

AN ASSESSMENT ON THE IMPACT OF FAMILY DYNAMICS ON THE RUNAWAY
PROBLEM AMONG TEENAGERS

SIDDIK EKICI, B.A.

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2005

APPROVED:

Eric J. Fritsch, Major Professor
John Liederbach, Committee Member
Chad Trulson, Committee Member
Robert W. Taylor, Chair of the Department of
Criminal Justice
David W. Hartman, Dean of the School of
Community Services
Sandra L. Terrell, Dean of the Robert B.
Toulouse School of Graduate Studies

EKICI, SIDDIK, An Assessment on the Impact of Family Dynamics on Runaway Problem Among Teenagers. Master of Science (Criminal Justice), August 2005, 108 pp. references, 67 titles.

Although Turkey is a country with strong social cohesion, figures of runaway children in Turkey are increasing dramatically. This research focused on the factors that cause children to run away and on interaction programs to intervene and/or prevent this problem. Until recently, Turkish family life was able to avoid such problems, but with the effect of westernization and social mobility in Turkey, the basic family structure has become more like the family structure in the western countries.

Studies reveal that runaway episodes happen in all families regardless of such factors as economic, race, or geographic situations. Teenagers run away for several reasons; however, early intervention is highly suggested by studies to mitigate the problem. Although, parent-child conflict plays a significant role as a reason for youth leaving home, on the other hand family interaction still remains the best alternative to the problem.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Gratitude has to go to many people but especially, I wish to express my appreciation to my committee chairperson, Dr. Eric Fritsch and to my committee members Dr. John Liederbach and Dr. Chad Trulson for their guidance and support of this thesis.

I also wish to thank my sponsoring organization the Turkish National Police for providing me the opportunity to study in the United States. Furthermore, thanks go to my friend, Oldat I. Lai who was always present to answer my questions, and to give moral support, encouragement and guidance.

Finally, I wish to express my deepest thanks to my wife, Nursal Ekici, and my two sons, Emre Ekici and Salih Ekici, for without their support, patience, and understanding I would not have been able to complete this thesis.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Running away from home is a very old phenomenon. Characters such as Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer left their small towns and headed for the city, traveled west or got on ships without being worried. Unfortunately, the image of the carefree youth on a harmless or positive adventure is no longer valid in the world of today's runaway. More often, these youth run not to seek new opportunities, but to escape difficult or unbearable circumstances with family, school, and community. The world that is awaiting them is intimidating, puzzling and dangerous. Often they are victims of abuse or neglect; they leave home in order to end something that has become a nightmare for them. These groups of children and adolescents have been called, endangered runners, terrified runners, victim runners, or push-outs, exiles, castaways, and throwaways. They put themselves at risk of becoming victims and /or offenders of crime. What is certain is that many such young people are at risk in their homes, and on the streets (Barry, Ensign & Lippek, 2002). One study (Hagan & McCarthy, 1997) pointed out that 78% of those in shelters reported that physical and or sexual abuse is the main reason for leaving home and running away. Barry et al. (2002) present a study from World Health Organization (WHO) 1997 on runaways, which found out that 73% of girls and 38% of boys report being sexually abused. The extant literature confirmed that many runaway incidents originate around family violence, and child abuse.

The phenomenon exists globally, in United Kingdom it is claimed that 43,000 children under 18 run away from home every year and that the number of street youth in

Canada ranged 10,000 to 20,000 for the year 1990 (Browne & Falshaw, 1998). In the United States it is estimated that one out of every eight adolescents between the ages of 10 and 18 runs away at least once from home. According to the most recent estimates there are 1.3 to 2.8 million runaways (Kids Call Program, 2005) and 127,000 "throwaways" every year in the United States (Ringwalt, Greene, Robertson & McPheeters, 1998). In Turkey it is estimated that there are approximately 40,000 children known as street kids either living on the streets or in shelters (Aksit, 2005). It is further estimated that around 2,000 to 6,000 children run away from home annually in Turkey (Aksam Gazetesi, 2005).

Professionals and government agencies move back and forth between being hopeful and hopeless, active and passive. Studies revealed that the younger the runaway is the more severe the incident becomes, and the greater the distress in the family and the professional system, and thus the greater the pressure becomes for the system to find the appropriate solution. If the runaway behavior becomes more severe then the system has fewer options to offer as a solution (Miller & Eggertson, 1990).

It is clear that runaway problems are highly interrelated with the quality of family life and the ongoing changing family structures and dynamics in the community (Television and Runaway, 1998). Miller and Eggertson (1990) contend that to the question of what could be done to keep the children at home and not on the run, in a study the majority (67.3%) of the sample guardians/parents responded that the youth should change their attitude or adjust their behavior. Only a small percentage (10.9%) believed that something could be done by them to keep the children at home. Miller and Eggertson also noted that is very unfortunate that the runaway youngsters are least

likely of all children to receive help from any local child protective services agency. They further stated that the disconnection of the youth is a focus of research, and that there are numerous studies which have been conducted based on the level of alienation between the runaways and their family (see for example Rankin & Kern, 1994; Krohn & Massey, 1998; Rebellon, 2002)..

Also much research has examined and categorized runaways into different level and groups. Among all of the extant studies, Benalcazar's earlier research (1982, as cited in Miller & Eggertson, 1990) developed some useful theories about runaways. He insists that teenagers do not run away for the same reasons. Reasons of running away change depending on where they live, in a care center or at home; others run away because of idiosyncratic reasons. However, he notes that many studies seem to confirm that adolescents see running away as both a solution and a problem. He also notes that children in stepfamilies tend to feel that nobody cares about them; that they are usually misunderstood and unfairly treated compared to other siblings. Eventually, he argues that these children are more likely to run away.

Plass and Hotaling (1995) established that the parents' childhood experiences play a significant role in increasing the likelihood of a child's running away behavior, and that the intergenerational transmission is not the only cause of runaway behavior, but it increases the risk of runaway. They also demonstrated that children who had parents with runaway experience were more likely to run away than those whose parents had no runaway experience.

As an effective intervention program, Thompson, Pollio, Constantine, Reid and Nebbit (2002) suggest that youth receiving shelter services demonstrated more positive

results than those sent to other treatment programs. They argue that shelter services decreased days on the run, increased perceived family support, increased self-esteem.

However, from a review of the literature and existing programs and services for children and adolescents two aspects relating to runaways remain clear. The first is that despite the issues pushing teenagers to run, resources to help them remain limited. Second, as the literature underlines, there is a significant correlation between runaway behavior and disrupted family dynamics (Kids Call Program, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

Turkey, situated in geographic proximity to Europe, has recently undergone many changes in its cultural infrastructures. Its interest in becoming a member of the European Union, and its developing technological strength, together with globalization has caused changes in, among other things, traditional Turkish family life and dynamics. The strong cohesions in the extended Turkish family life disappeared over past decades. Today's Turkish families look more like western families in that parent-child conflicts appear more, and in that parents spend less time with their children due to (1) increased urbanization, (2) increase in divorce rates, (3) or increased working mothers or employment of both parents. By the early 1950s, more than 80% of the inhabitants of Turkey lived in villages. Turkey's total population living in villages has declined as a result of rural-to-urban migration. In 1970 about 67% of the population lived in villages, in 1975 this proportion shrunk to 59%, and in 1980 more than 54% still lived in villages, but by 1985 most people lived in urban areas. In 1995 figures show that less than 35% of the population was living in villages (Village Life, 2003). According to a study

conducted by the Turkish Government Statistics Institute- T.C. Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü (DİE) - the divorce rates in Turkey increased from 27,725 in 1993 to 34,862 in 2000. The statistics show also that while there was close to 10% increase in the number of dual working parent households between 1993 and 2000, the population showed a slightly more than 5% increase in the same period (İstatistik Tabloları, 2000).

Research Questions

Since Western countries have dealt with runaway behavior for many decades, they made progress in examining the reasons why children run away, and determining what might be done to prevent runaway behavior. In light of the fact that Turkey's familial patterns appear to be becoming more Westernized, and runaway behavior started to become an issue of concern in larger urban areas this research focused on finding answers on the following two questions and use it to suggest frameworks for Turkey.

1. What are the underlying family dynamics causing teenagers to run away?
2. What kind of programs has been implemented in the U.S. and other developed countries to reduce the number of runaway teenagers?

That is the current pattern of teenage runaway problems in the United States and in the other Western countries is expected to be future problems in Turkey. Therefore, this study essentially intended to examine the particular phenomenon and its possible solutions. Eventually, this study will encourage Turkish society and social structure to be prepared for the possible higher rates of Turkish runaways. The information obtained in the course of this in depth literature and program review will be used to establish future recommendations to families and agencies dealing with teenage run away behavior in Turkey. While previous research has merely focused on a particular problem in regard

to runaway behavior, this paper made an in depth conducts and in depth analysis of all relevant family dynamics causing teenager runaway.

Definitions

Runaway children – Hammer, Finkelhor and Sedlak (2002) in their National Incidence Studies report, Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Throwaway Children in America (NISMART) contend that an accurate operational definition of the term *runaway* is required for any research that examines the occurrence or the general logic of runaway behavior. They state that; although, the term appears in the literature in the 1960s, its meaning has not always been clear; it usually has been implicit and often conflicting between different studies. A further problem that aggravated the definitional criteria was the use of related terms found based on popular terminology- flower children, transients, street people, splitters, hippies, road freaks, and so forth. They further suggest that perhaps the most comprehensive definition of runaways was established by NISMART, in 1998. It identified three types of runaway phenomena, (1) broad scope runaways—are defined as juveniles who leave or stay away from home without permission for at least one night. (2) policy focal runaways—minors, who also fit in the broad scope definition of runaways, but are further endangered by not having a familiar, safe place to stay, and (3) runaway gestures—children who leave home for only a few hours, but do not stay away overnight. Finally they note that the U. S. Department of Justice defines runaway as a child who leaves home without permission and stays away at least overnight or who left and was not allowed to return home. Runaways are also defined in legal terms. Running away from home or institutional care

is considered a status offense applicable only to minors, usually age seventeen and under. The Department of Justice's Uniform Crime Reporting Program defines arrests of runaways as juveniles taken into protective custody under provisions of local statutes.

The NISMART estimated that there are 446,700 broad scope runaways- runaways who leave or stay away from home without permission for at least one night from households each year- in the United States. Of these, 129,500 are Policy Focal Runaways- runaways without a secure, familiar place to stay outside of the household. An estimated 12,800 youth run away from juvenile facilities annually. Additionally, some 174,700 children are defined as Runaway Gestures annually- runaways who leave home for only a few hours (Hammer et al., 2002).

Throwaway children – Along with traditional runaways, there are a growing number of missing children who are forced out of the home or are unreported as missing by a parent. Children who are considered *throwaways* are abandoned, told to leave by a caregiver, or are not allowed to return home once they have left. Many throwaways come from lower social and economical backgrounds, and many struggle with sexual identity issues, rebellion, and other problems in the family which speed up their departure (Flowers, 2001). NISMART reported that there are around 127,000 broad scope throwaways- juveniles who are made leave or stay away from home by a household member for at least one night- annually in the United States. Among these, some 59,200 are policy focal throwaways- throwaways without a secure environment. Nearly 15,000 of the throwaways each year are estimated to be the result of abandonment, or children whose parents or caretakers had gone off and left them (Hammer et al., 2002).

These throwaway kids are seen all across America and, until recently, were included with other runaways in most statistical and survey data. However, unlike, the runaway who leaves home at his or her own initiative, the throwaway typically is put out of the house either directly or indirectly, usually against the child's wishes (Hammer et al., 2002). It is also noted that teenage homosexuals are especially at risk to be expelled from their homes, because of their sexual orientation or being otherwise considered by parents/guardians as just too much trouble to deal with. Furthermore, Hammer et al. (2004) reported that throwaways experience more violence and conflict with their family than do runaways. Slesnick (2004) provides throwaway statistics on major urban cities. In New York, estimates are that as many as half of youth on the streets are gay or lesbian, while 40% of the homeless youths in Seattle are estimated to be gay. Parents of these youth are unable to tolerate their child's sexual orientation and so ban the child from home.

Disrupted/dysfunctional family – Disrupted/dysfunctional families are also known as the broken homes. In other words, this family is one where at least one biological parent is absent. Broken homes could be the result of divorce, parent abandonment, a deceased parent, a parents' alcohol/drug problem or any other reason that has put the parents apart from each-other and has created a risky environment for the teenager (Rebellion, 2002).

Adolescent – A young person who has undergone puberty but who has not reached full maturity; a teenager (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition, 2000).

Teenager – An individual between the ages of 13 and 19; an adolescent, not an adult yet (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition, 2000).

Family dynamics – Dynamic is defined as “of motive force,” or “lively,” (Elliot, Knight, & Cowley, 1997, p, 232). From this definition *Family Dynamics* can be defined as the well established interactions and an interrelationship within both a nuclear family and extended family member which make the family being derived by a motive force and keeps lively. In other words, a family in which well established parent-child and interpersonal relations take place on a healthy basis according to specific cultural, social, and legal norms.

Runaway behavior as status offense – Usually, status offenses are legal violations only if committed by a person of juvenile status. Such behaviors included running away from home or being beyond the control of parents or guardians. The official processing of status offenders varies among states in the United States. For example, in some states, a runaway’s entry into the official system might be done through juvenile court intake while in other state it might be handled through a child welfare agency. The differences in case handling have made it difficult to monitor the volume and characteristics of status offense cases nationally. In 1997, around one in five status offense cases that came to the attention of juvenile court intake or child welfare agencies was formally processed by the courts. By U. S. Department of Justice’s Juvenile Offenders and Victims the runaway is defined as a child who left home without permission and stayed away at least overnight. Running away from home or institutional care is considered a status offense applicable only to minors (usually age seventeen and under). The Department of Justice’s Uniform Crime Reporting Program

defines arrests of runaways as; juveniles taken into protective custody under provisions of local statutes (Petitioned Status Offense Cases, 2000).

National Runaway Switchboard Statistics on Runaways

The National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) aims to help America's at risk and runaway youth stay safe at home and away from the streets. Within this direction the relevant staff is in contact with anybody who can be in touch with the runaway and at risk youth in the United States and offer free guidance and professional help. The statistics compiled by this board is concurrent with the research that showed the vital role of dynamics in runaway incidents (Kids Call Program, 2005).

The statistics from NRS reveal interesting trends. According to NRS statistics, the ratio of male to female runaways was 26% to 74% in 1998. During that year, the largest number (40%) left home because of problems related to family dynamics. The second greatest reason (15%) for leaving home was peer/social issues. In 2000 NRS records show that male runaways rated 25% while female runaways rated 75%, and 'Family Dynamics' was the initial cause of runaway rating 36%. As the second and the third highest rating causes 'school' with 20%, and 'peer/school' with 13% follows family dynamics. As of year 2001, the number of male runaway remains far behind of females, 22.8% versus 77.2%. In 2001 'Family Dynamics' remained in first place as the main cause of runaway behavior with a considerable increase, 42.4%. As the second high rating reason NRS provides 'peer/social' reasons with a rate of 14.2%. The 2002 statistics remain consistent with those of 2001. However, 2003 statistics show that while male and female runaway rates are similar to previous years, family dynamics as the

initial cause of runaway behavior declined to 37.3%. As the second and the third highest runaway cause, NRS mentioned peer/social (13%) and youth services (10.5%). As 2004 NRS statistics reveal that male runaways rate 23%, while female runaways rate 77%. As the main cause of runaway behavior family dynamics rate 36%, and 'peer/social' causes rate as second high runaway causing reason (13%), as the third highest cause NRS mentioned again youth services with a rate of 10% (Kids Call Program, 2005).

Methodology of the Study

Because of the decades' long existence of the runaway phenomenon in Western nations, much information currently exists on the problem and approaches to solving it. This research study therefore utilized previous research information from mainly The United States, Canada, UK and some other Western countries. Based on the accumulation of research and programs relating to runaway behavior in Western countries, this research study focused on an extensive literature review and synthesis of existing information.

