

IMPACT OF ABSENT FATHER-FIGURES ON MALE SUBJECTS AND THE
CORRELATION TO JUVENILE DELINQUENCY: FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

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This study was predicated on the belief that a father brings something unique to the family, thus, making irreplaceable contributions to the life of a child. Fathers are unique in that they provide something different from mothers. They are irreplaceable because when they are absent, children are said to suffer emotionally, intellectually, socially, and behaviorally. The contributions of fathers to a child's well being cannot be fully replaced by better programming, ensuring child support programs, or even by well-intentioned mentoring programs.

A review of literature relevant to delinquency and adolescent behavioral and academic success revealed that there may be a correlation between a male role-model and the teaching of self-control and socially appropriate behaviors. Indeed, much of what the large body of research pertaining to fatherhood reveals is that, compared to children raised in two-parent homes, children who grow up without their fathers have significantly worse outcomes, on average, on almost every measure of well being (Horn, 2002). In addition, an understanding of the factors that may influence delinquent behaviors, in particular within the family unit, can better equip parents and educators to support those who may be exhibiting the beginning signs of delinquent behavior.

This study was designed to determine the influence of, or correlation between, juvenile delinquency and the presence or absence of a father-figure in a child's life. Responses made on the *Delinquency Check List* between two sample sets, delinquent and non-delinquent adolescents, were examined. The study attempted to determine if delinquent activity among adolescents was differentiated by the absence or presence of a father-figure in a child's life. This study also

investigated the frequency and severity of delinquent activities between adolescents in the determined sample groups.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Approximately 25 years ago, Michael Lamb (1976) described fathers as the forgotten contributors to child development. However, much of what psychologists, childrearing experts, and popular culture have focused on has been the role of the mother, with the role of the father believed to be secondary in importance. On the contrary, over the past decade, an increasing amount of attention has been paid to the widespread threat of paternal deprivation, including various forms of father-absence, nonparticipation, neglect, and rejection. According to Horn (2002), former president of the National Fatherhood Initiative, interest in fatherhood has not been limited to researchers and academicians, but has spread to policymakers, social service providers, politicians, community and religious organizations, social commentators, and others.

As stated by President George W. Bush in June, 2001 at the National Fatherhood's 4th Annual Summit on Fatherhood,

Over the past four decades, fatherlessness has emerged as one of our greatest social problems. We know that children who grow up with absent-fathers can suffer lasting damage. They are more likely to end up in poverty or drop out of school, become addicted to drugs, have a child out of wedlock, or end up in prison. Fatherlessness is not the only cause of these things, but our nation must recognize it is an important factor (Horn, 2002, p. 17).

Paternal deprivation has been linked to a number of psychological difficulties in both sons and daughters (Biller, 1971, 1974, 1982). However, absent-fathers are seldom discussed in the literature (Popenoe, 1996a). Despite this fact, many believe that fathers are important to

society and impact the lives of children. Popenoe (1996b) stated that “Father absence is a major force lying behind many of the attention grabbing issues that dominate the news: crime and delinquency, premature sexuality, out-of-wedlock teen births, deteriorating educational achievement, depression, substance abuse, and alienation among teenagers, in addition to the growing number of women in poverty” (p. 3). All of these issues have an impact on the well being of children. Much of the available empirical data suggests negative outcomes for children who are without a paternal father-figure in their lives.

Numerous studies (i.e., Anderson, Holmes, & Ostrech, 1999; Beaty, 1995; Biller & Baum, 1971; Harper & McLanahan, 1999) suggest that criminal activity increases when fathers are absent from the home. In a longitudinal study of 6,403 males who were 14 to 22 years old, it was found that after controlling for family background variables such as mother’s educational level, race, family income, and number of siblings, as well as neighborhood variables such as unemployment rates and median incomes, boys who grew up outside of intact marriages were, on average, more than twice as likely as other boys to end up in jail (Harper & McLanahan, 1999). Each year spent without a father in the home increased the odds of future incarceration by five percent. Boys raised by unmarried mothers were at greatest risk, mostly because they spent the most time in a home without a father. Overall, a boy born to an unwed mother was two and a half times more likely to end up in prison, compared to boys reared in an intact, two-person household. In a study of 123 juvenile delinquents at the Wyoming Boys’ School, the authors reported that the delinquent behavior of boys who grew up in a two-parent household was significantly less severe than boys from single-parent households (Anderson, Holmes, & Ostresh, 1999).

Other areas have shown to be affected adversely by the absence of a father as well, including academic achievement and sexual behavior. In studies involving over 25,000 children using nationally representative data sets, children who lived with only one parent had lower grade point averages, lower college aspirations, poorer attendance records, and a higher drop out rate than students who lived with both parents (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Additionally, in an analysis of data collected from 26,023 adolescents ages 13 to 18, the teens living in single-parent households were more likely to engage in premarital sex than those living in two-parent households (Lammers, 2000).

Despite the negative outcomes reported, it cannot be denied that some children who grow up with an absent father do well, often due to the tremendous efforts of single mothers. In addition, many stepfathers or part-time fathers contribute to their children in countless ways. However, family structure, although not a perfect measure, is the best proxy measure we have for father involvement and the provision of parental resources (Horn, 2002). Thus, the focus of this study was to compare one set of possible negative outcomes, those associated with delinquency, with the absence or presence of a father-figure in a male adolescent's home.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the responses made on the *Delinquency Check List* between two sample sets, delinquent and non-delinquent adolescents. The study attempted to determine if delinquent activity among adolescents was differentiated by the absence or presence of a father-figure in the home. This study also investigated the frequency and severity of delinquent activities between adolescents in the determined sample groups.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean total scores from the delinquent versus non-delinquent sample groups?
2. What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean cluster scores of assaultiveness, delinquency role, parental defiance, and drug usage from the delinquent versus non-delinquent sample groups?
3. What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean total scores of those in the delinquent sample when divided into father-figure absent, father-figure present groups?
4. What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean cluster scores of assaultiveness, delinquency role, parental defiance, and drug usage in the delinquent sample when divided into father-figure present, father-figure absent groups?
5. What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean total scores of those in the non-delinquent sample when divided into father-figure absent, father-figure present groups?
6. What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean cluster scores of assaultiveness, delinquency role, parental defiance, and drug usage in the non-delinquent sample when divided into father-figure absent, father-figure present groups?

Significance of the Study

A review of literature relevant to delinquency and adolescent behavioral and academic success revealed that there might be a correlation between a male role model and the teaching of self-control and socially appropriate behaviors. Indeed, much of what the large body of research

pertaining to fatherhood reveals is that, compared to children raised in two-parent homes, children who grow up without their fathers have significantly worse outcomes, on average, on almost every measure of well being (Horn, 2002). In addition, an understanding of the factors that may influence delinquent behaviors, in particular within the family unit, can better equip parents and educators to support those who may be exhibiting the beginning signs of delinquent behavior.

Studying the relationship and impact between father-figures and adolescent behaviors has significance at the family, practitioner, and policy-making levels. Family structure, in particular the absence of a male figure in the home, may have a substantial impact on the behavior of children. Understanding both the antecedents and consequences of delinquent activity, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of strategies to prevent or intervene with delinquent adolescents, is paramount.

Divorce and non-marital childbearing do not preclude fathers from being actively involved in their children's lives. However, the percentage of children who are living apart from their parents has increased in recent decades. Although little national-level research has been conducted on the role of fathers living apart from their children, research has indicated that fathers' involvement can affect children's social development and cognitive development (Mosley & Thompson, 1995), however, there is an emerging body of research focusing on the impact of absent fathers on academic achievement. Given the knowledge and importance of fathers' contribution to their children, families may be able to impede the likelihood of delinquent behaviors in their children's lives. This study has focused on the presence of a father-figure in a child's life and its influence on the overt delinquent behavior of their children.

At the practitioner level, teachers, counselors, law enforcement, and professionals in the school system may utilize information from this study to develop effective techniques to assist in working with parents, conduct parent training, and provide educational support to those lacking family support or the presence of a male role-model in the home. Information concerning the association between delinquency and absentee father-figures may be used for preventative measures. This study also provides information concerning the types of delinquent behavior in which many adolescents participate.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations are apparent in this study. Subjects who have an absent father-figure may not be typical of those in similar situations. In addition, subjects who come from homes where a father-figure is present may not represent others who have a present father-figure in the home. Likewise, subjects who are attending a mainstream high school may not represent typical high school subjects throughout the state or nation. Furthermore, subjects who attend the selected facility for adjudicated youth may not be representative of the entire population of adjudicated youth.

Subjects in this study will be male, limiting the ability to generalize to a female population. In addition, subjects who had a father-figure present inconsistently over their childhood from age five to the present time will be considered to be a part of the father-figure absent group, eliminating the possibility that some benefit was received from the presence of a male role-model some of the time. Furthermore, students may have received positive benefit from a second adult in their home, whether male or female. The definitive nature of the father-figure absent and father-figure present groups limits the ability to generalize findings to subjects

who have had a father-figure present for part of their lives or those who have had a father-figure who was not physically living in their home.

It is difficult to prove causation in the social sciences, and those concerned about the effects of father-absence should be aware of the complexity of the causation/correlation conundrum. For instance, children who grow up absent of their fathers are more likely to be poor, according to Horn (2002). However, it is also true that poverty contributes to father absence. This study is limited in its ability to prove correlation due to the inclusion of only one of multiple factors contributing to delinquent behaviors in male adolescents.

Definitions of Terms

1. Adolescent: One who is in the period of life from puberty to maturity terminated legally at the age of majority (Collegiate Dictionary, 2002).
2. Adjudicated: Having had action through a court of law due to indictment or information filed with a trial court (Nelson, Rutherford, & Wolford, 1987).
3. Assault: The illegal, intentional perpetration or attempted perpetration of injury of another individual (Nelson et al., 1987).
4. Defiance: A disposition to resist or willingness to contend or fight (Collegiate Dictionary, 2002).
5. Delinquent: A legal term indicating that a child/adolescent had violated the law (Collegiate Dictionary, 2002). For the purposes of this study, an individual who has been adjudicated to a detention facility will be considered as delinquent.

6. Father: A person regarded as a male parent (Webster's Dictionary, 2001). For the purposes of this study, a father-figure can represent any male figure including, but not limited to, an uncle, grandfather, cousin, or step-father.
7. Juvenile: A youth at or below the oldest age for which a juvenile court has first authority or jurisdiction over an individual for violating the law (OJJDP, 2000).
8. Paternal Deprivation: Paternal deprivation is a general term that is used to describe various types of inadequacies involved in a child's experience with his or her father or father-figure. Most typically, it refers to the actual physical absence of the father-figure, but it can also refer to the father's disinterest in, neglect of, or rejection of the child (Horn, 2002).

Organization of Study

This study is organized as follows: (a) a review of literature, (b) method and procedures, (c) an analysis of data and discussion, (d) summary of findings, conclusion and implications, recommendations, and personal reflections, (e) references, and (f) appendices. The role of fathers, their impact and influence on children, alongside the reliability of self-report measures is contained in the review of literature. Specifics regarding the subjects being tested, testing instrumentation, procedures used, and data analysis is contained in chapter three. Chapter four summarizes the statistical findings in text and tabular format. A summary of findings is presented in the last chapter.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In examining the previous literature regarding the impact of fathers on children and the correlation between the paternal role and juvenile delinquency, searches were conducted through the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Dissertation Abstracts International, a relevant search by means of the Electric Library (E-Library), and a hand search of pertinent journal articles and related books at the University of North Texas and Texas Woman's University. Using these tools, literature from 1930 to the present was reviewed. Keywords used in this search were "delinquency," "absent-fathers and delinquency," "families and crime," "self-report delinquency index," "self-reported delinquency," "single parents and delinquency," and "measurement and delinquency."

