A COMPARISON OF THE TRUANT DELINQUENT AND THE NON-TRUANT DELINQUENT IN LUBBOCK, TEXAS

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The social problems of our contemporary society have their roots in the past and their consequences in the present and in the future.[1] A thorough knowledge of any complex problem necessitates an understanding of the historical and the cultural backgrounds, the conditions affected, and the fundamental elements of the problem itself.[2]

The Twentieth Century has witnessed great achievement, walking on the moon, the President's visit to Peking, wage and price controls, and a multitude of other history-laden events and problems. Since the 1900's, we have gone through one depression, numerous recessions, two world wars, the Korean conflict, the Vietnam conflict, and with the advent of scientific discovery our lives have been transformed drastically. Industrialization and urbanization have changed our complete structure and function in society. There have been many events that have occurred that will change the broad course of our history. Law violation is an important problem in modern

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[1]Martin H. Neumeyer, Juvenile Delinquency in Modern Society (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1955), p. 4.

[2]Ibid.

society. The problem increases when rapid social change takes place and when social disorganization becomes widespread.[3]

The increase in the population, the increase of law and the gradual expansion of the law enforcement machinery, the changed conditions of our present day standards of living and many of the inadequacies of the old reforms of control, must be noted when trying to appraise the crime situation from one period of time to another.

Innumerable new laws, federal, state, and local, have been passed, which have increased the possibility of law violation.[4]

For instance, traffic regulations, rent and price control, compulsory school attendance, child labor laws, curfew laws, and a variety of other forms of legislation were practically unknown at the beginning of the century. The additions of certain legislative enactments such as the compulsory school attendance law, will be one of the primary concerns noted in this paper. With the advent of this particular law, more youths are taken into custody, prosecuted, and handled by the courts and placed in correctional institutions than ever before in the past.

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[3] Ibid., p. 10.

[4] Ibid., p. 11.

Definition of a Delinquent Child

Under Texas Law, a delinquent child is

> . . . any female person over the age of ten years and under the age of 18 years and any male person over the age of ten years and under the age of 17 years:
>
> (a) Who violates any penal law of this State of the grade of felony;
> (b) or who violates any penal law of this State of the grade of misdemeanor where the punishment prescribed for such offense may be by confinement in jail;
> (c) or who habitually violates any penal law of this State of the grade of misdemeanor where the punishment prescribed for such offense may be by confinement in jail;
> (c) or who habitually violates any penal law of this State of the grade of misdemeanor where the punishment prescribed for such offense is by pecuniary fine only;
> (d) or who habitually violates any penal ordinance of a political subdivision of this State;
> (e) or who habitually violates a compulsory school attendance law of this State;
> (f) or who habitually so deports himself as to injure or endanger the morals or health of himself or others;
> (g) or who habitually associates with vicious or immoral persons.[5]

The Juvenile Court Act of Texas makes juvenile delinquency a civil rather than a criminal matter. Juveniles are "taken into custody," not "arrested"; they are "found to be delinquent" rather than "declared guilty," and "adjudicated" rather than sentenced.[6] The intent of this law

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[5]Bill Anderson and Ronny Gurley, The Juvenile Offender and Texas Law (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas, 1964), p. 24.

[6]Mhyra S. Minnis, Juvenile Delinquency: A Problem in Lubbock (Lubbock, Texas, 1965), p. 15, quoting The Crime Problem, p. 364.

is to protect the youngster who has come in contact with the Juvenile Courts. It is the intent of the Juvenile Court to protect the youngster at all times with the end goal of rehabilitation stressed rather than any punishment.

In Texas, any child who is a resident of the school district who is six years old and not yet twenty-one, has the right to free public school education.[7] It is the responsibility of public schools to provide a minimum of one hundred days' instruction to qualify their particular school district under the minimum foundation school program.[8] "Children who do not attend school violate the Civil Statute on school attendance and when their non-attendance becomes habitual, and they fall within the age range of delinquency, they are in violation of the Juvenile Court Act."[9] The term delinquent child means any female person over the age of ten years and under the age of eighteen years and any male person over the age of ten years and under the age of seventeen years who " . . . habitually violates the compulsory school attendance law of this state."[10]

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[7]Anderson and Gurley, Texas Law, p. 60, quoting Vernons Texas Civil Statutes, 1925, Art. 2902, as amended by General and Special Laws of Texas, 1929, p. 232.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., p. 60, Art. 2892.

[10]Ibid.

Problems of Truancy

Truancy is an important juvenile problem because of its frequency, its relationship to more severe delinquent acts, and its detrimental effect on the child's education. We really don't know statistically the frequency of truancy by looking at the court records. There are many problems involved in trying to substantiate truancy as outlined in this paper and it is possible that the low court statistic may be explained on three grounds:

(1) Truancy is referred to the court only as a last resort because, supposedly, the schools have the first attempt at trying to solve any type of school problems.

(2) Normally used, is a referral to the Juvenile Probation office for more serious delinquent acts rather than the truancy for which the youth was originally taken into custody.

(3) Many times the court referral is handled informally without ever becoming a record.

Truancy, per se, may not be a serious problem but it frequently is a part of a series of difficulties. The process may start with some form of personal or social maladjustment, unsatisfactory school experience, early misbehavior at school and, occasionally, absence from school, which is followed by more serious truancy and misconduct.

