Female delinquency: A comparison study as related to purpose in life

Geraldine M. Olin
FEMALE DELINQUENCY: A COMPARISON STUDY
AS RELATED TO PURPOSE IN LIFE

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State
College, San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Psychology

by
Geraldine M. Olin
August 1975
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Abstract

This study hypothesized that adolescent females who committed behaviors that caused them to be referred to the juvenile court system for official processing were more likely to exhibit an apparent lack of meaning or purpose in life. Forty-two delinquent females and forty-two non-delinquent females, between the ages of twelve and seventeen, were tested with the Purpose In Life Test and the group scores were compared. As predicted, the group of delinquent females scored significantly lower on the test than did the group of non-delinquent females, $t(82) = 5.4323, p < .0005$. 
Acknowledgements

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CHAPTER I

A significant portion of children in our society are either unhealthy, poorly educated, emotionally maladjusted, or habituated to misbehavior. Often this misbehavior is manifested in what is commonly referred to as delinquency. The preponderance of research in the area of delinquency has been devoted to male delinquency. This focus of attention is understandable in view of the greater frequency of reported male delinquency over that of female delinquency. Official statistics indicate that youthful male offenders appear before the juvenile court four to five times more often than do youthful female offenders, however, this ratio of male to female offenders is rapidly changing. For example, in 1974 the San Bernardino County Juvenile Court processed two youthful male offenders for every one youthful female offender (San Bernardino County, 1974).

Official juvenile delinquency consists of misbehavior by youthful offenders, a group comprised of children and adolescents, that leads to referral to the juvenile court. The laws governing juvenile offenders in most states are usually vague, and fall into what is
commonly referred to as omnibus statutes. The philosophy of the juvenile court system of the state of California is demonstrative of this omnibus concept. Juvenile court laws in the state of California originate from the Welfare and Institutions Code. Proceedings, considered non-criminal, are directed on behalf of the minor. As a result, the system is not intended to be an adversary process. The need for the formal adversary atmosphere is not apparent since the State is attempting to help, not prosecute, the defendant. The basic elements and objectives of this system are spelled out in the Welfare and Institutions Code, however, the means by which they are employed and interpreted vary from county to county. As a result, what occurs in practice is a rather vague, subjective interpretation, and ultimately a subjective enforcement of the statutes.

The general public commonly views juvenile delinquency as a social or psychological term but rarely is it seen as a legal concept. Definitions of delinquency delinquents themselves, and even the offenses which are termed delinquent, are frequently vague and inconsistent. There can be no general agreement as to an accurate definition or criterion for delinquency. In the United States, the definition is confused by moral judgments, such as willful disobedience, incorrigibility, stubborn-
ness, and associating with vicious persons. Actually, what is found is that offenses leading to commitments tend to be merely descriptive of the unlawful behavior with little possibility of any consistency and meaningful interpretation from one jurisdiction to another, even when the same legal terminology is employed. This has been supported by the work of Sophia M. Robinson (1960) who has suggested that delinquency is an umbrella term for the wide variety of socially disapproved behavior varying with time, place, administrative policy, and attitude of the criminal justice agency in authority. The concept has been saddled with extra-legal definitions, even by such experts as teachers, psychiatrists, and social workers, who have often been inconsistent in their views of delinquency. This inconsistency and uncertainty among professionals working in the field has stemmed from the basic structure of the omnibus style of delinquency statutes. Although delinquency statutes were originally designed to be protective in nature, the public now attaches a stigma to delinquency in much the same manner that it does to criminality.

Cavan (1961) has asserted that laws are actually of no utility in defining juvenile delinquency. In terms of developing a theoretical rationale in
which to operate and implement an effective treatment program, they have even less value. Criminologist Anthony Platt (1969) has often attacked the entire juvenile court system asserting that "the real purpose of the juvenile court is to prevent premature independence and to enforce traditional sex roles" (p. 17).

In essence, the concept of juvenile delinquency has no universal definition. In most juvenile research, the term juvenile delinquent has been described as a child who has been officially labeled by the court as delinquent. The child is delinquent by adjudication or by definition. Juvenile delinquency is neither a behavioral problem nor a clinical diagnosis; rather, it is a descriptive term referring to a vague area of antisocial and anti-social behavior. In reality delinquency is a legal concept and a juvenile cannot be deemed one unless the law so stipulates (Weiss, 1953).

