ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF NON-RESIDENTIAL FATHERS ON FAMILY ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS AMONG COURT-INVOLVED MALE ADOLESCENTS

By Jeffrey D. Herron

Despite the fact that there is growing evidence regarding a connection between non-residential fathers and juvenile delinquency (Coley & Medeiros, 2007; Harper & McLanahan, 2004), researchers have made little effort to identify family environmental risks that juvenile delinquents experience without a father present. The purpose of this study is to examine family environmental risks of households with residential fathers and without residential fathers among juvenile delinquents and compare the levels of family related risks according to ethnicity (i.e., African-American and Caucasian male adolescents). Family environmental risk factors identified include economic hardship, parenting problems, and family conflict. To determine the comparability of the groups, a 2 (father’s resident status: residential father and non-residential father) X 2 (ethnicity: African-American and Caucasian) MANOVA was performed with scores of family environmental risk indicators. Results of the two-way MANOVA revealed significant multivariate effects for ethnicity and father’s resident status; however, there was no interaction effect.
THE EFFECTS OF NON-RESIDENTIAL FATHERS ON FAMILY ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS AMONG COURT-INVOLVED MALE ADOLESCENTS

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my family.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

In 2002, the juvenile delinquent population in the United States was about 25% of the general population of adolescents, and is expected to increase to 36% by the year 2050 (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). African-American juvenile delinquents have higher rates of arrests and court cases compared to general population. In 1992, African-American juvenile delinquents constituted 27% of all juvenile arrests, even though they are only 12% of the general population in the United States (Joseph, 1995). In 2002, African-American adolescents represented about 16% of the population, but they represented 33% of all juvenile court cases (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). In order to decrease this future trend, there needs to be more programming and advocacy for juveniles and their families.

Over the years, research has shown that specific factors have influence on juvenile delinquency. Theses factors are individual, peer, family, school, and community related. For example, youth involved in delinquent peer relationships are more likely to become delinquent themselves due to peer pressure. Within specific communities juveniles from high inner city crime areas or low socioeconomic status have a greater risk of becoming delinquent. Juvenile delinquents within disadvantaged communities are faced with many problems such as low paying jobs, poor school performance, family related stress, and depression which could stay with them into their adult life.

In addition, youth who fail to develop and maintain strong bonds within their families also display higher rates of conduct problems and risk behaviors that are associated with juvenile delinquency. That is, if parent and child relationships are weak a juvenile has a greater chance of becoming a delinquent. If the juvenile feels alienated or distant from the family this will affect the outcome of the juvenile which could lead to delinquency. Therefore, it is important for families to have an unwavering family environment, so that juveniles can feel love and warmth from their parents (Carswell, 2007; Owens-Sabir, 2007; Pashcell, Ringwalt, & Flewelling, 2003).

Most research consistently reveals that children from diverse homes, such as non-residential fathers, divorce, and single mother families can lead adolescents to have a greater chance of becoming a juvenile delinquent (Pashcell et al., 2003). In 2004, 30% of African-American households were maintained by a single mother compared to 9% Caucasian
households with single mothers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). Almost half of the African-American adolescent population lives in a single mother household (Bynum & Thompson, 2007; Carswell 2007; King, Harris, & Heard, 2004; Owens-Sabir, 2007; Pashcell et al., 2003). In this context, African-American fathers are typically described in ways that reflect absence, abandonment, or incompetence (Levite & Mckenry, 2006).

Therefore, a great deal of concern has been raised about the increasing phenomena of non-residential fathers within African-American families and the negative effect that this may have on the development of young African-American males (Pashcell et al., 2003). Research has shown that female headed (single parent) households have limited financial resources and fewer community resources than a two-parent family, which can decreases their ability to monitor and supervise youth (Pashcell et al., 2003). Adolescents from single-mother families compared to two-parent families engage in higher levels of delinquency such as drug and alcohol use, violence, illegal activities, and school truancy due to lack of monitoring and supervision (Pashcell et al., 2003; Rodney & Mupier, 1999). In addition, fathers have an especially important role in the development of positive self-esteem in African-American male adolescents (Rodney & Mupier, 1999). That is, African-American males living in father-absent homes have poor paternal relationships and are likely to exhibit low self-esteem (Rodney & Mupier, 1999).

Previous researchers have suggested that living in single-mother families have different meaning or impact despite racial difference (Salem, Zimmerman & Notaro, 1998). African-American male adolescents from households with single-mothers have higher risk for negative outcomes. African-American juvenile delinquents with non-residential fathers are more likely to face issues such as poverty, illegal behaviors, substance abuse, and lack of education due to living in single-mother households. Therefore, African-American male juveniles that are from single-mother households will experience a decline in social capital within the family compared to two-parent households (Coleman, 1988; Edwards, 2004).

Social capital concerns the values that people hold and the resources that they can access which result in negotiating ties and relationships within families. Within the context of families social capital theory values the relationships between children and parents while also building resources with the community (Coleman, 1988; Edwards, 2004). However, social capital depends on the physical presence of the adults and on the attention given to the child in order for the child to benefit from the family’s social capital (Coleman, 1988; Edwards, 2004). That is, if a
parent is absent from the home there will be a decline in the family’s social capital which could affect the outcomes of the children. For example, if the biological father departs the family the juvenile will likely to experience outcomes such as poor school achievement and substance abuse which can lead to delinquency. Therefore, the departure of a biological parent or when a parent refuses to help can cause a decline in the social capital for the family.

**Purpose of the Study**

Previous studies to date have focused on African-American male adolescents and the effects of living in a single-mother household versus a two-parent household (Pashcell et al., 2003; Rodney, & Mupier, 1999). According to these studies, African-American males are more likely to become juvenile delinquents than Caucasian males, and this is due to effects of non-residential fathers or family structure (Pashcell et al., 2003). Despite the fact that there is growing evidence regarding a connection between non-residential fathers and juvenile delinquency (Coley & Medeiros, 2007; Harper & McLanahan, 2004), researchers have made little effort to identify family environmental risks that juvenile delinquents experience without a father present. No previous study has examined the relationship between differences in family environmental risks and father status and ethnicity among juvenile delinquents.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify family environmental risks that juvenile delinquents experience with non-residential fathers and compare the levels of family related risks according to ethnicity (i.e., African-American and Caucasian male adolescents). More specifically, the present study examines economic hardship, parenting problems and family conflict to father status and ethnicity. Therefore, this study is intended to advance knowledge of the impact of father’s residential status on family related risks among court-involved youth.

