The influence of selected perceptual and demographic factors on the involvement of youth in violent behaviors

Nathaniel McClinton
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, nmccli1@lsu.edu
THE INFLUENCE OF SELECTED PERCEPTUAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF YOUTH IN VIOLENT BEHAVIORS

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development

by
Nathaniel McClinton
B.S., Prairie View A & M University, 1969
M.A., Webster University, 1979
August 2004
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, the late Elmer and Gladys McClinton, who instilled strong values in me as a child. The values that they instilled in me were: the importance of unflappable character and the impact of a solid educational background as the foundation and means to achieving success in life. Without their love, support, understanding as nurturing parents who struggled to provide the best possible life for their children, the accomplishment of receiving a doctorate of philosophy (Ph.D.) degree would not have been possible. Throughout my life, and until their death, they continuously provided me with words of encouragement so that I would continue to seek self-improvement, life long learning and lead a productive life. They were excellent role models and my goal was to emulate their behavior and to follow in their footsteps. As a result of their efforts, I have learned to be a loving and caring husband and nurturing father in meeting the developmental needs of my children and family.

This dissertation is also dedicated to the late Laura M. Session McClinton who believed that learning was a life long experience. Together, we inspired others to realize their full potential by using education as a means to achieve success.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the support rendered to me by my dissertation committee: Dr. Michael Burnett, Dr. Satish Verma, Dr. Geraldine Johnson, Dr. Earl Johnson and Dr. Sung Joon Jung. Special acknowledgement is rendered to Dr. Michael Burnett, my major professor, for his outstanding mentorship throughout this academic endeavor. Without his guidance throughout this research process and his professionalism as a professor in teaching research, the completion of this dissertation would have been a more difficult challenge to achieve.

Also, special acknowledgement is extended to my wife, Annette Chaney McClinton, for her words of encouragement, mentoring and late night typing of multiple drafts of my dissertation. Without her assistance, I would have struggled trying to type the drafts of my dissertation with my two index fingers and traveled this journey alone in my quest for knowledge. Annette, thank you for being by my side and understanding when I had to study, write chapters and conduct research instead of giving you the quality time you deserved.

I would like to acknowledge Tori Ingram who assisted me with her time, effort and typing on multiple occasions at a moment’s notice. Tori, you learned to type as a high school student while assisting me with paperwork in the administration of grants for youth development programs in the area of conflict resolution and peer mediation. You exemplified a strong work ethic then and now. You seized the opportunity to learn a skill when you were in high school and applied it to your professional development as an adult. Continue your quest for knowledge and development as you grow into a highly competent professional.
Finally, special acknowledgement is extended to my children, Nathaniel “Jerry” and Natalie McClinton, for your prayers and words of encouragement. I have always tried to be a role model for both of you to emulate in everything that I attempted to accomplish.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication .......................................................... ii

Acknowledgement .................................................. iii

List of Tables ......................................................... vii

Abstract ............................................................. ix

Chapter I: Introduction .............................................. 1
  Rationale for the Study .......................................... 1
  Problem Statement .............................................. 5
  Purpose of the Study .......................................... 6
  Specific Objectives ........................................... 6
  Significance of the Study .................................... 9

Chapter II: Literature Review ...................................... 13
  Introduction .................................................... 13
  Definition of Youth Violence ................................ 15
  Overview of Youth Violence ................................. 15
  Overview of Victimization and Perpetration among Youth ........................................... 18
  Key Risk Factors Contributing to Youth Violence .............................................. 21
    Individual Risk Factors ..................................... 23
    Family Factors .............................................. 24
    Peer Relationships/Factors ................................. 25
    School Factors ............................................. 26
    Environmental Factors .................................... 27
  Theoretical Framework ....................................... 28
    Social Control Theory ...................................... 36
  Review of Previous Research ............................... 41
  Summary ......................................................... 58

Chapter III: Methods ................................................ 60
  Methodology ..................................................... 60
  Study Design .................................................. 60
  Population ..................................................... 60
  Sampling Plan ................................................ 61
  Protection of Human Subjects ............................... 64
  Instrumentation ................................................ 64
    Attitudes and Beliefs Assessments ....................... 65
    Behavior Assessments .................................... 68
    Environmental Assessments ............................. 70
    Demographic Characteristics ........................... 72
Data Collection ................................................................. 72

Chapter IV: Results ............................................................. 75
  Introduction .......................................................................... 75
  Specific Objectives ............................................................ 75
  Description of Study Participants ......................................... 79
  Objective #1 ...................................................................... 88
  Objective #2 ...................................................................... 97
  Objective #3 .................................................................... 110
  Objective #4 .................................................................... 118
  Objective #5 .................................................................... 121

Chapter V: Summary, Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations ...... 128
  Purpose and Objectives ....................................................... 128
  Methodology ...................................................................... 129
  Major Findings .................................................................. 131
  Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations ..................... 141

References ......................................................................... 147

Appendix A: Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Resource Subject Protection ...................................................... 154

Appendix B: Consent Form ...................................................... 157

Appendix C: Description of Measures ....................................... 160

Appendix D: Letter of Permission ............................................. 164

Appendix E: Survey Instruments: Measurement of Violence-Related Attitudes, Beliefs and Behaviors among Young Adults ...................... 167

Vita .................................................................................. 185
LIST OF TABLES

1. Prevalence of Different Forms of Violence in the Lives of Youth .................. 49
2. Difference in Violent Experiences by Race/Ethnicity and Types of Violence ...... 54
3. Distribution of Respondents at Participating Adult Education Centers ............ 73
4. Age of Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ......................... 79
5. Racial Identity of Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ............. 80
6. Individuals in Household of Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs during their Last Year in School ................................................................. 81
7. Last Year Attended School Reported by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ........................................................................................................ 82
8. Number of Hours Worked per Week by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ........................................................................................................ 83
9. Number of Jobs Held in Last 12 Months by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ........................................................................................................ 84
10. Reported Family Income of Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs during Last Year in School ................................................................. 84
11. Whether or Not Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs were Suspended from School ................................................................. 86
12. Number of Times Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs were Expelled from School ................................................................. 87
13. Number of Times Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs Changed Schools ........................................................................................................ 87
14. Aggressive Behavior Scores of Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ........................................................................................................ 96
15. Friends’ Delinquent Behavior Score of Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ........................................................................................................ 91
16. Overall Weapon Carrying Scores for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ........................................................................................................ 93
17. Incidence of Weapon Carrying Anywhere by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ................................................................. 93
18. Incidence of Weapon Carrying Going To and From School by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ........................................ 94
19. Incidence of Weapon Carrying on School Property by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ..................................................... 95
20. Incidence of Carrying a Weapon—Gun as Perceived by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ................................................. 96
21. Source Used to Obtain Guns as Perceived by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs .............................................................. 97
22. Normative Beliefs about Aggression among Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs .............................................................. 100
23. Interpersonal Peer Violence Individual Item Summary for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ................................................. 102
24. Acceptance of Couple Violence by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs .............................................................. 105
25. Attitude toward School for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs .............................................................. 107
26. Attitude toward Gangs for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs .............................................................. 109
27. Family Bonding Scores for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs .............................................................. 112
28. Environmental Neighborhood/Block Conditions as Perceived by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs ........................................ 113
29. Neighborhood Satisfaction Scores for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs .............................................................. 115
30. Neighborhood Community Action Scores for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs .............................................................. 117
31. Relationship between Aggressive Behavior and Selected Perceptual and Environmental Measures .............................................................. 120
32. Correlation Scale between Level of Involvement in Aggressive Behaviors and Selected Behavioral, Perceptual and Demographic Measures ............................... 123
33. Multiple Regression Analysis of Level of Aggression while in School among Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs................................. 126
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of selected perceptual and demographic factors on the self-reported aggressive/violent behavior of young adults while they were enrolled in school. Specific objectives formulated to guide the research were to determine: 1) the level of involvement in violence and violent behaviors; 2) the attitudes and beliefs of young adults; 3) the environmental conditions experienced by young adults when last in school; 4) if a relationship exists between the level of violence and violent behavior and selected perceptual and environmental factors among young adults and, finally, 5) if a model exists to explain the level of violence and violent behavior. A descriptive, correlational design was used to investigate the relationship between variables. Data was collected using a compendium of survey instruments that were developed to measure violence-related attitudes, beliefs and behaviors and five adult education centers were used for data collection. The target population was defined as young adults (18-25 years of age) enrolled in adult education programs. When the outcome measure, “Aggressive Behavior,” was correlated with each of the perceptual, behavioral and environmental measures, 16 of the 18 perceptual independent variables had significant correlations with the dependent variable. The variable found to be most highly correlated with the aggressive behavior was “Weapon Carrying Anywhere.” Other measures found to have a “very strong” association with the dependent variable included “Weapon Carrying on School Property” and “Weapon Carrying Going To and From School.” Two other variables, “Weapon Carrying – Guns” and “Attitudes toward Gangs,” were also found to have a “substantial” association with the dependent variable. Results of the multiple regression analysis found that the variable, “Weapon Carrying
Anywhere,” when considered alone explained 72.7% of the variance in the dependent variable; while two other variables, “Weapon Carrying on School Property” and “Normative Beliefs about Aggression,” explained an additional 6.7% of the variance. These three variables alone explained 79.4% of the variance in the dependent variable.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Violence in the United States among youth is a high-visibility, high priority concern in every sector of society. Violence is also a public health problem of epidemic proportions (Mason, 1992; Rosenberg, 1994; Campbell, Harris & Lee, 1995). Since 1985, just prior to the emergence of crack cocaine, the rates of youth homicide have risen steadily. Since the mid 1980s, the rate of murder at the hands of teenagers has doubled, increasing 102% (Fox, 1997). Dahlberg (1998) stated that between 1986 and 1991, homicide rates among youth 15 – 19 years of age increased 154% and remains at a historically high level. Both Fox and Dahlberg concluded that violence among teenagers remains a problem in America. Although overall homicide rates rose and then showed a slight decline in the United States in recent years, the rates among youth continue to escalate. The leading cause of death among African American youth in recent years has been homicide, and it is the leading cause of death for all races and both sexes between the ages of 15 – 24 years (National Vital Statistics Report, 2000). The economic cost to society is in the billions of dollars for violence-related illness, disability and premature death (Dahlberg, 1998). Throughout the nation, communities (whether affluent or poor, urban, suburban, or rural) are all affected by the devastating effects of youth violence.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Youth violence remains a significant public health problem in the United States. Youth violence is not limited to just homicide. Fatal violence is only the tip of the iceberg when estimating the consequences of violence (Brener, Simon, Krug & Lowry, 1999). Antisocial aggressive behavior demonstrated through fighting and weapon carrying is
extremely common in the daily lives of many youth. Such behavior may not always lead to physical injury. However, the potential for injury, exposure to intimidation and threats, and perceptions of fear and vulnerability exist (Lowry, Kann, Powell, Collins and Kolbe, 1998).

The victimization rate for children and adolescents as well as the rate of involvement in violent crimes other than homicide has dramatically increased over the past decade (Hennes, 1998). Arrests for aggravated assaults in 1999 were nearly 70 percent higher than during the pre-epidemic years of 1983 to 1993. There were 104,000 arrests of people under age 19 in 1999 for serious violent crimes—robbery, forcible rape, aggravated assault, or homicide (Snyder, 2000). Of these arrests, 1,400 were homicides committed by adolescents (Snyder, 2000) and, on occasion, even younger children based on results from several national research surveys (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). For every youth arrested in any given year in the late 1990s, at least 10 others were engaged in some form of violent behavior that could have seriously injured or killed another person. Although there has been a slight reduction in the lethality of violence and consequent arrests among youth in the most recent reports, the number of adolescents involved in violent behavior remains disconcertingly high (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

Results of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) indicated in general that the younger the individual, the greater the overall violent victimization rate in 1998. Youth, 16 to 19 years of age, sustained violent victimization at higher rates than individuals in other age categories. The NCVS results indicated that during 1998 violent crime rates increased as household income decreased. Individuals who live in households
with annual incomes greater than $35,000 had lower violent crime rates than persons in households at lower income levels. In contrast, individuals who live in households with incomes of less than $7,000 experienced a higher violent crime rate than other households (Rennison, 1998).

In recent years, the age of perpetrators has shifted. More violent crimes are now being committed by younger aged youth. Of all adolescent perpetrators, young African-American males, aged 14 - 17 years, have the highest and the most rapidly increasing arrest rates (Hennes, 1998). A shift can also be seen in the crime rates from the urban areas to suburban and rural communities (Levin, 1999). In the past, rural and suburban communities considered themselves immune to youth violence that existed in the inner cities.

In the mid 1990s, society witnessed unprecedented rates of violent victimization and perpetration among youth (Dahlberg, 1998). This surge in youth crime and violence occurred at a time when the population of youth was declining (Fox, 1996). Although there was a decline in the population of youth, still an estimated 39 million children under 10 years of age were a part of this population (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1996). Some researchers have predicted that as these children move into adolescence, society will see yet another surge in violent incidents (Fox, 1996). This predicted surge is based not simply on the numbers of children that make up this cohort, but rather on the presence of many key risk factors that will influence their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors placing them at risk to violent victimization and perpetration (Dahlberg, 1998). In the literature, several societal, cultural and individual factors have been associated with
violence. The interplay of individual, peer, family and environmental factors speaks to the complexity of the problem of youth violence in society (Dahlberg, 1998).

A number of individual risk factors have been identified as contributing to youth violence such as early aggressive behaviors, beliefs supportive of violence, attributional biases and social cognitive deficits. Each of these factors has been identified as a supportive factor contributing to violent behavior in youth. Dahlberg (1998) identified early aggression as a child as one of the strongest predictors of later aggression or criminal involvement as a teen or young adult.

A dysfunctional family environment places youth at greater risk for developing aggressive and violent behaviors. Many youth pattern their actions based on the behaviors learned from the environment in which they live. Youth that are associated with a dysfunctional family environment where parents exhibit antisocial personalities, have a history of criminal behavior, drug or alcohol abuse and physical or emotional abuse, their children are more likely to follow that pattern of behavior (Dahlberg, 1998).

The sense of belonging among peers is a major concern for youth today. Values taught by parents and the deviation from norms that society has established will be sacrificed for acceptance and a place of status among peers. Adolescent years are a difficult time in the lives of youth. Young people experience many physical, psychological and social demands. Adolescence marks the period in their lives where they begin to distance themselves from their parents and try to establish their own identity and self-worth, adapt to society’s demands for behavioral maturity and prepare for adult roles (Dahlberg, 1998). Peer groups can be a positive or negative effect on the
behavior of youth. If peer relationships are negative, that influence may place youth at risk to exhibit aggressive and violent behavior (Dahlberg, 1998).

The environment that youth experience on a daily basis has a significant influence on placing youth at risk to violence. The relationship between poverty or economically poor neighborhoods and violence is linked to several key dimensions that put youth at risk. The demographic characteristics of poverty neighborhoods provide few opportunities for youth to experience positive growth patterns.

Researchers have documented in the literature the magnitude of youth violence and the trends in violence over time. However, there remain a number of unanswered questions regarding why young people become involved in violence? Why do some youth “get caught up” in violence while others do not? Currently, there are no simple answers to these questions.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Identifying key outside influences that lead to aggressive violent behavior in youth is imperative. Youth violence is a complex problem. Outside influences have been recognized by researchers as an important factor in determining the behavior of youth. Outside influences such as attitudes and beliefs about violence, behavior, environmental conditions and demographic characteristics negatively impact the development of aggressive violent behavior in youth. To alleviate the problem of youth violence, it is critical for researchers to identify factors that cause youth violence and when, in the lives of youth, these factors have the most influence.
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of selected perceptual and demographic factors on the self-reported aggressive/violent behaviors of young adults while they were enrolled in school.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Specific objectives formulated to guide the researcher are as follows:

1. Determine the level of involvement in violence and violent behaviors while enrolled in school among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States as measured by the following scales:
   b. Friends Delinquent Behavior-Denver Youth Survey (Institute of Behavioral Science, 1987)
   c. Weapon Carrying-Youth Risk Behavior Survey/NYC Youth Violence Survey (Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH), CDC, 1993a,b)

2. Determine the attitudes and beliefs of young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States regarding violence and violent behavior among students as measured by the following scales:
   a. Normative Beliefs about Aggression (Huesmann, Guerra, Miller & Zelli, 1992)
b. Attitude Toward Interpersonal Peer Violence (Slaby, 1989)

c. Acceptance of Couple Violence (Foshee, Fothergill & Stuart, 1992)

d. Attitudes Toward School-Denver Youth Survey (Institute of Behavioral Science, 1990)

e. Attitudes Toward Gangs (Nadel, Spellman, Alvares-Canino et al., 1996)

3. Determine the environmental conditions experienced while enrolled in school as perceived by young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States as measured by the following scales:


4. Determine if a relationship exists between the level of violence and violent behavior while enrolled in school and selected perceptual and environmental factors among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States. Perceptual factors include the following:

   a. Normative Beliefs about Aggression (Huesmann, Guerra, Miller & Zelli, 1992)

   b. Attitude Toward Interpersonal Peer Violence (Slaby, 1989)

   c. Acceptance of Couple Violence (Foshee, Fothergill & Stuart, 1992)

   d. Attitude Toward School – Denver Youth Survey (Institute of Behavioral Science, 1990)
e. Attitude Toward Gangs (Nadel, Spellman, Alvares – Canino et al., 1996)

Environmental factors include the following:


g. Neighborhood/Block Conditions (Perkins, Florin & Rich, 1990)


Self-reported aggressive behaviors include:


l. Weapon carrying-Youth Risk Behavior Survey/NYC Youth Violence Survey (Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH), CDC,1993a,b)

For the purpose of this study, the independent variables are identified as the perceptual and environmental factors listed above. The dependent variable is identified as the self-reported aggressive behavior of respondents as measured by the subscales identified above (aggressive behavior, friend’s delinquent behavior and weapons carrying).

5. Determine if a model exists explaining the level of violence and violent behavior while enrolled in school among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States from the following perceptual and environmental measures:
a. Normative Beliefs about Aggression (Huesmann, Guerra, Miller & Zelli, 1992)
b. Attitude Toward Interpersonal Peer Violence (Slaby, 1989)
c. Acceptance of Couple Violence (Foshee, Fothergill & Stuart, 1992)
d. Attitude Toward School – Denver Youth Survey (Institute of Behavioral Science, 1990)
e. Attitude Toward Gangs (Nadel, Spellman, Alvares – Canino et al., 1996)
g. Neighborhood/Block Conditions (Perkins, Florin & Rich, 1990)
l. Weapon Carrying-Youth Risk Behavior Survey/NYC Youth Violence Survey (Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH), CDC, 1993a,b)

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Youth violence is a complex problem in society. This problem has escalated in recent years. To alleviate the problem of youth violence, it is critical for researchers to identify factors that cause youth violence. This information is significant because it will facilitate the design of preventive programs that can be implemented, at the appropriate
time, to positively impact youth behavior (U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services 2001).

Some factors are known to researchers that put youth at risk for violent behavior, and there are factors that seem to protect them from the effects of risk (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). However, researchers still do not know the specific factors that cause this epidemic of youth violence. The concepts of risk and protection factors are integral to preventing and stopping violence as well as identifying and understanding risk factors.

A risk factor has been identified as “anything that increases the probability that a person will suffer harm.” A protective factor is “something that decreases the potential harmful effects of a risk factor” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001, p. 57). A risk factor increases the probability that a young person will become violent, while a protective factor buffers the young person against those risks. Since youth violence is a public health problem, the approach to youth violence involves identifying risk and protective factors, determining how they work, making the public aware of these findings and designing programs to prevent or stop the violence.

The question, how to best reduce youth violence or to identify factors that cause youth violence, remains a challenge. It is the researcher’s belief that the best approach to answer this question is to ask the young people involved or those who have been involved in youth violence and deviant behavior. Research indicates that the best way to measure violent behavior or to obtain answers regarding youth violence is through self-reporting from youth. Self reports from youth have been the most desired among researchers because it provides data from primary sources as opposed to secondary ones.
Another approach that can be used relies on official statistics compiled by law enforcement, health, schools and community agencies (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Both data collection methods contribute to the understanding of youth violence. The significance of the findings usually depends on the understanding of the relative strengths and limitations and where they reinforce each other and where they diverge or conflict, and how the differences in findings are interpreted (Brener et al., 1995; Hindelang et al., 1981; Huizinga & Elliott, 1986; Snyder & Sickmund, 1999).

The researcher plans to use self-reported data from young adults through confidential surveys. The young adults selected to participate in the study had been involved in youth violence or deviate behavior while in high school. As a result of their behavior, these young people were suspended, expelled or dropped out of school. They are now involved in adult education programs as an attempt to correct their misfortunes and improve their standing in society.

