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Identifying at Risk Youth for Delinquency in Southern West Virginia

Roderick Q. Neal
rneal@ph.vccs.edu

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**Identifying at Risk Youth for Delinquency
in Southern West Virginia**

Thesis submitted to
The Graduate College of
Marshall University
In Psychology

In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

By

Roderick Q. Neal

Marshall University

Huntington, West Virginia

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MASTER OF ARTS THESIS

OF

RODERICK Q. NEAL

APPROVED:

Thesis Committee
Major Professor

Tony Goudy, Ph.D.
Chairman

Martin Amerikaner, Ph.D.
Psychology (Chair.)

Steven Mewaldt, Ph.D

Leonard Deutsch, Ph.D.
Dean

Abstract

Juvenile delinquency has been an important area of study. Academics, practitioners, politicians, and legal scholars have devoted their attention to basic questions about the nature of youth crime. This report was designed to identify which psychological and social variables are statistically reliable predictors of significant juvenile delinquency in southern West Virginia. In an effort to identify at risk youth, 200 subjects were administered a 16-question survey. This survey had a mixture of continuous and categorical psychological and social variables and the data was analyzed using Logistic Regression strategies. One hundred of the subjects had been referred to a juvenile probation officer; the other 100 subjects were southern West Virginia high school students.

The findings from this research show there are a number of explanatory variables (predictors) for delinquency within the population. Neglect, child abuse, drugs, witnessing domestic violence, and delinquent peers were variables statistically related to juvenile delinquency in this study. The scope and limitation and further implications of the study are discussed.

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I wish to acknowledge several individuals who provided me with help in accomplishing this goal. First, I would like to thank the Lord for giving me the persistence and opportunity. Next, I would like to acknowledge my committee specifically the Chairman, Dr. Tony Goudy. He has assisted me in an infinite number of ways. His guidance and patience is greatly appreciated. And of equal importance, I would like to acknowledge my mother for her moral assistance. This has been an academically challenging experience, however it has also been intellectually rewarding. Special thanks go to those who participated in the study and those who helped in its preparation. Further, I would like to thank the Circuit Courts and the WV Department of Juvenile corrections for allowing the use of their population.

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Identifying At Risk Youth

The purpose of this study was to identify youth at risk for delinquency in southern West Virginia. Juvenile delinquency has been an important area of study. Siegal and Senna (1994) reported that academia, practitioners, policy makers, and legal scholars all have devoted their attention to basic questions about the nature of youth crimes. For several decades, the public has consistently given increased attention to the problem of juvenile delinquency. Wright, Shell, and Smith (1992) disclosed that the media readily focuses on youth gangs, violence in schools, teenage substance abuse, and family violence. According to the authors, concern about juvenile crime and violence has resurfaced periodically throughout the twentieth century.

Juvenile delinquency is a social and legal label for a wide variety of law and norm violating behaviors. For the purpose of this research, a simple legal definition seems to suffice. "Delinquency is a behavior against the criminal code committed by an individual who has not reached adulthood." (Bartol, 1998) Nevertheless, the term delinquency has numerous definitions and meanings beyond this one certain definition. In some states, the legal definition also includes status offending, which is not behavior against the criminal code but behavior prohibited only for juveniles. For example, running away and violating curfew laws qualify as status offenses.

According to the West Virginia code 49-1-4 (Mitchel, 1996) delinquent child means a child:

- (1) Who commits an act which would be a crime under state law or a municipal ordinance if committed by an adult, punishable by jail confinement or imprisonment;
- (2) Who, without just cause, habitually and continually refuses to respond to the lawful supervision by such child's parents, guardian, or custodian;

- (3) Who is habitually absent from school without good cause;
- (4) Who willfully violates a condition of probation or contempt order issued by a court. (p. 752)

One of the least understood topics in the fields of criminology and criminal justice today is that of rural crime. First, research on rural crime remains sparse. Scholars have spent most of their efforts trying to understand urban patterns of crime. Second, popularized images of rural and urban areas include stereotypes that contain elements of the truth, yet represent gross exaggerations of reality. The image of rural American today still suggests that small towns, farming communities and the open country are “crime free”. This perception is not accurate; yet, relative to the problems of some large urban communities, rural areas do look like havens of safety.

It is important to remember that rural areas are incredibly diverse from the coalfields of Appalachia to the farmlands of Iowa, to the fishing villages of Louisiana, to the cattle ranches of Colorado, to the small towns of Illinois and Ohio. Just as most law enforcement agencies are small, as measured by number of personnel, so too, are most communities and most prevention and treatment programs. Each community can exhibit a unique crime profile that is difficult to describe with national level statistics and information.

The first step in exploring rural crime is to recognize that one standard definition of rural will not suffice. Therefore, this report will define rural according to US Census definition, territory, population, and housing units not classified as urban constitute “rural”. Urban Clusters is further defined as contiguous, densely settled geographic areas with a population of at least 2500 people but fewer than 50,000. Urban Clusters are present in 5 of the 7 counties (US Census 2000).

West Virginia is located in the very heart of the Appalachian region. The research was conducted in the southeastern part of the state an area that is in desperate need of economic and educational revitalization. The seven counties in which the population was sampled are poverty stricken and economically depressed. They are as follows: Mercer, Greenbrier, Monroe, McDowell, Raleigh, Pocahontas, and Summers. McDowell County is federally recognized as an Empowerment Zone. The counties as referenced above are considered rural according to the definition from the Census Bureau.

At risk describes a group of people who are statistically more likely to experience a particular event of state. For example, youth at risk for delinquency have a higher probability of being delinquent than those who are not at risk.

According to Bartol (1998) national arrest rates, victimization studies, and self-support data generate different estimates of the incidence of delinquency. Furthermore, the available data are extremely inadequate for answering even the most basic questions about the crimes, trends, or characteristics of juvenile offenders.

Identifying at risk youth has significant importance. It will contribute to the existing empirical literature and will briefly summarize a theoretical aspect regarding delinquency. Further, the problems of modern society have become a major national concern; consequently, delinquency has become an important subject for academic study. Given the diversity and gravity of the problem, it is essential to study delinquency in an orderly and scientific manner. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to devise strategies to combat such a complex social phenomenon as juvenile delinquency, if its fundamental dimensions were unknown. Is delinquency a function of psychological abnormality? Is it a collective reaction by youth against destructive social norms? Or is it the product of a disturbed home and disruptive socialization? There are a variety of social and

psychological factors that affect delinquency directly and indirectly. Identifying at risk youth will better prepare courts and mental health practitioners to meet the needs of these youth. The professionals will be better equipped to formulate intervention strategies for prevention and rehabilitation.

Delinquency is affected both directly and indirectly by a variety of social and psychological factors. The primary focus of this study is to identify a number of predictor variables related to juvenile delinquency. Delinquency experts agree the family is the frontline of defense against delinquency. A disruptive family life may encourage any pre-existing criminogenic forces and sustain delinquency over the life course. According to Segal and Sienna (1998) there are four broad categories of family functioning which seem to promote delinquent behaviors: families disrupted by spousal conflict or breakup (broken homes); families involved in interpersonal conflict (quality of family life); families that neglect their children's behavior and emotional problems; and families that contain deviant parents who transmit their behavior to children (parental criminality).

