EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND JUDGMENT ABILITY IN A GROUP OF 300 DELINQUENT BOYS AS REFLECTED BY THE INFORMATION AND COMPREHENSION SUBTEST OF THE WECHSLER INTELLIGENCE SCALE FOR CHILDREN

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The behavior of juvenile delinquents is of major concern to many people in the fields of psychology and sociology. The outlay of funds alone is of considerable proportions. In 1958 there were approximately 350 institutions in this country designed to serve the needs of delinquent children (5, p. 12). These same institutions cost the public $56,000,000 in operational costs alone; private institutions require $20,000,000 for their expenditures. During the fiscal year of 1964, the two state schools for boys in Texas had a total of over three million dollars in expenditures (30). The costs measured in human misery cannot be obtained, but a fraction of the picture may be glimpsed by simply looking at the number of youths involved in juvenile delinquency. The delinquent population in the United States in 1962 was set at approximately two million youths (32). This is far from a static estimate due to the fact that in 1960 the number of youths between the ages of ten to seventeen increased 2 per cent over the figure of 1959, but the number of delinquencies rose 6 per cent (33). A similar condition exists for the State of Texas as well. The admissions of boys in 1964 have increased 8 per cent over the previous year (30, p. 9). If only the new commitments, or boys coming
to a state school for the first time, are considered, then the figure shows a 12 per cent increase for the same period of time. The estimate for 1970 is that between three and four million youths will be brought to the attention of the juvenile courts of the United States for delinquent activity (29). The intensive study of juvenile delinquency is a task which no civilized society can afford to disregard.

Theoretical Background

The theories as to the causes of juvenile delinquency are numerous, complex, and, at times, interrelated. They represent many years of effort and research on the part of writers and scientists in the field of delinquency. All of the existing theories can be placed into three separate schools with a minimum of overlap. These three schools of thought are represented by the biological or constitutional theory, the psychogenic theory, and the sociological theory (23).

The biological theory views criminal deviations as the result of the inherited physical and mental makeup of man. This particular school of thought is often referred to as the European theory due to its early advocacy by men like Kretschmer, Lange, Schneider, and Frey (23, p. 42). The work of William Sheldon of this country can be added to the constitutional theory as well (26). This writer formulated the concept of the mesomorphic somatotype as being the one body-build most often related to delinquency. The Gluecks adopted
this idea later and applied it to their study of 500 delinquent and 500 nondelinquent boys (18). The Gluecks found that the delinquent boys were more mesomorphic than the nondelinquent boys. These authors also discovered that the delinquent boys were more aggressive and impulsive temperamentally, more defiant and resentful emotionally, more concrete learners, and were reared by more unfit parents than were the nondelinquent boys (18, pp. 281-282).

The psychogenic theory holds that the formation of an antisocial or delinquent character can be traced back to the early childhood in which faulty relationships within the family seriously hampered the child's ability to control his impulses. August Aichhorn is generally considered to be the founder of this particular school of thought. This author described juvenile delinquency as the result of the turmoil created in the family between the parents and the child (1). The parents attempt to solve their libidinal difficulties at the expense of the child's personal development. The child rejects this solution through the defense reactions of waywardness and negativism. Friedlander also follows this theory in her explanation of the antisocial character formation (16). This psychiatrist writes that the delinquent still retains instinctive demands too strong for the ego to modify. The superego is not independent enough to aid the ego, and the delinquent therefore remains under the influence of the pleasure principle rather than the reality principle. Glover's (17) analytically
oriented cause of delinquency is quite similar to that of Friedlander. Glover states that the main factors are composed of either an excess or a deficiency of institutional drives, especially the infantile impulses of sexuality and aggression. This creates a low threshold for frustration and a tendency to react in an aggressive fashion. Redl, another disciple of Aichhorn, builds his theory around a "delinquent ego" concept (24). This means that the delinquent is unable or unwilling to control impulsive behavior in order that he may enjoy this activity free from guilt and anxiety. The delinquents who are unable to control their impulsivity are those who are not value-identified, but instead have super-egos which are identified with a delinquent behavior code. These delinquents experience very little guilt feelings. Redl explains that the delinquents who are unwilling to control their impulsive behavior are those who actually have a conscience which is intact and must therefore trick it to obtain enjoyment out of their actions. Research in this area has indicated that the parents of delinquent children either consciously or unconsciously condone the behavior of their children (20). The parents gain a vicarious satisfaction from the child's aggressive and antisocial actions. Parental environments of this kind obviously injure the conscience formation of many children.

