

**Peer Court**

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### **Abstract**

Peer Court is a therapeutic program for youths who have been charged with an offense for the first time. Consequently, a teen court is majorly a diversionary program based on the concept of serving non-chronic offenders and restoring justice. There are multiple studies of teen Court evaluation that majorly suggest an excellent examination of various elements such as sanctions, which articulates how peer Court operates based on the participation criteria and referral sources. The current systematic review aimed at providing a clear, comprehensive review of the research study about Teen Court evaluation by programming different processes and components and synthesizing the correct evaluation analysis. To achieve an accurate evaluation research study, the authors opted to encompass a measurement tool to assess systematic reviews (AMSTAR) and closely related words to search 13 databases from relevant sources such as dissertations, thesis statements, blogs, and articles extra content from book chapters. Nonetheless, exclusion and inclusion criteria were also incorporated to evaluate each preferred document used. The findings depict that the referral sources used vary across each document. 30 studies displayed recidivism rates, besides the correct measurement and definition were not correctly identified. After the research study, there has been a slight difference in the program participation criteria, which suggested many who got immediate assistance from the Peer Court. In contrast, other participation criteria programs indicate that a significant number of youth face school disciplinary measures. However, additional studies are required to carry out research on Peer courts and draw rigorous conclusions about the possible results of Peer courts.

**Keywords** Recidivism, Peer Court, AMSTAR, and Diversion

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## **Peer Court**

### **Introduction**

Peer pressure is the root factor leading to a significant number of youths committing an offense. Consequently, in the United States, it is evident that per year a substantial number of children in the age of 18 usually get into the peer Justice system due to commuting or violation of the fundamental rules of the state. Statistically, in 2011 about 1.4 million youth got arrested due to various crimes and offenses. As a result, a good number of these peers get involved in the traditional juvenile justice system in which they face the repercussions which might result in delinquency. When these peers are arrested with an offense, they are left with no option but to wait for sentencing and hearing based on the Juvenile Court, which can decide to conduct a sentencing hearing that pertains to the offense committed by the youths' peers. Peer Court is supervised by a judge and other volunteers and peer defendants who play a fundamental role in the judicial system. The district attorney acts as the supervisor of the Teen court with other jurors and public defenders. The whole team is imperative because they play a vital role and task in administering justice. The Youth Court was established to allow the peers to get adequate practical experience in the Juvenile Justice System. Also, it aims to reinforce correctional facilities to teenagers who have committed crimes and violated the state's rules. In that case, the purpose and goal of the existing systematic review were to give a clear, complete analysis of the research study about Teen Court evaluation by programming different processes and components and synthesizing the correct evaluation analysis.

### **Overview**

Youth courts aim at providing an alternative approach in the Juvenile Court in which the offenders are allowed to experience life in these Juvenile Courts. Different programs are offered

to provide educational experience based on the legal system, mainly on those volunteers who voluntarily accept participating in these programs. The Juvenile Courts provide a framework that assists the Peer Justice agencies in enhancing and establishing juvenile Courts as an alternative channel that can be used to respond to different crimes committed in the communities. A significant number of youths commit multiple crimes, which results in a significant challenge in the Judicial system and impacts negatively on the individual teen, friends and family members, and the community at large (Bouchard & Wong, 2017). The related crimes and violations of rules by these defendants encompass many drug abuse problems, driving under alcohol. These problems negatively impact traffic safety. According to the traffic agencies, there has been an increase in alcohol and drug abuse-related fatalities, which has become a significant challenge in our current context. The fatalities involved young peers ranging from the age of 14-25. Over the past few years, there has been an increase in youths' invoicing in drug and alcohol use, leading to increased highway crashes.

