The Effects of Child Support on Juvenile Delinquency

by

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The Effects of Child Support
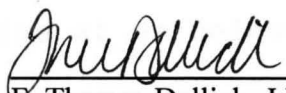on Juvenile Delinquency

Candace N. Rivera

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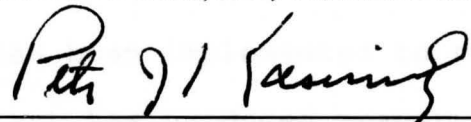
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Abstract

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Various studies have established a correlation between
single-parent households, poverty, and delinquency, but
child support fulfillment has not been identified as a
related aspect. Studies have found that 25 percent of all
children live at or below the poverty level and are entitled
to support yet are not receiving it. In recent decades,
legislation has been implemented to toughen up child support
enforcement, yet has produced meager results. These failures
indicate that research must go further with efforts to
understand how child support influences children.

In the current study, data was drawn from 88 counties
in Ohio. Child support rates, population density, and
poverty level were examined in relation to adjudicated
juvenile felony rates. This exploratory study, through

secondary analysis, demonstrated how child support influences delinquency. The data show that individually poverty and child support effect the adjudicated juvenile felony rates. Collectively, these variables do not relate to delinquency. However, this study acts as a guide to increasing awareness and the importance of public accessibility to delinquency statistics. Future research should be directed towards a longitudinal study that examines children from a variety of neighborhoods, accounts for those that receive child support and those who do not, and examines potential relationships with juvenile delinquency.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank God for blessing me with family and friends that have sacrificed so much to contribute to my success. I would like to thank my grandfather, Arthur E. Warden. Every accomplishment I have reached has been because of him. He is my strength and my driving force and will always live on through me. Thank you for reminding me that no one can take away my mind, my intellect. I will continue to live my dreams in hopes that he will see me achieve them from wherever he is. I would like to thank my husband, Ralph, who is one in a million. Thank you for understanding this process and keeping my tummy filled with good eats. Thank you Jaden, my precious son, his constant energy inspires me and keeps me on my toes. Thank you to my mother(Linda), father(Pat), and sister (Gina). You each gave me the power of words. Words are powerful but silence can leave a deep impression. Thank you, mommy, for showing me that money is not everything, but rather the time and energy we put into living. Thank Mum-mum for always putting me in my place and telling me to be kind. Thank you, Marilyn and Tom Blackstone, Marie Rivera, and Mary and Mike Zackasee, for being there for Jaden when I could not.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Each year the Catholic Dioceses celebrates Catholic
Schools Week by incorporating the values of friendship,
family, and teamwork into various activities for students to
participate. There is one day that encompasses the value of
family life more so than any other day. That day is
"Special Person's Day." On that particular day, students
invite those special persons in their life, whether it be a
mother, a father, a grandmother, a sister or brother, or
maybe just a close friend. Students anticipate this day
more so than any other school function, because it is their
opportunity to showcase their talents performed in the
classroom, or maybe an opportunity to spend some time with a
special person in their life. On that day, the students can
hardly wait to hear their name announced, indicating that
their special person has finally arrived. The anticipation
builds as some students are called, while the others wait
for their moment. For one particular student, there was no

build up of excitement. She simply watched her smiling classmates as they headed to the gym to meet their special person. Instead, she sat there with feelings of embarrassment, shame, and envy. She could not understand why her parents were not among the visitors. Her father was not a regular in her life and did not financially contribute to the family. Since he left the family, her mother worked as many hours as she could to afford a better lifestyle for her daughters. Each year she went through the same routine, but eventually she grew to accept it. During her final year at the school she was asked to report to the fifth grade classroom. As she entered, she looked to find another girl sitting in a corner, wearing the same tears, the same shame, and the same face that she once wore. It was her younger sister. As she grew up, she remembered how her single-mother, while working so hard, never saw the pain in her daughters' eyes on Special Person's Day.

As illustrated, lack of child support payments can affect quality of life, and may correlate with acting out. The purpose of this study is to determine if the non-payment of child support affects the delinquency of juveniles, those under the age of eighteen. "Abandonment of responsibility is a national scandal and affects taxpayers, governments, mothers, and children" (Beller & Graham, 1993, p. xvii).

Parental responsibility, in the form of financial obligation for support if children that do not reside with both biological parents, has become an increasing concern to society due to the rising demand for welfare assistance and the disgust against deadbeat parents. The victims of child abandonment, are not just the women and children, but a nation that must pay for parental irresponsibility. In a 2001 U.S. Census Bureau report, detailed with the current trends of child support, 27.6 percent of all children under 21 resided with one parent. Approximately 88.4 percent of custodial parents were mothers(Grall, 2003). While the system has improved on collections, there are still 20 million children in the United States that are entitled to 92.3 billion dollars of unpaid child support(Jensen, Miller, & Awad, 2002, ¶1). The majority of children that reside in a single parent household and, who do not receive child support, live in poverty. According to Agnew (2005), poverty and single family households have been identified as nurturing juvenile delinquency.

Juvenile delinquency has been identified as more likely to occur in a single parent household (Houston & Barton, 2005). While juvenile delinquency has been decreasing since the mid 1990's (Agnew, 2005),child support collection rates have increased by 24 percent in the United States, 44

percent in 2001 and 68 percent in 2002 (Jensen, et al, 2002, ¶1). What is scientifically unclear is if the payment of child support impacts juvenile delinquency rates and thus is the core need for this study.