Since the characteristics of the three populations (U.S., Canada, and U.K.) are very similar, the interpretation of the findings of researches in these countries in the same way is not problematic. The figures about the runaway children in Turkey were obtained from the most recent press releases of the Turkish National Police and from screening the Turkish daily newspapers online. Furthermore, the journals *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *Families in Society*, *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, *The Sociological Quarterly*, *Child Abuse Review*, *Social Problems*, and *Journal of Research*

in Crime and Delinquency have provided invaluable information for this research. In addition, peer reviewed academic articles were obtained from the electronic databases of the University of North Texas (UNT), and from the online electronic library "Sagepub." The books, which have been screened for the purpose of the study, were obtained primarily from the University of North Texas. Internet search engines were used to find additional academic literature to acquire different perspectives about the causes and the prevention methods of running away problem. The searches were conducted using the following English words and phrases; *runaway, runaway and family, family dynamics, runaway and solutions, runaway programs, runaway prevention, runaway and delinquency, runaway and step family, runaway and prostitution, status offense* and some searches were conducted by using the following Turkish words and phrases such as; '*evden kakan cocuklar*' (runaways), '*evden kakan cocuk istatistikleri*' (runaway statistics), '*evden kakan cocuklar ve cozumleri*' (runaways and solutions), '*parcalanmis aileler*' (disrupted families), and '*EGM basin bildirileri*' (EGM press releases). Based on the information included in their summaries the articles found have been screened and categorized according to the headings of the thesis. Subsequently, the categorized articles have been read and those that included related content for this study have been marked and notes have been taken to remind at which pages what kind of information is available to include in the study.

The information obtained in both published books and peer-reviewed journals, as well as government reports were examined. In addition, information has been gathered from the internet, as this is a technology that provides information that reflects current cultural and academic concerns in a timely fashion. Eventually, after the examination of

the relevant literature several major trends related to family dynamics were identified. These underlying causes of run away behavior and programs have been analyzed and possible applications to the problem in Turkey are revealed to use for future recommendations to agencies and families dealing with runaway problems in Turkey.

Limitations

In order to understand runaway teen behavior a review of the relevant population in terms of their demographics and characteristics of runaway episodes was necessary. Also this study had to identify the background and predictors of runaway behavior, which serve as a baseline for understanding predictors and determining the appropriate intervention in such behavior. Due to the disparate sources, the transient nature of the runaway youth, and the changes over time of the problem there are some limitations that should be considered while reviewing this literature review.

The research would be more conclusive if it was not hard to locate or to construct a sampling frame for the runaway children. Together with the in depth literature review it would then have been possible to acquire more up-to-date information on runaway behavior. Unfortunately, obtaining a random street sample of runaway children to conduct surveys or interviews is limited by the transient nature of their lives. In other words, the information mainly comes from juvenile arrest reports and self reported runaway cases. There is no actual case study of individual runaways in this research study. Thus, this particular research will lack some internal reliability of the family dynamics affecting the runaway behavior and also the actual effects of the intervention and prevention programs because of the nature of the reported information.

Social differences among the Turkish and Western countries could be presumed to be another limitation to the validity of the application of this research in Turkey. There are certain points at which Western and Turkish societies are at variance. The findings of the research from the Western countries may not exactly match the needs of the phenomenon in Turkey. This would be a greater problem if the family structure in Turkey were not currently changing into a more Western style family structure. The runaway issue is becoming as much a social problem in Turkey as it is already in the Western countries. Since the teenage runaway incidents that occur both in the Western countries and Turkey are usually seen in the families with similar disrupted family dynamics, it is likely that the intervention programs will be successful in Turkey too. In conclusion, the geographical difference is not likely to endanger this study because the family styles in Turkey have become similar to the family style in the Western countries.

The last limitation in this research is the fact that runaways are usually underreported; nobody knows the exact figure of runaways. Studies on shelters reveal that every year more and more children apply for shelter protection. The lack of the actual figures on runaways prevent researchers from convincing state officials to support studies and fund agencies related to runaway behavior. Therefore, although it is a limitation of the problem in general, by correlating the extant runaway statistic, more information will be available to be used to help fund shelters and programs dealing with the problem.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The runaway youth problem has become a major concern in American society in the 20th century. Since the 1970s, a lot of attention has been given to homeless and sexually exploited street children through public outcry, the media, and legislative and social policy initiatives (Flowers, 2001). The number of runaway children in America increases daily. Every day, between 1.3 and 2.8 million runaway and homeless youth live on the streets of the United States. Some estimate that the runaway figures are as high as 1 million to 4 million. Most of the runaway children are between the ages of 10-18 years old (Kids Call Program, 2005).

Browne and Falshaw (1998) note that in the United Kingdom, 'runaway' is defined as a child who leaves home without permission and stays away overnight or longer; as many as one in five run away from home, with girls being more likely to run away overnight. Furthermore, they claim that 43,000 children under 18 run away every year, who count for more than 30% of 102,000 reported missing person incidents in England and Scotland alone. In Canada, the annual estimate of the number of street youth ranged between 10,000 to 20,000 children in 1990.

Polat (2003) reports that the street children in Turkey are estimated to be between 20,000 and 40,000 yearly. Of this number, 20,000 are registered at the community shelters and are being provided with short term and long term services. Furthermore he states that the facilities to serve the runaway and homeless youth are far below satisfactory amount. Duvakli (2005) notes an alarming statistic revealed by the

Turkish Parliament directed Commission is that there are even children at the age of 5 living in the streets. Polat (2003) discusses that the recent estimates about annual *runaways* among all children on the streets in Turkey are estimated to be 2,000 to 6,000. Apparently only a fraction of them come under police intervention and based on the children's interaction with the police, in 2002, the Turkish National Police (TNP) handled 83,249 cases related to children. In the same year statistics show 326 children below the age 10, and 4,025 children between the ages of 11-18 were registered as runaways by the TNP. In 2003, 242 children below the age of 10, and 4,173 children between the ages of 11-18 were registered as runaways. In the first 10 months of 2004 TNP records show that 159 children below 10 years old and 1968 children between the ages of 11-18 were registered as runaways. Furthermore, these records reveal that annually around 29,000 children were determined as being addict of some kind of drug—cigarette, glue, pills, and alcohol or paint thinners. This information serves as another proof that children endanger themselves and get involved in crime while living on the street, no matter in which country they are (Cocuklar Siddet Magduru, 2005).

Browne and Falshaw (1998) state that even though conditions differ among cultures, homeless youth are a growing phenomenon in many countries and represent an important number of adolescents living in high-risk settings of both developed and developing nations of the world. It is pointed out that an estimated two-fifths of the world's street youth live in Latin American, with a majority of these youth living on the streets of Brazil. Similarly Hagan and McCarthy (1998) reported that in the United States, it is estimated that one out of every eight adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 runs away at least once from home.

Demographics of the Runaways

Gender of Runaways

Flores (as cited in, 2002) reports that according to the studies, surveys, and arrest data and information from NISMART and NRS conducted in the United States, girls are more likely to run away from home than boys. Furthermore, he states that the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), reported that 58% of runaways were female, while 42% were male, and while others note that around 60% of the juveniles arrested for running away are females.

Age, Race and Episodes of Runaways

Slesnick (2004) maintains that the majority of runaway youth in the United States are teenagers, 86% of runaways are between 14 and 17 years of age, as reported by the National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) 2000, older teens tend to run away more often than younger teens.

Furthermore Slesnick (2004) states the majority of runaways are white, non-Hispanic youths, and only 28% lived in households where there were either biological or adoptive parents present. She also concludes that the NISMART data has shown that nearly 3 out of every 4 broad scope runaways in the United States are white. Blacks constitute approximately 1 in every 5 runaways. More than 8 out of every 10 children who run away from juvenile facilities are white, compared to just 1 in 10 black. Hispanic youths are more liable to run away from juvenile facilities than households. NISMART findings show that, according to the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), an estimated 40% of runaway youth in shelters and homeless come from families receiving

public assistance. Slesnick (2004) further maintains that other studies indicate that runaways are more likely to come from middle-class families than lower-class ones. However, she says, the NISMART findings suggest that there is no significant relationship between running away and income. Plass and Hotaling (1995) affirm that the great portion (63%) of runaways stayed away from their families less than a week, and 39% of the care takers were aware where their child's whereabouts.

Other Characteristics and Factors Leading to Runaway Behavior

Many of the runaway youth have been sexually, physically, or emotionally abused or neglected at home. Some have problems with, school attendance, or substance abuse, and might show mental disorders. Others may be seriously disadvantaged in their displacement to street life, being likely to be victimized or become an offender (Flowers, 2001).

Whitbeck and Simons (1990) reveal that runaway youth come across a number of disturbing situations when they are away from home for an extended time. Problems include the lack of food, shelter, and other basic necessities. For female runaways, most turn to prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation just to survive. The risks of HIV infection, sexual assaults, sexually transmitted diseases, and other forms of victimization are high among runaway teens caught at the cross roads of high-risk activities and dangerous street life. In many cases they abuse or become addicted to drugs and alcohol. Many of them get engaged in drug dealing, theft, and violent criminal activities in order to support drug habits.

Hagan and McCarthy (1997) assert that running away from home is a major step even for the most streetwise teens. Few runaways leave the comfort and familiarity of home without some persuasive reasons. They state that some studies have found that running away can often be attributed to one or more of the following reasons: Domestic violence (physical and sexual abuse), poor home environment, broken home (absence of at least one parent), family crises, school problems, mental illness, emotional problems, substance abuse, and sex (sexual promiscuity, pregnancy, marriage).

According to Flowers (2001) in many instances, the runways child has multiple reasons to leave home. These factors are often long-term, unresolved issues and extreme conflicts that reach a point of no return, either by the runaway or by the care-taker, resulting in the child being thrown away. Family dysfunction, parental neglect, family drug use, and implications of sexual activity by the runaway are seen as strong indicators for running away by youth. Flowers further asserts that in a study in the U.S. about runaway children, the following disturbing characteristics emerged:

- 60% of these runaways had parents who either abused alcohol or drugs.
- 70% of these runaways used drugs before leaving home.
- A quarter (25%) percent of the runaways were born to a teenage mother, usually younger than seventeen years.
- Half of the runaways faced some kind of abuse- physical or sexual- at home.
- A quarter of the female runaways had experienced rape.
- A bit more than a third (36%) of female runaways had been pregnant at least once.
- 77% percent did not consider using birth control.
- 50% of the male runaways under the age of 14 were sexually active.

- Exactly 80% of runaways experienced severe behavioral or emotional problems.
- Close to 90% of the runaways were functionally illiterate.
- Around 70% percent of the runaways never sought help from a shelter (p.42).

According to Voorhis, Cullen, Mathers and Garner (1987) although a great deal of the research literature on family-delinquency in the U.S. do not specify a direct and linear connection between family structure and delinquency, it does suggest that the relationship between parenting, family bonding, quality of family life and runaway is relatively significant. Family, from this perspective, is considered as the initial social unit responsible for the socialization of children. Social disorganization, as evidenced by the weakening of the family dynamics and other social institutions (such as churches, neighborhoods, and schools), precipitates increases in the incidence of runaway behavior. They state that currently, extra attention is given to major demographic shifts in family structure. Eventually, they conclude that the gradually declining percentage of core nuclear families accompanied with deviation of conventional family morals and beliefs, is seen to significantly increase runaway behaviors, and that it seems that children from broken homes are more likely to become involved in status offenses—runaway.

Voorhis et al. (1987) assert that a study revealed that all measures of family quality are significantly related to overall delinquency and to runaway behaviors in particular. The family factors most that were related to delinquency were affection, supervision, and home quality as whole. The correlations between age and drug offenses and runaway showed that older youth are at a greater risk of these behaviors.

One recent study (Safyer, Thompson, Maccio, Kimberly, Palamara and Forehand, 2004) has shown that a significant portion (41.2%) of the youth believed that their runaway behavioral problems were created by problematic parent-child relationships, and as respond to what can be done to keep the youth at home, 21.6% adolescents held themselves responsible. The youth mentioned that they had to change their living and adjust to the family rules.

Theoretical Models for Runaway Behaviors

Rebellion (2002) notes that many sociological theories of crime such as Merton's anomie theory (1938), Shaw and McKay's social disorganization theory (1942), Cloward and Ohlin's, Subcultures (1960), and Greenberg's, Marxist Traditions (1981) suggest that unfavorable class situations are among the most important causes of delinquency and crime. This class-crime connection is one of the most central views of sociological criminology. A class difference is the foundation for crime as can be seen, for example when it creates different views of parenting. Rebellion (2002) further contended that these theories were developed from a structural-marxist theory of delinquency, which proposes that parents who work in firmly controlled and highly routine work conditions, or are poorly paid and have unstable jobs, use harsher forms of punishment in their relations with their kids than do parents who have job freedom, stability , and high salaries. Social scientists suggest that parents who experience economic and psychological strain linked with frequent periods of unemployment are also more likely to use coercive control in their families. Furthermore, Rebellion feels that these social science theories suggest that parental employment problems represent class-based

background factors that, among other things, encourage family disruptions and inconsistent and explosive forms of parent-child interactions. It is these patterns that lead to behavioral problems in childhood, at school, and later in adolescence. The results of several other studies also support that parental economic problems can lead to the mistreatment of children and youth. For example, Whitbeck & Hoyt (1997b) provide evidence of a positive association between parental unemployment and parental violence toward children. In addition, Rebellon (2002) states that McLoyd (1989) indicates that family poverty increasing the risk of cruel and contradictory punishment; and that Sampson and Laub (1993, 1994) found that social assistance and low socioeconomic status (SES) are related to harsh and changeable parental discipline. Furthermore, Rebellon (2002) points out Conger and Elder's (1994), and Whitbeck, Melby and Wu's (1994) studies in which it was reported that family revenue loss and unsteadiness are linked to negligent and unbalanced parenting.

Social Bonding/Control Theory

Jang and Smith, (1997) discuss another important theory related to family dynamics and youth behavior. They present Hirschi's (1969) social control and assert that family is the main source of attachment, commitments, and disciplinary controls in preventing delinquency. This model suggests that the family acts as a shield against deviant influence by creating a basic ties and commitments to the conventional order. Parents not only provide a source of ongoing motivations to conform and normative definitions of appropriate behaviors, they also offer an important coercive function in the supervision and punishment of children's inappropriate behaviors. Eventually, parents

support children's compliance through parental motivations to conform as well as restraints against deviance. According to Jang and Smith, among the various social control perspectives, Hirschi's 1969 version is probably the most instrumental for developments in family and delinquency research. The most important focal point of his theory is the inverse relationship between parent-child attachments and deviance/delinquency. Attachment is the affective ties that youths form with significant others—especially parents. Jang and Smith point out that Hirschi emphasizes that positive parent-child attachments result in fewer delinquent behaviors because the child does not want to endanger the reputable relationships. In contrast, weak attachments minimize the child's sensitivity to parental opinions, and free the child to deviate in response to situational demands.

Whitbeck, Hoyt and Yoder (1999) state that there are three major dimensions of parent-child attachments in Hirschi's theory: (1) affectional identification—love and respect children have for their caretakers/parents, (2) intimacy of communication—child's will to share personal concerns and ideas with caretakers/parents, (3) supervision—the “psychological” existence of parents to protect the child when danger for delinquency arises. Other researchers such as Wells and Rankin (1991) functionalized the parent-child attachment in a variety of ways, including indicators of affection and love, interest and concern, support and help, caring and trust, encouragement, lack of rejection, desire for physical closeness, amount of interaction, positive communication, control and supervision, parental conflict, identification with parents, and identity support.

Brennan, Huizinga and Elliot (2002) maintain that according to control theory, hesitant, inadequate, or ineffective socialization practices can carry to a situation in which a youth never establishes good bonding with the family. The global comparisons of runaways and non-runaways provide evidence that the parents of runaways are both ineffective at, and hesitant to conventional socialization. Parental tendencies toward low self-esteem and high social alienation make them poor models for their children. Moreover, they state that there is evidence that such parents choose ineffective disciplining procedures. They make less use of principled discipline than do the parents of non-runaways. They also are more likely to resort to affective punishment and to severe forms of physical abuse, while overlooking forms of positive reinforcement such as affective reward. Parents' discipline practices carry with them the danger that they can destroy a child's feelings of being respected and loved. Brennan et al. furthermore conclude that there is also evidence, which indicates that parents of runaways feel somewhat unsure about conventional socialization. They are more tolerant of deviance, have lower scores for prescriptiveness, and have lower expectation for academic achievement, all of which suggests that they are less committed to conventional values than are the parents of non-runaway youth.