**Definitions of Terms**

The following terms are used in this study.

*Father Status*- For the present study, residential father households are identified as consistiuous of either two-biological parents or married biological mother to a step-father. Non-residential father’s families are identified as single-parent mother only. However, the present study excludes single fathers, live-in boyfriends and girlfriends, grandparents and same-sex couples because the study is specifically focused on families with or without residential fathers.

*Global Risk Assessment Device (GRAD)* – An Internet-based instrument that measures potential risks, and refers youth and families at risk to appropriate services by using 11 different
domains such as prior offenses, family/parenting, education/vocation, peers relationships, substance abuse, leisure, personality/behavior, sociability, accountability, traumatic events, and health services.

**Family/Parenting Environmental risks** - Family/parenting risks for court involved youth are measured by the youths score on the family/parenting domain (see Appendix A) of the GRAD. Family/parenting domain is composed of 17 items. For example, “Is your family at-risk for homelessness?” For the present study, economic hardship, parenting problems and family conflict sub-domains are used.

**Court - Involved youth** - Youth who came to the attention of five juvenile county courts in Ohio who are on probation or parole within the court system.

**Ethnicity** - According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2005), Ethnicity is identity or membership in a particular racial, national, or cultural group. For the present study, African–American and Caucasian categories are used. The study excludes Bi-Racial, Latino, Asian, and Hispanic as this study is specifically designed to examine the difference between and compared African-American and Caucasian juveniles.

**Economic Hardship** – A family/parenting related risk to describe whether the family is experiencing financial hardship or at risk for homelessness measured by using the family/parenting domain (see Appendix A) of the GRAD.

**Family Conflict** – A family/parenting related risk to describe youths who are having conflict with their family and/or parents are too critical towards them measured by using the family/parenting domain (see Appendix A) of the GRAD.

**Parenting Problems** – A family/parenting related risk to describe parents that have difficulty maintaining order with the juvenile and/or having lack of supervision measured by using the family/parenting domain (see Appendix A) of the GRAD.

**Research Hypotheses**
1. Court-involved youth with non-residential fathers experience more family related environmental risks than their counterparts with fathers in the home.
   a. Court-involved youth with non-residential fathers experience more economic hardship compared to their counterparts with fathers living in the home.
b. Court-involved youth with non-residential fathers experience more problematic parenting compared to their peers with fathers living in the home.

c. Court-involved youth with non-residential fathers experience more parent-child conflict compared to their peers with fathers living in the home.

2. African-American male youth experience more family related environmental risks than their Caucasian counterparts.
   a. African-American male youth experience more economic hardship compared to their Caucasian counterparts.
   b. African-American male youth experience more parenting problems than their Caucasians counterparts.
   c. African-American male youth experience more parent-child conflicts than their Caucasians counterparts.

3. African-American youth with non-residential fathers experience more family related risk compared to other sub groups.
   a. African-American youth with non-residential fathers experience more economic hardship compared to other sub groups.
   b. African-American youth with non-residential fathers experience more parenting problems to other sub groups.
   c. African-American youth with non-residential fathers experience more family conflict compared to other sub groups.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

The review of literature focuses on the past and current research pertaining to African-American and Caucasian male adolescents, non-residential fathers, and juvenile delinquents. Also, the review and current literature focuses on family related risk factors such as economic hardship, family conflict and parenting problems. In addition, Social Capital Theory (Coleman, 1988; Hughes & Furstenberg, 1995; Menning, 2006; Portes, 1998) will be used to guide the theoretical framework for the present study.

Juvenile Delinquents

The word juvenile delinquent was first used to describe children who broke the law, street kids, homeless children, or unwanted children (Bridges, Crutchfield, & Weis, 2001; Joseph, 1995). Children who were neglected by their parents were classified as delinquents to be protected by the courts. Nowadays, a juvenile delinquent is anyone under the age of 18 who commits an offense or criminal act (Bridges et al., 2001; Joseph, 1995; Zimring, 2005). Overtime, the definition of juvenile delinquents has changed to become an official category.

African-American male adolescents face problems within courts and detention centers due to many discrepancies dealing with race. From 1989 to 1999 the percentage of Caucasian male juveniles that were detained was 33% while African-American male juveniles allotted for 15%. Furthermore, African-American male juvenile’s rate may have been higher since some of them are processed in adult systems. African-American male adolescents are more often being processed as adults as opposed to juveniles due to more serious crimes. In 1996, African-American male juvenile delinquents had 46% of cases waived to criminal court (Roberts, 2004).

Many researchers have concluded that discrimination and bias are the reasons for the overrepresentation of African-American in the juvenile justice system. Within the inner city or areas of low socioeconomic status the arrest rates are higher as the police may devote more time and resources to these areas (Joseph, 1995). When it comes to sentencing African-American males are treated more harshly by police and the justice system while Caucasian males are sentenced more lenient (Joseph, 1995; Zimring, 2005). That is, a lot of crimes committed by African-Americans male adolescents go unreported due to police officers or victims who are not
willing to prosecute the offenders. In addition, prosecutors decide who is charged with what crime or degree of crime and the judge or jury decides if a juvenile is found guilty or innocent.

Numerous studies have found many differences between African-American male juveniles and Caucasian male juveniles in regards to serious offenses, arrest rates, drug offenses and felony charges. African-American male adolescents have more serious offenses than Caucasian males which are generally two to three times higher (Bridges et al., 2001; Bynum & Thompson, 2007; Carswell 2007; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). African-American male adolescents under the age of 18 account for over half of the arrests for murder, robbery, and gambling compared to Caucasian male adolescents. In addition, African-American male adolescents have higher felony and drug offenses than Caucasian. However, Caucasian male adolescents do have more property crimes. In addition to these factors, African-American male adolescents are also lacking resources. For example, if the parents can not afford a good attorney then they have to receive a court appointed attorney, whom may not do the same or a good of a job as a private attorney. In this context, delinquent behaviors by African-American male juveniles is a special concern to society due to their overrepresentation in juvenile detention centers and adult prisons (Bridges et al., 2001; Bynum & Thompson, 2007; Carswell 2007; Owens-Sabir, 2007; Pashcell et al., 2003).

