

Lindenwood University

Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

Theses

Theses & Dissertations

2001

The Correlation Between Family Adaptability Scores and Adolescent Incarceration

Katherine P. Richard

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/theses>



Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

ABSTRACT

The Correlation Between Family Adaptability
Scores and Adolescent Incarceration

Katherine P. Richard, B.S. Communications
Lindenwood University

An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate
School of Lindenwood University in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts
2001

ABSTRACT

Adolescent crimes continue to climb in number and level of violence despite efforts to curtail them. Little research has been done on the impact of family interaction styles on adolescent crime. This study attempts to confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis that adolescents who are incarcerated are more likely to score their families as having a rigid family interaction style based on the FACES III adaptability scale than adolescents who are not incarcerated. The family adaptability scores of approximately 50 adolescents in a midwestern lock down facility were compared to those of approximately 50 students selected from a midwestern church and a public school where no adolescent family members have been incarcerated. Results of the study failed to confirm the hypothesis that adolescents who score their families as rigid on the adaptability scale were more likely to be incarcerated than adolescents who did not. Size restrictions and modified usage of test instrumentations limit generalizability of the results.

The Correlation Between Family Adaptability
Scores and Adolescent Incarceration

Katherine P. Richard, B.S. Communications
Lindenwood University

A Culminating Project Presented to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Lindenwood University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts 2001

COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF CANDIDACY:

Associate Professor Pam Nickels, Ed.D
Chair and Advisor

Assistant Professor Eddie Doerr, PhD.

Assistant Professor Anita Sankar

Table of Contents

List of Tables	vi
I. Introduction	1
Purpose of the Study	3
II. Literature Review	5
Legal Perspective	6
Psycho-social Perspective	9
Family Interaction Style	11
Research on Circumplex Model	14
III. Methods	19
Participants	19
Instruments	21
Procedures	25
Design and Data Analysis	26
IV. Results	27
V. Discussion	30
Limitations and Recommendations	31
Appendix A	36
Appendix B	37
References	38

List of Tables

Table 1	Demographic Characteristics of Incarcerated vs. Non-incarcerated Adolescents	21
Table 2	Group Adaptability Scores	27
Table 3	Results of t-Tests on Gender Differences in Adaptability Scores	28
Table 4	Crosstabulation of Adaptability Category by Incarceration Status	29

Chapter I

Introduction

Family interaction styles are being studied as new methods for addressing the growing problem of adolescent crime in the United States are being sought. School shootings by adolescents over the past few years are spurring efforts to identify adolescents at risk for criminal behavior and to find methods for prevention. While efforts have been primarily focused in the legal arena, more recently, research has identified social institutions (i.e., schools and families) as areas where opportunities exist for interaction aimed at prevention. Identifying the way family members interact with one another may provide an important predictor of adolescents at risk for socially maladaptive or criminal behavior.

Early studies of families have led researchers to refer to the way family members interact with one another as a family interaction style. A family interaction style has two dimensions including cohesion and adaptability (Masselam, Marcus, & Stunkard, 1990, p.725, 726; Ritchie, 1991). The cohesion dimension measures the emotional bonding family members feel toward one another. The adaptability dimension measures the ability of a family system to change its

power structure. These dimensions have been used in recent research to further examine family interactions.

Using the cohesion and adaptability dimensions, Olson, Russel, and Sprenkle developed a more current model to study families known as the Circumplex model. According to the Circumplex model, cohesion measures the emotional bonding on a continuum of disengaged, separated, connected, and enmeshed. Similarly, the adaptability dimension measures the ability of a family system to change its power structure based on four patterns of interaction including rigid, structured, flexible, and chaotic. According to the Circumplex model, the mid-range levels for both the cohesion and adaptability dimensions represent the preferred range of family behaviors (Masselam, Marcus, & Stunkard, 1990, p.725).

While the Circumplex model studied the two dimensions of cohesion and adaptability, recent research suggests that the single dimension of adaptability may be positively related to delinquent adolescent behavior (Ritchie, 1991, p.762, 563). This single dimension provides a possible link between the category of family interaction style and adolescent crime. Similarly, this study focuses on the single dimension of adaptability as measured by the FACES III,

as an indicator of potential criminal adolescent behavior.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to confirm or disconfirm that adolescents who are incarcerated are more likely to score their families as rigid or low on the adaptability scale than adolescents who are not incarcerated. Much has been made of the high or chaotic end of the scale with its lack of rules. While the chaotic category is perceived as a negative influence on adolescent behavior, little research is reported on the rigid end of the scale (Smith, Mullis, Kern, and Brack, 1999). The rationale for this study is that adaptability measures flexibility of a family. This adaptability is necessary for the adolescent's developmental goal of independence. The inability of a rigid family structure to adapt to the adolescent's need for greater self-control of her/his environment requires the adolescent to more strongly reject the family and its norms in her/his struggle to achieve the developmental goal of independence during adolescence.