It is evident that when a child is truant this violation will bring him to the attention of law enforcement agencies, and if he develops a repatition of offenses he will require some type of juvenile court action and probation supervision. The Gleucks found that truancy was the most frequent sign of maladjustment among the delinquents who misbehaved in school and that misbehavior among delinquents starts earlier than among non-delinquents, and occurs more frequently.[11]

Comparative studies among truants and non-truants are likely to reveal differential factors, both personal and environmental. Charles J. Browning and Vernon A. Snowbarger have made these differential studies. Browning made a comparative study of two delinquent groups, sixty-two auto thieves and fifty-seven truants, all wards of the Los Angeles Juvenile Court. In a control group, fifty-eight were perfect attenders in school. The purpose of the study was to differentiate two sub-groups of delinquents and a non-delinquent group. These groups were matched for age, sex, school, grade, race, and cultural factors. Data for comparing these groups were obtained from court records, school records, and home interviews. Each boy was given a California Test of Personality; the mother completed a marital adjustment, family solidarity and father

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[11] Neumeyer, Modern Society, p. 233.

participation scale; and the interviewer, with the aid of the parent, completed a socio-economic status scale and a schedule of items identifying each family in detail. Among the many findings, it was discovered that the perfect attenders had significantly higher scores than the delinquent groups in most variables of family life and in personality. The truants had significantly lower scores on such matters as: frequency of broken homes, education of parents, number of parents employed, socio-economic status, marital adjustment of parents, father participation in family life, family solidarity, sibling position, family relations, school relations, mental maturity, reading and arithmetic achievement, personal and social adjustment.

Role of the School

Truancy definitely has a detrimental effect on the child's education. While being absent, the child not only misses the formal education offered at school, but he may also jeopardize his chances for annual grade promotion.[12] The retardation typical of many truants is increased by the pupil's absence; therefore, his poor adjustment and dissatisfaction with school increases and truancy may seem all the more attractive.[13] The pupil is caught in a vicious

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[12]Martin A. Frey, "Truancy" (Lubbock, 1970), pp. 1-7, quoting Who Are Our Truants?. pp. 31-201.

[13]Ibid., p. 2.

circle.

A careful investigation may reveal that the source of the absence from school is a superficial problem which may be remedied easily or could possibly be serious and deep pathology.[14] The largest group among the latter, the so-called "disturbed truants," are the psychoneurotic.[15] Their neurotic patterns may take many forms, but the most significant early one seems to be the so-called "school phobia."[16] The child refuses to go to school because he feels that something terrible will happen if he goes. Fear is usually involved, either fear of the school, fear of pupils, often a fear of failure in school work, and a fear of the separation from the mother, essential for going to school.[17] Nervous signs of anxiety are seen on school days (vomiting, dizziness, perspiration, choking, and pains without an organic base).[18] Truancy also may be part of a psychosis of which schizophrenia is the most common type.[19] There is considerable psychiatric controversy as to whether this illness is found in infants or children of elementary school age, but it is identifiable among children of

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[14] Ibid., p. 3.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., p. 4.

junior high school and high school age.[20] The inability of the schizophrenic to relate between the real and the imaginary world is reflected in his school attendance and adjustment.[21] He often cannot explain his absence, neither is he aware of the rules for obtaining an excuse.[22] Relative to the role of the school, Kenney has indicated that the most common symptom of maladjustment in school is truancy. He has indicated that truancy is the "kindergarten of crime" because, frequently, children who later become delinquent start their misbehavior as truants during their early school years.[23] Children become truant from dissatisfaction with school from various situations:

(1) One may be a curriculum unsuited to the pupil. The Black child may become a truant because he finds that the routine school program, adjusted to the level of the mediocre, is boring.

(2) The dull child, because the program may be too difficult.

(3) There is a sense, many times, of being a failure and the scorn to which a retarded truant is

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] John P. Kenny, Police Work with Juveniles (Springfield, Illinois: Charles B. Thomas, 1962), p. 230.

exposed, both by his parents and by other children, these may be potent factors underlying the child's truancy.

(4) An uncomfortable relationship with the teacher who has no understanding of his needs may impel a child toward truancy.[24]

Evidence seems to suggest that, due to the roles that schools often play in the lives of youths, it would seem that the school has the greatest potential to at least offset or neutralize many of the pressures that are placed on the delinquent child by noneducational forces such as the family, the community, or the peer group.[25] There is a need for some educational changes that could reduce some of these pressures in the first place.[26] Unless some of these underlying educational conditions that help produce a delinquent's attitude are not altered, efforts to deal with these particular delinquents will have little effect in the long run. Many times the school may inadvertently contribute to some type of deviant behavior in the way that it looks at and reacts to many of the students. For example, many of the teachers tend to label students in their

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[24] Ibid.

[25] The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 222.

[26] Ibid.

relationship to their peer group interaction. If a student is involved with some peers who have particularly bad reputations or who have that "delinquent" look, then naturally, they must be a delinquent also, rather than on any basis of their actual behavior. The school reacts to deviant students justly or unjustly with a degrading or highly public "labeling ceremony"; this may inadvertently heighten the development of both a private and a public identity of the individual as a deviant.[27]

In a recent study by Bernard A. Thorsell and Lloyd W. Klemke they discovered that the labeling process is depicted as resulting characteristically in the reinforcement and crystallization of deviant behavior as a life style.[28] This negative result is attributed to what is considered to be typical sequelae of the labeling process, namely, the isolation of the deviant from non-deviant social relationships and a resultant acceptance of a definition of self as a deviant person.[29] There are many other categories of deviancy created by the schools, some of which would

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[27] Ibid., p. 227. (There are many articles in the leading journals emphasizing the "Labeling Theory." If there is nothing else wrong with the juvenile delinquent, the labeling process pushes him into a delinquent career.)