**Non-Resident Father**

Over the years fathers have been classified as the breadwinner or provider for the family, however due to changes in single mother households this has been changed. Recently, researchers have shown that fathers leave the family due to incarceration or not taking responsibility for their children (Coley & Hernandez, 2006; Harper & McLanaham, 2004). In addition, many fathers loose contact with male adolescents due to the conflict with mothers or financial hardships.

Jenkins and Lyons (2006) stated that non-resident fathers are defined as biological fathers of children with whom they do not share the same home or refuse contact. On the other hand, stepfathers are considered residential fathers after they have married the biological mother and reside in the home with the youth. Since stepfathers are taking responsibility for the children in the home, which includes financial support and parenting. Coley (2001) defined responsible fatherhood as composed of four tasks: financial support, providing care, emotional support, and
establishing legal paternity. Therefore, stepfathers should be considered as residential fathers due to the fact they provide financial and emotional support to the family.

Large national surveys consistently show an association between non-resident fathers’ and children’s well-being (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999). Some fathers are absent in the nurturing, social and emotional well-being of their children which can effect their social and economic environments (Hamer, 2001). Characteristics and social contexts of father involvement, particularly human and financial capital such as employment status, education, and income, can supply resources and skills to fathers that can be passed to their children (Coley & Hernandez, 2006). Children also have lower attachment to non-residential fathers which can affect their emotional stability, and job opportunities, which can increase their chances of incarceration (Harper & McLanaham, 2004).

Also, studies have shown a link between non-resident fathers’ involvement and adolescent behaviors (Coley & Medeiros, 2007). Relative to those in two-parent households, fatherless children experience poorer academic performance and higher rates of delinquent behavior (Hamer, 1998) due to the fact their fathers are not living with them or involved. For example, adolescents living apart from their fathers are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school which can lead to delinquent behavior (Carlson, 2006; King et al. 2004). Salem and associates (1998) concluded high school drop-out rates to be associated with father absence. Similarly, Rodney and Mupier (1999) reported that father absent adolescents experience more problems in terms of running away from home, skipping or cutting class, being suspended from school, and getting in trouble with the law.

Non-resident father involvement on child well-being has overwhelmingly focused on negative child outcomes such as behavioral problems, delinquency, and dropping out of school (King & Sobolewski, 2006) for African-American male adolescents. Bowman and Sanders (2003) noted that father absence and related provider role issues are growing problems in America especially for African-American families. For example, unskilled industrial jobs and related trends place African-American fathers at risk for joblessness, and provider role failure (Bowman & Sanders, 2003). Moreover, African-American non-residential fathers are often perceived as “bad” fathers because they appear to reject or neglect the functions of fatherhood (Hamer, 2001). In addition, Leite and McKenry (2006) stated that economic or provider roles for African-American fathers threaten their ability to do both roles with their children.
Non-residential parent-child relationships frequently have been shown to be negative consequences on psychological well being, social adjustment and academic performance (Depner & Bray, 1993). Therefore, non-residential fathers do have an impact on juvenile delinquents that can lead to family environmental risks such as economic hardship, parenting problems, and family conflict.

**Economic Hardship**

Most non-resident fathers are not paying child support, which contributes to financial hardship or well-being of the child (King, 1994; Menning, 2006). That is, the payment of child support can alleviate some of the economic disadvantages faced by single-mother households and provide a less stressful home environment (King & Sobolewski, 2006). Non-residential fathers’ payment of child support has consistently been linked to children’s well-being, and educational progress (Dunn, 2004), because it is likely to be associated with the child and parent relationship and responsive parenting as well (King & Sobolewski, 2006).

However, it appears that many non-residential fathers tend not to meet responsibilities or child support obligations, and pay either inconsistently or not at all (Hamer, 2001). Non-residential fathers appear to represent a disturbing removal from children’s lives due to the lack of financial support and involvement with their children (Coley, 2001). Instead, stepfathers, uncles, and grandfathers can contribute to male adolescents that are without residential fathers in order to help them with economic hardship, involvement, and support. Stepfathers often take financial responsibility for the juvenile when the biological father has refused to offer financial support. That is, economic resources have shown the difference in outcomes between children in single-mother families and two-parent families (Carlson, 2006).

In conclusion, economic hardship can be a risk on adolescents especially if they are not financially benefiting from non-residential fathers. Besides economic hardship, adolescents with non-residential fathers also experience other family environmental risks such as parenting problems.

**Parenting Problems**

Poor parenting can have a negative effect on juvenile delinquency when the parents are lacking supervision and monitoring. For example, poor parental monitoring has been found to be associated with a higher level of delinquency (Griffin et al., 2000), and parents of juvenile delinquents fail to provide adequate supervision and control which makes delinquency more
possible (Gray-Ray & Ray, 1990). Specially, single-mothers experience more difficult challenges in monitoring, supervising, and disciplining adolescents than two-parent families. On the other hand, effective parenting such as consistent support, a close relationship, and consistent supervision, monitoring, and discipline are associated with a lower lively hood of delinquency (Bolland et al., 2006).

Previous research has shown that, non-residential fathers are less experienced as parents than resident fathers, and they rarely participate in their children’s decisions, supervision, or discipline (Stewart, 2003). For example, non-residential fathers who try to follow authoritative parenting style may not be successful due to being absent within the home which can affect father-child relationships (Stewart, 2003). Society expects for non-residential fathers not to have an active role in their children lives. Also, non-resident fathers’ lack of contact with their children is commonly viewed as evidence of lack of responsibility (Jenkins & Lyons, 2006). For example, many non-residential fathers have limited opportunities such as reading and helping with homework, preparing and eating meals, and spending leisure time together. Therefore, adolescent crime and non-residential fathers are associated with parental absence it contributes to juvenile crime because of inadequate parental supervision (Rodney & Mupier, 1999). That is, father absence has a negative effect of juvenile delinquency which could lead to substance abuse and alcoholism.

Specially, African-American male adolescents have a higher risk of behavior problems such as delinquency and aggression due to lack of parental monitoring and daily involvement from parents (Rodney & Mupier, 1999). For example, African-American and Caucasian non-residential fathers, found to be both involved but the African-American fathers were less active in parenting skills (Leite & McKenry, 2006). On the other hand, African-American male adolescents that have less parental supervision and control have mild delinquent behavior such as truancy and curfew violations. African-American male adolescents with strong relationships in families withstand delinquency better than their counterparts in families where relationships are weak (Barlow & Ferdinand, 1992). Therefore, parenting problems can have a negative effect on juvenile delinquency such as lack of support and less paternal supervision which can lead to family conflict.

