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Completing Trajectories: Life-Course Considerations in Predicting Educational Attainment for Offenders Who Prematurely Transition Out

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Abstract

Consistent evidence has demonstrated that educational attainment facilitates long-term positive outcomes psychologically, socially, and criminologically. While research has also addressed social constraints and perspectives of people who drop out, few insights have been gleaned about what factors facilitate subsequent degree completion, and no research has examined deviant youth explicitly. The current study addresses this through the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, by identifying high school dropouts, exploring latent educational and psychological constructs, and regressing subsequent degree attainment on them. Results indicate that the identification of educational goals facilitates degree completion. This study contributes to the integration of theories within the framework of the life-course perspective, by applying context to antisocial youth, and examines psychological, social, and educational experiences that facilitate and hinder the completion of educational trajectories.

Introduction

Educational attainment, defined as completion of secondary education requirements, is almost universally perceived as a positive achievement. The United Nations lists universal secondary education completion as a desired goal for humanity (United Nations, 2023). This is certainly understandable given the overwhelming research evidence indicating that educational attainment improves social development, such as marriage likelihood and longevity, improved earning potentials and opportunities for social mobility, as well as psychological wellbeing (Assari, 2018; Baker, León, Greenaway, Collins, & Movit, 2011; Conti, Heckman, & Urzua, 2010; Cutler & Lleras-Muney, 2006; Haskins, Holzer, & Lerman, 2009; Isen & Stevenson, 2010; Kessler, 1982; Musick, Brand, & Davis 2012; Ross, 2017; Ross & Zhang, 2008; Torr, 2011; Zhang, Chen, & Fang, 2015). Obtaining an educational degree also decreases the likelihood of future offending behavior and criminal justice system contact (Groot & van den Brink, 2010; Hansen, 2003) by establishing a stake in social conformity and improving legitimate earning opportunities.

Studies such as these reveal consistent positive support for the role of formal educational institutions, but educational and criminological research reveal deficits relating to non-traditional experiences, such as dropping out of school or pursuing non-traditional educational pathways (Abeling-Judge, 2019; Feinstein & Peck, 2008; Tyler, 2003). Degree attainment among individuals who prematurely transitioned out is a crucial avenue for research, and only one identified study has explored prior school experiences and social controls as predictors of degree attainment (Boylan & Renzulli, 2017). While useful, this topic requires expansion to incorporate broader psychological perceptions, additional social factors, and relevant criminological contexts to degree attainment based on adolescent life course experiences. The need to incorporate criminological perspectives is particularly important given that certain factors facilitating educational reengagement, such as future orientation or peer influence (Haley, 2006), may be less impactful among deviant youth (e.g., future thinking) (Kamban & Thompson, 2009) or produce no strong impact at all (e.g., peer factors) (Abeling-Judge, 2022). The current study addresses this by utilizing a subset of respondents from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health

(Add Health) to identify different psychological, social, and criminological measures that facilitate or hinder completion of traditional and non-traditional educational trajectories for offenders who dropped out of school.

Literature Review

The life-course perspective is a valuable, multidisciplinary framework that has been utilized to provide new insights into education (Jamieson, Miller, & Stafford, 1998), sociology (Elder, 1998), and criminology (Laub, 2006), among many other scholarly fields. It allows for the conceptualization of individual pathways through life, as long-term largely stable behavioral patterns (trajectories), shorter-term periods of social or psychological change (transitions), and salient moments in one's life that spark broader changes in behavior, cognition, or even identity (turning points). The life-course perspective serves as a guiding framework to conceptualize both developmental sequences influencing criminology (Laub, 20a06) and educational processes as ongoing trajectories impacted by transitional experiences (Abeling-Judge, 2022; Benner et al., 2021; Jamieson et al., 1998). The two fields of study are intertwined in many ways, but the connection is particularly salient in the context of youth who drop out of school (Harlow, 2003). Completing one's educational degree, as the end of a trajectory, holds particular importance as a factor in reducing subsequent criminal activity (Abeling-Judge, 2019; Hansen, 2003) within desistance literature.

