

### ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency remains to be a major social issue and the number of adolescents involved in the juvenile system continues to increase. Research has shown that interactions between social, individual, and community can influence development of antisocial behavior such as delinquency. Unfortunately, adolescents who become repeated offenders will face consequences that might negatively affect their futures and may result in them entering the adult justice system. While research has emphasized the risk factors that may lead to juvenile delinquency there is a gap in the research the highlights protective factors for adolescents and further research on the influence of family on antisocial behavior. The aim of the current study is to examine the association between community involvement and familial incarcerations on juvenile delinquency. This secondary analysis examined the Pathways to Desistance study, particularly the first wave of the longitudinal study. The current study included participants (N=1,353) who were adolescents from diverse backgrounds who were involved in the juvenile justice system. Results of the Spearman's Rho correlation analyses found that there was no correlation that was statistically significance between aggressive frequency and community involvement. However, the Mann-Whitney *U* Test showed a statistical significant association between familial incarceration and aggressive frequency. The results of the current study highlight the great influence family has on adolescents and the need for preventative interventions that could decrease recidivism or involvement in juvenile justice system overall. In addition, it highlights the need for further research on protective factors that could decrease juvenile delinquency.

### INTRODUCTION

#### Research Question

1. What is the influence of familial incarceration on offense among juvenile offenders ?
2. What is the influence of community involvement on offense among juveniles?

#### Hypotheses

- There will be a positive correlation between familial incarceration and offense among juvenile offenders.
- Community involvement can serve as a protective factor.
- There will be a negative relationship between community involvement and offense among juvenile offenders.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Family Incarceration and Juvenile Delinquency

- Research has shown that problems within family and parent characteristics can also be associated with maladaptive outcomes in youth (Suveg, Jacob, & Payne 2010).
- 65 percent of the participants in a longitudinal study who had been separated due to parental incarceration were imprisoned later in life compared to 21 percent of participants with not parental incarceration history (Murray & Farrington, 2005).

#### Community Involvement and Juvenile Delinquency

- literature has distinguished that community-based programs can promote prosocial behavior (Burton & Marshall, 2005).
- Tashman, Weist, Nabors, and Shafer (1998) found that meaningful activities such as organized sports, religious involvement, other hobbies could decrease aggression and delinquent behavior.

#### Theoretical Framework

- strain theory looks at how individuals who are faced with disadvantages, in particular, are often pressured to commit crimes (Johnson & Easterling, 2012)

#### Gaps

- There is limited research on both the effects of familial incarceration and protective factors such as community involvement

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design and Data Collection Procedures

- The present study is a secondary analysis of the data from the Pathways to Desistance.
- The original study is a longitudinal and multi-site study that followed 1,354 juvenile offenders from adolescence to young adulthood between 2000 and 2010 (Mulvey, Schubert, & Piquero, 2014).
- Youth were considered for enrollment if their court files revealed that they had been found guilty for a serious offense except for less serious property crimes, misdemeanor weapon offenses and misdemeanor sexual assaults (Schubert et al., 2004; Mulvey et al., 2014).
- Baseline interviews were conducted from November 2000 to January 2003 and Follow-up interviews were then conducted at 6, 12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 48, 60, 72, and 84 months after the baseline interview (Mulvey et al., 2014).

#### Sample and Sampling Method

- The participants of this study consisted of 654 youths (1,170 males and 184 females) from Phoenix, Arizona, and 700 youths from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania ("Pathways to Desistance," n.d.).

#### Measures

- Criminal history of family was measured using the following question: Anyone in family been in jail or prison? Values for this variable were as followed 1=yes, and 0=No
- Community involvement was measured as the number of structured activities participants have ever been involved in. Responses for this measure can range from 0 through 4, the higher the number indicates more community involvement .
- The present study utilized Aggressive Offending Variety Frequency - past year [s0aggfrq] as the dependent variable ("Pathways to Desistance," n.d.). The dependent variable measured the amount of times the participant partook in any of the different types of crimes previously mentioned.