Literature concerning the link between broken homes and delinquency has received attention for some time; however, studies specific to delinquency in terms of absent or non-involved fathers are limited. This chapter will detail information regarding fathers and delinquency and will be organized as follows (a) absent-fathers, (b) absent-fathers in America today, (c) the impact of absent-fathers, (d) delinquency, (e) fatherhood and delinquency, and (f) self-report measures. A conclusion will follow after these topics have been discussed.

Absent-Fathers

According to Kumpfer (1993), Americans must face the reality that alterations in American society have weakened the ability of families to successfully raise children. Many unfortunate circumstances converge to create weaker families including the following: a weak economy (Blankenhorn, 1995; Horn, 2002), increasing divorce rates (Ancona, 1998; Barber,

2000; Blankenhorn, 1995; Bumpass, 1984; Demo & Acock, 1996; Horn, 2002; Kazdin, 1992; Kumpfer, 1993; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Popenoe, 1996a, 1996b; Wasserman & Seracini, 2001), the reduction of marriage rates (Horn, 2002), increasing teen pregnancy rates and the numbers of children born outside of marriage (Ancona, 1998; Horn, 2002; Robins & Rutter, 1990), reduced paternal responsibility for child support and/or childrearing (Horn, 2002; Kalb, Farrington, & Loeber, 2001; Larzelere & Patterson, 1990; Reiss & Roth, 1993), increased child abuse and neglect (Horn, 2002; Kumpfer, 1993), and increasing numbers of children being raised by poorly educated parents, mother-only families, and poverty (Horn, 2002).

Due to the overwhelmingly complexity of modern society and the diversity of roles that are now expected by men and women, it is no surprise that the structure of the American family has changed. According to Beaty (1995), the variety of alternative family structures has continued to increase over the past generations. One of the most common characteristics of these alternative families is paternal absence. Although maternal absence does exist and can have a profound effect on the children involved, paternal absence has a greater occurrence (Ancona, 1998; Biller & Solomon, 1986; Popenoe, 1996a).

The instability of marriage has caused a concern for potential ill effects on children and misgivings on the part of divorcing parents about how the decision should be made concerning children's living arrangements. Many have wondered, "Should parents stay together for the good of the children?" Children of divorce do experience some disadvantages, but there is a good reason to believe that they would have most of these problems even if the parents decided to stay together. The problems with divorce are associated with reduced parental investment (Barber, 2000).

Over the past decade, an increasing amount of attention has been paid to the widespread threat of paternal deprivation, including various forms of father absence, nonparticipation, neglect, and rejection. Paternal deprivation has been linked to a number of psychological difficulties in both sons and daughters (Angel & Angel, 1996; Biller, 1971, 1974, 1982; Demo & Acock, 1996). A study using a nationally representative sample of 6,287 children ages four to eleven years old indicated that children in single-parent homes are more likely to experience emotional problems and use mental health services than children who live with both parents (Angel & Angel, 1996).

Popenoe (1996a) believes that a father brings something unique to the family. Horn (2002) states that fathers make unique and irreplaceable contributions to the lives of their children. Horn (2002) adds that “Unique means that they provide something different from mothers; they are not just mommy substitutes. Irreplaceable means that when they are absent, people suffer” (p. 11). The contributions of fathers to children’s well-being cannot be fully replaced by better programming, ensuring child support programs, or even by well-intentioned mentoring programs. According to Horn (2002), the fact is “children need their fathers” (p. 11).

One of the most prominent findings concerning the importance of fathering and its role in preventing juvenile delinquency and violence was first disclosed by evidence in a cross-cultural study, which was gathered by anthropologists and comparative psychologists. Psychologist Henry Biller (1993) explained this finding with the following statement:

Males who are father deprived early in life are likely to engage later in rigidly over-compensatory masculine behaviors. The incidence of crimes against property and people, including child abuse and family violence, is relatively high in societies where the rearing of young children is considered to be an exclusively female endeavor. (p. 1).

Absent Fathers in America Today

Today, America's children are suffering in ever-greater numbers from the catastrophic loss of the paternal function (Ancona, 1998). At its core, the fatherhood crisis stems from the physical disappearance of fathers in families (Horn, 2002). Two major demographic trends have contributed to the rise in father absence including the increase in divorce rates and the increase in unwed childbearing. The divorce rates in the United States remain the highest in the world with an estimated 40 to 50% of all marriages ending in separation or divorce (Horn, 2002). Such statistics affect approximately one million children each year. The latter part of the twentieth century saw a dramatic upsurge in unwed childbearing. After remaining below five percent for decades, the proportion of births that occurred out of wedlock rose 600 percent from 1960 to 2000 (Kalb et al., 2001).

The loss of fathers is detrimental to the maturational process of individual children and deleterious for the maturation of the country itself (Ancona, 1998). Many have attributed the loss of the paternal function to more than adverse affects on the family and individual children. For example, Ancona (1998) believes that the loss of paternal function has "undermined the very social fabric of contemporary America, stripping this once strong nation of its maturation process" (p. 19); therefore, our country as a whole suffers from the lack of an adult male identity (Ancona, 1998; Biller, 1971, 1974, 1982; Biller & Solomon, 1986; Horn, 2002) and the subsequent inability of all its citizens to achieve maturity and independence (Ancona, 1998).

The United States is becoming an increasingly fatherless society (Ancona, 1998; Blankenhorn, 1995; Horn, 2002, Popenoe, 1996a). The decline of fatherhood is one of the most basic and unexpected trends of our time (Popenoe, 1996a). Blankenhorn (1995) states that "the decline of fatherhood is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation" (p. 1). Its

dimensions can be captured in a single statistic: within three decades, from 1960 to 1990, the percentage of children living apart from their biological fathers has more than doubled, from 17% to 36%. It was expected that by the turn of the century, nearly 50% of American children would be going to sleep without being able to say goodnight to their dads (Popenoe, 1996a). Thus tonight, one out of every three children will go to bed in a home where his or her father does not live. For the first time in our nation's history, the average child will spend at least a significant portion of his or her childhood living apart from his or her father. These statistics fail to include the scope of the problem of the great prevalence of paternal deprivation that is found in many father-present families.

This trend is seldom discussed (Blankenhorn, 1995; Popenoe, 1996b), but its importance to society and relevance to adolescent behavior is second to none.

Father absence is a major force lying behind many of the attention grabbing issues that dominate the news: crime and delinquency, premature sexuality, out-of-wedlock teen births, deteriorating educational achievement, depression, substance abuse, and alienation among teenagers, in addition to the growing number of women in poverty (Popenoe, 1996b, p. 3).

All of these issues have an impact on the well being of children.

Many researchers (e.g., Blankenhorn, 1995; Horn, 2002; Popenoe, 1996a, Popenoe, 1996b) are not hesitant to discuss the importance of the role of fathers and their impact on children. However, the trend in research is to confirm that the father, when present, may affect the child's cognitive and academic achievement advantageously, alongside moral and conscious development, sex-role development, and overall psychosocial competence or lack of psychopathology. When absent, the father may contribute to the obverse in all of the spheres

mentioned. Horn (2002) indicated that children who live absent from their biological fathers are, on average, at least two to three times more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems, to be victims of child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavior than those who live with their married, biological (or adoptive) parents.

The Impact of Absent-Fathers

The most frequently mentioned cause of paternal absence occurs when a father is away due to career demands, or divorced from the child's mother. For those children who are dealing with a temporary loss, such as one due to career relocation, fewer negative effects have been attributed to father-absence (Adams, Milner, & Schrepf, 1984; Blankenhorn, 1995; Hetherington, 1972; Horn, 2002; West, 1967). However, in the case of divorce or death, a more serious impact has been found on the child's emotional development (Horn, 2002; Steinberg, 1989).

As a recent final report to the National Commission on Children points out that when parents divorce or fail to marry, children are often the victims. Children who live with only one parent, usually their mothers, are six times as likely to be poor as children who live with both parents. (Horn, 2002). In addition, some researchers have found that children are more likely to suffer more emotional, behavioral, and intellectual problems resulting in a higher risk of dropping out of school (Barber, 2000; Biller, 1971, 1974, 1982, 1993; Biller & Solomon, 1986), alcohol and drug abuse (Barber, 1998; Blankenhorn, 1995; Kalb et al., 2001), adolescent pregnancy and childbearing (Barber, 2000; Blankenhorn, 1995; Hetherington, 1972; Kalb et al., 2001), juvenile delinquency (Barber, 1998; Biller, 1971, 1974, 1982, 1993; Biller & Solomon,

1986; Blankenhorn, 1995; Hetherington, 1971; Kalb et al., 2001; Popenoe, 1996a), mental illness (Barber, 1998; Kalb et al., 2001), and suicide (Biller, 1974) when the father is absent.

Alongside the growing numbers of absent-fathers in our society, some people are asking, “Does absent-fatherhood cause social problems such as poor academic performance, increased teen pregnancy, or higher unemployment” (Horn, 2002, p.5)? One way of testing this and questioning the impact of absent fathers on families and children is to control a study statistically. Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur reported their results in *Growing up with a Single Parent* (1994), using a regression analysis to remove the effects of all of the nuisance variables except income. With race, parental education, number of siblings and place of residence statistically controlled, they found that children living with only one biological parent were six percent more likely to drop out of high school, girls were nine percent more likely to become pregnant as teens, and young men were 11% more likely to be unemployed. When parental income was controlled, the risk of these social problems declined by approximately one half in each case. According to these results, reduced income in single parent, compared with two-parent homes, accounts for half of the increased risks of school dropout, pregnancy, and unemployment.

Researchers (e.g., Biller, 1971, 1974, 1982, 1993; Biller & Meredith, 1997; Bumpass, 1984) reported that there is a differential effect of age on the severity of impact of father absence in children versus adolescence. This may be due to the inferior coping mechanisms of children compared with the more advanced skills of adolescence, who have achieved increased emotional maturity and access to supportive social networks in the form of peer groups (Steinberg, 1989). As stated in literature (e.g., Beaty, 1995; Biller & Bahm, 1971; Hetherington, 1966), children who become father-absent before the age of five suffer more debilitating intrapsychological interpersonal difficulties than do children who become father-absent after the age of five. For

children who become father-absent before the age of five, the effects seem to be more profound and long-term (Beatty, 1995). Consequently, their relationships with their peers can be damaged as well. In a study of 40 middle school boys from a Midwest suburb found that those boys who lived without their father showed a poorer sense of masculinity and had poorer interpersonal relationships than boys who lived with their biological fathers (Beatty, 1995).

Johnson (1979) investigated the effects of father-absence due to divorce on adolescent peer relationships and found that there was significance between the father-child relationship and social involvement in both boys and girls. Children who are raised in father-absent homes tend to see the outside world as hostile and threatening, according to Draper & Belsky (1990). Conversely, children who observe a stable cooperative relationship between their parents tend to see other social relationships as potentially altruistic and mutually rewarding. This interpersonal orientation colors the type of relationship, which is possible with the other sex. A lack of positive interpersonal relationships may result in an individual's desire to be isolated from others, and contribute to the participation in delinquent activities (Marcus & Gray, 1998).