History has demonstrated that the burden of responsibility has shifted from the parent to the state, and, still, at many times shared by both entities. This is seen clearly by examining the evolvement of the juvenile from biblical times, in which Roman law gave the sole responsibility of disciplining to parents, and to a shift of power to juvenile authorities in *Ex Parte Crouse* of 1839 (Champion,2001). It was the Illinois Juvenile Court Act (1899) that gave "absolute control" over children under 16 in the state of Illinois (Champion, 2001). Some time after, other states implemented some form of juvenile court, afterwards each with its own power and authority.

Presently, the state of Ohio bears the responsibility of a child's well- being, including the enforcement of child support orders made by the courts. To obtain a more efficient system, Ohio delegates responsibility to the counties. Each county is responsible for its own children, whether it is child support enforcement or the oversight of juvenile detention, with some detention centers being responsible for multiple counties (see Appendix A).

Child support is financial obligation by a biological parent that does not reside in the same home as their juvenile child (Beller & Graham, 1993). In 2002, 20 million children in the United States were awarded child support, whiling only 68 percent received one or more payments (Grall, 2003). How does the non-payment of child support, or a nonfulfillment of a financial obligation, increase the chances of juvenile delinquency? In the 2002 *Preliminary Statistics* report presented by the Federal Office of Child Support statistics showed 63 percent of open child support cases involve a family on welfare or formerly on welfare (Grall, 2003). It further stated that 50 percent of all white children, 60 percent of all Hispanic children, and 70 percent of all black children growing up in one parent households live at or below the poverty level (Grall, 2003). Poverty has been identified as a predictor of juvenile delinquency and it is demonstrated throughout the current study that children entitled to support are increasingly at or below the poverty level.

Juvenile detention centers face the challenge of rehabilitating today's poverty stricken youth, while at the same time, experiencing increasing budget cuts. Laws have been created to enforce support, which present problems beyond the scope of this study, and have forced or feared

some parents into paying. However, child support has effected the quality of life on many levels, increased welfare assistance, increased poverty, and increased court caseloads, but how has it effected children in regards to crime?

In the proceeding chapters the effects of child support and juvenile delinquency will be explored. Chapter two will outline the evolution of the child support enforcement agency and the juvenile justice system. After a historical overview of the two entities, the question of how they effect each other is addressed. Because there may be other influences on delinquency, poverty and population density are also included. This study relies on two theories, Hirschi's Social Bond Theory and Agnew's General Strain Theory (GST). In chapter three, the methodology used to test the effects of child support on juvenile delinquency, bivariate and multivariate analysis are applied. Chapter four and five conclude with the findings of the analysis and future recommendations.

Chapter II

Literature Review

There have been several previous studies that examined the relationship between parenting and juvenile delinquency and the relationship between child support and parenting. This chapter provides an overview of these studies, a historical review of the concepts involved, and a summary of why more research is necessary in the connection between juvenile delinquency and non payment of child support. This chapter begins with expectations of parenting, the role of children in society, and the evolution of the juvenile justice system. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, this chapter concludes by drawing from two different theoretical perspectives proposed by Agnew and Hirschi.

Historical Overview of Juvenile Justice

The expectations of parenting have changed throughout history. In the 16th and 17th centuries, parents were expected to control their children and reprimand their behavior (Quay, 1987). Under common law, a child that had reached the age of 14 was treated as an adult (Quay, 1987).

Young boys were raised to contribute to their families by means of labor and financial responsibility. Young girls were taught domestic skills and the responsibility of rearing children. Because children were exposed to the same elements as adults, they were also expected to adhere to the rules of the community and society.

Historically, if a child deviated from social norms, their parents or the community would enforce punishment. Punishment would consist of public shaming, whipping, or forms of banishment (Champion, 2001). If a child's offense was profound, they would be subject to the same punishment of an adult, including execution. It was not until the Industrial Revolution and the Progressive Movement that children were differentiated from adults (Quay, 1987).

During the Industrial Revolution labor needs increased and the need was often met with children. During this time, society criticized the work environment children were exposed to, such as long hours and dangerous conditions, and resulted in the child labor acts established in 1916 to protect the children (Foner, 1947). At this point in history the line between a child and adult became clear and resulted in the emergence of the juvenile (Houston & Barton, 2005). The law became more active in matters dealing with juveniles and recognized a need to parent them, or

rehabilitate, versus the traditional punishment in previous years (Burns, 1996).

With the breakdown in society that occurred during the Industrial Revolution, coupled with child labor laws and an increase in juvenile delinquency, America experienced an increase in divorce, out-of wedlock conception, and structural change of families (Burns, 1996). Women began to take on what was considered a man's role and children began to have responsibilities outside of the home in the workforce. It was during this, approximately 1825, time that the term juvenile was specified to legally distinguish between childhood and adolescence (Quay,1987). With a legal interpretation of juvenile came the battle between what the state expected of a child and what their culture expected. Juveniles learned the values and customs of their culture and were subject to law. Society recognized a need to treat juveniles differently than adults.

In 1899 the Illinois Act was established to differentiate the punishment between juveniles and adults. The first juvenile court based the treatment of juveniles under the philosophy of the *parens patriae,* or "the doctrine that the state oversees the welfare of youths" (Champion, 2001, p.567). The court emphasized treatment and rehabilitation and recognized that juveniles "needed care,

education, and protection" (Burns, 1996). Juveniles were defined as delinquent instead of criminal to avoid the same stigmatization of an adult. By 1925, every state had implemented some type of juvenile court (Burns,1996). The philosophy of *parens patria* shifted some responsibility from parents to the state.

