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A Study of the Characteristics of Female Delinquent Youth within the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

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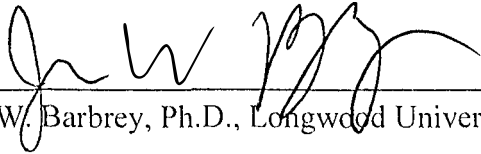
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A STUDY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF
FEMALE DELINQUENT YOUTH WITHIN THE VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Approval Page

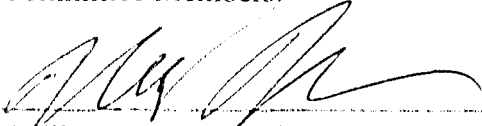
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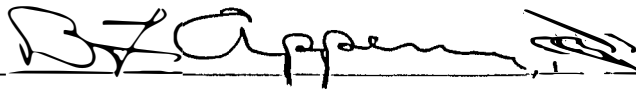


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A STUDY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF
FEMALE DELINQUENT YOUTH WITHIN THE VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Longwood University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science- Sociology
in
The Department of Sociology, Anthropology,
and Criminal Justice Studies

By
Stephanic Meehan
B.A., Lynchburg College, 2000
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	iv
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	4
3. DATA/METHODS.....	13
4. FINDINGS.....	21
5. DISCUSSION.....	33
REFERENCES.....	44
APPENDIX	
YOUTH ASSESSMENT AND SCREENING INSTRUMENT	50

LIST OF TABLES

1. Measures of Central Tendency for Ratio Variables
2. Percentages and Frequencies for Demographic Variables

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Youth's School Status
2. Youth's Academic Performance
3. Youth's School Conduct

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Female offenders make up the fastest growing segment of the juvenile and criminal justice system. According to 2006 national data from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency and Prevention, female youth accounted for 29% percent of all juvenile arrests and make up 17% of juvenile violent crime index arrests, 32% of juvenile property crime index arrests, and 16% of juvenile drug abuse arrests. Between 1980 and 2006, while the arrest rate for boys for simple assault doubled, the arrest rate for simple assault for girls quadrupled. In 2006, young women accounted for 33% of juvenile arrests for simple assault, and 23% of juvenile arrests for aggravated assault. Gender differences in arrest trends also increased the proportion of arrests involving girls in other offense categories for both juveniles and adults. The number of drug abuse violation arrests of juvenile females grew 2% between 1997 and 2006, while juvenile male arrests declined 14% (Snyder, 2006).

Comprehensive research studies that examine the characteristics of adolescent female delinquents are needed (Miller et al., 1995). Therefore, studies on these young women have become critical in order to adequately address intervention and prevention strategies for this subset of the population (Mullis et. al, 2004). In addition, studies over the past decade have indicated that female offenders have differing needs from male offenders. The negative impact of female offending extends well beyond the immediate consequences of the behaviors itself and the cost of juvenile justice system intervention. A review of twenty studies on the adult lives of antisocial adolescent girls found higher mortality rates, a variety of psychiatric problems, dysfunctional and violent relationships, poor educational achievement, and less stable work histories than among non-delinquent

girls (Pajer, 1998). These research findings indicate that for female offenders, the long term prognosis is worse than it is for male offenders (Cauffman, 2008). The dramatic rise in the number of female youth entering the juvenile and criminal justice system and the pace at which they are entering has caused policy makers to ask the question: What is the story behind the numbers? With that question in mind, the primary objective of this exploratory study is to further our understanding of the social and psychological characteristics of adolescent females found guilty of delinquent offenses. Further, in intervention samples of girls who have been arrested, examining earlier family environment and child factors at the time of the youth's first arrest could provide useful information in predicting which youth will continue to have problems.

The secondary data used for this study was derived from the individual case files of females referred to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (VA DJJ) for delinquent offenses from July 2007 through May 2010 and was analyzed from September 6, 2010, through November 18, 2010. Given the steadily increasing population of female offenders, it is beneficial to study youth who are already experiencing problems; doing so allows sufficient power to examine the process leading to delinquency problems. This thesis begins with a review of the literature of the prior research on the characteristics of female delinquent youth. Next, the method of the secondary data collection is discussed. I summed the responses to twenty-four ordinal variables in order to create my Index of Female Delinquency (IFD) score and I used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software generate descriptive statistics for my analysis. Findings, limitations of the study, directions for future research and conclusions will be discussed. The prior literature supports the use of all of the ordinal variables used to create my IFD score. The

new IFD score could be used as a measure of multiple indicator of delinquent behavior. A score on an index is considered to be a more reliable indicator of the property being measured than is a measure based on a response to one item alone (Weisburd & Britt).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Mullis et al., (2004) reported that the young female offender is typically 14 to 16 years old and on the whole, girls' delinquent acts are typically less chronic and often less serious than those of boys (Zahn et al., 2010). Most young women who enter the juvenile justice system have committed nonviolent, less-serious offenses, such as property and drug offenses. On the other hand, according to the literature, once the female youth are placed on probation for minor offenses, subsequent charges in violations of probation increase the chances that these youth will become more involved in the juvenile justice system (Acoca, 1999).

Researchers have long known that family dynamics are a key contributor to delinquency (Glueck and Glueck, 1934). Youth who come from broken homes or homes consisting of one parent often experience a lack of supervision, a lack of income, and instability in support from parental figures (Lanc, 2003). According to Zahn et al. (2010), studies done on adolescents found that those in two-parent biological families had more favorable adolescent outcomes than youth with other family structures, including lower levels of reported delinquency involvement. In Callhoun (2001) studies of female juvenile offenders reported that more than 95% of the girls assessed were lacking a stable home environment and 11% had experienced or witnessed the death of one or both parents or a sibling. Many of the youth interviewed recalled moving back and forth between relatives while they were growing up, or being placed in a foster home or group home typically between the ages of 12 and 14.

There is research that reports that juveniles with foster care experiences and other negative home environments are significantly more likely to engage in delinquent

activities earlier than are juvenile offenders without such backgrounds (Martin et al., 2008). Hoyt (1998) reported that female delinquents tend to respond to therapeutic placement quite differently than males. While males generally respond to treatment foster care with steady improvement after a troubled start, young women appear to begin quietly and then express more problem behaviors, theoretically after gaining some measure of comfort or intimacy in foster care.

A female's relationships are critical to her development and the nature of these relationships can serve either a protective or deleterious role in her life. According to research done by the National Mental Health Association, female delinquency is often associated with adversarial relationships with parents and romantic partners (Cauffman et al. 2008). In a study done by (Rosenthal & Doherty, 1985), it was found that delinquent girls tend to have more negative relationships with their mothers than do delinquent boys and research done by Cauffman et al. (2008) indicates that young women who have a negative relationship with their father are more likely to have boyfriends who encourage antisocial behavior. Calhoun (2001) found that on scales that measure relations with parents, females reported a perception of being less valued in their family and of being less important. This was significantly different than the perception reported by males.

Gilligan (1982) in her research on female development, has stressed the inseparable and reciprocal role of relationships and a female's sense of self. Such conceptualizations are particularly salient for those females in the juvenile justice system, whose first offenses typically include runaway, shoplifting, and truancy. These types of activities often stem from difficulty with familial, school, and peer relationships. These relationships are often accompanied by feelings of depression and anxiety and often

result in isolation. According to the Juvenile Offenders 2006, National Report, girls accounted for 59% of the arrests for running away from home (Snyder, 2006). This behavior along with other offending behavior serves as one possible option to cope with their feelings.