This is a comparative study designed to measure the family adaptability scores obtained on the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales III (FACES III) as perceived by one member of a family. Two differing populations were compared: families with

incarcerated adolescents and families where no adolescents have been incarcerated. The use of a score obtained from only one member of a family, the adolescent, while not the norm, follows the systems theory postulate that "each viewer creates his/her own reality and for whom that reality is his/her own truth ... nor that any account is more accurate than that of another" (Becvar & Becvar, 1996, p.9). The adolescent's family's adaptability score is the focus of the study as it is this perception of adaptability which influences behavior. Extremely low or high family adaptability scores may identify at-risk adolescents and indicate a need for counseling as an early intervention technique in curtailing adolescent crime.

Families with incarcerated adolescents are operationally defined as a family unit, with either a single parent, or two parents where one or more children previously residing in the home is currently in a lock-down facility. Families with adolescents who have not been incarcerated are operationally defined as a family unit with either a single parent, or two parents where no children currently residing or previously residing in the home have ever been in a lock-down facility determined by the responding adolescent's self report.

Chapter II

Literature Review

A review of the literature has shown there are two main areas of research in adolescent crime, the legal and the psycho-social. Historically, the legal arena has been the focus of efforts to reduce juvenile crime. However, research has shown that juvenile or adolescent crime has continued to increase despite legal measures to decrease it (Little Hoover Commission, 1994). Consequently, current efforts are being directed toward researching adolescent crime within the psycho-social area. Dr. Laurence Steinberg, Ph.D., the Distinguished Professor of Psychology at Temple University in Philadelphia and Past President of the Society for Research on Adolescence, the largest organization of social scientists interested in adolescent behavior and development, presented his report addressing adolescent criminal behavior from a psycho-social perspective to the U.S. House of Representatives. In his report, Dr. Steinberg's psycho-social research has indicated that juvenile crime overall has been increasing and arrests will more than double by the year 2010 (Steinberg, No Date). Therefore, in order to fully understand the complexity of adolescent criminal behavior, it is necessary to review both the historical legal

perspective as well as the current psycho-social research.

Legal Perspective

Historically the legal arena has received the greatest attention and funding for the prevention of adolescent crime. However, controversy has existed for several areas within the legal arena including the definition and identification of adolescent offenders, incarceration, intervention methods, and funding of programs.

The allocation of funding and resources has depended upon the definition and identification of adolescent crime. However, there has been wide ranging differences among the legal systems in various states as to what constitutes juvenile crime and how an adolescent is determined to be a juvenile offender (Cole, 1986). The main controversy in defining juvenile offenders has been with grouping runaways and school truants with those who commit violent crimes and then designating them all as juvenile offenders. This has made identifying potentially violent juvenile offenders as a group a complex task within the legal framework (Cole, 1986). Despite efforts to identify a common definition of a juvenile offender, no definition has been universally accepted within the legal arena.

Despite the differences in determining what constitutes a juvenile offender, the juvenile legal system has placed its emphasis on the treatment and prevention on incarceration and intervention by the states (Little Hoover Commission, 1994). However, incarceration and intervention methods have also occasioned controversy within the legal systems of various states. For example, in an effort to deter juvenile crime, recent decisions in Virginia have allowed judges to sentence juveniles as adults if the offender does not successfully complete a juvenile program (Gilmore, 1994). Conversely, Florida has contemplated returning to its juvenile system following a recent study that concluded that juveniles who were sentenced as adults have committed more crimes upon release than juveniles kept in the juvenile systems (Gest & Pope, 1996). Thus the research has indicated that current practices and methods within the legal arena may vary from state to state. At this time, the research has not identified one method as being more successful than another.

Despite the controversies with definitions and incarceration and intervention methods, the literature has indicated generalized agreement on a lack of funding to address juvenile crime. Yet, virtually billions of dollars have been spent in efforts to

curtail juvenile crime. The budget for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the coordinator for the Federal response to juvenile crime, has reached \$144 million (Roberts, 1999). Additional funds have been expended at the state and local levels. A report from the office of the governor of California has shown an expenditure of approximately \$1 billion to fight juvenile crime in 1992-1993 in California alone (The Report Part VI, 1995). Still it has been reported that the continued increase in juvenile crime and the efforts to curtail it have shown few programs within the legal arena demonstrating a statistical record of success and suggest that the problems have been ignored until it was too late (Gest & Pope, 1996).

Recently, emphasis in the legal system has expanded to organizations outside the legal system. While maintaining the major emphasis on legal remedies, areas in the psycho-social realm have been included. Other causes of juvenile crime, i.e., poverty, and non-traditional families have been cited, and alternative directions have been advanced for reduction of juvenile crimes. In a personal interview in November, 1999, Don Pokorny, Program Administrator, Bellefontaine Division of Youth Services for the State of Missouri, an integral part of the legal system, has identified group

counseling of the incarcerated youth, along with education as important elements of rehabilitation. California's 1994 Little Hoover Report, the result of a seven month study, has noted

the root causes of [juvenile] crime were many and diverse [and that] any hope of addressing those causes successfully required multi-faceted strategies, bits and pieces of which could be implemented by neighborhoods, communities and various levels of government. [They specifically noted] partnerships with schools to improve education and mentoring roles with at-risk children to providing opportunities through programs such as the Free Venture enterprises in California Youth Authority facilities and creating targeted hiring practices (Little Hoover Commission, 1994).