[28] Bernard A. Thorsell and Lloyd W. Klemke, "The Labeling Process: Reinforcement and Deterrent?" in Law and Society Review, ed. by Samuel Krislov (Denver: Law and Society Association, Vol. 6, No. 3, February, 1972), p. 394.

[29] Ibid.

be by placing misbehaving or underachieving students in the categories "sick," "emotionally disturbed," or "retarded."[30]

Review of the Relevant Literature

A study of fifty-three cases of school phobia referred to the Judge Baker Guidance Center in Boston concludes that it can become one of the most disabling disorders of childhood. Almost invariably truancy was accompanied by psychosomatic symptoms.[31] The most typical picture was a child who vomited his breakfast and used this device to remain at home.[32] The explanation usually given was that the child was fearful of being separated from his mother. The ways in which these children may be helped are the subject of current research at the Guidance Center in Boston. No studies to date have proved that laxity of discipline or failure to teach the three R's effectively have made this school's insufficient bulwarks against delinquency. There are indications that the public schools have been less aware than they should be of the significancy of truants, especially among the most economically and culturally deprived segments of our population.[33]

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[30] Ibid., p. 228.

[31] Sophia M. Robinson, Juvenile Delinquency (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960), p. 155.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

In a study done by the Gleucks they found that some of the earlier signs of maladaptation or anti-social behavior appeared in the form of truancy among 74.8 per cent of the 478 delinquents in their study and 52.3 per cent of the control group non-delinquents in their study.[34] Disobedience, unruliness, defiance, stubbornness, or temper-tantrums were the first evidence of school maladjustment of 15.5 per cent of the delinquents and 26.8 per cent of the small number of non-delinquents.[35] Most of the delinquents (94.8 per cent) were truant at one time or another during their school careers, while only 10.8 per cent of the non-delinquents were truant, and then only occasionally.[36] Of the 474 delinquents who were truant, a third skipped school only very occasionally, while two-thirds were persistently truant.[37] It was evidenced from this study, therefore, that school maladjustment expressed itself throughout the school careers of the delinquent boys in this study, largely through truancy; that is, by running away from difficult or unpleasant social situations

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[34] Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1950), p. 148.

[35] Ibid. (It is interesting to note that this destructive type behavior is exhibited by the non-truant rather than the truant delinquent.)

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

and obligations, or toward more absorbing activities.[38]

The Gleucks have outlined certain danger signals of delinquent behavior which they feel could identify potential delinquents at the time of school entrance or soon thereafter. They feel that by using certain criteria that it would make possible the application of some type of treatment measures that would be truly crime preventatives. They have listed these danger signals as: truancy, destructive mischief, stubbornness, running away, stealing, riots, temper tantrums, disobedience, sex play, stealing junk, gambling, using vile language, begging, staying out at night, sneaking admissions to movies, and lying.[39] The Gleucks indicated that these particular danger signals were also characteristic of some non-delinquent children prior to puberty.[40]

Armed with these potential danger signals, it seems that we should be able to effectively combat the problem of delinquency; this is definitely not the case. All evidence shows that juvenile delinquency is at an all time high in this country and it is still on the increase. For example, in 1965, there were almost 700,000 delinquency

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., p. 57.

cases handled by juvenile courts in the United States.[41] Juvenile delinquency is the manifestation of the changing urban environment. An increasing number of families are moving to the urban communities, thereby increasing their children's opportunity for anti-social behavior.

Today young people are dropping out of school at the rate of one million a year.[42] Dropping out of school is less tolerable today due to the universal school attendance law. It has been documented that the social and economic costs are too great for society to accept this dropout rate.

The prevention of truancy will not eliminate anti-social behavior, nor will it eliminate crime; but, armed with the evidence that truancy _is_ a stepping stone to other anti-social behavior, may help us to reduce the incidence and need for adjudication.

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[41] Commission, _Crime_, p. 222.

[42] _Ibid._, p. 280.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Purpose

It is the purpose of this study to compare and contrast the characteristic of the truant delinquent and the non-truant delinquent who were referred to the Lubbock County Juvenile Probation Department in Lubbock, Texas. Special considerations were given to (1) socio-economic status of the delinquents; (2) type of living arrangement of the delinquents; (3) I.Q. of the delinquents; (4) number of companions in first offense committed by the delinquents; and (5) types of offenses committed by truants during school hours.

The Hypotheses

In reviewing past research and from numerous observations:

I. It is hypothesized that there exists a relationship between truancy and I.Q. This will be tested in the following term:

It is predicted that a lower I.Q. will be characteristic of the truant.

II. It is hypothesized that a relationship exists between a physically broken home and truancy. This will

be tested in the following term:

It is predicted that the physically broken home will be characteristic of the truant child.

III. It is hypothesized that there exists a relationship between truancy and socio-economic status of the family. This will be tested in the following term:

It is predicted that the higher the socio-economic status of the family, the greater the incidence of truancy.

IV. It is hypothesized that a relationship exists between the number of companions in the first offense and the truancy status of the child. This will be tested in the following term:

It is predicted that the truant will have a high incidence of peer group participation when he commits his first offense.

Procedures

The population under study is comprised of boys, aged ten through sixteen, and girls, aged ten through seventeen, who have been referred to the Lubbock County Juvenile Probation Department in Lubbock, Texas, for violation of the Juvenile Laws. The population of this study have all had their day in court and have all been adjudicated delinquent. Using the Juvenile Court Act as its guide, it was in the best interest of these children that they

be taken to court and are now being supervised officially by the Juvenile Probation Department.