Transitioning Out

Educational trajectories may become interrupted for many reasons, and as further complication, may be conceptualized as a transitional period away from traditional schooling or a turning point decision (Dupéré et al., 2015; Na, 2017). Arguments for treating the phenomenon as a transitional process involve distal factors such as family difficulties or strains with curricula, fellow students, and other school personnel, or perceptions of overly harsh disciplinary policies (Alexander, Entwistle, & Kabbini, 2001). Proximal factors can reflect socially positive experiences, negative reactions, and logistical challenges, including the belief that taking immediate employment is more beneficial than remaining in school, getting married, assuming parenthood responsibilities or other family roles, or experiences with the justice system such as arrest (Boylan & Renzulli, 2017; Haley, 2006; Hirschfield, 2009; Hjalmarsson, 2008; Jordan, Lara, & McPartland, 1996; Kortering & Braziel, 1999; McNeal, 1997; Stearns & Glennie, 2006). However, at least in the United States, prematurely transitioning out for economic reasons is a rare event (Sweeten et al., 2009).

Salient factors that contribute to a greater likelihood of transitioning out of school early include consistently lower grades, weaker standardized test scores, prior contact with the criminal justice system, and falling behind one's cohort through repeating courses or even years (Franklin & Trouard, 2016; Stearns et al., 2007; Sweeten et al., 2009). Parental lack of education further increases risk as does truancy, antisocial peer networks, various behavioral problems, such as early exposure to substance use (Alexander et al., 2001; Bachman & O'Malley, 1978; Elliott & Voss, 1974; Fagan & Pabon,

1990; Kaplan, Peck, & Kaplan, 2001; Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1996), and negative perceptions of school environment (Boylan & Renzulli, 2017).

Transitioning Out and Deviance: Complex Interactions

Understanding the premature transition out of school requires a fuller acknowledgement of the overlapping risk factors that relate to deviant behavior. Research reveals an increased risk of violent conduct, drug use, various indicators of delinquency, and greater likelihood of criminal conviction for youth who transition out early (Aloise-Young et al., 2002; Crum, Helzer, & Anthony, 1993; Farrington, 1986; Jarjoura, 1993). Dropping out is significantly more likely to occur if one has previous contact with the justice system (Bäckman, 2017; Hirschfield, 2009; Na, 2017). However, the empirical and theoretical arguments are not always consistent in identifying a direct pathway, and arguments of causality have not been settled (Sweeten et al., 2009). Regardless of the complexity between offending and transitioning out, research has established a positive relationship between obtaining a traditional degree, for offenders who transitioned out, and reduced future offending behavior (Abeling-Judge, 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to examine what factors influence a transition back into, and completion of, an educational trajectory incorporating a criminological lens.

Transitioning Back and Through

Research has begun to provide insight into the psychological and social influences that shape a possible transition back to education. Before considering the offender context, additional theoretical aspects must be considered from the literature on the drop out phenomenon. A focus group study of 27 youth who dropped out of one school, and were actively recruited by a charter school, identified five categories that spurred a transition back. Family influences, principally from one's parents, facilitated the transition, as did positive feedback and perceptions from peers, implying value in age-graded informal social controls. Respondents also discussed how forming a specific goal (e.g., being the first in one's family to attend college or identification of a desired career), and recognition of future importance (e.g., having a diploma increases pay scales and employment opportunities, in general) helped them decide to return to school, thereby suggesting maturational growth in psychosocial and adult role domains. Lastly, respondents also discussed how feelings of boredom due to lack of structure in their day ultimately led them back to school (Haley, 2006).

These influences have been expanded upon in quantitative analyses. Results from the Educational Longitudinal Study (2002) suggest that positive peer bonding in a previous school environment, prior to dropping out, facilitates likelihood of G.E.D. certification, as well, but makes no impact in a model comparing G.E.D. certification to traditional graduation (Boylan & Renzulli, 2017). Maturation, manifesting as goal setting or recognition of capacity to facilitate changes in future outcomes, would certainly apply to the transition back into school (Haley, 2006), and has been shown to be relevant even among youth offenders who dropped out. Goal setting significantly predicted a return to a traditional school within the Pathways to Desistance study (Abeling-Judge, 2022). However, several logistical considerations must be acknowledged before assuming that goal setting is a sufficient motivation to

complete a traditional high school program. Individuals who drop out must be in a financially and socially supportive environment to return to school full time, must be willing and able to complete all remaining curricular requirements, and must find sufficient motivation to master what may be difficult subject matter (Franklin & Trouard, 2016; Stearns et al., 2007; Stewart, 2008). Youth who transition out are more likely to transition back if they believe that school is a safe environment (Boylan & Renzulli, 2017). Perceived hostility or animosity towards past teachers, staff, and administrators, or greater challenges with curricula, may also hinder a return to a traditional school, if such experiences are more salient for youth offenders who have dropped out relative to non-offenders. However, this point has not yet received empirical attention.