The 1994 Little Hoover report also noted the failure of families, the rejection by parents of the concept of behavioral consequences for children, the lack of decision making skills and the need for values education as areas of concern in juvenile crime. Thus, it has been determined that the legal arena alone cannot provide a solution to the problem of increasing juvenile crime. It has been recommended that elements of psycho-social education be considered when researching methods to curtail adolescent crime.

Psycho-social Perspective

The legal area has been instrumental in bringing psycho-social research more directly into the arena of juvenile crime. Thus, the second main area of research for curtailing juvenile crime is the psycho-social

realm. As the focus has shifted to the psycho-social perspective, the family and influences on the family have gained importance as areas for study in curtailing juvenile crime. Dr. Steinberg in his statement to U.S. House of Representatives while speaking specifically of youth violence has noted

that [while] there has been no single cause of youth violence, when there has been a common factor that cuts across different cases, it is usually some type of family dysfunction (Steinberg, L. No Date).

He has further noted his belief that there has been no stronger influence on the anti-social behavior of adolescents than the family. Dr. Steinberg has connected parental aggression, hostility and disengagement to adolescent antisocial behavior. He further noted that children who are exposed to violence and hostility in the home are more inclined to use violence as their problem solving method. Dr. Steinberg has further stated there is evidence to suggest violence committed in the home is carried from one generation to the next. He also indicated that there is evidence, although scarce due to limited research, that there may be a connection between experiences in the family and brain development. Of particular note in brain development are family experiences of alcohol abuse and neglect. He has also cited family and parental influences as potentiating

problems in emotional control, school behavior and an inability to appropriately interact with peers resulting in inappropriate or antisocial behavior (Steinberg, No Date).

Families, family influences, behavior, the concept of behavioral consequences and values education have been the subjects of continuing research. Early psycho-social research on families was directed toward family communication and interaction styles (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1997) suggest that although the research identified the media and other socializing influences, (i.e., peer groups, and social institutions) on adolescents, it has clearly shown that the family has been the primary socializing influence on children. The research also demonstrated that the passing on of society's values, and the family's ability to socialize children, have relied on families communicating family norms, or values. These norms are passed on through the way family members interact with one another. The way in which family members interact has been categorized as a family interaction style.

Family Interaction Style

A review of the research has identified two interaction styles. While agreeing there are two interaction styles, researchers disagree on what they

measure. In the early work by Ritchie, two dimensions of family interaction styles were identified. These included (i) socio-orientation in which parent-offspring interactions have been governed by parental supportiveness, and (ii) concept orientation in which parent-offspring interactions have been governed by parental assertion of power and control (Ritchie, 1991; Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1990; Clark & Shields, 1997; Newman & Newman, 1995).

In the early 1960's, Chaffee et al. (as cited in Ritchie, 1991) refined the original research on the family interaction style. They reassigned or reversed the earlier definitions of the socio-orientation and concept orientation dimensions. Their research found that the socio-orientation measured parent-offspring interactions which have been governed by parental assertion of power and control. In addition, they found that concept orientation measured parent-offspring interactions which have been governed by parental supportiveness of the offspring's autonomy (Ritchie, 1991). More recent research has relied on this reassignment of definitions of the dimensions of family interaction style.

Another refinement of the original research led to the development of Olson et al.'s Circumplex model. In this model the family interaction style was also

characterized as having two dimensions. Olson et al. agreed with the new dimensions of family interaction style of Chaffee et al. However, they referred to the two dimensions as

cohesion - the emotional bonding family members feel toward one another ... measured along a four-level continuum: disengaged, separated, connected and enmeshed ... [and]

adaptability - defined as the ability of a family system to change its power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress. The four patterns of interactions of adaptability are rigid, structured, flexible, and chaotic. (Masselam, Marcus, & Stunkard, 1990, p.725, 726)

In addition, the Circumplex model also included the communication dimension as a third component. The communication dimension represents the way family members communicate with one another with the goal being open and unproblematic communication between family members (Masselam et al., 1990). This type of communication pattern is considered to be conducive to healthy family dynamics. Using the three main dimensions of cohesion, adaptability and communication, the Circumplex model recategorized concepts previously used by theorists to describe family dynamics (Masselam et al., 1990). Although research spanning more than 20 years identified these three dimensions of the Circumplex model as vital to obtaining a comprehensive view of family dynamics, recent research has focused on just the two dimensions of cohesion and adaptability.

Research on Circumplex Model

The dimensions of cohesion and adaptability have been used to study the effect of family dynamics on school success, aggression in adolescents, and adolescent moral thought. Research studies indicated a link between lack of school success and anti-social or criminal juvenile behavior (Steinberg, L. No Date). Research on school success has shown a link between lack of school success and cohesion and adaptability (Masselam, Marcus and Stunkard, 1990). In the study by Masselam et al. two groups of families with adolescents were compared. One family had an adolescent in public school and one family had an adolescent who had failed in public school and had been attending alternative school. The study showed that families of the students attending public school had more scores in the balanced range of cohesion and adaptability, as measured by FACES III, than families of students in the alternative school setting. The results from the scores confirmed that there are differences in adaptability and cohesion scores between the two family samples. The research also indicated that the family cohesion score was a more reliable predictor of school success than the family adaptability score. However, the authors recommended that the adolescents' adaptability score be given strong consideration. They have noted that

family adaptability scores may have been affected by adolescents in the family being more willing to admit failure on the adaptability dimension than their parents, while the parents may have placed the blame for the failure on the adolescent rather than the family unit. The authors noted that the adolescents' adaptability scores did differentiate between the groups and that it was the adolescents' perceptions that were critical to predicting school success.