The sociological theory regards the cause of juvenile delinquency as originating from a defective environment. The
importance of community disorganization, low socio-economic status, family disruption, and the loss of restraining influences from the church and the school are stressed in the formation of delinquency by this school of thought. Sociologists since Ferri (23, p. 43) in 1885 have called attention to these conditions in the environment. The American sociologist, Edwin Sutherland, explained delinquency by his differential association theory (28, p. 6). Delinquent behavior is learned through the association with others according to the frequency, intensity, duration, and priority of the contacts. This theory has since been modified to include reference groups as models of behavior with which one identifies. Albert Cohen studied boys growing up in the slums and found that some of them turned their backs on middle-class values and looked to the street corner gangs to satisfy their status problems (9). Other writers (8) discovered that the urban slum boys who joined the delinquent subculture were those who discovered that they had no access to the legitimate avenues of success.

There is a more contemporary explanation of juvenile delinquency which cannot be placed exclusively into any one of the three theories previously described. Slavson (27, pp. 16-17) employs it in his work with juvenile delinquents. This author states that delinquency can be normal, accidental, neurotic, or psychotic. When conditions in the neighborhood or community are antisocial in character, similar behavior on the part of the youth is viewed as normal. Slavson reasons that
the pressures and demands of the environment are important factors in the formation of the personality. Accidental delinquency occurs as a result of special pressure or temp-tational circumstances. Such behavior is episodic and rather isolated in most circumstances, with the courts dismissing such cases. When the delinquent act stems from neurotic conflicts and serves unconscious needs, the delinquent is classified as neurotic and requires professional intervention. The psychotic delinquent commits his antisocial acts as the result of nonvolitional organic or psychic pathology.

A specific area of major concern within the research is the intellectual functioning of juvenile delinquents on the standard tests of intelligence. Most authorities are in agreement that a great percentage of delinquents tends to be less intelligent than the more socially adjusted adolescents (3, 10, 34, 37). This clinical attitude was quite prevalent shortly after the advent of intelligence tests in this country (6). More recent research tends to lessen the intellectual gap on tests between the delinquent and the non-delinquent youth. A study of 51,808 delinquents over a thirty-four-year period shows a steady rise in the scores (6, p. 243). The authors of this study call attention to the improved standard of living, broader educational opportunities, and special treatment programs as the factors most responsible for the upward trend in intelligence test achievement. Fisher (13) reports Wechsler intelligence scores of from 98.71 to 84.45 for
three groups of male adolescent sociopaths. In a study conducted with two hundred female delinquent, the authors (4) found the intelligence scores on the Wechsler to be 94.77 and 93.87. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale is used with increasing frequency because of its diagnostic value in regard to the adolescent delinquent. Wechsler states in his book that the adolescent psychopath usually achieves a higher Performance score than Verbal score (35, p. 155). A large amount of research has been conducted in an attempt to test this prediction. Several of these studies (7, 12, 14, 19, 31) reveal findings that oppose this clinical statement. Other researchers (2, 13, 36) have arrived at the conclusion that adolescent psychopaths do have higher Performance scores than Verbal scores. Much of the experimental conflict centers around the diagnostic criterion employed in determining which adolescents are considered as psychopaths and which are considered as juvenile delinquents. The studies which tend to make a distinction between these two categories and place psychopathy in the realm of mental illness and not within legal classifications consistently reveal Wechsler Performance scores which are significantly higher than Verbal scores. When a group of juvenile delinquents is chosen on the basis of their legal difficulties, the results of their Wechslers do not as often show a Performance score which is significantly higher than the Verbal score. It is noted, though, that both the personalities of juvenile delinquents and adolescent
psychopaths bear a distinct relationship and share numerous clinical symptoms in common.