Although juvenile delinquency may be regarded as an artificial concept which is legal and social in origin, it may also refer to a personality disturbance which manifests itself in open conflict with society (Bovet, 1951; Blos, 1957). For girls, this conflict has usually been in the form of sexual deviancy which Blos has claimed is dynamically close to perversion, a fact which strongly differentiates female delinquency from male delinquency.
Several authors (Galvin, 1956; Knopka, 1966; Lander, 1963) have suggested that delinquent girls have difficulty with femininity and see women as inevitable sufferers who are unable to obtain desirable goals. Galvin and Knopka have posited that, by becoming sexually promiscuous, these girls are not really seeking pleasure but are attempting to demonstrate that they are not afraid of men or sexual intercourse when in actuality they are very much afraid and often express guilt over their actions.

Until recently, the problems of both male and female delinquency have been interpreted and treated as a single entity. It has now become apparent that female delinquency has emerged as a complex problem in its own right. Female delinquency differs from male delinquency in etiological factors, types of crimes committed, age at onset of criminal career, and requires different treatment programming. Generally speaking, female delinquency falls under the more ambiguous clauses of sexual misconduct, incorrigibility, and truancy. Most contemporary theorists (Cavan, 1969; Gibbons, 1970; Knopka, 1966; Vedder & Sommerville, 1970) have acknowledged the existence of a sexual double standard inherent in the law and in the administration of the law—the latter of which is a matter of
interpretation.

In contrast to the property-damage offenses of boys, the vast majority of girl delinquents have been adjudicated guilty of sex-oriented crimes, a fact which imposes upon them added problems as well as social stigma. Society tends to view delinquent girls much differently from delinquent boys. Several authors (Cunningham, 1963; Deutsch, 1950; Knopka, 1966; Payak, 1963) have commented on societies judgment of them as bad girls and emphasize that those individuals responsible for the treatment of these girls have often shared this attitude.

Accordingly, the process of court referrals, juvenile hall detainment, and institutionalization has differed markedly for the female delinquent when compared with the male delinquent. The FBI's Uniform Crime Report of 1966 has indicated that male arrest rates for serious crimes was 1097 per 100,000 males as compared to 164 per 100,000 females (Gibbons, 1970). Similar statistics show that girls have been referred to court more often than boys for less serious crimes, usually non-criminal behavior, as expressed in sexual offenses, ungovernability, malicious mischief, whereas only 34% of the males were referred for these same offenses. It is evident that the vast majority of fe-
male delinquents have been institutionalized for conduct or offenses originating from sexual misconduct. Under the guise of protection, society has revealed profound confusion and ambivalence about young females and their sexual activity.

These statistics indicate that the juvenile court system is invested with the jurisdiction and, most importantly, the discretion over the control of females for conduct ignored in boys. In other words, females are prosecuted for behavior overlooked in males which would not be considered for action in either case if the individual was an adult. From the aforementioned statistics, it is apparent that sexual behavior is seen as a significant variable in focusing undeserved attention on the female delinquent in the juvenile court system.

In trying to understand female delinquency, one must account for the role that sexuality plays. Comprehending female delinquency has been further complicated by the problems encountered in attempting to reveal and identify the different etiological processes which are involved in the various forms of female delinquency. In this sense, Gibbons (1970) has viewed delinquent behavior as the product of multiple-causation. At the same time, it is possible to identify the
different variables which are involved in the various forms of female delinquency. It is my hope, with this research, to distinguish one more significant variable which may be used in conjunction with other theories of female delinquency to help identify the potentially delinquent girl.

The contemporary psychiatric and psychogenic approach to understanding delinquency has evolved from the predisposition towards physique and heredity as the major causative factors in delinquent behavior (Cowie, Cowie & Slater, 1968; Glueck & Glueck, 1934; Healy & Bronner, 1934; Lombroso, 1920) to the predisposition that character and personality are essential to understanding the causal scheme in the development of delinquent behavior (Friedlander, 1947; Reckless, 1967; Redl, 1951).