The female population in this study consisted of 16 per cent Anglo, 8 per cent Black, and 8 per cent Chicano. The male population consisted of 32 per cent Anglo, 17 per cent Black, and 19 per cent Chicano. The total number in the universe was 1,242 on September 9, 1971, the date this sample was started. Out of this universe of 1,242, the female population consisted of 15 per cent Anglo, 6 per cent Black, and 10 per cent Chicano. The male population consisted of 33 per cent Anglo, 16 per cent Black, and 20 per cent Chicano. The universe referrals consisted of a total of 860 males and 382 females.[43]

The population in this study all reside within the boundaries of Lubbock County and are all being supervised by probation officers of the Lubbock County Probation Office. This section of the Juvenile Probation Department is assigned all delinquent children for their supervision after they have been adjudicated delinquent by the courts.

Methodology

This research involved the use of juvenile court records and juvenile summaries from the Lubbock County Juvenile

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[43]Lubbock County Juvenile Probation Office, 1970 Annual Report (Lubbock, Texas: Lubbock County Printing Office, 1971), p. 5.

Probation Office 1970 Annual Report.

The sampling method consisted of each of the five Juvenile Probation Officers of Lubbock County randomly selecting twenty files from their active caseloads. These records are filed alphabetically by each of the probation officers. This sample consisted of 100 cases, or 12.4 per cent of the universe. Out of the 100 delinquent cases, 33 were labeled as truant by this investigator on the basis of data obtained from the juvenile records, and 67 labeled as non-truant.

The case file from the Probation Department is a comprehensive report, recording all contact that the child has had with law enforcement agencies, all offenses, family history, Otis Quick Scoring I.Q. Test, often a psychological evaluation obtained from the child's school record or from a private psychologist, and the contact reports made by the probation officer.

This information from the child's case file was assimilated for analysis and presentation in table form, comparing truant and non-truant delinquents on the basis of such independent variables as follows:

1. Age
2. Grade
3. Sex
4. Religious Denomination
5. Ethnic Group

6. Estimated Mental Capacity
7. Number of Companions in Truancy
8. Number of Companions in First Delinquent Offense for Non-Truants
9. Grade in School at First Offense
10. Living Arrangement of Child
11. Marital Status of Natural Parents
12. Annual Family Income

Additional data on the truant delinquent is provided on:

13. Types of Offenses While Truant
14. Grade in School When First Truant
15. Age at First Truancy

The study sample was dichotomized into truant and non-truant sub-samples. The chi-square test was used to determine if any statistically significant difference exists between the two sub-samples in relationship to these fifteen variables.

The Null Hypothesis states that there is no statistically significant difference between truants and non-truants as related to the independent variables. If the Null Hypothesis is sustained, it would mean that no relationship may be said to exist.

It is expected that chi-square would be difficult to interpret in some cases due to the small size of the sample. Further, empty cells result in computations of dubious value.

In cases where chi-square computation and the graphic presentations are self-explanatory on the basis of the χ^2, then the table will be presented, but only a brief generalization on the conclusions will be made.

The formula used to compute chi-square will be as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(o - e)^2}{E}$$

For the independent variables not investigated by the chi-square procedure a T-test was employed in order to determine if statistically significant differences occur between the means of the two groups under study.

In comparing the mean age of the truant and non-truant groups, no significant difference was found between the mean age of the two groups under comparison. The truants' mean age was 15.68 and the non-truants' was 15.57 years old (Table 1).

An analysis of the data was made in an attempt to discover any significant difference between or among the truant and non-truant on grade in school. In comparing the grade in school of the truant and non-truant, we found there was no significant difference. The truant group had a mean grade of 9.343, and the non-truant group had a slightly lower mean grade of 8.727 (Table 2).

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF TRUANT AND NON-TRUANT DELINQUENT ON AGE[a]

Age	Male	Female	Age	Male	Female
10	0	0	10	0	0
11	0	0	11	0	0
12	1	0	12	1	0
13	0	1	13	4	1
14	2	3	14	6	1
15	4	1	15	8	3
16	4	9	16	20	5
17	5	3	17	13	6
Sub-total	16	17		52	15
Total	33			67	
Mean Age	15.68			15.57	

[a]The truant group had a S.D. of 1.269 and the non-truant group had a S.D. of 1.275. The t was .4091 indicating no significant difference between the mean age of the two groups under comparison.

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF TRUANT AND NON-TRUANT DELINQUENT ON GRADE IN SCHOOL

	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	Sign
Truant	33	9.343	1.610		
				1.968	N.S.
Non-Truant	67	8.727	1.398		

In the comparison of the gender of the truant and non-truant group, we found that t = 2.850 which is significant at the .10 level. That is, there is a significant number of girls who were truant in our population (Table 3).

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF TRUANT AND NON-TRUANT DELINQUENT IN RELATIONSHIP TO GENDER

	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	Sign
Truant	33	1.515	.499		
				2.850	.10
Non-Truant	67	1.223	.5075		

Boys and girls are not always equally involved in delinquency and sex ratios are not normally the same for different types of delinquency. The ratio of boys to girls who appear before juvenile courts is usually related to the overall structure of the community in which the delinquent children reside. It would seem that possibly one of the reasons for the high incidence of female truants, in contrast to male truants, is that many times the females are involved in lesser juvenile offenses such as truancy, running away, and incorrigibility, where boys are involved in aggravated assault, property destruction, and acts of deviancy which are classified as felonies.

