantling anomie and labeling, does appear to be accurate.

**Study Limitations**

The reasoning for the change in behavior process remains to be unclear and pivotal to the understanding of program participation as a motivating factor. In effect, the data regarding the efficacy must now be further addressed to better understand why this is effective and whether the change in behavior is permanent or semi permanent—as well as the effects of this change in behavior as a result of environment, bureaucracy, or remorse. The study shows that participants exhibit a marked change in behavior and the majority have observed this. However, it must also be addressed the extent to which this change is an interpersonal change as a result of participating or if this is in fact a personal choice which has been made by many who choose to participate in available programs to further the betterment process already present prior to Beat Within engagements. This could not be addressed in this study as it is outside the scope, yet to fully understand the effects of the Beat Within workshops this component is a necessary piece in light of the reported change in behavior. Another
limiting factor in this study was the amount of subjectivity involved in the surveying and gathering of data. A change in behavior reported as more or less positive allows for much interpretation and variance among persons as to what is considered to be positive. The study was also conducted over a short period of time and could not gather data sufficient to address possible long-term effects or understandings of the program benefits.

Summary

Results supported my hypothesis as a perceived change in behavior among juveniles who participated in the Beat Within workshops was reported. There was also a positive correlation between an observed change in behavior and sociability especially in regard to those juveniles who contributed pieces to be published. These findings correlate with studies done previously, which address the positive outcomes of educational and creative workshops or social programs inside of institutions inter-personally as well as the social benefits of these programs for inmates intra-personally.

Section 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study is to determine if The Beat Within is meeting its goals and objectives. The independent and dependent variables for this study are participation in Beat Within workshops and a change in behavior as perceived by corrections officers and Beat Within representatives. The Beat within hopes to elicit a change in behavior and critical communication skills—also often closely related to projected and internal cultural identity. These are the variables I seek to link: Participation in the Beat Within workshops and a resulting change in behavior. Participation is the independent variable because according to the Beat Within mission statement and personal goals of staff this is alleged to cause an increased sense of community, which according to social theories such as labeling and social control (Shaftoe, 2006) should elicit a change in behavior (the dependent variable). This research has been conducted at the nominal level asking participants to determine among a variety of yes or no, more or less, and better or worse choices as well as qualitative self-explanations.

This study is significant to assess whether the Beat Within is meeting its goals as well as to contribute to the existing body of knowledge; however, in a broader sense this study is significant to address the potential need for a political, legislative, and social reevaluation of current justice system structure and procedures in determining the efficacy of a social program inside of juvenile halls. An iconoclastic look at current policy is important, as is an evaluation of current services rendered. An example of this is as follows in a case study of a humanist service inside a correctional facility. Studies such as this will also assist in determining if there is a more productive (financially, socially, and in regard to criminal rehabilitation) approach to these contemporary social needs or a deficiency thereof.

Studies such as these are important because they discuss the social perspectives and cultural interpretations of crime, punishment, and rehabilitation and the disjoint between these perspective and future prospects as well as reality. Although society desires that lawbreakers enter correction facilities to leave law abiders, the social influences
creating public policy and pushing legislative advancements do not address the needs or means of the juvenile population nor does this in effect appease the moral masses.

I did achieve the results hypothesized. There was a correlation between participation in the Beat Within program and a change in behavior as reported by correctional officers surveyed. I also received the results I had expected in regard to increased sociability of juveniles who participate in workshops. In accordance with the theoretical framework used I anticipated the reported change in behavior as according to Durkheim and Shaftoe, social cohesion is an antithesis of alienation, stigmatization, and other paralyzing effects of labeling inside of this contemporary individualistic organic society in which we live.

Similar to the results found during a study in Pinochet, Chile by Adams (2000), the introduction of positive role models facilitating participatory arts and the exchange of ideas and experiences appears to have if not created significantly contributed to an observed change in behavior. Similarly, as was found by Veroff (2002), a workshop or class for the creation of a project can move an individual from an inter-personal struggle to relating on a more intimate level and with greater critical thought and compassion. This activity could assist in the breaking down of social and personal barriers, in this instance such mediators as deviant culture, fear, danger, incarceration, and excessive amounts of stress, desperation, and isolation, similar to the experiences of the Inuit children in Veroff’s study.

The researcher suggests in future studies that they be on a more longitudinal basis and on a larger and more representative scale. A more longitudinal study may also be able to assess long-term effects of participation and consistency of change, which would be valuable. A suggestion in enhancing the validity of the survey would be to use an interval scale measuring degrees of agreement instead of a more nominal black and white approach as was used here. For future studies the researcher also suggests using a pre- and post-test model addressed directly to the youth involved and doing juvenile participation during the workshop to gain a better perspective on how participation is determined, and other factors influencing the decision to participate.

In conclusion, this study has reflected that there is an observed change in juveniles who participate in Beat Within workshops, which is predominantly a more positive change. According to the theoretical framework used here it does appear that labeling and stigmatization thereof could be minimized through the use of improving social cohesion and allowing for an alternative more positive reinforcement. There are many factors in juvenile delinquency and deviance is a trait of society, which will sustain itself; however, our reactions to these phenomena may be adjusted to better meet the needs of the individuals as well as fearful communities affected.
Works Cited