Contemporary psychoanalysts have described the inability to control impulses as a major predisposing factor to delinquent behavior. As a result of the inability to control impulses, the delinquent "carries out in his actions his natural, unbridled instinctual drives; in essence, he acts out as a child would act out only if it could" (Tarrasch, 1950, p. 97). Tarrasch has further related that "there is a delinquency potential in every child, hence, delinquency is almost
normal behavior" and that "the delinquent does not differ from the non-delinquent in his or her basic psychological make-up" (pp. 97-101). The basic difference between the delinquent and the non-delinquent is the result of parental training which develops within the individual a system of effective controls over these impulses. The delinquent has a weak ego, or an ego whose effectiveness has been reduced by emotional conflict (Toch & Goldstein, 1961).

There has been a substantial amount of research investigating the emotional development of the delinquent. In an early research study conducted by Healy and Bronner (1934), they found that no less than 91% of all the delinquents examined gave clear evidence of having had unhappy childhoods and were extremely disturbed by emotionally provoking situations or experiences. Following this, Bates (1949) has proposed that experiences, particularly those which are charged with a painful emotion which have since been repressed, are of great importance in attempting to understand the motivation behind delinquent behavior.

According to Abrahamsen (1968), delinquent and criminal behavior have been products of an individual's tendencies in the situation at the moment, interacting with the resistance to participate in misconduct ac-
quired during childhood conditioning. He has stressed that some children become predisposed to aggressive behavior due to emotional deprivation during childhood. As a developmental process, the offender seldom turns to delinquency overnight, but gradually becomes sensitized to and develops delinquent activities. Accordingly, the child, as he or she reaches adolescence, is seen as being in a period of crisis in his or her socialization process. This social-psychological identity crisis is seen as the result of the adolescent being denied the protection of childhood and at the same time denied the rewards of adulthood. This creates a no man's land where the individual has shaken the title of child, yet is unable to obtain the status of adult.

Barbara Kay (1961) has designed a research study to test a specific hypothesis regarding components of the self-concept as defined by delinquent females. By using 350 Ohio Reformatory for Women inmates as subjects, she sought to explain the chief aspects of the female prisoners' self as the inmate perceived it in the institution as well as the extent to which the inmate perceived herself as being alienated. She has found that alienation of the female inmates was not more pronounced than that experienced by professional
women, factory workers, or shop girls—that is, those individuals commonly referred to as normal and non-delinquent. Kay has conceptualized this as role lag. Role lag refers to the discrepancy between what the female considers to be the equal position of women in the United States today and her actual status in regard to the equality of her position when compared to males.

Contemporary women must wear a variety of masks and must portray many roles. These roles lack consistency and continuity and lay the ground work for role-dilemma because these masks must be frequently changed. Without a suitable adult female with whom the adolescent can identify, the chances of failing to learn to cope with this multiplicity of roles are increased. Subsequently, she may become especially vulnerable to delinquent behavior as she feels disassociated from society and powerless to control her destiny. As her control over her own life lessens, she may develop feelings of hopelessness (Coughlin, 1956; Kay, 1961).

Gisela Knopka (1966) has concluded that institutionalized girls commonly have fear and distrust of adults and authority figures, poor self images, a deep sense of isolation, and a lack of communication with others. She compared matched groups of delinquent and
non-delinquent boys and girls and established that delinquent girls had the highest incidence of broken homes or homes beset by quarrels or tension and were more often untidy and neglectful of personal appearance. It was further found that girls did not receive the same support from the delinquent subculture as do boys. Girls were only admitted to the fringes of male gangs. Perhaps the most significant difference was reported at puberty when the wayward boy engaged in stealing, breaking and entering, and burglarly, and only occasionally in sex offenses; whereas, the wayward girl more often engaged in sexual misconduct. Such behavior served as a direct form of protest against the attitudes and restrictions of significant authority figures and relatives. Most often it appeared to be a means of seeking out the affection which had been wanting in an unhappy environment. This was often manifested when the female ran away from an unhappy home into the arms of a lover. This illicit love was primarily an attention-seeking device and should not be considered as being motivated by promiscuity.