It was found that, in the truant group, sixteen were

male and seventeen were female. In the non-truant group, fifty-two were male and fifteen were female (Appendix).

It has been found that Sunday School and church training do not seem greatly to deter juvenile delinquency. From the available evidence to date, there seems to be little relationship between Biblical information and the distinct phases of conduct by juveniles, delinquents or otherwise.[44] This is true regardless of the denominational category or regularity of attendance by young people.[45] Such evidence probably warns that there has not yet been devised any part-time, religiously-oriented, character-building programs for young people that will adequately substitute for the day-by-day relationship of parents and children.[46]

In any comparison by religious denomination, it must be kept in mind that many times the religious denominations indicated by the youths are given because they felt that if they indicated they had some religious preference that the probation department would be lenient with them. In a Lubbock study by Dr. Mhyra Minnis, eighty youngsters in her sample of 140 claimed membership in Baptist churches,

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[44]Clyde B. Vedder, The Juvenile Offender (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1954), p. 85.

[45]Ibid., p. 86.

[46]Ibid.

yet frequently they were found to be unable to spell "Baptist."[47] Juvenile Probation officers, in questioning the juveniles about this area, would follow up the inquiry about their religious denomination with questions such as "What particular church do you attend?", "What is the address of the church you attend?", and "What is the name of your minister?"[48] Juveniles who had attended regularly had difficulty in answering these questions. Those with irregular attendance rarely could answer even one of these questions. The implications from these uncertain replies are that the data regarding church affiliation is related to the expected answer the youngster learns to make, perhaps to influence the decision regarding his situation by probation authorities.[49] It was also indicated by Dr. Minnis that in a highly church-related community, such as Lubbock, church affiliation is considered a normative expectation and the youngster is aware of the practical wisdom of his answer.[50]

We found that chi-square = 4.925, which is significant at the .01 level with one degree of freedom; that is, the rate of truancy in the sub-sample of the Church of Christ

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[47] Minnis, Delinquency, p. 49.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

members is significantly different than the rate of truancy in the whole sample. These delinquents who comprise 10 per cent of the total sample do get into trouble, but seemingly are not truant (Table 4).

TABLE 4

DELINQUENTS WITH CHURCH OF CHRIST MEMBERSHIP ACCORDING TO TRUANCY EXPERIENCE

	Expected	Observed
Truant	3.3	0
Non-Truant	6.7	10
$\sum$	10	10
$\chi^2 = 4.925$	DF = 1	$P < .01$

In this investigation we found that there were no males or females observed in the truant group. Of the ten who were observed in our non-truant group, seven were males and three were females (Appendix).

The rate of T is the same as the whole and there is no significant difference between the Baptist sub-sample and the whole population (Table 5).

Of the fifteen truant delinquents observed in this investigation, nine were males and six were females. In the non-truant delinquent group we observed twenty-five, consisting of fifteen males and ten females (Appendix).

TABLE 5

DELINQUENTS WITH BAPTIST MEMBERSHIP
ACCORDING TO TRUANCY EXPERIENCE

	Expected	Observed
Truant	13.2	15
Non-Truant	26.8	25
$\sum$	40	40
$\chi^2 = .366351$	DF = 1	P > .1

The rate of truancy is the same as the whole. There is no significant difference between the Methodist sub-sample and the whole population (Table 6).

TABLE 6

DELINQUENTS WITH METHODIST MEMBERSHIP
ACCORDING TO TRUANCY EXPERIENCE

	Expected	Observed
Truant	1.65	3
Non-Truant	3.35	2
$\sum$	5.00	5
$\chi^2 = 1.6485$	DF = 1	P > .1

This religious denomination group represented the smallest sample in the investigation. Of the three truants we observed, all were female. In the non-truant group we observed two, both of which were male (Appendix).

We found that chi-square = 4.217 which is significant at the .05 level with one degree of freedom; that is, the Catholic denomination and truant-non-truant status are not independent. Therefore, there is a significant dependent relationship between the two variables (Table 7).

TABLE 7

DELINQUENTS WITH CATHOLIC MEMBERSHIP ACCORDING TO TRUANCY EXPERIENCE

	Expected	Observed
Truant	6.67	11.0
Non-Truant	13.33	9.0
$\sum$	20.00	20.0

$\chi^2 = 4.217449$ DF = 1 P < .05

In this investigation we found that there were five males and six females observed in the truant group. It is interesting to note that this female truant group and the Baptist female truant group had the most represented in our female truant sample. In the non-truant group we observed a total of nine, of which eight were male and one was female (Appendix).

We found that chi-square = 4.501 which is significant at the .05 level with one degree of freedom. That is, the conglomeration of Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Christian religious denominations and truant-non-truant status are

not independent. Therefore, there is a significant dependent relationship between the two variables (Table 8).

TABLE 8

DELINQUENTS WITH OTHER MEMBERSHIP
ACCORDING TO TRUANCY EXPERIENCE

	Expected	Observed
Truant	3	0
Non-Truant	6	9
$\sum$	9	9
$\chi^2 = 4.501$	DF = 1	P < .05

However, since the sample is a combination of three middle class churches, the statistical significance may not be meaningful. In the non-truant group we observed a total of nine, all of which were male (Appendix).

The rate of truance is the same as the whole and there is no significant difference between the "no religious preference" sub-sample and the whole population (Table 9).