Poor parenting skills have been associated with female delinquency including harsh or inconsistent discipline, conflict, hostility, physical neglect, emotional distance, and erratic displays of control (Mullis et al., 1997). In a 1998, study conducted by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, it was reported that 54% of the young women interviewed reported having mothers who had been arrested or incarcerated while 46% of their fathers had reportedly been locked up at some point. In research done by Mowbry et al., (2004), it was concluded that children of parents with mental illnesses have significantly more conduct problems than those with undiagnosed parents. Adolescents in that study, self-reported high levels of nonnormative behaviors including police contacts and deviant peer values. Furthermore, the available research indicates that parental depression is significantly related to adolescent problems in school, lower grade point averages, problems with peers, and teen substance abuse (Mowbry et al., 2004). Among children of substance-abusing parents, parenting disruptions are linked more strongly with delinquency and drug abuse among girls than among boys (Cauffman, 2008).

Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber (1986), in their studies of family factors related to conduct problems and delinquency, concluded that that there was a significant relationship between marital discord and children's delinquency and aggression. They

summarized that children whose parents have high-conflict marriages are less well adjusted than children living with happily married parents.

Children with low academic performance, low commitment to school, and low educational aspirations during the elementary and middle school grades are at higher risk for child delinquency than are other children (Jenkins, 1997). In general, school failure increases young people's risk for violence and delinquency, although poor school performance appears to have a stronger effect on girls than boys (Shader, 2001). In a study done by Ladd and Burgess (2000), 91% of the female youth reported they had experienced one or more of the following: being suspended or expelled, repeating one or more grades, and /or being placed in a special classroom. Many girls described school as a battleground with sexual harassment, racism, interpersonal rivalries with peers, and inattention from adult professionals made dropping out appear to be a necessary means of escape.

School delinquency has also been explained by family issues, the school's environment, peer's behaviors, and the individual attributes of students (Welsh, 2001). When students do not hold positive views and do not feel connected to their school, they feel alienated and are at higher risk for school failure, dropping out, and future criminal behavior (Jenkins, 1997). Hoyt & Scherer (1998) found that in a female delinquency, social factors such as relationships to families, peers, and schools have played a prominent role because girls are widely considered to be more affected by the nature of their relationships with others than are boys. The school environment is one of the primary settings for the development and maintenance of adolescent relationships. For young women, relationships fostered with teachers, academic performance, and

educational commitment have been linked to delinquent conduct (Erickson et al., 2000). Research done by Lee and Smith-Adcock (2005) provides evidence that adolescent females who reported a strong bond to school were less likely to be engaged in school disciplinary problems. Close relationships with teachers, school counselors, and other adults also influence their choices. When these close relationships are not present, young women are more inclined to turn to peers for support and approval (Acoca, 1999).

Substance use and abuse among female adolescents is shown to be rising. According to the Juvenile Offenders 2006 National Report, females accounted for 32% of the liquor law cases and drug violations were up 20% between 1997 and 2002 (Snyder, 2006). Nationally, almost 83% of youths in long-term, state operated juvenile facilities in 1987 reported use of an illegal drug in the past, and 63% had used an illegal drug on a regular basis. The most commonly used drugs were marijuana, cocaine, and amphetamines. In a study done by Acoca (1999), 75% of young women interviewed reported regular use of drugs, including alcohol and typically began at age 14 years old. One reason noted for this clear connection is the capacity of mood altering chemicals to temporarily dull the psychological devastations wrought by experiences of physical and sexual violation.

A substantial body of research indicates that regardless of race and age, female offenders have higher rates of mental health problems, both internalizing and externalizing, than male offenders (Chesney- Lind & Shelton, 1998; Cauffman, 2004). Additionally, depression and anxiety disorders are clinically more common in female adolescents (Kataoka et al., 2001). Timmons-Mitchell et al. (1997) reported a prevalence of identified mental health disorders in 84% of the female offenders they studied, versus

27% in their male counterparts. Calhoun (2001) in her research found that females demonstrated higher levels of social stress, indicating increased levels of stress regarding personal relationships. The level of anxiety for the female offenders was significantly higher than for the male offenders, indicating a greater sense of fear and worry coupled with a heightened sensitivity. Depression levels were also significantly different for female and male offenders with the females reporting greater levels of sadness and loneliness along with feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. And finally, on the scale measuring self esteem or a sense of dissatisfaction with self, females reported significantly lower self-esteem than the males.

Potter and Jenson (2003) studied female youth arrested for serious offenses and found that their backgrounds commonly included sexual abuse as children, victimization by intimate partners, parental deviance, and parental drug use. Acoca (1999) reports that scholars have identified victimization: physical, sexual, and emotional as the first step along females' pathways into the juvenile and criminal justice systems and as a primary determinant of the types and patterns of offenses typically committed by young females and women. In a study of girls in the California juvenile justice system, conducted by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, it was indicated that delinquent females experienced high incidences of victimization including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. An alarming 92% report some form of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse (Acoca & Dedel, 1998). Mullis et al. (2004) found that female offender youth were more likely than male offender youth to have physical and sexual abuse histories. Many of the female offenders have been physically abused, neglected, and exposed to violence

at home and in their communities, experiences that have also been linked to criminal behavior and aggression.

The literature on the relationship between child sexual abuse and female crime, together with that on the effects of child sexual abuse, provides evidence that helps explain why such victimization may be an important etiological factor for various behaviors-such as running away, drug abuse, prostitution, and even violence-that can lead to criminal justice involvement (Siegel and Williams, 2003; Cuevas et al., 2007).

Accounts of female offenders' life histories have led to the hypothesis that sexual abuse triggers a woman's criminal career by leading her to run away as a means of escaping the abuse she is experiencing at home (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 1998; Kaufman & Widom, 1999). Running away may itself result in arrest and incarceration but can also lead to other forms of offending. Other research has also indicated that child sexual abuse was a statistically significant predictor of certain types of offenses, but other indicators of familial neglect and abuse were significant as well (Siegel and Williams, 2003; Funk, 1999; McCabe et al. 2002; Dembo et al. 1991; Lewis et al. 1991).

Female adolescents who have been sexually abused have been shown to have more serious problems than do males with self-image, sexual attitudes, family relations, vocational and educational goals, and "mastering" their environment (Orr & Downes, 1985). As with running away, another offense category in which differences between abuse victims and others might be expected is drug offenses because research has generally shown that both adolescents and adults with substance abuse problems report significantly higher rates of child sexual abuse victimization than others (Kilpatrick et al. 2000).

According to research done by Zahn et al., (2010), studies conducted to date suggests that subtle differences in certain biological functions and psychological traits may contribute to gender related variations in responses to certain environmental conditions. One theoretical model for understanding individual-level factors in female delinquency proposes that although similar risk factors may play a role in both girl's and boy's delinquency, gender differences in underlying biological functions, psychological traits, and social interpretations can result in different types and rates of delinquent behaviors for girls and boys. Another theory suggests that males and females are differentially exposed to certain conditions, placing them at variable risk for certain types of delinquency (Zahn et al., 2010).

Chesney-Lind (2004) in her research found that early puberty in girls has been associated with family dysfunction. Early puberty increases a young woman's risks for delinquency, particularly if they come from disadvantaged neighborhoods and have dysfunctional families. Although the timing of puberty is also a potential risk factor for boys, early maturation creates particular risks for girls because of the development of physical signs of maturity inconsistent with still largely undeveloped cognitive and emotional systems. Several studies suggest that early maturing female youth are more likely to engage in delinquency and other risk-taking behaviors. This disparity between biological and social maturity can lead to increased conflict with parents or negative associations with older boys or men. Early maturation in girls also appears to be a risk factor in exposure to intimate partner violence in adolescence. Finally, early puberty also interacts with mental health disorders, ADHD, and cognitive and emotional deficits to potentially worsen behavioral outcomes.