The early works of Fernald (1920), Glueck and Glueck (1934), Healy and Bronner (1936), and Otterstrom (1946) have supported the consensus that girl delinquents deviate from sociological and psychological
norms much more than do delinquent boys. This sex difference lies close to the predisposing factors that go into the causation of that delinquency. The evidence of these comparative studies has established that delinquent girls, as compared to delinquent boys, come from more economically disadvantaged homes reflecting more mental abnormality in the family, lower moral standards, and a lack of discipline. It has also been noted that more often delinquent females come from broken homes with more family conflict, lower school achievement, and hostility towards education. Additionally, the works of Diller (1952), Vane (1954), Bernstein and Corsini (1953) whose comparative studies of delinquent and non-delinquent girls indicate that delinquent girls obtain a wide range of IQ scores, but lean toward lower than average or dull IQ scores.

Fine and Fishman (1968) have reported an abusive or absent father and an overworked mother who has often turned to alcoholism and prostitution as commonplace in the family of the delinquent female. According to Otterstrom (1946), parental promiscuity and illegitimacy rates have been extremely high in the family background of the delinquent female; for example, 30%–40% of female delinquents studied were found to be illegitimate. Wattenburg and Saunders (1955) have held
the contention that defects of interpersonal relations, especially conflicts within the family, have played a large role in causing delinquency in girls more so than in boys. Unlike the pattern with female delinquency, most male delinquency has resulted from the influence of the social milieu in which the adolescent male participates. There has been a close correlation between gang life and the adoption of delinquent behavior patterns among male delinquents.

The work of Nye (1958) has indicated that the relationship between family conflict and the resulting lack of identification with the family leads to delinquent behavior. It is Nye's thesis that the major difference between the sexes is in the incidence of direct control, particularly at the time of adolescence. Girls have been more subject to a restricted life than have boys, and these controls have been exercised more by the family than by the extra-familial environment. According to Nye, the lack of proper family identification has been paramount in the development of illegitimate life styles and delinquent behavior patterns in females. Girls have been less frequently delinquent than boys because they have been kept under better control by their families, and this close family control and supervision constitutes a kind of bottleneck,
holding the girl back from her path towards delinquency. At the same time, this bottleneck has restricted the participation of the young female in family input which may be extremely significant when attempting to establish a causal scheme between proper female role-identity and delinquent peer group identity.

Robert Coughlin (1956) has stated that the industrial revolution has produced an unsettling effect on the emotional life of both men and women, and women in particular. He further stated that many psychiatrists believe that the sudden change destroyed the traditional basis upon which women's respect is based. In essence, her home, the center of her deepest emotional satisfaction, has lost not only its economic value, but most of the educational and recreational aspects which she has supervised.

Florence Kluchalm (1953) has stated that in reviewing the history of woman's role in America, it has become quite evident that for many years the essential issue has been her demand for the right to participate fully in those activities in which traditional American values have been expressed. Because of the advancement of education for women, the issue has become more apparent. Furthermore, she has concluded that "it is not to be wondered that the strains in
the feminine role are numerous and makes for serious personality disturbances in many women" (p.356).

The work of Gisela Knopka (1966) has added another important note to this conception. The rapidly changing cultural patterns of contemporary society have given adolescent girls no tradition or preparation for vocational roles, including those of wife and mother. Since the end of World War II, women have become more independent and autonomous of traditional roles. However, society has not yet fully accepted this change. As a result, there has been a value conflict of an intense nature at the time when adolescent girls have been forced to deal with many other value conflicts that are encountered in the maturational process. Accordingly, the social identity crisis of the female adolescent is much more paramount than the male adolescent. The complex identity problems differ from those of boys in intensity and in scope, and are aggravated for girls in lower income families by the inferior, undesirable status of the women available for role identification.

Zillbach (1962) has described the female delinquent as a deprived individual. Schwarfman (1967) has found the homes of delinquent girls from low social and economic environments to be disorganized and de-
plorable. The delinquent girl is generally a lonely girl with a warped concept of feminine identification, probably stemming from a poor, inadequate relationship with her mother. This inadequate relationship creates for the female adolescent, a poor role-identity figure and the resulting failure to identify leads to the internalization of delinquency, or subcultural identities.