Legal Response to the Financial Responsibility of Parents

The problem that occurred with shifting responsibility is that the accountability of a parent came into question. While a disparity based on poverty has always existed, the state started to extend assistance to families. "When a child loses a parent through death, desertion, or long separation, some form of deprivation is bound to result" (Monahan, 1957, pp. 250). In an attempt to address the financial burden of divorce the Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act (URESA) was established to provide support to children however, non-marital children were excluded for the eligibility of aid. The increase in impoverished children created a public concern which lead to the 1935 Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The program was created to provide assistance to poor families and became overwhelmed with non-marital children cases. In an effort to reduce AFDC, the Family Support Act (1988) was established to reduce poverty among children and

hold their parents financially responsible. The law places primary responsibility for the support of children on their parents. The law required states to withhold wages, periodic review and updating of cases, and to meet minimum paternity establishments (Beller & Graham, 1993). The iron hand fell with the passing of the Family Support Act, but with any law comes the challenge of enforcing it.

Parents may be criminally charged for not paying support for their children and most of the research is directed at measuring the success of enforcement. However, research lacks literature in deviance among children entitled to support. The current study addresses theories of Social Bond and Strain to develop a foundation for the explanation of delinquency as it relates to child support. To fully understand the importance of parental responsibility in relation to deviance, Hirschi's Social Bond theory assumes that delinquent, or deviant acts, result when an individual's bond to society is weak or broken (Hirschi, 1969).

Theoretical Perspective

Hirschi's Social Bond Theory is traced to the social disorganization that was at a peak in 1960. When Hirschi wrote his theory American society was in the midst of the civil rights movement and many individuals were breaking

away from social norms. Hirschi focused on roles of social relationships instead of an individual's personality as an indicator of criminality. Hirschi argued that delinquency and the violation of laws and or rules are rooted in the absence or weakness of intimate relations with family. The pressures and influences of other youth may not be powerful as a positive relationship with parents. The child who is closely attached to his parents will not be at risk of delinquency because the child will be positively rewarded for good behavior which in turn reinforces rules (Hirschi, 1969). The guarantee of punishment if rules are broken will or also reduce an adolescence's risk of delinquency. Those children who do not receive love and approval of their parents will tend not to seek love and approval from others which may increase delinquency (Hirschi, 1969). This will diminish the child's competence for emotional control and decrease their desire to conform to society's expectations. An individual's bond to society prevents him or her from violating social rules. If the bond weakens, the individual is free to commit crime.

The premise of Hirschi's Social Bond theory is that the bond that develops between an individual and larger society prevents crime through conformity. Hirschi identified four elements to his theory, which included attachment,

commitment, involvement, and belief. Attachment is measured by the strength of the bond to parents, teachers, and other primary socialization agents. Involvement is the amount of involvement and time spent in conventional or accepted activities. Commitment is the amount of loyalty one feels to socially accepted behaviors. Belief is the degree to which one believes in expectations (Akers, 2000). Hirschi's concepts have identified juvenile delinquent predictors, such as poverty and lack of supervision. Often children that live in low-income homes are less likely to achieve in school and more likely to drop-out or be an excessive truant (Siegel, 2006). While there are four elements to Hirschi's theory, he identified attachments as the most important bond and even if there is a strain in the family, the child must maintain the bond to one or both parents (Siegel, 2006). Hirschi's theory has been widely accepted and his concepts have been influential in the proactive approach to prevent and control juvenile delinquency.

Social bonding theory remains one of the most prestigious theories in criminology, as many modern day programs are built around its thought. For example, many after school programs for children have been created due to the ideas of Hirschi in his social bonding theory. Also modeled after the perspectives of Hirschi, Comprehensive

Strategy, a program that seeks to prevent and control juvenile behavior problems, has been implemented in Ohio. Mahoning County is one of five pilot Ohio cities, including Butler, Cuyahoga, Lucas, and Stark, that has implemented the Comprehensive Strategy. Comprehensive Strategy began in 1999. The characteristics that guide Comprehensive Strategy include structural theory, continued research for evaluation and external funding, and a continued commitment to the community (Grier, 2003).

Comprehensive Strategy is driven by the need to offset five indicators of juvenile problem behaviors: substance abuse, delinquency, teenage pregnancy, school dropout, and violence. To combat these problems, Comprehensive Strategy outlines five specific goals: strengthen family, support core institutions, promote delinquency prevention, intervene immediately and effectively when delinquent behavior occurs, and identify and control the small groups of serious violent offenders through a range of graduated sanctions (Grier, 2003). To achieve these goals Comprehensive Strategy implements four phases: mobilize, assess, plan, and implement. Through these phases Mahoning County's Comprehensive Strategy has proven successful and has been cited as a "how to" example for completing the Comprehensive Strategy (Grier, 2003). Some examples include the

development of a Truancy Court, Tobacco Court, Treatment Court, School-based Probation, and the Residential Substance Abuse Program (RSAT). These programs enhanced the community and provided the opportunity for juveniles to contribute through bonding with the community.

In addition to Hirschi's control theory, Agnew acknowledges different factors that influence an individual to embrace criminality in which he labels the General Strain Theory (GST). GST attempts to describe the major sources of strain and the factors that influence whether one reacts to strain with crime. Agnew's GST has defined measurements of strain, the major types of strain, the links between strain and crime, coping strategies to strain, and the determinants of delinquent or non delinquent behavior.