Other studies of family interaction style and school success included a study by Harleen Vickers published in 1994 which focused on the role of family cohesion and adaptability on school success using Olson, Russel, and Sprenkle's Circumplex model (Vickers, 1994). Vickers noted that cohesion and adaptability were curvilinear variables which suggested that either too much or too little was detrimental for optimum family functioning. Vickers once again confirmed that the mid-ranges on the dimensions of cohesion and adaptability identified families more likely to experience school success. Vickers has found that families who scored at either end of the cohesion and adaptability dimensions were more at risk for lack of school success than those who scored in the mid-range. Vickers work suggested once again that cohesion and adaptabilty provide predictors of school success.

Vickers further noted that adolescents who were successful in school were less likely to participate in juvenile crime (Vickers, 1994).

In addition to research on school success, research on family interaction style using cohesion and adaptability scores has also focused on moral thought among adolescents. Studies reported by Fiona A. White (2000) have suggested a correlation between high family adaptability and less reliance on the family as the source for moral thought among adolescents. She further found that adolescents who have rated their families on cohesion as very connected have identified their families as the primary source of moral thought with less emphasis on outside influences. While no direct connection between moral thought and juvenile crime was established by White's study, White established a strong connection between moral thought and social actions.

The final area of research on the family interaction style using cohesion and adaptability scores was aggression. Although research has indicated a correlation between cohesion and adaptability with school success and moral thought, only cohesion was found to be related to aggression in adolescents. Smith et al. (1999), in a study investigating the etiology of aggression in adolescents found no

correlation between adaptability and aggression. Their research did find a correlation between cohesion and aggression. The research sample was a group of adolescents involved in the legal system for assaultive crimes. Using the family interaction dimensions of cohesion and adaptability along with other factors, i.e., parental rejection, trait anger and anxiety they noted that "verbally and physically aggressive adolescents [were] likely to live in disengaged families" (Smith et al, 1999, page 145). The authors have suggested further research using both adjudicated adolescents and adolescents not involved in the juvenile legal system to further study juvenile crime.

Another study focusing on aggression was carried by the Journal of Counseling and Development (Summer 2000). This study by Espelage, Bosworth and Simon (2000) focused on a subset of aggression, bullying, in the middle school. The research results identified the family, once again, as the single most important factor in adolescent behavior. Data was collected from a large middle school (sixth, seventh, and eighth graders) in a large midwestern, economically diverse, metropolitan area. The authors of the study noted that peer relations, a commonly recognized strong influence among adolescents, were a very strong factor in influencing the adolescent toward bullying behavior.

Yet the authors found that even peer relations failed to "mediate" the influence of the family (Espelage, Bosworth & Simon, 2000, p 333). Therefore, family interactions remain a critical area for study.

As the literature has shown, school success, moral thought and aggression have been identified as key areas in research on family interaction style and juvenile crime. The literature has also shown that cohesion and adaptability have emerged as the two major dimensions of family interaction. Although studies have indicated a link between the dimensions of cohesion and adaptability and juvenile crime, research in this area has been limited. Little research has focused specifically on the dimension of adaptability and adolescent criminal behavior. Yet emphasis has been placed on further investigation of the adaptability scores as they represent the adolescents' perspective. It has been suggested by the research that it is possible this perspective in particular could provide an important predictor in the identification of adolescents at risk for juvenile criminal behavior.

Chapter III

Methods

This study was designed to investigate the hypothesis that a rigid, family adaptability score as determined by FACES III, is more prevalent in a group of incarcerated adolescents than in a comparable group of non-incarcerated adolescents. The adaptability scores, as measured by FACES III, of two sample groups of adolescents were compared in this study. The first set of adaptability scores was obtained from a sample group of 67 adolescents ranging in age from 13 to 18 years of age residing in a large midwestern, suburban area lock-down facility. Their scores were compared with the adaptability scores of 51 adolescents ranging from 13 to 18 years of age who have not been incarcerated and who attended a large suburban midwestern area high school and/or a large suburban midwestern church.

Participants

Two sample groups representing differing adolescents, incarcerated or non-incarcerated, were included in the study. Convenience sampling was used to identify both samples. One group of subjects consisted of the entire population of adolescents (n=67) of a lock-down facility with which the author of the study had a contact. Similarly, the second group

of subjects, non-incarcerated, came from a school (n=26) and church (n=25) where the researcher had contacts and where the demographical profile of the subjects were also similar. All three sites were located in and served a large midwestern suburban population. It should be noted that of three school districts and four churches contacted, only one teacher in one school district and one church administrator were willing to have adolescents participate in the study. The population from which the incarcerated sample was drawn was approximately 49% Caucasian, 49% Afro-American and 2% other according to the administrator in charge of the facility. The population from which the non-incarcerated sample was drawn was also approximately 49% Caucasian, 49% Afro-American and 2% other according to the teacher and administrator of the two (2) sites from which adolescents were sampled. The combined total of both sample groups was 118 adolescents.