Davids (1962) has found that, although delinquent girls appear to be more present-oriented than non-delinquent girls, the female delinquent is no different from her non-delinquent peers in her hopes and ambitions. The inadequate social and economic environment of the delinquent female prevents participation in, and identification with, stable and positive female identification models. This inadequate background, reflecting negative and unstable peer association, has set the female delinquent apart from the non-delinquent female in her attempts at achieving her hopes and ambitions. Without a proper role-identity model from which to develop those traits and behaviors necessary for full participation in society, an individual develops those traits and behaviors which are most easily accessible, as in peer groups. In fact, they may even develop new desires and ambitions acceptable to the subculture, yet in opposition to socially acceptable be-
Knopka (1966) has postulated that because most girls act out their frustration sexually, the attitude of society is especially harsh toward the delinquent girl and is reflected in the prosecution of females for this type of misconduct. As previously stated, several authors (Knopka, 1966; Lander, 1963; Trese, 1966) have suggested that these girls have difficulty with feminine identification and see women as inevitably suffering and unable to obtain desired goals. This suffering is a result of the role-identity crisis which stems from uncertain role expectations in a male-dominated society.

This author speculates that the female delinquent suffers from an apparent lack of meaning and purpose in her life, which is the result of an inability to achieve desired goals. In essence, a behavior pattern results which has developed because the original ambitions and aspirations have been denied and the delinquent becomes frustrated. The resulting values and attitudes are those of a non-achiever who seeks to find whatever immediate relief and satisfaction is available, without regard for long term goals, objectives or consequences.

It is hypothesized that this role-identity con-
fusion prevents the female delinquent from achieving her desired goals in life and satisfying her personal ambition. The intention of this research is to explore the possibility that adolescent girls who are processed through the juvenile court system as delinquent are more likely to suffer from an apparent lack of meaning or purpose in life, manifested as apathy or boredom.

Hypothesis

For the purpose of this investigation, the following hypothesis had been formulated and was tested:

The mean score of Group II (delinquent females) will be significantly lower than the mean score of Group I (non-delinquent females) indicating a lack of awareness or understanding of meaning in life, as measured by the Purpose In Life Test for delinquent females as compared with non-delinquent females (Crumbaugh, 1969).
CHAPTER II
Method

This study investigated the theoretical assumption that adolescent females who committed behaviors that caused them to be referred to the juvenile court system for official processing as a female delinquent were more likely to suffer an apparent lack of meaning or purpose in life, manifested as apathy or boredom. The female population in the study was divided into two groups. Group I consisted of non-delinquent females while Group II consisted of delinquent females. The groups were not matched or equated.

Subjects

Group I consisted of 42 female subjects randomly selected from a senior high school and a junior high school in the San Bernardino Unified School District, San Bernardino County, California. The subjects involved in this group had no history of official delinquent behavior in either arrest reported or conviction. The schools from which the subjects were drawn were chosen because they were similar in population to that which comprised Group II. The subjects ranged in age from 12 to 17, with a mean age of 14.5 years.
Group II consisted of 42 female subjects who had been officially referred to and processed by the San Bernardino County Juvenile Hall, Psychological Services, San Bernardino, California. Delinquency is defined as misbehavior by children and adolescents that leads to official referral to the juvenile court. The population represented female youths from various sections of San Bernardino County. They ranged in age from 12 to 17, with a mean age of 14.4.

Materials

Purpose In Life Test. The Purpose In Life Test is an attitude scale designed to measure a person's sense of meaning and purpose in life. The test consists of three parts, however, only Part A was administered since it is the only portion of the instrument which is objectively scored. Validity and reliability statistics are based on this part. For most research purposes Parts B and C are ignored. The structure of the items follow a pattern of a seven point scale, the higher the score in Part A, the higher the purpose in life.

Although not used in this study, in order to have a better understanding of the test instrument an explanation of the remaining sections of the test follows:

Part B of the Purpose In Life Test is a sentence
completion format with 13 items. Part C asks for a paragraph describing the aims, ambitions, and goals in life as well as how much progress is being made toward achieving them.

Validity. The construct validity of the instrument seems well supported by the work of Crumbaugh (1964), Gibson (1968), Worthen, Johnson, Badore, and Bentley (1973). Crumbaugh (1964) successfully discriminated significantly between patient and non-patient populations. This study was cross-validated by Crumbaugh and Maholick (1968).

The criterion or concurrent validity of the **Purpose In Life Test** has been evaluated by the following two measures: 1) a correlation between **Purpose In Life** scores and therapist ratings of "purposefulness", and 2) a correlation between **Purpose In Life** scores and ratings by ministers. The results were R=.38 (Pearson Product-Moment, N=50) and R=.47 (Pearson Product-Moment, N=120), respectively. Crumbaugh (1969) stated that these results were found to be in line with the level of criterion validity that can usually be obtained from a single measure of a complex trait.