Of the four truants that we observed, two were male and two were female. In the non-truant group twelve were observed, of which eleven were male and one was female (Appendix).

The rate of truancy is the same as the whole and there is no significant difference between the Black sub-sample and the whole population (Table 10).

TABLE 9

DELINQUENTS WITH NO MEMBERSHIP
ACCORDING TO TRUANCY EXPERIENCE

	Expected	Observed
Truant	5.28	4.0
Non-Truant	10.72	12.0
$\sum$	16.00	16.0
$\chi^2 = .4631$	DF = 1	P > .1

TABLE 10

THE BLACK DELINQUENT ACCORDING TO TRUANCY

	Expected	Observed
Truant	8.25	9
Non-Truant	16.75	16
$\sum$	25.00	25
$\chi^2 = .101$	DF = 1	P > .1

An analysis of the data was made to discover any significant difference between or among the Black, Chicano, and Anglo delinquent according to truancy.

We found that chi-square = 3.08 which is significant at the .10 level with one degree of freedom; that is, the Chicano ethnic group and truant-non-truant status are not independent. Therefore, there is a significant dependent relationship between the two variables (Table 11).

TABLE 11

THE CHICANO DELINQUENT ACCORDING TO TRUANCY

	Expected	Observed
Truant	8.97	13
Non-Truant	18.90	14
$\sum$	27.00	27
$\chi^2 = 3.08$	DF = 1	P < .10

The rate of truancy is the same as the whole and there is no significant difference between Anglo sub-sample and the whole population (Table 12).

TABLE 12

THE ANGLO DELINQUENT ACCORDING TO TRUANCY

	Expected	Observed
Truant	15.84	11
Non-Truant	32.16	37
$\sum$	48.00	48
$\chi^2 = 2.207$	DF = 1	P > .1

Hypothesis I. It was hypothesized that there exists a relationship between truancy and I.Q. It was predicted that the lower the I.Q., the greater the chance for truancy because of the difficulty in handling school work.

In comparing the means of the truant and non-truant groups, no significant difference was found, thereby rejecting the hypothesis that the mean I.Q. of the truant group was less than the mean I.Q. of the non-truant group (Table 13).

TABLE 13

COMPARISON OF TRUANT AND NON-TRUANT ON MEAN ESTIMATED MENTAL CAPACITY

	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	Sign
Truant	33	3.029	.6506		
				1.060	N.S.
Non-Truant	67	2.848	.8703		

It would seem valuable to note that the delinquent groups under study fell somewhere within the 70-90 I.Q. range on an average. This would tend to support some studies by L. A. Sibert, for example, who has tested 8,003 court cases. He found that the average I.Q. of these delinquents was 91.4, which was slightly below the national average.[51] This inconsequential difference can be explained in a number of ways; more intelligent delinquents may escape

[51] Lawrence A. Siebert, Journal of Clinical Psychology, "I.Q. Scores of Delinquents," International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. Edited by David L. Sills (Vol. IV; The McMillian Company, 1968), p. 49.

detention by the police, or perhaps the fact that the tests are normally administered in a stressful situation (such as a juvenile reformatory) may affect the performance of the delinquent, or due to the structure of our society, many of the average or above in socio-economic areas are not taken into custody by the juvenile police, and many of these problems are handled within the home and never referred to a juvenile court setting.[52]

An analysis of the data was made to reveal any significant difference between the truant and non-truant on grade in school at first offense. We found that there was no significant difference between the mean grade of the truant and the non-truant. The truant group had a mean grade of 7.611 and the non-truant group a slightly higher mean grade of 7.787 (Table 14).

TABLE 14

COMPARISON OF TRUANT AND NON-TRUANT ON GRADE IN SCHOOL AT FIRST OFFENSE

	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	Sign
Truant	33	7.611	2.014		
				.3419	N.S.
Non-Truant	67	7.787	2.595		

[52] Ibid.

In American society, there is a very high correlation between the personality development and behavior of the child and the quality of the family.[53] No institution in the community can have a more wholesome and positive effect upon the growth and behavior of the child than a good home; conversely, few agencies can have the disintegrating and devastating effect that can stem from an inadequate, broken, or strife-ridden home.[54]. If there is a common core in the delinquent studies, it is to be found in the unsatisfactory home settings from which many delinquents come.[55]

Over the past twenty-five years, many sociologists and psychologists have tried to identify the characteristics which identify the family life in the United States. They have made particular reference to many of the changes which have been taking place in our American home situations. There seems to have been an aggravation, if not an increase, of juvenile delinquency, and this increase is closely tied in with many of the changes that have evolved affecting the home and the family life.[56] Among the most significant are the following:

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[53]William C. Kvaraceus, The Community and the Delinquent (Yonkers-on-Hudson: World Book Company, 1954), p. 236.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Ibid., p. 237.

[56]Ibid.

> . . . the wholesale shift in population to the larger urban centers; the employment of women and their release from home and kitchen; the increase in mobility of the family and its members; the loosening of family ties; the instability of the family union; the increase of prestige and money and economic status as criteria of human values; the extended economic dependence of the adolescent and young adult on the parents; the growing dependence on commercial recreation and restaurant dining; the increase in confusion and decrease in controls due to the conflicts in and disappearance of neighborhood standards; the change in family status from that of a producer to a consumer; the final disappearance of adventurous frontier life of the pioneering family; and, the growing dependence of the modern family on other reinforcing institutions.[57]

In Hypothesis II it is predicted that a relationship exists between a physically broken home and truancy and that the physically broken home will be characteristic of the truant delinquent.