Another measure of weak family bonds is parental isolation and withdrawal from the child. To the degree that parents are not available to the child or are indifferent to the child, there will be less chance to socialize the child properly. Children who run away spend less time with their parents than do non-runaways. Furthermore, they score lower on both affiliative and instrumental companionship measure with their parents,

and this lack of instrumental companionship appears to be a serious problem for appropriate socialization of the child by the parent (Schaffner, 1999).

Rankin and Kern (1994) reveal that another indicator of conflicting relations between the parent and the child is the high level of indulgence which is apparent in runaways' relationships with their parents. A high level of indulgence is seen as an indicator of manipulation and inconsistent parental disciplining of the child. Rankin and Kern note that there is discrepancy among researchers regarding the precise number and types of family interactions. However, researchers mostly agree that close ties to parents are moderately and inversely related to self-reported delinquency.

Many research studies focused on the importance of attachment to the mother versus the father in preventing delinquency. Especially the research conducted by Rankin & Kern (1994) maintained that it is not the gender of the parent that is important, but it is more the number of ties that affects delinquency. Moreover, that unstable parenting concerning the application of roles, norms, and discipline is also shown by the high level of perceived differential treatment of siblings in the family of the runaway. Similarly, Whitbeck & Hoyt (1997) (as cited in Schaffner, 1999) suggested that parents of runaways tend to employ practices which deny their children's security, recognition, competence, self-worth, and freedom from excessive discipline, thus endangering the relationship they share. Their research shows that strong ties to both parents are likely to cause a lower probability of committing delinquency than strong bond to only one parent. However, as indicated by Rankin and Kern's (1994) study, the impact of this double attachment does not guarantee that the child is doubly insulated from deviance.

Nor do, strong ties to a second parent essentially reduce the likelihood of committing delinquency in half.

Schaffner (1999) asserts that the global comparisons of runaways and non-runaways indicate that the runaways' family situation is one in which it is extremely difficult to establish either strong and loving parent-child bonds or conventional goals and values. Such inadequate development of family bonds is sufficient in itself to explain the tendency that these children have to run away.

Furthermore, Krohn and Massey (1998) claim that social control theory implies that youth who have weak ties to social institution such as the family and school are more likely to become delinquent than are youth who are more integrated into such social institutions. Also that because of these weak ties to social institutions youth will be more likely to turn to other delinquent youth for support. Consistently with this perspective, studies have found that parental support, supervision, affection, and steady discipline, poor family management are lower among gang members and runaway than non-gang and non-runaway youth.

Furthermore Krohn and Massey (1998) maintain that there are several theoretical models such as the Control Perspective, the Learning Perspective, and the Strain Perspective which researchers use to study street-youth. Among them, control theory is widely known for its focus on social bonds developed in families and schools. They assert that Hirschi in 1969, and later on with Gottfredson in 1990 claimed that these social bonds to the society or family reduce crime and delinquency, and that the actual application of this theory can be interpreted as to the consistent and constraining roles of families in keeping youth at home and uninvolved in crime. The opposite of these

applications can result in erratic parenting and circumstances in which parents are uninvolved, unattached, and careless about their children.

Kohn and Massey (1998) basically conclude that, control theory and school-based studies of delinquency highlight a limited range of indirect, non-coercive familial and school control involving supervision and attachments. Also the extended analysis form of control theories included direct coercive controls in which they usually focus on a lack of parental discipline, inconsistent punishment, and parent child rejection. Still less consideration is given to more abusive parenting styles.

Congruent with Hirschi's 1969 social bonding theory Wells & Rankin (1986), and Rankin & Kern (1994) suggested that there is a strong relationship between broken homes and delinquency. Individuals engage in delinquency to the degree that they fail to form a strong effective attachment to their parents or caregivers. They also mentioned that studies note that youth develop a stake in conformity that promotes rational commitment to conventional norms, and seek behavioral involvement in conventional activities. Furthermore, they adopt a strong belief that conventional norms merit respect.

Strain Theory/Social Capital Theory—From Poverty to Runaway

According to Hagan and McCarthy (1997), in social science disciplines there are a range of theoretical models applied to study street youth. They claim that all of these theories can be included within the social capital theory. Hagan and McCarthy state that social capital theory suggests that people acquire at birth and accumulate through their lives unequal shares of capital that incrementally alter and determine their life chances.

It focuses on ways that individuals succeed and fail in their social life and on their efforts to achieve cultural goals. In doing so this, theory aims to place delinquency and crime along with more conventional activities in life course development. Furthermore, Hagan and McCarthy argue that the theory suggests that since individuals have different ways of access to social capital, they need to adapt themselves to existing, continuing, and changing accumulations of social capital in the circumstances that they inherit.

Adaptations to these situations take place in a range of formations of cultural capital.

When social capital is rich in the community and family, these cultural responses often include a massive of credential of higher education and involvements in high culture. In these communities and family settings, social capital is used to award children successfully with forms of cultural capital that significantly enhance their life chances.

However, Hagan and McCarthy (1997) also state that in communities and families which could be called less advantaged, due to the lack of the subject rich capitals- social and cultural- parents are less likely to provide or pass opportunities to their children. Trying to survive is a struggle and, children and families need to adapt to the disadvantaged circumstances or opportunities they come across. They assert that many parents, within protected and supportive social system, may be driven by their capital positions. Such socially secure parents have the chance to award their children with social and cultural which likely provides success in school and future life. On the other hand, the children from less advantaged socio-economical, or less advantaged cultural situations, and less driven and controlling parents usually drift more or are driven into less promising routes of social and cultural adaptation and capital formation.

Flowers (2001) argues that the majority of the runaways studied extensively come from families with limited social capital status. This kind of youth is more likely to leave a family in which the household caretaker is unemployed, or leave a disrupted household in which one or both biological parents were absent from the home. Adolescents experiencing this kind of limitations in their families are more likely to head to the streets because of the disfunctionalities in their households.

Flowers (2001) contends that Merton's ,1938, Classic Strain Theory and Agnew's ,1992, General Strain Theory (GST), suggest that broken homes increase delinquency by exerting financial pressure on the children who live in them, especially considering the fact that the American culture places importance on monetary outcomes and psychology of immediate gratification. Thus, failing to achieve economic goals is just one type of strain on individuals beside many others. Flowers states that Agnew more significantly, suggests psychological strain which usually is caused by the failure in achieving set goals -ranges from fair treatment to respect; the loss of previously attained outcomes- ranges from financial resources to romantic relationships; and the imposition of noxious stimuli- ranges from physical abuse to poor family relations. Flowers concludes that therefore, General Strain Theory suggests that negative family relations create negative emotions and it is likely that children will try to cope with these frustrations and harming relations by leaving the problematic families.

Family Systems Theory

Slesnick and Prestopnick (2004) maintain that family systems theory makes positive contribution to the understanding of reasons youth leaving their families and

homes; despite the lack of studies that examined parental, in addition to adolescent reports of the family environment and other problems. They argue that Family Systems Theory sees the family as an open system, and maintains that an adolescent's problematic behaviors, including substance abuse, running away, and other externalizing problems are symptoms of maladaptive family interaction patterns, and lack of communication with the youth; in other words, the theory underlines existing communication boundaries in an open system. Slesnick and Prestopnick feel that the studies have revealed an important finding which supports family being a vital component in the process of development, maintenance, and recovery of adolescents from substance use and disorders. They assert that family factors that influence addiction has been influential in developing intervention strategies for distressed marriages and family situations.

Henggeler and Borduin (1995, as cited in Slesnick & Prestopnick, 2004) suggest that Multidimensional Family Theory provides useful insights codifying family dynamics. The theory asserts that individuals are nested in a social ecology within a complex of interconnects systems. Furthermore, it suggests that these systems include individual, family, and extra familial (peer, school, and neighborhood) factors in which behavior is seen as the product of the joint interplay between child and these systems and of the relations of the systems with each other.

Learning Theory

Studies have revealed that it is very likely that teens engage in crime due to peer influence in which delinquent peers are seen as role models. Melson (1995) contends

that there are two notable studies that support peer influence regarding teen delinquency, which seems to be consistent factors over time. First, Nye 1957 found that adolescents in conflict-hidden households were more likely to report substantial delinquency among peers than were adolescents from stable households. Thirty years later Steinberg 1987 conducted an experiment demonstrating that youths from broken homes were least likely to resist peer influences while those living with both biological parents were most likely to resist peer influences. Eventually, Flowers (2001), concludes that Akers', 1998, Learning Theory indicates that the peer groups and peer relations have link to runaways and delinquency. According to Social Learning Theory, youths engage in delinquency because they engage with peers who act as model and promote beliefs favorable to deviant behaviors. Thus, family conflict may promote delinquency by encouraging the youth in the family to run away and get associated with delinquent peers.

Intergenerational Transmission Theory

Plass and Hotaling (1995) present the intergenerational transmission theory (ITT) which suggests that information and beliefs pass from one generation to the next. Often the contribution of parent's role in the runaway behavior problem has been examined in the context of conflict, arguments, abuse, and family crisis. However, little attention has been paid to the possible effect of parents' own experiences of running away during their adolescence. They assert that intergenerational transmission theory takes the position that adults often pass to their children what they have experienced in their childhood. That is adults reenact the observed behaviors of their own parents when they

reach adulthood themselves. The cycle of family violence, for instance is a classic example in this area. It is believed that those who abuse their children or have frequent arguments at home are likely to have experienced similar abuses or experience in their homes during their own childhood.

Plass and Hotaling (1995) contend that there is also some evidence of intergenerational victimization. In such a situation the victimized parents do not become perpetrators but there is more likelihood that their children become more vulnerable than those in other families. For instance, a woman who was victimized as a child can marry an individual who later on may abuse their children, she will not be able to prevent or protect their children from her husband's sexual or physical abuses. Parents who have experienced conflicts, abuse or constant disapprovals during their childhood which might have incited their own runaway behavior, may recreate similar contexts when they interact with their own children.

In addition Plass and Hotaling (1995) suggest that children may copy parents' risk taking behaviors. They maintain that research show that parents' risk taking behavior can associate with child's likelihood to injure them. In a situation in which a husband is in a marriage which he does not like but can not leave, his child may pick up on this desire to flee, even though the message is unspoken, and can respond by running away. Lappin and Covelman (1985, as cited in Plass and Hotaling, 1995) assert that children can be seen as imitating their parents' own actual or fantasy runaway behavior. Furthermore, they state that some research support the notion that children who acquire information about their parents' own runaway experiences in their childhoods are likely to see this as an option for themselves too.

Consequently, Plass and Hotaling (1995) contend that there are three different sorts of Intergenerational Transmission concerning run away behavior. They assert that the first is one in which childhood victims become adult perpetrators (they victimize their own children), and the second is the sort in which their childhood is dysfunctional which makes them less effective in protecting their own children from similar problems. The third sort of Intergenerational Transmission is that in which children find out about their parents' own runaway experiences and use it as a model for their own behavior.

Plass and Hotaling (1995) analyzed data from (NISMART). NISMART interviewed a nationally representative sample of 20,505 American children younger than 18 (for more information please see Sedlak, A., Mohadjer, L., and Hudock, V., 1990, Household Survey Survey Methodology. Westat, Inc., Rockville, MD). The respondents answered a long interview for the NISMART study including issues such as parent-child interaction, child stress, and parents' own childhood experiences. The same study focused on 330 of these long interview cases, including 224 "control children" and 108 runaways. As a result of their analysis of the data Plass and Hotaling (1995) established that parents' childhood experiences play a significant role in increasing the likelihood of child's run away behavior, and that while the intergenerational transmission is not the only cause (only 24% of runaway children had parents with runaway experience) of runaway behavior, it does increase the risk of their child running away. Moreover, the study showed that children who had parents with runaway experience were more likely to runaway than those whose parents had no runaway experience during their childhood. Unfortunately, the study did not provide enough evidence for a behavior modeling type of transmission, because it was not

possible for the researchers to find out how many of the children knew about their parents' previous runaway behaviors. Plass and Hotaling also argue that instead of transmission across generations, it is more a systematic or specific behavior which is transmitted to the next generation

Plass and Hotaling (1995) maintain that one of the most important implications of their findings is in the area of factors causing children to run. In the 1950s, the runaway behavior was primarily explained by the characteristics of the children. Runaway children were seen as those with adjustment problems to their family and social life, whose maladjustment caused them to run away from home. By the 1970s, factors causing runaway behavior included parental factors, but still the focus was primarily on the conflict between the parent and the child. Most recently the focus has included the issue of abuse in the family. Plass and Hotaling further assert that their data implied that more focus should be placed on the parents' own childhood due to the fact that their childhood runaway experience has a huge influence on their offspring's behavior. They note that the effect of the influence may be greater than it was originally believed.

Miller and Eggertson (1990) cite Lappin and Covelman's 1985 study in which they examined runaway from a different perspective, based upon a developmental/structural model. This model asserts that from the developmental side, adolescents' running was seen as an indicator of families' having troubles in shifting to the adolescent level and handling the issue of separation. From the structural perspective Lappin and Covelman assert that there are four dysfunctional organizational patterns within the families who experienced runaways: (1) a dysfunctional generational hierarchy- a family structure in which boundaries are demolished, and which requires

the reinforcement of clear, flexible boundaries, (2) the triangulation of the adolescent runaway- this process includes an unstable two-person system under stress. With the aim to reduce the increasing tension of their relationship, a third person is drawn from outside to form a triangle, or triad. For instance, an adolescent female in the normal developmental stage of individuation and differentiation may be drawn into the parents' conflict, thus forming a triangle. Eventually this creates more tension for the adolescent who runs away to decrease stress and increase individuation. (3) conflict avoidance- a youth runs away to avoid further conflict in family, either between him/her and the parents or among other family members which creates tension on the youth, those also include the parental contribution- ineffective parenting that causes the youth to run away. Ineffective parenting could be either parents exercising either excessive power against their children or exercising no control at all, (4) parental Collusion- severely ineffective parenting or no parenting at all; a situation in which the youth has been left without any parental support or advice.

Emotion Theory

According to some social scientists emotion is a key influence in meaning construction and decision making for youths who run away from home. Schaffner (1999) discusses Sociologist Jack Katz's, 1988, emotion theory to provide an understanding of some of the motivations to deviate. Emotion animates the perspectives of the runaways and influences their behavior. Teenage runaways flee families in conflict and often end up with their peers. These peers form emotional connections to one another. Schaffner believes that emotion theory helps explicate the meaning of the runaways' reports that

they feel more connected with and interested in their peers, than their parents, teachers, and other adults.

Schaffner (1999) goes on to point out that weakening emotional connections in the family may lead to a youth's running away, or opposite of this, strengthened emotional connections may keep the youth stay away from heading to the streets. The hurt feelings, sadness, and anger were usually reported by runaways who were experiencing a weakening of emotional attachment in their families: led toward dissolving the connections to the family norms and structures. Hagen and McCarthy, in their book *Mean Streets* (1997) reported that hurt feelings were some of the common emotions that runaways reported experiencing when revealing what led them to run away from home. The underlying reason for these feelings was often intense parental criticism. Schaffner (1999) reports that for girls, conflicts with their parents and accusations of sexual self-worthiness were characteristics. Several of the girls in the sample expressed hurt, anger and confusion over being called "whores" by their parents.

Schaffner (1999) also contends that another significant contributing factor to runaway is the weakening family bonds. Especially, in recent years, a rising number of binuclear families provide a good sample for this issue. Binuclear families are families that have re-formed after divorce, in which children from previous marriages now live with parents in blended separate households. These new family forms provide new challenges with which parents and young people have to struggle. The emotional connection between parents and children must remain intact for all family members to successfully survive divorces and consequent remarriages. Many family theorists argue

that it is not that families need to be “nuclear”; it is that they need to stay honest, close, open, and loving. Young people especially need additional emotional support and the structure of a daily routine from any their parents.

Causes of Running Away Behavior for Teenagers

The most frequent explanations specified by adolescences include problems with family and stepfamily members, disrupted and dysfunctional families, neglectful parents, coercive and abusive parents, parental rejecting, and problems in school that usually created conflict with parents later on studies relating to each problem have been conducted (Schaffner, 1999).

Dysfunctional Families-Broken Homes, Domestic Violence, Physical and Sexual Abuse

Domestic violence plays an important role in encouraging youths to run away from home. Domestic violence is encompassed as behaviors including physical, sexual, or psychological attacks, and economic intimidation, that adults or adolescents use against their close partners (Flowers, 2001). Domestic violence is a major problem in the United States, and the American Medical Association estimated that 4 million spouses are battered each year in the Unites States (Hagan & McCarthy, 1997).