**Family Conflict**
Family conflict can negatively affect the outcomes of juveniles due to conflict within the family environment. Griffin, Botvin, Scheier, Diaz, and Miller (2000) found that poor communication between parents and children has been found to be associated with higher rates of alcohol and tobacco use of youth.

Adolescent-parent disagreements, squabbling, and conflict have received a great deal of attention due to the natural component of a close relationship (Smetana, & Gaines, 1999). For example, adolescent-parent conflicts are different by cultures and depend on the interdependence of the adolescent. Within two-parent families there is less family conflict than in single-mother families due to father present and the mother has less contact with the children(Smetana, & Gaines, 1999).

Also, parent-child conflicts are higher in African-American male adolescents than any other ethnic groups which come from single-mother families (Griffin et al., 2000). Therefore, family conflict can have negative effect on juvenile delinquency such as disagreements and squabbling which can lead to a decrease in social capital.

Theoretical Framework

According to social capital theory, social capital is a resource within social structures and relationships, as are connections and ties with others (Coleman, 1988; Hughes & Furstenberg, 1995; Menning, 2006; Portes, 1998). There has not been a common definition of social capital that theorists can agree upon. Therefore, the definition will depend on the discipline and the level of the investigation. Since there is no clear definition of social capital most theorists discuss the concepts and add their own definition. Regardless of which definition of social capital one adheres to, there seems to be at least three distinct elements that researchers must address when conceptualizing social capital: forms, norms of obligation and reciprocity, and resources (McNeal, 1999).

In this context, both the family and social capital are cited as fundamental and strong bases for social cohesion, but also as easily eroded and in need of protection and encouragement (Edwards, 2004). More specifically, this perspective characterizes the family as positively meeting the needs of its members and carrying out vital functions for a successful society. That is, families are viewed as an economic unit that provides shelter, food, care, and stable adult (hetero) sexual relationships. However, Coleman (1988) stated that single mother families and
dual-earner families are lacking in social capital because parents simply do not have enough time to give their children or not enough attention.

Coleman (1988) also mentioned that intact families have the primary task of rearing children possess more social capital than do single-mother families. For example, the primary beneficiary of this resource is, of course, the children whose education and personality development are enriched accordingly (Portes, 1998). Moreover, social capital tends to be lower for children in single-mother families because they lack the benefit of a second parent who can be an at home parent and because they tend to change residence more often, leading to fewer ties to other community-based adults (Portes, 1998). Also, changing family structures, specifically in terms of increases in single mothers, non-residential fathers, and mothers working outside the home have led to a deficit in social capital, as has geographical mobility (Coleman, 1988).

Within the context of families, social capital depends upon both the physical presence of adults in the family and on the attention given by the adults to the child (Coleman, 1988; Hughes & Furstenberg, 1995; Menning, 2006; Portes, 1998). Physical absence of adults may be described as a structural deficiency in family social capital (Marrow, 1999). Parents who are more involved and supportive of their children are likely to build up social capital within the family and the connectedness can result in greater compliance and commitment from the offspring (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). Some researchers have speculated that declines in adolescents’ well being are due to declines in parenting that accompany the departure of a parent from a household. This psychological consequence is consistent with Coleman’s speculation regarding changes in social capital that accompany changes in family structure (Menning, 2006). In addition, the parenting that adolescents receive is often considered an indication of the level of connection they share with their parents - that is, the social capital within the family (Menning, 2006).

As such, families generally experience a decline in social capital with the departure of a biological parent, thereby presenting fewer opportunities for the transmission of human capital, expectations, and norms of behavior (Menning, 2006). Another example occurs when fathers are absent because children have less access to paternal resources in the form of social capital. That is, children loose time and attention from the father and they have reduced access to the father’s resources in the community (King et al., 2004).
In this case, social capital comes in two forms vital to child well-being. One form is inherent in father–child relations as fathers teach, nurture, monitor, and care for their children (King et al., 2004). In addition to the time that fathers spend with their children, the quality of the father-child relationship is a fundamental source of social capital that is especially important for children’s school attainment and avoidance of risk behavior (King et al., 2004; Coleman, 1998). A second form of social capital is inherent in the relationship between parents, other individuals, and institutions in the community (King et al., 2004). Relationships provide access to information, assistance, opportunities, and other resources in the community that foster the healthy development of youth (King et al., 2004). Social capital between fathers and their children can be measured by the quality and quantity of involvement, research indicates that not all involvement is equally beneficial for children such as frequent contact or child support (King & Sobolewski, 2006). When children live apart from their fathers, they have less access to parental resources in the form of social capital. Therefore, children lose time and attention from the father; and they have will have less access to the father’s resources in the community (Coleman, 1998).

A number of empirical studies have also shown that adolescents who grow up apart from their fathers are at a disadvantage in many ways (King et al., 2004). For example, compared to adolescents who grow up with both biological parents, adolescents with non-resident fathers are more likely to engage in health compromising behaviors such as drug and alcohol use, unprotected sex, and cigarette smoking. Adolescents with non-residential fathers are also less likely to graduate from high school and college, more likely to experience teenage and/or nonmarital fertility, as well as have lower levels of psychological well being.

Previous research has shown that African-American male adolescents are economically disadvantaged compared to Caucasian male adolescents due to reasons such as poverty, lack of education, and lack of resources (Coleman, 1988; King et. al., 2004). African-American male adolescents that are living in poverty have less access to better resources such as jobs, health care, and social services. Therefore, African-American male adolescents will experience more of a disadvantage of social capital compared to Caucasian males due to having a non-residential father. The following chapters will cover the methodology, results, and discussion.
Chapter 3
Methodology

The proposed study was conducted on a group of African-American and Caucasian male adolescents ages 13-17 who were in the juvenile court system. The Global Risk Assessment Device (GRAD) was used for the study. The GRAD (Gavazzi, Novak, Yarcheck, & DiStefano, 2004) is a web-based device that refers youth and families at-risk to appropriate services by using 11 different domains such as prior offenses, family/parenting, education/vocation, peers relationships, substance abuse, leisure, personality/behavior, sociability, accountability, traumatic events, and health services. For the present study, only the family/parenting domain was used along with demographic information.