Sociologists also search for factors outside the individual. (Henslin, 1997) Since deviance is related to delinquency, according to the author, why should one expect to find anything constant within people to account for a behavior that is conformist in one society and deviant in another? Greenwood (1997) documented five categories of causes and correlates of juvenile delinquency:

- (1) Individual characteristics such as alienation, rebellion and lack of bonding in society.
- (2) Family influences such as parental conflict, child abuse and family history of problem behavior (substance abuse, criminality, teen pregnancy, and school dropouts).
- (3) School experiences such as early academic failure and lack of commitment to school.
- (4) Peer group influences such as friends who engage in problem behavior (minor criminality, gangs and violence).
- (5) Neighborhood and

community factors such as economic deprivation, high rates of substance abuse and crime (p. 13).

According to Sarson and Sarson (1999) delinquent behavior has many causes ranging from poor living conditions to antisocial personality disorder to psychosis. Bartol (1998) stated that psychological definitions of delinquency include conduct disorder and antisocial behavior. The child may or may not have been arrested for the behaviors. Some of the behaviors are not against the criminal law. The clinical term antisocial behavior is typically reserved for more serious misbehaviors that involve direct and harmful actions against others.

Seigel and Senna (1994) view the cause of delinquency as essentially psychological. Most behaviors labeled delinquent seem to be symptomatic of some underlying psychological problem. According to the authors, numerous studies of incarcerated youth indicate that the personalities are marked by negative antisocial behavior characteristics. It is a fact that delinquent behavior occurs among youths in every racial, ethnic and socioeconomic group. Psychologists view behavior as a function of emotional and mental disturbances, rather than as a result of social factors such as racism, poverty, or class conflict.

Rural society is changing. Fewer jobs in rural areas have caused many people to leave in search of work. Also, as urban areas expand, they often reach into nearby rural communities. One of the consequences of these and other changes has been an increase in rural crime levels, although crime rates in rural areas are still less than those in urban areas.

Literature Review

The first section of my literature review will examine the data on juvenile delinquency in West Virginia. Causal explanations of juvenile delinquency, as well as factors associated with both, will be discussed. Last, literature and theoretical explanations of delinquency will be reviewed in order to link psychological and social variables to delinquency. I will attempt to show which predictor variables are simultaneously, statistically, significant to delinquency.

According to a report released by the Division of Criminal Justice Services, (1998) the state's juvenile arrest rate trend is growing 3.5% per year. Increases in arrests and the corresponding rise in juvenile delinquency have overwhelmed the state's limited juvenile justice resources. (DCJS 1998) The number of juvenile arrests in West Virginia grew significantly from 1990 to 1997, with the greatest increase in violent crime arrest. The most significant increase was 11% between 1994 and 1995.

According to an annual report submitted by the Division of Criminal Justice Services of West Virginia (1999-2000) approximately 475 juveniles were committed to West Virginia correctional facilities in 1999. The Division of Criminal Justice Services (1999) reported that there were 6895 juveniles involved in the probation system either through a written and signed petition complaint, or through the disposition of a case. These juveniles were charged with a total of 9557 offenses resulting in the filing of 7521 cases. The Division of Criminal Justice Services (1999) defines a case as a written or signed petition or complaint charging the juvenile with one or more crimes or status offenses committed within a 24 hour period in one county.

Not all psychologists agree that behavior is controlled by unconscious mental processes determined by parental relationships developed early in childhood. Behavioral psychologists argue that a person's personality is learned throughout life during

interaction with others. Based primarily on the works of the American psychologist John B. Watson (1878-1958) and popularized by Harvard professor B. F. Skinner, (1904-1990), *behaviorism* concerns itself solely with measurable events and not the unobservable psychic phenomenon described by psychoanalysts. (Shultz, 2001)

Watson also emphasized the nurturing effect of one's childhood environment in determining behavior and in minimizing of the influence of inherited tendencies. The following paragraph from *Behaviorism* is frequently quoted to support his point:

Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in, and I'll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select – doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief, and, yes, even beggarman and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors. (Watson, 1930, p. 104)

Watson argued that adult problems are linked to conditioned responses established in infancy, childhood, and adolescence. And if adult disturbances are a function of faulty childhood conditioning, then a proper program of childhood conditioning should prevent the emergence of adult disorders. (Shultz, 2001)

Some experts view the causes of delinquency as essentially psychological. (Thomas, 1988) After all, most behaviors labeled delinquent-for example, violence, theft, sexual misconduct-seem to be symptomatic of some underlying psychological problem. Psychologists point out that many delinquent youths have poor home lives, destructive relationships with neighbors, friends, and teachers, and conflicts with authority figures in general. These relationships seem to indicate a disturbed personality structure. Furthermore, numerous studies of incarcerated youths indicate that the youths' personalities are marked by negative, antisocial characteristics.

Throughout the twentieth century, the psychological approach to delinquency developed and, at times, flourished. Some of the more prominent variations of this overall approach included concepts of mental deficiency, psychiatric disturbance, and general personality configurations. Generically they share some common, basic assumptions: (1) The basic cause of delinquency lies *within* the individual's patterns and developments. Delinquent behavior, in other words, is a manifestation of internal, underlying disturbances. (2) Whatever the specific psychological disturbances which might exist in any particular delinquent behavior pattern, it most probably began to develop not later than early childhood and has become a fairly characteristic feature of an individual. (3) While allowance is given for the potential modifying effects of external, environmental factors, it is the individual who has the problem and it is thus on the individual that one must focus if the problem is to be resolved and the consequent behavior is to be changed.(Shoemaker, 2001)

According to Skidmore (2001) there are theories that attempt to explain or predict delinquency. They mention and examine many different social factors that are applicable within the theories. Families, peers, schools, and socioeconomic status are all social factors that are examined in many of the casual theories. Demographics and the relationships one has in society are also examined in some of the explanatory theories. Families are important to consider when explaining juvenile delinquency. The family unit is crucial to a child's development and healthy upbringing. In addition, much of what a child learns is through the family or guardians. Skidmore also reports that criminal parents can teach their child adverse lessons about life when their child views or witnesses their parent's delinquent behavior. Peers can also teach an adolescent or child criminal behavior just as the family member can. Family members and peers can also

cause delinquent patterns of behavior by labeling their child as delinquent. (Skidmore, 2001)

SOCIAL PREDICTORS

Put another way, “just as people must learn through socialization how to conform to their society’s norms, they must also learn how to depart from those norms. In other words, deviance, like conforming behavior, is a product of socialization”. (Shoemaker, 2000)

This theory shows how a juvenile can socially learn deviant behavior from those around him/her such as family, peers, schoolmates or anyone else that he or she may come in contact with. The parents and peers are probably the most powerful agents in socialization.