In research done by Jarjoura et al., (2002) they report in 1995, there were approximately 15.3 million U.S. children living in households defined as falling below the poverty line. Concern about the number of children living in poverty arises from our knowledge of the problems children face because of poverty. Since the 1960s, developmental research has examined the effects of poverty on IQ, social adjustment, self-esteem, depression, and other types of maladaptive behaviors as mediated by such factors as parenting, home environment, family structure, immediate resources and more recently, school, child care, and neighborhood. Children raised in poverty are less likely to perform well academically, are more likely to report lower levels of self-confidence, and are less likely to be supervised effectively by parents. They are also more likely to grow up in families that lack the resources or skills needed by children. These intervening mechanisms contribute to a higher likelihood of delinquent participation (Jarjoura et al., 2002).

Agnew et al. (2008) reports that delinquency is more likely when adolescents are unable to legally obtain the money they need to finance their social activities and achieve popularity with peers. When examining the impact of poverty on female youth, about half of all girls arrested are arrested for one of two offenses: larceny (includes shoplifting) and running away from home (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 2004). According to the 2006, national report on juvenile offenders, adolescent females account for 69% of the arrests made for prostitution (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). In a study of prostitutes, James (1976) found that 84.9 % of her sample were in the business primarily for the money or material goods.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This is an exploratory study that examines the characteristics of female delinquent youth. The study employed secondary data analysis. Data analyzed in this study were extracted from data collected in risk assessments used by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (VA DJJ). The data was extracted by the VA DJJ Research and Evaluation Unit in August, 2010. The population included in this study was the case files of young women referred to the VA DJJ for delinquent offenses from July 2007 through May 2010. A delinquent offense for the purpose of this study is defined as the involvement of a child younger than 18 years old, in behavior that violates the law. Such behavior includes violent crime, property crime, burglary, illegal drug use, and status offenses such as running away, truancy, and possession of alcohol (Zahn et al., 2010).

Probation officers with the VA DJJ complete risk assessments for each juvenile charged with a delinquent offense and subsequently placed on supervised probation. The Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) is the risk assessment tool used by the VA DJJ that examines: risk, needs, and protective factors and helps develop case plans for youth. Appendix A, illustrates a sample of the YASI used in the data collection. The YASI assessment examines and generates risk and protective scores for each of ten domains, as well as overall risk classifications. The ten domains are: legal history, family, school, community, alcohol and drugs, mental health, aggression, (pro- and anti-social) attitudes, (social and cognitive) skills, and employment and free time. Each of these delinquent offenses, when noted in the YASI is defined as an “intake contact”.

YASI assessments are completed on every juvenile offender placed on probation within the first 30 days of probation supervision.

I am currently employed as a juvenile probation officer with the VA DJJ. I made a formal request to the research and evaluation unit with the VA DJJ for permission to conduct this study and to examine the case files and the data recorded within the YASI assessments for the female youth, maintained by Orbis Partners software. The Research and Evaluation Unit then collected the requested data from a total of 3,826 case files within the Orbis Partners software, and organized the data in an Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet was sent as an email attachment to me for use in this study. Each of the female youth was assigned a unique number from 1 to 3826 within the spreadsheet. All of the youth's personal information was removed by VA DJJ before I received the data. I then transferred all of the received information from the Excel spreadsheet to a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data file. Analysis of the data was conducted September 6, 2010 through November 18, 2010. My goal was to examine the data recorded within the YASI assessments in order to contribute to the literature, a better understanding of the social and psychological characteristics of the delinquent adolescent female. Using the SPSS software, basic frequency counts and descriptive statistics such as the mean, median, and mode were created for each of the variables. In addition, the responses to twenty-four ordinal variables were summed to create an index score (Index of Female Delinquency) for female delinquency.

The IFD in this study will assist in describing distinctive aspects of delinquent female youth. For future studies, the index score will also allow me to further test the relationships between variables by running bivariate and/or multivariate correlations.

Several risk factors have been identified in the literature as placing females at greater risk of becoming juvenile delinquents. Some of the most prominent risk factors include: sexual and physical abuse, substance abuse, poor academic performance and/or school problems, mental health needs, and family dysfunction. Because of their prevalence, these risk factors were chosen by this researcher for further study. Other risk factors identified as placing females at risk of becoming delinquent have been noted in the research such as biological factors, interrelations between romantic partners, and poverty. Unfortunately, the above mentioned risk factors are not measured within the risk assessment and therefore could not be examined in this study.

Of the ten separate domains that are included in the YASI, I was able to examine components of the youth's legal history, family, school, alcohol and drugs, and mental health domains, consisting of thirty-six variables related to female delinquency. The nominal variables in this study were collected in a yes/no format within the YASI. The responses to these variables, using SPSS were recoded for statistical analysis, 0= variable is not present for the youth; 1= variable is present thereby creating a new ordinal scale.

Legal History Variables

Research has shown that young people with extensive legal histories who began involvement with the law at an early age are more likely to re-offend or have additional behavior problems in the future (Dembo et al., 1991). According to Mullis et al. (2004) female offenders are offending at increasingly younger ages and when a delinquent begins offending at a young age, the offenses ultimately worsen and become more frequent. The YASI collects the age of the youth at the time of the assessment and the

age of the youth at the time of their first intake contact with VA DJJ. For each female youth in the sample, their age at the time of the assessment and their age at first intake contact were recorded. The YASI also records the number of prior intake contacts for each of the female youth. Information as to whether the juvenile has a felony on their record is noted within the risk assessment and is noted as a nominal variable within the YASI. Unfortunately, the YASI assessment does not indicate the number of felony charges on the youth's record or the type of felony charge listed, therefore that information was not able to be examined.

Family Variables

The environment in which the youth is being raised has an incredible influence over the youth's attitudes and behaviors. Parental deviance, family criminality, and parental drug use are strongly associated with the development of delinquent and criminal behavior in children and adolescents of both genders (Zahn et al., 2010; Glueck & Glueck, 1950). Within the YASI information regarding whether the child lives with their mother, father, other family members, or foster home/group home is observed. The above mentioned variables are nominal variables and were used in creating the IFD. An accurate measurement of these variables has proven to be difficult, as the YASI assessment only provides "check boxes" for identifying whom the youth lives with, a check in the box would indicate that the child lives with that individual. Keeping this in mind, it is possible that responses as to who the youth resides with may overlap. For example, the youth may live with both the mother and the father, or the youth may live with a father and a grandmother. In addition, the information provided by the VA DJJ

does not specify who the other family members are or whether or not the youth is actually in a foster home or a group home.

Information regarding whether there is or is not a history of alcohol and/ or illegal drug abuse with the youth's mother and father, whether or not there is a history of mental health problems pertaining to the youth's mother and father, and whether or not the mother and the father have a criminal history is all recorded within the YASI. These are all nominal variables recoded into an ordinal scale. Unfortunately, the YASI does not indicate whether there is a specific history of alcohol or certain drugs. No mental health diagnosis or list of exact criminal charges was observed in reference to the parent.

Within the risk assessment, information is collected regarding the number of times the youth has run away from home. Lastly, evidence of family conflict, in the form of domestic violence, is recorded within the YASI and is collected as a nominal variable.

School Variables

There is a large body of research that substantiates a powerful link between school problems and delinquent behavioral problems. Essentially, youth with performance problems are at greater risk for delinquency. Other research has linked school behavior and truancy with risk for delinquency. On the flip side, positive school involvement protects against delinquency in both girls and boys and school attachment is more significant for girls than for boys (Zahn et. al).