Agnew identified three major types of strain: failure to achieve positively valued goals, the loss of positive stimuli, and the presentation of negative stimuli (Agnew, 2005). Failure to achieve positively valued goals explains three different goals for which society strives for, money, status and respect, and autonomy or the power over oneself. Strain induced by autonomy mainly affects adolescents and the lower class because of their position in society (Agnew, 2005).

The second type of strain is the loss of positively

valued stimuli. Agnew found that the removal of positive
stimuli can also cause strain and this loss could manifest
in the form of death, a broken relationship, or the theft of
a valued object. Agnew (2005) discovered that the strain
that is felt by the individual involved in the loss could
lead to delinquency as the individual attempts to prevent
the loss, retrieve what was lost, or seek revenge on who
removed the positive stimuli.

The presentation of negative stimuli is the final
strain identified by Agnew. He felt that this type of
strain had been left out of criminology. He, therefore,
conducted research on adolescents and juveniles and revealed
examples of negative stimuli that adolescents might face
which included, child abuse, neglect, negative school
experiences, and neighborhood problems. Strain from the
outside environment can cause many negative feelings in an
individual including defeat, despair, and fear, but the
feeling that is most applicable to crime is anger. Agnew
(2005) stressed that individuals who become angry are
subject to repetitive stress which lead to delinquent acts
or committing crime. In essence, GST proposed that an
increase in strain would lead to an increase in anger, which
may then lead to an increase in crime. Anticipated strains
to a child could be divorce, in which, there may be a

constant subjection to the animosity between the two parents (Agnew, 2005).

Studies have found that there is a significant positive relationship between living in a single parent home and delinquency (Paschall, Ringwalt, & Flewelling, 2003). This is particularly true of single mothers. Often, single mothers, have lower levels of income, less education, and more than two children living with them (Paschall, et al., 2003; Grall, 2002). These demographic characteristics present many challenges to a single woman raising a child and/ or children. Due to the poverty, single mothers often live in urban communities, are in the labor force, and do not receive child support from the biological father.

Purpose of the Current Study

How does the non-payment of child support affect juvenile delinquency? This study demonstrates that there is a relationship between child support and delinquency. It moves beyond the perspectives of previous research and offers something new. The information could benefit future program development, policies issues, and the financial debt placed on society. By examining secondary content, indicators such as poverty, population density, and child support, play an important role in a child's likelihood to act deviant.

Previous literature demonstrates that responsibility has shifted from parents to the state. This chapter provided an overview of significant legal responses to child support and the definition of a juvenile. Historically, parents have been held accountable for their children's actions but in present times the courts have played an active role in controlling juvenile behavior. In addition, as poverty increased, child support enforcement became more of a necessity.

The proceeding chapters look specifically at the relationship between child support rates and juvenile delinquency. In chapter three, the methodology used for this study is explained. The four hypotheses are identified and a description of the data involved is outlined.

Chapter III

Methodology

Design

This thesis uses a secondary analysis design to examine the relationship between child support and juvenile delinquency. The data were collected from three government agencies, Association for Children for Enforcement (ACES), Office of Strategic Research (OSR), and the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS). There were no human subject concerns for this project and no information that identified any subject in any way was obtained (see Appendix E). The unit of analysis is a county.

Population

The data consist of 88 counties in Ohio. Ohio was chosen because it is the location of the researcher, which provided familiarity, easy access, and the elimination of costs.

Measures

Four variables were used for the analysis. The independent variables are child support rate, poverty level, and population density. The dependent variable is the adjudicated juvenile felony rate for 2000 as reported by the Department of Youth Services in Ohio (Sowards, 2004). The variable was selected because it was complete for all 88 counties. Adjudicated felons consist of those individuals that a judge determined delinquent and responsible for a crime that would be deemed criminal for if committed by an adult (Agnew, 2005). The adjudicated juvenile felony rate was calculated by dividing the number of juvenile delinquents that have been transferred to adult court by the total population under 18 and multiplied by 100,000.

Child support rate is the collection rate for the year of 2001. The collection rate is the amount of child support owed in the prior fiscal year divided by the current amount of child support paid (see Appendix C). Each county is responsible for reporting this data to the state agency through Support Enforcement Tracking Systems(SETS) (see Appendix D). The poverty level, in families with children under 18 (2000) was calculated by using 48 thresholds, which vary by family size and the number of children. If the total family income is less than the threshold, the family

is considered poor (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000).
Population density was calculated by dividing the total
population (2000) by the total square miles.

Analysis

The analysis involves three phases; univariate
descriptive statistics, bivariate, and multivariate
analysis. The first phase, univariate analysis, summarized
each of the four variables. Bivariate analysis was then
performed to gain a sense of information relative to the
stated hypotheses below. In the final phase, multivariate
analysis was used. This analysis allows confidence that a
relationship between the independent variable and dependent
variable are predicted while taking into account other rival
factors. Although the major independent variable is child
support, also tested are population density and poverty.
These independent variables are used to account for levels
of adjudicated felonies because they may have some impact on
the dependent variable. The data analysis presented was
organized to address three areas: child support rates;
adjudicated felonies; population density; and poverty level.
The bivariate analysis tested the following hypotheses:

1. Child support rates and adjudicated juvenile felony
   rates will have a negative relationship;

2.   Population density and adjudicated juvenile felony will have a positive relationship; and

3.   Poverty and adjudicated juvenile felony will have a positive relationship.

The multivariate analsyis tested:

1. The higher the adjudicated juvenile felony rate a county has, the more likely that the county will have an increase population density and poverty level, and a decreased child support collection rate.