In 1961 sociologist Walter Reckless proposed Containment Theory, which explains delinquency as the interplay between two forms of control known as inner and outer containments. Containment theory outer containments refer to one’s social environment. Further theories of control focus on the strategies and techniques which help regulate human behavior and thus lead to conformity and compliance of the rules of society.

Social control theory, originally articulated by Travis Hirschi in his influential 1969 book Causes of Delinquency, replaced containment theory as the dominant version of control theory. (Hirschi 1969) Hirschi linked the onset of delinquent behavior to the weakening of the tie that binds people to society. Hirschi assumed that all individuals are potential law violators who are kept under control because of fear that illegal behavior will damage their relationships with friends, parents, neighbors, teachers, and employers. Social control theorists start with the premise that human behavior is, by nature, antisocial and delinquent. Travis Hirschi states, "We are all animals, and thus all

naturally capable of committing criminal acts," and "people commit crimes because it is their nature to do so." (Hirschi 1969) The question that really needs an answer is "Why do most people not commit crimes?"

Social control theorists believe delinquents are acting out of their primal inclination. This perspective states that members of society form bonds with other members in society or institutions in society such as peers, pro-social friends, churches, schools, teachers, and sports teams, to name a few. The social bonds identified by Hirschi include the ties that are factors of development for the children by key people in their lives such as parents, teachers, relatives and friends; commitment to social norms or behavior and to success of such values as getting a good education, a good job, and being successful. The most powerful and empirical support for the social bond theory comes from the significant body of literature that indicates, "Poor family, education, and peer relationships are all related to delinquency." Numerous studies over the years have found what Hirschi predicted; "delinquent youth have weak and strained relationships with their parents, a fear of school failure, and lack of interest in school activities."

More recently, Hirschi collaborated with Gottfredson to develop the general theory of crime (also referred to as low self-control theory), focusing on low self-control as the ultimate cause of crime. In their *A General Theory of Crime* (1990), the authors present a theory suited to explaining all criminal and deviant behaviors, focusing on one multi-dimensional trait. However, the authors do not provide an explanation of the connection between this theory and bond theory. Akers (1997:91) states, "bonding theory rejects the self control concept as unobservable and subsumes it under the concept of attachment."

Self-control is intended to be an inclusive theory, capable of explaining all criminal deviant behaviors, regardless of seriousness or demographic factors.

Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990:96) claim is that low self-control is developed through "ineffective or incomplete socialization." The low self-control trait remains stable throughout life and, in combination with opportunity, is the ultimate cause of criminality (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). Like Hirschi's bond theory, Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) general theory of crime has received attention by researchers and theorists alike (Shoemaker 1999; Akers 1997).

This trend toward aging out (which is the tendency for crime and deviance to diminish as age increases) of crime is well documented in the literature, as well as in official crime statistics, although exceptions do exist (Shoemaker 1996). Some criminal opportunities may be more common among older individuals. Examples of crime and deviance among older populations include public drunkenness and shoplifting (Steffensmeier 1987), physical violence among married or cohabitating couples (Stets and Straus 1989), and white collar offenses (Braithwaite).

Hirschi's more significant contribution was an attempt to test the principal hypothesis of the social control theory. He administered a detailed self-report survey to a sample of over 4000 junior and senior high school students in Contra Costa County, California. In a detailed analysis of the data, Hirschi found considerable evidence that supports the control theory model. Among Hirschi's important findings was youths who were strongly attached to their parents were less likely to commit criminal acts. Associations between indicators of attachment, belief, commitment, and involvement with measures of delinquency have tended to be positive and significant LeBlanc (1990). LeBlanc's research indicates that evidence of family detachment including family conduct, abuse of children, and lack of affection are predictors of delinquent conduct. In a study of 482 official delinquents and 185 non delinquents in Utah and Los Angeles, LeBlanc found that family variables such as broken homes, parental harmony, and

relations with parents, as well as school factors, particularly grades in school, were highly associated with delinquency in both settings. LaBlanc added that the social control theory also argues that delinquency is related to delinquent attitudes and beliefs. This position has received support in the formulation and testing of differential association and neutralization theory.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PREDICTORS

According to Shoemaker (2000), a number of investigators concluded that a general lack of intelligence was an important contributing factor to crime, delinquency, and a host of assorted social ills. A basic assumption of these earlier investigations was the lack of intelligence directly led to criminal behavior by rendering one less capable of appreciating the immorality of behavior or the complexity of a particular situation. Second, it was assumed that those of low intelligence were less able to control their emotions and desires, and were thus more likely to engage in criminality, not because they particularly wanted to, but because they could rarely keep their behavior in check. Later investigations have assumed that intelligence affects delinquency indirectly, because it affects other factors which have a more direct connection with delinquency.

In the literature connecting intelligence with delinquency, the key concept is *intelligence*. Besides the issue of whether intelligence is innately or environmentally determined, this goes beyond the scope of this project. Further there remains a crucial question of how to measure the concept.

Learning disabled (LD) is the second largest category of special education (Ysseldyke, Algonzine, & Thrulow 1992). Nationally LD students account for 43.6% of

the special education categories served in the United States (Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow, 1992).

The U.S. Office of Education (1977) has defined learning disability as follows:

“...a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, read, write spell, or do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

The result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation, or emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.”

(U.S. Office of Education. P. 65083).

Typically, there are two possible explanations of the link between learning disabilities and delinquency. (Tulliver, 1988) One view, known as the *susceptibility rationale*, argues that the link is caused by certain side effects of learning disabilities, such as impulsiveness, poor ability to learn from experience, and an inability to take social cues. In contrast, the *school failure rationale* assumes that the frustration caused by the LD child's poor school performance will lead to a negative self-image and acting out behavior. (Waldie and Spreen, 1983)

A number of recent research efforts have found that the LD child may not be any more susceptible to delinquent behavior than the non-LD child and that the proposed link between learning disabilities and delinquency may be an artifact of bias in the way the juvenile justice system treats LD youths. (Zimmerman, 1981)

Crime statistics indicate that levels of academic achievement, school attendance and graduation rates play an important role in the involvement of youth in the criminal justice system. Research indicates that the level of education attained can affect

opportunities for further employment. Although juveniles often fail to make this association, they do possess monetary ambitions (Farnworth & Lieber 1989, p.265).

Research consistently illustrates that poor academic achievement is a major factor in crime and delinquency. Farnworth and Lieber(1989) noted that : “... the gap between economic goals and educational expectations was more effective in predicting the prevalence of serious utilitarian than serious nonutilitarian delinquency.