The YASI collects information regarding the youth's school status. This is a six-category measure in which the responses include: graduated, enrolled full time, suspended, dropped out, expelled, or not applicable. The responses to these variables

were recoded for statistical analysis: 1= graduated; 2= enrolled full time; 3= suspended; 4= dropped out; 5= expelled; and 6= not applicable (females in this category are likely in psychiatric facilities and are not required to attend school).

Information regarding the youth's school conduct is measured within the YASI. This is a six-category measure in which the responses include: positive behavior adjustment, no problems reported, infractions reported, intervention by administration, police report filed, or not applicable. Responses were recoded: 1= positive behavior adjustment; 2= no problems reported; 3= infractions reported; 4= intervention by administration; 5= police reports filed; and 6= not applicable.

The youth's academic performance was collected. This is a five-category measure in which the responses include: B+ or above; C or better; C- or lower, Failing, or not applicable. The responses to these variables were taken from the excel spreadsheet and transferred to the SPSS data file and then recoded for statistical analysis: 1= C or better; 2= C- or lower; and 3= not applicable.

Alcohol and Drug Variables

Females with a history of using illegal substances are at greater risk for delinquent behavior and substance abuse disorders represent the most frequently occurring mental health problem in the population. Drug use has been linked to low academic performance, conduct problems at school, and associations with negatively influencing peers.

Whether or not the youth has used alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine is examined within the YASI. These are noted as nominal variables. The number of times the youth

reported using alcohol or marijuana was also collected for analysis. Finally, the age of the youth at the time they first used alcohol or marijuana has been recorded within the YASI. The research and evaluation unit with VA DJJ did not provide the age of the youth at their first cocaine use, therefore that variable could not be included in this study.

Mental Health Variables

Cauffman (2004), reports that there is research that indicates that a large number of youth entering the juvenile justice system have experienced or witnessed some form of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Although abuse in and of itself may not be a causal factor with respect to delinquent behavior, many investigators consider a history of early victimization to contribute to further experiences of victimization and to increased risk for self-destructive behaviors (i.e., substance abuse, self mutilation, suicide attempts, etc.), particularly for women. There is further evidence to support that female delinquency is closely associated with mental health needs.

Reports on any physical abuse of the youth are collected within the YASI. This is a three-category measure in which the responses include: physical abuse by parent, physical abuse by other family member, or physical abuse by outsider. Sexual abuse is also measured in a three-category measure in which the responses include: sexual abuse by parent, sexual abuse by other family member, or sexual by outsider. The above are nominal variables recoded to create an ordinal scale of measurement for analysis.

The YASI collects information regarding whether or not there is a history of mental health problems for the youth. Several types of mental health diagnosis are listed

and are ordinal variables. The mental health diagnoses included are: Bipolar disorder, Mood Disorder, Psychoses Disorder, or Thought Disorder.

All of the statistics generated for the variables are reported in Tables 1 & 2 and Figures 1, 2, & 3.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Discussion of the findings will be based on the order that each of the variables is collected within the YASI.

Legal History Variables

The age of the youth at the time of the assessment and the age of the youth at the time of their first intake contact with VA DJJ were reported in the YASI. As you see in Table 1 below, the sample included girls ranging in age from 7 through 19, with a mean age of 15.55 (Standard Deviation: S.D.=1.5). At the time the YASI assessment was completed, the majority of female youth were either 16 years old, 26.2% (n=1003) or 17 years old, 26.6% (n= 1016). Age 7 years old was the youngest age reported .1% (n=2) and the oldest age recorded was age 19, .2% (n= 6).

The number of prior intake contacts for each of female youth is collected and whether or not a felony is recorded on the youth's criminal record. Table 1 shows that the mean age for the females at the time of their first intake contact with VA DJJ was 14.54 (S.D. = (1.72) and the mode age was 15 years old, 21.5% (n=804). The mean number of intake contacts was 2.37 (S.D.= 2.78) and the mode was 1 prior intake contact, 46.2% (n=1758). Table 2 notes the female youth's felony contacts, 23% (n=875) had a felony charge on their record and 77% (n= 2932) did not have a felony charge.

Table 1: Measures of Central Tendency for Ratio Level Variables

Variable	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Age at Assessment	15.55	16.00	17	1.510
Age at First Intake	14.54	15.00	15	1.720
Number of Intake Contacts	2.37	1.0	1	2.728
Number of Runaways	1.09	.00	0	3.331
Alcohol: Age at First Use	13.88	14.00	14	1.649
Alcohol: # of Times Used	2.67	.00	0	9.142
Marijuana: Age at First Use	13.86	14.00	14	1.607
Marijuana: # of times Used	7.20	1.00	0	17.643
Cocaine: # of Times Used	.88	.00	0	2.929
Index Score	2.58	2.00	0	2.29

Family Variables

This study examined whether the child lives with their mother, father, other family members, or foster home/group home. The results presented in Table 2 show that from the overall sample, 39.1% (n=1495) are reported to live with their mother while 60.9% (n=2331) do not live with their mother. From the sample, 13% (n=497) reported to be living with their father while 87% (n=3329) reported not living with their father. It is reported that 10.5% (n=402) live with other family members and 2.1% (n=78) live in foster care or group homes. It should be noted that some of the above listed variables may overlap, for example, some of the youth may be living with the mother and father or

other family members may reside with the youth along with the mother. Appendix A illustrates how these variables are measured within the YASI.

Information was recorded as to whether there is or is not a history of alcohol abuse with the youth's mother and/or father. From the sample, 7% (n= 266) of the female youth's mothers are recorded as having a history of alcohol use while 93% (n=3560) reported no history of alcohol use. A history of alcohol use was reported in 5.8% (n=233) of the fathers and 94.2% (n= 3603) are reported to have no history of using alcohol (see Table 2).

Any history of mental health problems with the youth's mother and/or father was collected and is noted in Table 2. From the sample, 8.9% (n=339) of the female youth's mothers are reported to have a history of mental health problems and 91.1% (n=3487) are reported to have no history. Mental health histories are noted for 1.9% (n=71) of the fathers and 98.1 % (n=3755) are reported to have no history.

Table 2: Percentages and Frequencies for Demographic Variables

Variable	YES	NO
	Percentage (Frequency)	Percentage(Frequency)
Has a Felony Charge	22.9% (875)	76.6% (2932)
Lives with Mother	39.1% (1495)	60.9% (2331)
Lives with Father	13% (497)	87% (3329)
Lives with Other	10.5% (402)	89.5% (3424)
Lives in Foster/Group Home	2.1% (78)	97.9% (3748)
Mother: History of Alcohol	7% (266)	93% (3560)
Father: History of Alcohol	5.8% (223)	94.2% (3603)
Mother: History of Mental Health	8.9% (339)	91.1% (3487)
Father: History of Mental Health	1.9% (71)	98.1% (3755)
Mother: Criminal Record	10.2% (389)	89.8% (3437)
Father: Criminal Record	6.7% (255)	93.3% (3571)
Family Conflict	21.1% (808)	78.9% (3018)
Alcohol: Reported Use	34.2% (1307)	65.8% (2519)
Marijuana: Reported Use	33.7% (1291)	66.3% (2535)
Cocaine: Reported Use	4.1% (154)	95.9% (3672)
Bipolar diagnosed	.7% (27)	99.3% (3799)
Mood Disorder diagnosed	8.4% (319)	91.6% (3507)
Psychoses diagnosed	.3% (3814)	99.7%(12)
Thought Disorder diagnosed	4.2% (161)	95.8%(3665)
Physical Abuse: by Parent	8.5% (326)	91.5% (3500)
Physical Abuse: by other family	2.1%(81)	97.9%(3745)
Physical Abuse: by Outsider	2.2%(83)	97.8% (3743)
Sexual Abuse: by Parent	2.1% (82)	97.8% (3744)
Sexual Abuse: by other family	2.8% (107)	97.2% (3719)
Sexual Abuse: by Outsider	4.9% (186)	95.1%(3639)

This study examined whether or not the mother and the father have a criminal history. In regards to parent’s criminal history, 10.2% (n=389) of the mothers are recorded as having a criminal history and 89.8% (n=3437) are reported to have no criminal history. In Table 2, criminal histories were noted for 6.7% (n=255) of the fathers while 93.3% (n=3571) were reported to have no criminal history.