Chapter three outlines the methods used to examine the relationship between child support and juvenile delinquency. In addition to child support and juvenile delinquency, the poverty level and population density of each county was also included. Poverty level and population density have been identified in previous research as indicators of delinquency. Chapter four and five discuss the results of the analysis and address limitations of the current study and recommendations for future research.

Chapter IV

Findings

This study demonstrates how child support influences delinquency. The study relies on two theoretical perspectives, the Social Bond theory and General Strain theory. To test the effects of child support on juvenile delinquency, four hypotheses are identified:

1. Child support rates and adjudicated juvenile felony rates will have a negative relationship;

2. Population density and adjudicated juvenile felony will have a positive relationship;

3. Poverty and adjudicated juvenile felony will have a positive relationship; and

4. The higher the adjudicated juvenile felony rates a county has, the more likely that the county will have an increase population density and poverty level, and a decreased child support collection rate.

The content of the frequency descriptions summarizes the univariate statistics (see Table One). The analysis provides

characteristics of the single variables in isolation from the other variables. The table illustrates central tendency, the low and high values, and the standard deviation.

Table 1

Data Profile

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Child Support Rate	87	0.29	0.85	0.58	0.12
Poverty Level Adjudicated juvenile	88	4.1	24.10	11.76	5.04
felony Rate	88	43.98	761.97	287.68	135.16
Population Density	88	30.92	3041.63	285.24	480.11

Child Support Rates

Child support data was available for 87 counties in Ohio. The child support rate was based on the amount of child support owed in the prior fiscal year, divided by the current amount of child support paid. Of the 87 counties in Ohio analyzed, Cuyahoga has the lowest child support rate at 29 percent, while, Putnam has the highest child support rate at 85 percent. The mean for the state is 58 percent.

Poverty Level

The poverty level was calculated by using 48
thresholds, which vary by family size and the number of
children. If the total family income is less than the
threshold, the family is considered poor (U.S. Bureau of
Census, 2000). For the 88 counties in Ohio, Delaware has the
lowest poverty level at 4.1, while, Morgan has the highest
poverty level at 24.1. The mean for the state is 11.8, or
in other words, 11.8 percent of families live at or below
the poverty level.

Population Density

Population density was calculated by dividing the total
population (2000) by the total square miles. For the 88
counties in Ohio, Vinton has the lowest population density
at 30.9, while, Cuyahoga has the highest population density
at 3041.6. The mean for the state is 285.2, in other words,
the average county has 285.2 people per square mile.

Adjudicated Juvenile Felony Rate

The adjudicated juvenile felony rate was calculated by
dividing the number of juvenile delinquents that have been
transferred to adult court by the total population under 18
and multiplied by 100,000. For the 88 counties in Ohio,
Morrow has the lowest adjudicated juvenile felony rate at
43.98, while, Marion has the highest adjudicated juvenile

felony rate at 761.97. The mean for the state is 287.68, in others, the average county has 287.68 juveniles, per 100,000, transferred to adult court.

Another format to test the hypotheses consisted of a comparison of means using a two-sample hypothesis test. The cases were first divided into categories, at the cut point (means), based on the values of the independent variables. If the level of significance is less than .05 there is a statistical significant difference between the two groups suggesting a correlation between the two variables (see Table Two).

In table two the data leads to the conclusion that it is likely that a statistical significant difference exists in the anticipated directions between two groups, child support and poverty level related to adjudicated juvenile felony. The third variable, population density, is not found in this research to be correlated with adjudicated juvenile felony offenders ($p=.869$).

Table 2

Comparison of Means (Adjudicated Juvenile Felony Rate):

Child Support, Population Density, Poverty Level

		Adjudicated Juvenile Felony Rate	p-value
Child Support Rate			
	Low	341.5	.001
	High	247.3	
Population Density			
	Low	290.3	.869
	High	285.5	
Poverty Level			
	Low	269.7	.017
	High	352.9	

Child Support and Adjudicated Juvenile Felony

Counties that have low (less than or equal to .58) child support rates have high juvenile felony rates 341.5. Counties with high (greater than .58) child support rate have low juvenile felony rates, on average 247.3. This finding supports the hypothesis that counties with higher child support rates have a lower in adjudicated juvenile felony rates ($p \leq .05$).

Poverty Level and Adjudicated Juvenile Felony

Counties that have low (less than or equal to, 11.76) poverty levels have low juvenile felony rates, on average 269.7. Counties with high (greater than, 11.76) poverty levels have high felony rates, on average 352.9. This

finding supports the hypothesis that counties with higher poverty have higher adjudicated felony rates ($p \leq .05$).

Population Density and Adjudicated Juvenile Felony

Counties that have low (less than or equal to, 285.24) population density have high felony rates, on average 290.3. Counties with high (greater than, 285.24) population density have low felony rates, on average 285.5. This hypothesis was not supported ($p \geq .05$).

To test each of the hypotheses required examining the relationships between the variables to determine if there was an association. The variables were tested for significance and magnitude of effect. Correlations, Pearson's r, were used for this analysis (see Table Three).

Table 3

Correlations

	Child Support Rate	Population Density	Poverty Level
Population Density Pearson Correlation	-0.419		
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
Poverty Level Pearson Correlation	-0.545	0.041	
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.702	
Adjudicated Juvenile Felony Rate Pearson Correlation	-0.333	0.08	0.267
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	0.461	0.012

Child Support Rate and Population Density

As illustrated by table three, there is a strong relationship between child support and population density. The direction of the correlation indicated a negative relationship, that is when one variable increases the other variable decreases. There is statistical significance ($p \leq$ .05). Therefore, when there is a decrease in population density, there is an increase in child support rates. Those

counties that have lower concentration of people have an
higher child support collection rate.