However, the government is on the look to ensure that that this young generation is equipped with proper education that can help them to mitigate their behaviors; also the government has founded various programs that engage the youths, which helps them to reduce their possible risk of getting victimization when allowed to participate in multiple activities in the community. By doing this, we are confident that the rate of crimes will typically decrease, leading to a peaceful and conducive environment free from any insecurity reasons. These youths usually engage in these crime-related cases during adolescence (Bouchard & Wong, 2017). During this time, these young people usually develop different and new habits, skills, and other unpleasant attitudes, which gives them the momentum to commit these crimes. During this stage, it is vital for parents and the community to build a great outcome by shaping these young people

into becoming great people in the current society. Many researchers argue that the adolescence stage is the Optimum level in which many young people begin to think that they have the authority to make their own decisions in invoicing themselves in dangerous practices such as engaging in the use of illicit drugs and other related practices related to delinquency. In other words, the Juvenile Courts are imperative in our current context because they provide an appropriate mechanism that can be used to hold teens offenders reliable and accountable and aims at educating them on the legal system, civic organizations, and other social programs throughout.

### **Evidence of the Programs**

Stickle and Gottredson (2008) argue that Youth Courts are designed to divert the young offenders from restoring justice by holding youth accountable for the offenses they committed and preventing any occurrence of related crimes and other violations, hence preventing any future re-occurrence of delinquency. Nonetheless, they give a clear explanation of the Teen Court relating it to the traditional courts. The whole team comprises the defense attorney and prosecutors, Juries, offenders, and Judges. Godwin (2000) states that young people play an imperative role by filling these roles and determining the appropriate disposition via using different and multiple sentencing options (Slovinsky, 2017). The backbone goal of the peer court is to hold teen offenders accountable for their crimes and destructive behaviors by encompassing various sanctions that play a significant role in repairing the harms sentenced on the victims and ensure that the defendant cannot repeat the same mistakes. Moreover, Butts and Coggeshall (2002) explain why teen court programs differ from other problem-solving Court Models. Teen Court operates differently since it is not included in the government Judicial branch but instead

operates differently as part of a diversion process that aims at keeping the youth safe in mitigating any related reasons that might lead to court proceedings in the Judicial Justice System.

Teen Courts are increasing rapidly in our country. Currently, a significant number of youth courts range from 1600 courts that operate in 47 Districts and States of the United States and Columbia. According to the American Youth Policy, it is true that an estimated 120000 and 150000 offenders were served in Youth Court in the year 2003. Pearson and Jurich (2005) articulate the estimated age number of peer courts offenders ranks from 15-25 who have been sentenced for committing fewer offenses and have no Judicial arrest records. Most of these defendants are usually accused of lesser offenses such as drinking, curfew violations, the use of drug substances like tobacco, drinking and marijuana, and vandalism. Butts and Buck (2000) argue that these young generations are offered the teen court system as an alternative for the offenders to mold their ways by admitting their guilt and mitigating them by participating in the changing process (Slovinsky, 2017). Besides, several criminology theories help teens in the peer Court process. The first theory suggests that teens will respond effectively when peers are involved in court than other adults. Lieber and Dishian (1987) give a transparent justice approach that is effective as it aims at assuming the peers' association correlates with the behavior of another peer onset. Butts and Coggeshall (2002) explain how peer pressure can push young people to engage in prosocial-related behaviors. The teen court system is imperative since it plays a significant role in the offenders' lives by increasing their knowledge and matters pertaining to the judicial system.

Fischer (2007) gives a clear role of the teens court in our current content. The court aims at restoring justices of the harms committed by the offenders and ensures that there is no future occurrence of related crimes. In that case, the harm done to the communities or to the individuals

the court makes sure that it repairs and provokes the recurrence of these harms. The juvenile court aims at focusing on an open dialogue rather than just using the presented evidence and procedures. Fischer argues that teen court opts to seek and provide a conducive way in which the peers can be incorporated back into the society without any barriers whatsoever (Masur & Posner, 2018). Instead of them being left alone to stigmatize not knowing the right direction to take and stick back for their related delinquency. Godwin (2000) argues that there are three types of teen courts namely; the youth judge, peer jury, youth judge and adult judge. The adult judge uses peers to serve as prosecuting and defence attorney's, and jurors. But for the model to complete it requires an adult volunteer who acts as a judge and presides over the proceedings. The youth judge model aims at using the same organizational structure as that of the adult judge model but a peer is used as the judge. The youth tribunal on the other side is slightly different from other models because it aims at not including any peers' jurors.