Procedure

The data was collected as a part of an ongoing project by Dr. Stephen M. Gavazzi and his research team, The Global Risk Assessment Device (GRAD) project team. GRAD assessment took approximately 20 minutes to complete with an additional 5 minutes to input demographic information associated with each youth. Youth-serving professionals who have experience working with at-risk youth and their families had one day of training to learn how to administrate the device. The professionals asked questions to the youth and put the answers directly in to the database. For example, “Are your family members too critical of you”?

The youth, with the help from their caregivers, rated how each item was true now and within the past six months using the following scale 0 = No/Never; 1 = Yes/A couple of times; 2 = Yes/A lot. A high score in each domain means that this youth is at greater risk. The family environmental risks scores are linked to demographic information collected and information is systematically aggregated to the user for reporting purposes.

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1 The standard of data security implemented by version 2.0 of GRAD closely parallels the “Sensitive But Unclassified” (SBU) classification as defined by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in directive MD 11042.1, January 5, 2005. SBU is similar to the standard of care the federal government applies to federal tax return information, data covered by the Privacy Act, grand jury information, and information relating to the nation’s critical infrastructures. Consistent with the SBU standard of care, the GRAD information systems, internal policies and procedures, and operations are compliant with applicable portions of the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA) and NIST Draft Publication 800-53 (Recommended Security Controls for Federal Information Systems).

14
Sample

The present study is a secondary data analysis on a sample of 703 (42%) African–American males and 976 (58%) Caucasian males with a combined total of 1679. The adolescent’s ages range from 13 to 17 years old ($M=15.3$, $SD=1.3$) and they were in the juvenile court system across five Ohio counties. Youth perspective was used to identify the family composition. When asked who the primary caregiver was, about 55.8% of the youth identified biological mother, 25.7% identified married two-parent biological, and 18.5% identified step-family. In terms of annual income for the families, 36.3% refused to report income, 30.5% resided in homes where the income is less than $24,999, 20.5% resided in homes with income $25,000-$54,999 range, and only 12.7% of the youth resided in homes with income of $55,000 or higher. For the present study, single fathers, grandparents, same-sex couples, and foster families have been excluded from the sample because the present study is specifically focused on families with non-residential vs. residential fathers. See Table 3.1 for demographics of participants.

Instrument

For the present study, the Global Risk Assessment Device (GRAD) was utilized to compare family/parenting domain with African-American and Caucasian adolescent behaviors. Chronbach’s alpha estimates of internal consistency of each subscale ranged from .63 to .90 and a confirmatory analysis displayed the goodness of fit to the construct structure (Gavazzi & Lim, 2003). Several studies (Gavazzi, Slade, Buettner, Patridge, Yarcheck, & Andrews, 2003; Gavazzi, Yarcheck, & Lim, 2005) also have provided validity evidence with other well-established measures of risk and needs assessment with predictive validity evidence concerning the GRAD use in making referrals for youth services. Gavazzi and Lim (2003) reported the concurrent validity for the Global Risk Assessment Device using a sample of 37 families of adolescents who participated in a family-based program designed to divert youth out of the justice system and a Pearson correlation was used to calculate global risk domains with other measures (i.e., Family Events Checklist, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, and Brief Symptom Inventory) most associated with their content. These significant correlations suggest that the measures assess comparable content, providing preliminary evidence for concurrent validity (Gavazzi & Lim, 2003).
Table 3.1 *Demographic Descriptions of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic Background</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>703</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>976</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>207</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>304</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>386</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>412</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>370</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Composition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married, two-parent biological</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>431</td>
<td></td>
<td>431</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>311</td>
<td></td>
<td>311</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-parent (mother only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>937</td>
<td></td>
<td>937</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>610</td>
<td></td>
<td>610</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 24,999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>512</td>
<td></td>
<td>512</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000-$54,999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>344</td>
<td></td>
<td>344</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 55,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>213</td>
<td></td>
<td>213</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1679</td>
<td></td>
<td>1679</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, predictive validity was checked in a sample containing 224 families of adolescents who were assessed by intake workers in a juvenile court and then referred for youth services (Gavazzi, Lim, Yarcheck, & Eyre, 2003). That is, evidence of acceptable reliability and validity for the GRAD domains have been supported and re-confirmed across studies (Gavazzi, et al., 2003; Gavazzi, et al., 2003; Gavazzi, et al., 2005).

For the present study, the scores of family/parenting subdomains are utilized along with demographic information. More specifically, family/parenting domain consisted of 17 items (see Appendix A) that addressed family environmental risks to connect with African-American and Caucasian male adolescent delinquent behaviors, including family conflict, parenting problems and economic hardship (See Table 3.2). The chonbach alpha of economic hardship (.40) is low compared to family conflict (.72) and parenting problems (.75) because economic hardship domain has only two items.

Table 3.2 Test of Reliability of Family/Parenting Sub-Domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family/Parenting Domain</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>(Chonbach’s Alpha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Hardship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Conflict</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Problems</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analyses

In order to explore the characteristics of the subjects, descriptive analyses were performed first with frequency, mean, and standard deviation. As the main data analysis, a Two-Way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was employed. Father’s residential status and ethnicity was included as independent variables, and the scores on family’s economic hardship, family conflict, and parenting problems were included as dependent variables.

A two-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) includes two independent variables or sometimes called factors, which affect the dependent variables. Each independent
variable had two levels within. The main effect of analysis is to look at the direct effect the independent has on the dependent variables. The interaction effect of analysis is to look at how the two independent variables interacted and the effect on the dependent variable.

Here, a two-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used instead of a series of ANOVA. Since MANOVA includes multiple dependent variables that can be measured across all levels with the same p-value .05. However, with a series of ANOVA the p-value .05 will increase in each separate level with a p-value of .15 this is because the number of groups grows with the number of pair comparisons. A series of univariate ANOVA tests also ignore the possibility of correlation between the dependent variables which can lead to an overall group difference. Therefore, MANOVA is more powerful than running separate univariate tests or independent t-tests. Basically, MANOVA has the ability to provide a single method of testing on a wide range of multivariate questions.

Father status indicates residential father verses non-residential father. Ethnicity indicates African-American or Caucasian male adolescents. The family’s economic stress indicated the family’s financial hardship. One of the questions utilized to measure this factor is “Is the family experiencing financial hardship?” Parenting problems was also measured. One of the questions that measure this factor is as follows: “Do adults in the home have difficulty keeping track of this youth?” Family Conflict was also measured. One of the questions that measure this factor is as follows: “Are there any adults in the home in conflict with this youth?” For the rest of the questions please refer to Appendix A.
Chapter 4
Results

Research findings presented in this chapter consist of three parts. The first part provides
descriptive analyses which includes a cross-tabulation analysis of independent variables, mean
and standard deviation of dependent variables. The second part discusses the results of Pearson
correlation among the three dependent variables. The third part is a two-way Multivariate
Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) of economic hardship, parenting problems and family
conflict. The independent variables are father’s status and ethnicity. The dependent variables are
economic hardship, parenting problems and family conflict.

