**Abstract**

Is the inmate contact visitation procedures at USP Leavenworth the leading cause for contraband introduction into the inmate population? This thesis project looks at the most viable source for contraband through a number of qualitative sources. Upon further investigation of primary research articles, Bureau of Prison (BOP) statistics, a security survey, a risk assessment, and one-on-one interviews with BOP staff, the primary source of contraband does come from contact visitation. This data supports the hypothesis by agreeing with the original argument of contact visitation being the number one source of contraband introduction*.* With a thorough understanding of the primary source of contraband, it is important to implement the appropriate mitigation techniques, in the proper format, to target harden this weakness. Upon finding commonalities amongst each source of research, it is safe to begin the implementation of alternative, or various new programming approaches, to contact visitation throughout all federal prisons to reduce the levels of contraband.

**Methodology**

This project utilized many forms of qualitative, primary research. By using qualitative research, subjective data was utilized, no limit was placed by rigidly variables, and new theories were easily developed, which provided the study with a more in depth approach to personal opinions and assessments. This type of data analysis would be impossible with the use of strictly quantitative data – therefore, this research was not utilized. One of the first tools used was a Security Survey Analysis, a correctional study form of research. The security analysis utilized eight different aspects: Facility Security Legislation, Strategic Planning, Standard Operating Procedures, Security Force Management, Perimeter Fence Line, Parking, Access Points, Lighting, and Buildings (*See Survey Report 1.0)*. Many of these components were irrelevant to the contraband introduction through contact visitation, but were necessary in order to give the reader more extensive knowledge of the institution. Also, it increased validity and reliability of the survey. In regards to the physical structure of the visiting area, the security survey mainly focused on the Access Points, and Standard Operating Procedures, which could provide loopholes to contraband introduction.

After conducting the security survey, the possible security risks related to the visitation center and procedures was developed. This was completed with a thorough risk assessment, which is a casual-comparative design of research. It analyzed any particular risk with relation of how visitors manage to bring contraband inside, from the outside. A further detailed description of the risk assessment can be found in the appendix, *Risk Assessment 1.0.* To begin the risk assessment of visitation security, determining the *criticality* of contraband being introduced to inmates was needed. The next step of the risk analysis was to determine the *probability* of having visitors introduce contraband to inmates. Because the hypothesis focused strictly on visitation procedures and illegal contraband, this was the main focus on the probability portion of the assessment. Finally, a determination of the *vulnerability* of contraband introduction was assessed. A search for the most important threats that visitation provides to USP Leavenworth was essential; it attempts to dissect the components which are at fault. This tool also allowed the information to be converted to a single, numerical value of the risk of visitation procedures at the institution. The security survey and risk assessment were not the only forms of primary research however.

Accompanying other forms of original research was personal interviews, a descriptive type of research, from Bureau of Prisons staff on a multitude of levels and experiences. Four staff members from the North Central Region were interviewed; the majority of whom have well over 10 years of experience. It was important to discover their thoughts of contraband introduction through the visiting procedures, as well as their ideals to prevent further incidents. Other avenues of contraband introduction were assessed (i.e. prison staff, inmate mail, and even prison-made contraband). The results from the interviews were compiled, and a search for commonalities as well as differences was conducted, establishing further research to support the original hypothesis.

Finally, secondary research from the Park University’s Library Database was utilized. More specifically, empirical articles regarding visitation procedures in prisons, current trends and future goals, and inmate behaviors were used. The data was also compiled in such a way to supplement the security survey and risk assessment as well as the personal interviews with staff, which developed sufficient theories and conclusions.