Of the incarcerated sample 70% were male (n=47) and 30% were female (n=20). Ages ranged from 13 years to 18 years with a mean of 15.5 years of age. Permission to participate was based on facility management compliance procedures. Completion of the FACES III questionnaire was voluntary.

Student volunteers returning signed parental permission forms, see Appendix 1, comprised the non-incarcerated sample. In the non-incarcerated sample 35% were male (n=18) and 65% were female (n=33). Ages in the non-incarcerated sample also ranged from 13 years to 18 years with a mean of 15.5 years of age.

Demographic Characteristics
of Incarcerated vs. Non-incarcerated Adolescents

Table 1

Demographic Variable		Incarcerated		Non-incarcerated	
		f	%	f	%
Gender	Male	47	70	18	35
	Female	20	30	33	65
Age	13	6	8.96	7	13.73
	14	7	10.44	3	5.88
	15	16	23.88	6	11.76
	16	32	47.76	11	21.57
	17	7	10.44	18	35.29
	18	0	0	5	9.80

Instruments

A modified Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES III) was used to measure family adaptability scores (Olson, 1985). The modification to the form was made by this researcher to obtain minimal personal information from the participants. The modifications to the questionnaire included the use of a statement at the top of the form to identify whether any adolescent in the family had been incarcerated with

a coded response of 1 for yes and 2 for no. In addition an age block and gender block were added (see Appendix II). These additions did not change the content of the questionnaire. The 20 questions on the scale measure cohesion and adaptability. All 20 questions were given and even numbered items summed to obtain the adaptability score. Odd numbered items were summed to obtain the cohesion score. There are no requirement for special skills or training to administer the questionnaire (Olson, 1985) nor were there requirements related to the setting. FACES III has been normed for three groups, adults, families with adolescents and young couples. Adults in the range of 10 to 34 on the cohesion scale, and families with adolescents in the range of 10 to 31 along with young couples in the range of 10 to 36 are categorized as disengaged. The cohesion scale categorizes adults in the 35 to 40 range, families with adolescents in the 32 to 37 range, and young couples in the 37 to 42 range as separated. The cohesion scale categorizes adults in the 41 to 45 range, families with adolescents in the 38 to 43 range, and young couples in the 43 to 46 range as connected. Lastly, the cohesion scale categorizes adults in the 46 to 50 range, families with adolescents in the 44 to 50 range, and young couples in the 47 to 50 range as enmeshed. There are also four (4)

categories on the adaptability scale. The categories are rigid, structured, flexible and chaotic. Adults in the 10 to 19 range are categorized as rigid, families with adolescents in the 10 to 19 range, and young couples in the 10 to 21 range are categorized as rigid. Adults in the 20 to 24 range, families with adolescents in the 20 to 24 range, and young couples in the 22 to 26 range are categorized as structured. Adults in the 25 to 28 range, families with adolescents in the 25 to 29 range, and young couples in the 27 to 30 range are categorized as flexible. Lastly on the adaptability scale, adults in the 29 to 50 range, families in the 30 to 50 range, and young couples in the 31 to 50 range are categorized as chaotic.

While FACES III has been normed for the three groups, adults, young couples and families with adolescents, for the purposes of this study only the norms for families with adolescents were of interest. The norms for families with adolescents on FACES III ($n = 1315$) for the year 1983 show a mean of 37.1 for the cohesion dimension with a standard deviation of 6.1, and a mean of 24.3 for the adaptability dimension with a standard deviation of 4.8. The norms show that approximately 34% of families with adolescents scored in the extreme areas on the cohesion scale with 19% in the disengaged range and 15% in the enmeshed range.

The remaining 66% scored in the more desirable balanced ranges of separated and enmeshed. Norms in the balanced ranges show 30% of the families with adolescents were in the separated range, leaving 36% in the connected range. The adaptability norms show 30% in the extreme ranges with 16% in the rigid range and 14% in the chaotic range. The norms in the more desirable structured and flexible ranges are 37% and 33% respectively.

It is reported that FACES III has good face validity but test-retest data are not available. FACES III has only fair internal consistency with an overall alpha of .68 (Olson, 1985). Although the internal consistency is only fair, it remains widely used in research for measuring cohesion and adaptability

No attempt was made to include parents or other siblings in obtaining the adaptability and cohesion scores. While past research using FACES III as the test instrument included parents' and siblings' reports to determine a family score (Masselam, Marcus & Stunkard, 1990), more recent research emphasizes the importance of the individual scores. The individual scores as well as differences between sub-sets of family scores have been found to be of interest. In addition, individual adaptability and cohesion scores

have also been suggested as a future research area for studying the family (Farrell & Barnes, 1993).

Procedures

The author of this study, accompanied by an administrator from the lockdown facility, distributed the modified FACES III questionnaire to incarcerated adolescents in either their classroom or living quarters. The adolescents received verbal encouragement to participate from their administrator. No reward was given. Each adolescent completed the questionnaire at that time and returned it to either the administrator or directly to the author of this study. Although no time limits were given all, questionnaires were expected to be completed while the author was present. The time required for completion of the test ranged from approximately 15 to 20 minutes. The questionnaires were collected by the author upon completion.