The YASI collects information regarding the number of times the youth has run away from home. Noted in Table 1, the sample evidenced that that the female youth had

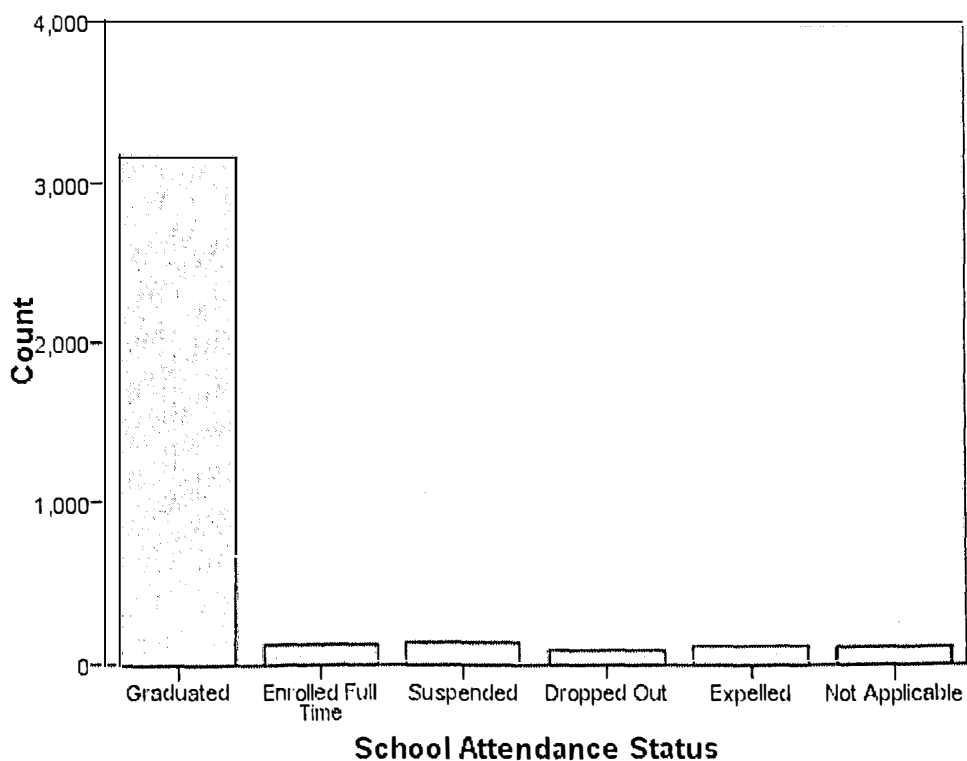
runaway between 1 and 100 times with the mean number being 1.09 (S.D. =3.33), and a mode of 0. Both the range and the standard deviation within this variable indicate that there is a wide amount of variance in regards to the number of times the youth reported running away.

The results presented in Table 2 report the presence of family conflict in the home in the form of domestic violence. No conflict was reported for 78.9% (n=3018), while conflict was reported in 21.1% (n= 808) of the cases.

School Variables

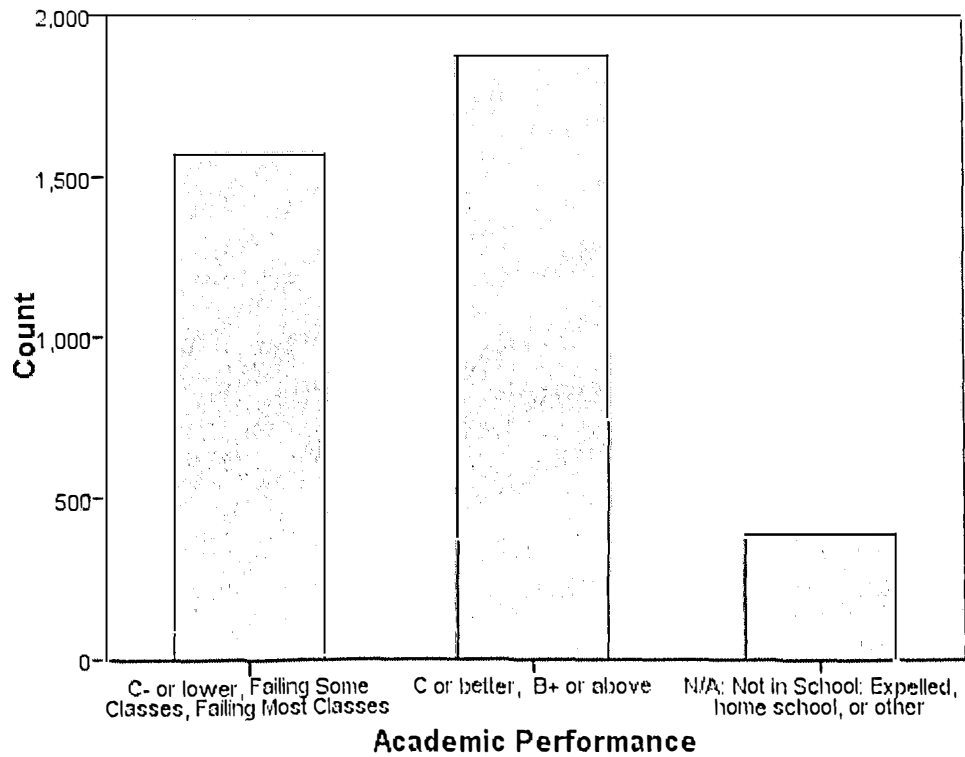
The female youth's status in school was collected. This is a six-category measure in which the responses include: graduated, enrolled full time, suspended, dropped out, expelled, or not applicable. As you can see Figure 1, reflects the responses for school status, with 82.7% (n=3165) having graduated, 3.3% (n=127) were enrolled full time, 3.7% (n=140) were suspended at the time, 2.4% (n=92) had dropped out of school while 3.1% (n=119) had been expelled. From the sample, 2.9% (n=110), of the cases were recorded as "Not Applicable", therefore the status of those cases is unknown and seventy-four cases were missing their school status.