Delinquency

Delinquent behavior has been the subject of considerable research in the last 50 years. Significant strides have been made in our understanding of both the antecedents and consequences of delinquent activity, as well as in evaluating the effectiveness of strategies to prevent or intervene with delinquent adolescents. At one level, juvenile delinquency is defined by a large number of laws, institutions, and beliefs regarding children and their behavior (Guttfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Alongside, juvenile delinquency is defined by the legal machinery and institutions developed to control behavior considered delinquent and to cope in

other ways with youth problems (Sampson & Laub, 1993). At another level, according to Short (1990), juvenile delinquency is behavior: the behavior of young people, their families, peers, and others who are involved in the behavioral settings out of which delinquent behavior emerges.

Serious juvenile offending has multiple dimensions. However, given the prominence of family life and its impact on the development of youths, family factors are the particular focus of this study and the aim of understanding when discussing the etiology and maintenance of juvenile delinquency. The following family factors have been found to be correlated with juvenile offending: family structure (Ancona, 1998; Geismar & Wood, 1986; Horn, 2002; Loeber & Dishion, 1983; Wadsworth, 1979), poor parent-child bonding and affection (Ainsworth, 1989; Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1987; Andry, 1962; Barber, 2000; Bowlby, 1969; Dentler & Monroe, 1961; Hirschi, 1969; Marcus & Gray, 1998; Nye, 1973; Popenoe, 1996a; Slocum & Stone, 1963), poor supervision, monitoring, and discipline practices (Barber, 2000; Blankenhorn, 1995; Glueck & Glueck, 1950; Hetherington, 1972; Kazden, 1992; Kumpfer, 1993; Nye, 1973; Patterson, 1982; Slocum & Stone, 1963; West, 1982), and family discord and conflict (Glueck & Glueck, 1950; Horn, 2002; Kumpfer, 1993; Nye, 1973; Slocum & Stone, 1963; Tolan, 1988; West, 1982). Adolescent delinquent behavior is a pressing problem in America. Almost 2.3 million juveniles are arrested annually. Over one billion dollars are required annually to maintain the juvenile justice system (Swenson & Kennedy, 1995). According to Sickmund, Snyder, & Poe-Yamagata (1997), adolescents under the age of 18 account for 16% of arrest for violent crimes, and 34% of property crime arrests.

The relationship between juveniles and violent crime has varied consistently over time. Between 1988 and 1992, arrests for violent crimes committed by juveniles increased 47%, while violent crime arrests for adults only increased 19%. However, the 1997 statistics have indicated

a drop in violent crimes among juveniles (Sickmund et al., 1997). Consistent over time, studies indicate that juvenile delinquents are more likely than non-delinquents to suffer problems in adulthood, such as unemployment, alcoholism, and involvement in welfare (Kazdin, 1992).

Absent-Fathers and Delinquency

A family's role in the genesis and control of juvenile delinquency is recognized widely (Blankenhorn, 1995; Geismar & Wood, 1986; Horn, 2002; Popenoe, 1996a). Popular literature, journal articles, clinical writing, social welfare case studies, and police reports provide evidence of the connection between disturbed family situations and the deviant behavior of young people emerging from these backgrounds. It is, therefore, surprising that relatively little effort has been devoted to the systematic study of the interrelationships between absent-fathers and delinquency.

Research that implicates the father in the etiology of delinquency is not as abundant, but ranges from general accusations to specific condemnations of paternal behavior (Horn, 2002). Past research is reflective of these accusations. Andry (1962) wrote that when he compared 80 delinquent boys with non-delinquents, the delinquents implied that they felt rejected by their fathers, but felt loved by their mothers. The non-delinquents indicated with much greater constancy that they felt loved equally by both parents. In addition, Lang, Papenfuhs, and Walters (1976) indicated that delinquent girls also feel rejected by their fathers. Non-delinquents had a marked tendency to obey the father and recognize him as the head of the family. Delinquents, on the other hand, while recognizing their fathers as the head of the household, tended to obey their fathers the least.

The unique contributions of fathers can be brought into clearer focus by examining several problem areas in which the presence of fathers is important. The absence of fathers has

been linked to delinquency, and some have suggested that fathers are needed to control the aggressive behavior of their children (Blankenhorn, 1995; Patterson, 1982; Popenoe, 1996a). It is important to note that distinguishing the etiology of violent behavior from other forms of antisocial or delinquent behavior is difficult. We do not really understand why some people are violent and others are not. Therefore, it is best to frame delinquency in terms of what generates antisocial behavior in general.

There is strong evidence that the tendency toward antisocial behavior can be seen in early childhood and remains relatively stable into adulthood (Gutfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Kazdin, 1992; Robins & Rutter, 1990; Sampson & Laub, 1990). Olweus (1979) reports that early evidence is especially true of male aggressiveness. One set of researchers stated this by saying that “Early antisocial behavior is the best predictor of later antisocial behavior” (White, Moffitt, Earls, Robins, & Silva, 1990, p. 521). In the words of another, “Adult antisocial behavior virtually requires childhood antisocial behavior” (Sampson & Laub, 1990, p. 68). According to Robins and Rutter (1990), there is a strong relationship between antisocial behavior in childhood and those individuals’ records of criminality, even when IQ and economic factors are held constant.

A reanalysis of data that was collected in the late 1930’s and early 1940’s was reported by Sampson and Laub in 1993. The Glueck’s 1950 dataset, designed to uncover the causes of delinquency and adult crime, compared the life course from childhood to adulthood of five-hundred delinquents with five-hundred non-delinquents. All of their subjects were white males who grew up in the Boston slums. The dataset combined teacher reports, psychiatric interviews, health and welfare records, employer assessments, and extensive interviews with the subjects and their families. Sampson and Laub reached this conclusion: “Low levels of parental supervision,

erratic, threatening, and harsh discipline, and weak parental attachment were strongly and directly related to delinquency” (p. 247). These researchers found strong corroborating evidence for the importance of early childhood experiences.

A 1993 report, prepared by the Panel on the Understanding and Control of Violent Behavior of the National Research Council entitled *Violence*, summarized beliefs about delinquency and crime: “Researchers have identified correlates and antecedents of aggressive childhood behavior that are presumed to reflect psychological influences including early family experiences: harsh and erratic discipline, lack of parental nurturance, physical abuse and neglect, poor supervision, and early separation of children from their parents” (Reiss & Roth, 1993, p. 105). In addition, the report states that numerous studies show that violent offenders tend to come from certain types of family backgrounds. These family backgrounds, in particular, have been subjected to physical punishment, tend to have alcoholic or criminal parents, and are reflective of a disharmonious parental relationship, who will most likely separate or divorce.

A major contribution of fathers, according to Wisdom (1989), is “to teach their children how to control their own emotions and empathize with others” (p. 368). People who have antisocial or criminal behavior tend to lack both of these traits and instead tend to be “impulsive, insensitive, physical, risk-taking, short-sighted, and nonverbal, therefore, they tend to engage in criminal acts” (Guttfredson & Hirschi, 1990, p. 90). The lack of self-control is associated with the absence of powerful and necessary inhibiting forces in early childhood. These forces can be identified with some clarity.

Following several decades of intense study by scientists, positive correlations have been identified between parental childrearing practices which are able to “set clear rules, monitor behavior, and to make rewards contingent on good behavior and punishment contingent on bad

behavior” (Gutfredson & Hirschi, 1990, p. 68). Furthermore, the development of empathy in children is strongly associated with childrearing practices that involve reasoning with children, rather than disciplining without reason. In addition, positive childrearing consists of teaching children about the consequences of their actions on others (Blankenhorn, 1995; Patterson, 1982; Popenoe, 1996a; Wisdom, 1989).

It is possible for a single-parent mother to convey self-control and empathy to their children; however, they are at a disadvantage, because it is certainly more difficult for one person rather than two. Gottfredson & Hirschi (1990) concluded that:

The single parent (usually a woman) must devote energy to support and maintain activities that are, at least to some extent, shared in the two-parent family. As a result, she is less able to devote time to monitoring and the application of consequences and is more likely to be involved in negative, abusive contacts with her children. (p. 104)

Furthermore, due to the fact that much antisocial behavior among teenagers is related to peer-groups, single-parent homes are susceptible to social realities that are inherent to that time in their lives. According to Steinberg (1989), children from single-parent families are even more susceptible to antisocial peer pressures.

An early study by the National Health Examination (Dornbusch et al., 1985) conducted in 1966-1970 utilizing a representative sample of 6,710 non-institutional youth of ages 12 to 17 compared mother-only families with families containing a male and a female in the home. They concluded the following:

Mother-only households are associated with particular patterns of family decision-making and adolescent deviance, even when family income and parental education are controlled. In contrast to adolescence in households with two natural parents, youth in

mother-only households are perceived as more likely to make decisions without direct parental input and more likely to exhibit deviant behavior. The presence of an additional adult in a mother-only household, especially for males, is associated with increased parental control and a reduction in various forms of adolescent deviance (p. 326)...we believe that a major reason for the increased deviance of youths in mother-only households is the absence of the second adult. (p. 332)

The percentages of single-family households is illustrated in a study of one-hundred and one juvenile delinquent African American males committed to a maximum security detention center. When this group of adolescents was surveyed regarding their family structure, most subjects reported growing up in a female-headed household. According to Marcus and Gray (1998), prior to incarceration, 73% lived with mothers only, 17% with their grandparents, 3% with both parents, and 7% with an aunt. The fathers who were not living in the home had little or no contact with their sons. Of the 66% of fathers who had some contact with the family, the subjects said that they have had fair to poor relationships with their fathers, and that their father did not provide any emotional or financial support to them.

Much of what fathers contribute to the growth of children compliments the mothers (Popenoe, 1996a). For example, an often overlooked dimension of fathering is play (Herzog, 1980; Shulman & Collins, 1993). From childhood to adolescence, fathers tend to emphasize play more than care taking. This style of interaction has proven to have unusual significance. For younger children, it is more physically stimulating and exciting. On the contrary, for older children, it involves more teamwork, requiring the competitive testing of physical and mental skills. Popenoe (1996b) concluded that the family is frequently the apprenticeship or teaching of relationships.

Self-Report Measures

Previous studies have shown that delinquent behavior of significant seriousness is prevalent among general samples of adolescence (Elliot, Huizinga, & Ageton, 1985; Tolan, 1988; Williams & Gold, 1972). Tolan (1988) stated, “it appears that self-report measures of delinquent behavior among general samples can provide the best indication of the development patterns of delinquent behavior and the correlates of such involvement” (p. 415). Self-report methodological considerations have been characterized as more useful for prevention efforts because they allow the study of behavior patterns as they develop rather than after they are established. Also, the deviant behavior can be evaluated within a normative context (Gold & Petronio, 1980; Lorion, Tolan, & Wahler, 1987). Self-report methods are beneficial for more mainstream populations due to the fact that poor and minority adolescents tend to be overly represented in police records, but class differences disappear when self-report methods are used (Larzelere & Patterson, 1990).