Reliability. Crumbaugh and Maholick (1964) reported a split-half (odd-even) reliability coefficient of R=.81 (Pearson Product-Moment, N=225), Spearmann-
Brown corrected to .90. The same relationship was determined by Crumbaugh (1968) as $R = .85$ (Pearson-Product Moment, $N=120$), Spearman-Brown corrected to .92.

Procedure

The Purpose In Life Test is easily administered in an individual or group setting and requires no instructions beyond those printed on the test form. The test requires a reading ability of about fourth grade level or higher. There is no time limit.

Group I. After receiving permission from the principals and respective teachers, the test was administered to the subjects that comprised the non-delinquent group.

Group II. The subjects that comprised the delinquent group were administered the Purpose In Life Test along with the battery of tests that they are required to take upon detention in juvenile hall. The Purpose In Life Test was the first test administered in the battery.

Even though the Purpose In Life Test is a self-administering test, the investigator attempted to answer all questions pertinent to the test that the subjects posed.

Scoring. The subject is asked to provide a measure of her purpose in life by rating each state-
ment according to a seven point scale. The numbers always extend from one extreme feeling to its opposite kind of feeling.

The score is the simple sum of the numerical values circled for the twenty items of Part A.

Norms. The individuals from which the normative data were developed was composed of 1,151 cases reported by Crumbaugh (1968). In that study the normal population (N=805) yielded a mean of 112.42 in relation to the smaller patient population (N=346) for which the mean was 92.60. It was estimated that the best cutting score would be one-half way between the two means with an over-all estimated standard deviation of 19.

Crumbaugh (1968) reported that raw scores of 113 or above suggested the presence of definite purpose in life, while raw scores of 91 or below suggest lack of clear meaning and purpose.
CHAPTER III

Results

The purpose of this study was to compare the measured purpose in life of two groups of girls demonstrating different behavior patterns to establish that the delinquent subjects held less meaning in life when compared to the non-delinquent subjects.

A t-Test analysis of the means was performed in an effort to support the previously stated specific hypothesis. The .05 level of significance was established as the level for acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis.

Findings

Statistical analysis of the means was found to be significant at the .0005 level. To demonstrate that a significant difference existed between the groups the obtained value of $t$ had to exceed 1.666 at the .05 level and 3.4280 at the .0005 level. Computed critical $t = 5.4323$.

The delinquent group of females scored significantly lower than the non-delinquent group of females. The hypothesis was accepted as being significant in a positive direction.

Table 1 provides the measures of central tend-
ency and variability of the *Purpose In Life Test* scores received by the delinquent and non-delinquent groups. Lower scores indicated less purpose and meaning in life.

The results of the t-Test analysis as well as the means and standard deviations of the scores for the delinquent and non-delinquent groups are presented in Table 2. The delinquent female group demonstrates significantly lower purpose and meaning in life, as measured by the *Purpose In Life Test*, than the non-delinquent female group.

Figure 1 graphically presents the frequency distribution of scores for the delinquent and non-delinquent female subjects.

The findings of this study are in accordance with the results that might normally be expected for a study of the purpose in life of delinquents and non-delinquents. The available research studies (Gibson, 1968; Worthen, et. al., 1973) have demonstrated that delinquent males score much lower in purpose in life than do non-delinquent males.
TABLE 1

Total Sample Descriptive Statistics for Purpose In Life Test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Delinquent</td>
<td>104.55</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>18.14</td>
<td>50-131</td>
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<tr>
<td>(N=42)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquent</td>
<td>83.69</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>20.19</td>
<td>41-119</td>
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<tr>
<td>(N=42)</td>
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TABLE 2

t-Test Analysis of Means of Non-Delinquent Females and Delinquent Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Non-Delinquent Mean</th>
<th>Non-Delinquent SD</th>
<th>Delinquent Mean</th>
<th>Delinquent SD</th>
<th>t</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose In Life</td>
<td>104.55</td>
<td>18.14</td>
<td>83.69</td>
<td>20.19</td>
<td>5.4323*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=84)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

*p < .0005

1 tailed, 82 df
Non-Delinquents
M=104.55
SD=18.14
N=42

Delinquents
M=83.69
SD=20.19
N=42

Purpose In Life Scores

Figure 1. Frequency distribution for delinquent and non-delinquent female subjects
CHAPTER IV

Discussion

The test results indicate a significantly lower purpose in life among delinquent females when compared to non-delinquent females. These findings provide strong support for the contemporary psychological thought advanced by the previously cited theorists who view the delinquent female as alienated, apathetic, and lonely.