Child Support Rate and Poverty Level

There is a strong relationship between child support
and poverty level. The direction of the correlation
indicated a negative relationship, that is when one variable
increase the other decreases ($p \le .05$). Therefore, when there
is an increase in the poverty level, there is a decrease in
child support rates. Those counties that have more families
living at or below the poverty level have lower child
support collection rates.

Child Support Rate and Adjudicated Juvenile Felony Rate

There is a strong relationship between child support
and adjudicated juvenile felony rates. The direction of the
correlation indicated a negative relationship, that is when
one variable increases the other decreases ($p \le .05$).
Therefore, when child support rates increase, adjudicated
juvenile felony rates decrease. Those counties that have
higher child support collection rates, have lower
adjudicated juvenile felony rates.

Poverty Level and Population Density

There is a weak relationship between poverty level and
population density. The direction of correlation indicated

a positive relationship, that is when one variable increases the other variable increases ($p \geq .05$). The insignificant result could be attributed to the high proportion of rural area in the state of Ohio. Future research should examine the population density of cities as related to poverty because the sample would be more diverse.

Population Density and Adjudicated Juvenile Felony Rate

There is a weak relationship between population density and adjudicated juvenile felonies. The direction of correlation indicated a positive relationship, that is when one variable increases the other variable increases, although it is not statistically significant ($p \geq .05$). As stated above, county level data as it relates to population density, was not a good representation due a high concentration of rural areas which failed to capture the variation reflective within the county.

Poverty Level and Adjudicated Juvenile Felony Rate

There is moderate strength between poverty level and adjudicated juvenile felony rates. The direction of the correlation indicated a positive relationship, that is when one variable increases the other variable increases ($p \leq .05$). Therefore, when the poverty level increases the adjudicated juvenile felony rate also increases. Those counties with a

high poverty level are more likely to have a high adjudicated juvenile felony rate.

The final analysis was multivariate. In this analysis the following research question was put forth: Is there a relationship between child support and adjudicated juvenile felony rates, with additional indicators of poverty levels and population density taken into account? It was hypothesized that there is a negative relationship between child support and adjudicated juvenile felony, and a positive relationship between adjudicated juvenile felony, population density and poverty level. Therefore, those counties that have a high poverty level, increased population density, and a low child support collection rate, are more likely to have a higher amount of juveniles transferred to adult court. Multivariate analysis allowed more than one independent variable to explain variation in the observed values of the dependent variable or to predict accurately particular observed values of the dependent variable. For this study, ordinary least squares regression was used to examine a relationship between the variables (see Table Four).

Table 4

Regression Results Predicting Adjudicated Juvenile Felony

Rates

(Adjusted R Square= 8.4%)

	b	B	p-value
Child Support Rate	5.89E-05	-0.117	0.411
Population Density	-0.001	-0.035	0.771
Poverty Level	-0.127	0.225	0.085

When examining the significance test in Table 4, the only significant variable is poverty level ($p \le .05$). This reinforces Agnew's theory, stating that those children that are live in poverty are more likely to have delinquent tendencies. The research from the current study indicates that child support may influence delinquency negatively, but future research is needed to examine this indirect effect. Future research should examine the relationship between child support and poverty because they may be too closely related. Prior research did indicate that children who were entitled to child support were more likely to live at or below the poverty level. Chapter five presents an overview of this study, an explanation of the results, and an assessment of its limitations. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

Chapter V

Discussion

As presented in the findings, three of four hypotheses
were supported. At the bivariate level, as child support
increased, the rate of adjudicated juvenile felonies
decreased. Further, as the poverty level increased the
adjudicated juvenile felony rate increased. There was not a
statistically significant positive relationship between
population density and adjudicated juvenile felony rate,
therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. This could be
explained by the uniqueness of the data set. Among Ohio's
counties, only nine were considered urban, thus providing a
skewed variable. Most of the demographics for the counties
mirrored one another, presenting no large differences among
them. Similarly at the multivariate level, the fourth
hypothesis was not supported. This suggested that the
influence of child support on adjudicated juvenile felony
rates is mainly indirect. The only predictor of juvenile

delinquency that was significant was poverty level. This relationship supports both Hirschi's Social Bond Theory and Agnew's General Strain theory. Children who live in poverty have a higher risk of dropping out of school due to behavioral, health issues, and learning disabilities, than children from affluent neighborhoods (Siegel, 2006). Poverty presents a strain and weakens the bonds between children and society. While poverty level is a predictor of delinquency, child support and population density are unsupported.

Limitations

Data on juvenile delinquency and child support are difficult to obtain. Child support is not public information, so therefore, the only data available come from special reports, in this case, "Child Support Held Hostage (Jensen, 2002)." In regards to the dependent variable, adjudicated juvenile felony, the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS) compiles a list for each county and uses this to determine the allocation of Ohio's juvenile justice program, the Reasoned and Equitable Community and Local Alternatives to the Incarceration of Minors (RECLAIM). RECLAIM is a program that attempts to promote community-based programming for non-violent felony offenders while at the same time promotes incarceration for violent felony offenders. Further, juvenile delinquency data that are

reported to ODYS may be recorded differently, therefore reliability may be precluded (Sowards,2004).