The self-report technique is one of three major ways of measuring involvement in delinquent and criminal behavior. The basic approach of the self-report method is to ask individuals if they have engaged in criminal or delinquent behavior, and if so, how frequently and to what degree have they participated. Since the conception of the idea of self-reporting measures in the 1950’s, much progress has been made to grow and refine this measurement technique (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000). Although there is much room for continued improvement, self-report data appear acceptably valid and reliable for most research purposes.

Self-report measures are being used extensively both within the United States and abroad (Klein, 1989). Some researchers believe that the development and widespread use of the self-report methods of delinquent and criminal behavior is one of the most important innovations in

criminological research in the 20th century (Klein, 1989; Thornberry & Krohn, 2000; Tolan, 1988). This type of data collection is thought to be the nearest data source to the actual behavior, since many times the behavior cannot actually be observed. In many cases, a substantial amount of crime is not reported, but even many crimes that are reported or brought to the attention of law officials are not officially reported. Therefore, relying on official data will usually underestimate the actual percentage of crime that is taking place.

In the past, there has been great skepticism concerning the honesty of the respondents and whether they would actually tell researchers about their illegal behaviors. However, early studies (e.g., Porterfield, 1946; Wallerstein & Wylie, 1947) found that not only were respondents willing to self-report their delinquent behavior, they did so in surprising numbers. Since those early studies, the self-report method of gathering data has become much more sophisticated in its design, ensuring more reliable results and extending its application to a myriad of issues (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000).

The self-report method of data collection is based on the assumption that official results underestimate actual criminal behavior. According to some scholars (e.g., Larzelere & Patterson, 1990; Merton, 1938; Sutherland, 1949; Tolan, 1988), simply relying on official information is not sufficient data for analyzation because official data does not tap “hidden delinquency.” An early study by Robinson (1936) stated that “court figures alone are not only insufficient, but misleading” (p. 76). Similar conclusions were reached by Murphy, Shirley, and Witmer (1946) after these researchers analyzed caseworker records of boys brought into the juvenile court. Their findings indicated that less than 1.5 percent of law violations in the caseworker reports resulted in official complaints.

Gibbons (1979) credited Edwin Sutherland for providing the impetus for self-report studies. In 1949, Sutherland conducted a landmark study on white-collar crime based on the belief that individuals from favored social backgrounds were less likely to break the law. The discrepancies between the reports that relied on official data on street crimes, when compared to Sutherland's observations among the upper class, led criminologists to seek alternative means of measuring crime.

Austin Porterfield (1946) provided the first published results from a self-report survey on crime. Results came from the analyzation of juvenile court records of 2,049 delinquents from the Fort Worth area. A more normative sample was surveyed as well, consisting of women and men from three north Texas universities. The offenses committed by the college subjects were criminally significant when compared with those committed by the adjudicated youth, although not committed as frequently. In addition, few of the college subjects had come in contact with law agency officials as a result of the participation in delinquent acts. Furthermore, Wallerstein and Wylie (1947) sampled a group of 1,698 adult men and women and examined self-reports of their delinquent behavior committed before the age of 16. Forty-nine offenses were listed on the mailed questionnaires. Almost all subjects reported committing at least one delinquent act, and 64% of the men and 29% of the women had committed at least one of the 14 felonies included on the checklist.

The early studies that provided the groundwork for current self-report measures are methodologically unsophisticated. Early studies are questioned today for a lack of sample representivity, selection of delinquency items, failure to examine the reliability and validity of these items, and reliance on descriptive analysis to examine poorly stated hypotheses (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000). However, they are considered landmark studies that alerted

researchers to the amount of criminology that existed outside of official reports, providing a measure to report more representational data.

As interpreted by Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis (1981), the works of Short and Nye in 1958 “revolutionized ideas about the feasibility of using survey procedures with a hitherto taboo topic and changed the thinking about delinquent behavior itself” (p. 23). What distinguished Short and Nye’s (1958) work from the previous self-reported studies is their attention to methodological issues such as scale construction, reliability, validity, and sampling. In addition, these researchers focused explicitly on the relationship between social class and delinquent behavior.

A number of studies in the late 1950’s and 1960’s used self-reports to examine the relationship between social status and delinquent behavior (e.g., Akers, 1964; Clark & Wenninger 1962; Dentler & Monroe, 1961; Empey & Erikson, 1966; Erikson & Empey, 1963; Gold, 1966; Slocum & Stone, 1963; Vaz, 1966; Voss, 1966). Other studies advanced self-report measures by applying this type of instrument to ethnically diverse populations (e.g., Clark & Wenninger, 1966; Gold, 1966; Voss, 1966). Gold (1966) addressed issues regarding offense seriousness and frequency. These studies found that although most individuals participated in delinquent acts at some time, few repeatedly committed these acts (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000).

During the 1960’s, researchers began to include questions about other aspects of adolescent delinquency alongside the self-report instrument. Theoretically interesting issues regarding the family (e.g., Dentler & Monroe, 1961; Gold, 1970; Nye, Short & Olson, 1958; Stanfield, 1966; Voss, 1966) were explored. Self-report measures were used to examine etiological theories of delinquency in the 1970’s, as displayed in Travis Hirschi’s *Causes of Delinquency* (1969). Another development during this time period was the introduction of

national surveys investigating delinquency and drug use. Williams and Gold (1972) conducted the first nationwide survey, with a sample of 847 boys and girls who were 13 to 16 years old.

One of the larger undertakings at the national level is that of the National Youth Survey (NYS). This survey was conducted by Elliot and colleagues in 1977 when these researchers surveyed a national probability sample of 1,723 youth (Elliot et al., 1985). A number of methodological deficiencies were improved from prior self-report studies. However, in the 1980's, Elliot and Ageton (1980) explored the methodological shortcomings of self-report instruments again, only to find that most early self-report instruments truncate the response categories for the frequency of offenses and do not include serious offenses in the inventory at all. In addition, many of the samples did not include enough high-rate offenders to clearly distinguish them from other delinquents.

Self-reports began to be designed to measure the high-rate, serious offenders that were most likely to come in contact with authorities. The identification of a relatively small group of offenders who commit disproportionate numbers of criminal acts led to a call to focus research on the "chronic" or "career" criminals (Blumstein, Cohen, Roth, & Visher, 1986; Wolfgang, Figlio, & Sellin, 1972). Blumstein and his colleagues' study drew attention to the early precursors of delinquency, maintenance through adolescent years, and later consequences through adult years.

Since the introduction of scaled items by Short and Nye (1958), considerable attention has been made to develop the instrument and refine its characteristics. The most sophisticated and influential work, according to Thornberry & Krohn (2000), was done by Elliot and his colleagues (Elliot & Ageton, 1980; Elliot et al., 1985; Huizinga & Elliot, 1986) and by Hindelang et al., (1979, 1981). A set of characteristics for acceptable self-report scales has

emerged from their work. Four of the most important characteristics that can be traced to these researchers include (a) the inclusion of a wide array of delinquency items, (b) serious offenses, (c) frequency response sets, and (d) follow-up questions.

The self-report methodology has continued to advance, both in terms of its application and design (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000). The domain of delinquency and crime questions on the index cover a wide range of behaviors, from truancy and running away from home to aggravated assault and homicide. The scales on the self-report instrument include serious as well as minor delinquent acts. Frequency scales are used to separate high-rate offenders from those who offend occasionally. These procedures improve our ability to identify delinquents and discriminate among different types of delinquents.

Conclusion

In order to measure the delinquent participation of adolescents, self-report data scales are often used to report the frequency and severity of criminal activity. Respondents are asked to respond to questions honestly so that behavior that may not be observed or officially recorded can be measured. In addition to being an integral part of the way that crime and delinquency are studied, data that is obtained from this type of measure can be used to compare delinquency based upon a number of variables, including sex, race, and family background. By measuring these variables in relationship to the frequency and severity of delinquent acts, researchers and educators can be better equipped to target interventions for the populations most at-risk.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

Although several studies (i.e., Anderson, Holmes, & Ostrech, 1999; Beatty, 1995; Biller & Baum, 1971; Harper & McLanahan, 1999) have been conducted that highlight the detrimental relationship between absent-fathers and anti-social behavior in children and adolescents, more data are needed to confirm these results. Horn (2002) states that the low levels of supervision of adolescents frequently found in father-absent homes contributed more to the cause of delinquency than did poverty. Therefore, the contributions of fathers to a child's well-being cannot be replaced simply by ensuring better child support enforcement, by designing better income transfer programs, or even by providing well-intentioned mentoring programs. As research has shown and will most likely confirm, "the fact is children need their fathers" (Horn, 2002, p. 11).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the responses made on the *Delinquency Check List* between two sample sets, delinquent and non-delinquent adolescents. The study attempted to determine if delinquent activity among adolescents was differentiated by the absence or presence of a father-figure in the home. This study also investigated the frequency and severity of delinquent activities between adolescents in the determined sample groups.

Research Questions

The following research questions have guided this study:

1. What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean total scores from the delinquent

versus non-delinquent sample groups?

2. What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean cluster scores of assaultiveness, delinquency role, parental defiance, and drug usage from the delinquent versus non-delinquent sample groups?
3. What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean total scores of those in the delinquent sample when divided into father-figure absent, father-figure present groups?
4. What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean cluster scores of assaultiveness, delinquency role, parental defiance, and drug usage in the delinquent sample when divided into father-figure present, father-figure absent groups?
5. What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean total scores of those in the non-delinquent sample when divided into father-figure absent, father-figure present groups?
6. What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean cluster scores of assaultiveness, delinquency role, parental defiance, and drug usage in the non-delinquent sample when divided into father-figure absent, father-figure present groups?

Approval for Study

The researcher received approval to conduct the study from the Institutional Review Board at the University of North Texas (see Appendix A). Consent was given by Dr. Kenneth Stein, one of the authors of the *Delinquency Check List*, to obtain and utilize the primary testing instrument (see Appendix B). In addition, approval was also obtained by the two cooperating institutions, the Texas Youth Commission (see Appendix C) and Terrell Independent School District (see Appendix D), allowing the researcher to access subjects and administer the testing

instruments. Testing instruments included the personal data questionnaire (see Appendix E) and the *Delinquency Check List* (see Appendix F). All participants were presented with the Participant Informed Consent Form (see Appendix G). Furthermore, parents of students in the Terrell Independent School District were informed by letter, which was signed and returned to the researcher if consent was denied (see Appendix H).

Description of Subjects

The first group of subjects was those who have been adjudicated to a state juvenile detention facility. The researcher received approval from the Texas Youth Commission (see Appendix C) to administer a personal data questionnaire (see Appendix E) and the *Delinquency Check List* (see Appendix F) to a sample of 100 male subjects, ranging from 14 to 18 years old. Subjects placed in the facility were from all geographic areas within the state of Texas. Consent forms were given to all participating subjects (see Appendix G).

The second group of subjects was pooled from a north central Texas high school. The researcher received approval from Terrell ISD (see Appendix D) to administer a personal data questionnaire (see Appendix E) and the *Delinquency Check List* (See Appendix F) to subjects. One-hundred male subjects were solicited from mandatory English classes at Terrell High School, ranging from 14 to 18 years old. Parents of subjects were informed by letter, which was signed and returned to the researcher if consent was denied (see Appendix H). Additionally, consent forms were given to all participating subjects (see Appendix G).