The major cause for this delinquent behavior is seen by these aforementioned authors as a result of the frustration experienced when adolescents, regardless of gender, are unable to accomplish desired or expected goals. The resulting frustrated pattern of behavior may or may not lead to asocial or anti-social behaviors.

In order to adequately understand the results of this investigation as it relates to female delinquency, the individual psychological and environmental factors influencing the development of the adolescent female identity must be considered. Many adolescents perceive that there is no meaningful purpose or place for them in society. This is especially true for adolescent females who experience difficulty in knowing
the role that they are to portray in our changing society. The increased awareness of women as a cultural entity has led to the evolution of the American woman's social emancipation resulting in the rapid changing of the female role in contemporary society. It has been found that disharmony results when the social expectancies of modern women clash with the traditional ideal of women in society (Kay, 1961; Knopka, 1966). This author speculates that this rapid change in role expectations and the inherent conflict found in the disharmony between modern aspirations and traditional expectancies has resulted in role confusion which prevents the female adolescent from achieving her desired goals in life and satisfying her personal ambitions.

The theoretical formulation of this author suggests that the typical female delinquent feels that she has no control over her future. It is important for teachers, parents, and correctional workers, as defining agents, to understand the peculiar position in which the female adolescent has been placed and the unique problem with which she has been confronted. In most cases these young girls are adults physiologically and are moving to adulthood psychologically. Yet, they are restrained by society and held in a childlike, dependent role and prevented from assuming the responsi-
bilities, privileges, and goals of adulthood. As a result, they become frustrated by their feelings of impotence due to the lack of control over their own destiny. Parallel with these feelings of impotence, they develop feelings of incompetence because they are unable to contribute in any significant way to society. Accordingly, the adolescent identity crisis is compounded by the role-confusion of the female creating conditions that may ultimately lead to delinquency.

It is this author's opinion that the practical implications of the aforementioned causal scheme strongly suggest that there is a need to instill within adolescent females, especially delinquent adolescent females, proper role identities. By preventing role-identity confusion and the resulting personal frustration, the probability of preventing or correcting the behavior which has resulted from that attitude will be increased. The body of knowledge regarding the psychological factors leading to female delinquency should include the techniques for the prevention and correction of role-identity confusion. The implication here is that, as a society, it is essential that we establish practical and worthwhile roles for female adolescents. In this sense, "awareness training" would appear to be an effective tool for preventing and correct-
ing delinquent behavior among females. "Consciousness raising" groups would be seen as a viable treatment for the prevention of female delinquency, treatment of institutionalized female delinquents and delinquent females currently on probation or parole (Brodsky, 1973; Franks, 1974). With more knowledge of the individual self of the female and her personal and social expectancies, the frustration resulting from role-confusion would be reduced, resulting in a stabilization of roles, attitudes, and behavior.

Inherent in any empirical investigation are limitations imposed by research design. By limiting this study to only those delinquents who have been officially processed as delinquents, the vast majority of unofficial and uninstitutionalized female delinquents have been omitted. As a result, it is possible that the subject population is not representative of all female offenders. Perhaps the reason for the extreme significance found in this study lies in the fact that the female population investigated consisted of institutionalized subjects. Intrinsic to the institutionalization of these subjects is the loss of control over their existence which may have been reflected in their test scores. This author recommends that any attempts at future research of this nature should include non-in-
institutionalized delinquents in their study to control for this factor variable.

The data collected and the results formulated from this study were not adequate to determine a complete causal scheme of female delinquency; additional research would have to be conducted in order to develop such a scheme. However, this study established a significant relationship between a lack of purpose in life, represented by feelings of apathy and boredom, and a tendency to participate in delinquent activities.