Terrel (1997) reports that 7% of all American women, married or living with someone, are beaten annually. The effect on children who witness this domestic violence, and who are often victims as well, can be shocking. The violence leads many teens to flee the brutality and tension it produces within the entire household (as cited in Baron, 2003).

Baron (2003) discusses that the relationship between childhood sexual and or/physical abuse and running away incidents are well documented. He also points out that according to the National Network of Runaway and Youth Services, 70% of runaways in shelters had been sexually molested or abused while being at home. This statistic is supported by other studies where estimate research shows that 16% to 81% experience physical abuse and 5% to 50% experience sexual abuse.

Hagan and McCarthy (1997) present what is perhaps the most comprehensive study of delinquency among runaways in their book *Mean Streets*. They state that many youths reported being physically and sexually abused by family members or family friends. Indeed, many studies report physical and sexual abuse are among the reasons children give for running away from home (Kaufman & Widom, 1998). In fact the statistics may not be accurate since; literature reveals that it is possible that the powerful figures such as the father or another family member in that household threaten the child to keep the abuse secret. They are powerful in the child's life by virtue of their position in the family. Those figures threaten the child that he/she can be held responsible for the terrible consequences that could happen to the family if he/she tells (Hughes, 1989).

Therefore, abuse may be even more prevalent than is reported. Furthermore, Hagan and McCarthy (1997) basically explained how the street life introduces the youth to opportunities for criminality, and suggest that there is a direct relationship between situational adversity and crime, by providing example an such as hunger, which makes street youth steal food. This is supported by other research. For example runaways

often also report involvement in delinquency and criminal activities, in addition to abuse (Kaufman & Widom, 1997).

Baron (2003) after a review of the literature on runaways, states that both physical and sexual abuses experienced by youth at home happen in many varieties and are also repetitive. Furthermore he states that the literature reveals that more than 75% of youngsters reported that they experienced physically assault at home and 94% of those assaulted have stated that they had been victimized more than once. Fifty-percent of these youth who experienced assault youngsters considered the level of hostility life threatening. In addition he contends that these individuals also reported that they had been threatened with a weapon, stabbed or shot. Baron states that Whitbeck and Hoyt, 2001, found out from their study that 80% of the youngsters from their research sample had been pushed, shoved or grabbed in anger. Baron concludes that the same study also revealed that around 70% of the research sample had been slapped either on the face or on open hand. Moreover, 64% of the children reported that they had been hit by some object; 33% of them had been beaten with bare fists, and 6% noted a real assault with a weapon by a parent or care taker. Baron (2003) cites also the result from another research conducted by Janus and his colleagues in 1995. He reports that 56% of Janus and his colleagues sample had been hit with an object such as belt to such a point that it left mark. Furthermore, the same study reported that 30% of the sample had been threatened with an actual weapon. Finally the same study showed that nearly more than 50% of the children had also been punched mainly on their face with closed fist.

Moreover, Baron (2003) presents statistics from runaway youth who reported sexual abuse that is both repetitive and perpetrated by different offenders. He states that a research about sexual abuse showed that 34% of their sample had a sexual assault incident in their background committed by relatives, caretakers, friends, strangers, or cohabitants. Seventy-five percent of the individuals revealed the sexual assault they experienced included genital contact with the perpetrator.

Other research conducted by Craig and Hodson (1998, as cited in Baron, 2003) reveals that being the victim of abuse, especially sexual abuse, raises the chances of becoming the victim of another type of abuse. The authors also maintain that approximately 75% of the street youth who were sexually abused had also been physically abused. From a similar research conducted by Janus (1987, as cited in Baron, 2003) it has been reported that 72% of the street youth in their research sample who were sexually abused had also been physically abused. Therefore many street teenagers have been the victims of both physical and sexual abuse.

Baron (2003) further examined the impact of violence on runaways. He asserts that research also showed that runaway youths are surrounded by violent environments that go beyond their own victimization. For example, he cites Russell, 1998, who reported that almost half of the sample talked about having witnessed violence in their households. Fifty percent of those who witnessed domestic violence stated that the violence was between adults. Approximately 95% of those witnessing adults exchanging violence including being slapped and 48% of the sample reported witnessing someone being beaten. Baron also presented the research conducted by Paradise, 2001, who found out that children who are just witnesses to common parental

fighters can experience negative consequences for a long time. He further notes that Carlson, 1991, observed that it is uncommon that child abuse and marital abuse occurs in the same families. Baron further asserts there is a significant association between domestic violence and maltreatment among runaways.

Baron (2003) furthermore suggests that running away to escape abuse or any kind of victimization actually increases the chances to be victimized in the street. He offers Kipt's (1997) report which showed that 51% of the sample had been victimized since the day they landed in the streets, and nearly 25% mentioned that they had been seriously hurt during an attack. Approximately, 20% of Kipt's sample indicated being attacked or stabbed with a knife and 15% of them had been sexually assaulted. Additionally, 25% of the young women and 18% of the young men reported to Kipt that they had been sexually assaulted when they were living on the street. Baron maintains that these samples about victimization provide an understanding that it is no surprise that street youth report high levels of fear concerning their personal safety. He further notes that, researchers have found a significant link between the victimization at home and later victimization on the streets.

Baron (2003) contends that the street youth usually comes from the family where a great deal of violence takes place. This negative experience at home has a strong affect on their decision to leave home and start living on the street. Although violence and abuse have a great impact on youth's decision to leave home, Baron further asserts that the research has also found other family problems that affect the decision. These include such factors as physical and emotional neglect, parental refusal, parental

substance abuse, parental unemployment, and repeated changes in family structure, reoccurring arguments and parental control issues, and inconsistent parenting.

Runaway problem can also be related to issues outside of the family. Baron's list includes problems with classes at school, conflicts with teachers, and problematic relations with peers, deviant peers, pregnancy or parenthood, being gay or lesbian or having behavioral or mental health problems, all of which increase the risk of teenagers leaving home (2003). Interestingly research suggests that psychological distress experienced by teenagers due to abuse may differ across gender. Yoder, Whitbeck, and Hoyt (2001) note that, male street youth who have been abused were most likely to engage in types of externalizing behavior typical of disruptive behavior syndrome, such as, antisocial behavior or vandalism. On the other hand, females displayed more internalizing disorders by engaging in self destructive behavior such as committing suicide, experiencing depression, and getting involved in prostitution.

Kelly (2003) asserts that a great number of researchers believe that millions of children are being affected by sexual abuse in the United States every year. She cites a recent 50 state survey of child maltreatment conducted by the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, in which it was revealed that approximately 17% of all of child abuse cases and neglect involved sexual abuse. Kelly also cites statistics from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System and states that close to 130 thousand reports of child sexual abuse are substantiated each year. Hammer et al. (2002) reported that 52% of the adult females and 9% of the adult males in their research sample indicated being child victims of sexual abuse. Other documentation indicates the relationship between child sexual abuse and teenage prostitution. Flowers (2001)

reiterates that children who are sexually abused are at greater risk to run away from home; further, Flowers states it is likely that most long-term runaways will become prostituted youth. Sexually abused girls are more likely than boys to leave home as a direct consequence of the abuse and engage in prostitution (2001). Flowers cites the National Network of Runaway and Youth Services study which estimated that 70% of runaways in youth shelters have been sexually abused. Eventually, Flowers points out that other studies have shown that almost all girls who are involved in prostitution experienced sexual molestation or some kind of abuse prior to their engagement with prostitution.

Tyler, Hoyt and Whitbeck (2000) contend that childhood sexual abuse typically occurs between 8 and 12 years of age. Therefore, they maintain that children who have been abused sexually are likely to runaway at earlier ages. In summary young women who lived in dysfunctional and disorganized families and escape the abuse often found themselves faced with similar problems in the streets.

Tyler et al. (2000) also reiterate that other studies indicate that any kind of child abuse is a noteworthy correlate of teenage runaway incidents. They outline patterns of parental behavior that result in runaway behavior. First they mention coercive/abusive families provide basic training for antisocial behaviors. Second, they point out the harsh, inconsistent disciplinary practices that create elicit aggressive responses in children. Eventually, they argue, that the parents typically responds in turn, creating more coercive interactions that often escalate to into physical force. These coercive, aggressive interaction styles are likely to be learned by children and generalized to

other contexts, resulting in academic problems and rejection by conventional peers at school or outside settings, and ultimately teen runs away.

Household and Personal Relation in Running Away Behavior

Canadian researchers Angenet and De Man (1989, as cited in Dolan, Pelletier and Reid, 1993) noticed that most studies on run away rely on univariate methods of data analysis. They consider that to be problematic and instead propose multivariate evaluations to be conducted. This examines the relationship between adolescent runaway behavior and selected correlates. They identify these to include family condition (complete families vs. incomplete families), parent-child relationships, depression, suicidal thought, truancy, juvenile delinquency, drug and alcohol use, also age and gender of subject.

The participants of the Angenet and De Man's study were from 11 parishes, from Miramichi region of New Brunswick, Canada. There were 347 participants in total out of that 155 were males and 192 were females. The age of the sample group was ranging from 11 to 18 years and they also represented both the English and French speaking groups of the province (as cited in Dolan et. al., 1993).

Dolan et al. (1993) report that the participants of Angenet and De Man's study were asked to fill out a questionnaire in which the researchers asked questions about their age, gender, family status, truancy, and whether they ever run away from or intended to do so. The participants were also asked whether they ever stole or vandalized anything, and finally participants were asked to answer the question whether they used drug or alcohol. Respondents were given a scale of four points (very open-

distant) to rate their relationship with their parents. Another ten point scale (never- all the time) was provided to make the participants assess their feeling about suicide ideation.

Further Dolan et al. state that the researchers found bivariate correlation between runaway behavior and variables such as parent-child relationship, family status, suicide thoughts, depression, truancy, vandalism, drug use, alcohol use, and age. Interestingly the gender variable was not significantly related. Furthermore, a multiple regression analysis on run away behavior revealed that suicidal thought is the best single predictor of runaway behavior among other variables. Dolan et al. maintain that as a result Angenet and De Man conclude that the bivariate correlation between runaway behaviors and the variables truancy, vandalism alcohol use and age were significant. Dolan et al. (1993) note that Angenet and De Man, 1989, argue that these correlations are indirect results of the relationship between runaway behavior and some of the other predictors. Another outcome of Angenet and De Man's study revealed that runaway children come from incomplete families where the parent-child relation was described as problematic. Dolan et al. define problematic families as those where children perceive their parents as difficult, families with depressed children, families with children who have suicidal thoughts, or families who have children with a background of drug use or theft.

Running to and Running From Something

Miller and Eggertson (1990) argue that most studies on runaways seem to be based on the conceptualization, first used by Homer (1973), of approaching runaways

from the perspective of 'running to' or 'running from' something. Runners described as 'to' are often attracted to the adventure of the street life. Runners defined as 'from' usually left home due to problems with their parents.

Based upon an extensive review of the relevant literature review and their clinical practice, Miller and Eggertson (1990) present five conclusions: (1) while first degree runaways- runaways who head to street to be away from home due to problems at home- usually run *from* something, second degree runaways- runaways who head to street because of problems at home and who have the will to be in the street- both *run from* and *to* something, and third degree runaways- often the runaways who just want to be independent in the streets- usually run *to* something. (2) first and second degree runaways run away as a reaction, but third degree runaways usually plan their run beforehand. (3) first degree runaways believe that running away is the solution to their problem, but second degree runaways think that running away is both a solution and a problem. Third degree runaways are used to street life and they are attracted to it; thus, they see it as a solution. (4) running away has more severe consequences if the youth is removed from his/her parents. Youths run away from home because of conflict in family relations and run away from care centers often because of peer influences. (5) parents are concerned when their child's runaway behavior is not so severe, but they can become less concerned and give up when the runaway behavior becomes severe (i.e. continual, repetitive).

Miller and Eggertson (1990) concluded that the runaways generally saw running away as a solution but it is seen as a problem when severity increases. Furthermore, their study revealed that the majority of the runaways were more likely to run away

again when they were taken into a care center. At home family conflict was seen as the major reason causing run away. The results did not support that youths run away from care center due to peer pressure. Rule conflict in the center was a larger factor than peer influence. Concerning the parent's concern, the study showed that the parents of both runaway groups showed equal concern about their children runaway behavior.

As Miller and Eggertson (1990) noted an earlier research, Greene and Esselstyn (1972) classified the 'running from' by describing the 'terrified runner' as a youth who had been a victim of a sexual abuse and leaves home. They describe the 'anxious runner' as a 'parental child' who has an alcoholic parent. Finally they describe a third subgroup of 'running from' as 'rootless runner' which was an individual who has no limits of freedom and runs away for instant gratification.

Parent-Child Conflicts and Interactions

Although studies mention that the parent-child relationship have relied mainly on the runaway adolescent's reports of their parent's behaviors and child-rearing practices, Whitbeck, Hoyt, and Ackley (1997a) maintain that the important finding is that no matter who the information provider is, adult caretakers or the runaways, the explanation of family processes are basically the same. They summarized survey data showing that both parents/legal guardians and youth report similar parent-child conflicts characterized by low levels of parental monitoring, parental warmth and supportiveness, and high levels of parental rejection. Data showed that both parents/legal guardians and runaway youth report consistent family violence. Family members also agree on behavioral problems of the adolescents. Both parents/legal guardians and runaway

youth reported serious conduct problems concerning the adolescents. Parents or legal guardians of runaways believe that their children are more problematic than their non-runaway counterparts. In addition, runaways from problematic family relationships are often characterized by sexual exploitation, mutual aggression, and violence.

Whitbeck et al. (1997a) note that these family characteristics have long been linked with externalizing behaviors among adolescents. Usually these parents/legal guardians try to repair previous developmental damages that could have been caused by another adult or legal guardian. Their data indicates that many are looking for answers and support. Therefore, from the perspective of these parents/legal guardians, they are not just individuals trying to cope with delinquent, disobedient children, but they are parents who have serious, often dangerous, family problems that should be considered. Whitbeck et al. (1997a) contend that if a runaway is returned to such a problematic family context without considering these potentially dangerous family issues, it is likely that the youth and the parent are put in danger again. They conclude that forced return to parents will mean continued conflict and may put both child and parent at risk for serious harm. Additionally they predict the chances for those adolescents running away will be dramatically increased if they are placed back in the problematic family environment.

Most youths run away to avoid intolerable situations in their homes, though the situation is may be defined or presented differently by each person. Whitbeck and Hoyt's (1999) research supports that conflict in the family has a direct effect on runaway behavior. In their studies, 75% of the sample parents of runaways talked about conflict within the family, mainly over subjects such as the child's performance at school,

choosing of friends, and rejection of family norms. They found that the five most frequent issues resulting in conflict were, in descending order of frequency, as follows: eating dinner with the family, arguing, church attendance, going around with certain boys or girls, and not being home enough. Safyer et al. (2004) maintain that other research determined that many runaways felt that their parents/legal guardians did not make time or want to listen to them, did not allow them to have sufficient privacy, interfered with their dating patterns. These adolescents lacked respect for and trust in their parents which contributed to their runaway behavior.

Slesnick and Prestopnik (2004) contend that the conflict today between parents and children seems not to be because of the way teens dress or look. In fact, issues dying their hair, using alcohol or narcotics, dressing inappropriately, alcohol, indulging in sex, spending long time on the internet, piercing their nose, these are only expressions of frustration which hide roots of the problem. Although, disobedience is ostensibly an issue for parents and that the minor conflicts escalate into major problems. Slesnick and Prestopnik maintain that parents usually complain that their child even fails to honor simple requests, such as completing required chores, accepting parental guidance regarding choosing friends or when they are asked to stop smoking. Further it is noted that bad manners were recognized as a common reason for irritation among parents and that all these negative situations were compounded by experimentation with sex and drugs. They state usually a major conflict starts because of a minor issue, and that there is relatively minor argumentation over significant or major issues. Thus, intense anger from both parties adds to the already fragile family relations. Eventually, Slesnick and Prestopnik (2004) feel that the major problems is hidden within focuses on trust and

security, achievement, recognition, affection, belongingness, conformity to peers and attainment of worthy goals, love and acceptance.