The non-incarcerated adolescents received a copy of the modified FACES III questionnaire from either their high school teacher or their church Sunday School teacher. Unlike the incarcerated sample, students were given the questionnaire by the teachers and allowed to keep them for later completion. Some questionnaires were completed at home. The high school students were motivated by an offer of extra credit for all returned

questionnaires. All responses were returned to the teacher and forwarded to the researcher. Those questionnaires indicating that adolescents in the family had been or were presently incarcerated were eliminated from this group. Although a possibility exists that more than one (1) subject from a single family could be included no effort was made to identify families with more than one adolescent responding.

Design and Data Analysis

This was a causal comparative study to investigate whether incarceration or non-incarceration of an adolescent is related to adaptability scores. Data analysis comparing the dependent variable, adaptability, between the incarcerated and non-incarcerated sample involved using a t-test.

Chapter IV

Results

The hypothesis that a rigid, family adaptability score as determined by FACES III, is more prevalent in a group of incarcerated adolescents than in a comparable group of non-incarcerated adolescents was not supported by the data. Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation on adaptability for the incarcerated and nonincarcerated groups. The means for both groups are very high compared to the normed mean of 24.3 for adaptability. It is evident that both groups fall into the chaotic range. As Table 2 indicates, the results of the t-test show that the mean adaptability scores of both groups did not differ significantly ($t=-.822$, $p=.413$).

Table 2

Group Adaptability Scores

Incar.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t
Yes	67	31.75	8.46	1.03
No	51	32.96	7.22	1.01

Due to the gender imbalance in the two groups, with more males in the incarcerated group and more females in the nonincarcerated group, t-tests were run to check for gender effect. The results suggest that there was no significant gender difference in

adaptability scores ($t=-.619$, $p=.537$) see Table 3. Therefore, the gender of the adolescent was not an extraneous variable that significantly affected the outcome of the data analysis.

Table 3
Results of t-Tests on Gender Differences
in Adaptability Scores

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t
Male	65	31.86	7.84	-.619
Female	53	32.77	8.10	

The crosstabulation of the adaptability categories with incarceration status led to an interesting finding. The crosstabulation showed that 73% of the responding adolescents who scored their families as rigid were, in fact, incarcerated. It is also interesting to note that of the 118 total subjects, 81 or 68.6% scored their families as chaotic. However, due to the low numbers in each cell caution must be observed in interpreting this information, see Table 4.

Table 4
Crosstabulation of Adaptability Category
by Incarceration Status

Adapt. Category	Incar. f	Not Incar. f	Category % Incar.	Total
Rigid	8	3	73	11
Structrd	8	4	67	12
Flexible	6	8	43	14
Chaotic	45	36	56	81
Total	67	51		118

Chapter V

Discussion

The data does not confirm the hypothesis that adolescents who are incarcerated are more likely to have low adaptability scores than nonincarcerated adolescents. The adaptability scores of the two groups, families with incarcerated adolescents or families where no adolescents have been incarcerated, do not differ significantly. Although not confirming the hypothesis, the results of this study provide some interesting findings.

The results of this study are consistent with earlier research which suggests that adaptability scores may be unreliable for predicting adolescent involvement in crime (Masselam, Marcus, & Stunkard, 1990). Recommendations from this earlier research were to investigate a possible correlation between the adolescents' adaptability scores and juvenile crime. Using this approach in the current study, the results indicate adaptability scores collected from only the adolescent cannot identify adolescents at risk for incarceration. Thus, the results of this study suggest that restricting the source of the adaptability score to the adolescent in the family provides no more or less predictive value than using all family members. The overall results did not correlate adaptability

scores with adolescents at risk for juvenile crime and incarceration.

Another interesting finding in this study is that no significant gender differences are found between the adaptability scores of males and females for either the incarcerated or non-incarcerated populations. This is in contrast to earlier studies including one by Ritchie which demonstrated a correlation between a rigid family and aggression in males (Ritchie, 1991). Based on these studies one could expect to find more adolescents in the incarcerated sample to report a rigid family structure. However, this was not found to be the case in the current study. Instead most of the incarcerated sample reported a chaotic family structure. However, they did not differ from the nonincarcerated adolescents in this respect. FACES III is limited in predicting which adolescents are at risk for criminal behavior.

Limitations and Recommendations

In addition to the findings of the current study, analysis of the scores of incarcerated and non-incarcerated adolescents in each range on the adaptability scale reflects some interesting trends. Although caution must be adopted due to this study's limitation of low sample numbers, the trends remain of interest. The data show that most adolescents in the

study, incarcerated or not, view their families as out of the more optimal functioning middle ranges on FACES III. The data show 69% view their families as chaotic while 9% view their families as rigid. According to this data, only 22% of all the adolescents surveyed identify their families as in a healthily functioning family situation. In this study there is a close similarity in adaptability between the two sample groups with the majority describing their families as chaotic. This differs from a study by Masselam, Marcus and Stunkard (1990). In the Masselam et al. study adaptability differentiated between two sample groups of adolescents (those successful in the public school system and those not successful in the public school system and considered at risk for juvenile crime). In the current study only 3 percentage points separate the two groups. The data indicate that 67% of the incarcerated adolescents and 70% of the non-incarcerated adolescents scored their families as chaotic. As both groups score their families similarly, this suggests that a factor other than adaptability may be reflected in the scores. Family adaptability may not be an issue for the incarcerated adolescent.