Wechsler also describes a subtest patterning for this same group in which the sum of the Object Assembly and the Picture Arrangement is consistently higher than the sum of the Block Design and the Picture Completion (35, p. 151). In one particular study (14) a group of forty-four male delinquents was found to have a combined Picture Arrangement and Object Assembly subtest score significantly higher than their combined Block Design and Picture Completion scores. Also in keeping with Wechsler's prediction is a Picture Arrangement score significantly larger than both the Block Design and Digit Span scores. A similar study (4) employing female delinquents produced findings that are in basic agreement with the above research conducted on male delinquents. General substantiation of Wechsler's subtest signs is found in other studies (2, 15) dealing with juvenile delinquents. Wechsler goes on to describe particular features on the various subtest which he expects to find when testing certain personality types. The Information and Comprehension subtests are of particular importance at this time.

Wechsler states that "... the conditions which most often influence level of information are schooling, cultural background, and specific interests." (35, p. 179) This writer also writes that large discrepancies between Information and
other subtests are clinically important. Mayman, Schafer, and Rapaport (22, pp. 551-552) consider the Information subtest to be a measure of natural endowment and early educational stimulation. These writers conclude that

The acquisition of knowledge is hindered in a person who uses as a primary method of adjustment the defense of pushing out of consciousness (repressing) facts that are even remotely connected with conflict-laden ideas and feelings (22, p. 552).

Wechsler is less precise about the Comprehension subtest when he states

Precisely what function the Comprehension Test involves is difficult to say. . . . Success on the test seemingly depends on the possession of a certain amount of practical information and a general ability to evaluate past experience (35, p. 68).

Wechsler does conclude in his book that certain capacities, such as "social stereotypy" and "common sense judgment" (35, p. 130), do influence the performance on the Comprehension scale. Other writers in the field view this scale as a test of judgment. Mayman, Schafer, and Rapaport (22, pp. 553-554) write

The concept of judgment implies -- beyond intellectual, logical, and informational factors -- an emotional-attitudinal orientation that automatically picks out what is appropriate and what is relevant in the situation. A stable balance of emotions is prerequisite for the selection of the appropriate information making for good judgment; hence, maladjustment often lowers the Comprehension score (22, p. 554).

The two qualities of early educational background and judgment are important factors in the research on juvenile
delinquency. Numerous authors have called attention to the role they play in the formation of this problem. The school has been cited as a means of predicting delinquency through the truancy and maladjustment of some youths (11, p. 4). Other writers (3, 4, 10, 34) believe that prolonged schooling of youths who are either unwilling or unable to learn actually aids in the development of delinquency. Riese (25, p. 33), in her book about delinquent and dependent children, writes

As long as a child is beset with so many needs and obsessions, whether he is able to learn or not, he thinks of school as just another device of the grown group to prevent his pursuit of satisfactory ways of discovering the world — of the kind of world he is willing to accept. The gift of knowledge, offered by our modern schools in as pleasurable a way as possible, cannot be accepted because of the threatening involvement with it and with the people who represent it. The child fears the responsibility associated with it, "the change of mind," as he may call it.

Redl (24, p. 241) provides a thorough description of the educational background of delinquent and antisocial children when he writes

Why education and love "are not enough" ought to be painfully clear by now on the basis of the disturbances we have described in this book. In a nutshell: the main reason is that the so-called "simple" educational techniques usually referred to are not so simple as they are made out to be.