Descriptive Statistics Analyses

A two-way contingency analysis was conducted to evaluate whether father’s status and
ethnicity have a statistically different association between these two variables. Father’s status
and ethnicity were found to be significantly related, $\chi^2 (2, 1679) = 249.82, p < .001$. That is,
African-American male adolescents had more non-residential fathers compared to Caucasians
counterparts, while Caucasian male adolescents had more residential fathers. See table 4.1 of the
results for the cross-tabulation of Ethnicity by Father Status. The mean and standard deviation of
dependent variables are listed on Table 4.2.
Table 4.1 *Cross-tabulation of Ethnicity by Father Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Status</th>
<th>Residential</th>
<th>Non-Residential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>African-American</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caucasian</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>937</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 *Descriptive Statistics of Family Environmental Risks*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Hardship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Conflict</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Pearson Correlation**

A Pearson correlation was used to determine the linear relationship between economic hardship, parenting problems, and family conflict to test the significance among the dependent variables. The results of the correlation analyses presented in Table 4.3 shows that all three of the correlation coefficients were statistically significant at the .01 level. The correlation coefficient between economic hardship and family conflict was statistically significant ($r = .37, p < .01$). The correlation coefficient between economic hardship and parenting problems was statistically significant ($r = .38, p < .01$). The correlation coefficient between parenting problems and family conflict was statistically significant ($r = .76, p < .01$).

Table 4.3 *Correlation between Family Environmental Risks*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Economic Hardship</th>
<th>Family Conflict</th>
<th>Parenting Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Hardship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.37(**)</td>
<td>.38(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.76(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Problems</td>
<td></td>
<td>.38(**)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $p^{**} < .01$
Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)

To determine the comparability of the groups, a 2 (father’s resident status: residential father and non-residential father) X 2 (ethnicity: African-American and Caucasian) MANOVA was performed with scores of family environmental risk indicators. Results of the two-way MANOVA revealed significant multivariate effects (based on Wilks’ Lambda) for ethnicity $[F (3, 1673) = 10.91, p < .001]$, and father’s resident status $[F (3, 1673) = 15.64, p < .001]$. However, there was no significant father’s resident status x ethnicity interaction effect $[F (3, 1673) = 2.30, ns.]$. The results are present on Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Multivariate Effect Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Numerator DF</th>
<th>Denominator DF</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>15.64</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1673</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>10.91</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1673</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father * Ethnicity</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1673</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subsequent univariate analyses were conducted in order to identify the source of the significant multivariate effects regarding father’s resident status, and ethnicity. In terms of the main effect of father’s resident status, male juvenile delinquents not having residential fathers were significantly more likely to report higher risk scores on the economic hardship $[F (1, 1675) = 43.86, p < .00]$, parenting problems $[F (1, 1675) = 15.93 p < .00]$, and family conflict $[F (1, 1675) = 11.24 p < .01]$ domain when compared to male juvenile delinquents having residential fathers. Regarding the significant ethnicity effect, African-American male adolescents scored significantly higher on only the parenting problem domain in comparison to Caucasian male adolescents. Results show that the univariate main effects for ethnicity was economic hardship $[F (1, 1675) = 3.005, p < .83]$, parenting problems $[F (1, 1675) = 15.81 p < .00]$, and family conflict $[F (1, 1675) = .163 p < .68]$. The results are presented in Table 4.5.
Table 4.5 *Univariate Main Effect Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Dependent Variables</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Error DF</th>
<th>F Value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Hardship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1675</td>
<td>43.86</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1675</td>
<td>15.928</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Conflict</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1675</td>
<td>11.241</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Hardship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1675</td>
<td>3.005</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1675</td>
<td>15.808</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Conflict</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1675</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The group means and standard deviations for each indicator are presented in Table 4.6. The results demonstrated that there were differentiated levels of family environmental risks that juvenile delinquents experience according to father’s residential status and ethnicity. That is, African-American juvenile delinquents or juvenile delinquents with non-residential fathers experience more family related problems than Caucasian juvenile delinquents or juvenile delinquent with residential fathers in this special population.
Table 4.6: Mean and Standard Deviation of Family Environmental Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Caucasian (n = 976)</th>
<th>African American (n = 703)</th>
<th>Non-Residential Fathers (n = 742)</th>
<th>Residential Fathers (n = 937)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Hardship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>3.08***</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.25***</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3.02***</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.74***</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.25***</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.25***</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < .01, ** p < .05, *** p < .001
The present study was designed to identify family environmental risks that juvenile delinquents experience without residential fathers and compare the levels of family related risks according to ethnicity (i.e., African-American and Caucasian male adolescents). More specifically, the present study examined economic hardship, parenting problems and family conflict according to father status and ethnicity. The data was collected as a part of an ongoing project by Dr. Stephen M. Gavazzi and his research team, The Global Risk Assessment Device (GRAD) project team. This study is a secondary data analysis on a sample of, 1679 adolescents that were in the juvenile court system in five Ohio counties. Family environmental risks that were identified by the youth were economic hardship, parenting problems and family conflict.

A Two-Way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used as the main data analysis to look at the effect that father’s residential status and ethnicity has on the family’s economic hardship, family conflict, and parenting problems. For the present study, the independent variables were father’s status and ethnicity. Economic hardship, family conflict, and parenting problems were included as dependent variables.

Summary of Findings

1. Court-involved male youth with non-residential fathers experience more family environmental risks than their counterparts with fathers in the home.

This study was used to identify the main effects of father’s status on family environmental risks on court-involved youth. Juvenile delinquents not having residential fathers were significantly more likely to report higher risk scores on the economic hardship, parenting problems, and family conflict domain when compared to juvenile delinquents having residential fathers. Further explanations of each sub-hypothesis are listed below.

1.1 Court-involved youth with non-residential fathers experience more economic hardship compared to their counterparts with fathers living in the home.