Delinquent youth, relative to non-offending similarly aged youth, consistently score lower on assessments of future planning and the ability to conceptualize how current actions facilitate different future outcomes (Burke, 2011; Kamban & Thompson, 2009). Offenders do transition back based on goal development (Abeling-Judge, 2022), but it remains unclear if the transition back also facilitates completion of a traditional educational trajectory. Only 9.50% of dropped out respondents in the Educational Longitudinal Study ultimately earned a diploma, while 25.88% completed G.E.D. certification, and 64.62% earned no formal degree (Boylan & Renzulli, 2017).

Hypotheses

H1: Prior perceptions of hostility and difficulty in a school environment will hinder the completion of a traditional degree among youth offenders who drop out.

H2A: Positive parental bonding will increase the likelihood of completing an educational trajectory, for offenders who dropped out previously.

H2B: Antisocial peer interactions will hinder the likelihood of completing an educational trajectory.

H3: Personal goals relating to education will increase the likelihood of completing an educational trajectory.

Methods

Sample

The current study begins with data collected by the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health). The Add Health project is an ongoing, longitudinal, nationally representative study that initially targeted youth from grades 7-12 across the United States in the 1994-95 academic year. Originally designed to provide insight into adolescent health across the entire population, the study utilized a multi-stage stratification design targeting high schools and using geographic region, population density, type of school, student body demographics, and enrollment sizes as stratification criteria. Wave I data was collected from 20,745 adolescents across the country, with additional information collected via parent interviews and school resources, and four additional waves collected

since. The current study utilizes the data published for public use, creating a subset of original respondents. Specific sample sizes are as follows: Wave I: n = 6,504; Wave II: n = 4,834; Wave III: n = 4,882; Wave IV: n = 5,114.

The data provides an opportunity to study the drop out problem in adulthood, while also considering the unique challenges faced by drop out offenders. By wave III, the mean age of respondents (in the public data) is 21.82 years (SD = 1.81). This establishes a timeframe wherein respondents would be expected to have completed secondary education. In this interview, they provided information regarding the highest degree they had obtained, and whether or not they had ever formally attended a high school (as opposed to those who were entirely home schooled). 420 respondents reported they had not obtained G.E.D. certification or graduated high school by wave III, out of those who had attended a traditional education program. Additionally, 9 reported currently being enrolled in a full time educational program, thus lowering the focus to 411 respondents who dropped out prematurely. This drastically reduces sample size but remains sufficient for exploratory consideration. Table 1 illustrates similarities and differences between this group and the non-drop out respondents. The subgroup did not differ by gender or whether their parents graduated. Drop out respondents came from larger families ($t(445.04) = 4.86$, $p < .001$), and had slightly more strained relationships with their mothers, at least at baseline ($X^2(1) = 10.84$, $p < .05$). They were also less likely to be white ($X^2(1) = 3.90$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, their mothers would have been less likely to express disapproval over the respondent not graduating from high school ($X^2(1) = 43.03$, $p < .001$). Drop out respondents were also less likely to have peers in school at wave II ($t(358.91) = -6.44$, $p < .001$).

Insert Table 1

The criminological implications previously addressed necessitate a further focus on drop out respondents who reported committing at least one offense. In the Add Health public data, 374 out of these 411 reported committing at least one offense at wave III or before, supporting the argument of a significant overlap of risk factors between dropping out and offending ($X^2(1) = 40.50$, $p < .001$). Offenses included vandalizing property via graffiti, committing property damage or destruction, stealing things worth less or more than $50, driving a vehicle without permission, breaking and entering, threatening someone with a weapon, selling marijuana or other illegal drugs, engaging in a fight, joining a gang, pulling a knife or gun on a person, shooting or stabbing someone, or using marijuana or other illegal drugs.