Figure 1: Youth's School Status



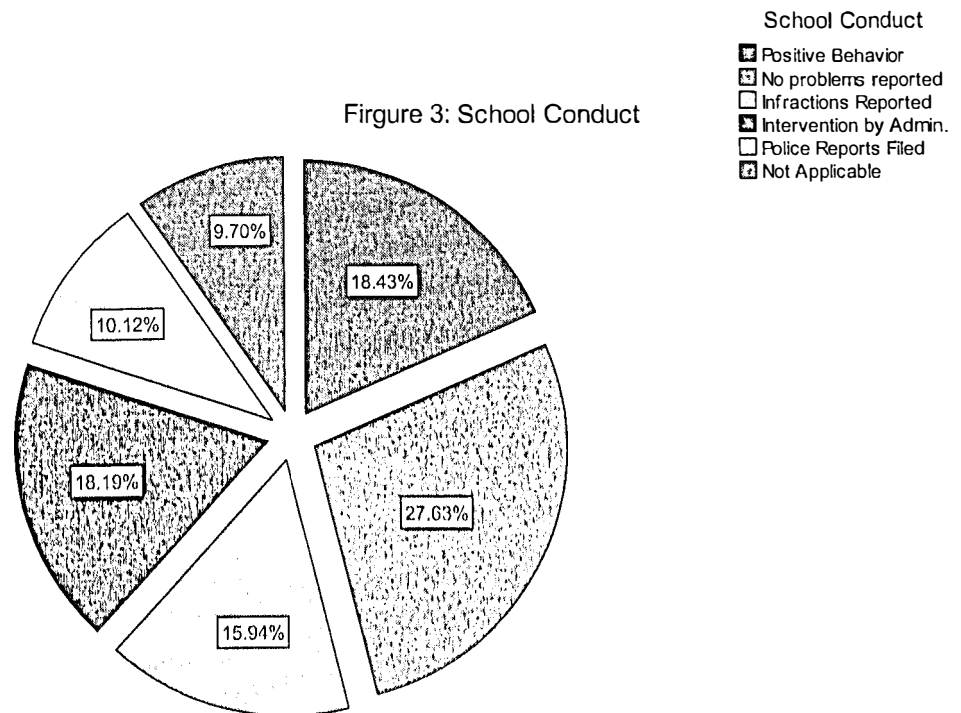
Information regarding the youth's academic performance was recorded. This is a five-category measure in which the responses include: B+ or above; C or better; C- or lower, Failing, or not applicable. The responses to these variables were taken from the excel spreadsheet and transferred to the SPSS data file and then recoded for statistical analysis. The scores of academic performance were combined for statistical analysis with, 1= C or better and 2= C- or lower. Figure 2 illustrates, the results for the academic performance of our sampled youth with 49% (n=1875) scoring a "C or better" and 41% (n=1569) scoring a "C- or lower". From the sample, 10% (n=382) were reported as not being in school.

Figure 2: Youth's Academic Performance



Information regarding the youth's school conduct was recorded. This is a six-category measure in which the responses include: positive behavior adjustment, no problems reported, infractions reported, intervention by administration, police report filed, or not applicable. Figure 3 reflects the school conduct reported for the youth, 27.6% (n=1057) were reported to have no behavioral problems in the school setting, 18.4% (n=704) were reported to have positive behavior in the school setting, 15.9% (n=610) were said to have infractions reported to administration, while 18.2% (n=696) of

the youth have required intervention by administration. Police reports were filed on 10.1% (n=387) of the youth, while 9.7% (n=371) were reported as “Not Applicable”, meaning that youth is not enrolled in school (for various reasons, i.e. graduated, expelled, suspended) and therefore no behaviors were reported.



Alcohol and Drug Variables

The YASI includes information regarding whether or not the youth has used alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine. Table 2 shows that, 34.2% (n=1307), of the youth reported that they had used alcohol while 65.8% (n=2519) reported they had not used alcohol. When reporting marijuana use, 33.7% (n=1291) reported using marijuana, and

66.2% (2535) reported they had not used marijuana. Table 2 also illustrates that, 4.1 % (n=154) of the youth reported that they had used cocaine, while 95.9% (n=3672) reported they had not used cocaine.

The YASI records the number of times the youth reported using alcohol, marijuana, or cocaine. Based on the number of responses (n=1472), the female youth reported using alcohol between 0 and 92 times. The mean number of times the female youth reported using alcohol was 2.67 (S.D. 9.14) with a mode of 0. The large standard deviation number in this variable indicates that there appears to be wide dispersion within this variable. Fifty-five percent, (n=810) reported never using alcohol, 15.5% (n=228) reported using alcohol on only one occasion, while 29.6% (n=434) reported using alcohol two or more times.

Based on the recorded responses (n=1466), the female youth reported using marijuana between 0 and 120 times. The mean number of time the youth reported using marijuana was 7.20 (S.D. = 17.64) with a mode of 0. The large standard deviation for reported use of marijuana indicates a large dispersion within this variable. Over 43% (n=638) reported never using marijuana, while 14.4% (n=211) reported using marijuana only once and 42.1% (n=617) reported using marijuana two or more occasions. While, .2% (n=4) of the youth reported using marijuana more than 100 times.

Table 1 shows that for the number of times the youth admitted to using cocaine, with the number of recorded responses, (n=133), 75.2% (n=100) report never using cocaine, while 11.3% (n=15) reported using cocaine on only one occasion while 13.5% (n= 18) reported using cocaine on two or more occasions.

The results in Table 1 show the age at which the youth first used alcohol or marijuana. Of the recorded responses 35.3% (n=1351), the female youth reported using alcohol between the ages of 7 and 17, with the average (mean) age being 13.8 (S.D. = 1.64) and a mode of age 14. Nineteen percent (n=266) reported first using alcohol at age 13, while 24.1% (n=325) reported first using alcohol at age 14, and 20.4% (275) reported first using alcohol at age 15. Finally, 19.2 % (n=260) of the sample reported first using alcohol at age 12 years old or younger and 16.6% (n=225) reported first using alcohol at age 16 or older.

Table 1 also reflects the age at which the female youth first used marijuana. From those responses, the female youth reported first using marijuana between the ages of 7 and 17 with the average (mean) age being 13.86 (S.D. = 1.60) and a mode of age 14. Twenty percent (n=281), reported first using marijuana at age 13, while 26.2% (n=356) reported first using marijuana at age 14, and 20.1% (n=274) reported first using marijuana at age 15. Lastly, 17.9% (n=244) reported first using marijuana at age 12 years old or younger and 15% (n=205) reported using marijuana at age 16 years or older.

Mental Health Variables

The YASI measures information regarding whether or not there is reported physical abuse of the youth, this information is recorded in Table 2. Based on the overall sample, 91.5% (n=3500) reported no physical abuse by a parent and 8.5% (n=326) reported physical abuse by a parent. In reference to physical abuse by another family member, 97.9% (n=3745) reported no abuse and 2.1% (n=81) reported abuse. Finally,

97.8% (n=3743) reported no abuse by an outsider /other individual and 2.2% (n=83) reported abuse.

In regards to sexual abuse, 97.9% (n=3744) reported no sexual abuse by a parent, and 2.1% (n=82) reported sexual abuse by a parent. The number of youth reported to have been sexually abused by another family member was 2.8% (n=107), while 97.2% (n=3179) reported no sexual abuse by another family member. Finally, 95.1% (n=3639) reported no sexual abuse by an outsider/other individual and 4.9% (n=186) reported being a victim of sexual abuse by an outsider/other individual.

Information was collected as to whether or not there is a history of mental health problems for the youth, and is displayed in Table 2. The mental health diagnoses measured by the YASI and analyzed in this study include: Bipolar Disorder, Mood Disorder, Psychoses Disorder, or Thought Disorder.

In regards to Bipolar disorder, .7% (n=27) reported being diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, while 99.3% (n=3799) reported no diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder. In examining cases of recorded diagnosis for Mood Disorder, 91.7% (n=3507) reported having no Mood Disorder diagnosis, while 8.3% (n=319) reported being diagnosed with a Mood Disorder. In regards to Psychoses Disorder, 91.7% (n=3507) reported having no Psychoses Disorder, while .3% (n=12) reported having a Psychoses Disorder. Finally, 95.8% (n=3665) reported no Thought Disorder, while 4.2% (n=161) reported having been diagnosed with a Thought Disorder.

Index of Female Delinquency Variable .

The IFD was calculated by summing the responses to twenty-four ordinal variables. As evidenced in Table 1, the mean score for the IFD was 2.58 (S.D.=2.29) and a mode score of 0 was observed. A range of 11 was noted as well as a median score of 2.0.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the characteristics of female youth referred to the VA DJJ for delinquent offenses. I hoped my study would further the understanding of the social and psychological characteristics of the delinquent adolescent female. Based on the literature reviewed, I expected to find elevated measures of sexual and physical abuse, substance abuse, poor academic performance and/or school problems, mental health needs, and family dysfunction.