... In order to be "challenged" by fascinating life tasks or learning situations, a child must have some image of his own future, must be able to take the fear of failure without a breakdown, the victory over an opponent without an outburst of triumphant hate. In order to be motivated by friendly behavior on the side of adults and their institutions, a child must already have developed a real need for adult love and must be able to recognize adults as being loving even at times when they interfere in momentary fun.
In considering the judgment ability of the delinquent youth, it would appear that his power of comparing, deciding, and understanding would be impaired by his particular problem. His ability to distinguish what is appropriate and relevant to the situation might therefore be lessened. This idea is contained in some of the theoretical research of the field. Lampl-De Groot states

Delinquent children all show the same inability to give up immediate gratification, and almost invariably they have been brought up by someone (parents or guardians) whose methods were extreme. Either they were too severe and did not compensate the child for frustrations of love or other gratifications, or they spoiled the child until he was incapable of bearing any disappointment, or they oscillated between the two attitudes so that the child became too confused to be able to make any adequate adaptation (21, pp. 138-139).

Redl (24, p. 241) also describes the lack of judgment and inability to select appropriate information which some delinquent children exhibit.

In order for punishment, criticism, reward or praise, promise or threat to work at all, a child must at least be aware of his own guilt at the very moment when somebody else interferes in his life, and he must be able to differentiate between what he just got by luck and what he deserved. He also must be able to apply experiences from previous life situations to guide him in a moment of temptational challenge right now.

Juvenile delinquents, according to a considerable amount of psychological material on this subject, have an extremely difficult time within the structured environment of the typical classroom. The process of education requires a certain degree of discipline and patience from the student. He must control
his more aggressive and self-centered wishes in favor of the group goal established by the teacher. Delinquent youths are described as being unable to master such control; hence, they all too quickly leave or are expelled from school. If this is the case, then the educational background of the typical juvenile delinquent should be markedly impaired. The Information subtest scale of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children is designed, in addition to supplying an estimate of verbal intelligence, to give a clinical picture of this past schooling. The juvenile delinquent should, therefore, have a lowered score on the Information scale because of suspected educational difficulties.

The judgment ability of delinquents is described by some writers as poor due to the disturbed background that these youths experienced. Faulty parental relationships, insufficient ego strength, or a defective environment can all theoretically contribute to delinquency and hamper the youth's ability to distinguish the relevant from the harmful. His experiences from previous situations may be of a negative nature, and can therefore influence his judgment of what is happening to him at the present moment. If these ideas and formulations are correct, then the Comprehension subtest of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children should reflect this flaw in the judgment ability of juvenile delinquents. The Comprehension subtest scale can be affected by a lack of judgment and an inability to correctly evaluate past experiences.
This particular study, as well as the majority of the research included, is composed of Wechsler intelligence scales of juvenile delinquents alone. The Wechsler protocols of nondelinquents are omitted because the difference between these two groups is considered too large to be of clinical significance in this study. The intellectual functioning of the delinquent group is still some distance behind that of the more socially adjusted adolescent. Such a difference would produce a "false positive" on the Wechsler which would confuse the clinical picture of delinquency. The large difference which can result would tend to push the delinquent youth farther from normalcy and would not reveal the needed information about him. It is already known that a difference exists between the delinquent youth and the nondelinquent; what is desired in this study is additional information on the judgment ability and previous educational background of a group of juvenile delinquents. This same information is not sought in a group of nondelinquents.

Purpose of the Study

It was the purpose of this study to attempt to discover if the educational background and judgment ability of juvenile delinquents are markedly impaired, as indicated by the Information and Comprehension subtest scores of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children. Two assumptions are made as follows:
1. The Information subtest is a valid measure of prior schooling and educational stimulation.

2. The Comprehension subtest is a valid measure of judgment ability.

The following hypotheses were formulated for examination in this study:

**Hypothesis I.**—A group of juvenile delinquents, all incarcerated in the State reformatory and administered a Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, will show a significantly low score on the Information subtest when this scale is compared with the other subtest scores of the Verbal scale.