Youth are a protected class, therefore access to their persons or their records takes time that was not afforded for this study. The data for the current study depended on sources that must be used cautiously. The child support data may be replete with problems of accuracy, representativeness, and reliability due to the fact that the numbers are reported and produced for the intention of incentive- money for the state and the county. Further, the adjudicated juvenile felony variable has two limitations, one that it is the most serious offense, and therefore not a complete measure of juvenile delinquency and two, the basis for which RECLAIM funds are dispersed, thus making it subject to political and social influence.

Future Recommendations

This research is a catalyst for future investigations. This exploratory study offered the possibility that child support may effect juvenile delinquency. A limitation of the study lies in the secondary analysis design. The dependent variable was not the best description of juvenile delinquency. It would have been better to measure initial police contact when juveniles enter the system because it provides a more representative group. However, for

secondary analysis, the only complete data of all 88 counties was adjudicated juvenile felony. This data is reported to ODYS and is the only data available for all 88 counties. The independent variable, child support collection rate, was also limited because it only provides data for children that received one or more payments. It does not guarantee consistent collection and does not take into account arrearages, money that is owed beyond the current payment.

This research expands on previous studies of juvenile delinquency. There is no research that specifically looks to child support as an indicator for juvenile delinquency. This research serves to open the door for a longitudinal study of the effects of child support on juvenile delinquency. A longitudinal study is beneficial because it is dynamic and would examine a case over a period of time and may capture other predictors that influence juvenile delinquency. Further, a longitudinal study can examine the points in a child's life that they were awarded support, if it was consistently paid, and if it was adjusted to the needs of the child.

In regards to the caveats with the child support variable, there are three agencies, the federal government, the state, and each county that implement enforcement. To

qualify for incentives the federal government sets guidelines that each state must meet. The state is given a maximum incentive and then distributes it to the counties based on percentages. These percentages are calculated based on incentives each county must meet by the Ohio Revised Code. The state then allocates funds to each county according to percentages of cases that they collected payments on, established paternity, collected on arrearages, and so forth. In brief, the collection rate includes payments made for child support. Payments are defined as one payment. The numbers are deceiving because residential parents are not necessarily receiving regular child support payments and the agency is not necessarily meeting its full obligation.

Continuing research into the effect of child support on juvenile delinquency is desirable. Many unanswered questions remain about predictors of juvenile delinquency. The current study has shown that there is a relationship between poverty and juvenile delinquency and therefore reinforces the concern of child welfare. Previous research has shown that approximately 25 percent of children under the age of six live in poverty (Siegel, 2006). Those children are less likely to live with two parents, have access to health care, and succeed in school (Siegel, 2006). Perhaps, future

research should conduct a longitudinal study that examines children from a variety of neighborhoods, accounts for those that receive child support and those who do not, and examines the potential relationships with juvenile delinquency. Juvenile delinquency should be measured at levels of police contact, truancy, and arrest records.

In the current study the relationships among child support, poverty, population density, and adjudicated juvenile felony are meaningful, but not necessarily statistically important. The statistical significance at the bivariate level showed that the relationships were not random. The bivariate analysis separately examined the characteristics of child support, poverty, and population density with the characteristics of adjudicated juvenile felonies. This initial step in hypothesis testing should have directed the current study to a more inclusive dependent variable to represent juvenile delinquency. Hopefully, in the future there will be more information available to the public about juvenile delinquency in order to understand better the relationship between how children are influenced early in life and how they become later in life.