It is the researcher’s belief that these individuals will give honest responses to the inquiries in the assessment tool because they are now removed from many of the factors that influenced their behavior. Whereas, students currently enrolled in high school and functioning in an environment where many negative influences still exist may not give honest responses. Their responses may reflect biases of inflated egos and the attitude of wanting to appear tough to maintain the perceived image they hold of themselves.

During a previous study, the researcher conducted a qualitative study and interviewed youth who had been involved in fighting or verbal confrontations with their peers. The researcher found that the causes for the actions of the high school students varied and depended on what they had been taught at home, perceived peer pressure and
on the idea of gaining respect. In many cases, a person gained more respect by engaging in a fight than by actually winning the fight. During the study, the youth were asked, “Why do they fight?” They responded that their parent(s) told them “If the girl looks at you funny when you get to school, slap her.” In regards to peer pressure, youth indicated that there is a “code of conduct” among youth which dictates how you respond when confronted with certain situations. These factors influence aggressive behavior in youth and support the need for research to identify specific causes for this violent behavior. Specific causes for youth violence have yet to be identified.

This study seeks to identify risk factors that influence youth in the development of aggressive and violent behavior. Over the next 10 years, it is predicted that there will be an increase in the teenage population, particularly among African-Americans and Hispanics. This forecasted increase in juvenile population over the next decade will cause a dramatic increase in the level of juvenile violence (Fox, 1998). These major demographic changes coupled with other societal, cultural and individual risk factors associated with youth violence support this study. Influences that contribute to youth violence among high school students need to be identified.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW
INTRODUCTION

Youth violence has become an important national and public health problem, and it is a high visibility, high priority concern throughout American society (Dahlberg, 1998). Young people in every community throughout America have been found to be involved in violence whether the community is a small rural town, urban inner city or a wealthy suburb. Young males, particularly those from minority groups, are disproportionately arrested for violent crimes. However, self reports indicated that differences between minority and majority populations, both male and female, may not be as great as police arrest records might indicate (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Race and ethnicity, when considered alone from other factors that influence the behavior of youth, shed little light on a young person’s propensity for getting involved in violence. Despite a recent decline in homicide rates across the United States, homicide continues to claim the lives of many young people (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Violence among youth is rising.

During the last decade, violence has been recognized as an issue requiring increased attention as a major public health problem (Ellickson & McGuigan, 2000). An urgent need is to develop a unified effort nationally to confront the problem of youth violence systematically using research-based approaches to correct inaccurate myths and stereotypes that interfere with resolving the problem of youth violence (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). The Surgeon General’s (2001) Research Report substantiates the need for continued research to solve the problem of youth violence.
Many approaches have been instituted with the aim of reducing and preventing youth violence. However, they have been unsuccessful, or their efforts have been reduced due to random violent events involving youth such as recent school shootings throughout the United States.

Violence among children and adolescents is rising. The victimization rate for children and adolescents, as well as the rate of involvement in violent crimes, has dramatically increased over the past decade (Hennes, 1998). This increase occurs at a time when death from medical illness and non-intentional injury related deaths, such as motor vehicle accidents, are declining (Hennes, 1998). However, the literature continues to reveal that there is a growing concern regarding children’s and adolescent’s victimization and violent behavior within the United States health care community. Several societal, cultural and individual factors have also been associated with violence. The interplay of individual, peer, family and environmental factors speak to the complexity of the problem of youth violence in our society (Dahlberg, 1998). The interplay of these key risk factors can place young people at risk to violent victimization and perpetration.

The literature review will define violence, provide an overview of youth violence, victimization and perpetration among youth, discuss key risk factors contributing to the rise of youth violence and the theoretical framework that supports this research study. A number of research studies and articles have been reviewed to gain a clearer understanding of the magnitude and developmental dynamics of youth violence.
DEFINITION OF YOUTH VIOLENCE

To adequately discuss the issue of youth violence, one must first understand the definition of violence. In an article by Hennes (1998), he stated that violence is a frequently used term to describe an intentionally inflicted force leading to physical or emotional trauma. Although several definitions of violence exist, Mercy, Rosenberg and Powell (1993) presented the most useful definition. They defined violence as “a threatened or actual use of physical force against a person or group that either results or is likely to result in injury or death” (Hennes, 1999, p. 270). This definition is broad and covers the most common forms of intentional violence including homicide, suicide and assault. One common theme noted in both definitions is that violence is an intentional act. Therefore, youth understand what they are doing and are making a deliberate attempt to demonstrate antisocial behavior.

OVERVIEW OF YOUTH VIOLENCE

Research shows that the epidemic of youth violence began in the early 1980s. Rates of violent incidents for youth escalated from 1983 to 1993. This violence epidemic of the 1990s indicated a breakdown in the social order (Elliott, 1994). Now, communities throughout the nation have great concerns regarding the youth violence epidemic. No place in America is amused by youth violence. Violence in America extends into homes, neighborhoods, schools, day care facilities, shopping malls and the workplace (Elliott, 1994).

Some researchers ask the question, “Is there really an epidemic of youth violence or is there excess coverage by the media of violent incidents involving youth?” Their conclusions suggest the following regarding youth violence over the past decade: 1)
violent victimization rates for youth have substantially increased, especially for
dolates, 12-15 years of age; 2) there has been a small increase (8-10 percent) in the
proportion of adolescents involved in some type of serious violent crime; and 3)
adolescent homicide rates have increased since 1988. Elliott (1998) concluded that
today’s youth are committing more lethal acts of violence and a larger proportion of these
acts results in serious injury or death. The rise in youth homicide rates has more than
doubled since 1988, and substantiates the evidence that youth violence has become more
lethal. The use of hand guns in these incidents also attests to the lethality of adolescent
violence in America. (Elliott, 1994).

summarized results from their report 2001 *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System*
(YRBSS), that approximately three-fourths of all deaths among persons, 10-24 years of
age, result from only four causes: motor vehicle crashes, other unintentional injuries,
homicide and suicide. The results indicated that 70.6% of all deaths among youth in
America aged 10-24 years result from one of the four causes mentioned above. Deaths
from homicide and acts of violence account for 15.3% of that total (Grunbaum et al
2002).

In comparison to adults aged 25 years and over, 64.6% of all deaths in the United
States result from cardiovascular disease (41%) and cancer (23.6%). Among all age
groups, the leading causes of mortality and morbidity in the United States are related to
the following categories of health behavior: behaviors that contribute to unintentional
injuries and violence; tobacco use; alcohol and other drug use. In most cases these
behaviors begin in youth and extend into adulthood. (Grunbaum et al 2002).
Some researchers indicate that life threatening violence is on the decline. However, the prevalence of aggressive behavior poses a major threat to youth, communities and schools. Although the threat of youth violence may be shifting, it remains a critical issue. Adults in all phases of youth development must support efforts that address youth violence and its underlying causes. Lazarus (2003) states that a collaborative effort is needed by adults, schools and communities to create a culture that emphasizes prevention and early intervention as a means to eliminate youth violence.

The *Surgeon General’s Report on Youth Violence* (2001), states that the origins of youth violence come from environmental, social, physical and mental health factors. Family connectedness, peer group relationships and success in school are the three most significant factors influencing the likelihood of youth violence. The Surgeon General (2001) described youth violence as an “epidemic” that requires treatment from a public health approach that uses evidence-based strategies. These evidence-based strategies are based on identifying and eliminating risks rather than profiling individuals (Lazarus, 2003). These strategies are designed to provide youth with physical, mental health resources, behavioral interventions, skills development and academic support. Preventive discipline and incarceration produce little positive changes and should be used as last resort in comparison to evidence-based strategies (Lazarus, 2003).

When one looks at the major causes of youth violence, researchers conclude that most violent behavior is learned behavior. Elliott (1994) stated that everyone has the potential for violent behavior. Youth observe others using violent behavior to resolve conflict and, as a result, they formulate their own tactics using violence. Although people have the potential to use violence, most people use non-violent ways to resolve conflict.
that are effective. The major difference between the use or non-use of violence is that most people are committed to conventional norms and values which inhibit them from using violent behavior (Elliot, 1994). In addition to a strong commitment to conventional norms, non-violent individuals have a supportive social network of family and friends and other positive influences where negative behavior has serious consequences. Because of these strong beliefs and attitudes, violent behavior becomes irrational (Elliott, 1994).

Since violent behavior is a learned behavior, many youth often believe that violence is the only means or the most effective way to resolve conflict and achieve status, respect and other basic social and personal gratification among peers. Many youth view violence as a source of power, and, this may be the only form of power they can achieve in comparison to wealth and knowledge. Elliott (1994) stated that some youth have limited alternatives to achieving status and respect. Therefore, violent behavior to them is recognized as being rational.

Derzon (2000) looked at youth violence as being a behavior that is learned and, over time, becomes stable. Youth violence (or youthful antisocial behavior as he refers to it) can be viewed as a predictor for later violent and threatening behavior. However, the results of his meta-analysis of antisocial predictors of violence concluded that 60% of those engaging in antisocial or substance-using behavior were not violent later in life.

OVERVIEW OF VICTIMIZATION AND PERPETRATION AMONG YOUTH

The United States has witnessed unprecedented rates of violent victimization and perpetration among the nation’s youth over the last decade (Dahlberg, 1998).
Hennes (1998) substantiated the fact that youth violence is on the rise. According to the FBI, 11% of all murder victims in 1994 were children under 18 years of age and nearly half were adolescents between 15 to 17 years of age. In most murders of young children, the perpetrator was a family member. In older teens and adolescents, the perpetrator was an acquaintance. The FBI report noted that approximately 70% of the victims were killed with a handgun (U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996). This rapid increase in victimization rates among children and adolescents is alarming (Finklhor & Dziuba, 1994).

Homicide is now the second leading cause of death among young adults ages 15 to 24 and the leading cause in young African-American males (Sigler, 1995). An article that appeared in a *Journal of the American Medical Association* (1999) stated that violent behavior among teens is decreasing overall. The percentage of students in grades 9-12 who have engaged in violence-related behavior decreased between 1991 to 1997. This information was extracted from an analysis of four youth risk behavior surveys conducted during those years by researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, while there was a decrease in violence overall, certain subgroups showed increases. For example, fighting among Hispanics and those of other racial or ethnic groups increased (Brener, Simon, Krug & Lowry, 1999). Rates of fighting between black and white students declined, as did the numbers of females involved in fights. These differences illustrate the need for adult researchers to learn how to reach the groups that showed increases.

In recent years, the at-risk group of perpetrators has shifted to a younger age. Of all adolescent perpetrators, young African-American males, ages 14 to 17 years, have the
highest and most rapidly increasing arrest rates (Hennes, 1998). In a report published by
*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Levin (1999) discussed a decline in teenage crime. This decrease in violence was attributed to the recent decline in the crack cocaine epidemic and its accompanying street wars among youth. Levin (1999) cited the zero tolerance policies adopted by many school systems against violent crimes. Greater handgun control and enhanced community police programs are also causes for a decline in the youth crime rate.

Levin (1999) stated that there is an incipient cultural revolution going on where Americans are doing more in regards to meeting the needs of children and teenagers, especially in urban areas. Schools are no longer the only institutions where steps have been undertaken to play key roles in changing the behavior of youth. Levin (1999) stated that churches have become more involved in initiating youth after school and weekend athletic and academic programs. Many city governments have increased their police force to fight youth crime activity.

Levin (1999) cited Boston as an example of a model city in dealing with youth crime. In his article, he stated that in 1990, 34 teenagers were arrested on murder charges but the number dropped to three in 1998. During the same period, the city saw a proliferation of programs directed toward at-risk teenagers by civic organizations and business and industry. Programs begun by these organizations include the Thousand Black Men Basketball Mentoring Program, Teen Empowerment, Gang Peace, the Ten Point Coalition of Urban Ministers, the Boston Private Industry Council and Choice through Education (Levin, 1999).
In a study done by Fox (1998), a criminologist from Northwestern University, it was reported that the murder rate for perpetrators in the 14 to 17 age group declined to 16.5 per 100,000 in 1997 after it soared to 30.2 per 100,000 in 1993. A similar decline was reported for the homicide rate for young adults aged 18 to 24 which rose to 41.3 per 100,000 in 1993 and then dropped to 33.2 in 1997.

A shift also can be seen in the crime rates from the urban areas to suburban and rural communities (Levin, 1999). The incidents at Littleton, Colorado and similar locales can attest to this shift. In the past, rural and suburban communities considered themselves immune to youth violence that existed in cities: they had been complacent and had not organized any pre-emptive civic programs to meet specific needs of youth. However, youth violence has no boundaries and society must take steps to prevent it by identifying its causes and initiating programs to satisfy the needs of youth.

KEY RISK FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO YOUTH VIOLENCE

Several societal, cultural and individual factors have been associated with violence. The interplay of individual peer, family and environmental factors speaks to the complexity of the problem of violence in the United States (Dahlberg, 1998). Preventing violence depends in large part on understanding what causes it. School shootings are not isolated events but are part of a larger problem. During the past decade, homicides and suicides among young people have more than doubled. The rate of deaths as a result of firearms among American children, 15 years and younger, is 12 times higher than it is in 25 other developed countries combined (Namecek, 1998). Although the causes for these developments are myriad, studies have documented that the standard complaints--clear access to guns as well as exposure to brutality, both at home and on television and movie
screens -- do have an effect on kids. Initial results from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health (an on-going survey of 12,000 adolescents) showed that children who have good parental and family relationships correlated positively with a reduction in violent behavior (Namecek, 1998).

To further understand the complexity of the interplay of individual, family, peer, school and environmental factors and how they relate to antisocial behavior, the literature review will examine these influences on youth as predictors of youth violence. The task of researchers today is to identify predictors that can predict which youth are prone to commit violent acts in order to significantly strengthen efforts to prevent youth violence (Hawkins, Herrenkohl, Farrington, Brewer, Catalano, Harachi & Cothern, 2000).

The literature states that researchers have made progress in identifying risk factors for antisocial behavior in general terms. However, attention by researchers has focused more on identifying risk factors since there is an upward trend in youth arrests for violent acts among youth. Studies by Farrington (1997), Hawking, Herrenkohl, Farrington, Brewer and Catolano (1998) and Lipsey and Derzon (1998) indicated that select risk factors influence the behavior of youth and may serve as predictors for youth violence. These risk factors may be related to the socialization process of youth in their families, schools, peer groups and communities. To reduce youth violence, researchers must understand potential causes to adequately develop interventions to prevent acts of violence. Core, Watt, West, Hawkins, Asarnow, Markman, Ramey, Shure & Long (1993) defined risk factors as “variables associated with a high probability of onset, greater severity, and longer duration” (p. 1013) of a disorder or form of antisocial behavior, such as violence. Protective factors (interventions) on the other hand, have a less defined
relationship with a given disorder or pattern of behavior but act in some capacity to lower risk of onset, severity, and duration of that outcome.

Key risk factors discussed in the literature are individual, family, peer, school and environmental factors that influence youth violence. The interplay of these five risk factors may place youth at risk for violent victimization and perpetration. Each of the above listed risk factors will be discussed separately.

**Individual Risk Factors**

A number of individual risk factors have been identified as contributing to youth violence such as early aggressive behaviors, beliefs supportive of violence, attributional biases, and social cognitive deficits. Each of these factors has been supportive of violent behavior in youth. Dahlberg (1998) identified early aggression in a child as one of the strongest predictors of later aggression or criminal involvement as a teen or young adult. Data from the Rochester Youth Study (1999) indicated that among those teens who began committing violent offenses before age nine, nearly 40% became chronic violent offenders by the age of 16; compared with 30% who began committing violent offenses between the ages of 10 and 12, and 23% who began at age 13 or older. Similar data from the Denver Youth Study (1999) showed that of those who initiated violent behavior at age nine or younger, 62% became chronic violent offenders during adolescence, and almost half (42%) of those who initiated violent behavior between 10 and 12 years of age eventually became chronic violent offenders.

Factors that sustain early aggression over time have been found to be linked to attributional biases, normative beliefs supportive of aggression and social problem-solving skill deficits (Dahlberg, 1998). Children and teens with impaired cognitive skills
normally have difficulty interpreting social situations, quickly make irrational decisions when reacting to social issues, and perceive the actions of others as hostile (Dahlberg, 1998). Dahlberg (1998) further stated that highly aggressive youth, when confronted with aggressive responses from others, have difficulty arriving at non aggressive solutions to problems, support aggressive retaliation, and believe that aggressive behavior increases their self esteem and image. The most powerful early risk factor for violence at age 15-18 years are involvement in general offenses and substance use before age 12. General offenses include violent acts such as burglary, grand theft, extortion, and felony convictions. Involvement in these types of offenses early in life is a strong predictor for violence later (U. S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2001).

Family Factors

A dysfunctional family environment places youth at greater risk for developing aggressive and violent behaviors. Many youth pattern their actions based on the behavior learned from the environment in which they live. Youths that are associated with a dysfunctional family environment where their parents exhibit antisocial personalities, have a history of criminal behavior, drug or alcohol abuse and physically or emotionally abuse their children, are more likely to follow that pattern of behavior (Dahlberg, 1998).

Dahlberg (1998) further stated that parenting practices such as poor monitoring and supervision of children, poor communication, deficiencies in solving problems or negotiating with children, are positively associated with antisocial aggressive and delinquent behavior in youth. The absence of effective bonds and controls over behavior puts children at risk for later violence (Elliott, 1994). The researcher also found that
youths who grow up in a dysfunctional family and witness violence in the home are at greater risk of being both a victim and a perpetrator of violence.

Dahlberg (1998) defined family violence in the home as child maltreatment, spousal or partner violence and a family climate of physical fighting and hostility. Findings from a longitudinal study by Dahlberg (1998) indicated that while 38% of youth from non-violent families report involvement in violent behavior, the rate increases to 60% for youth exposed to one form of family violence; 73% for youth exposed to two forms of family violence, and 78% for youth exposed to three forms of family violence. Abusive parenting in general and neglect in particular are predictors of later violence for youth (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

**Peer Relationships/ Factors**

The sense of belonging among their peers is a major concern for youth today. Values taught by parents and the norms that society has established will be sacrificed for acceptance and a place of status among peers. Adolescent years are a difficult time in the lives of youth. Young people experience many physical, psychological, and social demands. This marks the point in their life when they begin to distance themselves from their parents and try to establish their identity and self-worth, adapt to society’s demands for behavioral maturity and prepare for adult roles (Dahlberg, 1998). The functions of peer groups are generally positive on youth and may be regarded by some developmental experts as being a healthy part of life by helping them develop skills to interact with people (Dahlberg, 1998).

However, peer relationships can have a negative influence and place youth at risk to aggressive and violent behavior. Negative peer influences are important risk factors in
shaping the behavior of youth in ways that promote drug, alcohol or tobacco use, sexual promiscuity, delinquency or even gang involvement.

The above mentioned factors are easy predictors of negative behavior. However, the relationship between violent behavior and peer influences are more difficult to predict. Delinquency research does not always separate violent acts such as aggravated assaults or homicide from non-violent acts such as theft or property damage. This makes it more difficult to identify the effect of group processes on violent events. Membership in gangs has been cited as a risk factor for violent victimization and perpetrators (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, & Chard-Wiershem, 1993). Research showed that social organization and cohesion vary among gangs while some gangs maintain high rates of violence and others do not (Huff, 1996). After reviewing the literature on violent behavior, peer influences and its relationship to violent behavior was difficult to predict.

**School Factors**

In the school domain, an early risk factor is a decline in school attendance and academic performance. Youth who have been exposed to violence from other domains may have trouble concentrating in school. Individual, family and peer factors may contribute to poor performance. Youth who are rejected by their peers or who are physically aggressive will have difficulty concentrating or sitting still in class. This, in turn, will lead to poor academic performance (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Students exposed to violence at school may react by staying home in fear of threats and may even carry weapons to school as protection (Brener, Simon, Krug, & Lowry, 1999). Peer groups at school can complicate the situation of school reliance and its impact on the behavior of youth. The heavy concentration of peer groups at school
can intensify the influence of peer groups. Peer groups at school may value non-violence while other groups may value violence (Felson, Liska, South, & McNulty, 1994). Schools located in disadvantaged neighborhoods are more likely to have high rates of school violence than those schools in upscale areas (Laub & Lauritsen, 1998). However, researchers have found that most violence to youth occurs in their home neighborhood or the neighborhood surrounding the school and not in the school itself (Laub & Lauritsen, 1998).