Description of Instrument

The *Delinquency Check List* (see Appendix F) was designed to measure the extent of anti-social or delinquent behaviors in boys of high school age (Kulik, Stein, & Sarbin, 1968). The original item pool consisted of 52 descriptors of delinquent behavior that ranged in severity from “mild misbehaviors,” such as parental disobedience, to “severely antisocial acts,” such as armed robbery, use of, or sale of drugs. However, three items were deleted from the original instrument for this study, at the request of an administrator. Deleted items were not found to have significant factor coefficients and did not contribute to those questions that comprise cluster group items.

The original items were submitted to three different factor analyses, each of which was performed on a separate sample group. Reliabilities, generalities, and inter correlations were based upon a sample group of both non-delinquent high school boys and institutionalized delinquents. A cluster analysis of the items on the checklist was replicated on two other samples. The first replication involved the 100 incarcerated delinquents alone. Results of this cluster analysis were virtually identical to the results of the cluster analysis using the combined sample. The second replication consisted of 505 high school boys, and again the results were highly similar to the combined sample. The results from all three factor analyses indicated that four oblique factors were inherent in the 52-item *Delinquency Check List*. These factors were carefully examined and labeled: (a) delinquent role, (b) drug usage, (c) parental defiance, and (d) assaultiveness. The factors included ten, four, five, and five items respectively. Kulik et al., (1968) reported coefficient alphas of .95 for delinquent role, .92 for drug usage, .78 for parental defiance, and .88 for assaultiveness (See Appendix I). The estimated coefficient alpha for the total *Delinquency Check List* was reported at .96.

When using the *Delinquency Check List*, the respondents were requested to read each question and note whether he has “never” engaged in the activity, or committed it “once or twice,” “several times,” “often,” or “very often.” Each item received a score ranging from zero to four indicating the degree of frequency with which an individual has engaged in the act. Scores for each of the scales were obtained by adding individual item scores for individual test questions that comprise one of four clusters. Further, a total delinquency score was obtained by adding item scores for all of the 52-items. For each scale, a high score indicates participation in those types of activities.

Procedures

Data for this study were collected by means of a personal data questionnaire (see Appendix E) and the *Delinquency Check List* (see Appendix F). The *Delinquency Check List* was re-titled as the “Adolescent Check List” when administered to subjects. Administering the personal data questionnaire allowed the researcher to gain access to the age, race, gender, and information regarding the father-figure in a subject’s life. Both the personal data questionnaire and the *Delinquency Check List* were prerecorded by the researcher onto cassette tapes. Subjects who have difficulty reading were identified and grouped beforehand in cooperation with the school’s diagnostician and special education staff. Those subjects who were identified as having difficulty reading were provided with individual cassette players and headphones. The entire group of non-readers, or low readers, was tested this way, so that attention was not called to their disability.

Subjects were provided with either a preprinted test or a cassette tape recording of the test. The personal data questionnaire allowed the researcher to link the responses that were

specific to the father-figure in the student's lives with their responses to questions on the *Delinquency Check List*. Based on the subject's response to questions specific to the father-figure in their lives, subjects were divided into two sub-samples, those with absent and present father-figures.

Delinquency Check List scores were entered into a SPSS data file at the Data Entry Center at the University of North Texas. Results were summed separately for each cluster, in addition to the summation of the total test score. According to the study by Kulik et al., (1968), four definable clusters were established and labeled as follows: (a) delinquent role, (b) assaultiveness, (c) parental defiance, and (d) substance abuse. The internal consistency of each response was examined by computing Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the delinquent and non-delinquent samples. In order to compare the normative (non-delinquent) sample to the delinquent (adjudicated youth) sample, t-tests of Equality of Means were conducted. Significance was determined at the .05 level. Scale means and standard deviations were computed for each group's cluster scores and each group's total test scores. A two-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to test the main effects of the four clusters. The Wilks's lambda F statistic was used to interpret the two-way MANOVA with the four clusters as dependent variables and the delinquent and non-delinquent groups established as the two independent variables. Computing the scaled correlations between the four sample groups allowed the researcher to answer the purported questions. This analysis included a total of 200 subjects; 100 subjects comprised the non-delinquent sample, and 100 subjects comprised the delinquent sample.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains a presentation of the data analyses. The research questions are listed with statistical findings in reference to the research questions presented in narrative and tabular format. Demographic statistics that describe the subjects are provided.

The purpose of this study was to examine the responses made on the *Delinquency Check List* between two sample sets, delinquent and non-delinquent adolescents. The study attempted to determine if delinquent activity among adolescents was differentiated by the absence or presence of a father-figure in the home. This study also investigated the frequency and severity of delinquent activities between adolescents in the determined sample groups.

Description of Subjects

The first group of subjects was those who have been adjudicated to a state juvenile detention facility. The researcher received approval from the Texas Youth Commission (see Appendix C) to administer a personal data questionnaire (see Appendix E) and the *Delinquency Check List* (see Appendix F) to a sample of 100 male subjects, ranging from 14 to 18 years old. Subjects placed in the facility were from all geographic areas within the state of Texas. Consent forms were given to all participating subjects (see Appendix G).

The second group of subjects was pooled from a local high school in north central Texas. The researcher received approval from Terrell ISD (see Appendix D) to administer a personal data questionnaire (see Appendix E) and the *Delinquency Check List* (See Appendix F) to subjects. One-hundred male subjects were solicited from mandatory English classes at the high school, ranging from 14 to 18 years old. Parents of subjects were informed by letter,

which was signed and returned to the researcher if consent was denied (see Appendix H). Additionally, consent forms were given to all participating subjects (see Appendix G).

Group Statistics

Table 1 illustrates the number of students who participated in this study by facility. Students (N 100) who attended the Terrell ISD High School comprised the non-delinquent population. Conversely, for the purposes of this study, students (N 100) who attended the Texas Youth Commission's State School were labeled as delinquent.

Table 2 reflects the fluctuation in populations for the four sub-sample groups. Students in the non-delinquent and delinquent groups were divided into two sub groups: absent father-figures or present father-figures. As can be seen, the number of students with an absent father-figure comprised 35% of the non-delinquent population, in contrast to 64% of the delinquent population. Conversely, the number of students with a present father-figure comprised 65% of the non-delinquent population, in contrast to 36% of the delinquent population.

Table 3 illustrates the diversity of ethnic representation among the males in the non-delinquent group who have an absent or present father-figure in their lives. As can be seen, the majority of students in both the absent and present father-figure sub-groups were represented by the African American and Caucasian ethnic groups. Very few subjects reported Asian Pacific and Native American ethnicity, alongside a small number of subjects who reported Hispanic ethnicity.

Table 1. Number and Percent of Subjects Used in the Study by Sample Groups

Facility	Number (n = 200)	Percent
Terrell ISD High School	100	50
Texas Youth Commission	100	50

Table 2. Number and Percent of Subjects Used in Study by Sub-Groups

Facility	Absent-Fathers		Present Fathers	
	n (99)	%	n (101)	%
Terrell ISD High School	35	35	65	65
Texas Youth Commission	64	64	36	36

Table 3. Ethnicity of Non-Delinquent Subjects with Absent or Present Father-Figures

Ethnicity	<u>Absent Father-Figures</u>		<u>Present Father-Figures</u>	
	n (35)	%	n (65)	%
African American	12	34.3	15	23.1
Asian Pacific	0	0	1	1.5
Caucasian	13	37.1	34	52.3
Hispanic	4	11.4	9	13.8
Native American	0	0	1	1.5
Other	6	17.1	3	4.6
Prefer not to answer	0	0	2	3.1

Table 4 illustrates the ethnic representation among males in the delinquent group who have absent or present father-figures in their lives. As can be seen, African Americans

represented 45% of the absent father-figure group, and only 6% of the present father-figure group. Hispanics followed in number in both the absent and present father-figure groups. Subjects with Asian Pacific ethnicity were not reported, and only two subjects identified themselves as Native American.

Table 4. Ethnicity of Subjects in Delinquent Group with Absent or Present Father-Figures

Ethnicity	<u>Absent Father-Figures</u>		<u>Present Father-Figures</u>	
	n (64)	%	n (35)	%
African American	29	45.3	6	16.7
Asian Pacific	0	0	0	0
Caucasian	14	21.9	10	27.8
Hispanic	16	25.0	19	52.8
Native American	2	3.1	0	0
Other	3	4.7	0	0
Prefer not to answer	0	0	0	0

Table 5 represents the parental status of subjects in the non-delinquent group who have an absent or present father-figure in their lives. As shown in Table 5, non-delinquent subjects with an absent father-figure reported that the majority of their parents were divorced, with one parent remarried. On the contrary, 78% of the non-delinquent subjects indicated that their parents were married and living together. Several of the subjects in the present father-figure group indicated that their parents were divorced, however, they continued to remain in the custody of a male father-figure.

Table 5. Parental Status of Subjects in the Non-Delinquent Group with Absent or Present Father-Figures

Parental Status	<u>Absent Father-Figures</u>		<u>Present Father-Figures</u>	
	n (35)	%	n (61)	%
Married, living together	3	8.6	51	78.5
Married, living apart	2	5.7	1	1.5
Divorced, neither remarried	5	14.3	4	6.2
Divorced, one remarried	15	42.9	2	3.1
Divorced, both remarried	1	2.9	2	3.1
Mother deceased	0	0	0	0
Father deceased	1	2.9	0	0
Both parents deceased	2	5.7	0	0
Not Married	6	17.1	1	1.5

Table 6 represents the parental status of subjects in the delinquent group who have an absent father-figure or present father-figure in their lives. As seen in Table 6, the majority of subjects in the delinquent group with absent father-figures reported that their parents were divorced or not married. Although only 35 subjects comprised the delinquent present father-figure group, 12 of those subjects reported that their parents were married and living together.

Table 6. Parental Status of Subjects in Delinquent Group with Absent or Present Father-Figures

Parental Status	<u>Absent Father-Figures</u>		<u>Present Father-Figures</u>	
	n (64)	%	n (36)	%
Married, living together	3	4.7	12	33.3
Married, living apart	3	4.7	1	2.8
Divorced, neither remarried	13	20.3	3	8.3
Divorced, one remarried	11	17.2	6	16.7
Divorced, both remarried	2	3.1	2	5.6
Mother deceased	2	3.1	1	2.8
Father deceased	7	10.9	3	8.3
Both parents deceased	0	0	0	0
Not Married	23	35.9	8	22.2

Table 7 represents those subjects who were or were not a father of a child in the non-delinquent group who have an absent or present father-figure in their lives. The majority of subjects in the non-delinquent group, despite father-figure sub-group, did not report fathering a child.

Table 7. Fatherhood Status of Non-Delinquent Subjects with Absent or Present Father-Figures

Fatherhood Status	<u>Absent Father-Figures</u>		<u>Present Father-Figures</u>	
	n (35)	%	n (65)	%
Father of a child	1	2.9	2	3
Not a father of a child	34	97.1	63	96.9
Don't know	0	0	0	0

Table 8 represents those subjects who were or were not a father of a child in the delinquent group. Sixteen of the sixty-two responses (25%) reported by those subjects in the delinquent group with an absent father-figure indicated that they were a father of a child. Eight (22%) of the thirty-six delinquents with a present father-figure reported being a father of a child.