**Hypothesis II.**—The same group of delinquent youths will show a significantly low score on the Comprehension subtest when this scale is compared with the other subtest scores of the Verbal scale of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children.


CHAPTER II

PROCEDURE

Subjects

The subjects used in this study were 300 male adolescent delinquents who were incarcerated at the Gatesville State Schools for Boys at Gatesville, Texas. All of the subjects were committed to this institution for the first time, and the age range was from ten to sixteen years of age. The subjects were equally divided into three groups according to the three races.

Materials

The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) was the instrument utilized in this study. The WISC was derived from the Wechsler-Bellevue Intelligence Scales and was published in 1949 by David Wechsler (2, p. 1). This test is composed of a Verbal portion and a Performance portion. These two sections are combined to produce a Full Scale IQ.

Method

All of the tests were administered to the subjects by two staff psychologists at the Gatesville State Schools for Boys. The tests were administered after the subjects had been in the Reception and Classification building for one week. Prior to the administration of the Wechsler scale each youth
received two separate tests for grade placement within the institution. The subjects also attended an orientation lecture, which was designed to familiarize them with the institution's rules. Every subject was informed by the professional staff that the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children was a standard part of the testing and orientation process prior to their being sent to one of the five units for the length of their commitment.

The instructions given to each subject prior to the administration of the WISC are the standard directions that accompany this test. No subject was informed of his results on this particular test.

Statistical Treatment

The mean for each of the five subtests used in the Verbal portion was tabulated in all three groups. Since only five subtests are required to obtain the Verbal IQ, the Vocabulary scale was omitted by the psychologists who administered the WISC. A rank order was assigned to each of the five subtests, beginning with the highest score and going down to the lowest score. The standard deviation for each of the five subtests was next obtained. The Information subtest Mean and the Comprehension subtest Mean were then separately compared to the Means of the remaining three subtests. The differences between the Means are expressed with a plus (+) when the Information or Comprehension Mean is larger than the particular
subtest to which it is compared and with a minus (-) when it is smaller than the subtest to which it is compared. The $t$ score (1, pp. 424-425) for each subtest was arrived at, and the level of significant difference was included when present.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPH


CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Presentation of Data

The results of this study tend to confirm the hypothesis that the juvenile delinquent has an Information subtest score which is significantly lower when compared to the remaining subtests of the Verbal portion on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children. The second hypothesis, that the juvenile delinquent has a Comprehension score which is significantly lower than his other subtest scales on the Verbal portion of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, is not supported by this study. The data derived from the study are presented in the following three tables.

Table I is designed to show the five subtests in each of the three groups and to indicate the Mean score for each subtest. A rank order is assigned, beginning with the largest score and going down to the smallest subtest score. Table II compares the Mean Information subtest scores with the Means of the remaining three Verbal subtest scores for each group. The differences are statistically dealt with to give further meaning to the findings of this study. Table III treats the Mean Comprehension subtest scores by the same statistical analysis which the Means of the Information subtests received.
**TABLE I**

**MEAN AND RANK ORDER OF VERBAL SUBTEST SCORES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Subtest</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>7.72</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>9.11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digit Span</td>
<td>8.63</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>6.26</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digit Span</td>
<td>8.60</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digit Span</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An inspection of the Means and rank order of subtest scores for all three groups reveals that the Information score is the lowest score in Groups III and II and the next to lowest score in Group I. The Comprehension subtest is the
second lowest score in Group III but occupies a median position in both Groups II and I. In order to obtain further understanding of the nature of these results, the following two tables present separate comparisons of the Information and Comprehension subtests with the remaining subtest scales.