**Environmental Factors**

The environment youths inhabit and experience on a daily basis has a significant influence on placing them at risk to violence. The relationship between poverty or economically poor neighborhoods and violence is linked to several key dimensions that put youth at risk. Crime and violence are high in areas where at least 20% of the residents are poor (Lamison-White, 1996). These areas are characterized by high concentrations of poor people, high levels of transiency, family disruption, crowded housing, low community participation and organization, and the presence of firearms and drug distribution networks (Lamison-White, 1996). Economically poor areas also tended to have high rates of school dropouts, high rates of substance abuse, unemployment, and teenage pregnancy. It was found that many of the households in these areas are headed by women.

The demographic characteristics of poverty neighborhoods provide few opportunities for youth to experience positive growth patterns. These areas have diminished private economic activity. Public and social services offered to residents are limited as well as recreational and academic developmental programs for youth. Poverty
neighborhoods tend to be characterized by disorganization or a lack of community cohesion. High levels of transiency make it difficult for residents to establish common values and norms and to develop informal support networks (Elliot, 1994). As a result, residents often experience a sense of social isolation and exhibit lower levels of attachment to the community. Elliot (1994) further stated that chronic unemploymentisolates people from honest labor markets and increases the likelihood of participation in illegal activities as a source of income. When neighborhood social and economic systems break down, it becomes difficult to resist crime and violence (Reiss, 1993).

The bottom line effect of these social demographic characteristics of poverty neighborhoods is reduced opportunities for youth who live in these areas. Many of the young people have few positive role models to offset the negative influences in the environment. Families have difficulty reducing the level of exposure to the unhealthy or violent lifestyles in the community. Research by Attar, Guerra & Tolan (1994) showed that exposure to violence and the experience of stressful life events contribute significantly to aggression in children. In a related study by the National Research Council: Panel on High Risk Youth, over the long term, children growing up in poverty communities are at greater risk of abandoning educational goals, becoming teenage parents, and adapting lifestyles and behaviors that put them at risk for violent victimization and perpetration.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

This research study is guided by a theoretical framework that is most relevant to aggressive and violent behavior. Several theories used in this research project have relevance regarding how risk factors influence aggressive violent behavior. These
theories address potential causes of violence in youth from the individual, family, peer, school and environmental domains.

Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura is the behavior theory most relevant to aggressive and violent behaviors (Isom, 1998). Social learning theory states that aggression is learned through a process called observational learning. Observational learning is also known as imitation or modeling. Through this process, individual learning occurs when an individual observes and imitates the behavior of others. Bandura (1977) states “learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action” (p 22). The theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences.

There are four underlying observational learning component processes to social learning theory: 1) attention, including modeled events (distinctiveness, affective valence, complexity, prevalence, functional value) and observer characteristics (sensory capacities, arousal level, perceptual set, past reinforcement, 2) retention, including symbolic coding, cognitive organization symbolic rehearsal, motor rehearsal, 3) motor reproduction, including physical capabilities, self-observation of reproduction, accuracy of feedback, and 4) motivation, including external, vicarious and reinforcement (Isom, 1998).
Social learning theory spans both cognitive and behavioral frameworks because the theory encompasses attention, memory and motivation. Researchers have applied social learning theory extensively to the understanding of aggression (Bandura, 1973) and psychological disorders such as behavior modification (Bandura, 1969). The theory has been used as the theoretical foundation for the technique of behavior modeling which is widely used in training programs. In recent years, Bandura focused his work on the concept of self-efficiency. Bandura believes that people are more likely to engage in certain behaviors when they believe they are capable of executing those behaviors successfully. When this occurs, this means that individuals will have high self-efficiency.

In addition to Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, Rotter (1954) developed another version of the theory with the Law of Effects as its motivating factors. The Law of Effects stated that people are motivated to seek out positive stimulation or reinforcement, and avoid unpleasant stimulation. Rotter (1954), in his version, combined behaviorism and the study of personality without relying on physiological instincts or drives as a motive force. In the theory, personality represents an interaction of the individual with his or her environment. Rotter & Chance (1972) view personality as always changeable. One’s personality behavior and the way they think change with their environment. Rotter (1966) used four components of the social learning theory to predict behavior. The components are behavior potential, expectancy, reinforcement value and the psychological situation. These four components are described below.

Behavior Potential: Behavior Potential is defined as the probability that an individual will exhibit a particular behavior in a situation. One may exhibit multiple
behaviors in a given situation. There is a behavior potential for each possible behavior. An individual will exhibit whichever behavior has the highest potential for gain.

Expectancy: Expectancy represents the subjective probability that a given behavior will lead to a particular outcome or reinforcer. The more often a behavior has led to reinforcement in the past, the stronger the person’s expectancy that the behavior will lead to similar outcomes now.

Reinforcement Value: Reinforcement Value refers to the desirability of the outcomes of our behavior. The more attractive the outcome desired, the higher the reinforcement value. Those things we do not want to happen and wish to avoid, the lower the reinforcement value will become. Reinforcement value is subjective like the expectancy component. Being subjective means that the same event or experience can greatly differ in desirability depending on the individual’s life experience.

Psychological Situation: Psychological situation believes that people interpret the same situation differently. This is a person’s subjective interpretation of the environment rather than an objective array of stimuli that is meaningful to them and that determines how they behave.

Rotter’s (1972) Social Learning Theory differs from Bandura in that Rotter relies on the Law of Effect Theory which states that people are motivated to seek out positive stimulation or reinforcement and avoid unpleasant stimulation. He excludes physiological instincts or drives as a motivating force. When compared to Bandura’s theory, which emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes and emotional reactions of others, Rotter (1966) theorizes that behavior is not learned from
others but from generalized expectancies of reinforcements and internal/external laws of control based on self-initiated change versus change influenced by others.

Another theory, the Strain Theory, which evolved over time into a relevant theory regarding deviant behavior in relationship to crime, has been used in sociological considerations of deviance for many years from Durkheim (1897) to Messner & Rosenfeld (1994) and O’Connor (2003). The Strain Theory can be understood in two ways: Social processes and personal experiences. As a social process, structural strain refers to the processes by which inadequate regulation of positive norms at the societal level filters down to how the individual perceives his or her needs. From the perspective of personal experience, the theory refers to the friction and pain experienced by the individual as he/she looks for motivational mechanisms to meet their needs through acts of violence and crime (Rotter 1994).

The Strain Theory supports the belief that the commission of violent and non-violent crimes involves “adaptive responses to the strain of incongruence between a person’s internalization of culturally defined success goals and his or her culturally approved means for achieving those goals” (Title, 1995 p. 4). Other structural strain theorists argue that most people have a desire to achieve success but based on the strains of society, they choose different means to obtain their goals. Those with limited resources are more likely to choose a means that violate laws because they feel they have few options and opportunities to advance their position in society. With a feeling of hopelessness of being able to enter mainstream society, these individuals resort to means that may include illicit ways to improve their standing in society (Agnew, 1985).
Deviance in an individual’s behavior can be the antisocial patterns that support criminal subcultures which provide opportunities and rewards for deviant behavior.

The Strain Theory has direct applications to this study. Cohen (1955), a theorist of the Strain Theory, used it as his thesis that class-based status frustration is the origin of subcultures. Cohen’s focus is on school-based achievement status. The school stresses visible class values regarding honesty, courtesy, personality and responsibility. During this process, an individual competes for status among his peers to gain respect or approval. If an individual fails to achieve status, it is through frustration that deviant behavior is used to gain recognition.

Merton’s (1938) explanation of the Strain Theory takes a means-end theory of deviance approach. His approach states that crime breeds in the gap between culturally induced aspirations for economic success and structurally distributed possibilities of achievement. The strains built into the social system of a culture motivate individuals to commit crimes to keep pace. Merton’s (1938) explanation of the theory is vague on why individuals make certain choices over others but is very explicit at pointing to normative concerns as evidence of anomie at the individual level.

Cloward and Ohlin (1960) offered a revision to the theory with a hypothesis that is summarized as, “the disparity between what lower class youth are led to want and what is actually available to them is the source of a major problem of adjustment” (p. 86). The Strain Theory to them is inter-personal.

Agnew’s (1985) revised version of the Strain Theory stressed that the theory waives neither structural nor interpersonal but emotional. The perception of an adverse
environment by an individual will lead to strong negative emotions that motivate one to engage in crime.

Agnew (1985) stated that when individuals feel unrewarded for their efforts, when compared to the efforts of others when outcomes are similar, distress occurs in their belief system. When these negative emotions occur, their value system supports handling conflict with deviant behavior. Agnew (1985) states that unhappiness in negative relationships has a direct effect on anger and an indirect effect on serious crime and aggression. As a result, anger has a significant impact on all measures of crime and deviance. Research shows that anger is related to crime and deviance (Agnew, 1985). Agnew (1985) stated that anger is the most critical emotion to control and that it’s almost always outer directed.

Messner and Rosenfeld (1994) theorized that behavior is driven by economics. Our culture, dominated by economics and success, is the driver of our belief system. Material success drives the goals of individuals. Materialistic goals such as parenting, teaching, serving the community and others are not important anymore. Since the emphasis is seeking the most efficient way to achieve economic success, crime by some individuals is seen as the most efficient way to make immediate monetary gain (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1994). Causal variables to this theory are beliefs, values and commitment; and the closer they are aligned to economics, the more powerful the motivation to pursue money to some individuals (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1994).

As mentioned above, the Strain Theory has a direct relationship to this study. The interplay of strain in the environment and social values a particular culture place on an individual can influence a person to commit crime. As long as our society emphasizes
economic achievement as a means of measuring success, individuals will continue to attempt to keep pace in society even if crime and violence are the only means. Social forces that are economically motivated are believed to cause individuals to commit crimes due to the strain placed on them by society (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1994).

Another theory that has relevance to aggression and violent behavior is social disorganization theory. According to the tenets of this theory, crime rates differ across neighborhoods according to structural arrangements that facilitate or inhibit social control (Sampson, 1994). Social disorganization theory hypothesized that when norms for prosocial behavior fail to be reinforced by its residents, individuals will be less likely to conform to prosocial standards. Due to the impoverished conditions of many inner-city neighborhoods, they experience high residential turnover and anonymity among residents. The enforcement of social norms and the promotion of regulations and informal social control networks are not stressed (Sampson, 1994). The failure of residents to be law abiding citizens further weakens community unity. Traub and Little (1994) stated, “social organization (social order) exists when behavioral regularity and social organization bind the individuals and institutions in a society closely together. When consensus concerning values and norms is upset and traditional rules no longer apply, conflict, social disorganization and the volume of deviance are all apt to increase” (p 54).

Researchers tested this theory in a number of studies over the years. They have been most persistent in deteriorated areas closest to the city center and lowest in the suburbs (Shaw & McKay, 1942; Bursik & Grasmick, 1995). Even in a study dating back 60 years, Shaw & McKay (1942) concluded that neighborhoods with high crime rates
were often characterized by economic deprivation, high transit rates and racial/ethnic heterogeneity. They further concluded that these combined factors contributed to the social disorganization of neighborhoods, which lowered social control.

In another study, Elliott, Wilson, Huizinga, Sampson, Elliott, & Rankin (1996) found significant mediating effects of neighborhood disadvantage on developmental outcomes when assessed at the neighborhood level. Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls (1997) examined the relationship between social and economic disadvantage in neighborhoods in the Chicago area and the level of cohesion and informal control among residents as a mediating factor in predicting violent crimes. These researchers found that neighborhood disadvantage predicted the occurrence of violent crimes which supported findings of earlier research studies.

**Social Control Theory**

The final theory that has been found to be relevant to this study is the Social Control Theory. Unlike many of the past theories that ask the question, "Why do people break the law?" social control theories ask the question, “Why don’t people break the law?” Social control theorists assume all people are capable of committing crime and violent acts and would do so if left to their own values, beliefs and behaviors (Hirchi, 1969). Some social control theorists view deviant behavior as individuals acting out their most primal inclinations. However, the focus of social control theory is on the strategies and techniques which help regulate learned behavior which leads to conformity and compliance of the rules of society including the influence of family, school, morals, values, peers and beliefs (Hirschi, 1969). The social control theories are comprised of three major theories: containment, social bond, and self control.
Reckless (1961) developed the containment theory in 1961 and explained deviate behavior as the interplay between two basic forms of controls known as internal and external factors. Internal factors were described as those factors from within an individual that pulled him toward not committing crime, such as the strength of one’s personality. These influences include a good self image, high level of frustration tolerance, strong ego, goal oriented, high sense of responsibility and strong internalized morals and ethics (Schegel, 1998). Those individuals who view themselves as responsible and accountable for their actions will not commit crimes or violent acts. Those external factors that serve as constraints to committing deviate acts were positive family and peer relationships, opportunities for achievement, reinforcement goals, norms and values and discipline (Reckless, 1961). In the containment theory Schegel (1998) states that the probability of deviate behavior increases and one’s internal and external constraints weaken.

The Social Bond Theory of Hirschi (1969) focus on the techniques and strategies used to regulate behavior to ensure one’s conformity. Hirschi’s (1969) version of the social control theory focuses on the role of social relationships as social bonds rather than an individual’s personality. Hirschi’s (1969) beliefs about delinquency and desirable behavior assume that an individual would commit criminal acts when one’s connection or bonding to society becomes weak or is broken (Hirschi, 1969).

Schegel (1998) explains that social control defines deviant behavior by what is right and wrong and by what is a violation of the law. This socialization process is referred to as bonding and motivating the individual into conformity (Schegel, 1998).

Hirschi (1969) further explained his theory using four central elements to bonding: attachment, commitment, involvement and beliefs. He states that as an
individual becomes more attached to others and has a strong sense of belonging, the less likely he is to develop deviate behavior. Individuals who have strong attachments to parents and family, peers, teachers, religious leaders and other community leaders prefer conformity to deviate behavior.

Hirchi (1969) defines commitment as the rational component to conformity. This component speaks to the investment [in conventional lives] of actions such as time, energy and the fear of law-breaking behavior. An individual will strongly consider what he risks losing if he engages in deviant behavior. The time invested in developing a positive reputation, earning a valuable education, and any other positive state in society means far more than breaking the law (Hirchi, 1969).

Involvement in conventional activities by an individual would keep them involved in positive endeavors with little time for deviant behavior. If youth are involved in school, community and family activities, there is no idle time to get involved in trouble (Hirchi, 1969). The concept in the theory has been used as the basis for generating programs which focus on positive recreational activities to occupy the leisure time of youth (Hirchi, 1969).

The belief component refers to the existence of a common value system that conforms to the positive norms of society. A person is more likely to conform to social norms when he believes in them. Hirchi (1969) recognized that the depth and magnitude of beliefs are based on the attachment an individual has to the systems representing the beliefs being challenged.

Although Hirchi’s (1969) bonding theory has utility, its four components have been criticized. First, the theory has been criticized for not explaining all types of crimes.
and conformity, for example white collar crime. If an individual is working a job and conforming to societal norms, he is not necessarily too busy to commit crime. But the fact that he is working, allows him the opportunity to commit white collar crime (Welch, 1998). Some researchers say the theory offers a simplistic solution to the problem of youth delinquency. For example, giving children recreational activities, swimming pools in the community and homework to occupy their time will not prevent youth crime. This theory has been challenged.

Several empirical tests of the theory by criminologists and sociologists challenge the theory. One study conducted by Thompson, Mitchell, & Doddler (1984) indicated that the extent of variation in deviant behavior among youth is more accurate when the role of delinquent peers is introduced as an additional variable. Thompson, et al. (1984) study was found to be more representative of social learning or differential association theory than the one theorized by Hirschi (1969).

To counter the criticisms of the theory, Hirschi (1969) developed a more refined control theory and called it the Self-Control Theory of Delinquency. This theory is based on the premise that crime is a product of low self-control combined with opportunities (Schegel, 1998). Self-control, both high and low, is a stable characteristic arising from the internalization of external social controls. Goffredson and Hirschi (1990) strayed from Hirschi’s (1969) previous theory that supported positive social bonding as a buffer against criminal behavior for this new proposition that self control, internalized early in life determines who has the highest probability of committing crimes. Youth who grow up with behavioral problems will tend to grow into juvenile delinquents and eventually into adult offenders (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). The self-control theory theorized that
proper parenting is the most important factor that determines a child’s self-control. Children who have loose controls, no discipline, abusive or neglectful upbringing tend to be impulsive, insensitive, risk takers, non-verbal and are more likely to engage in criminal activity or violence (Grasmick, Title, Bursik, & Arneklev, 1993). Youth who come from parents who set limits and supervise and punish their misconduct will develop the self-control needed to make rational decisions and socialization skills and are more likely to resist easy temptations offered by crime and violence. Although parental control is important to this theory, the lack of self-control and family involvement in the development of the child does not mean that an individual will unequivocally become deviant. These missing factors only mean that one is at high risk and conditions are favorable for deviant behavior (Grusnick, et al., 1993).

Overall, this theory has been accepted by researchers. The strong role of parental involvement in the development of children has merit. This theory has become popular among researchers today. The need for parental involvement is important to the development of youth. Although this theory has merit, it is not without criticism. Some researchers indicate that the theory fails to account for all crimes (Schegel, 1998). There are variations in crime rates based on the product of opportunity structures, for instance youth living in under-privileged areas versus those that have more privileges. Opportunities for crime are more readily available to certain individuals and areas. Those without access to opportunities will engage in other forms of low self-control rather than crimes such as drinking, cheating, absenteeism, self-centeredness, gambling and smoking (Schegel, 1998). This makes the relationship between self-control and opportunities unclear.
REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

A number of major research studies have been conducted to address the presence of violence in the lives of America’s youth. These studies have focused on determining causes of and where, when, and how youth violence occurs. The literature draws heavily from several studies that have relevant importance to the body of knowledge regarding youth violence. These studies provide an extensive review of research on risk factors for aggression and other behavior problems.

A major report on youth violence was conducted in 2001 by the Department of Health and Human Services (2001). The report, *Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General* (2001), focused on the scope of the problem, its causes, and how to prevent it. The report reviewed violence from a developmental perspective. It examined how youths’ personal characteristics interact over time with the social context in which they live (Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). The approach considered a number of risks over the course of youths’ lives from prenatal factors to factors that influence whether patterns of violent behavior of adolescence would persist into adulthood. This developmental approach has facilitated researchers to identify two general categories of violence. One is that violent behaviors starts before puberty and the other one is that violent behavior appears after puberty. It is believed that these two pathways to violence will help researchers target interventions to periods in the development of youth where they will be most effective (Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

The Surgeon General’s 2001 Report was a collaborative effort of three primary government agencies: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the
National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). All of these agencies are components of the Department of Health and Human Services. In compiling this report, these agencies reviewed an extensive body of research regarding youth violence, its causes, where, when and how much of it occurs, and which preventive strategies used by practitioners are effective.

Major research findings and conclusions in the report identified factors that increased the risk or statistical probability that a child will become involved in violence and the developmental pathways that may lead a child into a violent lifestyle. The most significant conclusion noted in the report is that youth violence is not an intractable problem (Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). The report provided information regarding the knowledge and tools needed to reduce or even prevent many of the most serious acts and reduce less serious acts. As a result, researchers and practitioners can gain important information for use in designing, testing and evaluating intervention programs.

The bottom line regarding the Surgeon General’s 2001 Report is that there is an urgent need for a national resolve to confront the problem of youth violence using research-based approaches.

In a study conducted by Hawkins, Herrenkohl, Farrington, Brewer, Catalano, Harachi and Cothern (2000), information was synthesized from over 60 studies using meta-analysis procedures. Studies selected for the review had to meet the following six criteria:

1) Subjects were juveniles living in their community (i.e. they were not incarcerated) when they were first assessed.
2) Subjects were not chosen for having committed prior criminal or violent offences.

3) Studies measured interpersonal physical violence or acts resulting in physical injury or threat of physical injury to another person, excluding suicidal behavior.

4) Studies identified a modifiable indicator of a meaningful predictor or risk factor. The meta-analysis procedures excluded studies of interactions between multiple risk factors and discussions of race and gender as predictors of violence.

5) The study design was longitudinal with results based on prospective or retrospective data so that exposure to risk factors preceded violence.

6) Individual subjects served as the assistants of analysis for both independent and dependent variables.

In performing the meta-analysis, Hawkins, et al. (2000) performed a statistical analysis to determine the strength of the association between particular risk factors and the violence that occurred. Since many of the studies they reviewed used different methods of analyses, they used a correlation coefficient to express the relationship using standard meta-analytical procedures from Rosenthal (1991). They summarized the findings from two or more studies as a weighted mean correlation which gave more weight to studies with large samples than those with small samples. The methodology for the study included expressing the strength of the association between a risk factor and subsequent violence as an odds ratio (the odds of violence in the group with a particular risk factor divided by the odds of violence in the group without that risk factor). The use
of an odds ratio expressed the degree of increased risk for violence associated with the presence of a risk factor in a population (Hawkins et al., 2000).

The results of their study found that predictors were arranged in five domains: individual, family, school, peer-related and community and neighborhood factors.