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Appendix A

Juvenile Detention Centers in Ohio

Juvenile Detention Centers in Ohio

Allen County Juvenile Justice Center: Lima, Ohio

Ashland Detention Facility: Asland, Ohio

Ashtabula County Youth Detention Center: Ashtabula, Ohio

Butler Juvenile Detention Center: Hamilton, Ohio

Clark County Detention Center: Springfield, Ohio

Clermont County Detention Center: Batavia, Ohio

Cuyahoga County Detention Center: Cleveland, Ohio

Edward J. Buzzo Juvenile Center: Marion, Ohio

Erie County Detention Center: Sandusky, Ohio

Five County Joint Juvenile Detention Center: Marysville, Ohio

Franklin County Juvenile Detention Center: Columbus, Ohio

Greene County Juvenile Detention Center: Xenia, Ohio

Hamilton County Juvenile Detention: Cincinnati, Ohio

Jefferson County Juvenile Detention: Steubenville, Ohio

Lake County Youth Detention Center:
Painsville, Ohio

Lorain County Detention Home
Elyria, Ohio

Louis Tobin Attention Center
Lisbon, Ohio

Lucas County Child Study Institute
Toledo, Ohio

Martin P. Joyce Detention Center
Youngstown, Ohio

Montgomery County Detention Center
Dayton, Ohio

Muskingham County Detention Center
Zanesville, Ohio

Portage- Geauga Detention Center
Ravenna, Ohio

Richland County Attention Center
Mansfield, Ohio

Sandusky County Juvenile Detention Center
Fremont, Ohio

Sargus Juvenile Detention Center
St. Clairsville, Ohio

SCOR Juevnile Detention Center
Chillocothe, Ohio

Senecca County Youth Center
Tiffin, Ohio

Stark Attention Center
Stark, Ohio

Summit County Detention Services
Akron, Ohio

Trumbull County Detention Center
Warren, Ohio

Tuscarawas Attention Center
New Philadelphia, Ohio

Warren County Maryhaven
Lebanon, Ohio

Wayne- Holmes Attention Center
Wooster, Ohio

West Central Juvenile Facility
Troy, Ohio

Wood County Juvenile Detention
Bowling Green, Ohio

Appendix B

Child Support Enforcement Agencies
County Level

Child Support Enforcement Agencies
County Level

Adams
800-840-5711

Allen
800-224-7133

Ashland
800-589-8141

Ashtabula
800-935-0242

Athens
800-436-8933

Auglaize
800-508-8817

Belmont
800-494-1616

Brown
800-244-9833

Butler
800-542-0806

Carroll
800-567-5357

Champaign
800-652-1606

Clark
800-516-3463

Clermont
800-571-0943

Clinton
800-793-1290

Columbiana
800-353-0125

Coshocton
800-622-7722

Crawford
800-761-0773

Cuyahoga
800-443-1431

Darke
800-501-5635

Defiance
800-569-8003

Delaware
800-490-9534

Erie
800-454-3747

Fairfield
800-409-2732

Fayette
800-922-0745

Franklin
800-827-3740

Fulton
800-344-3575

Gallia
800-806-0634

Geauga
800-209-7590

Greene
800-337-1740

Guernsey
800-307-8422

Hamilton
800-315-7119

Hancock
800-228-2732

Hardin
800-320-2148

Harrison
800-455-5355

Henry

800-592-4633

Highland
800-391-9631

Hocking
800-555-2480

Holmes
800-971-7979

Huron
800-668-9152

Jackson
800-588-7161

Jefferson
800-353-2716

Knox
800-298-2223

Lake
800-442-1955

Lawrence
800-510-4443

Licking
800-513-1128

Logan
800-599-7232

Lorain

800-808-2991

Lucas

800-466-6396

Madison

800-852-0243

Mahoning

800-528-9511

Marion

800-960-5437

Medina

800-706-2732

Meigs

800-992-2608

Mercer

800-207-3597

Miami

800-308-0264

Monroe

800-472-1602

Montgomery

800-555-

0430

Morgan

800-564-9234

Morrow

800-533-0353

Muskingum

800-450-7146

Noble

800-905-2732

Ottawa

800-665-1677

Paulding

800-399-2911

Perry

800-549-1890

Pickaway

800-822-5437

Pike

800-646-2165

Portage

800-876-9544

Preble

800-413-5899

Putnam

800-523-5799

Richland

800-774-2552

Ross

800-413-3140

Sandusky

800-883-8283

Scioto

800-354-6377

Seneca

800-666-1632

Shelby

800-561-5548

Stark

800-339-0349

Summit

800-726-2765

Trumbull

800-720-2732

Tuscarawas

800-685-2732

Union

800-248-2347

Van Wert

800-830-0954

Vinton

800-679-8707

Warren

800-644-2732

Washington

800-888-2732

Wayne

800-216-6636

Williams

800-937-2732

Wood

800-966-3543

Wyandot

800-320-5211

Appendix C

Child Support Collection Formula

Child Support Collection Formula

Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) is the county- level child support office that is responsible for child support payments within its own county. Each county is responsible for reporting its collection rate for the fiscal year for performance measures and evaluations. The collection rate is calculated according to the standards of the Child Support Enforcement Manual.

Section 2 (iii) states that the collection of current support is calculated by dividing the amount of current support collected on orders in IV-D cases by the total amount of current support owed in IV-D cases with orders. Title IV-D cases are those filed by the local department of child support services for the purpose of establishing the parentage of children and obtaining and collecting child support and health insurance when public assistance has been expended or upon the request of a parent who is not receiving public assistance. These cases seek to promote financial self-sufficiency for families on public assistance through the establishment and collection of child support, to reimburse the government for monies paid out for public assistance expended on behalf of children, and to establish and collect child support for any parent who desires this service (Jensen, et al, 2002)

Appendix D

Contacts

Contacts

1. Heidi Hallas: Graduate student and employee of
    Youngstown State University's Center for Human
    Services Department, provided the contact for the Ohio
    Department of Youth Services

2. Bruce Sowards: Social Science Research Specialist of
    the Ohio Department of Youth Services, provided
    Adjudicated to felony statistics for each county of
    Ohio

3. Don Larrick: Office of Strategic Research, Ohio
    Department of Development

4. Pat Rhotan: Human Resource Research, The Ohio State
    University, provided ICSPR data

5. Jacklyn Taylor: Youngstown State University,
    Representative for Ohio Office of Strategic Research

Appendix E

Human Subjects Review Exemption Form

YSU

February 22, 2005

Dr. John Hazy, Principal Investigator
Ms. Candace Rivera, Co-investigator
Department of Criminal Justice
UNIVERSITY

RE: HSRC Protocol Number: 65-2005
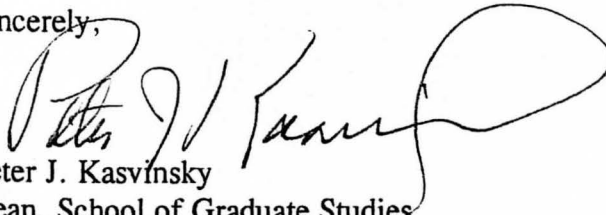   Title: The Effects of Child Support on Juvenile Delinquency

Dear Dr. Hazy and Ms. Rivera:

The Human Subjects Research Committee has reviewed the abovementioned protocol and
determined that it is exempt from full committee review based on a DHHS Category 4
exemption.

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Human Subjects
Research Committee and may not be initiated without HSRC approval except where necessary
to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects
should also be promptly reported to the Human Subjects Research Committee.

The HSRC would like to extend its best wishes to you in the conduct of this study.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Kasvinsky
Dean, School of Graduate Studies
Research Compliance Officer

PJK/cc

c: Dr. James Conser, Acting Chair
       Department of Criminal Justice