Table 8. Fatherhood Status of Subjects in Delinquent Group with Absent or Present Father-Figures

Fatherhood Status	Absent Father-Figures		Present Father-Figures	
	n (62)	%	n (36)	%
Father of a child	16	25.0	8	22.2
Not a father of a child	46	71.9	27	75.0
Don't know	0	0	1	2.8

Instrument Reliability Scores

A reliability analysis was conducted to determine the internal consistency of responses for the sample groups and sub-sample groups. Table 9 notes Cronbach's alpha for each group. As can be seen, alpha levels for every group of responders were in a reliable to extremely reliable range. Thus, the responses from subjects within each group and sub-group were reported with consistency.

Table 10 contains Cronbach's alpha for each cluster group, when all subjects were considered. As can be seen, alpha levels for each cluster were reported to be reliable, ranging from .84 to .92. Therefore, when considering all subjects' responses, consistency was found to be present in each cluster.

Table 9. Total Test Reliability

Sample Group	Number of Responders	(Cronbach's Alpha)
Delinquent absent father-figure	64	.93
Delinquent present father-figure	36	.89
Non-Delinquent absent father-figure	35	.92
Non-Delinquent present father-figure	65	.95
Total of all sample groups	200	.97

Table 10. Cluster Score Reliability for Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Groups

Cluster Groups	(Cronbach's alpha)
Delinquent Role	.92
Drug Usage	.84
Parental Defiance	.88
Assaultiveness	.89

Analysis of Research Questions

A summary of findings from the study answer the six research questions:

Research Question #1

What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean total scores from the delinquent versus non-delinquent sample groups?

Table 11 provides the total mean scores of subjects in the delinquent versus the non-delinquent groups. Using the scaled scores from delinquent and non-delinquent subjects, as measured by the *Delinquency Check List*, the data were analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance, testing the main effects between subjects in the two facilities. The probability of a Type 1 error was maintained at .05 for all subsequent analyses.

Table 11. Total Mean Scores of Delinquent vs Non-Delinquent Groups

Facility	Total Mean Scores
Delinquent Group	99.01
Non-Delinquent Group	34.01

Table 12 represents the findings of the analysis when comparing total score responses from the delinquent versus non-delinquent sample groups. The findings indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the responses of the subjects in the non-delinquent and delinquent groups on their total score at $p < .001$.

Table 12. Two-Way Analysis of Variance for Total Score Between Non-Delinquents and Delinquents

Source	df	F	p	η
School ID	1	236.00	.00*	.55
Error	196	(782.71)		

* Denotes statistical significance at the .001 level.

There was a statistically significant difference between the non-delinquent and delinquent total scores on the *Delinquency Check List* obtained in this analysis, $F(1, 196) = 236.00$, $p < .001$. Differences existed on the *Delinquency Check List* mean total test score when comparing subjects in the delinquent group to those in the non-delinquent group. Mean total scores indicated that the delinquent group total scores were three times higher than the non-delinquent group total scores.

Research Question #2

What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean cluster scores of assaultiveness, delinquency role, parental defiance, and drug usage from the delinquent versus non-delinquent sample groups?

Table 13 contains the mean cluster scores of non-delinquent subjects, as compared to delinquent subject's mean cluster scores. Higher scores indicated greater participation in each particular cluster group. As can be seen, mean cluster scores ranged from two to seven times greater for the delinquent group, when compared to the non-delinquent group.

In order to compare the statistical relationships between cluster groups for the two primary sample groups, a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used.

This procedure allowed the researcher to test the main effects of several dependent variables (cluster groups) between the two independent variables (the sample groups). The Wilks's lambda procedure was used to interpret the two-way MANOVA with four dependent variables.

Table 14 displays the results of this analysis. As noted, a statistically significant difference was found on the mean cluster scores when comparing the non-delinquent and delinquent groups. The subjects in the delinquent group scored higher than the subjects in the non-delinquent group on each cluster.

Table 13. Cluster Mean Scores of Delinquents vs Non-Delinquent Groups

Cluster Groups	Cluster Mean Scores	
	Non-Delinquent	Delinquent
Delinquent Role	9.64	26.73
Drug Usage	1.95	9.49
Parental Defiance	5.30	10.50
Assaultiveness	.07	7.17

Table 14. Two-Way Multivariate Analysis of Variance Results Between Sample Groups for Cluster Scores

Source	df	F	p	η
School ID	4	61.35	.00*	.56
Delinquent Role	1	185.34	.00*	.49
Drug Usage	1	196.64	.00*	.50
Parental Defiance	1	50.51	.00*	.21
Assaultiveness	1	103.64	.00*	.35

* Denotes statistical significance at the .001 level.

There was a statistically significant difference between the non-delinquent and delinquent total scores on the *Delinquency Check List* obtained in this analysis, $F(4, 193) = 61.35, p < .001$. Subsequent analysis revealed that all four clusters were statistically significant at $p < .001$. Statistically significant results existed when comparing the mean cluster scores of the delinquent group versus the non-delinquent groups. Differences existed between all four mean cluster scores on the *Delinquency Check List* when comparing subjects in the delinquent group with those in the non-delinquent group. When comparing the cluster scores for the two school groups, the mean cluster score for each cluster was greater for subjects in the delinquent group when compared to the cluster scores of those in the non-delinquent group.

Research Question #3

What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean total scores of those in the delinquent sample when divided into father-figure absent, father-figure present groups?

Table 15 provides the total mean scores of delinquent subjects when divided into father-figure absent or present sub-groups. Higher scores indicated increased participation in delinquent activities. As shown in Table 15, subjects in the delinquent group with absent father-figures scored comparably, but slightly higher, than those who have present father-figures.

To compare the differences between the two groups in the delinquent sample, Levine's test for equality of variances was computed to insure that the assumption of homogeneity was met. Once met, an independent t-test for equality of means was computed for the sub-sample scores.

Table 16 shows the statistical results of a t-test comparing subjects in the delinquent group when divided into those who have a father-figure present or absent. As is noted in Table

16, subjects in the delinquent group scored similarly, regardless of whether they had an absent or present father-figure in their lives.

Table 15. Total Mean Scores of Delinquent Father-Figures Absent or Present

Delinquent Group - TYC	Total Mean Score
Father-Figure Absent	103.19
Father-Figure Present	91.58

Table 16. Results of t-Test Comparing Delinquent Father-Figure Absent or Present Scores

Group	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
Delinquent	1.74	98	.09	-1.63	24.84

The results, as summarized in Table 16, indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between delinquent subjects who have a father-figure present or absent ($t = 1.74, df = 98, p > .05$). Even though statistical significance was not found on this particular instrument, the chance existed that the presence or absence of a father-figure had impacted the behavior of participants, with significance approaching at $p = .09$. Differences existed between the mean total scores, however, the difference found was not statistically significant. Subjects in the delinquent group did not differ significantly when divided into absent or present father-figure sub-groups.

Research Question #4

What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean cluster scores of assaultiveness, delinquency role, parental defiance, and drug usage in the delinquent sample when divided into father-figure present, father-figure absent groups?

Table 17 provides the mean cluster scores of delinquent subjects when divided into absent or present father-figure groups. Higher mean cluster scores indicated greater participation in delinquent activities defined by particular clusters. As can be seen, subjects in the delinquent groups scored similarly when comparing mean cluster scores, regardless of the presence or absence of a father-figure in their lives.

Table 17. Mean Cluster Scores of Delinquents with Absent or Present Father-Figures

Cluster Groups	Delinquent Mean Cluster Scores	
	Absent Fathers	Present Fathers
Delinquent Role	27.53	25.31
Drug Usage	9.70	9.11
Parental Defiance	10.80	9.97
Assaultiveness	7.80	6.06

In order to compare the statistical relationships between cluster groups for delinquents when divided into father-figure absent or present sub-groups, a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used. This procedure allowed the researcher to test the main effects of several dependent variables (cluster groups) between the two independent variables (i.e., delinquent present father-figure and delinquent absent father-figure groups). The Wilks's lambda procedure was used to interpret the two-way MANOVA with four dependent variables.

Table 18 displays the results of this analysis. Findings indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between mean cluster scores for subjects in the delinquent group when comparing responses of those with absent or present father-figures in their lives.

Table 18. Two-Way Multivariate Analysis of Variance Results Between Absent or Present Father-Figures in the Delinquent Group

Source	df	F	p	η
Group ID	4	.81	.52	.03
Delinquent Role	1	1.43	.24	.01
Drug Usage	1	.41	.52	.00
Parental Defiance	1	.47	.50	.00
Assaultiveness	1	2.29	.13	.02

There was not a statistically significant difference between delinquent group cluster scores when divided into father-figure absent or present sub-groups on the *Delinquency Check List* obtained in this analysis, $F(4, 95) = .81, p > .05$. Subsequent analysis revealed that none of the four clusters were statistically significant at $p > .05$. Statistically significant differences between the mean cluster scores in the delinquent group between subjects where the father-figure is present or absent were not found. Therefore, responses from the subjects in the delinquent group did not vary significantly on the mean cluster scores when comparing those subjects who have absent or present father-figures.

Research Question #5

What differences exist in the *Delinquency Check List* mean total scores of those in the non-delinquent sample when divided into father-figure-absent, father-figure-present groups?

Table 19 represents the total mean score on the *Delinquency Check List* of the non-delinquent subjects when divided in father-figure present or father-figure absent groups. A higher total score indicated greater participation in delinquent activities on the total test. As indicated in Table 19, all responders in the non-delinquent group responded similarly, regardless of the absence or presence of a father-figure in their lives.

To compare the differences between the two groups in the non-delinquent sample, Levine’s test for equality of variances was computed to insure that the assumption of homogeneity was met. Once met, an independent t-test for equality of means was computed for the sub-sample scores.

Table 20 indicates the statistical results as calculated by an independent t-test when comparing the non-delinquent subjects who have an absent father-figure to those who have present father-figures. The findings, as can be seen, did not indicate a statistically significant difference between subjects in the non-delinquent group.

Table 19. Total Mean Score of Non-Delinquents in Father-Figure Absent or Present Groups

Non-Delinquent Group – Terrell High School	Total Mean Score
Father-Figure Absent	32.77
Father-Figure Present	34.97

Table 20. Results of t-Test Comparing Non-Delinquent Father-Figure Absent or Present Total Scores

Group	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
Non-Delinquent				-11.88	7.48

The results, as summarized in Table 20, indicate that there was not a statistically significant difference between non-delinquent subjects who have a father-figure present or absent ($t = -.451, df = 98, p > .05$). Statistically significant differences between the sub-groups in the non-delinquent group, when comparing those with absent or present father-figures, were not found. Therefore, responses from the subjects in the non-delinquent group did not vary significantly on the mean total test scores when comparing those subjects who have absent or present father-figures.

Research Question #6

What differences exist in the Delinquency Check List mean cluster scores of assaultiveness, delinquent role, parental defiance, and drug usage in the non-delinquent sample when divided father-figure-absent, father-figure-present groups?

Table 21 presents the mean cluster scores of subjects in the non-delinquent group when divided into father-figure absent or present sub-groups. Higher mean cluster scores indicated greater participation in delinquent activities characterized by each particular cluster group. As shown in table 21, subjects in the non-delinquent group scored similarly, even when divided into father-figure absent or present sub-groups.