Lipsey and Derzon (1998) conducted a study which examined predictors of violent and serious delinquency in adolescence and early adulthood. The researchers used procedures for a meta-analysis by compiling information from published and unpublished research into a database that indexed the strength of the relationship between the predictor variable and the criterion variables in terms of effect sizes.

The first goal of Lipsey and Derzon’s (1998) study was to determine which predictors seen at adolescence had the strongest empirical association with subsequent violence or delinquency. The second goal was to identify which associations were of sufficient magnitude to help identify which at-risk juveniles to receive intervention.

Results of the study concluded that predictors of violent or serious delinquency at ages 6 – 11 and 12 – 14 years were significantly different. The best predictors of violent or serious delinquency differ according to age groups. A juvenile offense at ages 6 – 11 years is the strongest predictor of subsequent violence as a serious delinquency even if the offense did not involve violence. For the 12 – 14 years age group, a juvenile offense was the second most powerful predictor of future violence. Another predictor with little correlation between the two groups was substance abuse. For the 6 – 11 year old age group, substance abuse was the strongest predictor of future violence and for the 12 – 14 year old age group, it was the poorest predictor for future violence (Lipsey and Derzon, 1998).
The two strongest predictors for subsequent violence for the 12 – 14 year old age group was the lack of social ties and involvement with antisocial peers. These predictors have to do with interpersonal relations. The predictor for the 6 – 11 year old age group was weak (Lipsey and Derzon, 1998).

Another comparison of the two groups revealed that relatively fixed personal characteristics are second and third rank predictors of subsequent violence for 6 – 11 year olds and have a heavier representation of behavioral predictors for subsequent violence for the 12 – 14 age group (Lipsey and Derzon, 1998).

The final findings of Lipsey and Derzon’s (1998) study indicated that broken homes and abusive parents are among the poorest predictors of subsequent violence for both groups, while antisocial peers and substance abuse is reversed for the two age groups. Having antisocial peers is a strong predictor for the 12 – 14 age group; it is a weak predictor for the 6 – 11 year old group.

Lipsey and Derzon (1998) concluded by indicating that more research is needed regarding youth violence. The rise of violence is compounded by the number of risk factors involved. The larger the number of risk factors to which an individual is exposed, the greater the probability that the individual will engage in violent behavior.

To further the research process on risk factor, Hann and Borek, (in press) conducted a study known as *Taking Stock of Risk Factors for Child/Youth Externalizing Behavior Problems for the National Institute of Mental Health* (NIMH). The study refers to a range of rule breaking behaviors and conduct problems, including physical and verbal aggression, defiance, lying, stealing, truancy, delinquency, physical cruelty and criminal acts. The report had three key objectives: (1) to identify and describe what is
known about risk factors and processes that contribute to externalizing behavior problems; (2) to identify gaps in our knowledge about risk factors and processes; and (3) to describe the kinds of research and research methodologies needed to advance the field of youth violence and youth development (Hann & Borek, in press).

Researchers in this study reviewed a broad base of empirical studies relating to externalizing behavior problems and conduct disorder. The *Taking Stock Report* (in press) provides an integrated overview of what experts in the field regard as the most well studied factors and processes and further evaluates these factors in terms of their status as correlates, predictive risk factors, or causal risk factors. However, the study was limited to research on child and adolescent externalizing behavior problems and conduct disorders.

Four primary domains of risk were identified as the focus for the study, they were: 1) child characteristics; 2) family factors and processes; 3) peer influences; and 4) the broader social environment, communities, and schools (Hann & Borek, in press). For each domain, experts in the field were organized into small groups of six to eight to summarize the risk factor and processes. Each group discussed which factors were most supported by documentation and known by the field. Using a consensus process, each group identified the most well established risk factors and processes in a given domain. To further document these factors, each expert had to identify, evaluate, and summarize a minimum of three key references for each factor. To evaluate the risk factors, the experts used a framework developed by Kraemer, Kazdin, Offord, Kessler, Jensen and Kupfer (1997) that described three types of risk factors: correlates, predictive and causal. Correlates were defined as factors that appeared to occur concurrently with externalizing
behavior problems. Factors that are found to reliably precede behavior problems can be described as predictive risk factors (Hann & Borek, in press). Factors that can be manipulated through experimental or intervention and shown to have had a change in behavior problems can be described as causal risk factors.

Results of this study identified three findings: 1) Research in this area has blossomed in the past decade, resulting in hundreds of empirical papers covering a wide range of possible factors. 2) While a number of significant causal risk factors have been identified (i.e. child hostile attributional processes; parental engagement, validation, and discipline; peer rejection and association with deviant peers), many of the identified factors have empirical support as predictive risk factors and others have been identified as concurrent correlates. 3) Researchers have moved beyond a simple risk-factor perspective to a more complex and textured view of children and how they develop from informing through early adulthood (Hann & Borek, in press).

Grunbaum et al., (2001) conducted the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System Study (YRBSS) for the United States. The study was designed to assess health-risk behaviors which contribute to the leading causes of mortality and morbidity among youth and adults in the United States. The health-risk behaviors are normally established during youth and extend into adulthood. The period of the study covered data from February through December 2001.

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System monitors six categories of priority health-risk behaviors among youth and young adults. The six categories of behaviors are unintentional injuries and violence; tobacco use; alcohol and other drug use; sexual behaviors; unhealthy dietary behaviors and physical inactivity (Grunbaum et al., 2001).
The study collected data using a national school level survey administered by the Centers for Disease Control, as well as state, territorial, and school-based surveys conducted by education and health agencies. Data from the national survey, 34 state surveys and 18 local school-based surveys collected from students in grades 9 – 12 during February – December 2001 was summarized to prepare the YRBSS report for 2001.

Results of the study revealed that approximately three-fourths of all deaths in the United States among young people aged 10 – 24 years old resulted from four causes: motor-vehicle crashes, other unintentional injuries, homicide, and suicide. These results demonstrate that many high school students engage in behaviors that increase their likelihood of death from influences and causes other than violence (Grunbaum et al., 2001).

In the state of Louisiana, the results of the 2001 YRBSS show that the leading cause of death among youth aged 10 – 24 years is motor vehicle crashes (33%). The next leading cause of death is other unintentional injuries (26%) followed by homicide (17%) and suicide (10%) (Grunbaum, et al, 2001).

Brown and Bzostek (2003) conducted a study which presents a broad overview of the many types of violence affecting the lives of children and youth. Their research provides a stronger sense of the relative risks for children experiencing different forms of violence as well as disparities in the overall levels of violence experienced by different groups of children: male and female; black, white, and Hispanic; younger and older youth (Brown & Bzostek, 2003). Unlike these researchers, much of the previous reports on youth violence focused on a particular type: child abuse or media violence, gang violence or suicide, dating violence or violent crime. Programs and policy making regarding youth
violence have focused narrowly on particular types of violence (Brown and Bzostek, 2003). Brown and Bzostek (2003) contend that the broader perspective will help policy makers and service providers to prioritize program and funding efforts and design anti-violence interventions that are more sensitive to the broad needs of target groups.

Research by Brown and Bzostek (2003) drew on the latest data and the most recent findings from research studies. They looked at the most common and least common forms of violence affecting youth and a variety of other types of violence that affect youth development. Their study focused on the critical intersections of violence and age, gender and race/ethnicity by examining how various subgroups of children and youth are affected by violence.

Brown and Bzostek’s (2003) findings regarding the prevalence of different forms of violence in the lives of children and youth are depicted in Table 1. The most common forms of violence affecting children and youth identified by the researchers were: media violence, physical fighting, severe spanking, carrying weapons and contemplating suicide.

Table 1
Prevalence of Different Forms of Violence in the Lives of Children and Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violence</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watches 2+ hours or TV (each weekday)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>Nearly 3 out of 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical fighting (past year)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Grades 9 – 12</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>1 out of 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who report spanking</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1 out of 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table cont’d)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>with hard object (past month)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ages 2 – 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons carrying (past month)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Grades 9 – 12</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>1 out of 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence exposure (past year)</td>
<td>1979, 1985</td>
<td>Under age 18</td>
<td>5 – 16</td>
<td>1 out of 20-1 out of 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen suicide attempts (past year)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Grades 9 – 12</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>1 out of 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying (past six months)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Ages 12 – 18</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>1 out of 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of attack at school (past six months)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Ages 12 – 18</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1 out of 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent crime victimization (past year)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Ages 16 – 19</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent crime victimization (past year)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Ages 12 – 15</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child maltreatment (past year)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Under age 18</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1 out of 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse (past year)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Under age 18</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>1 out of 833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen homicide (annual)</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Ages 15 – 19</td>
<td>0.0096</td>
<td>1 out of 10,417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen suicide (annual)</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Ages 15 – 19</td>
<td>0.0082</td>
<td>1 out of 12,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant homicide (annual)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Under one year</td>
<td>0.0077</td>
<td>1 out of 12,987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1The lower bound estimate of domestic violence is from 1979, with percent of total calculated using population estimates for July of 1980 from the U.S. Census Bureau. The upper bound estimate is from 1985, with percent of total population calculated using population estimates for July of 1985 from the U.S. Census Bureau.

2Because the lower bound (1979) estimate for domestic violence is based on a sample of 3 – 17 year olds living in two-parent families, it is likely that the actual prevalence of domestic violence is greater than the estimate presented here.

3Includes fear of attack at school or on the way to and from school.

(table cont’d)
Media violence was identified as being one of the most common forms of violence since most children are exposed to media violence at some level on a daily basis through television, video games, or music. Brown and Bzostek (2003) found that approximately three-fourths of all eighth-graders report that they watch two or more hours of television each weeknight and a third reported that they watch four or more hours each weeknight (see Table 1). The average American child watches 28 hours of television each week and will have viewed 16,000 simulated murders and 200,000 acts of violence by the age of 18 (Brown and Bzostek, 2003). In contrast, they reported prime-time programming for adults is far less violent than commercial television for children. Some cartoons that children watch have more than 80 acts of violence per hour (Brown & Bzostek, 2003). Children and youth’s exposure to media violence has been linked to the development of their increased aggressive behavior and attitudes, fears or pessimistic attitudes about the world and desensitization to both real and fantasy violence (Brown & Bzostek, 2003). The researchers indicated that children who identify with aggressive characters on television and who perceive television violence as real are more likely to be aggressive as adults regardless of how aggressive they were as children.

Another common form of violence that is prevalent in the lives of youth is physical fighting. In 2001, one-third of all high-school students reported being in a physical fight within the last year (See Table 1). About four percent of that number required treatment by a doctor or nurse because of injuries they received fighting (Brown & Bzostek, 2003). The researchers further reported that one (1) in 10 high school students
reported having been physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend within the past year.

Although severe spanking is a common form of violence, it is a broadly accepted as a common means of discipline for children (Brown & Bzostek, 2003). Spanking children has been defended by many researchers to be both constructive and to cause problems in the development of a child. Some studies show consistent relationships between corporal punishment and increased problems with aggression, depression, juvenile delinquency and even later spousal abuse. Other studies have found that mild to moderate spanking was not associated with lasting harm to the child once other aspects of the parent/child relationship were taken in account (Brown & Bzostek, 2003).

Brown and Bzostek (2003) found that a substantial number of youth carry a weapon, such as a gun, knife, or club. In 2001, more than 17 percent of all high-school students reported carrying a weapon within the past month, and nine (9) percent reported being threatened with a weapon on school property within the past year (See Table 1).

The final most common form of violence found by Brown and Bzostek (2003) is the risk of contemplating suicide. The study showed that it is rare for children and youth to actually kill themselves. However, it is not rare for children and youth to think about committing suicide. In 2001, nearly one in five (19 percent) high-school students reported that they had thought seriously about killing themselves within the last 12 months and about one (1) in 11 (nine percent) reported actually attempting suicide (See Table 1).

The least common form of violence among children and youth is homicide and suicide. In 2000, children between the ages of 10 and 14 years had homicide and suicide rates that were less than one-fifth the rates for youth between the ages of 15 and 19.
(Brown & Bzostek, 2003). Homicide rates for children below the age of 10 were also very low with the exception of infants. They found that infants had one in 12,987 chance of being murdered. Although statistics may reveal that there was an epidemic of youth violence over the past decade, homicide and suicide rates have been extremely low among children and youth. However, the overall rates depicted in Table 1 mask the differences in risk across race and ethnic groups. In 2000, homicide rates among black males ages 15 to 19 years were more than three times as high as the overall rates for all males in that age group (Brown & Bzostek, 2003).

Other forms of violence depicted in Table 1 regarding domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse and assault, and violent crime victimization vary in their significance relating to youth violence. Data in Table 1 related to domestic violence is dated and does not reflect recent estimates. However, children exposed to domestic violence are more likely than other children to exhibit aggressive and antisocial behavior. One out of 83 youth under the age of 18 experienced maltreatment in 2001 (Brown & Bzostek, 2003). Survey data revealed in 2001 that 7.7 percent of students in grades nine through 12 reported having been raped at some point in their lives. In 2001, 5.5 percent of youth between the ages of 12 and 15 years and 5.6 percent of youth between the ages of 16 and 19 years reported being victims of violent crime during the year. Data for children under the age of 12 are not available (Brown & Bzostek, 2003).

The violence experienced by youth is substantially different based on racial and ethnic backgrounds. A variety of social factors including income, family structure, educational level, and neighborhood characteristics have been found by researchers to be correlated with these differences. Blacks in particular have been found to be of greater
risk to violence than Hispanic and white youths. Black infants are more than four times as likely as Hispanic and non-Hispanic white infants to be murdered. Black teens between the ages of 15 and 19 are twice as likely to be murdered as Hispanic teens and about 12.5 times as likely to be murdered as non-Hispanic white teens (See Table 2).

Table 2
Differences in Violent Experiences by Race/Ethnicity and Type of Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violence</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Blacks compared to Whites¹</th>
<th>Hispanics compared to Whites¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Infants</td>
<td>4.3 times as likely</td>
<td>1.2 times as likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>15 – 19</td>
<td>12.5 times as likely</td>
<td>6.2 times as likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>15 – 19</td>
<td>.63 times as likely</td>
<td>.70 times as likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assault</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>16 – 19</td>
<td>1.7 times as likely</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse and Neglect</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>2.4 times as likely</td>
<td>1.2 times as likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+ Hours of TV per Day</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>8th grade</td>
<td>2.8 times as likely</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Note: Estimates for whites for aggravated assault and TV watching include all whites. All other estimates include only white non-Hispanics.

When suicide rates are considered, nearly the same numbers of teens commit suicide as teen homicides. Native American male youth between the ages of 15 and 19 years are nearly twice as likely as their non-Hispanic white counterparts to commit suicide, and about three times as likely as their black, Hispanic, or Asian counterparts to do so (Brown and Bzostek, 2003).
The experiences of child abuse and neglect for black children are higher than those for non-Hispanic white or Hispanic children. Results from survey data revealed similar racial disparities for parental reports of physical abuse by parents (See Table 2).

Black youth are more likely to be victimized than Hispanic and white youth. They are more likely to be victims of aggravated assault and more likely to be victims of robbery than white youth (Brown & Bzostek, 2003).

Data shown in Table 2 indicate that black children watch considerably more television than white children which suggests that they have greater exposure to media violence. In 2001, 62 percent of black students watched four or more hours of television on an average weekday, compared with 22 percent of white students. Brown & Bzostek (2003) also found that black tenth and twelfth-grade students watched significantly more television than their white student counterparts.

A qualitative research study was conducted by Yackley (2002) with the objective of increasing the awareness and understanding of youth violence. The study involved eight youth co-researchers and Yackley who met nine times over 15 weeks to discuss the topic of youth violence. The participants had the opportunity to increase their understanding and empowerment related to youth violence by expressing their views and beliefs through dialogue with peers about the behavior of others and their own way of dealing with conflict. The findings revealed that the mutual theme throughout the discussion was the issue of respect. Participants revealed that they had problems with anger but claimed they only treated others with disrespect in order to gain respect and to disguise any signs of weakness. Standing their ground was a means of defending their honor and maintaining respect (Yackley, 2002).
Leary (2001) conducted a study based on Socio-cultural Theory, Social Learning Theory, Trauma Theory and the Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome that looked into accounts of multigenerational trauma. The study investigated five research questions involving independent variables believed to predict violent behavior in African American male youth. Two hundred African American males who resided in the inner city of northeast Portland, Oregon participated in the study. The first three questions investigated stressors experienced by African Americans: violence witnessing, violence victimization and daily urban hassles. Questions four and five addressed socio-cultural characteristics of racial socialization and pro-social attitudes toward respect. The study included two groups of African American male youth, 14 to 18 years of age. One hundred were incarcerated and 100 were not incarcerated (Leary, 2001).

Leary (2001) found that all five independent variables significantly predicted use of violence. Multiple regression analysis revealed that the strongest predictor of the use of violence was victimization, which accounted for 43.3% of the total variance in the use of violence. The second step of the regression, witnessing, was added to the equation which increased the explained variance to 49.2%. The final two steps added pro-social attitudes toward respect to the regression accounting for a total of 51.2% of the variance attributed to the use of violence (Leary, 2001).

Racial socialization and urban hassles which were excluded from the final regression failed to significantly increase the prediction of the criterion variables regarding extent to use violence. Evidence provided by data indicated that trauma characteristics of absent mothers, witnessing violence, and feeling disrespected by others were key factors that could provide practitioners a better lens to use in the assessment,
planning and treatment than the current response of punishment and incarceration for acts of violent behavior (Leary, 2001).

A study conducted by Herrenkohl (1998) analyzed measures combined from the 1990 census for the city of Seattle with data from the Seattle Social Development Project (SSDP). This was a developmental longitudinal study of health-risk behaviors among urban youths. The first set of analyses and multi-level models were constructed using the HLM program of Bryk, Raudenbush, & Congdon (1996). These models addressed the nested structure of individuals within neighborhoods and examined relationships between context measure derived from the 1990 census and individual-level outcomes. Standard logistic regression models were used in the second set of analyses to examine relationships between risk factor constructs and violence outcome measures.

The results from the multi-level regression model revealed that youths’ perceptions of neighborhood disorganization and attachment to neighborhoods varied between black group areas; and the variation was associated with levels of neighborhood disadvantage which was measured by the 1990 census. A second census measure, residential stability, was also related to youths’ levels of attachment to their neighborhoods. The analyses showed that neighborhood disadvantage may be related to gang involvement and violence during adolescence (Leary, 2001).

To estimate the prediction of violence (at ages 15, 16 and 18 years) using risk factor variables from youth-reports representing the neighborhood, school, family and peer domains, logistic regression was used. Variables were entered hierarchically on the basis of theory by blacks according to their domain of influence. After examining the contribution of each domain to determine the prediction of violence and the effect of each
risk factor, the analyses revealed that all three hierarchical regressions contributed significantly to the overall prediction of violence. The study determined that variables with unique effects were similar to violence at ages 15 and 16 years of age. Similarity between models was less apparent for violence at age 18. Relationships between risk factors and violence at ages 16 and 18 remained consistent after controlling for violence at age 15 years (Leary, 2001).

SUMMARY

The review of the literature revealed that certain biological and psychological characteristics of individuals predict violent behavior and are, therefore, potential risk factors. The literature revealed that risk factors are related to children’s socialization in families, school, peer groups and the environment in which they live. Demographic data such as sex, race, age, urban, suburban, income levels have an influence on behavioral attitudes. Violence is a complex interplay of these influences; therefore, intervention and prevention efforts are needed at each level. Both urban and suburban youth share some of these risk factors which suggest that both cultures could benefit from programs that provide constructive things to do and encourage family and friends to do them with, as a means of preventing youth from becoming perpetrators or victims of violence.

Research in the area of youth violence has been conducted in a wide variety of disciplines, from criminal justice to psychology and biochemistry. Current knowledge about the causes of violent behavior has yet to reveal solid evidence identifying direct causes or interventions to solve the problem of youth violence. Many theories have been identified that guide the research process and serve as a foundation to determine the risk factors that contribute to youth violence. This theoretical foundation can also provide a
framework for practitioners to implement intervention programs to control or prevent youth violence.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will discuss the methods used for the present research study. In preceding chapters, important questions were asked about the influence of individual, social and environmental factors as risks for violent behavior. The researcher will attempt to isolate risk factors for violence that are most salient during adolescence. The methodology for the research included the following: a) study design, b) identification of target population, c) sampling plan, d) protection of human subjects, e) instrumentation, f) data collection and, g) data analysis procedures.

STUDY DESIGN

The design for the research study was descriptive. Data was collected using a compendium of survey instruments that were developed to measure violence-related attitudes, beliefs and behaviors among young adults. The researcher utilized a descriptive, correlational design to investigate the relationship between risk factors.