Yes, no, maybe – these are the answers to be found in the research seeking to establish the existence of a link between LD and behavior. There are studies that support a strong correlation (Wilgosh & Paitich, 1982), others that support a modest correlation (Lane 1980), and still others that indicate that there is no correlation (Broder, Dunivant, Smith & Sutton, 1981; Cornwell & Bawden., 1992; Spreen, 1981). Other studies indicate that people react differently to a child with LD than they do to a child without LD. Such studies indicate that individuals with LD receive differential treatment because of their inability to communicate effectively and are therefore more likely to be taken into custody by police (Thompson, 1985), to be found delinquent by a juvenile court (Broder et al., 1981), or to receive more severe penalties (Speen, 1981). When individuals with LD get trouble, the same difficulties with language and pragmatics that lead to academic difficulty interfere with their ability to explain themselves and present a sympathetic posture. Many children with LD, in the face of an accusation, look guilty, act guilty, and cannot articulate satisfactory explanations.

The term “hyperactive syndrome” (also called minimal brain dysfunction, hyperkinesis, attention deficit disorder, or currently attention deficit hyperactivity disorder [ADHD]) includes a heterogeneity of behaviors: The central three are (1) inattention (does not seem to listen, or is easily distracted); (2) impulsivity (acts before thinking, shifts quickly from one activity to another); and (3) excessive motor activity

(cannot sit still, fidgets, runs about, is talkative and noisy). ADHD is the leading psychological diagnosis of American children (Cowley, 1993).

As research on ADHD accumulates, it is becoming increasingly apparent that ADHD is not so much a disorder or activity as it is a *disorder of interpersonal relationships*. Even those ADHD children who are not aggressive and who manage to control some of their “hyperactivity” still have problems with their social interactions and intimacy (Henker & Whalen, 1989). Terri Moffitt (Moffitt & Silva, 1988; Moffitt, 1993b).

ADHD frequently co-occurs with a diagnostic category called “conduct disorders” (Offord, Boyle, & Racine, 1991; Reid, 1993). As mentioned previously, the term *conduct disorder* (abbreviated CD) represents a cluster of behaviors characterized by persistent misbehavior. Examples of this misbehavior include stealing, fire setting, running away from home, skipping school, destroying property, fighting, frequently telling lies, and cruelty to animals and people. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-IV* (DSM-IV), published by the American Psychiatric Association (1994), the central feature of conduct disorder is the *repetitive and persistent* pattern of behavior that violates the basic rights of others.

Over the past three decades, the psychological study of crime has shifted away from accepting personality traits as major determinants of criminal and delinquent behavior toward a more interactive cognitive and developmental focus. There is good evidence that serious, persistent delinquency patterns begin in early childhood. Learning experiences begin early and build on themselves. Researchers have noted differences in impulsiveness, social skills, and feelings for others between children who ultimately became serious delinquents or non-delinquents during their early school years. Even at an early age, aggressive, belligerent children are unpopular and are excluded from peer

groups (Hartup, 1983; Patterson, 1982; Olweus, 1978). In fact, Coie, Underwood, and Lockman (1992) contend that aggressiveness is the single most important reason for a child to be rejected by peers.

OTHER PREDICTORS

Violence and abuse of women and children date back to biblical times and extend across a wide range of cultures and societies. Anthropologist David Livingston (1991) examined data on 46 well-described small scale and close societies that represented all the major cultural regions of the world for which there were data on violence towards wives. He found that wife beating was common or frequent in more than 40 percent of societies. (Gelles, 1995) The codification of English common law in 1768 asserted that husbands had the right to physically chastise an "errant wife," provided that the stick was no thicker than his thumb, thus the rule of thumb was born. The legacy of British common law carried over into the United States well into the 19th century. Wife abuse, however, was effectively illegal in the United States by 1870. (Gordon 1988; Peck 1987)

There is considerable debate about the comparative rates of violence against husbands and wives. While some investigators report that the rate of wife to husband violence is about the same as the rate of husband to wife violence, others explain that women are the disproportionate victims of family violence. (Dobash, et. al. 1992) If one goes by how much harm is done and how easy it is for a victim to escape violence, women clearly are the disproportionate victims of domestic violence.

West Virginia State Police Uniform Crime Reporting Agencies define a domestic violence incident in the following manner: abuse is an occurrence of one or more of the following acts between family or household members who reside together or who formally reside together. 1. Attempting to cause or intentionally knowing or recklessly

causing bodily injury with or without a dangerous or deadly weapon. 2. Placing by physical menace another in fear of eminent serious bodily injury. 3. Sexually abusing a person under the age of 18 years old. According to the Division of Criminal Justice Services, (May 2000), the number of reported domestic violence incidents in the state of West Virginia rose from 2,565 in 1989 to 10,397 in 1998. The overall offense rate for West Virginia increased dramatically from 1989 to 1998 ranging from a low 1.38 offenses per 100,000 residents in 1989 to a high of 5.5 offenses per 100,000 residents in 1998. Between 1989 and 1998 the number of domestic violence incidents reported to police increased 405%.

Research on developmental psychopathology as well as clinical work has identified a wide range of factors that affect the development of antisocial behaviors (Nishio, French, & Patterson, 1995; Lahey, Waldman, & McBurnett, 1999). Although the notion that all types of problem behavior are complexly determined seems to be generally accepted, the child's family is often seen as the important factor that fosters pathology. There is thus little controversy regarding the importance of the family in the development of problem behavior, but there is less agreement regarding the measurement procedures used to define "family." Whereas some researchers emphasized the "molar" characteristics of the families, such as the family composition (living in a two-parent vs. single-parent family) (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992), other researchers assessed more "molecular: aspects of family functioning, such as the parent-child interaction (Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992).

Many family variables have been studied in an attempt to better understand the etiology of delinquency. For example, Rosenbaum (1989) found that adolescents who have a strong bond with their parents are less likely to be delinquent. Flannery et al. (1999) reported that adolescents without parental supervision during after-school hours

are more likely to engage in delinquent acts. Featherstone et al. (1993) stated that youth from intact two-parent families are less likely to report school problems than are children from single-parent families. Clark and Shields (1997) reported that the level of familial communication is related to adolescent delinquent behavior. Cashwell and Vacc (1996) found that a cohesive family environment reduces the chances of delinquent behavior. Similarly, Shields and Clark (1995) found that low levels of adaptability in the family result in higher levels of delinquency. Thus, there appears to be a relationship between family environment and the development of delinquency in adolescents.

A growing body of clinical experience and research reveals that domestic violence and child abuse occur in the same families and are highly associated with similar social and economic risk factors. Data also show that children growing up in violent families are more likely to engage in youth violence. Furthermore, the social economic risk factors for youth violence correspond to the risk factors for domestic violence and child abuse.

According to the West Virginia University Survey Research Center:

- In 25% of all violent relationships the woman is beaten while pregnant
- More than 30% of all female murder victims are slain by their husbands or boyfriends
- A child's exposure to the father abusing the mother is the strongest risk factor for transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next
- 3.3 million children witness domestic violence each year
- 60% of homeless women in the United States have been victims of domestic violence
- Mercer County had 1,421 domestic violence cases reported in 2002
- Between July 1 and June 2002 the Mercer County DHHR office had over 2700 domestic violence clients. (source Mercer County DHHR Dec. 2002)

- Mercer County recorded the highest number of open child abuse cases in the state of West Virginia in 2002 (273 cases as of December 2002)

The child abuse and neglect rate continues to worsen in West Virginia.