My study revealed that the majority of female youth were either 16 or 17 years old, at the time of the assessment, and that the majority of females had their first intake contact 1 to 2 years earlier, at 15 years old, 21.5% (n=804). These findings are consistent with previous studies that reported that the young female offender as being 14 to 16 years old (Mullis et al., 2004). This information may have indications that once a female youth enters into the court system, she is likely to remain in the system for some time and this would be consistent with findings by Acoca, (1999) who reported that once female delinquents are placed on probation for minor offenses, subsequent charges in violation of probation increase the chances that these girls will become more involved in the juvenile justice system.

I found that only 23 % (n=875) of the female youth had a felony charge on their record and the large majority of females, 45.9 % (n=1758) were found to have only 1 intake contact on their record. These findings are also consistent with prior research, which reported that on the whole, girls' delinquent acts are typically less chronic and often less serious than those of boys (Zahn et al., 2010).

I found that 39.1 % (n=1495) of the youth live with their mother, but that the majority, 60.9% (n=2331) do not live with their mother. A low 13 % (n=497) live with their father, 10% (n=402) live with others, and 2% (n=708) live in foster care or group homes. These finding support the prior research, in that the majority of female delinquent youth are lacking a stable home environment.

Contrary to prior studies, I only found a small percentage of reported substance abuse among parents. Seven percent, (n=266) of the female youth's mothers were reported to have a history of alcohol and/or drug use and only 5.8 % (n=223) of the female youth's fathers were reported to have a history of alcohol and/or drug use. It is important to note here that based on the reported living arrangements for the female youth, 39.1 % (n=1495) residing with their mother and 13% (n=497) living with their father), these numbers may be underestimated and underreported. In addition, probation officers largely rely on the juveniles and their parents to provide truthful information about issues such as drug abuse, parent-youth relationships, and so forth. Because people try to present themselves in the best possible light, it seems likely that there were a greater number of substance abuse problems than were reported to probation officers.

My study found only a small percentage of any history of mental issues regarding the mother 8.9% (n=339) and for the father, 1.9% (n=71). Again, due to the living arrangements, these figures may be underestimated and underreported.

Consistent with the lower percentages from above, my study revealed that only 10.2 % (n=389) of female youth's mothers had a criminal record while only 6.7 % (n=255) of the fathers had a criminal record.

As noted earlier, only 39.1 % (n=1495) reported living with their mother and 13% (n=497) reported living with their father, which could impact the reporting for a criminal record in regards to the mother and father.

Research done by Chesney-Lind and Sheldon (2004), conclude that running away from home has long been seen as the typical female offense. However, in my study, the majority of female youth, 73.1% (n=2747) reported never running away. Despite the low number of reported runaways, an interesting finding is that the number of runaways ranges from 1 to 100 and 8.3% (n=381) of the female youth reported running away five times or more.

In my research, a low 21.1% (808) reported family conflict, contrary to earlier studies. An explanation for the lower percentage may be that it is a single parent household. Another explanation for the small percentage is that the female youth may be hesitant to report family conflict in fear of being removed from the home or revealing difficult family interrelationships.

The findings of my study are not consistent with past studies that looked at school achievement. The current study revealed that 84.3% (n=3165) of the female youth sampled had graduated from school, while only 3.7% (n=140) had been suspended and 3.2% (n=119) expelled. Past studies estimated that over 80% of female delinquent youth have experienced school problems such as expulsion, suspension, or being held back (Lederman et al., 2004).

My research found that 49% (n=1875) were achieving grades of C or better, while 41% (n=1569) were achieving a C- or lower. Other research on female delinquency points to school characteristics such as frequent occurrences of disruptive behavior in

school (Mullis et al., 2004). The majority of the female youth in my sample, 27.6 % (n=1057) were reported as having no behavioral problems, while 18.4 % (n=705) were reported as having positive behavior in the school setting.

Slightly higher percentages were seen in self-reported substance abuse among the female youth, with 34.2 % (n=1307) reporting the use of alcohol, 33.7% (n=1291) reported using marijuana, and 4% (n=154) reported using cocaine. These numbers appear to be consistent with the prior research.

Prior studies have estimated that a substantial proportion of incarcerated female youth (80%) merited a mental health evaluation for an emotional disorder or substance abuse evaluation. Surprisingly, my study revealed that combined only 13.5% (n= 519) of the female youth were noted to have a diagnosis of Bipolar disorder, Mood disorder, Psychoses, or a Thought Disorder. This number was considerably lower than I expected. I believe that the mental health diagnosis domain within the YASI needs to be more detailed and specific in regards to types of mental health issues. The prior research has indicated that girls are more likely than boys to have a broad array of co-occurring mental health problems, with high rates of depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and anxiety disorders. These specific disorders are not mentioned within the YASI and it appears that more detailed information regarding mental health issues is needed within the current risk assessment examined, in order to determine the specific mental health characteristics of the female youth.

Perhaps the most surprising findings in my study were that only 12.8% (n=490) reported being the victim of physical abuse by a parent, family member, or outsider and only 9.8% (n=375) reported being sexual abused by a parent, family member, or outsider.

These reports are significantly lower than expected based on the prior research. An average of 60% of the female delinquent youth committed to VA DJJ, in 2005, 2006, and 2007 reported either being physically or sexually abused by a parent, family member or outside individual. This study's findings may suggest that the female youth who had been physically or sexually abused may have given less accurate self-report, depending on the duration and perceived importance of the events they were reporting. Another possible explanation for the small percentage is that the female youth may be hesitant to report physical and sexual abuse by a parent/guardian or family member in fear of being removed from the home, legal consequences, or revealing difficult family interrelationships.

Because the data is statewide, it is safe to assume that the data can be used to make generalizations about female delinquents on probation with VA DJJ and several findings within my study proved consistent with previous literature. The age of the female youth's first intake, age at the time of the assessment, number of intake contacts, and seriousness of charges were all consistent with previous studies. There were slightly higher percentages for self-reported use of alcohol and marijuana use and finally the majority of the youth in my sample did not report living with either their mother or their father. From this study, an Index of Female Delinquency score was created to further test the relationships between variables in the study. Time restraints limited the amount of analysis I could do. I had hoped to run several bivariate and multivariate correlations, but was limited to only frequencies and descriptive statistics.

There are limitations with the current study, to begin, the risk assessments of the female youth were not recorded until they had been adjudicated guilty of a delinquent

offense; thus, only retrospective reports of delinquency were obtained. In addition, using an established risk assessment limited me to only the characteristics measured in the current risk assessment. There was no funding for this research, and therefore I was confined to a limited amount of available secondary data. The time restraints for this study also had an impact on the amount of analysis that could be done with the sample and data. I had hoped to run a series of bivariate and multivariate correlations to further test for the relationships among variables, but unfortunately, time did not allow.

Findings from my study are based on data taken from case files; the female youth were not interviewed by this researcher. There were multiple probation officers who completed the risk assessments and there may be considerable differences in the interviewing and reporting methods.

Some frequently noted characteristics of delinquent female youth identified in the prior literature as are not included on the YASI assessment and therefore could not be examined in this study.

Directions for Future Research

In their survey of program providers and juvenile justice administrators in California, Bloom, Owen, Deschenes, and Rosenbaum (2002) found that 72.3% of the respondents indicated a need for more information about what works for girls.

The present study examined a relatively short time frame and in the future, it may be helpful to look at female delinquent youths in a longitudinal study over an extended period of time.

The results of this study pose a possible challenge to the use of the current risk assessment for females on probation. This study revealed lower than expected percentages in many of the areas analyzed and I could find no published studies on the validity and reliability of the YASI. The VA DJJ could consider replicating this study and performing more complex analysis in order to test the reliability of the current assessment.