POPULATION

The target population for the study was defined as young adults (18-25 years of age) who were unsuccessful in graduating from a secondary education system and who possessed at least one risk factor that contributed to his/her lack of success in school and his/her involvement in violent behaviors when they were under the age of 18. The accessible population was defined as young adults (18-25 years of age) who are currently enrolled at one of five adult education centers in an urban area in the southern United States. The programs offered through the adult education centers consisted of Graduate
Equivalent Diploma (GED) program training and continuing education in English, mathematics, science and reading. The youth enrolled in the adult educations classes are required to complete the program of study; however, they complete the program at their own pace within a certain time frame.

SAMPLING PLAN

The sampling plan for this study was developed based on the unique characteristics of the population from which the sample was drawn. The detailed procedures for selecting the sample are as follows:

1. The sampling frame for this study was 18 – 25 year olds enrolled in adult education programs at five adult education learning centers. This frame was based on current enrollment records and “walk in” students that attended the center on the days the survey was administered.

2. Convenience sampling was used because the accessible population was not fixed to a regular schedule for attending class. This made it difficult for the researcher to administer the survey to groups of students at one time. Therefore, the survey was administered to the study participants when they came to the center to receive instruction.

3. To implement this sampling technique, the researcher obtained from each center administrator the optimum time most students visit the center to receive training. Based on this information, the researcher established a schedule to be present at each of the five centers to maximize the number of participants contacted while the researcher was present.
4. As students entered the center, they were asked to participate in the study. A brief explanation of the study was provided by the researcher along with a guarantee of complete confidentiality. Completed surveys did not have any identification numbers, and subjects were not asked to identify themselves on the instrument. To ensure that no participant completed the survey more than one time, center administrators kept a list of all students who completed a survey. This list was never given to, nor seen by, the researcher. Therefore, the participants’ responses could not be matched to their names. A center identification number was placed on each questionnaire so that the researcher could use the information for subsequent analysis.

5. Screening questions were used on the survey to further select the sample. Based on responses to the screening questions, respondents were instructed to either return the survey to the researcher or continue completing the entire survey.

6. The sample size for this study was determined by following the recommendations of Cochran’s (1977). The minimum required usable sample size was calculated to be 70. Cochran’s (1977) sample size formula for continuous data and the calculations for its use are presented below along with explanations describing how these decisions were made.

\[
\frac{(t)^2 \times (s)^2}{(d)^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2(1.142)^2}{(8 \times .03)^2}
\]

\[
\frac{n_0}{\text{--------}} = \frac{------}{87}
\]
a. The researcher set the alpha level a priori at .05 (t) and used an eight-point response scale. He set the level of acceptable margin of error at 3% (d) and estimated the standard deviation (s) of the scale to be 1.142.

b. An explanation of the decisions made were based on the following:
   1. \( t = \) value for selected alpha level of .025 in each tail = 1.96. The alpha level of .05 indicates the level of risk the researcher is willing to take (Cochran, 1977).
   2. \( s = \) estimate of standard deviation in the population = 1.142. The estimate of the standard deviation for an eight point scale was calculated by using 8 divided by 7 (number of standard deviations which includes almost all of the possible values in the range (approximately 98%) (Cochran, 1977).
   3. \( d = \) acceptable margin of error for the mean was estimated = .24, (number of points on primary scale * acceptable margin of error; points on primary scale = 8; acceptable margin of error = .03. This represents the error that the researcher is willing to accept (Cochran, 1977).

c. Since the required sample size of 87 exceeded 5% of the accessible population, (350 * .05 = 18), Cochran’s (1977) small population correction formula was used to calculate the final sample size. The calculations are as follows:
\[
\frac{n_0}{1+n_0/\text{population}} = \frac{87}{1+87/350} = 70
\]

1. Where population size = 350.

2. Where \( n_0 \) = required return sample size according to Cochran’s (1977) formula = 87.

d. The above procedures describe the minimum returned useable sample size required for the study.

**PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Human rights of subjects were protected in this study. Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Louisiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (See Appendix A). Subjects participating in the study were informed verbally by the researcher and received a fact sheet informing them about the purpose of the study and the amount of time it would take to complete the instrument. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that responses to the survey would be confidential.

**INSTRUMENTATION**

The investigator used a compendium of assessment instruments to measure the variables being tested. The measures in this compendium were intended for use with youth and young adults to assess risk factors such as violence-related attitudes, beliefs and behaviors, and environmental conditions. Assessments in the survey instrument were categorized into four sections: 1) attitudes and beliefs, 2) behavior, 3) environmental, and 4) demographic. Each section focused on a different category of assessments.
Each assessment used in this study has been identified at Appendix B. Appendix B identifies each construct to be measured (appearing in alphabetical order down the left-hand column), provides details about the characteristics of the scale or assessment tool, identifies target groups previously assessed, provides reliability and validity information for each construct, and identifies the original developer of the scale or assessment.

The entire instrument contained 130 items and is included at appendix A. A copy of the request for permission to use the instrument (Normative Beliefs about Aggression Assessment) in this study from the developer of the instrument is also provided since the instrument was copyrighted (See Appendix C). The developer’s response to the request for permission to use the instrument is at Appendix D. A description of and scoring procedures for each assessment used in this study follows.

Attitudes and Beliefs Assessment

A1. Normative Beliefs about Aggression: The assessment measured a young adult’s perception of how acceptable it was to behave aggressively, both under varying conditions or provocation, and when no provocative conditions are specified. The assessment could be administered individually or in a group setting. Each respondent was asked to select the one choice that best described his own ideas or experiences. The measures on this assessment were composed of three sub-scales. The items were scored using the following 4 point scale: 1) It’s perfectly OK = 4; 2) It’s sort of OK = 3; 3) It’s sort of wrong = 2; 4) It’s really wrong = 1 (Huesman, Guerra, Miller & Zelli, 1992).

The “General Approval of Aggression Scale” was the first sub-scale of this measure. The scale was calculated by summing participants’ responses to eight items and dividing the sum by the total number of items. A maximum score of 4 indicated a belief
that it is generally acceptable to aggress against others. The belief that aggression against others is generally unacceptable is indicated with a minimum score of 1 (Huesman, Guerra, Miller & Zelli, 1992).

The second sub-scale, “Approval of Retaliation,” was calculated by summing participants’ responses to 12 items and dividing the number by the total number of items. A respondent’s maximum score of 4 indicated a belief that it is acceptable to aggress against others in specific provocation situations. A minimum score of 1 indicated that the respondent has a belief that it is unacceptable to aggress against others in specific provocation situations (Huesman, Guerra, Miller & Zelli, 1992).

The last sub-scale, “Total Approval of Aggression,” measured beliefs about aggression in both specific and general situations. It was calculated by averaging all 20 items on this sub-scale (Huesmann, Guerra, Miller & Zelli, 1992). This score serves as the overall score for respondents’ “Normative Beliefs about Aggression.”

A2. “Attitudes toward Interpersonal Peer Violence” -- the passive or violent attitude orientation and knowledge and skill in resolving conflicts nonviolently was assessed using these 14 items. In this scale, respondents were asked to indicate their opinions or feelings about fighting. Fighting was defined as physical fights with pushing and hitting, not just arguments. Scoring and analysis was accomplished by assigning the following point values: 1) Disagree A Lot = 1; 2) Disagree A Little = 2; 3) Agree A Little = 3; 4) Agree A Lot = 4 (Slaby, 1984).

All items were coded such that a more positive (accepting) orientation toward violence received the higher response value of four (4). The scale was scored by summing the point values of the responses and dividing by the total number of responses.
Lower mean scores, which ranged from one (1) to four (4), indicated a higher level of knowledge and skills in resolving conflict non-violently. Higher mean scores indicated less knowledge or skill in non-violent conflict resolution and a more violent orientation (Slaby, 1984).

B1. “Acceptance of Couple Violence”-- this assessment measured acceptance of couple violence. It has three subscales: male on female violence, female on male violence and acceptance of general dating violence. Respondents were asked to circle the answer that best corresponded with their beliefs (Foshee, Fothergill & Stuart, 1992).

A point value for each item was assigned as indicated for each response on the assessment. The following three subscales were scored: 1) The acceptance of Male on Female Violence subscale was based on three items; 2) the Acceptance of Female on Male Violence subscale was based on three items; 3) the Acceptance of General Dating Violence subscale was based on five items. The score for each subscale was calculated by summing the point values of the responses from a respondent and dividing by the number of items. The range of scores was from a low of one (1) to a high of four (4) with higher scores indicating a higher level of acceptance of couple violence. Low scores indicated a lower level of acceptance of couple violence (Foshee, Fothergill and Stuart, 1992).

C1. “Attitude toward School”—the six items in this subscale measured attitudes toward school (e.g. homework, teachers’ opinions). Respondents were asked to check the response that best corresponded with their beliefs. Point values were assigned for items as follows: 1) Strongly Agree = 4; 2) Agree = 3; 3) Disagree = 2; 4) Strongly Disagree = 1. All items were coded such that a more positive attitude toward school received the higher response value of four (4). Point values were summed for each respondent and divided
by the number of items. The range of scores was from a low of one (1) to a high of four (4) with a higher score indicating a more positive attitude toward school (Institute of Behavioral Science, 1990).

D1. “Attitudes toward Gangs” -- the nine items in this subscale measured a respondent’s attitude toward gangs. Participants were asked to indicate how true certain statements about gangs are for them. Point values for each item were zero (0) = Not true for me, and one (1) = True for me. All items were coded such that a more accepting attitude toward gangs received the higher response value of one (1). The total score was derived by summing all the items. Higher scores indicated a more positive (accepting) attitude toward gangs (Nadel, Spellmann, Alvarez-Cannino et al., 1996).

**Behavior Assessments**

A1. “Aggressive Behavior” – the six items in this subscale measured whether the respondent, or anyone in the household during the last month they were in school, had been a victim or perpetrator of violence. These items were scored by adding the point values of the responses and dividing the total by the number of responses. In this scale, the participants’ responses to each of the 14 specific items was coded such that if they indicated that they had experienced the behavior (as either a victim or perpetrator), the item was coded with a value of one (1). If they had not experienced the behavior, it was coded with a value of zero (0). Additionally, two items used a response scale of zero (0) to four (4) with the higher values representing a greater number of occurrences of the specified event. The responses to these 16 items were then summed to provide a score of violence and violent behaviors with a range of possible scores from zero (0) to 22. The mean score was recorded as the participants’ extent of involvement in aggressive
behavior. The higher the mean scores, the higher the level of exposure to, or participation in, violent or aggressive behavior. The lower the mean score, the lower the level of exposure to (or participation in) violent or aggressive behaviors of the participants (LH Research, Inc., 1993).

B1. “Friends’ Delinquent Behavior” – the eight items in this subscale measured a respondent’s knowledge of their friends’ involvement in delinquent and high risk behaviors (such as vandalism, violence, and drug use) during the last year they were in school. Participants were asked to indicate how many of their close friends engaged in delinquent and high risk behaviors (Institute of Behavioral Science, 1987).

The point values were summed and then divided by the total number of items (8) for each respondent. The scores ranged from zero (0) to four (4), with a higher score indicating greater association with (or exposure to) delinquent behavior by close friends. Point values were assigned as follows: 1) All of them = “4;” 2) Most of them = “3;” 3) Some of them = “2;” 4) Very few of them = “1;” and 5) None of them = “0” (Institute of Behavioral Science, 1987).

C1. “Weapons Carrying” -- the eight items in this subscale measured the frequency of weapon carrying. Participants were asked to indicate the number of days they carried a weapon in the following three settings: 1) Anywhere, 2) To and/or From School, and 3) On School Property (Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH), CDL, 1993, a, b).

Each of these settings was addressed in the instrument with two items that requested the respondents to indicate the number of days out of the last 30 days they were in school they carried a “Gun” in this setting. The score for each setting was computed
by summing the response provided; therefore, each sub-scale (representing the different settings) had a possible range of scores from 0 to 36. In addition, the six total items were combined to provide an overall assessment of the extent to which the respondents carried weapons during their last 30 days of enrollment in school. This score had a possible range of scores of from 0 to 108.

**Environmental Assessments**

A1. “Family Bonding” – the six items in this subscale measured family bonding and communication. Respondents were asked to indicate how strongly they felt each sentence was true for them. “YES!” was checked if the statement was very true for them; “yes” if it was somewhat true; “no” if it was somewhat false; and “NO!” if it was very false.

Individual items were scored as follows: 1) YES! = 4; 2) yes = 3; 3) no = 2; and 4) NO! = 1. All items were coded such that a more positive family bonding response received the highest response value of four (4). To score, point values for all six items were added. The maximum obtainable score of 24 indicated a strong self-concept. A minimum score of 6 indicated a weak self-concept (Phillips and Springer, 1992).

B1. “Neighborhood/Block Conditions” – the 13 items in this subscale measured a resident’s perceptions of neighborhood conditions (e.g., severity of problems, sense of safety). Respondents were given a list of common urban problems and asked to indicate the extent to which each was a problem on their block.

The point values for responses to these items were summed, and then divided by the total number of responses. Items left blank were not counted in the number of responses. Higher mean scores indicated higher levels of perceived problems in residents’
neighborhood. Lower mean scores indicated lower levels of perceived neighborhood problems (Perkins, Florin & Rich, 1990).

B2. “Neighborhood Satisfaction” – the four items in this subscale measured respondents’ attitudes toward their neighborhood (e.g. “good place to live”). Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with four statements about neighborhood satisfaction (Perkins, Florin & Rich, 1990). Individual items were scored as follows: 1) Agree = 3; 2) Disagree = 1; and No Opinion = 2. All items were coded such that a higher level of neighborhood satisfaction received the higher response value of three (3).

The scoring of these items was accomplished by adding the point values of the responses from a respondent, then dividing the total by the number of responses. The higher the mean score, the higher the level of respondent’s satisfaction with their (residential) block as a place to live and their expectations about the future for their block (Perkins, Florin and Rich, 1990).

B3. “Neighborhood/Community Action” – the six items in this subscale assessment developed by Perkins, Florin and Rich (1990) were designed to measure the perceived likelihood that the resident or a neighbor would intervene when presented with a problem in the neighborhood (e.g. break up a fight, stop drug selling). Participants were presented with six situations that may or may not happen on their block, and were asked to determine the likelihood of a neighbor responding appropriately (Perkins, Florin and Rich, 1990).

Adding the point values of the responses from a respondent, then dividing this total by the number of responses was the method that was used for scoring these items.
All items were coded such that a more positive perception that neighbors would intervene when presented with a problem on their block received the highest response value of three (3). Higher mean scores indicated higher levels of expressed likelihood that the participant or a neighbor would intervene when presented with a problem on their block (Perkins, Florin and Rich 1990).

**Demographic Characteristics**

Data for selected demographic characteristics on respondents were measured. Measures included in this instrument were: gender, race, age, disrupted family status (not living with both biological parents), income, job history, frequent change of schools while in school and suspension/expulsion record while in school.

The instrument used in this study is at Appendix E and contains 130 items. It took respondents approximately 25 minutes to complete the assessment tool. A pilot test was conducted using (N=5) 18-year-old high school seniors with similar demographic characteristics of the study population to determine how long it would take to complete the survey.

**DATA COLLECTION**

Five adult education centers were used in the study. Research in adult education centers posed data collection challenges. Students enrolled in adult education programs are completing self-paced instruction and are not fixed to a regular schedule for attending classes. Many students in these centers complete instruction primarily at their convenience.

Entry into the adult education centers used in this study was obtained from the school district’s director for adult learning and the director of two community based
centers. Permission was granted by the director for the researcher to coordinate with respective center administrators to facilitate data collection. The five adult education centers that agreed to participate in the study are presented in Table 3. Eighty-six (N=86) questionnaires were completed by young adults who agreed to participate in the study. Two questionnaires were eliminated due to incomplete data. As a result, data was collected and analyzed from a total of 84 questionnaires. The largest number of participants (N=34 or 40.5%) were found at Center #3 (see Table 3).

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification of Center</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data was collected using the following procedure.

1. The researcher obtained permission to include three adult education centers as data collection sites from the school district’s director for adult learning. The directors of two community base adult learning centers also granted permission to the researcher to use their sites to collect data.

2. After approval was obtained, the researcher met with the administrator from each of the five adult education centers to obtain his/her approval and cooperation to collect data at each of the sites. The purpose of the study and
planned procedures were explained to each administrator and any questions/concerns they expressed were addressed.

3. A schedule was established so that the researcher could be present at each of the five centers during times to maximize the number of participant contacts while the researcher was present.

4. During the specified schedule, the researcher was at the center, he briefly visited with each student as they entered the center and asked for their consent to participate in the study. A brief explanation of the study was provided along with a guarantee of complete anonymity. Completed surveys were not marked with any identification numbers and subjects were not asked to identify themselves in any way on the instrument. Potential subjects were also made aware that a small token of appreciation would be provided for each individual that participated in the study.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS
INTRODUCTION

Findings of the study are presented in this chapter and are organized by objectives of the study. Prior to addressing the specific objectives of the study, however, a description of the study participants is presented based on demographic information available to the researcher.

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of selected perceptual and demographic factors on the self-reported aggressive/violent behaviors of young adults while they were enrolled in school.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Specific objectives for the study included:

1. Determine the level of involvement in violence and violent behaviors while enrolled in school among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States as measured by the following scales:
   b. Friends Delinquent Behavior-Denver Youth Survey (Institute of Behavioral Science, 1987)
   c. Weapons Carrying-Youth Risk Behavior Survey/NYC Youth Violence Survey (Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH), CDC, 1993a,b)
2. Determine the attitudes and beliefs of young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States regarding violence and violent behavior among school students as measured by the following scales:
   a. Normative Beliefs about Aggression (Huesmann, Guerra, Miller & Zelli, 1992)
   b. Attitudes Toward Interpersonal Peer Violence (Slaby, 1989)
   c. Acceptance of Couple Violence (Foshee, Fothergill & Stuart, 1992)
   d. Attitudes Toward School-Denver Youth Survey (Institute of Behavioral Science, 1990)
   e. Attitudes Toward Gangs (Nadel, Spellman, Alvarees-Canino et al., 1996)

3. Determine the environmental conditions experienced while enrolled in school as perceived by young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States as measured by the following scales:

4. Determine if a relationship exists between the level of violence and violent behavior while enrolled in school and selected perceptual and environmental factors among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States.
Violence and violent behavior was measured by the results of the following measure:


Perceptual factors included the following:

b. Normative Beliefs about Aggression (Huesmann, Guerra, Miller & Zelli, 1992)
c. Attitudes Toward Interpersonal Peer Violence (Slaby, 1989)
d. Acceptance of Couple Violence (Foshee, Fothergill & Stuart, 1992)
e. Attitudes Toward School – Denver Youth Survey (Institute of Behavioral Science, 1990)
f. Attitudes Toward Gangs (Nadel, Spellman, Alvares – Canino et al., 1996)

Environmental factors included the following:


For the purpose of this study, the independent variables were identified as the perceptual and environmental factors listed above. The dependent variable was identified as the self-reported aggressive behavior of respondents as measured by the scale, “Aggressive Behavior – Joyce Foundation Youth Survey (L.H. Research, Inc., 1993).”
5. Determine if a model exists that explains the level of violence and violent behavior while enrolled in school among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States from the following perceptual, environmental and demographic measures:

   a. Normative Beliefs about Aggression (Huesmann, Guerra, Miller & Zelli, 1992)

   b. Attitudes toward Interpersonal Peer Violence (Slaby, 1989)

   c. Acceptance of Couple Violence (Foshee, Fothergill & Stuart, 1992)

   d. Attitudes toward School – Denver Youth Survey (Institute of Behavioral Science, 1990)

   e. Attitudes Toward Gangs (Nadel, Spellman, Alvares – Canino et al., 1996)


   g. Neighborhood/Block Conditions (Perkins, Florin & Rich, 1990)


   k. Weapon Carrying-Youth Risk Behavior Survey/NYC Youth Violence Survey (Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH), CDC, 1993a,b)
1. Demographic measures such as ethnicity, family income, suspension from school for fighting, expulsion from school for fighting and number of times changed school

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Individuals participating in the study were asked to provide information regarding several demographic characteristics as part of their response to the survey instrument. The first characteristic on which they were described was current age. The population of the study was defined as young adults between the ages of 18 and 25; therefore, any individual who indicated that their age was not in this range was eliminated from participating in the study.

The majority (n = 47, 55.9%) of subjects in the study reported that they were 18 or 19 years old. In addition, only seven (8.4%) of the participants indicated that they were more than 23 years old. (See Table 4).