Blood and D'Angelo (1994) maintain that youth deviation seems to reveal where affectional ties are weak and demonstrations of love is less or do not exist at all. In such a condition, the adolescent feels that there is no love for them. If they do not see demonstrations of love, and feel alienated from the family, eventually the teens tend to leave the family. The escalating intensity of disagreement expressed by runaways, and the frequency of conflict with parental view indicate a lack of positive reinforcement. In fact studies reveal that, a significant proportion of runaways mentioned being in conflict over the issue of parental acceptance.

Blood and D'Angelo (1994) cite three important studies. Cervantes, 1965, found out that 80% of the dropouts who left their homes did it because they did not feel accepted at home as compared to 20% of the graduates. Coopersmith, 1967, then showed that children who have high self esteem and are happy are likely to have parents who respect their opinions and value their ideas. Similar results were seen in Ohio State's Teenage Flight Project- took place during the academic year 1972-1973. Runaways showed more of educational failure and scored lower on a self-acceptance scale compared to a control group. Blood and D' Angelo concluded that it appears as if parents who recognize the youth's right to self-expression and dissent are demonstrating a form of acceptance and therefore the teens are less likely to flee.

As Whitbeck and Hoyt (1999) found, Blood and D'Angelo (2004) note that another important reason for parent-child conflicts is a communication issue. Runaways characteristically report facing problems with their adults due to their parents' failure to

listen. The problem of non-communication is not easily separated from feelings of lack of love and acceptance. Runaways often criticize parent's avoidance of communication. As past studies suggest (see Hoyt and Whitbeck, 1997 and Flowers, 2001) avoidance can take a passive as well as aggressive form. In both cases, youth are very sensitive to it. In a situation they feel that they are in need to talk to someone, then they are open for solutions concerning the problems they face. Blood and D'Angelo (2004) further feel that the most valuable help parents can give their troubled child is listening to him/her, which they define as the beginning of communication. They conclude, that it is very unfortunate that often the parent and the child engage in intense arguments in which running away seems to be an alternative for the youth.

Miller and Eggertson offer Barth's, 1986, explanation of runaway behavior by categorizing it in three groups. In the first group, youths run away from family strain caused by economical crisis in the family, change in parental structure, or limited parental supervision. In the second group, youths run away from extreme parental expectations. In the third group, youths run away from sexually or physically abusive situations. Within these three, Barth evaluates runaway patterns and the family resources to develop resolution plans. Barth defines the family structures in three groups. The first is the closed family structure- a family structure in which communication boundaries exists; the second is a random family structure- a family structures in which communication problems occur on a random basis; and third, the open family structure- a family structure with no communication boundaries among family members. Eventually Miller and Eggertson cite that Barth suggests that the open family structure is in a more advantaged position in preventing the children from fleeing.

Miller and Eggertson (1990) also present Orten and Soll's, 1980, findings, which examined runaways based on the level of alienation between the youths and their family. In their study, they focused on the degree to which the child had believed running away was a response to stressful situations. Miller and Eggertson explain that the researchers identified the first degree runaways as those who were alienated a little from their family. The second degree runaways were those who had some street life experience and were unsure about running away from home. The third degree runaways were those who very well used to street life and had no interest in being treated or intend of returning home.

Self-Esteem

The research also suggests that adolescents living in homeless shelters have a more negative self-image than adolescents living at home. Many runaway teens view themselves as needing help; they also feel that they are not good family members and have disappointed their families (Bradley, 1997). Thus, on the other hand, youth who are being respected by their parents seem to have higher self-esteem, and show more happiness, thus are less likely to run away (Blood, & D'Angelo, 1994).

Family Structure Impacts on Runaway Behavior

The literature shows that youth are less likely to run away from households in which both parents are present. Running away is disproportionately experienced in families with stepparents or live-in partners. Studies found out that 25% of runaways were born to an adolescent mother- under 18 years of age, 75% came from single

parent homes, and 50% had been sexually or physically abused by someone in their household (Melson, 1995). Hughes (1989) reported that divorced, single-parent, or blended families are far more prone to experience a youth runaway episode with the youth's aim to get help from outside world. Furthermore, similar studies suggested that runaway incident could be more likely to take place in single-parent or very large families.

As previously mentioned most runaways run from broken homes, where at least one parent is absent. Hammer et al. (2002) revealed that only 28% of the broad scope runaways— juveniles who leave or stay away from home without permission for at least one night – lived with both parents (natural or adoptive) at the time of departure. This compares to nearly 50% of runaways who lived with a single parent with no partner or a single parent with partner, 7% of the runaways left homes where neither parent was present, while for 15% of the runaways; the nature of their family structure was underestimated.

The findings in America are supported by research conducted in Great Britain. Barnard (2001) reviews the Children's Society Study, conducted in UK, in 2001, which revealed the fact that children living with step families are three times more likely to run away from home. From a sample of 13,000 children, it was found out that close to 25% of children under age 16 run away or are urged to leave by their stepfamilies. This statistic compares with only 14% in one parent families, and 7% of those living with both parents. The survey determined that children in stepfamilies expressed greater feeling of being less cared for, being more misunderstood, more unfairly treated within the family than their siblings were. Eventually, Barnard concludes that the study

found out that, these children were more likely to feel forced to leave home. Even when they felt taken care of, these step children were still twice more likely to run away compared to children with two biological parents.

Hughes (1989) notes that; however, when the child grows and becomes an adolescent he/she goes through a normal developing process, which ends up with a separation from his/her parental figures. Hughes points out that youth test out new behaviors and roles, which make them, feel more independent. If abuse takes place during the separation phase, the teen may be alienated from the family and seek freedom. This is also the period when frequent arguments and fighting take place in the family between the adolescent and the parents. Eventually, youth may decide to run away, attempt suicide, or both just to escape the unbearable circumstances in which they find themselves.

Not all youth who run away have such serious problems in their households. Hughes (1989) suggests that in some cases events such as a divorce, a long-term illness, change of settlement, or a poor school performance that creates a crisis may end with youth's runaway too. Hughes also notes that there is no disagreement among researchers in this field about the importance of the family environment to runaway behavior. The teen might have tried to resolve his/her problems by talking to their parents or others but did not find anyone approachable. In these situations teens run away because they feel themselves alone and isolated and desperately try to avoid further tension and arguments in their families. Some may feel responsible for the problems in their homes and try to resolve it by leaving the home.

Hughes (1989) maintains that youth who run away or are homeless come from various living environments. Runaway episodes happen in all families regardless of their economical, racial, geographical settlement, and other factors. Though run away cases happen in any kind of families it is more likely that it is experienced by divorced, single-parent, or blended families. Children in these families are more prone to run away from home in case a problem occurs in the family (Hughes, 1989).

Upon reviewing extant studies Hughes (1989) concludes that more than the half of the youth (52%) remains in the country or metropolitan area from which they run away. Around 12% of the youth who run away are cross-country runners. Even these youth may have traveled only 50-100 miles away from their homes. Often the decision to run away is the consequence of an undesired moment in the household that pushes the youth to leave home. He also cites a survey conducted in 1986 that showed that 70% of the runaways return home within a week. This result indicates that the running away is not planned beforehand, but happens due to conditions the youth cannot overcome.

Adolescents' and Parents' Perceptions of Runaway Behavior

Melson (1995) reports that, approximately 65% of the runaways leave home because they did not get along with their parents. Poor parent-child relationships and extreme family conflict are also found other studies of runaways. Furthermore, many runaways feel conflict with the value systems of their parents and a loss of individuality in their families. They often have poor communication with parents and feel a lack of

warmth, affection, and support from their families. They perceive their family environment as cold, not understanding, and indifferent.

Melson (1995) also presents findings from another study conducted by Post and McCoard (1995), which found that around 70% adolescent runaways' greatest needs were concerned with living arrangements, family relationships, and communication with parents. In addition, when runaways and their parents are compared to non-runaways and their parents, Post and McCoard's study revealed that runaways and their parents receive lesser empathy and positive regard from each other than non-runaways and their parents in their sample.

Research findings from Whitbeck and Hoyt (1999) state that that there are perceptual discrepancies between the adolescents' and their parents' perception of family functioning and parent-child relationships in the family. In their study parents often stated that the family functioning process goes on in a positive manner; however, the adolescents and the care takers report less positive process compared to parents. Primary care takers perceive their youths' externalization problems to be more severe than the youths perceive them. The primary care takers felt the family environment less problematic than the youth themselves, and parents blame the youth for the running away behavior. At the same time, the adolescents seemed to take personal responsibility for the problems and solutions. In research conducted by Safyer et al. (2004), it was found out that more than 33% of the runaway adolescents believed that they caused the problem that led them to run. In fact, less than 33% of the runaway youngsters believe that their parents were main cause for the runaway behavior. More

than one third of the adolescents surveyed were most likely to explain the cause of the problem as being a problematic parent-child relationship.

Whitbeck and Hoyt (1999) suggest that analyzing perceptual differences and their effects on the family life may be mainly associated with the moment when the family dynamics have prompted the teen to flee or be thrown out of the house in addition to parent-child interaction and perceptual discrepancies. Their research also demonstrated other significant variables in which runaway youngsters' detailed high rates of alcohol use; unsuccessful parenting practices and occurrences of physical and sexual abuse. Thompson et al. (2002) argued that youth who run away have endangered themselves by failing at school, abusing drug, practicing unsafe sex, and becoming delinquent. They also found that runaway teens further are at risk of experiencing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post traumatic stress.

In their research Whitbeck and Hoyt (1999) posited that these emotional and behavioral problems do not disappear when they grow up, and that runaway teens in their sample are in great danger while attending their primary needs on the street because they might be subject to street victimization and sexual exploitation. Whitbeck and Hoyt's 1999 research contends that eventually it is likely that many runaway teens get engaged in crimes such as selling drugs, minor theft, and trading sex for money or shelter.

The reasons why youth run from home and then engage in crime have been examined by researchers for many years. Some of the previous findings that studied parent-child relationship during adolescent years suggest that various family members have different perspectives about the cause of run away behavior. Teens, which are in

the middle of re-negotiating parental relationships, are apt to be less optimistic about their families. However, at the same time their parents may have a greater feeling that there is no problem (Safyer et al., 2004).

The study conducted by Safyer and colleagues (2004) aimed to gather data concerning effective ways to reach out to these high-risk families based on the perceptions of both the youth and the parents. They posed the following questions: (1) what are the problems of runaway adolescents? (2) are there any differences in the reports of the parents and the adolescents concerning youth problems and family functioning? (3) who do parents and adolescents hold responsible for the problem? (4) what kind of solutions do parents and adolescents propose for the problem?

A total of 61 adolescents and their parents agreed to participate. Fifty-five out of 61 parents and adolescents replied to the semi-structured interview. The majority (89.1%) of the parents stated that the adolescent themselves were responsible for the run away behavior. Many of them responded that their child ran away due to a disagreement with the house rules. None of the parents stated that they had done anything to contribute to their child's runaway behavior. Only a small percentage (7.0%) of the parents reported that the problems were interpersonal, or because of the parent-child relationship. At the same time, the same parents identified their partner as the one causing problems in the parent-child relationship (Safyer, et. al., 2004).

In answer to question what could be done to keep the children stay home and not run away, the majority (67.3%) of the guardians/parents responded that the youth should change their attitude or adjust their behavior. Only a small percentage (10.9%) of the guardians/parents believed that they could do something to keep the children at

home. In response to the same question in the semi-structured interview (oral interview conducted with both the parents/guardians and the adolescents to get their opinions about the reasons and solutions for runaway behavior) 31.4% of the adolescents believed that the problem resided within them. Approximately a quarter of the adolescents responded that their parents were the actual cause of their runaway behavior. The most frequent teen response (41.2%) was that they believed that problems were created by problematic parent-child relationship. As respond to what can be done to keep the youth at home, 21.6% adolescents held themselves responsible. For instance one youngster stated that he should stop smoking marijuana, come home in time, or not hanging around with juvenile peers. Similar to the respond of the parents, 25.5% of the adolescents believed that the parents should change their behavior and try to understand them better. Finally, 17.6% of the adolescents suggested that the child-parent relationship should change to stop children run away from their homes (Safyer et al., 2004).

Extra Familial Influences

School Environment and Bullying Behaviors' Effects on Runaway Youth

American teenagers with school-related problems seem to be at a higher risk to run away from home than teens with no school related problems according to research. Flowers (2001) notes that his study showed that 13% of high school students sampled have at least one runaway experience, and another 20% had a thought about running away. At risk youths for running away include those who have poor grades in school, school expulsions social isolation from peers, and/or disciplinary problems in school or

the home. He further states that many of these teens are apt to dropping out of school and leaving their families—heading to the streets into a life of prostitution and many other deviant behaviors.

Slesnick (2004) upon reviewing the literature identifies two causations relating to runaways and school. The first, failure at school is a big factor that causes conflict between the children and their parents. School failure experience leads to scolding and nagging, which likely is accompanied by emotional withdrawal and negative response by an angry or upset parent. She contends that children may respond to this treatment in different ways: (a) self-esteem may fall, the child may become noncompliant or withdrawn; (b) the child may escape to a place of the refuge and/or seek the comfort of a peer group. Eventually, the actual effect is decrease or weakening of conventional social control on the child. Thus, children who experience the extensive stress of failure at school and parental rejection, parental pressure, and emotional trauma from care givers or parents may see running away as one of the solutions to their problem. The second main cause defined as the fundamental source of the youth's runaway problem lies in the home. Slesnick contends that the intensity of the problems at home results with an inability focus and cope in a positive manner with the stresses and demands made by the school. She concludes that the ability to concentrate on, be motivated by, be interested in, or exert energy upon school work may be seriously impaired by the emotional overspill of a home circumstance which is filled with anger, crisis, violence, rejection, or other kinds of disruption.

Furthermore, in the study by Brennan, Huizing and Elliott (1994) it is argued that poor teacher-student relations and school problems could lead to poor school

performance and adolescents' running away. This study found out that 75% of their sample showed poor performance in school. Moreover, 82% of the runaways in the study saw themselves as failures and 69% reported feeling useless. Brennan et al. (1994) maintain that other studies showed runaways to have serious school problems including truancy, dropping out, pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse, severe depression and suicide, and that they also displayed low academic motivation, did not like school, and were known as troublemakers. Furthermore, Brennan et al. (1994) argue that contrary to non-runaways, runaways are more likely to be enrolled in vocational and nonacademic programs in school, and that runaways had poorer grades, less interest for continuing education in college, and having more difficulties in getting along with teachers and school counselors than non-runaways. Similarly Plymton (1997) also contends that more than half of the runaways studied drop out of high school, and they have further difficulty in maintaining regular employment, they also had trouble having good interpersonal relationships, and more than 50% are likely to get divorced.

These findings concur with research done in the UK. One of the largest studies conducted in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and England in 1999 collected data from 13,000 UK students under the age of 16. The study found out that bullying at schools causes children to run away from their homes (Mansell, 2001).

The findings revealed that the relation between bullying and running away was strong; 23% of the surveyed children reported that they run away as a result of the persistent bullying and parental pressure. The same study also revealed that 41% of the bullied children had been excluded from school in the past. The student also stated that problems, such as physical abuse in their households contributed to their runaway

behavior. The data further showed that 25% of children who ran away did that because of problems at school. Additionally the study found out that every year 100 thousand children ran away from their homes or their care centers for at least one night (Mansell, 2001).

Psychosocial and Behavioral Problems among Runaways

The extant American literature shows that there is a huge interest in studying psychosocial and behavioral problems among runaways. Studies have consistently revealed such problems in this population. Kingree, Braithwaite and Woodring (2001) for example, cite Booth's and Zhang's (1996) study which included 150 youths residing in a shelter in New York City found out that 41% met diagnostic criteria for major affective disorder and 27% had at least one prior suicide attempt. They also discuss another study of 576 youths recruited from four shelters for runaways in New York City which found very similar rates of depression 44% and prior suicidal attempts 29%. Kingree et al. further cite a third study of 219 homeless and runaway youths in Denver determined that 43% had attempted suicide and 35% had previously received psychiatric treatment, and conclude that research has shown that runaways are often victims of prior abuse or trauma. Consequently Kingree et al. (2001) present Feitel and colleagues 1992 study which revealed that 27% of the respondents in their New York City sample had been sexually abused.