Table 21. Mean Cluster Scores of Non-Delinquents with Absent or Present Father-Figures

Cluster Groups	<u>Non-Delinquent Mean Cluster Scores</u>	
	Absent Fathers	Present Fathers
Delinquent Role	8.69	10.15
Drug Usage	1.91	1.97
Parental Defiance	4.94	5.49
Assaultiveness	.57	.80

In order to compare the statistical relationships between cluster scores for the non-delinquent sample when divided into father-figure present or absent sub-groups, a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used. This procedure allowed the researcher to test the main effects of several dependent variables (i.e., cluster groups) between the two independent variables (non-delinquent father-present and non-delinquent father-absent). The Wilks's lambda procedure was used to interpret the two-way MANOVA with four dependent variables. Table 22 displays the results of this analysis. As can be seen, subjects in the non-delinquent groups scored similarly when divided into father-figure absent or present sub-groups.

Table 22. Two-Way Multivariate Analysis of Variance Results Between Absent or Present Father-Figures Cluster Scores in the Non-Delinquent Group

Source	df	F	p	η
Group ID	4	.38	.82	.02
Delinquent Role	1	.78	.38	.01
Drug Usage	1	.01	.92	.00
Parental Defiance	1	.46	.50	.01
Assaultiveness	1	.29	.59	.00

There was not a statistically significant difference between non-delinquent group cluster scores when divided into those with father-figure absent or present on the *Delinquency Check List* obtained in this analysis, $F(4, 95) = .38, p > .05$. Subsequent analysis revealed that none of the four clusters were statistically significant at $p > .05$. This indicated that there was not a significant difference between the mean cluster scores in the delinquent group between subjects where the father-figure is present or absent. Statistically significant differences were not found

when comparing the mean cluster scores in the non-delinquent group between subjects where the father-figure is present or absent.

Summary of Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the responses made on the *Delinquency Check List* between two sample sets, delinquent and non-delinquent adolescents. The study attempted to determine if delinquent activity among adolescents is differentiated by the absence or presence of a father-figure in the home. Chapter Four presented the data analyses for six research questions. Significance was set a priori at the .05 level. Findings indicate that statistically significant responses existed on the *Delinquency Check List* between the delinquent and non-delinquent sample groups. Higher delinquency scores were reported by the delinquent groups on all four clusters of delinquent role, drug usage, parental defiance, and assaultiveness. Statistical significance was not found when subjects within the delinquent and non-delinquent groups were divided into father-figure present or father-figure absent groups.

Responses within both the delinquent and non-delinquent groups did not differ in terms of those who had an absent or present father-figure when comparing the total mean test scores and mean cluster scores. However, differences were found between both the mean total test scores and mean cluster scores when comparing the delinquent and non-delinquent samples. Therefore, it may be concluded that the non-delinquent and delinquent groups differed in terms of their participation and frequency of participation in delinquent activities. Results indicated that subjects in the delinquent group were three times as likely to engage in delinquent activities in general. In addition, subjects in the delinquent group were more likely to engage in drug-related activities as characterized by the drug usage cluster, and physically aggressive behavior, as characterized by the assaultiveness cluster.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

As juvenile delinquency continues to pose a problem in our society, one can only speculate on the various roots of delinquent behavior. A causal relationship between family factors and delinquent behaviors in male juveniles cannot be confirmed. However, research has indicated that there are negative outcomes in many facets of life for those individuals who are raised without a father-figure present in their life (Horn, 2002).

The purpose of this study was to examine the responses made on the *Delinquency Check List* between two sample sets, delinquent and non-delinquent adolescents. The study attempted to determine if delinquent activity among adolescents is differentiated by the absence or presence of a father-figure in the home. This study also investigated the frequency and severity of delinquent activities between adolescents in the determined sample groups.

A sample of 100 incarcerated males at a Texas juvenile facility of 265 were chosen. Youth were randomly selected throughout the housing facilities, varying in ages between 14-18. In addition, 100 male youths from Terrell High School participated in this study, all of which were randomly selected. The *Delinquency Check List* was administered to participating youth, in addition to a personal data questionnaire. Four distinct clusters comprised the *Delinquency Check List* including (a) parental defiance, (b) assaultiveness, (c) substance abuse, and (d) general delinquency (See Appendix I). Participants in both the delinquent and non-delinquent samples were divided further into two separate sub-samples, those who have present father-figure and those with an absent father-figure. Score comparisons were made on the total test and cluster scores between sample and sub-sample groups.

Interpreting the results of the study should be done with caution. Studies are only generalizable to the degree in which the sample accurately represents the population being examined. Subjects in this study may differ from populations in other geographical regions. Additionally, if generalizing to other populations, additional sample groups, testing instrument, and different incarcerating facilities may be considered. Finally, a paper and pencil questionnaire given to students may not elicit honest or accurate information about delinquent behavior.

Conclusions and Implications

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions and implications can be drawn. The conclusions are limited to subjects who are similar to those who participated in the study.

1. There is a significant statistical difference in the total test scores when comparing subjects from the non-delinquent group to those in the delinquent group. Statistical significance was found at $p < .001$ when a two-way analysis of variance was conducted considering the delinquent and non-delinquent populations. It may be concluded that the non-delinquent and delinquent groups differed on their responses to the *Delinquency Check List* when the mean total scores was analyzed.
2. There is a significant statistical difference in the total cluster scores when comparing subjects from the non-delinquent group to those in the delinquent group. Statistical significance was found at $p < .001$ when a two-way analysis of variance was conducted considering the TYC and Terrell High School on all four clusters. It may be concluded

that the non-delinquent and delinquent groups differed on their responses to the *Delinquency Check List* when the mean cluster scores were analyzed.

3. It may be concluded that subjects at the Texas Youth Commission engaged in delinquent activities three times as often as those who attended Terrell High School. The mean total score for the delinquent population was 99.01, compared to the mean total score of the non-delinquents of 34.20.
4. Statistical significance was not found when comparing the delinquent and non-delinquent samples in terms of an absent or present father-figure. Although statistical significant results were found among the non-delinquent and delinquent populations, the sub-sample groups appeared to respond similarly. The delinquent group had a mean cluster score on questions assigned to delinquent role, drug usage, parental defiance, and assaultiveness as follows: 26.7, 9.49, 10.50, and 7.17 respectively. On the contrary, the non-delinquent group had a mean cluster score on questions assigned to delinquent role, drug usage, parental defiance, and assaultiveness as follows: 34.20, 9.64, 1.95, 5.30, .7189 respectively. According to these figures, subjects in the delinquent group reported physical assault and drug usage seven times more frequently than did the non-delinquents.
5. Delinquent subjects were more likely to have an absent father-figure than non-delinquents, according to the percentage of subjects that comprised the sub-groups. Within the delinquent sample, 64/100 reported having an absent father-figure, as compared to 35/100 in the non-delinquent group.
6. The reliability, or consistency of scores, was high with a total test reliability score of $\alpha = .9703$. Internal consistency for delinquents with absent father-figures was $\alpha = .9294$, with delinquents with present father-figures reported at $\alpha = .8872$. The reliability

analyses for subjects in the non-delinquent sample with absent father-figures was reported to be $\alpha = .9294$, alongside $\alpha = .9485$ for the non-delinquents who reported having a present father-figure.

Recommendations for Further Research

Findings from this study demonstrate a need to further investigate the impact of absent or present father-figures on subjects who have been adjudicated and those who have not been adjudicated. Exploring the results of responses on several different types of self-reporting instruments is warranted. As the results of this study suggest, subjects who were adjudicated are approximately three times more likely to have engaged in delinquent behaviors without any significant correlation between those who have absent or present father-figures. It is obvious that other factors such as a child's relationship with parental figures, the consistency of discipline, and/or the amount of parental supervision within a home may be involved in formation of delinquent behaviors in youth.

Factors such as a subject's ethnic background, the quality of relationships with male father-figures, and the amount of interaction with those figures could prove to be influential in the prediction of delinquent behaviors. Investigations specifically targeting multiple factors that encompass a young person's childhood may highlight the most significant influences on the development of delinquent behavior. Targeted factors may include social-skills training, the teaching of positive coping skills, a parent-training curriculum, counseling and mental health services, and information concerning community resources. Longitudinal studies that address the positive impact of placing father-figures in a young person's life could be used to determine whether mentoring efforts might be successful in deterring delinquent behavior. Furthermore,

examining the responses of female subjects who have had absent or present father-figure may give additional insight into the impact of the influence of a male father-figure on delinquent behavior.

Personal Reflections

Juvenile delinquency is a pressing problem in America, with a rise in the number of single parents that are raising children without the financial, emotional, and relational help of another adult. Unlike studies conducted in the past, many researchers have begun to focus on the influence of a father-figure, not just the influence of the mother on his/her child. Whether the quality of relationship or amount of time that is spend with a father-figure has a positive impact is unknown. However, it is clear that the subjects who have been adjudicated are in need of effective prevention and programming efforts.

It is important to empathize that father-absence does not necessarily lead to delinquency, developmental deficits, and/or render the child with an absent father-figure inferior in psychological functioning to the child with a present father-figure in their lives. Children who have absent-fathers are far from a homogeneous group with almost an infinite number of patterns that can be specified. Many factors need to be considered in evaluating the father-absent situation including the length of separation from the father, type of separation, cause of separation, the child's age and gender, the child's constitutional characteristics, the mother's reaction to the father's absence, the quality of mother-child interactions, the family's socioeconomic status, and the availability of surrogate models (Biller & Solomon, 1986).

The number of family risks to which children are exposed often best predicts how well children will be able to adjust in the world and conform to social norms (Kalb et al., 2001).

Adverse life events such as a divorce, death, or loss of a parent's job frequently tend to cluster together and co-occur with other risk factors. When research finds this correlated pattern, it is probably most prudent to take a cumulative risk approach. The implementation of interventions aimed at multiple risk factors that target those risks are encouraged.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter of Approval from the Institutional Review Board

UNIVERSITY of NORTH TEXAS

Office of Research Services

February 5, 2003

Jennifer Eastin
Special Education
University of North Texas

RE: Human Subjects Application No. 03-009

Dear Ms. Eastin:

On January 31, 2003, the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board reviewed your project titled "Impact of Absent Fathers on Delinquency: Findings and Implications." The Board agrees that the risks inherent in this research are minimal, and the potential benefits to the subjects outweigh those risks. Your study is hereby approved for the use of human subjects. **Federal policy 45 CFR 46.109(e) stipulates that IRB approval is for one year only.**

Enclosed is the consent document with stamped IRB approval. Please copy and **use this form only** for your study subjects.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations require that you submit annual and terminal progress reports to the UNT Institutional Review Board.

Further, the UNT IRB must re-review this project annually and/or prior to any modifications you make in the approved project. Please contact me if you wish to make such changes or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Peter L. Shillingsburg
Chair
Institutional Review Board

PS:sb

APPENDIX B

Letter of Approval from Kenneth Stein

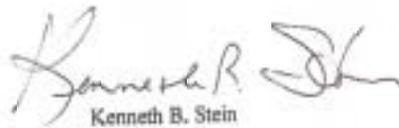
KENNETH B. STEIN, PH.D.
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST
817 MORAGA AVE.
FEDMONT, CALIF. 94611

November 15, 2002

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter gives Jennifer Eastin permission to reproduce for research purposes as many copies as needed of the Checklist of Antisocial Behavior (Delinquency Checklist). Reference can be found in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 1968, Vol. 32, No. 4, 375-382.