Table 4
Age of Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table cont’d)

79
Regarding ethnicity, more than three-fourths (n = 65, 77.4%) indicated that they were African-American. In addition, 16 (19%) reported that they were Caucasian. (See Table 5).

Table 5

Racial Identity of Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biracial/Mixed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked to report their gender, the respondents were almost evenly divided with 43 (51.2%) reporting they were male and 41 (48.8%) indicating that they were female. Information was sought from study participants regarding the individuals with which they resided during the last year they were enrolled in school. This information was collected to describe one aspect of the individuals’ home environment. Responses were summarized to classify each of the participants into one of the following categories: They lived with both parents; they lived with one parent (could be either mother or father); they lived with grandparents(s); or they lived with another relative. The other
relative category was further divided into: brothers and/or sisters; spouse; boy/girlfriend; or miscellaneous other relatives (such as aunt, uncle, etc.). The largest group of respondents ($n = 35, 41.7\%$) reported that they lived in a home situation with both biological parents during their last year in school. Additionally, 24 (28.6\%) of the respondents reported that they lived with one parent. A complete list of individuals with which the respondents lived is reported in Table 6.

Table 6

Individuals in Households of Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs during their Last Year in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Members</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both Parents</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One parent</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives$^a$</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent(s)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriend or girlfriend</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers and sisters</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife or husband</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. $^a$ Other relatives*, eight respondents reported aunts, uncles and cousins as household members.

Respondents were asked to indicate the “last year you attended school” as a measure of their grade level when they dropped out of school. The grade that was identified most frequently by the respondents was “11th” with slightly more than one-fourth ($n = 22, 26.2\%$) of the respondents. Additionally, 21 (25.0\%) indicated that their
last grade in school was “10th,” and 12 (14.3%) respondents reported that they were last enrolled in the “9th” grade. (See Table 7)

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7TH</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8TH</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9TH</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10TH</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11TH</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12TH</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHERa</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. a Individuals who marked “other” did not provide additional information.

Forty-three (51%) of the respondents reported that they were employed during their last year in school. Of the 43 individuals who indicated they were employed, almost one-third reported that they worked between 21 and 30 hours per week. The next largest group of respondents (n = 11, 25.6%) reported that they worked 10 hours or less per week. (See Table 8).
Table 8

Number of Hours Worked per Week by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of hours</th>
<th>n&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 or more</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>N = 84, however 41 of the study participants indicated that they were not employed during their last year in school.

Study participants were asked to report the number of different jobs they had held in the past 12 months. The largest group of respondents (n = 32, 38.1%) indicated that they had held one job. In addition, 18 (21.4%) reported that they had held zero jobs which essentially indicated that they had not been employed in the past twelve months. The largest number of jobs reported was five, and the range in number of jobs held was from zero (0) to five (5) with a mean of 1.5 jobs held (SD = 1.18). (See Table 9).

Another characteristic for which respondents were asked to provide information was the yearly income of their family while they were in school. Almost half (n = 39, 46.4%) of the respondents indicated that they did not know the income of their family while they were in school. Of the 45 participants who provided their income level, the largest group (n = 14, 31.1%) reported their income as “Less than $10,000.00.” (See Table 10).
Table 9

Number of Jobs Held in Last 12 Months by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Jobs Held</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10

Reported Family Income of Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs during Last Year in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than $10,000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,001-$20,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,001-$30,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,001-$40,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,001-$50,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001-$60,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,001 or above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another variable on which respondents was described was the community size in which they lived during the last year they attended school. To accomplish this measurement, respondents were asked to identify the name of the town in which they lived during their last year in school. This information was then used to identify the population size of the town and classify each as a large city, town or rural area. A large city was defined as a metropolitan area with a large center of population. A town was defined as a center of population smaller than a city yet larger than a village. A rural area was defined as one with a population base less than a town or village and is commonly referred to as the “country.” On this characteristic, the majority of respondents (n = 63, 75.0%) indicated that they lived in an area classified by the researcher as a large city during the last year they attended school. In addition, 19 (22.6%) reported that they lived in an area classified as a “town” and two (2.4%) indicated that they lived in an area classified as rural.

Another area on which study participants were described was their suspension and expulsion from school. Regarding suspension, subjects were asked to indicate whether or not they were ever suspended from school. More than one-fourth (n = 25, 29.8%) indicated that they had never been suspended from school. However, 59 (70.2%) reported that they had been suspended from school. Of those who had been suspended, 32 (54.2%), or 38.1% of the total group indicated that they had been suspended from school for fighting and 27 (45.8%), or 32.1% of the total group indicated that they had been suspended for reasons other than fighting. It should be noted that the individuals who had been suspended for fighting might have also been suspended for reasons other
than fighting; but the primary focus of this study was on violence and violent behaviors. Therefore, the emphasis was placed on whether or not they had been suspended for fighting. (See Table 11).

Table 11

Whether or Not Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs were Suspended from School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suspension</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes for fighting</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes for other reasons</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding expulsion, subjects were asked to indicate whether or not they were ever expelled from school. The majority of the participants ($n = 54, 64.3.8\%$) indicated that they had never been expelled from school. However, 30 (35.7\%) reported that they had been expelled from school. Of those who had been expelled, 16 (46.6\%), or 19.0\% of the total group indicated that they had been expelled from school for fighting and 14 (53.3\%), or 16.7\% of the total group indicated that they had been expelled for reasons other than fighting. It should be noted that the individuals who had been expelled for fighting might have also been expelled for reasons other than fighting, but the primary focus of this study was on violence and violent behaviors. Therefore, the emphasis was placed on whether or not they had been expelled for fighting. (See Table 12).

Information was also sought from the study participants regarding the number of times they changed schools during the time they were enrolled. The majority of the
respondents (n = 58, 69%) indicated that they changed schools between 0 and 2 times. Additionally, 14 respondents (16.7%) reported that they changed schools between 3 and 5 times. Four of the participants (4.8%) reported that they changed schools 11 or more times. (See Table 13)

Table 12

Number of Times Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs were Expelled from School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expulsion</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes for fighting</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes for other reasons</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13

Number of Times Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs Changed Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Times Changed Schools</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2 times</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 or more times</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Young adults participating in the study were also asked to respond regarding whether or not their reason for dropping out of school was because they failed to pass the graduate exit examination (GEE). Ten participants (11.9%) responded “Yes” to this question indicating that they dropped out of school because they failed to pass the GEE; and 74(88.1%) reported that this was not their reason for dropping out of school.

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether or not they had a child while they were in school. The majority of study participants 76 (90.5%) indicated that they did not have a child while they were enrolled in school while eight participants (9.5%) indicated that they did have a child.

OBJECTIVE #1

Objective #1 of the study was to: “Determine the level of involvement in violence and violent behaviors while enrolled in school among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States.” For the purpose of this study, measurement of the construct, “Involvement in violence and violent behaviors” included the following three aspects of violence: The extent to which participants and/or individuals in their household had been a perpetrator or victim of selected aggressive behaviors (as measured by the “Aggressive Behavior – Joyce Foundation Youth Survey,” L. H. Research Inc., 1993); the extent to which the participants’ close friends had been involved in delinquent and high risk behaviors (as measured by the “Friend’s Delinquent Behavior--Denver Youth Survey,” Institute of Behavioral Science, 1987); and the extent to which the participants engaged in carrying weapons (as measured by the “Weapon Carrying – Youth Risk Behavior Survey/NYC
Procedures used to summarize the information on whether or not the participants and their family had been the victim or perpetrator of various types of violence was measured using the “Aggressive Behavior Scale-Joyce Foundation Youth Survey”. In this scale, the participants’ responses to each of the 14 specific items was coded such that if they indicated that they had experienced the behavior (as either a victim or perpetrator), the item was coded with a value of “1.” If they had not experienced the behavior, it was coded with a value of “0.” Additionally, two items used a response scale of zero (0) to four (4) with the higher values representing a greater number of occurrences of the specified event. The responses to these 16 items were then summed to provide a score of violence and violent behaviors with a range of possible scores from zero (0) to 22. The mean score was recorded as the participants’ extent of involvement in aggressive behavior. The reliability coefficient for the scale was estimated using the Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient and was determined to be $\alpha = 0.92$.

Results of the computation of participants’ aggressive behavior scores revealed a mean score of 2.48 with a standard deviation of 4.06. The largest group of respondents had aggressive behavior scores of 0.0 (the minimum possible score). The highest score identified was 20.0 (of a possible 22.0 points), and six (7.1%) of the respondents had scores of 10 or higher. (See Table 14).
Table 14

“Aggressive Behavior” Scores of Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 or more</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Aggressive Behavior Score ranged from 0.0 to 20 with a mean of 2.5 (SD = 4.06)

The second dimension of level of involvement in violence and violent behavior measured in this study was friends’ involvement in delinquent and high risk behaviors. This was measured using the “Friends’ Delinquent Behavior” scale (Institute of Behavioral Science, 1982) which included eight items that measured the participants’ knowledge of their friends’ involvement in vandalism, violence and drug use during the last year they were in school. Point values were assigned to each of the eight items as follows: 4 = “All of them;” 3 = “Most of them;” 2 = “Some of them;” 1 = “Very few of them;” and 0 = “None of them.” Values were summed and divided by the total number of items (which was eight) for each respondent. The possible range of scores was from 0 to 4, with the higher score indicating greater association with, or exposure to, delinquent behavior by close friends. The Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient for this scale was $\alpha = 0.93$. Scores ranged from 0.00 to 3.63. The mean score for this sample of subjects was 1.3 with a standard deviation of 1.05. (See Table 15).
When the scores for this scale were examined in response groups, the largest number of participants (29, 35%) scored in the range of 0.00 to 0.50. (See Table 15). Twenty-three individuals (27%) had scores between the scores of 1.50 and 2.49. Three respondents (4%) scored 3.50 or higher. The higher the score, the greater the level of involvement of close friends in delinquent and high risk behaviors.

Table 15

“Friends’ Delinquent Behavior” Score of Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-.50</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.51-1.50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.51-2.49</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.50-3.49</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.50-4.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Friends’ Delinquent Behavior Score ranged from 0 – 3.50 with a mean of 1.37 (SD = 1.05)

Friend’s delinquent behavior scale was divided into two sub-scales, “Friends’ Violent Behavior” and “Friends’ High-Risk Behavior.” The variable, “Weapon Carrying” included the sub-scales which measured weapon carrying anywhere, weapon carrying going to and from school, weapon carrying on school property and weapon carrying of guns.
A factor analysis of “Friends’ Delinquent Behavior” scale was conducted. This analysis was performed by dividing the “Friends’ Delinquent Behavior” scale into the “Friends’ Violent Behavior” scale and the “Friends’ High Risk Behavior” categories.

The third dimension of level of involvement in violence and violent behaviors on which respondents were assessed was the extent to which they carried weapons in various settings. The settings addressed in the study included “Anywhere,” “To and From School,” and “On School Grounds.” Each of these settings was addressed in the instrument with two items that requested the respondents to indicate the number of days out of the last 30 days they were in school they carried a “Gun” in this setting. The score for each item in a setting was computed by summing the response provided with the following values for each: 0 days = “0,” 1 day = “1,” 2-3 days = “2.5,” 4-5 days = “4.5,” 6-9 days = “7.5,” 10-13 days = “11.5,” 14-17 days = “15.5,” and 18 days = “18.” Therefore, each sub-scale (representing the different settings) had a possible range of scores from zero (0) to 36. The six items of the subscale were combined to provide an overall assessment of the extent to which the respondents carried weapons during their last 30 days of enrollment in school. This score had a possible range of scores of from 0.0 to 108.

The overall assessment of the extent to which study respondents carried weapons ranged from a low of zero (0) to a high of 97.50. The mean overall weapon carrying score was 7.88 (SD = 20.62). (See Table 16).

The variable, “Weapon Carrying,” was further summarized by an analysis of the three sub-scales that made up the primary variable (weapon carrying anywhere, going to and from school, and on school property). For the sub-scale, “Weapon Carrying
Anywhere,” respondents’ mean score was 2.8 (SD = 7.86). Seventy-one (84.5%) respondents indicated that they did not carry a weapon anywhere. Two (2.4%) of the respondents had scores of 31 or higher. (See Table 17).

Table 16

“Overall Weapon Carrying Scores” for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0-5.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1-10.0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1-15.0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.1-20.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.1-25.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.1-50.0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.1 or higher</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* N = 84, mean = 7.88, SD = 20.62.

Table 17

Incidence of “Weapons Carrying Anywhere” by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Weapon Carrying Anywhere Score”</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>84.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table cont’d)
Scores on “Weapon Carrying To and From School” ranged from 0 to 36. The summary of respondents’ behavior regarding “Weapon Carrying-- Going to and from School” revealed a mean score of 2.9 (SD = 8.02). The scores reported by the study participants indicated that 82% of the respondents did not carry a weapon going to and from school. However, two (2.4%) individuals had scores of 31 or higher on this dimension of weapon carrying. (See Table 18)

Table 18

Incidence of “Weapon Carrying Going To and From School” by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Weapon Carrying Going To and From School” Score</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean = 2.76, SD = 7.86

(table cont’d)
Scores on “Weapon Carrying Anywhere” ranged from 0.0 to 36.

For the sub-scale, “Weapon Carrying on School Property,” 78.5% of the respondents reported that they did not engage in weapon carrying on school property.

The mean score for this sub-scale was 2.2 (SD = 6.18). (See Table 19).

Table 19

Incidence of “Weapon Carrying on School Property” by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Weapon Carrying on School Property” Score</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 or higher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean = 2.76, SD = 7.86

Scores on “On School Property” ranged from 0.0 to 27.

In comparison to “Weapon Carrying Anywhere” and “Weapon Carrying – Going to and from School,” more respondents (21%) reported incidences of carrying a weapon on school property one or more times than for the other two categories (15% and 18%
respectively). “Weapon Carrying on School Property” was a behavior demonstrated more frequently by the study participants than “Weapon Carrying Anywhere” and “Weapon Carrying – Going to and from School.”

Two of the six items in this scale specifically addressed the extent to which respondents carried “Guns” rather than weapons in general. These two items were combined to produce a “Weapons-Guns” score using the same scoring method as for the other three sub-scale scores. The “Weapons-Guns” scores ranged from 0 to 36 (the maximum possible score) with a mean value of 1.43 (SD = 6.22). (See Table 20).

Table 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Carrying a Weapon—Gun Category” Score</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.00</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>92.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0–10.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1–20.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.1—30.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.1 or higher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. mean = 1.43, SD = 6.22.

When respondents were asked where they obtained the gun, three (3.6%) indicated that they bought the gun on the street, three (3.6%) other respondents indicated that the gun they carried was either a stolen weapon or one they borrowed from a friend.
Eleven (13.1%) of the respondents indicated that they carried a weapon for protection and three (3.6%) indicated that they carried a weapon for reasons not identified. (See Table 21).

To accomplish the first objective of the study, which was to determine the level of involvement in violence and violent behavior while enrolled in school among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States, the researcher used the aggressive behavior score derived from the “Aggressive Behavior” scale. This measure was used as the primary outcome measure in subsequent analyses.

Table 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Used to Obtain Guns as Perceived by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Program</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not carry a gun</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>92.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bought a gun on the street</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carried a stolen gun or borrowed the gun from a friend</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OBJECTIVE #2

Objective #2 of the study was to determine the attitudes and beliefs of young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States regarding violence and violent behaviors while they were in school. Several scales were used to measure the participants’ attitudes and beliefs about violence and violent behaviors. These scales measured the participants’ normative beliefs about
aggression, attitude toward interpersonal peer violence, acceptance of couple violence, attitude toward school and attitude toward gangs.

The first scale utilized in the study to measure attitudes and beliefs regarding violence and violent behaviors was the “Normative Beliefs about Aggression” scale. This scale consisted of 20 items designed to assess the respondent’s beliefs about the use of violence in selected situations. Respondents were asked to respond to the items on a four point scale with descriptors including “It’s Really Wrong;” “It’s Sort of Wrong;” “It’s Sort of OK;” “It’s Perfectly Ok.” Values placed on the responses ranged from one to four with higher values placed on the response that is more accepting of the aggressive behavior. Therefore, the higher scores on the scale items are indicative of a more accepting attitude toward aggressive behaviors. The item on the scale which the respondents rated the highest was “Suppose a boy hit another boy, John; Did you think it was OK for John to hit him back?” The mean response value on this item was 2.74 (SD = 1.22) indicating that the overall response to this item was “It’s Sort of OK.” The item which the respondents rated the lowest was “Suppose a girl said something bad to a boy; Did you think it was wrong for the boy to hit her?” The mean response to this item was 1.07 (SD=.26) indicating that the respondents felt that this action was “Really Wrong.” (See Table 22). The “Normative Beliefs about Aggression” scale was further composed of three sub-scales: 1) General Approval Aggression, 2) Approval of Retaliation Aggression, and 3) Total Approval of Aggression (overall normative beliefs about aggression).

The “General Approval Aggression” sub-scale was calculated by summing participants’ responses to nine (9) of the 20 items and dividing by the total number of
items. (See Table 22). A maximum score of four (4) indicates a belief that it is generally acceptable to aggress against others. A minimum score of one (1) indicates that they believe that aggression against others is generally unacceptable. When the participants’ data was examined regarding their “General Approval Aggression” Scale, the scores ranged from a low of 1.00 (the lowest possible score) to a high of 3.56. The mean score was 1.50 (SD=0.47).

The second sub-scale, “Approval of Retaliation Aggression,” was calculated by summing participants’ responses to 11 of the 20 items and dividing by the total number of items. (See Table 22). A maximum score of four (4) indicates a belief that it is acceptable to aggress against others in specific provocation situations. The minimum score of one (1) indicates the belief that it is unacceptable to aggress against others in specific provocation situations. Scores for participants in this study ranged from a low of 1.00 (the lowest possible score) to a high of 3.45. The mean score was 2.01 (SD= 0.61).

The third sub-scale “Total Approval of Aggression” scale was calculated by averaging all 20 items. This was utilized as a measure of participants’ overall normative beliefs about aggression. When data was examined regarding participants’ “Total Approval of Aggression” Scale, the scores ranged from a low of 1.00 (the lowest possible score) to a high of 3.20. The overall Normative Belief about Aggression mean score was 1.78 (SD=0.49). To estimate the reliability of the “Normative Beliefs about Aggression” scale, the Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient was computed from the data and determined to be $\alpha = 0.87$. (See Table 22).
Table 22

“Normative Beliefs about Aggression” among Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suppose a boy hit another boy, John. Did you think it was wrong for John to hit him back?</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose a girl hit another girl, Mary. Did you think it was wrong for Mary to hit her back?</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose a boy hit a girl. Did you think it was OK for the girl to hit him back?</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose a boy said something bad to a girl. Did you think it was wrong for the girl to scream at him?</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose a boy said something bad to another girl, Mary. Did you think it was OK for Mary to scream at him?</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose a girl said something bad to a boy. Did you think it was wrong for the boy to scream at her?</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose a boy said something bad to another girl, Mary. Did you think it was OK for Mary to hit him?</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you were angry, did you feel it was OK to say mean things to other people?</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose a boy says something bad to another boy, John. Did you think it was OK for John to scream at him?</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, when I was enrolled in school, I believed it was wrong to hit other people.</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was generally wrong to get in physical fights with others.</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose a boy said something bad to a girl. Did you think it was wrong for the girl to hit him back?</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose a boy hit a girl. Did you think it was OK for the boy to hit her back?</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, was it OK to yell at others and say bad thing?</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table cont’d)
Suppose a boy says something bad to another boy, John. Did you think it was OK for John to hit him?b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was wrong to insult other people. a</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, it was OK to take your anger out on others by using physical force. a</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was wrong to take it out on others by saying mean things when you were mad. a</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was usually OK to push or shove other people around if you were mad. a</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suppose a girl said something bad to a boy. Did you think it was wrong for the boy to hit her?b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note. N = 84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a “General Approval Aggression” sub-scale items (mean = 1.50, SD = 0.47)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b “Approval of Retaliation Aggression” sub-scale items (mean = 2.02, SD = 0.61)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Total Approval of Aggression” = all 20 items serve as the overall score (mean = 1.78, SD = 0.49)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Normative Beliefs about Aggression” scale. Individual items were scored as follows: 1) It’s Perfectly OK = 4; 2) It’s sort of OK = 3; 3) It’s sort of wrong = 2; and 4) It’s really wrong = 1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another dimension of Attitudes and Beliefs assessments included in the study was the “Attitude toward Interpersonal Peer Violence.” This was measured using a 14 item scale which utilized a four point Likert-type response scale with values ranging from “Disagree a Lot” to “Agree a Lot.” Values were assigned to the items on the scale such that higher values indicated a more accepting attitude toward peer violence. Therefore, if disagreeing with an item indicated an accepting attitude toward peer violence, “Disagree a Lot” was assigned a value of four (4) and “Agree a Lot” was assigned a value of one (1). Similarly, if agreeing with an item indicated an accepting attitude toward peer violence, “Agree a Lot” was assigned a value of four (4) and “Disagree a Lot” was assigned a value of one (1).
The individual items on which the respondents had the most accepting attitude toward peer violence included: “It was OK to hit someone who hit you first” (mean=3.19, SD=1.06); “Anyone who wouldn’t fight was going to be picked on even more” (mean=3.18, SD=1.06); and “If a student hit me first, my family would have wanted me to hit them back” (mean=3.01, SD=1.15). The items on which the respondents had the least accepting attitudes toward peer violence were: “I usually could tell when things were bothering me or getting on my nerves” (mean=1.26, SD=.68) and “The best way to stop a fight before it started was to stop the argument (problem) that caused it” (mean = 1.46, SD = .83). (See Table 23).