Whitbeck and Hoyt (1999) showed that traumatic experiences, psychological distress, substance abuse, and risky sexual behavior could be either to runaway behavior leading factors or consequences of running away. Runaway behaviors are

directly related to traumatic experiences from family, but not all runaway incidents are caused by parental abuse. Indeed, running away may often occur after parents have attempted to exercise appropriate supervision or discipline in response to their children engaging in problematic behaviors such as substance use, or risky sexual behaviors. Running away may also be influenced by peer factors, such as when one youth decides to join another in a runaway episode.

Runaway Teenager Victimization and Crime Involvement

Runaways and Delinquency—Gang involvement

As previously mentioned it is estimated that more than 1.3 million children in the United States spent at least one night homeless during a year period. Ringwalt, Greene, Robertson, and McPheeters (1998) discuss that children who run away from home are not only at risk for victimization but may also victimize others. The relation between runaways and delinquency or criminal activities has been well established; for example many runaways sell sexual favors to make money for basic requirements. Bradley (1997) maintains that many of the runaways turn to drug dealing to support drug habits or as additional means to provide food, clothing and shelter; further he states that theft is also a common crime among runaways. Bradley (1997) cites from the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) which reported that around 80% of their sample of street runaways and 66% of the shelter runaways had committed or attempted a theft. Runaways are also prone to committing violent crimes while on the streets. In addition Bradley points out that other research has found that there is a direct relation between runaway violence, violence victimization as runaways, and violence experienced by the

runaways prior to leaving home. Statistics from FYSB show that around two-thirds of the homeless runaways and half of those in shelters surveyed by the FYSB reported carrying a weapon. Also, approximately one in four street runaways and one in ten shelter runaways had committed an act of violence using a weapon.

Yoder, Whitbeck and Hoyt (2003) contend that there are similarities between youth gang members and homeless and runaway youth; both are more likely to come from abusive and dysfunctional families of origin compared to non-gang and non-runaway youth. A second similarity is that like gang members homeless and runaway youth seek peers who can provide companionship, and social support, in order to survive on their own. Although they differ in degree of seriousness, both youth gang members and homeless and runaway youth engage in criminal behaviors (Second Comprehensive Study, 2000), they are responsible for many homicides and a variety of serious criminal activities. Furthermore, Yoder et al. (2003) state that, if homeless and runaway youth are on their own in the streets they engage in less serious criminal activity to survive. They also maintain that both youth gang members and homeless and runaway youth are more likely to use drugs than are non-gang and non-runaway youth. Homeless and runaway youth seek peers who can provide companionship, social support, and protection for surviving on their own, and runaways often join gangs for similar reasons- companionship, acceptance, protection, and criminal opportunities.

Similarly, from research conducted by McCarthy and Hagan (1991) it is revealed that criminal involvement is not simply more common among street youth but also more frequent and serious. It indicated that 46% of the homeless respondents made drug

sales, 49% stole goods valued up to \$50, and 27% broke into dwellings or businesses (as cited in Yoder et al., 2003).

In fact some research suggest that given the similarities between youth gang members and homeless and runaway youth, and given that gangs may provide the companionship and protection necessary for survival on the streets, it is believable that homeless and runaway youth are involved in youth gangs (Hagen & McCarthy, 1997).

Substance Abuse

American runaways often engage in substance use and abuse. (Whitbeck, Hoyt and Ackley (1997b) revealed that more than half of runaways they surveyed receive a diagnosis for an alcohol disorder, or a diagnosis for an illicit drug disorder. Moreover, 21% of the runaway and homeless youths who participated in a study in Northern California reported that they had injected drugs into their body in the 30 days prior to being interviewed. Additionally, high rates of substance abuse were mentioned by runaway and homeless youth. Whitbeck et al. (1997b) contend that many studies also show that drug use in shelters is likely to occur, most of users reported that they use it more than once a week. Alcohol use is also common among runaways, with rates reported as high as 60% using on common base.

Sexual Behavior among Runaways

Not surprisingly, runaways are also apt to engage in risky sexual behavior. Flowers (2001) reports that commonly spotted problems and risky sexual behaviors are irregular condom use, and having sex with multiple partners in the previous 12 months.

He also maintains that a study conducted in San Francisco showed that one out of five street youths recruited from health clinics in San Francisco had a sexually transmitted disease. Further he states that the same study also revealed that one out of five from the same street youth had exchanged sex for money, drugs, or food at some point in their lives.

Prostitution

In the United States, significant amount of runaway teenagers who end up on the streets, often get engaged in prostitution to survive. Flowers (2001) points out that according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, up to 77% of prostitution cases involving teens also reported running away from home on at least one occasion. Snyder (2002) notes that, according to the Office of Justice Programs, 67% of the juveniles who were arrested in 2002 because of prostitution and commercialized vice, were females.

Flowers (2001) maintains that a majority of runaway prostitutes were victims of child sexual abuse. The correlation between child sexual abuse, running away, and prostitution is supported by the literature. Flowers points to a U.S. Department of Justice analysis of child prostitution, which indicates that sexual abuse seems to indirectly increase the chance of prostitution by increasing the risk of running away. This implies that it is not that sexual abuse leads to prostitution, but it is that running away likely leads to prostitution. Flowers also reports that as noted by the U.S. Department of Justice's publication *Prostitution of Children and Child-Sex Tourism*, the problem of runaways and prostituted youth is not only a major concern in the United States but

throughout the world. Millions of victims—often runaways, throwaways, or street kids are conned, charmed, coerced, or sold into prostitution and other sexual misuse.

Summary

As the literature demonstrates runaway youth has become a major concern in American society and in other Western countries. Every year an estimated number of 1.3 million to 2.8 million and according to other estimates between 1 million to 4 million children between the ages 20 to 18 run away from home in the United States. In United Kingdom it is estimated that 43,000 children under 18 run away every year. In Canada, an annual estimate of the number of street youth has ranged from 10,000 to 20,000 for the year of 1990. Street children in Turkey are estimated to be around 20,000 to 40,000 and the recent estimates in Turkey shows that among these street children there are 2,000 to 6,000 runaway children annually. Recent figures indicate that approximately 100 million children and adolescents live on the streets of cities worldwide.

It can be summarized from the literature in the U.S. that girls are more likely to run away from home than boys (58% to 42%). The majority of runaway's are teenagers. The majority of runaways are white, non-Hispanic teenagers. Some research indicates socio-economic factors. According to the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), an estimated 40% of runaway youth in shelters and homeless came from families receiving public assistance. Other studies indicate that runaways are more likely to come from middle-class families than lower-class ones. However, the NISMART findings do not support this assertion and states that that there is no significant relationship between running away and income.

Many of the runaway children have been sexually, physically, or emotionally abused or neglected at home; have problems with substance abuse, school attendance, or mental disorders; or are otherwise seriously disadvantaged in their displacement to street life. These children typically face a number of troubling situations such as lack of food, shelter and protection when away from home for an extended time. Female runaways are likely to prostitute just to survive and, in many cases runaways are likely to abuse or become addicted to drugs and alcohol. Sexually transmitted diseases, sexual assaults, and other forms of victimization are high among runaway teens caught at the cross roads of high-risk activities and dangerous street life.

Factors such as long-term, unresolved issues and intense conflicts that reach a point of no return, either by the runaway or by the care-taker, result with the child being thrown out or running away. Family dysfunction, parental neglect, family drug use, and implications of sexual activity in the runaway are seen as strong indicators of potential runaway behavior in teens.

The recent U.S. research thus suggests that the relationships among parenting, family bonding, and factors pertinent to the quality of family life and runaway behaviors are relatively significant. Family, from this perspective, is defined as the primary social unit responsible for the socialization of children. Presumably, social disorganization, as evidenced by the weakening of the family dynamics and other social institutions, precipitates increases in the incidence of runaway behavior.

Several paradigms provided methods of predicting and describing run away causes. From the perspective of criminological theories Hirschi's social control theory focuses on the family as the primary source of attachment, commitments, and

disciplinary controls in preventing delinquency. According to social control theory, youths who have weak ties to social institution such as the family and school are more likely to become delinquent than are youths who are more integrated into such social institutions. On the other hand, social capital theory assumes that majority of the runaways studied come from families with diminished social capital. This population is more likely to have left their families in which the head of household was unemployed, or the family was disrupted in which one or both biological parents were absent from the home.

Family systems theory maintains that adolescent problem behaviors including substance abuse, running away, and other externalizing problems are symptoms of maladaptive family interaction patterns. Social learning theory suggests that youths engage in delinquency because they associate with peers who model, promote beliefs favorable to, and reinforce deviant behavior. Finally, emotion theory explains why adolescents deviate; it argues that emotion animates the perspectives of the runaways and influences their behavior.

Among the causes of run away behavior, domestic violence plays a significant role. The family condition (complete families vs. incomplete families), parent-child relationships, depression, suicidal thoughts, truancy, juvenile delinquency, drug and alcohol use, as well as age and gender of the runaway subject are all thought to be factors related to runaway behavior. In the literature Parents/caretakers and adolescents report similar problematic parent-child relationships characterized by low levels of parental monitoring, parental warmth and supportiveness, and high levels of parental rejection. Most runaways run from broken homes, where at least one parent is

absent. In some cases events such as a divorce, a long term illness, change of settlement, or a poor school performance that creates a crisis may end with youth's runaway too.

Research findings also confirm that there are significant perceptual discrepancies between the adolescent and perception of family functioning parent-child relationship and family life. Parents have reported family functioning in a more positive light than the adolescents. American teenagers with school-related problems seem to be at a higher risk to run away from home than teens that are well adjusted in school. Youths at risk for running away include those who suffer from have poor grades in school, school expulsions social isolation from peers, and/or disciplinary problems in school or the home.

A study in the United Kingdom also found out that bullying at schools causes children to run away from their homes. Traumatic experiences, psychological distress, substance abuse, and risky sexual behavior could be either precipitants or consequences of running away. Studies show that youth gang members and homeless and runaway youth are also more likely to have abusive and dysfunctional families of origin than are non-gang and non-runaway youth.

Finally, National Runaway Statistics, show that 'family dynamics' are the main cause of runaway behavior, followed by school, and peer/social causes. Other studies also indicate the family as the main resource of the runaway teens but they also present family as the best alternative to the runaway problem.

CHAPTER 3

PROGRAMS AND SOLUTIONS FOR THE RUNAWAY YOUTH PROBLEM

In previous chapter the study focused on finding out the motivations that make the youth head to the streets. This chapter provides extensive information about the methods Western countries have been applying for decades while dealing with the youth runaway behavior. Literature review has shown that the runaway problem is much complicated to prevent or intervene with a single program or method. In Western countries, particularly in the United States; National runaway hotlines, youth crisis shelters, outreach services, residential treatment programs, youth centered life skills training programs, and family oriented therapy services are just some of these programs used to intervene or prevent runaway behavior among youth.

Similar problems related to children have also attracted the attention of the International Community; United Nation's following declaration expresses the importance of focusing on the wellbeing of the children.

The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means to enable him to develop physically, mentally morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose, the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration. (United Nations Declaration, Principle 2, 1959).

This means that all children, including but not limited to those living in the streets or anywhere far from their homes, have the right to feel safe and be able to develop their maximum potential in a nurturing environment (Yeo, 1998).

Street life, a temporary stay with relatives or at a friend's house, or a visit to a safety or an emergency shelter are alternatives for a youth on the run. Runaways who are not reported seek often refuge with someone close to them. In such cases it is likely

that the problem in the household is resolved and the runaway returns home after a short time. On the other hand, if the problems in the house are not addressed properly, then it is possible that the runaway behavior reoccurs or the youth seeks other solutions (Hughes, 1989).

The resolution of any problem lies heavily on through understanding of the problem. In the case of American runaways, the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), administered by the FBI, is mandated to locate and identify missing children. The problem here is that running away is not considered a criminal act but a status offense. Due to this fact, the runaway problem is not a priority in many law enforcement agencies, often many law enforcement agencies fail to include all the names of runaways in the files. In fact, even when the name is included, files lack detailed description such as aliases, numerical identifiers, dental information, scars, jewelry and other information that could make a positive contribution to locating the missing children (America's Missing, 1986).

The Missing Children Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-292) mandates that parents, legal guardians, or next of kin have the right to request that information about the missing child be entered in the NCIC database. Participation in this system is largely voluntarily; some states require while others leave it to the Law Enforcement Agencies' determination to enter the data into the system. This results in an inadequate representation of the actual figures about runaways. Sadly in cases where a runaway child is molested or murdered it has happened that that case is recorded as murder without referring to the fact that the child was first missing (America's Missing, 1986)

Community Based Programs

The problem of runaway and prostituted teenagers and its implications has resulted in a number of policy initiatives and responses in addressing the issues. American federal programs aimed at responding to youth at risk for running away and for teenage prostitution and at intervening with those responsible for child abuse and child sexual exploitation can be seen in a number of important legislative acts since the mid-1970s. These include the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation Act, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, the Missing Children Act, and the creation of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (Significant Measures, 2004).

Task Forces

Law enforcement agencies apply a variety of multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary approaches while responding to runaways and prostituted youth incidents. These prevention and intervention efforts usually involve specialized task forces, strike forces, and professional networks aimed at combating the problems of teen runaways and their sexual exploitation (Flowers, 2001).

Task forces usually consist of local and federal law enforcement, prosecutors, and community organizations that use their resources, skills, and expertise to develop strategies and techniques for identifying runaways and teenage prostitutes. The ultimate goal is to return these vulnerable youths to a safe environment, and to find and arrest pimps, child molesters, pornographers, and others who exploit them. Examples include

the Southern California Regional Sexual Assault and Exploitation Felony Enforcement Team, (SAFE), the South Florida Law Enforcement Effort against Child Harm (LEACH) Task Force, and the Federal Child Exploitation Strike Force out of Chicago, all of these are successful teams in this field. In the state of Minnesota, a similar model is being established: The Pimp/Juvenile Prostitution Task Force will include members from local police agencies, the FBI, the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, County Prosecutors, and community groups. They will work together toward the common goal of prevention, apprehension, and prosecution (Flowers, 2001).

Strike forces created by multi agencies work towards quickly identifying and apprehending sexual exploiters of children. Multidisciplinary approaches to assist teens who are at risk through intervening, investigating, and providing specialized training and mutual cooperation among agencies have been successful in fighting teenage prostitution and in responding to the needs of exploited runaway youths. One example of such successful multi-jurisdictional effort was the 1997 conference sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, called the Combating the Trafficking of Youth for Prostitution: Forming Partnerships for Prevention, Protection and Prosecution” (Flowers, 2001).

National Runaway Hotlines

National Runaway Switchboard

National Runaway Switchboard offers services for 24 hours for runaway children. It gives them the opportunity to make long distance calls at no charge. Furthermore, it provides free referral services and counseling to children, parents, teachers and all

relevant individuals (Runaway Youth Program Directory, 1979). The National Runaway Switchboard recently initiated the Kids Call Program which seeks to educate about the real alternatives they have to running away when they face crises in their lives. Through Kids Call, the front line team of the staff and volunteers from the National Runaway Switchboard talk to youths via speakerphones in alternative living arrangements, in classrooms, and to children's groups about this critical topic (Kids Call Program, 2005).

Peace of Mind

This particular service conveys messages from the runaway children to their parents, but keeps the location of the runaway confidential (Runaway Youth Program Directory, 1979).

Community-Based Youth Crisis Shelters

Greene et al. (1997) as cited in Thompson, Pollio, Constantine, Reid and Nebbit (2002) reported that community-based youth crisis shelters are the first intervention methods used for the runaway and homeless youth problem. These centers commonly serve youths aged 12 to 18. They are usually limited in size and cannot provide service for the same individual for more than 15 to 30 continuing days, depending on the center. In addition, Thompson et al. (2002) state that Greene et al. explained that these services are often partially funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Thompson et al. (2002) conducted a study to assess the short-term outcomes for youths receiving runaway and homeless shelter services and compared it to similar youths using other, long term treatment methods. The researchers posed two

questions: (1) what are the short-term outcomes for runaway and homeless youths after discharge from an emergency or crisis shelter? (2) how do these short-term outcomes compare with outcomes of similar youths using longer-term treatment modalities? The study used a quasi-experimental design that included pre-service and post-service interviews of runaway/homeless youth and a comparison group with similar characteristics from day treatment programs.