It is difficult to generalize comparisons from a group of 37 (non-offenders), but for exploratory purposes and to further establish relevance of context, table 2 compares the 374 drop out offenders to the 37 non-offenders who dropped out early. Offenders were younger ($t(418) = -2.17$, $p < .05$), and reported worse baseline educational experiences regarding paying attention in class ($t(396) = 2.29$, $p < .05$), getting homework done ($t(49.49) = 2.88$, $p < .01$), feeling close to others at school ($t(50.23) = 2.45$, $p < .05$), feeling like a part of the school ($t(58.50) = 3.66$, $p < .01$), and feeling happy at school ($t(56.87) = 4.15$, p

< .001). Offenders were also significantly more likely to report being suspended ($X^2(1) = 7.25$, $p < .01$). These findings are tentative, but strongly illustrate a depth of research that should be explored.

Insert Table 2

Defining Variables

Wave IV - Adulthood

The dependent variable reflects whether or not respondents who reported being offenders who dropped out by wave III had completed traditional high school requirements and graduated by wave IV. Within this subset, 43 earned high school diplomas.

Wave III – Early Adulthood

Early adulthood measures included age, given the sample was not a birth cohort and age factors in educational law vary by state. While the sampling design could not address dropouts at wave II who completed education by wave III, a control measure for respondents who had dropped out early and were still without educational certification was included. Sentencing and correctional mandates necessitated the inclusion of two additional dummy codes, addressing whether or not the respondent had been incarcerated or sentenced to probation prior to or during the third interview. Lastly, respondents provided ordinal responses the question of whether either parent provided financial assistance, either as money or goods, from less than $200 to over $1000. This information was recoded into a binary measure of whether or not a parent provided financial assistance at all.

Wave II - Adolescence

Variables assessing future thinking were operationally developed from measures examining future goals. Respondents used a 5-point scale (1 meaning low and 5 high) to address how much they wanted to go to college and how likely they felt they would go to college. Respondents were also given the statements “You will be married by age 25,” and “You will have a middle-class family income by age 30,” and asked to respond to an ordinal scale: “almost no chance,” “some chance, but probably not,” “a 50-50 chance,” “a good chance,” or “almost certain.”

Social bonds at this time addressed peer influence, both positive and negative. Respondents were asked if each of their top 10 friends was currently enrolled in school in wave II, including both male and female friendships. This information was combined into a proportional measure of the number of friends enrolled, ranging from 0 (no friends in school) to 1 (all reported friends enrolled). To assess antisocial peer influences, an additional measure was included tapping peer involved violence. Respondents reported “zero,” “1 or 2 times,” “3 or 4 times,” or “5 or more times” to the question: “in the past 12 months, how often did you take part in a fight where a group of your friends was against another group.” Responses were recoded into a binary measure.

Wave I – Adolescence

To gauge school culture and climate prior to dropping out, respondents were assessed on ten measures of school bonding and curricular engagement, referenced in table 2. For example, respondents selected options from: 0 – Never; 1 – Just a few times; 2 – About once a week; 3 – Almost every day; 4 – Every day; to questions including "During the 1995-1996 school year, how often did you have trouble getting along with your teachers?" Appendix A provides the full list of variables included. Respondents were asked to choose from 1 (low) to 5 (high) on the question: how disappointed would (your mother) be if you did not graduate from high school?

Controls

Lastly, additional control measures accounted for gender, race, and family factors. Specifically, models included dummy codes for gender (male), race (white), whether a parent had graduated themselves, and a count of residents living at the respondent's house at the baseline interview.

Analysis

The current study serves to explore whether established educational theories predict different trajectories of educational attainment later in life among youth offenders who drop out. To address this, factor analyses were conducted itemizing separate conceptually related variables at each of the first two waves. This allowed for the operationalization of latent constructs previously identified only qualitatively (Haley, 2006) and for parsimony of subsequent analyses. Factors were modeled using orthogonal varimax rotation to minimize risk of variable crossover and establish firm operational definitions for each identified factor. Subsequently, logistic regression models, incorporating the factors and noted controls, were run to identify influences of G.E.D. certificate acquisition, and high school graduation, separately.