According to the Kids Count Fund (2001) since 1993 there has been a 36.7 percent increase in the number of referrals of maltreatment and risk of maltreatment accepted for investigation by Child Protective Services. The percentage of births to unmarried teens has grown over the last decade.

Contemporary studies have also found that children who grew up in maladapted homes and who witnessed violence and conflict later exhibited patterns of emotional disturbance behavior problems and social conflict. (Hershorn, Rashbaum 1985) The most consistent findings about delinquent youths are their family environments are low in warmth, high in conflict, and characterized by inconsistent discipline. (Berk 1998)

Juvenile courts have seen an increase in drug and alcohol use among teenagers in the past decade. The juvenile courts have been faced with a progressively larger case loads of children involved with drugs and alcohol. According to a bulletin on the facts about alcohol use among teenagers, in 1994 there were 7,965 juvenile Driving Under the Influence offenses, 17,130 juvenile Liquor Law offenses and 23,049 juvenile Drunkenness offenses. Gang activity increased 476 percent between 1988 and 1991 where the sale and distribution of illicit drugs, including alcohol, was involved. Seventy percent of teen pregnancies occur while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. (DCJS, 2001) Currently, 11.1 percent of births in West Virginia are to unmarried teenagers 10-19, greater than the national average of 9.9 percent.

Adolescent substance use has devastating consequences for juveniles, families, communities, and society. As a result of using some substances, youth can experience impaired judgment, coordination and motor skills. Their short-term memory and ability

to concentrate may be affected, and they may experience depression, developmental lag, apathy, withdrawal, and other psychological disorders. (OJJDP, 1998)

According to the Office of the National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP, 2003), drug abuse is costly to our society as a whole but is especially harmful to our youth. Youth's immature physical and psychological development makes them more susceptible than adults to the harmful effects of drug abuse. Behavior patterns that result from teen and preteen drug use often produce tragic consequences. Self degradation, loss of control, disruptive conduct, and antisocial attitudes can cause untold harm to juveniles and their families. In the 7 years that the National Center of Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University has published the *National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse*, results have indicated that teens and their parents view drugs as their biggest concern.

Results from the 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse indicates that 10.8% of youth ages 12 to 17 are current drug users, having used an illicit drug at least once in the month before being interviewed.

In recent years, women and girls have accounted for a growing proportion of people arrested and convicted for serious offenses (Greenfield and Snell 1999), a trend that underscores the need for better understanding of the etiology of female crime and delinquency. Several scholars have posited that explanations of female offending must take into account the victimization women experience both as children and adults, and research suggests that child sexual abuse may indeed play a central role in some girls' pathway to delinquency and subsequent crime. For instance, studies of female delinquents (Lewis et al. 1991; Mouzakitis 1981) report that approximately half (48-53 percent) have been sexually abused, and the proportion of women prisoners who report having a history of childhood sexual victimization is two to three times greater than

women in general public (Harlow 1999). The literature on the relationship between sexual abuse and female crime, together with that on the effects of child sexual abuse, provides evidence that helps explain why such victimization may be an important etiological factor for various behaviors – such as running away, drug abuse, prostitution, and even violence that can lead to criminal justice involvement.

Social scientific knowledge about youth gangs and how their members differ from non-gang youths is limited and controversial. More specifically, little is known about how gang members differ from young members of the general population.

Especially in America, gangs are the foundations of violence and crime.

According to DCJ (2003), today a gang can be defined in four basic ways:

- an organized group with a leader
- an unified group that usually remains together during peaceful times as well as times of conflict
- a group whose members show unity through clothing, language, hair, ...
- a group whose activities are criminal or threatening to the larger society

The prevailing image of youth gangs - with their symbols, colors, and territorial graffiti - is that they are found in the poorest neighborhoods of America's large cities. Certainly, they are. In recent years, however, such gangs also have been popping up in outlying rural areas, far away from urban decay. A number of assumptions about these rural gangs are popular in the criminal justice research literature. For example, researchers commonly believe that once a youth gang establishes itself in an area, it will be around for quite some time.

A study focused on the numbers and locations of gangs in rural America reveals that this and many other assumptions about rural youth gangs are inaccurate. (Weisheit & Wells, 2004) The data also show that gang activity in rural America is not as extensive as many fear. Lastly, the research indicates that rural gangs are unlike urban ones in

many respects; one of the most surprising findings was that gang activity in rural areas rises rather than falls during times of economic recovery.

The differences between urban and rural gangs strongly suggest that the policies and practices aimed at suppressing urban gangs may not be the best approaches in non-urban areas. A different set of strategies must be created, directed squarely at the unique characteristics of rural youth gangs.

Both researchers and the popular press suggest that gangs are increasingly becoming a problem in rural areas, but scientific consideration of this idea is limited. The National Youth Gang Crime Center conducts the only annual survey of gang data using a representative national sample that includes a substantial number of rural jurisdictions. National Youth Gang Surveys (NYGS) have shown that gang problems are occurring in communities of all sizes and locations, although they are still most heavily concentrated in medium and large cities.

The single most important predictor of gang activity in a primarily rural county was the percentage of the county's population that lived in and "urban" area (that is, an incorporated areas of 2,500 or more people). Urbanization – the physical sprawl of a city's de facto boundaries into outlying areas – seems to have an influence in and of itself, distinct from the poor economic conditions or social disengagement often associated with big city life.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to identify youth at risk for delinquency in southern West Virginia. The research has been designed to identify which predictor variables are statistically significant to delinquency. There are a variety of psychological and social factors that affect delinquency directly and indirectly. This research was designed to identify those factors associated with juvenile delinquency. Identifying at risk youth will better prepare courts and mental health practices to meet the needs of these youth. Professionals will be better equipped to formulate intervention strategies for prevention and rehabilitation.

Juvenile delinquency was the dependent variable representing the phenomena I wished to explain. Juvenile delinquency is nominally defined as a behavior against the criminal code committed by an individual who has not reached adulthood. The unit of analysis was the individual. The variables were multiple variables related to the literature on delinquency. The population was adolescents living in Southern, West Virginia. This is an exploratory attempt to identify at risk youth for delinquency in West Virginia.

METHOD

Participants

There were 200 subjects involved in this research. They ranged from ages 14-18 years of age with 100 being identified juvenile delinquent, and 100 identified as non-delinquent. A sample of 100 participants who had been referred to a juvenile probation officer was used. The referred participants were from 3 different institutions. Twenty-six participants were from Southern Regional Juvenile Detention Center, which is

operated by the Division of Criminal Justice Services of West Virginia. According to the West Virginia Code, 49-5-16 paragraph (A), a child over 14 years of age who is charged with a crime which would be a violent felony if committed by an adult may upon order of the circuit court be held in a juvenile detention center. Thirty seven subjects were from the Mercer County Juvenile Probation Office. The Mercer County Juvenile Probation Office is a component of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. The juveniles are referred by law enforcement agents or through formal written complaints by concerned citizens. Thirty seven subjects were from Presley Ridge Schools, a community based program whose objectives include the prevention and intervention for juvenile delinquency. Their mission is to enhance the adjustment and achievement of troubled youth through effective programs.