There were seven living arrangements used in comparing the truant and the non-truant:

1. With Both Parents
2. With Mother and Step-Father
3. With Father and Step-Mother
4. With Mother Only
5. With Father Only
6. In Home of Relatives
7. In Foster Family Home

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[57] Ibid.

The distribution for all seven categories are found in Table III of the Appendix. Of the seven living arrangements of the truant and non-truant, only the category "Living With Father Only" was significantly related to the variable of truancy.

A chi-square of 4.01 (significant at the .05 level with one degree of freedom) indicates that the living arrangement "With Father Only" and truant or non-truant status was not independent. There were only two delinquents out of the 100 delinquents in the sample who fell in the "With Father Only" category. It may be, given the relatively small size sample of two, that the "With Father Only" category is no more related to truancy than to non-truancy.

In Hypothesis III it is hypothesized that there exists a relationship between truancy and the socio-economic status of the family. It is predicted that the higher the socio-economic status of the family, the higher the incidence of truancy.

In the comparison of the annual family income of the truant and non-truant group, we found that $t = 2.540$, significant at the .05 level; that is, there is a significant relationship between the higher socio-economic status of the family and the greater incidence of truancy. This investigation revealed that the truant group had a mean

economic income of $3,343 and the non-truant group a mean economic income of $2,696 (Table 15). It is obvious that neither of these incomes would be sufficient in relationship to our present poverty level standard of $4,000 for a family of four.[58]

TABLE 15

COMPARISON OF TRUANT AND NON-TRUANT ON ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME

	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	Sign
Truant	33	3.343	1.108		
				2.540	.05
Non-Truant	67	2.696	1.237		

An analysis of the data was made in an attempt to discover any significant difference between or among the truant and non-truant on age at first offense. In comparing the data it was revealed that there is no significant difference. The truant group had a mean age at first offense of 13.567 years and the non-truant group a slightly higher mean age at first offense of 13.818 (Table 16).

Hypothesis IV. It is hypothesized that a relationship exists between the number of companions in the first

[58]This level of $4000.00 for a family of four was the figure given by the Office of Economic Opportunity on March 28, 1972.

offense and the truant status of the child.

TABLE 16

COMPARISON OF TRUANT AND NON-TRUANT
ON AGE AT FIRST OFFENSE

	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	Sign
Truant	33	13.567	1.777		
				.6877	N.S.
Non-Truant	67	13.818	1.685		

In the comparison of the truant and non-truant in relationship to number of companions in first offense, we found that t = 1.654 which is significant at the .10 level; that is, truants tend to have a significant number of their peer group with them when committing their offenses. The truant delinquent had a mean number of 1.909 companions in their first offense and the non-truant delinquent group had a mean number of 1.403 companions in their first offense (Table 17). It is evident that both truant delinquents and non-truant delinquents did commit anti-social acts in the company of peers.

In Dr. Mhyra Minnis' investigation of offenses committed by Lubbock County juvenile delinquents, it was found that not only did delinquents commit the offenses in the presence of other youthful delinquents, but occasionally they are involved in offenses in the company of both older and

younger siblings and with a parent; particularly in offenses involving shoplifting, bootlegging, thefts and handling of stolen property.[59]

TABLE 17

COMPARISON OF TRUANT AND NON-TRUANT IN RELATIONSHIP TO NUMBER OF COMPANIONS IN FIRST OFFENSE

	N	X	S.D.	t	Sign
Truant	33	1.909	1.466		
				1.654	.10
Non-Truant	67	1.403	1.426		

An analysis of the data was made to discover any significant difference between the student population of Lubbock by ethnic group and their representation in delinquent status.

The study revealed that a chi-square equal to 17.26 is significant at the .01 level with two degrees of freedom; that is, there is a significant difference between the three ethnic groups under study (Table 18).

Ethnic groups have been shown by many studies to have varying degrees of representation in delinquent status. This representation varies greatly with the type of communities

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[59]Minnis, Delinquency, p. 71.

in which the delinquents reside. Blacks in the United States, despite some improvements in socio-economic positions (which are reflected in variations in delinquency rates within the Black population), for many years have had high delinquency rates.

TABLE 18

STUDENT ETHNIC POPULATION IN LUBBOCK, TEXAS, AND THEIR REPRESENTATION IN DELINQUENT STATUS

	Expected	Observed
Anglo	63.44	48
Black	12.29	25
Chicano	24.06	27
$\chi^2 = 17.26$	DF = 2	$p < .01$

This study reflects the findings that the Blacks are over-represented in the study with 25 being observed, but only 12.29 being expected on the basis of their relative proportions in the school population.

The Chicanos are over-represented in the sample with 24.06 being expected and 27 being observed. This slight over-representation is not statistically significant.

On the other hand, it is important to note that the Anglo ethnic group is under-represented in our particular sample in relationship to the universe of the school population. It was expected that 63.44 Anglo students were in the sample, yet, we observed only 48.

It was not hypothesized but expected that the hours a truant spends away from school are spent in delinquent, deviant or anti-social behavior.

The data revealed that 26 truants of the 33 in this study committed some form of deviant behavior while truant from school (Table 19).

TABLE 19

TYPES OF OFFENSES COMMITTED WHILE TRUANT

	Types of Offenses Committed by Truant	Truant
01	Theft, Robbery	1
02	Assault	1
03	Auto Theft	3
04	Larceny	3
05	Drug Offense	2
06	Drunkenness	2
07	Burglary	5
08	Sex Offense	3
09	Runaway, Curfew	6
10	Truancy Only	7

We found that chi-square = 71.3 which is significant at the .01 level with one degree of freedom; that is, time of offense and truant-non-truant status are not independent. Therefore, there is a significant dependent relationship between the two variables and our hypothesis is supported (Table 20).