It is important to acknowledge that, with such a small subsample, the concern over missing data must be carefully considered. For example, missing information on psychological variables was significantly related to race ($X^2(1) = 20.73$, $p < .001$). Therefore, missing information was imputed for all regression analyses using the Blimp Studio 3.2.2 software application. This software package utilizes Bayesian estimation for multiple imputation techniques. The current study involved fully conditional specification (FCS), specifying 2,000 burn-in iterations computed prior to establishing the first imputed data set, running 10,000 iterations per model, and estimating 50 imputed data sets that were pooled into single logistic regression models estimating parameters and standard errors (Enders, Keller, & Levy, 2018). Also, given the unique nature of the original sampling design of the Add Health data, the study authors recommend utilizing sampling weights to properly inform regression parameters and standard errors. Per design recommendations, wave specific cross-sectional weights were applied in the BLIMP models, with supplemental weighting used to compare all Add Health respondents to the specified subgroups (Chen & Harris, 2020).

Results

Factor Analyses

Tables 3 and 4 provide initial factor analyses and rotated factor loading to inform the number and content of latent constructs identified. Table 3 provides the factor analysis results for the 10 educational measures collected from wave I and identifies three relevant factors. Per loading results, factor one is labeled “Alienated Environment.” Factor two is labeled “Curricular Difficulty,” and factor 3 is labeled “Hostile Environment.” Table 4 provides results for aspirational goals, and identifies two relevant factors, labeled “Educational Aspirations,” and “Family Aspirations,” respectively.

Regression Models

Table 5 provides logistic regression results, focusing on high school graduation. A one standard deviation increase in the Educational Aspirations factor increases the log-odds of graduating by 0.31 ($p < .05$). Respondents who were involved in a group-based fight earlier in their lives were significantly less likely to graduate than those who were not. Similarly, respondents who had dropped out earlier at wave II were also less likely to graduate. None of the educational or family experiences from wave I predicted degree attainment later in life. However, white respondents were significantly less likely to graduate than non-white individuals, while male respondents and those whose parents had graduated were more likely to graduate.

Insert Table 5

Discussion

School Climate in Context

The findings identified in table 2 should be considered with healthy skepticism, and be subject to re-evaluation with larger sub-samples. Nevertheless, they do provide initial support for the position that offenders are much more likely to experience curricular difficulties, and feel alienated in the school environment. The results provide no support for the first hypothesis, but do not definitively rule out prior negative experiences influencing later educational choices. The temporal difference between negative experiences at wave I and attainment status at wave IV could be up to 14 years, depending on when one obtained a degree. Events fourteen years in one’s past may be less relevant to current goals and actions than more proximal considerations. Prior experiences certainly play a role in transitioning back and impact the type of trajectory pursued among drop outs, generally (Boylan & Renzulli, 2017), but appear irrelevant in the context of offender populations. Future work should explore temporal sequencing, such as whether perceptions of hostility or alienation hinder motivation for employment or other prosocial experiences as one transitions out of education in a shorter-term context

Limitations of Social Processes

The results also provide no support for hypothesis 2A, but face the same temporal challenge as that of school climate. It is well documented that educational attainment facilitates further social developments

and integration (Copen et al., 2012; Musick et al., 2012; Torr, 2011) and reduces future criminal behavior (Abeling-Judge, 2019). The current results suggest that familial and peer support do not facilitate educational attainment, however. Social support facilitates degree completion for those who remain on normative educational trajectories (Burchinal et al., 2008), and such family, peer, and community support foster personal attachment to educational environments (Ryan & Deci, 2017), which speaks to the importance of efforts to prevent dropping out initially. In the context of youth offenders, these psychosocial developments do not resonate with educational reengagement, and warrant deeper temporal scrutiny in the context of how family stress may contribute to both delinquency and dropping out (Sweeten et al., 2009).

The results do support hypothesis 2B. Antisocial peer influences, particularly those involving violence, negatively influence traditional degree attainment. Peer influence is well documented and theorized, from behavioral modeling to identity formation (or reformation) to status validation to psychological and physical protection, while also reflecting the role of choice and selection of one's primary peer group (Laursen & Veenstra, 2021). Group violence or gang fighting is a clear indicator of subsequent classification as a serious, violent, and chronic offender within juvenile justice systems (García-Rojo, Talavera-Velasco, & Luceño-Moreno, 2023; Gordon, Rowe, Pardini, Loeber, & White, 2014). Likewise, youth offenders labeled as serious, violent, and chronic are more likely to drop out and persist in offending (Henry, Knight, & Thornberry, 2011). Unfortunately, the data does not allow for a more elaborate teasing apart of any developmental sequence. The progression from onset of deviant conduct, escalation to violence and/or gang engagement, transition out of school, and hardening of antisocial values and attitudes is certainly needed in criminological life-course work, but must remain an open question at present.