The remaining 100 participants were adolescents from the following schools: Bluefield High School, Princeton High School, Pikeview High School, which are located in Mercer County, Woodrow Wilson High School located in Raleigh County, Summers County High School, Oakhill High School located in Fayette County, and Mt. View High School located in McDowell County. These adolescents were chosen using Snowball Sampling. The base sample students were asked to recommend other students for the survey, thus creating a snowball effect. The demographics and other characteristics of the subjects studied are shown in Appendix E.

Characteristics of the sample were: 61% of the participants in the non-delinquent sample were between the ages of 14 and 16. 39% were between the ages of 17 and 19. In the delinquent population 62% were between the ages 17 and 19 and 38% were between the ages 14 and 16. In the non delinquent population 43% were male 57% female. In the delinquent population 67% were male and 33% female. In the non-delinquent population 78% were Caucasian, 18% African American, and 1% Hispanic.

In the delinquent survey results 57% Caucasian, 32% African American, 5% Hispanic, 3% Native American, 1% Asian, and 2% other.

Procedure

A self-report survey was administered to the 200 participants. One hundred participants were referred to a juvenile probation officer. The other 100 participants were sampled from southern West Virginia high school students. (Appendix B) The survey questions were designed to identify psychological and social variables which may be related to juvenile delinquency. In order for the delinquent subjects to participate in the study, permission was obtained from three institutions as referenced. (Letters 1, 2, 3) Informed consent was also obtained for all 200 participants. (Appendix A) The consent form included an introduction to the study, as well as instructions of anonymity and the notification of freedom to withdraw from the study at any point. The surveys administered to the referred group were done at their respective locations. The others were administered at high school recruitment tours at Bluefield State College from Fall 2000 to Spring 2001. Purposive sampling (aka- theoretical sampling) was used. In purposive sampling you begin by identifying someone who meets the criteria for inclusion in your study. Purposive sampling is especially useful when you are trying to reach populations that are inaccessible or hard to find.

Results

A multivariate analysis of data was used. A nonparametric version of regression called Logistic Regression was utilized. According to Cone and Foster (1997) logistic regression resembles multiple regressions. A number of predictors are related to a single criterion variable. However, in logistic regression, predictors can be continuous or not.

Unlike multiple regressions the criterion variable is categorical, not continuous.

Nonparametric regression statistics tell you about how well obtained frequencies in a particular cell fit the expected frequencies.

Logistic regression was used to derive maximum likelihood odds ratios of 95% confidence intervals for the following variables: child abuse/neglect, substance abuse, witnessing domestic violence, learning disabilities, gang membership and delinquent peers. Logistic regression analysis (LRA) extends the techniques of multiple regression analysis to research situations in which the outcome variable is categorical. Logistic regression is not available in Minitab but is one of the features relatively recently added to SPSS. SPSS was used to analyze the data.

The central aim of this study was to explore psychological and social predictors of delinquency. The variables that were significantly related to delinquency were Witnessing Domestic Violence, Child Abuse, Child Neglect, Delinquent Peers, and Drug Abuse. Perhaps equally important are the variables that are not significantly related to juvenile delinquency in southern West Virginia which include Learning Disabilities, and Gang Membership. (Table 3)

DISCUSSION

The variables which were simultaneously statistically significant to juvenile delinquency in southern West Virginia were child abuse and neglect, alcohol and drug abuse, delinquent peers, and witnessing domestic violence. Learning disabilities and gang membership findings were not statistically significant with this population. These findings are both consistent and inconsistent with regard the literature on delinquency. Social scientists search for factors outside the individual. According to Sarson and

Sarson (1999) delinquent behavior has many causes ranging from poor living conditions to antisocial personality disorder to psychosis. The research is consistent with the basic ideology of social control theory originally articulated by Travis Hirschi (1969) in his influential book Causes of Delinquency, which replaced containment theory as the dominant version of control theory. Hirschi linked the onset of delinquent behavior to the weakening of the tie that binds people to society. Social control theorists believe delinquents are acting out of their primal inclination. This perspective states that members of society form bonds with other members in society or institutions in society such as peers, pro-social friends, churches, schools, teachers, and sports teams, to name a few. The social bonds identified by Hirschi include the ties that are factors of development for the children by key people in their lives such as parents, teachers, relatives and friends. This proposition supports the positive relationships between witnessing domestic violence, peers that are delinquent, and abuse and neglect. The findings reaffirm the theories on socializations and its relationship to juvenile delinquency. Delinquency experts agree the family is the frontline of defense against delinquency. A disruptive family life may encourage any pre-existing criminogenic forces and sustain delinquency over the life course. According to Segal and Sienna (1998) there are four broad categories of family functioning which seem to promote delinquent behaviors: families disrupted by spousal conflict or breakup (broken homes); families involved in interpersonal conflict (quality of family life); families that neglect their children's behavior and emotional problems; and families that contain deviant parents who transmit their behavior children (parental criminality).

Greenwood (1997) documented five categories of causes and correlates of juvenile delinquency:

(1) Individual characteristics such as alienation, rebellion and lack of bonding in society. (2) Family influences such as parental conflict, child abuse and family history of problem behavior (substance abuse, criminality, teen pregnancy, and school dropouts). (3) School experiences such as early academic failure and lack of commitment to school. (4) Peer group influences such as friends who engage in problem behavior (minor criminality, gangs and violence). (5) Neighborhood and community factors such as economic deprivation, high rates of substance abuse and crime (p. 13).

According to Skidmore (2001), families are important to consider when explaining juvenile delinquency. The family unit is crucial to a child's development and healthy upbringing. In addition, much of what a child learns is through the family and guardians.

The statistics and literature on child abuse, child neglect, and adolescent substance use and abuse were consistent with the findings.

According to the Kids Count Fund (2001) since 1993 there has been a 36.7 percent increase in the number of referrals of maltreatment and risk of maltreatment accepted for investigation by Child Protective Services. The child abuse and neglect rate continues to worsen. The findings support relevant statistics regarding drug and alcohol abuse among teenagers. According to a bulletin on the facts about alcohol use among teenagers, in 1994 there were 7,965 juvenile Driving Under the Influence offenses, 17,130 juvenile Liquor Law offenses and 23,049 juvenile Drunkenness offenses.

The findings were not consistent with the literature regarding learning disabilities a LD child may not be anymore susceptible to delinquent behavior than the non-LD child, suggesting that the proposed link between learning disabilities and delinquency

may be an artifact of bias. Further, the findings were not consistent with the literature regarding the relationship between gang membership and delinquency.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Social scientists can now point with confidence to a large list of risk factors associated with juvenile delinquency and criminal behavior. No single predictor is particularly at fault with in this study I examined some of the risk factors associated with crime and delinquency. Discrimination, racism, inadequate schools, family disruption, unsafe living conditions, joblessness, social isolation, and limited non-deviant social networks all play roles in the formation of crime and delinquency. However, these factors were not direct variables within this study.