Table 2  
Descriptive Statistics: Study Variables (N=1353)

Variables	f	%
<b>Independent Variables</b>		
Familial incarceration	M=.85	SD=.359
Yes	891	65.9
No	159	11.8
Community involvement	M=.64	SD=.875
<b>Dependent Variables</b>		
Aggressive Offending Frequency	M=.85	SD=.359

Table 1  
Sample Characteristics (N=1353)

Characteristic	f	%
<b>Subject gender</b>		
Male	1169	86.4
Female	184	13.6
<b>Age in years</b>		
	M=16.04	SD=1.143
<b>Subject Ethnicity</b>		
White	274	20.3
Black	561	41.5
Hispanic	453	33.5
Other	65	4.8
<b>Education</b>		
Yes	381	28.2
No	972	71.8
<b>Family Structure</b>		
Two bio parents	199	14.7
Single bio mom, never married	287	21.2
Single bio mom, divorced or separated	218	16.1
Single bio mom, widowed	22	1.6
Bio mom and step dad	238	17.6
Single bio dad	74	5.5
Other relative	164	12.1
Bio dad and stepmom	42	3.1
Two adoptive parents	10	.7
No adult at home	64	4.7
Other	4	.3
Single bio mom, married, bio dad not present	23	1.7
Single bio mom, marital status unknown	8	.6
<b>Mother Current Job</b>		
Higher executives and major professionals	10	1.3
Business managers and lesser professionals	103	13.7
Administrative and minor professionals	65	8.6
Clerical, sales, technicians, and little business owners	303	40.2
Skilled manual employees	32	4.2
Machine operators and semiskilled employees	106	14.1
Unskilled employees	134	17.9
<b>Father Current Job</b>		
Higher executives and major professionals	18	3.2
Business managers and lesser professionals	15	2.7
Administrative and minor professionals	52	9.2
Clerical, sales, technicians, and little business owners	96	17.0
Skilled manual employees	116	20.5
Machine operators and semiskilled employees	134	23.7
Unskilled employees	134	23.7

### RESULTS

#### Spearman's rho Correlation

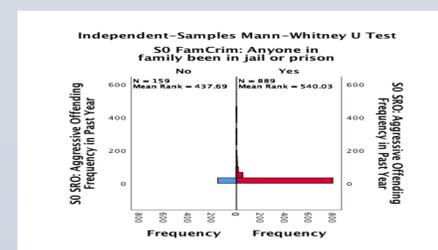
Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient was computed to determine the relationship between aggressive offending frequency and community involvement. The results of the correlational analyses showed no correlation that was statistically significant, ( $r=-0.19$ ,  $p=.488$ ). Community involvement was not associated with aggressive offending frequency.

#### Mann-Whitney U Test

A Mann-Whitney *U* Test was used to examine the association between participants who have had family in jail or prison and those who did not. Participants who had not had family in jail or prison had lower aggressive frequency of offending ( $Mean Rank=437.69$ ) than those who did report having had family in jail or prison ( $Mean rank=540.03$ );  $U=84,479$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

Table 3  
Aggressive Offending Difference Between Participants with Familial Incarceration and without Family Incarceration

Variables	Mean Rank	U	p
Familial incarceration		84,479.0	<.001
Yes	540.03		
No	437.69		



### DISCUSSION

#### Summary of Findings

- Prior research did find a significant association between parental incarceration and offense among juvenile offenders.
- Research also emphasized that parental incarceration could serve as a predictor of adverse outcomes in late adulthood.
- The second finding was also consistent with prior research, but did not support the hypothesis of the present study. Results and prior research found there to be no association between community involvement and frequency of offense.
- Research found that participation in organized sports can lead to delinquent activity. However, there are few studies that state that participation in meaningful activities could serve as a protective factor.

#### Implications for Research and Practice

- The present research highlights the need for further research on protective factors that could prevent adolescents from partaking in antisocial behavior, particularly delinquency.
- Research highlights the need for preventative measures to be taken to decrease the number of adolescents entering the juvenile justice system.
- Further study will help social workers better understand the complexity of juvenile delinquency and the way in which social and environmental factors affect the youth.
- On a macro level, the current study highlights the need for preventative program such as school-based and community based programs that can serve as protective factors for at risk youth and as a result will decrease juvenile delinquency, decrease recidivism and provide adolescents with opportunities for better futures.

#### Limitations

- The first noted limitation is that there was scarce literature on the research topics and majority of the literature is outdated and only focuses on social factors, risk factors, rather than protective factors like community involvement.
- As a result of unreliable literature, the present study found it challenging to provide a sufficient understanding of the research questions being investigated. Furthermore, the available research shows the importance of the need of further investigation on other forms of activities.
- The present study relied primarily on self-report information from the participants which can result in response bias and lower reliability.

#### Strengths

- The current study's greatest strength is its large sample size, although one respondent was excluded, it further strengthened the study by avoiding possible response bias.
- respondents came from diverse backgrounds, making the study generalizable, and the sample representative of the study population.
- the self-report information was validated through the use of official record information such as FBI records of arrest and juvenile and adult records to ensure reliability.

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