Internal Development

The results provide support for hypotheses 3, as those who recognize the desire to complete education are more likely to return to school. While educational attainment as a direct, focused goal for oneself does produce positive results, the broader, more abstract importance of one's future is not clearly operationalized in the available data, and must remain open for future empirical consideration. Prior arguments would suggest honing efforts on forming educational goals, rather than considering broader, more abstract, ideas of future possibilities (Burke, 2011; Kamban & Thompson, 2009). The importance of framing educational progression within the life-course framework of trajectory modeling, or interrupting transitions, allows for a revised comprehension of dynamic social interactions, evolving psychological perspectives, and the reshaping of one's future (Benner et al., 2021).

Future work should also incorporate additional life-course experiences that may help or hinder degree completion. Respondents who married prior to dropping out were more likely to later earn G.E.D. certification than obtain a traditional diploma (Boylan & Renzulli, 2017), and younger individuals who become parents are also less likely to return to formal educational efforts later on (Black, Polidano, & Tseng, 2012; Boylan & Renzulli, 2017). As marriage facilitates positive change among offenders (Laub &

Sampson, 2003), a relevant question arises regarding the impact of a spouse, romantic partner, or child rearing responsibilities on attitudes towards education and corresponding actions.

Strengths and Limitations

This study expands insights into educational trajectory completion among respondents who prematurely dropped out (Boylan & Renzulli, 2017), and focused on a particularly concerning subset of individuals in this context. It incorporates relevant psychological, sociological, criminological, and educational perspectives on a subject that does not fit solely into any one domain of scholarship.

This study includes limitations, as well. First, the subsample reflects a small portion of overall Add Health participants, even within the publicly available data set. This is not surprising given that the original sampling mechanism targeted schools across the United States. While small, it is important to note that this reflects a true nationwide effort to sample youth, given the weighting variables (Chen & Harris, 2020), and the results provide supplemental support, and advancement of, many life-course arguments relating to education (Boylan & Renzulli, 2017) and deviant behaviors (Abeling-Judge, 2019). Second, the time gap between waves of data collection limits the ability to infer findings, to an extent. Those who dropped out at wave III were assessed on attainment 8 years later at wave IV. This rules out the ability to detect more proximate influences on degree attainment during that span of time. However, obtaining a traditional high school diploma may take years if one drops out early or experiences other social or criminological complications along the way. While recent findings have been able to shed light on factors facilitating a return to traditional education (Abeling-Judge, 2022), this study opens inquiry to address the long-term mapping of various educational trajectories among offenders. The criminological interest in traditional degree completion (Abeling-Judge, 2019), and the smaller subset available, necessitated focusing on high school completion only, but future work should also address non-traditional attainment (i.e., G.E.D. certification).

Conclusions

Educational trajectories involve ongoing decision-making processes, being acted upon by and impacting external factors. The decision to transition out, and back, and efforts to complete different pathways reflect structured choice influenced by social bonds, personal motivations, reflections on past experiences with education, and future goals (Walthers, Warth, Ule, & Bois-Reymond, 2015). This point is particularly salient within the context of criminology (Elliott & Voss, 1974; Hirschfield, 2009; Sweeten et al., 2009). Goals, social resources, and personal reflections are critically relevant to understanding educational pathways, in general (Haley, 2006), and particularly among deviant youth if desistance efforts are to be furthered (Abeling-Judge, 2019, 2022).

Declarations

Author Biography: Dr. Abeling-Judge is an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Coppin State University. His research interests include education and crime, desistance from crime, victimization,

policing, and inequalities in crime and criminal justice. He holds a PhD in Criminology and Justice Policy from Northeastern University.