**TABLE II**

**INFORMATION SUBTEST COMPARISON**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Compared to</th>
<th>M Diff.</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t Score</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>+ .23</td>
<td>2.466</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>-1.16</td>
<td>3.296</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digit Span</td>
<td>- .68</td>
<td>2.662</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>- .72</td>
<td>2.051</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>-1.65</td>
<td>2.468</td>
<td>9.42</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digit Span</td>
<td>-3.06</td>
<td>2.336</td>
<td>17.894</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>- .82</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>3.923</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>-.91</td>
<td>3.078</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digit Span</td>
<td>-1.86</td>
<td>.620</td>
<td>10.941</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is immediately apparent that the Information subtest comparison in Group II shows the highest level of significant difference. The Information score is significantly lower than the three remaining subtests in Group III. Group I shows an Information score with a significant difference in
the predicted direction when compared to the Similarities and Digit Span subtests but not when compared to the Arithmetic scale. The Information subtest Mean is slightly larger than the Arithmetic subtest Mean, and, therefore, no $t$ score is tabulated. With the exception of the Arithmetic scale in Group I, the Information subtest is significantly lower than all of the subtests for each of the three groups. Therefore, the hypothesis that the educational background of the juvenile delinquent is markedly impaired is accepted in this study.

**TABLE III**

**COMPREHENSION SUBTEST COMPARISON**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Compared to</th>
<th>M Diff.</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>$t$ Score</th>
<th>$P$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>+ .73</td>
<td>2.466</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>- .66</td>
<td>3.296</td>
<td>2.705</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digit Span</td>
<td>- .18</td>
<td>2.662</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>+ .70</td>
<td>2.052</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>- .23</td>
<td>2.468</td>
<td>1.017</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digit Span</td>
<td>-1.64</td>
<td>2.336</td>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>- .49</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>- .58</td>
<td>3.078</td>
<td>2.377</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digit Span</td>
<td>-1.53</td>
<td>.620</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident that the Comprehension scale is significantly lower than the other three subtests in Group III alone. In two of these subtests, Arithmetic and Similarities, the level of significant difference is minimal. In Group II the Comprehension scale is significantly lower than the Digit Span score but not for the Arithmetic and Similarities subtests. The Comprehension scale has a significant level of difference when compared to the Similarities subtest only in Group I. Both the Arithmetic and Digit Span subtests in this group fail to show the predicted difference. Therefore, the hypothesis that the judgment ability of juvenile delinquents is markedly impaired is rejected for this population.

Discussion of Data

From this study, it would seem that the educational background of the juvenile delinquent, as reflected by the Information subtest of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, is quite poor. The prior schooling of the delinquent is below the level of his other intellectual achievements which are not so determined by formal education. On the Similarities subtest, which correlates well with general intellectual ability, the subjects in this study achieved a high score when this scale was compared to the other subtests. This would imply that the juvenile delinquent has acquired a certain amount of knowledge but not in the traditional fashion of his contemporary, the nondelinquent. This is
intellectual functioning of the delinquent is only slightly less than that of the nondelinquent. This study would seem to imply that perhaps part of the diagnostic delinquent syndrome is an abnormally low Information score on the Wechsler test.

The results of this study would also seem to indicate that judgment ability, as defined by the Comprehension scale of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, is not significantly impaired for the juvenile delinquent. This fact could offer support to the theory that delinquency can be viewed as normal, accidental, neurotic or psychotic. If the delinquent is considered normal, then his behavior is only a reflection of an antisocial environment. Accidental delinquency could be the result of special and rather isolated circumstances which need not influence the subject in any psychopathological fashion. Both contentions would not necessarily restrict his judgment ability on the Wechsler. Since the Comprehension scale is considerably lower than the other Verbal subtests for some of the subjects but not for all of them, it could therefore be possible that some juvenile delinquents are emotionally disturbed while others are not. The classification of juvenile delinquency does not automatically include deep mental problems.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

This research was designed to investigate the theoretical concepts that the prior educational background and judgment ability of the juvenile delinquent are both markedly impaired. Educational background was operationally defined as the ability to remain in school and to profit from the setting formal education provides. Judgment ability was operationally defined as the proficiency required to distinguish what is appropriate and relevant in a present situation through the evaluation of past experiences. The educational background was inferred from the score on the Information subtest of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children. The judgment ability was inferred from the Comprehension subtest score on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children.