In the present study, male adolescents with non-residential fathers experienced more economic hardship compared to adolescents with residential fathers. Also, it indicates that
Stepfathers can take financial responsibility for the juvenile when biological fathers have refused to offer financial support or have alienated themselves from the juvenile (King, 1994). The findings are consistent with previous studies (King, 1994; King et al., 2004; King & Sobolewski, 2006; Marsiglo et al., 2000) in that non-residential fathers don’t provide for their children. Most non-residential fathers are not paying child support, which also contributes to financial hardship or lowered well-being of the child. For example, Coley (2001) found that within families that have a child support order in place, less than one third of non-residential fathers pay the full amount. In addition, these families with non-residential fathers seem to be lacking social capital as providing for the family unit. The family is positively meeting the needs of its members and carrying out vital functions for a successful society which leads to an effective economic unit that provides shelter, food and care for its members (Coleman, 1988; Hughes & Furstenberg, 1995; Menning, 2006; Portes, 1998). That is, when a biological parent departs the family due to lack of responsibility or refusing to care for the adolescent’s financial needs, the social capital will decline within the family. Therefore, youth living in single mother families have fewer resources for financial support and child support payments due to the departure of a biological parent (Coleman, 1988; Hughes & Furstenberg, 1995; Menning, 2006; Portes, 1998).

1.2 Court-involved youth with non-residential fathers experience more parenting problems compared to their peers with fathers living in the home.

In the present study, male adolescents with non-residential fathers experienced more parenting problems than their peers with fathers due to less structure in the home and living in a single-parent family. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Griffin et al., 2000; Harper & McLanahan 2004; Knoester & Haynie, 2005), that court-involved youth with non-residential fathers do experience more parenting problems than youth with residential fathers. Adolescents living in single mother families have lack of parental obligations such as supervision, monitoring, and involvement which can affect juvenile delinquency outcomes. For example, many non-residential fathers have limited opportunities such as reading and helping with homework, preparing and eating meals, and spending leisure time together. Therefore, adolescent delinquency and non-residential fathers seems to be associated with parental absence because of inadequate parental supervision (Rodney & Mupier, 1999).
Court-involved youth living in single mother families will have less structure due to the mother not being at home to supervise or monitor the youth’s actions (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Griffin et al., 2000; Harper & McLanahan 2004; Knoester & Haynie, 2005). For example, in a two-parent family there is someone available to be at home with the youth to make sure they are not getting into trouble. On the other hand, in a single-parent family the mother is performing dual roles as the mother and the father. That is, in single-mother families the mother is usually away from home due to jobs, which could lead the youth to become more delinquent than in two-parent families. Therefore, if a father is present in the home the adolescent would have better supervision and monitoring that is associated with parenting problems.

1.3 Court-involved youth with non-residential fathers experience more family conflict compared to their peers with fathers living in the home.

In the present study, male adolescents with non-residential fathers experienced more family conflict than their peers with fathers due to the relationship with the mothers and fathers role. The findings are consistent with previous studies (Harper & McLanahan 2004), that court-involved youth with non-residential fathers do experience more family conflict than their counterparts with fathers in the home.

Adolescents growing up in single mother households usually don’t have relationships with their fathers (Harper & McLanahan 2004). For example, if the father has alienated himself from the adolescent due to not caring or refusing to support them this would lead to conflict within their relationship. In addition, mother and son relationship could also lead to conflict if the adolescent is not showing his mother respect due to not having a father present which could lead to acting out. Therefore, in families where there is a father present would lead to less conflict between mother and son.

2. African-American male youth experience more family environmental risks than their white Caucasian counterparts.

This study identified differences to determine that African-American male adolescents experienced higher family risks compared to their Caucasian counterparts. Regarding the ethnicity main effect, African-American adolescents scored statically significant on the parenting problem domain in comparison to Caucasian adolescents. However, there is no significant
difference for African-American adolescents on economic hardship and family conflict domains in comparison to Caucasian adolescents.

2.1 African-American male youth experience more economic hardship compared to their Caucasian counterparts.

In the present study, African-American male youth did not experience more economic hardship compared to Caucasian counterparts. The finding is inconsistent with previous studies that have been reported (King et al., 2004; Pashcell et al., 2003) this seems to because by having a different sample in the present study. Paschall and colleagues (2003) sample was African-American male adolescents that were from socioeconomic disadvantaged families, however the uniqueness of the present sample could have affected the inconsistent results. For the present study, the sample was very limited to court-involved youth which could have expanded the results.

2.2 African-American male youth experience more parenting problems than their Caucasians counterparts.

In the present study, African-American male youth did experience more parenting problems compared to Caucasians. The findings are consistent with previous studies (Gray-Ray & Ray, 1990; Jenkins & Lyons, 2006; Paschall et al., 2003) finding African-American youth experience more parenting problems than their Caucasian counterparts. For example, African-American male adolescents in single mother families have less supervision and monitoring due to not having a father present (Paschall et al., 2003), because African-American adolescent males that are living in single-mother families have fewer resources (e.g. lack of education) than Caucasian adolescent males (Gray-Ray & Ray, 1990; Jenkins & Lyons, 2006).

2.3 African-American male youth experience more family conflict than their Caucasian counterparts.

African-American male youth did not experience more family conflict compared to their Caucasian counterparts. The findings are inconsistent with previous studies (Griffin et al., 2000; Smetana, & Gaines, 1999), that African-American males do experience more family conflict than their Caucasian counterparts. Griffin and colleagues (2000) found that African-American males do have more family conflict in single-mother families. Another study, Smetana and
Gaines (1999) found that African-American adolescents do experience more conflict mainly due to chores, acting out, and not cleaning their room. However, their sample was very small and only looked at African-American middle class families. The uniqueness of the present sample could have affected the inconsistent results. That is, the present sample was very limited to court-involved youth.

3. African-American male youth with non-residential fathers experience highest family related risk compared to other sub groups.

There was no significant father’s residential status and ethnicity interaction effect which was measured to look at African-American male youth with non-residential fathers experience highest family related risks compared to other sub-groups. For the present study, father’s residential status does have an effect on family environmental risks among court-involved youth regardless of race.

Limitations of the Study
Several limitations of the study should be noted and can be used to improve future studies.

First, the results were limited in their generalizability because the sample of the present study is from five juvenile county courts in Ohio, where the participants were on probation or parole within the court system. Also, the study did not include female adolescents or other ethnic groups (e.g. Latino, Hispanic, Bi-Racial, and Asian). The household composition was limited to single-parent mother, biological two-parents and biological mother and stepfather. The study did not include live in partners, grandparents, divorce parents, foster families, same-sex couples, and other relatives, incarnated fathers, or biological fathers that have passed away.