TABLE 20

OFFENSES COMMITTED DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Offense	Truant	Per Cent	Non-Truant	Per Cent
During school hours	26	78.8	0	0
Other than school hours	7	21.2	67	100
Total	33	100	67	100

$\chi^2 = 71.3$ DF = 1 P < .01

It is obvious that the non-truant are committing their offenses during the non-school hours, but it was significant to report that numerous offenses were committed by the truants during the school hours. Only 7 of the 33 delinquent truants committed the singular offense of truancy itself. As reported in Table 20, 78.8 per cent of the 33 delinquent truants committed a secondary offense while truant.

In comparing delinquency according to truancy and ethnic membership, we found that chi-square = 5.12, which is significant at the .10 level with two degrees of freedom; that is, ethnicity and truant-non-truant status are not independent, with the Chicano having the highest truancy rate. Therefore, there is a tendency toward a significant dependent relationship between the two variables (Table 21).

It is substantially important and statistically significant that the Chicano ethnic group had the highest

proportion, 39 per cent, in our truant sample. Of the 13 Chicanos in our truant sample, 7 were male and six were female.

TABLE 21

DELINQUENCY ACCORDING TO TRUANCY AND ETHNIC MEMBERSHIP

	Anglo	Black	Chicano
Truant	11	9	13
Non-Truant	37	16	14

$\chi^2 = 5.12$ DF = 2 P < .10

A comparison was made to see if there was a significant difference in the marital status of the natural parents of the truant and the non-truant. There were seven categories used in this comparison:

1. Parents Married and Living Togehter
2. Both Parents Deceased
3. Father Deceased
4. Mother Deceased
5. Parents Divorced or Legally Separated
6. Father Deserted Mother
7. Parents Not Married to Each Other

In summarizing the data in Table IV of the Appendix, it seems that the families of the youths who have been adjudicated "delinquent" have a highly unstable situation.

Only 41 per cent of the combined truant and non-truant in our study are living with parents who are married. Fifty-nine per cent of them have a family structure which is highly unstable.[60] Out of all the categories under observation, the category labeled "Parents Divorced or Legally Separated" has the highest incidence of instability. Thirty-two of the 100 truants and non-truants in our sample come from the category "Parents Divorced or Legally Separated." This is the most unstable situation in relationship to the marriage structure in the family.

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[60]This figure of 59 per cent seems to coincide with the Glueck's monumental study of 500 matched pairs of delinquents and non-delinquents where they discovered that 60.4 per cent of the truants came from unstable family structures.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS

While interesting and of great heuristic value, the distinction between the truant delinquent and the non-truant delinquent does not indicate different patterns of delinquency.

This researcher has attempted to measure difference from a number of points of view, from four hypothesized statements, and in the data of twenty-one tables.

From the evidence presented in this study, the following conclusions appear to be in order:

1. There seems to be an incidence of "School Phobia" among truants who appear to avoid school, not from dislike, but rather to avoid the frustration that the classroom presents.
2. The truant is not statistically differentiated from the non-truant delinquent on the basis of age, grade in school, mental capacity, grade in school at first offense, living arrangement of youth in own home, annual family income, or age at first offense.
3. The truant and the non-truant delinquent tend to have a significant number of their peer group with them when committing an offense.

4. The truant and the non-truant delinquent family tends to have incomes on the lower end of the economic scale.
5. The truant and the non-truant delinquent family tends to be unstable in relationship to the marriage structure.
6. The hours that a truant spends away from school are spent in delinquent, deviant, or anti-social behavior.

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APPENDIX

TABLE I

COMPARISON OF TRUANT AND NON-TRUANT
IN RELATIONSHIP TO GENDER

	Male	Female	Σ
Truant	16	17	33
Non-Truant	52	15	67

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION AND GENDER OF DELINQUENTS ACCORDING TO
TRUANCY AND RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION

Religious Denomination	Truant		Non-Truant		Σ
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Church of Christ	0	0	7	3	10
Baptist	9	6	15	10	40
Methodist	0	3	2	0	5
Catholic	5	6	8	1	20
Other	0	0	9	0	9
None	2	2	11	1	16
Sub-Total	16	17	52	15	100
Total	33		67		100

TABLE III

DISTRIBUTION OF DELINQUENTS ACCORDING TO TRUANCY AND LIVING ARRANGEMENT OF YOUTH IN OWN HOME

Living Arrangement	Truant	Non-Truant	Σ
With Both Parents	12	29	41
With Mother and Step-father	6	12	18
With Father and Step-mother	0	2	2
With Mother Only	12	20	32
With Father Only	2	0	2
In Home of Relatives	0	2	2
In Foster Family Home	1	2	3
Total	33	67	100

TABLE IV

DISTRIBUTION OF DELINQUENTS ACCORDING TO TRUANCY AND MARITAL STATUS OF NATURAL PARENTS

Marital Status of Natural Parents	Truant	Non-Truant	Σ
Parents Married and Living Together	12	29	41
Both Parents Deceased	0	2	2
Father Deceased	5	6	11
Mother Deceased	2	1	3
Parents Divorced or Legally Separated	11	21	32
Father Deserted Mother	2	4	6
Parents Not Married to Each Other	1	4	5
Total	33	67	100