The subjects used in this study were 300 male juvenile delinquents confined at the Gatesville State Schools for Boys in Gatesville, Texas. All subjects were committed for the first time, and the age range was from ten to sixteen years. The subjects were administered the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children. Their WISC tests were divided into three equal groups according to race.
The mean for the five Verbal subtests was tabulated and a rank order assigned to each subtest, beginning with the highest and going down to the lowest. The standard deviation for each subtest was tabulated. The Information and Comprehension subtests were separately compared to the remaining three subtests in each of the three groups. A t score was sought for each subtest, so that the level of significant difference could be shown.

It was found that the Information subtest score was significantly lower than the other subtests for all three groups with the exception of the Arithmetic scale in Group I. It was also found that there was no significant difference in the Comprehension scale when compared to the other subtests.

In discussing the results of this study, it was postulated that the prior educational background of the juvenile delinquent was markedly impaired as a result of his behavior and inability to remain within the formal school setting. It was also suggested that the judgment ability of the juvenile delinquent is not defective solely because he is a delinquent. It appears possible to have different types of delinquency ranging from the normal to the psychotic.

Conclusions

Numerous writers have depicted a relationship between a youth's early misbehavior in the classroom and his subsequent delinquent reaction at a later date. The explanations of this
occurrence range from prolonged schooling of unwilling children to personality disturbances which hinder the child’s ability to control himself in an acceptable fashion. This particular study, which considered a psychometric measurement of the early educational background of a group of juvenile delinquents as reflected by the Information subtest score on the WISC, found a significant difference in this area when compared to the other Verbal subtests of the delinquents. Thus, an extremely poor development in the area of formal schooling appears to be in keeping with the formation of juvenile delinquency. Obviously, myriad other factors are required to bring a more adequate understanding of this problem into fruition. The concept of juvenile delinquency is an extremely complex one which involves many different factors.

Other writers have described the juvenile delinquent as having a flaw in his judgment ability, resulting from an unhealthy early development. Such a child is said to be unable to distinguish whatever is relevant and appropriate from what will give immediate gratification. The delinquent youth is pictured as being unable to apply experiences from previous life situations to guide him when challenged in the present. In this study concerning the Comprehension score of the WISC as a measurement of judgment ability, no significant difference was found in this score when it was compared to the other Verbal subtests. Consequently, it would seem that the judgment ability of the juvenile delinquent is not markedly
impaired on the basis of his delinquency alone. It is possible that the concept of juvenile delinquency does not, in all cases, imply poor mental health. Some delinquents may have an emotional disturbance which can effect their judgment and which can be observed on the WISC. Juvenile delinquency appears to be only one important aspect of the total personality and does not necessarily infringe upon the subject's judgment ability in all decision making occasions.

Recommendations

In making recommendations for further research in this area, several ideas should be considered. First of all, the diagnostic aspects of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children require more study if they are to be considered as measurements of personality factors. Children under sixteen are quite different from adults over eighteen; yet personality attributes found on one scale are too often taken for granted as automatically appearing on the other. Research in these separate areas will tend to strengthen the Wechsler as a diagnostic and projective tool.

The large area of juvenile delinquency could be clarified by research into the psychological factors which go into the formation of a delinquent personality. The concept of delinquency contains many different and only slightly related personality types. A great deal of work has been done exploring delinquency which originates in the slums, but less is to be
found in explaining "middle class" delinquency. Understanding the different types of delinquency from an experimental, rather than theoretical, frame of reference also appears to be important. A quantitative account of the issue would serve to anchor the problem in terms that would have more meaning than that obtained in a very broad qualitative theory. The various theories of delinquency should be subjected to experimental scrutiny and verified or rejected after being objectively tested. In this fashion a more meaningful approach toward a final "cure" for juvenile delinquency can be made.
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*Manuals*