Sincerely,


Kenneth B. Stein

APPENDIX C

Letter of Approval from Texas Youth Commission

STEVE ROBINSON
Executive Director
DWIGHT HARRIS
Deputy Executive Director



TEXAS YOUTH COMMISSION

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December 20, 2002

Ms. Jennifer Eastin
P.O. Box 401
Coppell, Texas 75019

Dear Ms. Eastin:

I am pleased to inform you that after reading your research proposal and consulting with the Superintendent of the Gainesville State School, your proposal to survey 100 TYC youth concerning the impact of absent father figures on juvenile delinquency has been approved, contingent upon your acceptance of the conditions specified in the enclosed Research Confidentiality Agreement, and any other logistical conditions specified by the Gainesville State School.

I look forward to reviewing your final report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chuck".

Charles R. Jeffords, Ph.D.
Research Director

APPENDIX D

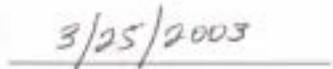
Letter of Approval from Terrell Independent School District

Terrell ISD Letter of Approval

Having read the proposal, as submitted by Jennifer F. Eastin, I would like to grant my support and approval of the proposed study. Jennifer F. Eastin has my permission to administer the Delinquency Check List and personal data questionnaire to students, as agreed upon with the local high school administrators at the school. Jennifer F. Eastin has agreed to keep student responses confidential and to report the concluding results of the study to Terrell ISD to be used research purposes.

Regards,





Date

APPENDIX E

Personal Data Questionnaire

PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE

Test # _____ **PLEASE COPY THIS NUMBER ONTO YOUR SCANTRON**

INSTRUCTIONS: In the space next to the items below, please enter the number that best answers the question. Fill in the information when requested in the spaces provided. Please answer every item.

AGE

_____ 14

_____ 15

_____ 16

_____ 17

_____ 18

WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?

_____ Male

_____ Female

_____ Prefer not to answer

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

_____ African American

_____ Asian Pacific

_____ Caucasian

_____ Hispanic

_____ Native American

_____ Other: Please State _____

MY PARENTS ARE:

_____ Married, living together

_____ Married, living apart

_____ Divorced, neither remarried

_____ Divorced, one remarried

_____ Divorced, both remarried

_____ Mother deceased

_____ Father deceased

_____Both parents deceased

_____Not married

IF YOUR PARENTS DO NOT LIVE TOGETHER, HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN THEY SEPARATED?

HAS A FATHER-FIGURE BEEN PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN YOUR HOME FROM AGE 5 TO THE PRESENT TIME?

_____yes

_____no

_____some of the time

ARE YOU A FATHER OF A CHILD?

_____yes

_____no

_____I don't know

APPENDIX F

Delinquency Check List

Used with Permission from Kenneth Stein

Adolescent Check List

Please indicate to what extent you have participated in the activities below. If you have never participated in the activity, circle the “0.” If you have participated in the activity once or twice, circle “1”; if several times, circle “2”; if often, “3”; if very often, “4.”

	Once or		Several	Very	
	Never	Twice	Times	Often	Often
1. Gone against your parent’s wishes?	0	1	2	3	4
2. Talked back to your parents to their face?	0	1	2	3	4
3. Shouted at your mother or father?	0	1	2	3	4
4. Used foul language at your mother or father?	0	1	2	3	4
5. Got in a physical confrontation with your mother or father?	0	1	2	3	4
6. Come to school tardy in the morning?	0	1	2	3	4
7. Skipped school without a legitimate excuse?	0	1	2	3	4
8. Cheated on any class test?	0	1	2	3	4
9. Caused a major disruption in the classroom?	0	1	2	3	4
10. Run away from home?	0	1	2	3	4
11. Driven a car without a driver’s car or permit?	0	1	2	3	4
12. Broken curfew?	0	1	2	3	4
13. Participated in a gang fight?	0	1	2	3	4
14. Had older friends buy alcohol for you?	0	1	2	3	4
15. Bought or drank beer, wine, or hard liquor?	0	1	2	3	4
16. Used a fake I.D. card?	0	1	2	3	4

	Never	Once or Twice	Several Times	Often	Very Often
17. Played cards, such as poker, for money?	0	1	2	3	4
18. Stopped someone on the street and asked for money?	0	1	2	3	4
19. Broken street lights or windows just to have fun doing so?	0	1	2	3	4
20. Snuck into a place of entertainment (movie theatre, ball game) without paying admission?	0	1	2	3	4
21. Carried a switchblade or other weapon?	0	1	2	3	4
22. Used alcohol excessively?	0	1	2	3	4
23. Drunk so much that you could not remember afterwards some of the things you had done?	0	1	2	3	4
24. Sniffed "glue" or some other substance?	0	1	2	3	4
25. Gone for a ride in a car that someone had stolen?	0	1	2	3	4
26. Taken little things (less than \$2) that did not belong to you?	0	1	2	3	4
27. Taken things of medium value (between \$2 and \$50) that did not belong to you?	0	1	2	3	4
28. Stolen things from a car (hubcaps, etc.)?	0	1	2	3	4
29. Bought or accepted property that you knew was stolen?	0	1	2	3	4
30. Taken a car for a ride without the owner's permission?	0	1	2	3	4

	Never	Once or Twice	Several Times	Often	Very Often
31. Purposely damaged or destroyed public or private property that did not belong to you?	0	1	2	3	4
32. Had sexual intercourse with a person of the opposite sex?	0	1	2	3	4
33. Taken things of large value (over \$50) that did not belong to you?	0	1	2	3	4
34. Driven too fast or recklessly in an automobile?	0	1	2	3	4
35. Stolen someone's purse?	0	1	2	3	4
36. Smoked marijuana?	0	1	2	3	4
37. Hit a teacher?	0	1	2	3	4
38. Resisted arrest, or fought with a police officer who was trying to arrest you?	0	1	2	3	4
39. Broken into a store, home, warehouse, or some other place in order to steal something?	0	1	2	3	4
40. Sold marijuana to someone?	0	1	2	3	4
41. Been in a fight, which led to an all out attack on one person?	0	1	2	3	4
42. Driven a car while drunk?	0	1	2	3	4
43. Taken part in any robbery?	0	1	2	3	4
44. Taken part in a robbery involving the use of physical force?	0	1	2	3	4
45. Taken part in a robbery involving the use of a weapon?	0	1	2	3	4
46. Used narcotic drugs, other than marijuana?	0	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX G

Participant Informed Consent Form

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This study will explore the activities in which teenagers sometimes engage. It is hoped that the results from this study will increase our understanding of teenage behavior. Participation will involve completing a demographic form and a behavioral questionnaire that will take approximately 20-30 minutes of your time. If you choose to participate in this study, your answers will not be shared with anyone. There will be no risks or discomforts involved in this study. You may withdraw from the study at any time if you choose to do so.

The questionnaire contains instructions that are self-explanatory. It is very important that you answer every question. Please be completely honest. Your answers are completely confidential and will be useful only if they accurately describe you.

PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON ANY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES.

If you are willing to participate, please sign below.

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (Phone: 940-565-3940).

This form will be separate from you questionnaires when I receive it. Thank you for your participation.

Jenni Eastin, M. Ed.
Special Education
University of North Texas

Dr. Lyndal M. Bullock
Regents Professor, Special Education
University of North Texas

APPENDIX H

Parent or Guardian Informed Consent Form

PARENT OR GUARDIAN INFORMED CONSENT FORM

As a doctoral candidate and a former Behavior Specialist in Coppell ISD, I would like to inform you in regard to a study that I will be conducting at Terrell High School. This study will explore the delinquent activities in which male teenagers sometimes engage. Participants will be asked questions that include topics such as: truancy, theft, drug and alcohol consumption, and sexual behavior. Questions asked in the questionnaire address such behaviors as driving a car without a license or permit, buying alcohol illegally, sneaking into places without paying, taking part in a robbery, and using illegal drugs. It is hoped that the results of this study will increase our understanding of teenage behavior. Participation will involve completing a personal data questionnaire and a behavioral questionnaire that will take your son approximately 20-25 minutes during their advisory period. If you choose to approve of their participation in this study, their names and responses will be kept confidential at all times. Students will not be asked to identify themselves by name or number on any forms, therefore the researcher will not be able to track responses back to individual students. This study will not pose a risk that exceeds the risk students experience in everyday life and should not cause any discomfort. Students will not be isolated due to their participation or non-participation, nor will they be identified by school staff members in regard to their responses. Students who participate will do so as part of one advisory period, and will not be removed from any academic instruction. Your son may withdraw from the study at any time if they choose to do so. In addition, there will be no loss of privileges or penalties imposed if your son wishes to withdraw.

If you agree to let your son participate in this study, please sign below and return this form in the self-addressed envelope to Jenni Eastin. Any questions or concerns can be directed to Jenni Eastin at (214) 632-8955. The questionnaire is available by the Director of Student Support Services for viewing.

SON'S NAME _____ YOUR SIGNATURE _____

Jenni Eastin, M. Ed.
Special Education
University of North Texas

Dr. Lyndal M. Bullock
Regents Professor, Special Education
University of North Texas

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (Phone: 940-565-3940).

APPENDIX I

Factor Coefficients for Individual Items Comprising Clusters

Factor Coefficients for Individual Items Comprising Clusters

CLUSTER 1 – DELINQUENT ROLE

Ten items define this dimension. Items having high factor readings involve minor delinquencies such as the use of alcohol, school disobedience, and standard gang behaviors. This dimension was labeled “delinquent role” by the authors of the *Delinquency Check List*. Listed below are the defining items along with the oblique factor coefficients.

Factor coefficient	Item
.92	Obtained liquor by having older friend buy it for you?
.85	Skipped school without a legitimate excuse?
.83	Drunk so much that you couldn't remember afterwards?
.81	Used alcohol excessively?
.80	Gone for ride in a car someone had stolen?
.78	Taken part in a gang fight?
.77	Carried a switchblade or other weapon?
.76	Bought or drank beer, wine, or liquor?
.75	Had sexual intercourse with someone of the opposite sex?
.68	Come to school late in the morning?

CLUSTER 2 – DRUG USAGE

Four items relating to drug usage were included in the checklist. The following items define the second cluster.

Factor Coefficient	Item
.91	Used narcotic drugs, other than marijuana?
.89	Smoked marijuana?
.85	Sold marijuana to someone?
.75	Sniffed “glue” or other substances?

CLUSTER 3 – PARENTAL DEFIANCE

The five items relating to defiance of parents in the checklist are the definers of the third cluster. Items vary in severity from going against parents’ wishes to cursing at or striking one’s mother or father.

Factor Coefficient	Item
.79	Defied your parents’ authority?
.67	Shouted at your mother or father?
.63	Cursed at your mother or father?
.61	Gone against your parents’ wishes?
.47	Struck your mother or father?

CLUSTER 4 – ASSAULTIVENESS

Serious assaultive behavior is included in the fourth dimension. The five items that define this cluster involved threat to or assault upon an individual when directly confronted. The factor coefficients are included below.

Factor Coefficient	Item
.87	Taken part in a robbery involving the use of physical force?
.84	Taken part in a robbery involving the use of a weapon?
.78	Taken part in any robbery?
.76	Resisted arrest, or fought with an officer arresting you?
.57	Hit a teacher?

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