That an incarcerated adolescent views his family as outside the more desirable or balanced (healthily

functioning family) mid-range scores according to this data is not an unanticipated outcome. Since the family is the primary socializing influence (Steinberg, No Date), a poorly functioning, i.e., dysfunctional family, would not be expected to adequately socialize the children. Thus the adolescent could be expected to have difficulty with society's rules and likely end up involved in the legal system which enforces society's rules. Yet the higher percentage of the incarcerated adolescents who view their families as chaotic, 67%, is a surprising outcome. One could surmise that an adolescent whose family structure lacks rules, or is chaotic, would have less to rebel against than the incarcerated adolescent from a rigid family structure. Yet the data show the reverse to be the case.

Other factors that might explain the high adaptability score include the developmental stage and outside influences. In this stage of development, puberty and adolescent, adolescents are expected to rebel against family norms in their struggle for independence. This normal rebellion may be reflected in the adolescents' adaptability results. It is also of interest to note that other research has questioned whether an adolescent's behavior is a result of a family's adaptability style or a causal factor (Masselam, Marcus and Stunkard, 1990). In addition,

while no attempt was made to collect family work and leisure data, it can be noted that many families have unprecedented outside influences and demands on their time in today's society. This leaves little time for participation in family activities and perhaps leads adolescents to score their families as chaotic. In addition, the growing popularity and availability of non-school related sports activities adds to the decline in family time. As growing family incomes provide the resources, participation in extracurricular sports for children and adolescents limits family home time. Adolescents' part-time jobs also compete for family togetherness and interaction. It is possible that as families become more affluent and try to provide more opportunities for their children, they are unwittingly depriving them of one of their most important resources, the family. In addition, as adolescents spend more time outside of the family influence, they may perceive a lack of family structure and rules.

There is little research on family adaptability scores and the impact of family adaptability on adolescent behavior. Still, family adaptability remains an area of interest. More research in this area is needed to either confirm a correlation between adolescent criminal behavior and adaptability or

establish that there is none. The confirmation of a relationship between adolescent incarceration and family adaptability scores could provide a tool to predict adolescents in at risk for possible criminal behavior. Identification of at-risk adolescents and their families could provide an opportunity for intervention. Counseling is one intervention method that has been shown to have a positive impact on families. Thus counseling directed toward improving family adaptability may be an early intervention method to reduce adolescent crime.

Appendix A
Permission Notice

Permission is requested for your child to participate in a family style and communications survey. It has been shown that families and family members have different styles and methods of communicating with one another. The goal of this survey is to determine the family communication style as perceived by the adolescent family members.

The identity of each individual and family will be anonymous. This signed permission sheet will be detached from the survey prior to completion of the survey by the adolescent and stacked separately from the completed survey. The researcher will collect both permission slips and completed surveys. permission sheets and surveys will be shuffled to eliminate any possibility of reassembly. Survey sheets will not be accepted unless the adolescent has turned in a signed permission sheet.

A copy of the survey is included so that you are aware of the survey contents and limited biographical data used to differentiate and tally results. The survey will be filled out and collected at school. This survey is being conducted by a graduate student for a Masters thesis and your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Permission is granted for my child: Name _____
to participate in the Family Communications Survey.

Signed: Parent or Guardian _____ Date _____

Appendix B

Biographical Data: Circle your personal information

Gender: Male Female Age: 13 14 15 16 17 18

An adolescent in your immediate family, either yourself or a sibling, has been in a disciplinary lockdown facility longer than overnight:

1 = Yes 2 = No

FACES-III

Please use the following scale to answer the questions:

1 = Almost never	4 = Frequently
2 = Once in a while	5 = Almost Always
3 = Sometimes	

DESCRIBE YOUR FAMILY NOW:

1. Family members ask each other for help.
2. In solving problems, the children's suggestions are followed.
3. We approve of each other's friends.
4. Children have a say in their discipline.
5. We like to do things with just immediate family.
6. Different persons act as leaders in our family.
7. Family members feel closer to other family members than to people outside the family.
8. Our family changes its way of handling tasks.
9. Family members like to spend free time with each other.
10. Parent(s) and children discuss punishment together.
11. Family members feel very close to each other.
12. The children make the decisions in our family.
13. When our family gets together for activities, everybody is present.
14. Rules change in our family.
15. We can easily think of things to do together as a family.
16. We shift household responsibilities from person to person.
17. Family members consult other family members on their decisions.
18. It is hard to identify the leader(s) in our family.
19. Family togetherness is very important.
20. It is hard to tell who does which household chores.

References

Bakken, L. & Romig C. (1994). The relationship of perceived family dynamics to adolescents' principled moral reasoning. Journal of Adolescent Research, 9 (4), 442-458. Available: More.net, MasterFILE Elite, ISSN: 0743-5584/Item number: 9703270545.

Clark, R. D., & Shields, G. (1997). Family communication and delinquency. Adolescence, 32, 81-92.