Substantially, the peer jury model does not include youths or any presenting attorneys. Instead, they operate closely like a Grand jury in which the case is presented, and other youth jurors directly interrogate the defendant. Butts and Coggeshall (2002) argue that regardless of the model used; it does not interfere with the tasks of teen courts in determining an appropriate dissolution of a peer who had already been sentenced to the charge committed. According to the court order, those youths who participated in the teen court created an innovative disposition (Han, 2018). However, according to the principles guiding the dispositions is designed to address matters and needs relating to the community and other victims. All of these principles are based on the therapeutic measures included during the act of court charge. Fischer (2007) responds to the disposition measures, including restitution, writing apologies to the affected person and the judge. These measures are essential and effective since they are designed to enhance and



improve the victim's awareness of the crimes committed and offer advice that may help them not to engage in such crimes later in the future. However, several studies have examined the benefits of juvenile justice, few research studies aimed at educating more of the participants' programs. Nonetheless, Butts and Coggeshall (2002) managed to complete the evaluation of analysis about the teen courts. They managed to do this research study by examining four other different sites.

### **The Cost-Benefit Analysis**

The cost analysis is imperative because it helps determine the correct financial aid needed for every program based on the products and services needed and used in each program. The knowledge makes it easier to know how the cost per program can be utilized and prioritized, favoring cost saving which is essential and effective because the costs can be used for other development projects like building other Juvenile Courts. Data analysis is imperative in peer court because it helps support both the government and the community at large in ensuring that the juvenile offenders' lives matter in terms of hygiene and ensure that they have access to proper and improved facilities (Han, 2018). Visualization team support leads to the effectiveness and efficiency of developing several criminal justice projects both in urban and rural areas. In that case, the juvenile court system would not spend much on the transport system. Strategic planning on the financial services in Criminal Justice helps to allocate enough finances in establishing good correctional services with improved facilities that can assist the offenders in pursuing different courses while there are in custody to promote self-development. Practitioners and policymakers face some challenges when allocating resources. Resource allocation is related to how efficiently the policymakers can constrain their available resources by supervising how they use the equipment and materials and allocate labor and funds.

The CBA carries out various research studies to get in-depth information related to how they can minimize the costs in the years to come. The CBA report is aimed to benefit both the policymakers, practitioners, and researchers who usually use research to carry out their financial choices on how to minimize resources. CBA is more effective than any other analysis because it offers an improved framework encompassing multiple ranges of impacts. Although CBA is beneficial, it can also lead to some negative impacts which do not incorporate any financial benefit. CBA's fundamental role is it provides a comprehensive framework that encompasses the impacts of money as a metric for diverse outcomes (Masur & Posner, 2018). Theoretically, CBA focuses most on scathing criticisms. It values most things that are not essential and cannot be valued, such as suffering and pain endured from the loss of life or any violent cases of victimization. In that case, it is not cost-beneficial to spend much on the minimum and things that are not imperative and valued within our current context; hence, the CBA makes a good move in mitigating the use of limited resources to solve good significant cases. The CBA focuses transparently and consistently on the limited resources in ensuring that few resources are used in performing and solving a variety of things. The CBA focuses on earnings and wages by considering a time value that someone uses to bring productivity.

Nonetheless, the CBA ensures that the time used by the officer and other judicial team are valued and compensated; in that case, the CBA set goals is to focus on the social value rather than fiscal savings. The goal states that probation officers tend to spend most of the quality time focusing on the productive activity, which promotes a positive gain of the program; hence, the services promote cost benefits to the program. CBA analysis makes their strategies transparent by identifying how the proposed assumptions can be used and affect the program results. The critical task of CBA is to compare the two different alternatives or programs that may impact