The evidence is clear that prevention and intervention must begin early, preferably during the preschool years. Early intervention is especially critical for children growing up in dysfunctional families where risk factors for delinquency are more prevalent. Research strongly indicates that intervention becomes more difficult and more intransigent behavior patterns are encountered in teenagers who exhibit antisocial behavior from an early age. From a practical perspective it appears that the present findings may give more insight into identifying at risk youth in southern West Virginia.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

With the consideration of the above statements, it is important to discuss limitations to this study. First, the results presented in this thesis are taken from a non-random and non-representative sample. Any attempt to generalize the findings to the

larger population should be done cautiously. A non-probability sample was used. The difference between non-probability sampling is that non-probability sampling does not involve *random* selection and probability sampling does. Does that mean that non-probability samples aren't representative of the population? Not necessarily but it does mean that non-probability samples cannot depend upon the rationale of probability theory. Non-probability (non-random) sampling is rarely representative of the target population and often under-representation occurs further sampling bias is likely present; however it is convenient and economical.

There are also limitations regarding questionnaire research. Concerns arise regarding under-reporting and over-reporting. Bias reporting and sampling errors are other concerns.

Another limitation of this study is the lack of racial diversity in the sample. This factor is likely to be critical in the explanation of why race does not significantly explain deviant behavior.

Additional limitations exist in the way the data was analyzed. The Frequency Distribution of the demographics of the sample might be analyzed. A Chi-Square (χ^2) test could also be used. According to Cone and Foster (1997), when there are several levels of an independent variable, with categorical data, the most appropriate analysis is often Chi-Square. As a descriptive statistic, it tells of the strength of the association between two variables as an inferential statistic it tells us the probability that any association we find is likely to reduce factors. Further, the data for the project has been retained. Other methods of analysis, such as t-tests or more sophisticated multi-variant data analysis can be utilized.

Even though this was a low risk survey, IRB approval for this study should have been requested. Further, I should have had the participants give their "assent" and sought

“consent” from either parents or those with legal custody of those in an institution. A more valid sampling plan should have also been used.

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Appendix A

**Informed Consent of Participation
Of Investigative Projects**

Title of Project: Identifying at Risk Youth for Delinquency

Principal Investigator: Roderick Q. Neal, M.A.

You are invited to participate in a study about Juvenile Delinquency. This study involves experimentation for the purpose of identifying at risk youth for delinquency. The results of this study will be kept strictly confidential. At no time will the researcher release the results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on this project.

I have read and understand the informed consent and conditions of his project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project, and no guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage participation.

survey #

Appendix B

Variables Survey

1. What is your age? ____
2. What is your sex? ____ male ____ female
3. What is your race?
 ____ African American
 ____ Caucasian
 ____ Hispanic
 ____ Native American
 ____ Asian
 ____ other
 _____ if other, explain
4. Who else is living with you?
 ____ mother and father
 ____ mother
 ____ father
 ____ grandparents
 ____ siblings ____ number of siblings
 ____ extended family (example: aunts/uncles)
 ____ other
5. Have you ever witnessed domestic violence in your home? ____ no ____ yes
 If yes, was this violence: ____ occasional ____ frequent
6. Do you feel that you were neglected as a child? ____ no ____ yes
 If yes, how would you categorize this neglect? ____ occasional neglect ____ severe neglect
7. Have you ever been abused? ____ no ____ yes
 If yes, was this abuse: ____ physical ____ sexual ____ verbal
8. Have you ever consumed alcohol? ____ no ____ yes ____ occasionally ____ frequently
9. Have you ever used illegal drugs? ____ no ____ yes ____ occasionally ____ frequently
10. Do you have friends that abuse alcohol and/or drugs? ____ no ____ yes ____ if yes, how many
11. Have you ever been in a learning disabilities class? ____ no ____ yes
12. Have you ever been diagnosed with ADHD? ____ no ____ yes
 If yes, are you currently: ____ receiving treatment ____ taking prescribed medication
13. Have you ever witnessed violence in your school? ____ no ____ yes
 If yes, was this violence: ____ occasional ____ frequent ____ gang related
14. Have you ever been a member of a gang? ____ no ____ yes
15. Do you have friends on juvenile probation? ____ no ____ yes
16. Have you ever been referred to a juvenile probation officer? ____ no ____ yes ____ if yes, number of times.

Appendix C

Variables

Age: The age of respondents will be operationalized as actual age at time of survey.

Gender: Gender will be determined by asking respondent, “What is your sex?” Male will be coded 1, and Female will be coded 2.

Race: Race will be determined by asking respondent, “What is your race?” African American will be coded 1, Caucasian will be coded 2, Hispanic will be coded 3, Native American will be coded 4, Asian will be coded 5, and Other will be coded 6.

Household Size: Household size will be determined by asking respondent, “Who else is living with you?” Mother and Father will be coded 1, Mother will be coded 2, Father will be coded 3, Grandparents will be coded 4, and Other will be coded 5.

Domestic Violence: Domestic violence will be determined by asking respondent, “Have you ever witnessed domestic violence in your home?” No will be coded 1, Yes will be coded 2, Occasional will be coded 3, and Frequently will be coded 4.

Neglect: Neglect will be determined by asking respondent, “Do you feel that you were neglected as a child?” No will be coded 1, Yes will be coded 2, Occasional will be coded 3, and Severe will be coded 4.

Abuse: Abuse will be determined by asking respondent, “Have you ever been abused?” No will be coded 1, Yes will be coded 2, Physical will be coded 3, Sexual will be coded 4, and Verbal will be coded 5.

Alcohol Consumption: Alcohol consumption will be determined by asking respondent, “Have you ever consumed alcohol?” No will be coded 1, Tried will be coded 2, Occasionally will be coded 3, and Frequently will be coded 4.

Drug Use: Drug use will be determined by asking respondent, “Have you ever used illegal drugs?” No will be coded 1, Tried will be coded 2, Occasional will be coded 3, and Frequently will be coded 4.

Peer Substance Abuse: Peer substance abuse will be determined by asking respondent, “Do you have friends that abuse alcohol and/or drugs?” No will be coded 1 and Yes will be coded 2.

Learning Disability: Learning disability will be determined by asking respondent, “Have you ever been in a learning disabilities class?” No will be coded 1 and Yes will be coded 2.

ADHD: ADHD will be determined by asking respondent, “Have you ever been diagnosed with ADHD?” No will be coded 1, Yes will be coded 2, Receiving Treatment will be coded 3, and Taking Prescribed Medication will be coded 4.

School Violence: School violence will be determined by asking respondent, “Have you ever witnessed violence in your school?” No will be coded 1, Yes will be coded 2, Occasional will be coded 3, Frequent will be coded 4, and Gang Related will be coded 5.

Gang Membership: Gang membership will be determined by asking respondent, “Have you ever been a member of a gang?” No will be coded 1 and Yes will be coded 2.