One relatively unexplored area in risk assessment research is gender differences in juvenile risk factors. In general risk assessment instruments either ignore gender all together or include gender as a risk factor for males (Anderson, 1994). Researchers might improve predictive power by designing separate instruments. It appears that gender differences may affect the types of risks that females encounter but also the ways they respond to those risk factors. It seems logical to examine female risk factors separately from those of males when conducting risk assessments. This would allow probation officers to classify females on probation more accurately and to identify particular risks associated with female offending. Reliable risk assessments tools for female offending are in short supply, furthermore, practitioners in the juvenile justice system typically use standardized instruments to make decisions on identifying girl's treatment needs, and processing decisions (e.g., adjudication and detention). Many of these instruments have not taken gender into consideration (Moses, 2001). The instruments being used should be tailored to female needs. Another possible avenue of future research should include evaluating the interrater reliability of the YASI among probation officers. An even greater concern is that the current risk assessment may fail to identify the female youth's specific risks for re-offending.

The construction of gender sensitive risk assessments must take into consideration the gender related factors that are relevant for delinquent female youth. These include greater attention to: sexual and physical abuse, substance abuse, poor academic performance and/or school problems, mental health needs, family dysfunction, biological factors, interrelations between romantic partners, and poverty (Lane, 2003).

Many of the characteristics reported in the present study have the potential to be assessed both in public health and school system settings. As previously noted, the vast majority of adolescent girls who engage in delinquent behavior are involved in various types of abusive relationships in which they are victimized by their caregivers, romantic partners, and peers.

Some frequently noted characteristics of delinquent female youth identified in the prior literature as are not included on the YASI assessment and therefore could not be examined in this study. Future research should attempt to secure more detailed information regarding biological factors, interrelations between peers, and romantic partners, and poverty.

The prior research advocates for delinquency prevention and intervention programs for girls that address physical and sexual abuse. Past studies also indicate that the responses to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder should be integral components of programming for girls (Cauffman et al., 2008, Cruise et al., 2007, and Hoyt & Scherer, 1992).

More research notes that compared to boys, girls' identity development are more contextualized within their close interpersonal relationships. Consequently girls may suffer more when their relationships are threatened. No peer or romantic partner

relationships are explored within the YASI. Programs should be developed that teach and model healthy relationships. Parents and guardians also may need to be linked to services for their own issues, such as substance abuse, mental health issues, domestic violence, and other trauma, that may be barriers to supervising and interacting with young females. Finally, programs should be created that work specifically with females and their families (Miller et al., 1995).

My hope is that this report documents the importance of understanding and acknowledging the characteristics of female delinquent youth. While young female offenders remain a small minority within the juvenile justice system, the unique needs of this population present numerous challenges and require particular attention in terms of research and policy. An effective system for female offenders needs to be structured differently than a system for male offenders. Being gender responsive in the justice system requires an acknowledgment of the realities of the female youth's lives, including the pathways they travel to criminal offending and the relationships that shape their lives. Research studies like my own as well as the research of others that are committed to understanding the characteristics of the delinquent female youth will continue to have an impact on the development and improvement of gender-responsive policies, practices, and programs in the juvenile and criminal justice system.

Counselors, school employees, probation officers, correctional officers, social services workers, and other professionals working with female offenders must obtain a clearer picture of a girls pathway to delinquency and therefore must take into consideration the multifaceted issues girls are facing in order to understand their effects on female adolescent development. To help those working with female youth to respond

effectively and appropriately, periodic trainings focusing on the needs and characteristics of female delinquent youth (e.g., mental health needs; traumatic life experiences) may be beneficial (Bloom & Covington 2001, Acoca & Dedel, 1998, Cauffman, 2004).

Understanding female delinquent youth and their involvement in the juvenile justice system will benefit the female youth themselves, their communities, and society. Such efforts will develop a more effective juvenile and criminal justice system and generate positive effects for generations to come.

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APPENDIX A: YOUTH ASSESSMENT AND SCREENING INSTRUMENT

Standard Web Edition 5.0

Navigation

- Clients
 - Find / Create / Delete
- Assessments
 - Find / Create / Delete
 - Domains
 - Pre-Screen Results
 - Full Assessment Results
 - Narrative
- Case Planning
 - Case Analysis
 - Goals and Action Steps
- Reports
 - Statistical Reports
- Settings
 - Administration
- Help and Support
 - Technical Support
 - Help

Direct Sections

Security

DJJ_MEEHANSW
Logout

Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument

Standard Web Edition - Version 5.0

ORBIS

Statistical Reports

Settings

- Administration
- Help and Support
- Technical Support
- Help

Legal History

Editing

- Previous intake contacts for delinquent/criminal offenses:

No Yes
- Age at first intake contact for delinquent/criminal offenses

Age at first contact:
- Number of intake contacts

Number of contacts:
- Intake contacts for felony offenses:

No Yes

4. Circumstances of family members who are living in the household:
Check all that apply

	Mother	Father	Step-Parent	Sibling	Other
Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol/Drug Problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental Health Problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Childrent/Guard Record	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delinquent/Violent Criminal Record	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Historic problems of family members who lived in the environment in which the youth was primarily raised:
Check all that apply

	Mother	Father	Step-Parent	Sibling	Other
Not Applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol/Drug Problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental Health Problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delinquent/Criminal Record	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delinquent/Violent Criminal Record	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Youth's current living arrangements:
Check all that apply

<input type="checkbox"/> Mother (biological or adoptive)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other adult
<input type="checkbox"/> Father (biological or adoptive)	<input type="checkbox"/> Foster/group home
<input type="checkbox"/> Step-Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent
<input type="checkbox"/> Siblings	<input type="checkbox"/> No permanent address/shelter
<input type="checkbox"/> Other relatives	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

7. Parental/custodial supervision:

Not Applicable

Good supervision

Some good supervision

Some inadequate supervision

Consistently inadequate supervision

8. Appropriate consequences for bad behavior:

Not applicable

Consistently appropriate consequences

Sometimes appropriate consequences

Usually not appropriate consequences

Never appropriate consequences

YAS | Full Assessment Results | Narrative | Case Planning | Case Analysis | Goals and Action Steps | Reports | Statistical Reports | Settings | Administration | Help and Support | Technical Support | Help

Update

[School] Editing

Check here if School items do not apply to this client:

1. Youth's current school enrollment:

- Not applicable
- Graduated GED
- Enrolled full time
- Enrolled part-time
- Dropped out
- Suspended
- Expelled

2. Youth's attendance in the previous three months of school:

- Not applicable
- Attends regularly (at least 90% of the time)
- Some part-day unexcused absences
- Some full-day unexcused absences
- Five or more full-day unexcused absences

YAS | 3. Youth's conduct in the previous three months of school:

- Not applicable
- Positive behavior adjustment
- No problems reported
- Infractions reported
- Intervention by school administration
- Police report filed by school

4. Youth's academic performance in the previous three months:

- Not applicable
- B+ or above
- C or better
- C or lower
- Failing some classes
- Failing most classes

5. Youth's current school conduct:

- Not applicable
- Consistent, stable
- Improving
- Worsening

YASI

6. Youth's current academic performance:

- Not applicable
- Consistent/stable
- Improving
- Worsening

7. If youth is a special education student or has been found to have a learning, behavioral, or other disability; or has a formal IEP:
Check all that apply

- No special education status
- Learning
- Behavioral
- Mental Retardation
- ADHD / ADD
- Other []

8. Youth believes receiving an education is beneficial to him or her:

- Not applicable
- Believes
- Somewhat believes
- Does not believe

Start

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