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Tables

Table 1: Difference in Social Bonds

	Dropouts	Remaining Add Health Respondents
	n = 411	n = 6,093
	Mean (S.D.)	Mean (S.D.)
Male	51.60%	48.20%
White	61.60%	66.30%
Parent Graduated	73.50%	72.90%
Childhood Household Size	4.92 (1.97)	4.43 (1.55)
Close to Mom (Wave I)		
Not close at all	0.00%	0.40%
Not very close	4.60%	2.40%
Somewhat close	6.30%	7.90%
Quite close	17.70%	20.20%
Extremely close	71.40%	69.00%
Mom Disappointed if no Graduation (Wave I)		
1 (Low)	6.60%	3.30%
2	1.60%	1.00%
3	6.30%	2.40%
4	8.00%	4.90%
5 (High)	77.50%	88.40%
Peers Enrolled (Wave II)	0.67 (0.47)	0.83 (0.37)

Table 2: Illustrating Differences

	Offenders	Non-Offenders
	n = 374	n = 37
	Mean (S.D.)	Mean (S.D.)
Age (Wave III)	21.55 (1.79)	22.20 (1.91)
Education (Wave I)		
Get along with teachers	1.39 (1.26)	1.13 (1.28)
Pay attention in school	1.53 (1.23)	1.05 (1.21)
Get homework done	1.50 (1.29)	0.95 (1.12)
Get along with students	1.24 (1.29)	0.95 (1.28)
Felt close to people at school	2.48 (1.13)	2.08 (0.96)
Felt like part of school	2.45 (1.14)	1.95 (0.76)
Students prejudiced	2.97 (1.24)	3.03 (1.19)
Happy to be at school	2.67 (1.26)	2.03 (0.87)
Teachers treated students fairly	2.70 (1.18)	2.54 (1.25)
Felt safe at school	2.43 (1.17)	2.26 (0.94)
Ever Suspended (Wave I)	60.70%	35.80%

Table 3: Factor Analysis – School Climate

n = 357			
	Eigenvalue	Proportion	Cumulative
1	3.03	0.30	0.30
2	1.58	0.16	0.46
3	1.12	0.11	0.57
4	0.87	0.09	
5	0.82	0.08	
6	0.68	0.07	
7	0.53	0.05	
8	0.51	0.05	
9	0.45	0.05	
10	0.41	0.04	
Rotated Factor Loading			
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Trouble with Teachers	0.25	0.49	0.39
Trouble Paying Attention	0.06	0.86	-0.01
Trouble with Homework	0.01	0.82	-0.06
Trouble with Students	0.13	0.38	0.34
Feel Close to People*	0.81	-0.02	0.01
Feel Part of School*	0.80	0.11	-0.08
Students Prejudiced*	0.08	0.05	-0.83
Happy at School*	0.72	0.23	0.13
Teachers Fair*	0.46	0.18	0.42
Felt Safe at School*	0.59	-0.05	0.46

* - Reverse Ordinal Scale

Table 4: Factor Analysis – Future Thinking

n = 315			
	Eigenvalue	Proportion	Cumulative
1	1.89	0.47	0.47
2	1.21	0.30	0.77
3	0.60	0.15	
4	0.30	0.07	
Rotated Factor Loading			
	Factor 1	Factor 2	
Desire College	0.91	0.10	
Anticipate College	0.92	0.08	
Desire Marriage	0.01	0.85	
Desire Middle Class Income	0.16	0.81	

Table 5: Predicting Educational Attainment by Wave 4			
High School Diploma			
n = 374			
Coef.	S.E.	Sig.	
Intercept	-1.83	1.35	
Wave I			
Alienated Environment	0.08	0.11	
Curricular Difficulty	-0.09	0.11	
Hostile Environment	0.05	0.11	
Mom Desires Graduation	-0.11	0.11	
Wave II			
Educational Aspirations	0.31	0.14	*
Family Aspirations	0.07	0.14	
Friends Enrolled	0.19	0.31	
Group Fight	-0.86	0.30	**
Wave III			
Dropped out at Wave II	-1.03	0.43	**
Family Financial Support	0.07	0.08	
Age	0.02	0.06	
Incarcated	-0.84	0.68	
On Probation	0.10	0.49	
Male	0.67	0.25	*
White	-0.58	0.25	*
Parent Graduated	0.52	0.27	*
Childhood Household Size	0.05	0.05	
* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001			

Supplementary Files

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