



Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

770 West Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43222
614-752-1164

John R. Kasich, Governor

www.drc.ohio.gov

Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

An Overview of Research Findings in the Visitation, Offender Behavior Connection

-Gary C. Mohr, Director



Over the last five years two research studies have been conducted in Ohio analyzing the visitation, offender behavior relationship and the effects of prisoner location on visitation patterns. These two studies provide invaluable insight into the correlation between visitation, and several variables that may influence positive outcomes for prisoners during incarceration, and as they enter the community. Findings indicate there are significant positive outcomes for inmates who experience visitation during incarceration.

Visitation and Offender Behavior Connection

In 2007, Karthik Balasubramanian, an intern with the Bureau of Research in the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC), examined the patterns of two institutions with regard to rule infractions and visitation records. The institutions examined were the Ohio Reformatory for Women (ORW) and Mansfield Correctional Institution (ManCI). The researcher reviewed visitation records of inmates at each facility from February through March 2007.

Research Method and Findings

The study utilized a descriptive correlational design analyzing quantitative data in order to determine correlates between visitation and offender behavior. During the analysis it was discovered that a significant number of offenders received no visits during the two month period. Two-thirds of the ManCI inmates did not receive a visit, and almost three-quarters of the ORW inmates did not have a visit. The data revealed that nearly a quarter of the study group at each prison had no registered visitors. These figures were based on persons who entered the institution during a specific time period.

There were statistically significant relationships between those incurring rule infractions during the review period and visitation. The amount of visitations was associated with fewer violations. The data indicates that even one visit has a positive effect on rule infractions. It should be noted that there were varying impacts of offender visits. Visits from individuals that could be generally described as parental/guardian were found to have a more positive effect on the offender.

Effects of Location on Visitation Patterns

The second study explored factors related to prisoner visitation patterns and the effect of inmate location on visits. The study, which was conducted by Anjannette Monroe, a McNair Scholar at the Ohio State University, reviewed ODRC inmate demographic data from January 2006 until July 19, 2011. Monroe's study posited four hypotheses:

- There is a negative correlation between travel distances/cost and visitation frequency.
- Inmate relocation to more distant facilities negatively affects visitation patterns.
- Inmate visitation will be greater during early incarceration and immediately prior to release.
- Women receive fewer visits than men due to smaller number of women's facilities.

Research methodology and study results

This study incorporated an analysis of quantitative data exploring relationships between prisoner location and visitation patterns. The inquiry also included an investigation of information collected with the idea of replicating the experience of a visitor. The visitation patterns of 39,874 offenders were included in the study. Inmates serving life or death

sentences were excluded from the study. Inmates with life or death sentences were deselected from the pool of participants due to their decreased reentry potential.

While the researcher sought to test four hypotheses, only one was tested. The presupposition was that women received fewer visits on average than men. The study results did not corroborate the hypothesis and indicated that women did not receive significantly fewer visits than men. Further, the researcher was unable to draw any conclusive empirical evidence to support the negative effects of prisoner relocation on visitation patterns.

The analysis of the qualitative data suggested that there exist significant barriers to visitation for low-income families or working families with children. Families, who rely on public transportation, operate in a significant deficit as compared to individuals that have access to private transportation as it relates to visitation.