different types of results. Besides, the CBA focuses on the quality time spent by workers in performing the duties allocated to them. The program aims to either increase the time spent by a probation officer and reduce the time spent by the officer in performing and fulfilling the set tasks and roles according to the program's motives. Although the possible outcomes of these impacts will not impact positively on the cost that the agency has spent if an appropriate time allocation and incorporate the use of limited resources, then there is a high possibility that both the outcomes would have based on the implications of the use of the available resources in performing different tasks. In that case, the programs are effective because it helps the officer minimize the available resources while performing their duties (Pratt, 2019). Hence, there is no need for an officer to conduct any additional patrols but instead use limited resources to perform the same task, thus mitigating the cost. When the officers engage in performing additional patrols, they spend much of their time on the based approaches related to crime and offenses prevention which encompasses the involvement of a larger community. Without the use of the program, the officer will end up using most of the time and resources on the client interactions that aim to reinforce the reduction of revocation and any crime occurrence.

CBA ensures that the individual's wage is directly proportional to the time spent while contributing to the services rendered to the society. CBA is beneficial since it allows gathering and presenting different types of information into one metric, thus enabling comparisons based on the critical information gathered, which could not have been necessary. Again, CBA gives a clear direction on how to use and balance the relevancy of multiple types of impacts and gives precise information to the decision-makers on how the programs play a significant role in allocating and utilization of resources and what measures are required to be followed to replenish resources promoting financial benefit. However, CBA is imperative, but it can also be

meaningless since it does not have the power to formulate different recommendations and answers without a robust framework and evaluation. Moreover, estimating the value impact of the program selected in allocating and limiting the use of resources needs to have an explicit estimation of how the program works about the presented outcomes when the program is not included. The analysis consists of a broad alternative encompassing community programs, teen courts and youth involvement in the court charges, multi systematic and family therapy. To conduct a compelling research study, the researchers opted to apply Canada State institute as the public policy methodology for conducting the cost-benefit analysis. After conducting the research study in other states and cities like New York, the findings depict that practices, policies, and structures were used accordingly (Slovinsky, 2017). The findings articulate that some research programs can reduce the rate of crime rates in our current context and improve the outcomes of youths by mitigating their negative behaviors. The taxpayers are limited due to few cases related to crimes and saving because a lot of money is not used during the hearings at the court. The policymakers are examining how to regulate the cost by limiting the placing and expansion of community programs, which tends to be costlier. Nonetheless, Juvenile Justice is on the task of ensuring that the placement facilities are kept conducive and improved.

### **Implementation Plan**

The implementation plan aims at training the facilitators to get the required knowledge and skills to use while rendering their services to the judicial and legal system. The teen programs are imperative because they offer sufficient opportunities for youths to develop the skills to cope with various activities of daily goal. Some of the fundamental skills that the youth should have are; conflict solving, negotiation, improved listening, and communication skills. Professionals usually play a significant role in educating youth volunteers in the judicial and

legal procedure, rules, and judicial system structure. Professionals are the best when educating counseling and other social services, enabling youth volunteers to enhance life by coping with the required set skills. When the youth volunteers are trained, they impact the community positively as they present fresh and positive viewpoints. Substantially, youths who participate in capacities like the defendants, attorney jurors, and defendants can provide a steady insight into the program's effectiveness (Smokowski et al., 2017). The program helps to develop various solutions based on the problems encountered and increases the rate of success. Establishing mentoring youth, peer counseling, teen programs, and other related youth court programs is beneficial because it helps in promoting a mobilized community. When recruiting volunteers, the peer Court ensures that the individuals have diverse expertise that can be used to serve the court programs and develop fundraising and create an organized marketing program. Although there are various traditional teen court roles, it is good to encourage the volunteers to participate in various managerial and organizational programs. However, multiple problems are facing the juvenile court in which it lacks influential roles for the youths. Teen Courts ensure that the youth are placed according to their integral roles, which they can use to empower and establish themselves within their current context.