Corcoran, K., & Fischer, J. (1987). Measures for clinical practice: A sourcebook. London: Collier Macmillan Publishers.

Espelage, D. L., Bosworth, K., & Simon, T. R. (2000). Examining the social context of bullying behaviors in early adolescence. Journal of Counseling Development, 78, 326-333.

Fitzpatrick, M. A., Marshall, L. J., Leutwiler, T. J., & Krcmar, M. (1996). The effect of family communication environments on children's social behavior during middle childhood. Communication Research, 23, 379-406.

Fitzpatrick, M. A., & Ritchie, L. D. (1994). Communication schemata within the family: Multiple perspectives on family interaction. Human Communication Research, 20, 275-300.

Fitzpatrick, M. A., & Ritchie, L. D. (1990). Family communication patterns: Measuring intrapersonal perceptions of interpersonal relationships. Communication Research, 17, 523-544.

Garbarino, J., Sebes, J. & Schellenbach, C. (1984) Families at risk for destructive parent-child relations in adolescence. Child Development, 55, 174-183.

Gest, T, & Pope, V. (March 25, 1996). Cover Story: Crime Time Bomb. USNews [On Line] Available: www.usnews/issue/crime.

Gilmore, J. (October 1994). Remarks by Governor Jim Gilmore: Governor's Crime Forum Commonwealth of Virginia Press Office.

Greenwald, D. F. (1990). Family interaction and child outcome in a high-risk sample. Psychological Reports, 66, 675-688.

Kashani, J. A. H., Canfield, L. A., Soltys, S. M. & Reid, J. C. (1995). Psychiatric inpatient children's family perceptions and anger expression. Journal of Emotional & Behavioral Disorders, 3 (1), 13-25.

Available: More.net, MasterFILE Elite, ISSN 1063-4266/Item number 9503012452.

Kuhl, J., Jarkon-Horlick, L., & Morrissey, R. F. (1997). Measuring barriers to help-seeking behavior in adolescents. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 26, 637-689.

Little Hoover Commission (1994), The juvenile crime challenge: Making prevention a priority. State of California, Report #127 [Online]. Available: www.lhc.ca.gov/lhcdir/127rp.html.

Masselam, V. S., Marcus, R. F., & Stunkard, C. L. (1990). Parent-adolescent communication, family functioning, and school performance. Adolescence, XXV, 725-737.

Nash, J. M. (1997, February 3). Fertile Minds. Time, 49-56.

NBC News April 1999 (Columbine Shooting) May, 2000.

Olson, D. H. (1985). FACES III, St. Paul, Minnesota: University of Minnesota, Family Social Science Department.

Olson, D. H. (1999). Circumplex model of marital & family systems. Special edition of the Journal of Family Therapy. Available: W3C//DTD3.2FINAL/EN ISO-8859-1.

Olson, D. H., Portner, J., & Lavee, Y. (1985). Family adaptability and cohesion evaluation scales. St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota, Department of Family Social Science.

Pine, J. M. (1995). Variation in vocabulary development as a function of birth order. Child Development, 66, 272-281.

Rathunde, K. (1997). Parent-adolescent interaction and optimal experience. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 26, 639-389.

Ritchie, L. D. (1991). Family Communication Patterns: An epistemic analysis and conceptual reinterpretation. Communication Research, 18, 548-565.

Ritchie, L. D. (1997). Parents' workplace experiences and family communication patterns. Communication Research, 24, 175-187.

Roberts, (June, 1999). Available: (<http://www.tenet.cc.utexas.edu/minigrants/roberts/cx-aclu.html>).

Simons, R. L., Whitbeck, L. B., Conger, R. D., & Conger, K. J., (1991). Parenting factors, social skills, and value commitments as precursors to school failure, involvement with deviant peers, and delinquent behavior. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 20, 645-664.

Smith, S., Mullis, F., Kern, R. M., & Brack, G. (1999). An Adlerian model for the etiology of aggression in adjudicated adolescents. Family Journal, 7 (2), 135-161. Available: More.net, MasterFILE Elite, ISSN: 1066-4807/Item number: 2527004.

Steinberg, L. (No date). Youth violence: Do parents and families make a difference? Working Group Report (online). Available: www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles/jr00243.txt.

The report Part VI ...1995 Juvenile Crime--Outlook for California Part I. How much does juvenile crime cost? [Online]. Available: www.lao.ca.gov/laokkktoc.html.

Thomas, V. & Olson, D. H. (1994). Circumplex model of marital & family systems. Family Journal, 2 (1), 36-45. Available: More.net, MasterFILE Elite, ISSN 1066-4807/Item number 9702280648.

Tims, A. R., & Masland, J. L. (1985). Measurement of family communication patterns. Communication Research, 12, 35-57.

Vickers, H. S. (1994). Young children at risk: Differences in family functioning. Journal of Educational Research, 87 (5), 262-271. Available: More.net, MasterFILE Elite, ISSN: 0022-0671/ Item number: 9407071866.

White, F. A. (2000). Relationship of Family Socialization Processes to Adolescent Moral Thought. Journal of Social Psychology, 140, 75-92. Available: More.net, MasterFILE Elite ISSN: 0022-4545/Item number: 2872282.