The significant influence of the increasing emancipation of women and the proliferation of the equal right movements are both contributing factors in girls becoming more involved in aggressive anti-social behavior, fighting, stealing, and gang activities. Yet, it is understandable that as the social roles of boys and girls become more alike, their delinquent activities become less distinguishable. Considering this direction, it will not be unreasonable to expect more serious female delinquency in the future unless there are significant strides made in understanding, preventing, and treating female delinquency.
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APPENDIX A

NAME ___________________________ DATE _______________________

AGE ___________ SEX ___________ CLASSIFICATION __________________

THE PURPOSE IN LIFE TEST

James C. Crumbaugh, Ph.D.                                        Leonard T. Maholick, M.D.
Veterans Administration Hospital                                   The Bradley Center, Inc.
Gulfport, Mississippi                                               Columbus, Georgia

Part A

For each of the following statements, circle the number that would be most nearly true for you. Note that the numbers always extend from one extreme feeling to its opposite kind of feeling. “Neutral” implies no judgment either way; try to use this rating as little as possible.

1. I am usually:
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   completely bored

   (neutral)

   exuberant, enthusiastic

2. Life to me seems:
   7 6 5 4 3 2 1

   always exciting

   (neutral)

   completely routine

3. In life I have:
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   no goals or aims at all

   (neutral)

   Very clear goals and aims

4. My personal existence is:
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   Utterly meaningless without purpose

   (neutral)

   very purposeful and meaningful

5. Every day is:
   7 6 5 4 3 2 1

   constantly new and different

   (neutral)

   exactly the same

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Munster, Indiana 46321

Test #168
6. If I could choose, I would:

1. prefer never to have been born
2. (neutral)
3. 4
4. 5
5. 6
6. Like nine more lives just like this one

7. After retiring, I would:

1. do some of the exciting things I have always wanted to
2. (neutral)
3. 4
4. 5
5. 6
6. loaf completely the rest of my life

8. In achieving life goals I have:

1. made no progress whatever
2. (neutral)
3. 4
4. 5
5. 6
6. progressed to complete fulfillment

9. My life is:

1. empty, filled only with despair
2. (neutral)
3. 4
4. 5
5. 6
6. running over with exciting good things

10. If I should die today, I would feel that my life has been:

1. very worthwhile
2. (neutral)
3. 4
4. 5
5. 6
6. completely worthless

11. In thinking of my life, I:

1. often wonder why I exist
2. (neutral)
3. 4
4. 5
5. 6
6. always see a reason for my being here

12. As I view the world in relation to my life, the world:

1. completely confuses me
2. (neutral)
3. 4
4. 5
5. 6
6. (neutral)
7. fits meaningfully with my life

13. I am a:

1. very irresponsible person
2. (neutral)
3. 4
4. 5
5. 6
6. very responsible person

14. Concerning man's freedom to make his own choices, I believe man is:

1. absolutely free to make all life choices
2. (neutral)
3. 4
4. 5
5. 6
6. completely bound by limitations of heredity and environment
15. With regard to death, I am:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prepared and</td>
<td>(neutral)</td>
<td>unprepared and</td>
<td>frightened</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>unafraid</td>
<td></td>
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16. With regard to suicide, I have:

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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thought of it seriously</td>
<td>(neutral)</td>
<td>never given it a</td>
<td>second thought</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>as a way out</td>
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17. I regard my ability to find a meaning, purpose, or mission in life as:

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<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>very great</td>
<td>(neutral)</td>
<td>practically none</td>
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18. My life is:

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<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in my hands and I</td>
<td>(neutral)</td>
<td>out of my hands and controlled by external factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>am in control of it</td>
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19. Facing my daily tasks is:

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<th>6</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a source of pleasure and satisfaction</td>
<td>(neutral)</td>
<td>a painful and boring experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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20. I have discovered:

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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no mission or purpose in life</td>
<td>(neutral)</td>
<td>clear-cut goals and a satisfying life purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Part B

Make complete sentences of each of the following phrases. Work rapidly, filling in the blanks with the first thing that pops into your mind.

1. More than anything, I want

2. My life is

3. I hope I can

4. I have achieved

5. My highest aspiration

6. The most hopeless thing

7. The whole purpose of my life

Continued—
Part C

Write a paragraph describing in detail your aims, ambitions, goals in life. How much progress are you making in achieving them?