### **Staff Training**

Recruiting and training volunteers is imperative because they are the root key to all teen programs. Substantially, no teen is allowed and recommended to recruit any adult and youth volunteers until a practical consideration is set aside to give a clear overview of the position and roles they pertain to undertake. If volunteers are used unwisely, they may feel used and have wasted their time while rendering their services, which they are not appreciated later on. The volunteers tend to regret why they chose to work with that urgency, yet they had the opportunity

to choose to work with other agencies that benefitted them financially. When recruiting volunteers, it is advisable to take keen measures not to create any additional work program that may unwisely use resources. To avoid this, they should be taken in the recruitment process, using volunteers and training methods; by not doing so, the court staff may be weak. As a result, it is a burden that all of the staff members should encompass and deal with the situation accordingly.

The best channel to be used is by carefully examining the best way the program can use the volunteers in establishing various tasks that can lead to effective use of the community resources (Stalker, 2028). The possible role of volunteers is to provide reliable services that the teen court can use in providing many services rendered by the court programs. Teen Courts rely on both adult and youth volunteers to carry out the expected court hearings. However, the youth and the adult should have certain qualities that served the roles of prosecuting attorneys. The youth judge is responsible for deciding the appropriate sentence to be used and applied to the offender. The youth judge is accountable for presiding in the court hearings and ensures the set rules of the procedures are followed. The judge presides over the hearings by overruling and intervenes against the court guidelines. On the other hand, the adult volunteer offers a program opportunity by deciding on someone eligible to participate in the court proceedings which have the required skills to handle any legal issues that may arise later in the future and address the peer volunteers on the relevant questions concerning the legal procedures during the trial.

### **Implementation Schedule**

The implementation schedule opted to provide the youth with the opportunity to provide positive input on the operation and development programs typically designed to address their grievances and needs. The youth can work diligently in making imperative and valuable contributions to society if given a chance to. Proper training enables the youth to pursue different

roles in the society related to serving as advisory committees, act as a board of directors on peer Court programs, and perform different task forces in the court. Although the youth can spread the information to their fellow youths on recruiting youth volunteers, they must be encouraged to follow specific measures when recruiting volunteers (Stalker, 2019). The youth should be introduced in new and other creative ways that they can use to recruit volunteers. The based method and strategies to use are based on the qualities they need to see in the youth volunteers chosen to work with the court program. Marketing the peer court programs is vital because it increases their morale and ensures the court program's development. In that case, the community should always be ready to help and offer supportive measures to the youth court program all through. The community should reinforce their services by supporting their efforts by implementing the operation of the court programs all through from the beginning. The government and community should offer financial and other related support since the youth can be more powerful and have the power to be persuasive advocates in the future if their efforts are highly valued. The best tactic to be used is to accompany both the youth and the adult volunteers when accompanying the court staff on matters relating to making group presentations.

In summary, Teen Court is a therapeutic program for youths who have been charged with an offense for the first time. Consequently, a teen court is majorly a diversionary program based on the concept of serving non-chronic offenders and restoring justice. There are multiple studies of teen Court evaluation that majorly suggest an excellent examination of various elements such as sanctions, which articulates how peer Court operates based on the participation criteria and referral sources. Peer pressure is the root factor leading to a significant number of youths committing an offense. Consequently, in the United States, it is evident that per year a good number of children who are at the age of 18 usually get into the teen Justice system due to

commuting or violation of the fundamental rules of the state. Statistically, in 2011 about 1.4 million youth got arrested due to various crimes and offenses. The cost analysis is imperative because it helps determine the correct financial aid needed for every program based on the products and services needed and used in each program. The knowledge makes it easier to know how the cost per program can be utilized and prioritized, favoring cost saving which is essential and effective because the costs can be used for other development projects like building other Juvenile Courts. Nonetheless, recruiting and training volunteers is imperative because they are the root key to all teen programs. Substantially, no teen is allowed and recommended to recruit any adult and youth volunteers until a practical consideration is set aside to give a clear overview of the position and roles they pertain to undertake. Data analysis is imperative in peer court because it helps to support both the government and the community at large in ensuring that the juvenile offenders' lives matter in terms of hygiene and ensure that they have access to proper and improved facilities. The implementation schedule opted to provide the youth with the opportunity to provide positive input on the operation and development programs typically designed to address their grievances and needs. The youth can work diligently in making imperative and valuable contributions to society if given a chance to.



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