Delinquent Peers: Delinquent peers will be determined by asking respondent, “Do you have friends on juvenile probation?” No will be coded 1 and Yes will be coded 2.

Appendix E

Table 1

Non-Delinquent Survey Results

What is your age?	14-16	61
	17-19	39
What is your sex?	Male	43
	Female	57
What is your race?	African American	18
	Caucasian	78
	Hispanic	1
	Native American	0
	Asian	0
	Other	3
Who else is living with you?	Mother and Father	67
	Mother	19
	Father	2
	Other	12
Have you ever witnessed domestic violence in your home?	No	66
	Yes	34
Do you feel that you were neglected as a child?	No	90
	Yes	10
Have you ever been abused?	No	82
	Yes	18
Have you ever consumed alcohol?	Never	34
	Tried	24
	Occasionally	33
	Frequently	9
Have you ever used illegal drugs?	Never	58
	Tried	21
	Occasionally	14
	Frequently	7
Do you have friends that abuse alcohol and/or drugs?	No	26
	Yes	74
Have you ever been in a learning disabilities class?	No	97
	Yes	3
Have you ever been diagnosed with ADHD?	No	97
	Yes	3
Have you ever witnessed violence in your school?	No	35
	Yes	65
Have you ever been a member of a gang?	No	96
	Yes	4
Do you have friends on juvenile probation?	No	75
	Yes	25
Have you ever been referred to a juvenile probation officer	No	100
	Yes	0

Table 2
Delinquent Survey Results

What is your age?	14-16	38
	17-19	62
What is your sex?	Male	67
	Female	33
What is your race?	African American	32
	Caucasian	57
	Hispanic	5
	Native American	3
	Asian	1
	Other	2
Who else is living with you?	Mother and Father	24
	Mother	32
	Father	8
	Other	36
Have you ever witnessed domestic violence in your home?	No	36
	Yes	64
Do you feel that you were neglected as a child?	No	55
	Yes	45
Have you ever been abused?	No	56
	Yes	44
Have you ever consumed alcohol?	Never	7
	Tried	25
	Occasionally	43
	Frequently	25
Have you ever used illegal drugs?	Never	10
	Tried	29
	Occasionally	30
	Frequently	31
Do you have friends that abuse alcohol and/or drugs?	No	14
	Yes	86
Have you ever been in a learning disabilities class?	No	82
	Yes	18
Have you ever been diagnosed with ADHD?	No	83
	Yes	17
Have you ever witnessed violence in your school?	No	17
	Yes	83
Have you ever been a member of a gang?	No	83
	Yes	17
Do you have friends on juvenile probation?*	No	16
	Yes	83
Have you ever been referred to a juvenile probation officer	No	0
	Yes	100

* one person did not put down an answer for this question

Table 3
Logistic Regression Analysis

		B	S.E.	Wald.	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step	DVIOL	-.887	.631	1.974	1	.003	.412
1	NEGLECT	-3.710	.822	20.345	1	.001	11.848
	ABUSE	-2.908	.703	17.107	1	.004	.055
	ALCOHOL	1.153	.757	2.320	1	.003	3.169
	DRUGS	2.308	.689	11.221	1	.001	10.051
	LD	-.468	.598	.613	1	.433	.626
	GANG	1.138	.728	2.445	1	.118	3.121
	PEERD	3.125	.528	35.034	1	.004	14.768
	Constant	-10.544	1.719	37.607	1	.000	.000

Appendix F

Letter 1

Bluefield State College

September 15, 2000

The Honorable John R. Frazier
Chief Judge, 9th Judicial Circuit Court
Mercer County Courthouse
Princeton, WV 24740

RE: Juvenile Delinquency/Research

Dear Judge Frazier:

I hope this letter finds you and your staff in good health and spirits. Pursuant to our conversation some time ago regarding the above referenced, I am pleased to report that my research proposal has been approved, (Proposal attached). The purpose of the research is to find the best linear fit among several independent or explanatory variables of Juvenile Delinquency. In an effort to determine the variables that account for variance in Juvenile Delinquency, among adolescents in Mercer County, the data will be analyzed by means of step wise multiple regressions analysis. The research will attempt to identify the social psychological factors associated with Juvenile Delinquency, which will enable child support services to identify at risk youth.

At this time, I would respectfully request permission to administer the questionnaire to a randomly sampled group of juveniles on file in the Juvenile Probation Office.

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Mary Porterfield has been contacted in regards to my request. Further, she has acknowledged her office would assist me upon court approval.

At this time, I would respectfully request permission to administer a questionnaire to 50-75 juveniles on record with the court (questionnaire attached).

If there are any questions, please feel free to call 327-4433 or 425-4704. Further, I would like to schedule an appointment with you to discuss the research.

Very truly yours,

Roderick Q. Neal

Letter 2

Bluefield State College

October 3, 2000

Mercer County Juvenile Probation
Mercer County Courthouse
Princeton, WV 24740

RE: Research

Ladies:

I apologize for the delay in completing the attached survey. Multiple regression is a statistical technique whose calculation is beyond hand calculation and interpretation. It was necessary to develop a code key upon which the codes, (established in the operationalization of variables), will be entered into a program called Statistical Packaged for Social Science. Arrangements have been made with the research department of Jackson State University (Mississippi) to calculate and interpret the data. That caused a delay, nevertheless, the survey is completed and I respectfully request that every adolescent who enters your office be granted the opportunity to take this survey.

Pursuant to the court's request confidentiality is extremely important in the collection of the data considering the population that is being studied. I feel as a result of our discussion with Judge Frazier, the systematic arrangement which was agreed upon would be effective.

Enclosed are 50 surveys. I will pick the surveys up at the end of each week beginning October 14, 2000, consecutive for 3 – 4 weeks.

Again, thanks for your assistance. If there are any questions, call 327-4433.

Very Truly Yours,

Roderick Q. Neal

Cc: Judge Frazier (chief)
Judge Knight

Letter 3

Bluefield State College

Division of Juvenile Services
Mr. Mannford Holland
Mr. John Richardson
Mr. Sam Perdue

RE: At risk youth.

Gentlemen,

At this time I would like to respectfully request permission to administer a 16-question survey to the population at your facility. Survey attached. I am trying to see which psychosociological variables discriminate between two or more groups. The title of my research is Identifying at risk youth. A discriminate analysis of psychosociological determinates of delinquent vs. non-delinquent behavior.

Further you will find attached a copy of a permission letter to the Court, which has been granted. I am also using the 8th, 10th, 11th Circuit Courts population. My goal is to have the research published in several Journals, and to expand on our knowledge of delinquent behavior.

I have been a full time faculty member at Bluefield State College for three years teaching Criminal Behavior, Developmental Psychology, General Psychology, and Social Psychology. Ironically I have not come across any similar studies.

I have also worked as a probation officer for the 9th Circuit Court for 6 years, and while there I still did not see any related studies.

If there are any questions, please call 487-4027.

Sincerely,

Roderick Q. Neal, M.A.