Second, the present study doesn’t consider the bias from juvenile justice system toward African-American male adolescents. Many researchers have concluded that discrimination and bias are the reasons for the overrepresentation of African-Americans within the juvenile justice systems. African-American male youth do have a higher rate of delinquency compared to their Caucasian counterparts. For example, police officers are more unkindly toward African-American male adolescents than Caucasian male adolescents and they are more likely to arrest them.

Third, the data only used the youth’s perspective which could lead to bias or misleading responses. The youth’s could be lying about their responses to the question given by the
administrator. For example, if the youth is angry at their parents maybe they would say something that is not true to get back at their parents.

Fourth, the study excludes kinship families in all extended families. For example, many African-American families usually have other family members (e.g. grandmother, elderly aunt or uncle, niece or nephew) living under the same roof in order to provide more adults to help raise the children (Gray-Ray & Ray, 1990; Paschall et al., 2003).

Fifth, the study excludes the level of education of parents and whether the students received child support or not. Level of education for parents can have a positive affect on the outcomes of juvenile delinquents which can lead to a decrease of social capital. Also, child support can help pay expenses for the juvenile with educational or personal expenses (King, 1994; Menning, 2006).

Implications

Despite the fact that there is growing evidence regarding a connection between non-residential fathers and family environmental risks (Coley & Medeiros, 2007; Harper & McLanahan, 2004), researchers have made little effort to identify family environmental risks that juvenile delinquents experience without a father present. That is, no study examines family environmental risks between father statuses among juvenile delinquents.

Therefore, this study is intended to advance knowledge of the impact of father’s residential status on family related risks among court-involved youth. The findings from the present study should be helpful to professionals within the field of family science by providing more programming and advocacy about the dynamics of behaviors that contribute to juvenile delinquency. For example, the information provided can contribute to parenting programs to help parents with their parenting skills with juvenile delinquents. The parenting educator will be able to help parents that are having difficulty with disciplining, monitoring, and lack of supervision of their adolescents. That is, parents need to emphasize the importance of supervision and control of delinquent behaviors.

Programs that target fathers can use the findings from the study to understand the impact they have on juvenile delinquency. For example, the programs could help fathers with their understanding on why they need to spend more time in their children’s life. Also it will help fathers that are incarnated to speak with their adolescent sons about not following the same path.
Juvenile courts and detention centers could become more aware of the problems that juvenile defenders are facing within the family environment such as living in a single mother household or living in the inner city.

This study is very important for non-residential fathers to contribute to the economic hardship faced by many male juvenile delinquents that are growing up in single-mother households. Non-residential fathers need to have more of an open relationship with their children instead of a close relationship, so they can feel warmth and emotional closeness to be more of a useful parent which can include social capital for adolescents.

Finally, the study will help society not to have so much stigmatism on juvenile delinquents and African-American male adolescents that are in the juvenile system. Society needs to look at more policy change for African-American males and juvenile delinquents to see where the problem starts within the family dynamics or family environment.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The finding from the current study provides the impact that father’s status has on male court-involved youth within family environmental risks which can lead to further direction. The significant results of the study can be used to examine other family environmental risks variables (i.e., education, socioeconomic status, poverty, and child neglect) to be used to asset father’s status (i.e., Residential and Non-Residential) and with non court-involved youth.

Ethnicity was limited to only African-American and Caucasian male court-involved youth in the present study. Instead it should have include other ethnic groups to get a wide range of the impact of father’s status has on family environmental risks. Therefore, future research should include other ethnic groups (e.g. Latino, Hispanic, Bi-Racial, and Asian) and females as well.

Additionally, the relationships between the juvenile justice systems such as arrest rates, behavior patterns, court processing, and sentencing should be explored more fully to understand the high incarnation rates of African-American male juveniles. The study can also that are exploring juvenile delinquency with the impact of African-American families and community to examine more in deep analysis of the environment using the GRAD which could include other domains such as prior offenses, education/vocation, peers relationships, substance abuse, leisure, personality/behavior, sociability, accountability, traumatic events, and health service and to look at the bias of juvenile justice system. Therefore, using the GRAD could help determine different
outcomes for juvenile that are experiencing bias for justice system to further educate society and to assess the needs of the delinquent.

Finally, future research is needed to replicate the present study and to use a longitudinal study design which also include age, race, gender, and fathers status in order to receive greater generalizability to look at the relationship between father’s status and family environmental risks that was used in the present study. Therefore, longitudinal study will be able to have more of an impact to explore the family environmental risks that juvenile delinquents face.

**Conclusion**

This study is the first study to identify family environmental risks that juvenile delinquents experience with non-residential fathers and compare the levels of family related risks according to ethnicity (i.e., African-American and Caucasian male adolescents). More specifically, the present study examines economic hardship, parenting problems and family conflict to father’s residential status and ethnicity.

The main findings of the study show that non-residential fathers do have a negative impact on male adolescent compared to residential fathers. African-American male adolescents do experience more parenting problems compared to Caucasian male adolescent. Therefore, based on the results of this study there appears to be specific family environmental risks and father’s status that impact court-involved youth and African-American male adolescents.
References


Appendix A: Parenting/Family Domain
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Economic Hardship
1. Is the family experiencing financial hardship?
2. Is the family at-risk for homelessness?

Family Conflict
1. Are there any adults in the home in conflict with this youth?
2. Do physical altercations happen between this youth and adults in the home because of the youth’s misbehavior?
3. Do adults in the home get into verbal shouting matches with this youth?
4. Does the youth become more uncontrollable after they have been punished?
5. Do family members seem to take extra care not to upset this youth?
6. Is there too much conflict or fighting between this youth and their siblings?

Parenting Problems
1. Do adults in the home have difficulty keeping track of this youth?
2. Are family members to critical of the youth?
3. Is this youth not welcome to stay in the family home?
4. Is this youth at-risk of harm or in eminent physical danger if they remain in the home?
5. Do adults have to come down hard on this youth (i.e. harsh punishment)?
6. Do adults in the home tip-toe around this youth in order not to upset them?
7. Do adults in the home find it easier to do things themselves instead of asking the youth to do them?
8. Is the quality of the youth’s relationship with their mother/primary female caregiver poor or non-existent?
9. Is the quality of the youth’s relationship with the father/primary male caregiver poor or non-existent?