The 14-item “Attitude toward Interpersonal Peer Violence” Scale was also summarized to produce an overall attitude toward peer violence scale score. This score was defined as the mean of the responses to the 14 items with all items coded such that a more accepting attitude toward peer violence received the higher response value (four). To estimate the reliability of this scale, the Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient was computed from the data and determined to be $\alpha=0.72$. Overall “Attitude toward Peer Violence” scores ranged from a low of 1.29 to a high of 3.57 with a group mean score of 2.35 (SD=0.50). (See Table 23).

Table 23

“Interpersonal Peer Violence” Individual Item Summary for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean$^a$</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was Ok to hit someone who hit you first.</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table cont’d)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anyone who wouldn’t fight was going to be “Picked on” even more.</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a student had hit me first, my family would have wanted me to hit them back.</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had walked away from a fight, I would have been called a coward (“Chicken”).</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a kid at school hit me, it was harder to report them to a teacher or other adult than it was to just hit them back.</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I really wanted to, I could usually talk someone out of trying to fight with me.</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family would have been mad at me if I had gotten in a fight with another student, no matter what the reason.</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in school didn’t need to fight because there were other ways to deal with being mad.</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If my friends wanted to go someplace where a fight might happen, I found it easy to say I didn’t want to go with them.</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When actions of others made me angry, I usually dealt with it without getting into a physical fight.</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a kid teased me or “dissed” me, I usually could not get them to stop unless I hit them.</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If things were bothering me or getting on my nerves, I did things to relax.</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The best way to stop a fight before it started was to stop the argument (problem) that caused it.</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually could tell when things were bothering me or getting on my nerves.</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n = 84, Overall mean = 2.35 (SD = 0.50)

*aScoring scale for the “Interpersonal Peer Violence” scale items: Disagree a Lot = 1; Disagree a Little = 2; Agree a Little = 3; Agree a Lot = 4.

*bFor items that were reversed coded, the scoring scale is as follows: Disagree a Lot = 4; Disagree a Little = 3; Agree a Little = 2; Agree a Lot = 1.
The third scale utilized in the study to measure attitudes and beliefs about violence was the “Acceptance of Couple Violence” Scale. The scale consisted of 11 items which utilized a four point Likert-type response with values ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” Values were assigned to the items on the scale such that higher values indicated a more accepting attitude toward couple violence and lower values indicated a low level of acceptance of couple violence. Therefore if disagreeing with an item indicated an accepting attitude toward couple violence, “Strongly Disagree” was assigned a value of four (4) and “Strongly Agree” was assigned a value of one (1).

The individual items on which the participants had the most accepting attitude toward couple violence included: “Boys sometimes deserve to be hit by the girls they date” (mean = 2.05, SD = 1.05); “Violence between dating partners was a personal matter and people should not interfere” (mean = 1.95, SD = 1.15). The items on which the participants had the least accepting attitude toward couple violence were: “Violence between dating partners could improve the relationship” (mean = 1.30, SD = 0.67) and “A boy angry enough to hit his girlfriend must have loved her very much” (mean = 1.31, SD = 0.73. To estimate the reliability of this scale, the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was computed from the data and determined to be α = .86. (See Table 24).

The “Acceptance of Couple Violence” scale was composed of three sub-scales that measured respondents’ attitudes and beliefs about acceptance of male on female violence, and female on male violence, and acceptance of general dating violence.
Table 24

“Acceptance of Couple Violence” by Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs Individual Item Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sub-Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys sometimes deserved to be hit by the girls they dated.(^a)</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>F on M(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence between dating partners was a personal matter and people should not interfere.(^c)</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>GDV(^c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A boy who made his girlfriend jealous on purpose deserved to be hit.(^a)</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>F on M(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some couples had to use violence to solve their problems.(^c)</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>GDV(^c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A girl angry enough to hit her boyfriend must have loved him very much.(^a)</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>F on M(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were times when violence between dating partners was Okay.(^c)</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>GDV(^c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes violence was the only way to solve their problems.(^c)</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>GDV(^c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A girl who made her boyfriend jealous on purpose deserved to be hit.(^b)</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>M on F(^b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls sometimes deserved to be hit by the boys they dated.(^b)</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>M on F(^b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A boy angry enough to hit his girlfriend must have loved her very much.(^b)</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>M on F(^b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence between dating partners could improve the relationship.(^c)</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>GDV(^c)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \(n = 84\).

Scoring scale for “Acceptance of Couple Violence” scale items: Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Agree = 3; and Strongly Agree = 4.

\(^a\) F on M = “Acceptance of Female on Male Violence” (mean = 1.80, SD = 0.78).

\(^b\) M on F = “Acceptance of Male on Female Violence” (mean = 1.58, SD = 0.61).

\(^c\) GDV = “General Dating Violence” (mean = 1.59, SD = 0.61).

Overall attitude score ranged from a low of 1.00 to a high of 3.00 with a mean score of 1.59 (SD = 0.57).
The first sub-scale, female on male violence, was defined as the mean of the responses to 3-items with all items coded such that a more accepting attitude toward female on male violence received the higher response value of four (4). Participants had a mean score of 1.80 (SD = 0.78). This was the highest score of the three sub-scores. The second sub-scale, general dating violence sub-scale, measured the respondents’ attitude toward general dating violence. Participants had a mean score of 1.59 (SD = 0.61). This score was defined as the mean of the responses to 5-items with all items coded such that a more accepting attitude toward general dating violence received the higher response value of four (4). The last sub-scale, male on female violence, measured respondents’ attitude toward male on female violence. This sub-scale was rated the lowest of the three sub-scales by the respondents. Participants had a mean score for male on female violence of 1.58 (SD = 0.61). This score was defined as the mean of the responses to 3-items with all items coded such that a more accepting attitude toward male on female violence received the highest response value of four (4).

The 11-item “Acceptance of Couple Violence” Scale was summarized to produce an overall attitude score which measured the acceptance of couple violence. This score was defined as the mean of the responses to the 11-items with all items coded such that a more accepting attitude toward couple violence received the higher response value of four (4).

Another dimension of “Attitudes and Beliefs” assessment scale examined in the study was “Attitudes toward School.” This six-item scale measured participants’ attitude toward school (e.g., homework and teachers’ opinions) utilizing a four-point Likert-type response with values ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” Values
were assigned to items on the scale such that the higher scores indicated a more positive attitude toward school; therefore, if disagreeing with an item indicated a positive attitude toward school. “Strongly Disagree” was assigned a value of four (4) and “Strongly Agree” was assigned a value of one (1). Similarly, if agreeing with an item indicated a positive attitude toward school, then “Strongly Agree” was assigned a value of four (4) and “Strongly Disagree” was assigned a value of one (1).

The item receiving the highest mean score from respondents regarding their attitude toward school was, “I didn’t care what teachers thought of me.” (mean = 3.00, SD = 1.04). The statement, “I tried hard while I was in school” received the lowest score from respondents regarding their attitude toward school (mean = 1.89, SD = 0.84). (See Table 25).

Table 25

“Attitude toward School” for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t care what teachers thought of me.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, I liked school.</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I was a student in school, homework was a waste of time.</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I was in school, my teachers liked me.</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education was so important that it was worth it to put up with things about school that I didn’t like.</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tried hard while I was in school.</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = 84 (table cont’d)
Individual items were scored as follows: Strongly Agree = 4; Agree = 3; Disagree = 2; and Strongly Disagree = 1.

Items that were reverse coded were scored as follows: Strongly Agree = 1; Agree = 2; Disagree = 3; and Strongly Disagree = 4.

Overall “Attitude toward School” scores ranged from a low of 1.00 to a high of 4.00 with a mean score of 2.17 (SD = 0.56).

The overall score on the “Attitudes toward School” Scale was defined as the mean of the responses to the 6-items with all items coded such that a more positive attitude toward school received the higher response value of four (4). To estimate the reliability of this scale, Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient was computed from the data and determined to be $\alpha = .68$.

The final scale in the study to measure attitudes and beliefs regarding violence and violent behavior was the “Attitude toward Gangs” Scale. The 9-item scale was designed to measure participants’ attitudes toward gangs. Respondents were asked to indicate how true certain statements about gangs were for them. Participants responded to items as either “Not True for Me” or “True for Me.” Values were assigned to the items on the scale such that higher values indicated a more accepting attitude toward gangs. “Not True for Me” was assigned a value of zero (0) and “True for Me” was assigned a value of one (1).

The individual items on which the respondents had the highest score regarding their attitude toward gangs were: “My friends would have thought less of me if I had joined a gang while I was in school” (mean = 0.67, SD = 0.47 where 1 = “Not True for Me” and 0 = “True for Me”); “I believed it was dangerous for me to join a gang; because I would have ended up getting hurt or killed by belonging to a gang” (mean = 0.43, SD = 0.49 where 1 = “Not True for Me” and 0 = “True for Me”); and “I thought I would have probably gotten into trouble if I had joined a gang while I was in school” (mean = 0.39,
SD = 0.49 where 1 = “Not True for Me” and 0 = “True for Me”). Higher scores by respondents indicated a more positive (accepting) attitude toward gangs. The items on which the respondents had the lowest score regarding their attitude toward gangs were: “When I was a student in school, I joined a gang” (mean = 0.10, SD = 0.29 where 1 = “Not True for Me” and 0 = “True for Me”); “I thought it was cool to be in a gang while I was in school” (mean = 0.11, SD = 0.31 where 1 = “Not True for Me” and 0 = “True for Me”); and “I think in school you are safer, and have protection if you join a gang” (mean = 0.12, SD = 0.32 where 1 = “Not True for Me” and 0 = “True for Me”). (See Table 26).

Table 26

“Attitudes toward Gangs” for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My friends would have thought less of me if I had joined a gang while I was in school.(^b)</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believed it was dangerous to join a gang; because I would have ended up getting hurt or killed by belonging to a gang.(^b)</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought I would have probably gotten into trouble if I had joined a gang while I was in school.(^b)</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of my friends belonged to gangs when I was in high school.(^a)</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some people in my family belonged to a gang, or had belonged to a gang while I was in school.(^a)</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I belonged to a gang while I was in school.(^a)</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think in school you are safer, and have protection, if you join a gang.(^a)</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought it was cool to be in a gang while I was in school.(^a)</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I was a student in school, I joined a gang.(^a)</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \(n = 84\).
\(^a\)Individual items were scored as follows: Not True for Me = 0; True for Me = 1.
Items that were reversed coded were scored as follows: Not True for Me = 1; True for Me = 0.

The 9-item “Attitude toward Gangs” Scale was further summarized to produce an overall attitude toward gangs scale score. This score was defined as the sum of the responses to the 9-item with all items coded such that a more accepting attitude toward gangs received the higher response value of one (1). To estimate the reliability of this scale, Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient was computed from the data and determined to be $\alpha = 0.70$. Overall, “Attitude toward Gangs” scores ranged from a low of 0.00 to a high of 9.00 with a mean score of 2.41 (SD = 1.99).

OBJECTIVE #3

Objective #3 of the study was to determine the environmental conditions experienced while enrolled in school as perceived by young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States. The researcher attempted to identify environmental conditions experienced by young adults enrolled in adult education programs while they were in school. Four scales were used to measure participants’ perceptions of their environmental conditions. These scales measured the participants’ perceptions about family bonding, neighborhood/block conditions, neighborhood satisfaction and neighborhood/community action.

The first scale utilized in this study to measure environmental conditions was the “Family Bonding—Individual Protective Factor Index” (Phillips & Springer, 1992). The scale consisted of six items designed to measure participants’ perceptions of their level of family bonding and communication. Respondents were asked to respond to the items related to family bonding on a four point scale with descriptors including “YES!” if the statement was very true for them; “yes” if it was somewhat true; “no” if it was
somewhat false; and “NO!” if it was very false. Values placed on the responses ranged from one (1) to four (4) with the higher value placed on the response that was more indicative of a strong self-concept regarding family bonding and communication. Values were assigned to the items on the scale such that higher values indicated a higher level of family bonding and lower values indicated a lower level of family bonding. Therefore, if the response “NO!” indicated a higher level of family bonding, it was assigned a value of “4,” and “YES!” was assigned a value of “1.” Similarly, if responding “YES!” to an item indicated a higher level of family bonding, a value of “4” was assigned and “NO!” was assigned a value of “1.”

The item on the scale that received the highest rating was, “My family let me down when I was in school.” The mean response value on this item was 2.35 (SD = .95) which indicated that the overall response of this item was “yes.” The item that received the lowest rating from the respondents was, “My family expected too much of me when I was in school.” The mean response to this item was 2.50 (SD = 1.08). An overall scale score was obtained by adding the point values for all six items. A maximum obtainable score of 24 indicated a high level of family bonding. A minimum score of 6 indicated a low level of family bonding. To estimate the reliability of this scale, Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient was computed from the data and determined to be $\alpha = 0.78$. Overall, “Family Bonding” scores ranged from a low of 6.00 to a high of 24.00 with a group mean of 18.33 (SD = 4.37). (See Table 27).
Table 27

“Family Bonding” Scores for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Itema</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Sometimes I was ashamed of my parents.”b</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“While I was in school, I could tell my parents the way I felt about things.”a</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I enjoyed talking with my family when I was in school.”a</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I liked to do things with my family when I was in school.”a</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“My family expected too much of me when I was in school.”b</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“My family let me down when I was in school.”b</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = 84

aItems were scored as follows: YES! = 4, yes = 3, no = 2, NO! = 1.
bItems that were reverse coded were coded as follows: YES! = 1, yes = 2, no = 3, NO! = 4.

Overall “Family Bonding” scores ranged from a low of 6.00 to a high of 24.00 with a mean of 18.33 (SD = 4.37).

The second scale utilized in this study to measure environmental conditions was the “Neighborhood/Block Conditions” Assessment. This scale consisted of 13 items, which utilized a three point anchored response with values ranging from “No problem” to “A serious problem.” Response measures for the scale were scored as follows: 1 = “No problem;” 2 = “A minor problem;” and 3 = “A serious problem.” Values were assigned to the items on the scale such that higher values indicated more serious perceived problems regarding neighborhood/block conditions. Lower scores indicated lower levels of perceived neighborhood problems.

The items receiving the highest scores by the respondents regarding neighborhood/block conditions were: “Lack of supervised activities for youth? Was
that…?” (mean = 1.96, SD = 0.90); “Drug dealing? Was that…?” (mean = 1.91, SD 0.92); “Physical fighting? Was that…?” (mean = 1.90, SD = 0.82); and “Groups of young people hanging around? Was that …?” (mean = 1.88, SD = 0.84). The items receiving the lowest ratings by respondents regarding neighborhood block/conditions were: “Feeling unsafe in your home? Was that…?” (mean = 1.42, SD = 0.73); “Feeling unsafe while out alone on your block during the day? Was that …?” (mean = 1.47, SD = 0.72): and “Organized gangs? Was that…?” (mean = 1.55, SD = 0.80).

The 13-item “Neighborhood/Block Conditions” scale was summarized to produce an overall perception of neighborhood/block conditions score. This score was defined as the mean of the responses to the 13-items with all items coded such that a perception of a more serious problem regarding their neighborhood/block conditions received the higher response value (three). To estimate the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient was computed for the data and determined to be $\alpha = 0.92$. Overall, “Neighborhood/Block Conditions” scores ranged from a low of 1.42 to a high of 1.96 with a mean score of 1.72 (SD = 0.58). (See Table 28).

Table 28

“Environmental Neighborhood/Block Conditions” as Perceived by Young Adults Enrolled in an Adult Education Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Itema</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Lack of supervised activities for youth?  Was that….?”</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Drug dealing?  Was that….?”</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Physical fighting.  Was that….?”</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Groups of young people hanging around?  Was that….?”</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table cont’d)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gunshots? Was that….”</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical assaults of people on the street? Was that….”</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling unsafe while out alone on your block during the night? Was that….”</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate recreational facilities available for young people? Was that….”</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property damage? Was that….”</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor city services, like trash pick-up and police response? Was that….”</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized gangs? Was that….”</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling unsafe while out alone on your block during the day? Was that….”</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling unsafe in your home? Was that….”</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 84  
*Items were scored as follows: No problem = 1; A minor problem = 2; and A serious problem = 3. Overall score for “Neighborhood/Block Conditions” scale (mean = 1.72, SD = 0.58).

The third scale utilized in this study to measure environmental conditions was the “Neighborhood Satisfaction” Scale. This four-item scale utilized a three point response scale with descriptors of “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “No Opinion.” Values were assigned to the items on the scale such that higher values indicated a higher level of satisfaction with the neighborhood and lower values indicated a lower level of satisfaction with the neighborhood (as a place to live) and their expectations about the future for their block. Therefore, if disagreeing with an item indicated higher neighborhood satisfaction, “Disagree” was assigned a value of “3,” and “Agree” was assigned a value of “1.” Similarly, if agreeing with an item indicated a more positive attitude toward neighborhood satisfaction, “Agree” was assigned a value of “3” and “Disagree” was
assigned a value of “1.” In both situations, “No Opinion” was constant with the assigned value of “2.”

The individual item on which the participants had the highest level of neighborhood satisfaction was, “I am satisfied with this block as a place to live” (mean = 2.44, SD = 0.78) and the item which participants rated lowest on “Neighborhood Satisfaction,” was “The year after I left high school, the general conditions on my block were probably better” (mean = 2.00, SD = 0.85). (See Table 29).

The four-item “Neighborhood Satisfaction” scale was summarized to produce an overall score related to the level of neighborhood satisfaction as a place to live and their expectations about the future of their block. This score was defined as the mean of the responses to the four items with all items coded such that a higher level of neighborhood satisfaction received the higher response value of three (3). To estimate the reliability of this scale, the Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient was computed from the data and determined to be $\alpha = 0.61$. The overall neighborhood satisfaction score ranged from a low of 2.00 to a high of 2.44 with a mean score of 2.27 (SD = 0.57). (See Table 29).

Table 29

“Neighborhood Satisfaction” Scores for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Itema</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Compared to other blocks in this area, my block was a good place to live.&quot;a</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>0.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am satisfied with this block as a place to live.&quot;a</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.781</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table cont’d)
“In the last year I left high school, the general conditions on my block have gotten worse.”

“The year after I left high school, the general condition on my block was probably going to be better.”

| Note | N = 84 |
|      |       |
| Item were coded as follows: Agree = 3; Disagree = 1; and No opinion = 2. |
| Item that was reverse coded was coded as follows: Agree = 1; Disagree = 3; and No opinion = 2. |
| Overall “Neighborhood Satisfaction” score ranged from a low of 2.00 to a high of 2.44 with a mean score of 2.27 (SD = 0.57). |

The last scale utilized to measure environmental conditions was the “Neighborhood Community Action” scale. This six-item scale measured participants’ perceptions of the likelihood that a neighbor would intervene when presented with a problem in the neighborhood (e.g., break up a fight, stop drug selling). Respondents were presented with six problems that may or may not happen on their block, and were asked to determine the likelihood of a neighbor responding appropriately. Participants responded to items on a three point anchored scale with descriptors that included, “Not at all Likely,” “Somewhat Likely,” and “Very Likely.” Values were assigned to items on the scale such that the higher scores indicated higher levels of expressed likelihood that the respondent, or a neighbor, would intervene when presented with a problem on their block.

Analysis of the individual items revealed that respondents rated the highest likelihood of intervention for the problem, “If a suspicious stranger was hanging around the block, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have noticed this and warned others to be on guard?” (mean = 2.21, SD = 0.79); and “If someone on your block was firing a gun, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have done something about it?” (mean = 2.19, SD = 0.87). The items that the respondents felt
were least likely to receive intervention included: “If someone on your block was playing loud music, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have asked them to turn the music down?” (mean = 1.85, SD = 0.78); and “If teenagers were fist-fighting on your block, how likely was it they you or some of your neighbors would have attempted to stop it?” (mean = 1.91, SD = 0.79). (Table 30).