The sample was drawn among youth that utilized emergency shelters in 11 agencies across Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas between November 1997 and May 1998. These agencies are, known as MINK-Region VII, providing emergency shelters and crisis intervention programs for youth in need. They are federally funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. The MINK agencies provide crisis shelter and services which include short term, temporary and residential services. Furthermore, they make the youth access to school-based education; crisis and family counseling; life skills training; and referral services. The agency population varies some serve only males other serve both genders and they are spread out in the suburban, urban and rural areas. The youth in the comparison group was drawn from four agencies providing day treatment for youth at risk in the greater St. Louis area (Thompson et. al., 2002).

The research outcomes suggest that youths who were served by these shelters and returned home demonstrated more positive results than those sent to other treatment programs. Regarding the first research question 'short-term outcomes,' every outcome variable showed significant improvement post intervention. For instance, days on the run decreased, perceived family support increased, and the self-esteem of

runaway and throwaway youths increased. Treatment was seen to decrease runaway behavior, and although less strongly detention, and expulsion rates at school. It also decreased teen unemployment rates by increasing employment (Thompson et. al., 2002).

Yeo (1998) asserts that there is a risk that American runaway teenagers can become institutionalized if they remain in these shelters away from their families for a long time. The shelter services should be considered effective only for a transition period. If youths are going to remain in the shelter for longer periods, than they need to be placed in environments similar to those in the society. He further states that the schooling services in these programs should be similar to those in the community. The teaching staff and the curricula should be provided by a Department or Board of Education to achieve the goal settling the children sufficiently to attend typical schools.

Porth Project (UK)

Other Western countries have similar services. Browne and Falshaw (1998) noted that the Porth Project in United Kingdom provides 24-hour telephone service if a young person requires refuge. The Porth Project involves approved carers/families at confidential locations, which provide short-term crises intervention solutions such as accommodation in the evening, overnight and all day during the weekend. The young runaways are allowed to choose where they would like to stay. During the daytime the child is transferred to the office base of the Porth Project.

Shelters for Runaway Youth

Every year an increasing number of runaway and homeless youths are applying to emergency shelters for their services. In the U.S. shelters seem to be the safest to runaway youth and to the community. Shelters with 24 hours access and various counseling and assistance services are rated as the most effective ones. These shelters are designed to meet the specific needs of the society. Shelters are usually well-supervised group living facilities. Compared to the shelters in the urban areas, those in rural areas may have several intensively monitored emergency foster homes. Urban or rural the process is the same; the runaway youths and homeless youths have access to immediate safety in a caring and warm place. The ultimate aim of such programs for runaway youths is to have them reunited with their families. It is strongly recommended that families be involved in the resolution of the conflict that caused the youth to run away (Hughes, 1989).

Hughes (1989) further contends that in 1987, federally funded runaway centers declared that 53% of the youths put in these programs returned home. If the reunification is not a solution for the teens, because of possible abuse, the shelter officials work together with the individual to find an alternative arrangement for him/her. Programs to find alternative arrangements accomplished a positive arrangement for 37% of the runaway youth in the same period. The advantage of these reunification programs is that provide long-term solutions for families and the runaway youths if there is no abuse in the house. However Hughes states that the disadvantage of these programs is that there are not enough available.

Hughes (1989) discusses that if parents are opposed to reunification, other alternative approaches such as the child residing with other relatives, entering foster care, or living in a supervised apartment are considered. At this point, programs that facilitate life skill training and provide both educational and job readiness training opportunities are essential for runaways. He further contends that unfortunately, the U.S. has been biased toward building jails and institutions for youths who are very problematic instead of investing in programs for youths that could prevent such harsh measures. Hughes reiterates a deficit model that such kinds of institutions stigmatize the youths for the rest of their lives, and are not the most appropriate environments for the youth.

Outreach/Outpost Services for Runaways

Both in the United States and globally many outreach programs have been established to respond to runaway and prostitution incidents in which teenagers were involved. The basic goals of these outreach programs are to prevent these incidents, to provide support through education, counseling, intervention, hotlines, and to mobilize community support and resources to help youths defined as at-risk. Successful outreach programs include community youth shelters such as Covenant House and Children of the Night and national and international efforts like the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse, the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect, the National Fingerprint Center for Missing Children, and End Child Prostitution (Flowers, 2001).

In American programs the street outreach program employees try to gain the confidence of the runaway youths, and attempt to provide them with the support and services they lack in their street life. In some areas officials set up outposts with special equipment to provide medical care for runaways. Youths in rural areas have other problems, have fewer facilities to receive service, and are usually more visible and caught compared to those in large cities. These outpost/outreach services assist those in need to survive until they receive full shelter protection or get into another runaway youth assistance program. In small settlements runaways usually end up in juvenile correction facilities because such communities don't have many alternative solutions to deal with problematic youths (Hughes, 1989).

Similarly the Safe in the City Program in United Kingdom provides support to youths on the street through street work. Workers traverse the city in pairs, visiting pre-designated venues at pre-determined, advertised times. However, they also operate outside such scheduled times to hit youth in need by chance and provide them the service they need. Besides providing services to youths in need, this program represents the ideas and the opinion of the youths on the streets at meetings with the governmental officials and parents (Browne & Falshaw, 1998). Some of these outreach/outpost workers hand out care packages, including juice, food, toiletries, underwear, and socks, as well as information on where youths can go to get help. However, street youth do not usually seek help and show very low service utilization. For example Slesnick, (2004) points out that a research in 1999 showed that only 9% had ever made use of mental health services and only 10% to 15% had ever received treatment for alcohol or drug problems. The same study also revealed that among

shelter-residing youth, service utilization is higher. In addition Slesnick, Meade, and Tonigan (2001) found that 29% of their shelter-based sample had been to health and psychological services.

Hagan and McCarthy (1997) cite Marshall and Bhugra's (1996) study in which it was explained that many runaways might avoid seeking services because they perceive them to be disapproving and inflexible. Further Hagan and McCarthy (1997) mention Herman, Struening and Barrow's (1993) study which also indicated that discrepancies between the youth's perceived needs and those of mental health professional's can create a dichotomy that may result with the rejection of the service. In addition Hagan and McCarthy contend that Struening and Barrow mentioned that even problems occur in these units, shelters and shelter-based programs have commonly been the primary interventions for runaway youth in the literature.

Residential Treatment Programs

The reasons for running away change depending on where they live (in a care center or at home), and also the reason may change for the particular individual. Because of these differences the following is advised by Miller and Eggertson (1990): (1) residential treatment should not be conducted until the youth, the family and the professionals agree on the "house rules." (2) if all sides agree on the "house rules" then the residential treatment can be conducted. In additionally to the house rules the agreement should include problem identification and goals. (3) if running away remains a major pattern, commitment to the house rules and treatment goals has to be renegotiated, rather than focusing on the runaway behavior. Often the 'real problem'

may be ambivalence, lack of direction, and lack of progress in the treatment goals, or other problems, and not the running behavior itself. (4) adolescents see running away as both a solution and a problem, and the function of the behavior can fluctuate over in time. Therefore it is important to determine the related previous circumstances which make the individual run away. Whether it is a dislike of the rules, a family conflict or another reason, an ongoing assessment allows for a meaningful treatment focus at any time. The motive behind this is that the adolescent's view as to whether treatment is a solution or a problem also will change. (5) it is important to assess the degree of severity of the runaway behavior during the referral in order to apply the most effective treatment. This assessment needs to be ongoing if the severity of runaway behavior is not stable. For the first degree runners, those who were slightly alienated from their family, family work should be the initial focal point. However, second-degree runners, those who had some street life experience and were unsure about running away from home, individual, group, family, and larger systems work are all similarly significant because of the ambivalent nature of the running behavior. Finally, for the third degree runners, those who became very well used to street life and had no intention to return home, since running becomes a kind of lifestyle for them, the individual, group, and larger system work should be the initial treatment in order to prepare them for independent living and decision-making. (6) treatment may differ depending on where the teen lives, at home or in a care center. While family work should be used for youths who run away from home, it is more complex when a youth runs away from care center. For positive results it is important to exactly define the runaway behavior. (7) therapists should search for direction and consultation once they think they are 'stuck' and

disempowered despite all efforts.(8) finally, additional studies should gather in parent and professional data, which can be compared with self-report runaway data. As last suggestion Miller and Eggertson assert that a sample of adolescents who have stopped running away should be studied to find out what kinds of programs were most effective in preventing or resolving their runaway behavior.

Peer Counseling and School-Support to Prevent Runaway Behavior

In Great Britain Roger Smith, head of policy at the Children's Society argues that problems at school are just one of the many factors causing children to run away. He further notes that it is also a fact that schools are places where problems can be identified when they appear. In this context schools fail to respond to the students when the problem arises, and that results in reluctance of students to seek help from the teachers. As a solution to this problem, Dr. Michelle Elliot, director of the child protection charity Kidscape, states that schools need to encourage students to express their feelings and problems. Furthermore, she argues that children run away because of problems at home, but they are also not able to get support from their schools. Thus, more time has to be spent on personal, social, and health training in this matter (as cited in Mansell, 2001).

In five schools in Leeds, United Kingdom, students have been trained to give advice to their peers. The project is called Safe on the Streets Scheme. The officials running the project claim that problems arise at schools easily. If noticed, it is more effective if peers give advice to their friends instead of their teachers (Browne & Falshaw, 1998).

Browne and Falshaw (1998) point out David, Carmany, Cook, Epps, Statman and Walker's (1978) study in which too was suggested that the young people should be included in the serving process. David et al. (1978) further asserted that officials should not claim that they are the experts and that they know everything about runaways. The involvement of youth in the programs mitigates this kind of missionary attitude towards their clients. Furthermore, they contended that in previous trials they have seen that youth participation adds immeasurably positive effects to the quality of a program, and that young people can offer invaluable volunteer or staff services as peer counselors, board members, fix it people and this list can be extended depending on the need of the runaway youth.

The most recent study similar to the one in UK and David et al.'s (1978) study is about to be launched in the Netherlands. Officials of the city Rotterdam felt obliged to establish a program to watch problematic children who frequently got in trouble and showed truancy. The "student watch system" (leerlingvolgsysteem) is going to be implemented at first at six pilot secondary schools in Rotterdam, after a one year trial period the program is going to include all schools in Rotterdam. Officials state that their students showed many problems rooted from their homes. If they could realize or catch the signs in advance, than they would be more helpful to the students. In addition the officials maintained that if they don't take any measure to find out which student have problems it is very likely that these particular students skip school, fail at classes, and head to the streets where they will be in insecure environments (Probleemleerling, 2005).

Youth Centered Life Skills and Employment Training Programs

There are many projects which operate on young-person-centered basis. Homeless youth might benefit from interventions designed to improve effective and adaptive coping skills. Teaching street youth to deal more effectively with their stress may prevent more serious problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, suicide, and/or interpersonal violence. Other researchers emphasized that replacing drug use with effective, realistic life skills and attitudes is important, as is building a new basis for self-esteem and self-confidence (Baron, 2003).

These mental health and drug abuse programs would also be linked to programs addressing physical health. In addition, employment-training programs are also essential for runaway youth. Employment training must include basic life skills to develop work habits, including arriving for work on time, dealing with responsibility and authority, and understanding their tasks in an organization. Skills should be in work that avoids boring repetitive tasks that alienate the youth. Instead, work should provide skills that provide a sense of achievement and progress. To be fully effective, job placement programs and counseling must include efforts to develop jobs with increasing mobility for the youth. Eventually, programs that provide youth with jobs that allow for career advancement have been shown to reduce delinquent behavior (Baron, 2003).

Employment programs and programs centering on drug abuse and mental and physical health need to be coupled with the provisions of decent, affordable, safe housing in which these youth might be able to distance themselves from the offenders, the poverty, the deviant subsistence strategies, and the culture that all lead to violence

and victimization. Without a place to live, street youth cannot attend school, find employment, or be successful in treatment programs (Baron, 2003).

Family-Oriented Services

One source of the missing children problem may also be its most hopeful solution- the family. Family holds the greatest hope of bringing stability to children's maturation processes. To resolve the many problems of the runaway or missing children, parents or legal guardians must recognize and commit themselves to every child's right to family nurturing, protection, discipline, and family structure. Eventually the core of any society is the family (America's Missing, 1986).

Family Therapy and Counseling Services

Providing individual and family therapy has been an ongoing effort with the aim of family reunification and individual development among runaway youth. Based upon many social scientists' ideas, it is suggested that certain social and psychological attachments keep most youth tied to the home. The subject social bonds include elements such as participation in satisfying activities, occupation of rewarding social roles, effective sanctioning networks, and so on. Personal commitment bonds, on the other hand, refer to internalized values and beliefs. They include commitment to conventional social goals and values, belief in the legitimacy of conventional norms, positive self-esteem, and negative attitudes toward delinquent behavior. Any type of family therapy promoting these kinds of bonding and interaction may be for the benefit of the runaway youth. As suggested, many of the social studies programs tied to the

specific needs of the whole family, not just runaway adolescents, may aim at high goals. Since parent-child-conflicts and problematic family environment seem to overwhelm runaway youth and parents, family-based counseling and therapy become the most fundamental treatment for runaways and their families (Flowers, 2001).

Additionally, Adams & Adams (1987) suggested that intervention efforts must respond to problems such as poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, and lack of community resources that many of these parents face. Demarsh & Kumpfer (1986); Whitbeck & Hoyt (1999) suggest that family-based therapy or programs must be more intensive, longer term, include both the adolescents and their parents, and cover such issues as family communication, effective parenting strategies, and anger management. In addition, Russell (1998) and Terrell (1997) suggested that family-based programs should also consider youth's past experiences of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and psychological abuse as well as their physical and sexual victimization on the street and the related problems coupled with these experiences, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, suicide ideation, and other mental health problems. Furthermore, it would be more beneficial that such programs also cover issues such as substance abuse and provide intervention and follow-up services to assist in the recovery of the youth and the family (as cited in Baron, 2003).

All these earlier mentioned youth and family related programs should also aim to promote the youth's self-esteem and self-confidence. More importantly, it must be counselors who are trustworthy, who stick to their word, and who treat youth with respect that deliver all of these services. These programs must avoid a sense of rigidity

because this type of structure may only result in the adolescents' leaving the programs or being kicked out for violations of the rules (Baron, 2003).

Host-Homes Program

Most runaway projects have in-house shelter care services offered to runaway youth. Besides these projects, some programs also offer alternative living models, such as short-term foster care or host-homes within the community. The benefit of such programs is that the young runaways stay within their own community instead of being sent to far away locations or experience displacements. This particular service may be one of the best choices in a population with less density. It eliminates the cost of buying or hiring a center for these young people with run away behavior (Browne & Falshaw, 1998).

However, the host-home project has some disadvantages and potential drawbacks too. The process of referring to host-families requires a detailed and constant effort at recruitment, training, screening, and supervision. Additionally, due to the fact that placing youth in different host-houses creates problems for service providers, being able to, contact youth at centralized locations is recognized as easier and simpler compared to host-houses. As a final negative impact, it should be noted that placing these young people in a host home in the middle of a major family crisis may prove threatening or confusing (Browne & Falshaw, 1998).

Involvement of Significant Others and Trained Staff at Runaway Youth Centers

The significant others –biological/foster parents, workers, etc. - need to contribute in the service providing process for the children throughout the period of confinement. This is directly related to the gradual reintegration of the youth into the community. It is vital for the parents/caregivers of the youth to be involved in the programs and to attend preparatory courses and management strategy training to maintain behaviors acquired in the centers (Yeo, 1998). The ideal involvement of the adult/caretaker in the program is that they stay overnight and spend time with their child. This will improve the inter-family communication during their time together. Furthermore, it can help the caregiver to have some control and give them a chance to negotiate with their child. Consequently, parental stay will have some kind of stabilizing effect on the child and provide an opportunity for a later transition into the community (Yeo, 1998).

The staff at centers receiving and serving runaway youth should have training at least at a tertiary level with a component in child and adolescent development. Furthermore, they need to have demonstrated a commitment to working with problematic children, and knowledge about the reintegration of such children back into the community is essential. All of these elements require professional training and education. In conclusion, a high staff-child ratio is essential for high quality care, with minimal use of casual caregivers. This speaks directly to the fact that continuity and consistency is part of the treatment (Yeo, 1998).

Aftercare Services

Yeo (1998) argues that it does not necessarily mean that the gains made in the runaway centers will be maintained in the future too. Thus, he asserts that after care services should have 24 hour counseling for those who accomplished the program and are reintegrated in the community. Browne and Falshaw (1998) assert that a comprehensive system of services to runaways and their families does not end when a young person leaves the center or is referred to another agency. They suggest that especially those who spend just a few days at the center need after care services in order to maintain a possible normal life without running away again. Further they contend that the tangled web of destructive family dynamics, built over the course of a youth's lifetime course, cannot be rectified in a couple of nights. Eventually, Yeo (1998) maintains that in the initial period after leaving the program, aftercare services offer continuous support and counseling to former runaways and their families. These services include a monitoring period, and can include further individual and or/family therapy if needed. The family therapy service involves the required family member or members in therapeutic sessions, which aims to resolve the conflict between the family members and the children. Finally, Yeo concludes that assistance in areas of education, employment and in other social fields will ease the reintegration of the youth into the community.

Recommendations and Findings on Family Conflict and Approach to Runaways

Studies do not establish a single reason for run away behavior, but child-parent conflict is the most common factor cited. The commission assigned by the Turkish

National Assembly to study the street children problem in Turkey concluded that finding 5 year old children living in the street, was evidence of a serious and discouraging situation concerning the disruption of family dynamics. The initial step of dealing, intervening, or preventing the runaway problem in a society requires programs which include or commence the rehabilitation of the families experiencing such problems (Duvakli, 2005). Although factors causing runaway cannot be limited to a single source or given age, they often expand rapidly and present early warning signs. The early warning signs could be any of the following: angry rejection by the child, disagreement with the house rules, threats to run away, drug abuse, alcoholism, school failure, conflict with the parents, truancy, juvenile delinquency, child abuse, problems with communication, sudden changes in behavior or personality, poor peer relationships, low self esteem, and poor social skills. These warning signs are not unique to runaway behavior but they increase the likelihood of the child to run away (Deni, 1990).

Deni (1990) asserts that prevention is the best method to combat the runaway problem, and Deni states that studies suggest that parents take the following actions to prevent their children run away: (1) since children run away just to find somebody to whom they can talk about their concerns, parents need to listen and talk to their children; (2) as children have feelings and thoughts too, and they may lack the skills of good communication, parents need to try to understand what children mean despite with their poor vocabulary; (3) parents should treat and respect their children just like they respect adults; (4) communication must be recognized as a vital tool in relations. It can either be constructive or destructive in parent-child relationships. Parents should try to avoid responses that children can take as criticizing, moralizing, lecturing, and

blaming. Such responses restrain growth in relationships; (5) parents should be aware of the whereabouts of their child, where he/she spends the night, what kind of friends he/she hangs out with; (6) house rules are not that bad at all, and parents should have their basic rules at home which they implement with consistency. Contrary to common belief, children want to have some rules at home which direct their behavior; (7) if parents face any problem in this matter that they are not able to resolve by themselves, they should not hesitate to seek support from professionals.

Similar suggestions are made by Conner (2004). Additionally, Conner emphasizes the significance of children lacking family love, interest, affection and being raised unaware of family values. He argues that these children are likely to find their homes unpleasant and will seek alternatives outside their homes. He asserts that it is easier to prevent children from running away than trying to reintegrate them back into the community. The second action is more time consuming and expensive. Thus, he suggests that the family/care taker should carefully analyze any indicator of a problem between the parent and the child. A child who is happy and feels that he/she is respected in the house is less likely to run away. In this regard, he proposes the following actions during interactions with children: (1) poverty is a serious problem in a family life, but fulfilling the money-oriented needs of children does not necessarily mean that they are happy. There are many poor families who manage to prevent their children run away from their homes. They do this by showing respect and love to their children. (2) children learn from their parents. Uphold the societal and familial values so that the children will learn the preferred way of living to gain respect in the future, and avoid any conflict with the family dynamics. Ultimately, parent-child conflict will be avoided. (3) find

a solution by talking and consulting your child when they have violated any house rules, do not just show superiority to the child. Before taking any further action, ask for the reason for their behavior. (4) show no differential treatment to any of the children in the same household. They might assess this as being unwanted in the family and might leave home. (5) parents or care-takers must be more understanding in the phase when the child is going into adolescence. At that particular phase, children seek for more independence and try to prove themselves. Arguments, often take place in the family to gain some self respect.

Connor (2004) further argues that parents/care takers should be especially cautious if the warning signs of a potential runaway are noticed. He identifies them as following:

- Attempts to communicate result in arguments, raised voices, name calling, avoidance or failure to get to an acceptable agreement.
- The child has a group of friends who are largely less supervised, disobedient, show antisocial behavior and use drugs.
- Either the parent/care taker or the child is showing increasing patterns of impulsive, emotionally abusive, or irrational behavior.

Eventually, open channels of communication with a teenager and increasing their bonds to parents/home decrease the likelihood of running away.

Summary

Dealing with human beings has always been a challenging task for academicians, officials and experts. It is an actual challenge especially when the subject is a youth with problems that requires more attention and effort, because they are more vulnerable than adults. The literature has found out that the intervention or the solution

of runaway problems is not that simple as it might be expected. The methods applied in the United States and in the other Western countries is the evidence for this assertion. For decades, the countries which have been experiencing the run away problem have used programs such as; task forces, runaway hotlines, crisis shelters, outreach/outpost services, residential programs, peers counseling services, life skills and employment training programs, therapy and counseling services, and after care services.

A short look on the variety of the programs makes clear that the issue is complicated and needs more attention because any service lack in the intervention/prevention process may fail the program. Thus, the people dealing with the runaway matter may have to start everything from the beginning with one difference; next time the child is more experienced and may not respond as positively as expected, because they know what the parents or experts are going to do as the next step. Although new methods are being established in the Western counties, traditional approaches like crisis shelters, outreach posts and counseling services still remain as vital parts of the solution to the problem. Eventually, the literature suggests multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary approaches while dealing with the runaway incidents.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION, APPLICATION TO TURKEY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Conclusion

Especially in the last few decades, most western countries, including Turkey, have experienced changes both in the landscape of the family and community life due to several social factors. Both the families and the communities have become less capable in providing the sufficient support for their youth; clearly, as a foundation for these changes, the rates of family mobility and working or socially active parents increased in the societies.

A long debate has ensued on about the reasons why some teenagers leave home while others from similar households remain in their households. Some researchers suggest that love and affection in family life has disappeared; others underline poverty and care givers' unemployment status which makes them aggressive towards household members, and eventually pushes the child out of the house. Many other external and internal factors are suggested as causal factors. This group of young people has been called as endangered runners, terrified runners, victim runners, or push-outs, exiles, castaways, and throwaways, but whatever they were named, one issue is clear, there are still many questions to be answered in this runaway problem. Studies show that it is not only the child who is to be held responsible when they get in trouble. Even though it appears be totally a child's own mistake, societies still need to focus on youth problems even just to secure their own society's well being in the future. Otherwise, today's status offenders are likely to turn into serious criminals in the future.

Today's runaway problem in Turkey is not as horrifying as it is in the U.S. and U.K. or some other developed Western countries; however, literature has shown that due to globalization interactions with other Western countries increased, and technological developments accompanied with economic difficulties have altered the normal functioning of the classical Turkish families. Statistics have shown that more and more people have moved to urban areas and faced difficulties in the cities. The city life has prevented families from spending enough time and paying enough attention to the development of their children. All these problematic nuclear families, if added together, have started appearing as a problem in the Turkish society. Unfortunately, if the entitled agencies and families in Turkey do not take prompt actions in the near future, it is likely that Turkey will see similar dramatic consequences of this runaway youth problem as it has appeared in the Western countries.

Furthermore, studies show that there is not only a single cause of the runaway problem. Primarily, parent-child conflict has been indicated in the literature, but apparently the external environment of the youth such as, problems at school, bullying, school failure, peer groups, deviant peers, and gangs may be the reason for run away incidents too. Besides many other factors, studies indicate dysfunctional families, broken homes, domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse, depression, and intergenerational transmission as possible causes of runaway incidents. These vulnerable, young people often head to the streets to avoid unbearable circumstances at home while they are not aware that worse dangers in the streets are awaiting them. It is very likely that runaway teenagers become offenders by engaging in crimes such as theft, prostitution, vandalism, assault, drug use and abuse, murder and so on, or a

victim of a crime while in the streets. Runaway youth explain their involvement in crime as a way to provide their basic needs: food, shelter, clothing, or protection. It is obvious that this group of people need to have attention paid to their problem.

From a different perspective it can be argued that these people become offenders because they have to provide their basic needs- food, clothing, shelter, protection- for themselves while living on the streets. Thus the community is punishing such youth for running away from abuse at home and trying to survive on the streets by engaging in crime despite having no other option.

Unfortunately, on the other hand, runaway behavior is not defined as a criminal activity, but rather an offense- applicable only to minors, usually age seventeen and under-, and that is why law enforcement agencies are not enthusiastic about giving as much priority to this matter as they do about actual crimes. Eventually, many statistics about runaways lack the required information about the subject group which could make a positive contribution to locating and re-integrating these people in the community. It is obvious that the matter is very complicated since the focus is on the incredibly big world of youth and their problems.

Although studies have drawn a dramatic picture about these young people, there are opportunities to reduce/prevent/intervene in the runaway teenager problem. A majority of studies have indicated the family and the diminished family dynamics as fundamental sources of the runaway youth problem; however, similar studies also have revealed that the family still remains as one of the best solution to the problem. Literature has supported the idea that disruption of the family dynamics is a major cause; thus, it can be argued that the re-establishment or strengthening of family

dynamics can prevent teenagers from running away or accelerate their return/healing. Certainly, a sole focus on family seems not to be able to provide the desired result, studies have reported that multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary approaches are likely to be effective than approaches that include only one relevant body such as family, or law enforcement, or social institutes. A combined approach has the ability to fill all the needs of the teenagers because the causes of runaway behavior range from family to school and to many other social factors.

Consequently, literature also provides information on how to combat teenage runaway problem. The Youth Crisis Shelters seem to have played and still do play a vital role in the lives of these young people by providing support when they are in need for protection, shelter, food, medical treatment or therapy. Together with shelters the outreach services and the runaway hotlines serve as the first communication channels between the youth- at risk and runaway youth- and the protective services. Moreover, the residential treatment programs, peer counseling program, and life skills and employment training programs seem to have major effects on the return and re-integration of these youth back into their homes or society. Finally literature suggests that runaway youth should not be left unattended and they should be served by the aftercare services until experts believe that the youth is re-covered totally. Otherwise, if youth face similar problems again, he/she might consider heading back to the street with one difference. This time they are more experienced and may feel more comfortable to leave.

As the bottom line, the causes of runaway incidents can not be limited to one source: they often grow like snowballs and present early warning signs. The early

warning signs, such as angry rejection by the child, disagreement with the house rules, threats to run away, drug abuse, alcoholism, school failure, conflict with the parents, truancy, juvenile delinquency, child abuse, problems with communication, sudden changes in behavior or personality, poor peer relationships, low self esteem, and poor social skills should be taken as red alerts of possible runaway issue and the families should take immediate action to prevent their children from running away. Studies suggest prevention as the best method to fight the runaway problem because reintegration into the community is more expensive and time consuming, then another question arises; how can prevention be applied? Experts suggest that parents listen and talk to their children, keep the communication channels always open to their children, try to understand what they say with their poor vocabulary, treat and respect them as adults, avoid criticizing, moralizing, lecturing, and blaming, be aware of the whereabouts of the child, have basic house rules that are implemented with consistency, and to seek professionals help if needed. Other experts also suggested that family love, interest, affection, and family values should be promoted in the lives of the children. Eventually all of the actions expected from the parents are the essentials of a family in which well established parent-child and interpersonal relations take place on a healthy basis, or expressed in a different way, a family in which strong and loving parent-child relationship or conventional goals and values are established. Probably then, it is more likely that the happy child feels that he/she is respected in the house and does not run away.

Application to Turkey

This study in essence found that family dynamics is significantly correlated with the runaway problem. Although Turkey is a country with strong social cohesion and Turkey still seems to have the necessary social foundation to prevent/intervene the runaway problem, the number of runaway children in Turkey is increasing. While runaway youth figures in Western countries range in the tens of thousands to millions (in the U.S. it is estimated to be 1.3 to 2.8 million) in Turkey runaway figures are estimated to be lower than 10 thousand. However, this should not be seen as too encouraging because there is information that there are even children at the age of 5 living on the streets of Turkey. This is a frightening situation since it might be an indication of more severe family disruptions in the Turkish society which should be considered during the policy development, formulation, and implementation for street children or runaways.

Considering the findings of the studies mentioned earlier, it can be suggested that Turkey, like the U.S., establish a National Runaway Switchboard and Runaway Hotline. In Turkey, similar activities are run by Civil Associations and Governmental Foundations, but it seems that they do not cooperate much because the literature reviews have not provided much research and reliable statistics on runaways in Turkey. A National Runaway Switchboard and Runaway Hotline would serve Turkey well, by gathering more reliable statistical information about runaways that could be used to re-direct those youth in need to service available facilities, re-unite them with their families. With the collection of more accurate statistics, government officials would realize the seriousness of the problem easier, and eventually, more funding would be granted from

the government to serve these young people. Furthermore, it can be suggested that Turkey pay extra attention to considerable demographic shifts in family structure before it takes any further action. Policy makers should realize that this problem can not be solved with the efforts of one agency, policy or law. It requires combined approaches such as multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary intervention/prevention methods. In addition, the family unit should be placed at the center of these resolution approaches.

Literature has revealed that the facilities to serve the runaway and homeless youth in Turkey are far below satisfactory levels. The implementation process will undoubtedly need to include basic intervention and temporary provisions such as runaway shelters, or outreach posts; thus, inauguration of new facilities is a necessity, but more than that, Turkey needs to pay more attention on empowerment of the conventional family norms by applying family therapy and counseling for those in need. As the next phase, Turkey should implement similar after-care services and life skills training programs as in Western countries to secure the home life and the welfare of the youth in the future.

Due to the positive findings on Peer Counseling, it could be suggested that Turkey commence similar services at schools for students who are prone to runaway. Studies have shown that youth follow advices from their peers, rather than adults. Peer counseling programs and a similar *student watch system* (as in the Netherlands) at schools will support the completion of the safety circle around the youth. At home, the empowered, well balanced family life and parental supervision will provide protection and look for early warning signs of runaway, and at school the trained peers and the teachers will provide similar support for the youth.

Implications for Future Research

This study has outlined many characteristics of runaways, the intervention methods, information about social services, and follow up treatments. Although, it also has provided useful information about reasons why youth run away, there is still a need that future studies take into consideration the following subject matters.

Development of Early Warning Sign Instruments

Studies have emphasized the importance of realizing the early warning signs. Apparently, potential services from the psychiatrists, counselors, and public social services would be more supportive and affective at the stage the youth are still at home than providing these services while they are on the streets. In this study, such an early warning sign instrument has not been developed or studied in detail. Although some warning signs have been mentioned, future studies might focus on methods on how to recognize these warning signs at the earliest stage. Consequently, the job of the relevant agencies and the family to heal, or help the youth return to their homes would be easier.

The Impact of Combined Approach to the Problem

Literature in the Western countries indicates that multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary approaches seem to be more successful in runaway youth cases than single agency/unit approaches. However, this study has not covered the actual impacts of these combined approaches from different agencies. Future studies might consider focusing on the impact of these approaches on the runaway problem to find out whether

it is necessary that multi agencies take part in the process to resolve teenager runaway problems, or if it would be sufficient if a particular agency was given the ability (power, staff, funding) to carry out all the necessary services for these problematic youth. Apparently, combined approaches are more likely to provide more professional support and services for runaway youth, but in this study there is no information included about whether these agencies have overlapping jurisdictions in this matter, and if yes, what kind of problems result from overlapping is not included either. A study to reveal these possible problems could provide the policy makers a view to separate or draw clear lines among the activities of these agencies involved in the intervention/prevention process which clearly would be very beneficial for the runaway youth since it will decrease the time they receive their services from the subject agencies.

Family Involvement in the Intervention Process

Previously it has been stated that although family is one of the major sources of conflict for runaway youth, family still remains the best alternative to the problem. In this study valuable information is provided about the role of the family in regard to the prevention of runaway behavior; however, not much has been covered related to the role of the family during the intervention process. Many studies implied that family could make very positive contributions to the return of the runaway teenager to home, but what the role of the families should be has not been defined at all. Future studies would provide huge support to the runaway case handling processes if they would study the clear role of the families of runaway children in the intervention processes.

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