The overall score on the “Neighborhood/Community Action” scale was defined as the mean of the responses to the six-items. All items were coded such that a higher score expressed likelihood that someone in the neighborhood would intervene when presented with a problem on their block received the highest response value (3). Individual items were scored as follows: 1) Not at all likely = 1; 2) Somewhat likely = 2; and 3) Very likely = 3. To estimate the reliability of this scale, Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient was computed from the data and determined to be $\alpha = 0.81$. The overall score ranged from a low of 1.85 to a high of 2.21 with a mean score of 2.02 (SD = 0.59). (See Table 30)

Table 30

“Neighborhood/Community Action” Score for Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“If a suspicious stranger was hanging around the block, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have noticed this and warned others to be on guard?”</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If someone on your block was firing a gun, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have done something about it?”</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“If some 10 to 12 year-old youths were spray painting a street sign on the block, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have told them to stop?”

“If drugs were being sold on your block, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have done something about it?”

“If teenagers were fist-fighting on your block, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have attempted to stop it?”

“If someone on your block was playing loud music, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have asked them to turn the music down?”

Note. n = 84.

*Items were scored as follows: Not at all likely = 1; Somewhat likely = 2; and Very likely = 3.

Overall “Neighborhood/Community Action” score ranged from a low of 1.85 to a high of 2.21 with a mean score of 2.02 (SD = 0.59).

**OBJECTIVE #4**

Objective #4 of the study was to determine if a relationship exists between the level of violence and violent behavior while enrolled in school and selected perceptual measures among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States.

Behavioral variables measured in the study included aggressive behavior, friends’ delinquent behaviors and weapon carrying. Perceptual variables measured by the researcher included normative beliefs about aggression which contained sub-scales measuring general approval aggression and approval of retaliation aggression; attitudes toward interpersonal peer violence; acceptance of couple violence with three sub-scales
measuring acceptance of male on female violence, acceptance of female on male violence and acceptance of general dating violence; attitudes toward school; and attitudes toward gangs. Environmental measures included family bonding, neighborhood/block conditions, neighborhood satisfaction and neighborhood/community action.

For interpretation of correlation coefficients, Davis’ proposed set of descriptors was used (Davis, 1971). The coefficients and their descriptions are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.70 or higher</td>
<td>Very strong association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.50 to .69</td>
<td>Substantial association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.30 to .49</td>
<td>Moderate association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.10 to .29</td>
<td>Low association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.01 to .09</td>
<td>Negligible association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appropriate statistical procedures were selected to measure the strength of the relationships based on the level of measurement of the variables being studied. Since all measures were interval or higher in nature, the Pearson Product Moment was used for all correlations.

The variable that was found to be most highly correlated with the violence and violent behaviors score was “Weapon Carrying Anywhere” ($r = .85, p < .001$). This relationship was described using Davis’ descriptors as a “Very Strong” association. Two other measures were found to have “Very Strong” associations with the aggressive behavior score. These measures were “Weapon Carrying on School Property” ($r = .79, p < .001$) and “Weapon Carrying Going To and From School” ($r = .78, p < .001$).
The variables, “Weapon Carrying – Guns” \((r = .62, p < .001)\) and “Attitude toward Gangs \((r = .53, p < .001)\) were classified descriptively as “Substantial” associations (Davis, 1971). Only three (3) of the remaining 14 variables were found to be unrelated to the dependent variable, aggressive behavior score. The three (3) variables found to be unrelated included the following: “Neighborhood Community Action,” \((r = -.14, p = .06)\); “Neighborhood Satisfaction,” \((r = -.15, p = .08)\); and “Acceptance of Male on Female Violence,” \((r = .14, p = .09)\). (See Table 31).

Table 31

Relationship between Aggressive Behavior and Selected Perceptual and Environmental Measures

------------------BEHAVIORAL AND ATTITUDINAL MEASURES-------------------

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>(r)</th>
<th>(p)</th>
<th>Descriptor(^b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Carrying Anywhere</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Very Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Carrying On School Property</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Very Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Carrying To and From School</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Very Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Carrying--Guns</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Substantial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Toward Gangs</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Substantial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends’ Violent Behavior</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends’ At-Risk Behavior</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Beliefs about Aggression</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(General Approval Aggression)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Violence</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Violence Acceptance (General Dating)</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Violence Total</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table cont’d)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>p</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Couple Violence Female on Male</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Beliefs (Approval of Retaliation Aggression)</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward School</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

----------------------ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES----------------------------

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>p</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Bonding</td>
<td>-.33</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood/Block Conditions</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Community Action</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Violence Male on Female</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n = 84

aPearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient

bInterpretation based on Davis’ Descriptors where .70 or higher = very strong association; .50 - .69 = substantial association; .30 - .49 = moderate association; .10 to .29 = low association; and .01 to .09 = negligible association.

OBJECTIVE #5

Objective #5 of the study was to determine if a model exists that explains a significant portion of the variance in the level of violence and violent behavior while enrolled in school among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States from selected perceptual and demographic measures.

This objective was accomplished using multiple regression analysis with the aggressive behavior score as the dependent variable. All the other variables were treated as independent variables. Stepwise entry of the independent variables was used because of the exploratory nature of the study.
Four demographic variables were included in the regression analysis as independent variables. Three (3) of these variables were categorical in nature and were therefore recorded as dichotomous variables. The first variable was suspension from school. Since the primary focus of this study is an involvement in violence and violent behaviors, the aspect of school suspension that was used in the analysis was whether or not the respondent had been suspended from school for fighting.

The second variable was expulsion from school. Since the primary focus of this study is on the involvement in violence and violent behavior, the aspect of school expulsion that was used in the analysis was whether or not the respondent had been expelled from school for fighting. The third variable was the number of times they changed schools during the time they were enrolled. The fourth variable to enter the regression equation was the number of times participants changed schools. This variable measured the number of times respondents changed schools when they last attended school.

With the variable ethnicity, there were insufficient numbers to include all ethnic groups in the analysis. Therefore, two variables were created: “African American/Black” or “not African American/Black” and “Caucasian/White” or “not Caucasian/White.”

In the regression equation, variables were added to the equation that increased the explained variance by one percent or more as long as the overall regression equation remained significant.

For descriptive purposes, correlations between the factors that were used as independent variables and the dependent variable, aggressive behavior, are presented in Table 32. The variable, “Weapon Carrying Anywhere,” had the strongest association
with the dependent variable, aggressive behavior \((r = .85, p < .001)\). Additionally, the measures “Weapon Carrying on School Property,” \((r = .79, p < .001)\) and “Weapon Carrying Going To and From School,” \((r = .78, p < .001)\) had very strong associations with the dependent variable. Two other variables had substantial associations with the dependent variable with the \(r\) values ranging from a high of \(r = .62\) to a low of \(r = .53\). Nine variables had moderate and low associations with the dependent variable with the \(r\) value ranging from a high of \(r = .47\) to a low of \(-.33\); and from a high of \(.28\) to a low of \(.14\) respectively. The variable, “Expulsion for fighting” \((r = .45, p < .001)\) had a moderate association with the dependent variable; while the variable, “Suspension for fighting,” \((r = .23, p = .018)\) had a low association with the dependent variable.

The relationship between the variables “Neighborhood Community Action” \((r = -.17, p = .06)\), “Neighborhood Satisfaction” \((r = -.15, p = .07)\), and “Couple Violence – Male on Female” \((r = .14, p = .10)\) and the dependent variable, aggressive behavior, were not statistically significant. Also, the relationship between “Acceptance of Male on Female Violence” and the dependent variable was not statistically significant. (See Table 32).

Table 32
Correlation Scale between Level of Involvement in Aggressive Behavior and Selected Behavioral, Perceptual and Demographic Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>(r)</th>
<th>(p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Carrying Anywhere</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Carrying On School Property</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Carrying To and From School</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table cont’d)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Carrying--Guns</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Toward Gangs</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends’ Violent Behavior</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expulsion for Fighting</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends’ At-Risk Behavior</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Beliefs about Aggression (General Approval Aggression)</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Violence</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Violence Acceptance (General Dating)</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Violence Total</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Violence Female on Male</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Bonding</td>
<td>-.33</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Beliefs (Approval of Retaliation Aggression)</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward School</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspension for Fighting</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood/Block Conditions</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Community Action</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Violence Male on Female</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.098</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n = 84

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient
Interpretation based on Davis’ Descriptors where .70 or higher = very strong association; .50 - .69 = substantial association; .30 - .49 = moderate association; .10 to .29 = low association; and .01 to .09 = negligible association.
The model summary presents the results of the multiple regression analysis. The variable that entered the regression model first was “Weapon-Carrying Anywhere.” Considered alone, this variable explained 72.7% of the variance in the dependent variable, aggressive behavior. (See Table 33).

Two additional variables entered the regression equation. These two variables explained an additional 6.7% of the variance in the level of aggressive behavior of young adults enrolled in adult education programs when they last attended school. The two additional variables were: “Weapon Carrying on School Property “and “Normative Beliefs about Aggression” (approval of general aggression and aggressive behavior). The three variables together explained a total of 79.4% of the variance in the level of aggressive behavior in young adults enrolled in adult education programs when they last attended school. (See Table 33).

The nature of the influence of these significant explanatory factors was such that individuals with higher scores on the “Weapon-Carrying Anywhere” subscale tended to have higher aggressive behavior scores; those with higher scores on “Weapon Carrying on School Property” subscale tended to have higher aggressive behavior scores, and those whose normative beliefs were more accepting of aggression and aggressive behavior tended to have higher aggressive behavior scores. Table 33 displays the analysis of variance (ANOVA) which indicates a significant regression equation (p < .001). (See Table 33).
Table 33

Multiple Regression Analysis of Level of Aggression while in School among Young Adults Enrolled in Adult Education Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Ms</th>
<th>F-ratio</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>362.880</td>
<td>102.831</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.529</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-------------------------------Variables in the Equation-------------------------------

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$ Cumulative</th>
<th>$R^2$ Change</th>
<th>$F$ Change</th>
<th>$p$ Change</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Carrying Anywhere</td>
<td>.727</td>
<td>.727</td>
<td>218.289</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Carrying on School Property</td>
<td>.784</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>21.450</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Beliefs about Aggression and Aggressive Behavior</td>
<td>.794</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>3.874</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-------------------------------Variables not in the Equation-------------------------------

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>Sign $t$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expulsion for Fighting</td>
<td>1.523</td>
<td>.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Bonding</td>
<td>-1.439</td>
<td>.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward School</td>
<td>-1.335</td>
<td>.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Block Conditions</td>
<td>1.274</td>
<td>.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward Gangs</td>
<td>1.077</td>
<td>.285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Community Action</td>
<td>-1.065</td>
<td>.290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table cont’d)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends’ At-Risk Behavior</td>
<td>.972</td>
<td>.334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Beliefs about Aggression</td>
<td>-.953</td>
<td>.344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Carrying To an From School</td>
<td>-.873</td>
<td>.385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Violence</td>
<td>.865</td>
<td>.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspension for Fighting</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends’ Violent Behavior</td>
<td>.756</td>
<td>.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Carrying – Guns</td>
<td>-.751</td>
<td>.455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Violence (Female on Male)</td>
<td>-.638</td>
<td>.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Times Changed Schools</td>
<td>-.622</td>
<td>.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Violence (Male on Female)</td>
<td>-.543</td>
<td>.589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.461</td>
<td>.646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>-.454</td>
<td>.651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Violence (Total)</td>
<td>-.358</td>
<td>.721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>-.288</td>
<td>.774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Violence (General Dating)</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>.922</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents an overview of the study followed by major conclusions, implications and recommendations of the research. The objectives of the study guided the analyses performed and served as a format for the presentation of the conclusions and recommendations. Recommendations for youth development professionals (in education and practice) and future research are also addressed.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The overall purpose of the study was to determine the influence of selected perceptual and demographic factors on the self-reported aggressive/violent behaviors of young adults while they were enrolled in school. Specific objectives formulated to guide the research included the following: First, to determine the level of involvement in violence and violent behaviors while enrolled in school among adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States as measured by their self-reports of aggressive behavior. Second, to determine the attitudes and beliefs of young adults enrolled in adult education programs regarding violence and violent behavior while they were enrolled in school. Third, to determine the environmental conditions experienced while enrolled in school as perceived by young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States. Fourth, to determine if a relationship exists between the level of violence and violent behavior while enrolled in school and selected perceptual and environmental factors among young adults enrolled in adult education programs. Finally, to determine
if a model exists to explain the level of violence and violent behavior while enrolled in school among young adults enrolled in adult education programs.

METHODOLOGY

Specific objectives formulated to guide the researcher were measured using the following measurement tools. Objective #1 of the study was to: “Determine the level of involvement in violence and violent behaviors while enrolled in high school among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States.” Objective #1 was measured by the following scales --The Aggressive Behavior– Joyce Foundation Youth Survey which was developed by L.H. Research Inc., (1993); the Friends’ Delinquent Behavior- Denver Youth Survey was developed by the Institute of Behavioral Science (1987); and Weapon Carrying-Youth Risk Behavior Survey/ New York City Youth Violence Survey (DASH, CDL, 1993, a, b).

Objective #2 of the study was to: “Determine the attitudes and beliefs of young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States regarding violence and violent behaviors while they were in high school.” Objective #2 was measured by the Normative Beliefs about Aggression scale developed by Huesman, Guerra, Miller & Zelli (1992); Attitude toward Interpersonal Peer Violence Assessment developed by Slaby (1984); Acceptance of Couple Violence developed by Foshee, Fothergill & Stuart (1992); Attitude toward School developed by the Institute of Behavioral Science (1990); and Attitude toward Gangs developed by Nadel, Spellmann, Alvarez-Cammino, et al. (1996).
Objective #3 of the study was to: “Determine the environmental conditions experienced while enrolled in high school as perceived by young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States.” Objective #3 was measured by the Family Bonding—Individual Protective Factor Index developed by Phillips & Springer (1992); the Neighborhood/Block Conditions developed by Perkins, Florin & Rich (1990); Neighborhood Satisfaction developed by Perkins, Florin & Rich (1990); and Neighborhood/Community Action developed by Perkins, Florin & Rich (1990).

Objective #4 of the study was to: “Determine if a relationship exists between the level of violence and violent behavior while enrolled in school and the selected perceptual, behavioral and environmental measures among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States.”

Objective #5 of the study was to: “Determine if a model exists to explain the level of violence and violent behavior while enrolled in high school among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States.”

Five adult education centers were used in the study. Entry into the centers was granted by the school district’s director for adult learning. The researcher coordinated with the respective center administrators to facilitate the data collection process. Research in the adult education centers posed data collection challenges since students enrolled in adult education programs were completing self-paced instruction and were not fixed to regular schedules for attending classes. Many students completed the questionnaires at their convenience while attending the center. Consequently, there was
not an established time to meet with students to collect data. Repeated trips to each center were necessary to obtain the minimum number of questionnaires for the required sample size (N=70). Participants in the sample completed a questionnaire which consisted of 130 items. Eighty-six (n = 86) questionnaires were completed by young adults who agreed to participate in the study. The researcher eliminated two questionnaires due to incomplete data. Consequently, data was collected and analyzed from a total of n = 84 questionnaires.

The research objectives in the study were analyzed using SPSS software package. Data collected by the researcher were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis. Information such as correlation matrix, R square, adjusted R square, beta weights and the mean square error (MSE) were reported.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The researcher examined various independent variables to determine their relationship with the dependent variable, aggressive behavior score. The independent variables included selected perceptual (behavior and attitude) measures in addition to environmental measures. To accomplish the first objective of the study, which was to “determine the level of involvement in violence and violent behavior while enrolled in school among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States,” the researcher used the measure, aggressive behavior score, in this study.

The “Aggressive Behavior” scale was considered to be the most direct measure of involvement in violence and violent behavior. This score was used as the primary outcome measure in the subsequent analyses.
The “Aggressive Behavior” scale measured the extent to which participants and/or individuals in their household had been a perpetrator or victim of selected aggressive behavior. The scale contained a total of 16 items. In this scale, the participants’ responses to each of the first 14 specific items were coded such that if respondents indicated that they had experienced the behavior (as either a victim or perpetrator), the item was coded with a value of “1.” If they indicated that they had not experienced the behavior, the item was coded with a value of “0.” Two additional items used a response scale of zero (0) to four (4) with the higher values representing a greater number of occurrences of the specified event. The responses to these 16 items were summed to provide a score of participants’ aggressive behavior with a range of possible scores from zero (0) to 22. The mean score was recorded as the participants’ extent of involvement in aggressive behavior. Results of the computation of participants’ aggressive behavior scores revealed a mean score of 2.48 with a standard deviation of 4.06.

A second dimension of the level of involvement in violence and violent behavior measured in the study was friends’ involvement in delinquent and high risk behaviors. This dimension was measured using the “Friends’ Delinquent Behavior” scale which included eight (8) items that measured the participants’ knowledge of their friends’ involvement in vandalism, violence and drug use during the last year they were in school. Point values were assigned to each of the eight (8) items as follows: “4” = All of them; “3” = Most of them; “2” = Some of them; “1” = Very few of them; and “0” = None of them. Values were summed and divided by the total number of items (8) for each respondent. The possible range of scores was from zero (0) to four (4), with the higher
score indicating greater association with, or exposure to, delinquent behavior by close friends. Scores ranged from 0.00 to 3.63. The mean score for this sample of subjects was 1.3 with a standard deviation of 1.05.

This scale was further analyzed by dividing the responses into “Friends’ Violent Behavior” and “Friends’ High-Risk Behavior” categories. The “Friends’ Violent Behavior” sub-scale included four (4) items and respondents’ mean score was 1.28 with a standard deviation of 1.03. Results of the “Friends’ High–Risk Behavior” sub-scale was a mean score of 1.31 (SD = 1.19). This sub-scale included four (4) items.

The final dimension of level of involvement in violence and violent behavior on which respondents were assessed was the extent to which they carried weapons in various settings. The settings addressed in the study include “Anywhere,” “Going To and From School,” and “On School Property.” Each of these settings was addressed in the instrument with two items that requested the respondent to indicate the number of days during the last 30 days they were in school that they carried a “Gun” in this setting. The score for each item in a setting was computed by summing the responses and assigning the following values for each item: 0 days = “0;” 1 day = “1,” 2-3 days = “2.5,” 4-5 days = “4.5,” 6-9 days = “7.5,” 10-13 days = “11.5,” 14-17 days = “15.5,” and 18 days = “18.” Therefore, each sub-scale (representing different settings) had a possible range of scores from zero (0) to 36. The six items of the sub-scales were combined to provide an overall assessment of the extent to which the respondents carried weapons during their last 30 days of enrollment in school. This score had a possible range of scores from zero (0) to 108.
The overall assessment of the extent to which study respondents carried weapons ranged from a low of zero (0) to a high of 97.50. The mean overall weapon carrying score was 7.88 (SD = 20.62).

The variable, “Weapon Carrying,” was further summarized by an analysis of the three sub-scales that completed the primary variable (Weapon Carrying Anywhere, Weapon Carrying To and From School, and Weapon Carrying on School Property). For the sub-scale, “Weapon Carrying Anywhere,” the respondents’ mean score was 2.8 (SD = 7.86). The analysis of respondents’ behavior regarding “Weapon Carrying Going To and From School” revealed a mean score of 2.9 (SD = 8.02). For the sub-scale, “Weapon Carrying on School Property,” the mean score was 2.2 (SD = 6.18).

Although “Weapon Carrying” was defined as carrying a weapon such as a gun, knife or club, the respondents were asked to specifically respond to two items that asked them if the weapon carried was a gun. The mean score of respondents on these two items was 1.43 (SD = 6.22).

Objective #2 of the study was to: “Determine the attitudes and beliefs of young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States regarding violence and violent behaviors while they were in school.” Several scales were used to measure the participants’ attitudes and beliefs about violence and violent behaviors. These scales measured the participants’ normative beliefs about aggression, attitude toward interpersonal peer violence, acceptance of couple violence, attitude toward school and attitude toward gangs.

The first scale utilized in the study to measure attitudes and beliefs regarding violence and violent behaviors was the “Normative Beliefs about Aggression” scale. This
scale consisted of 20 items designed to assess the respondent’s beliefs about the use of violence in selected situations. Respondents were asked to respond to the items on a four point scale with descriptors including “It’s Really Wrong;” “It’s Sort of Wrong;” “It’s Sort of OK;” “It’s Perfectly Ok.” Values placed on the responses ranged from one to four with higher values placed on the response that is more accepting of the aggressive behavior. Therefore, the higher scores on the scale items are indicative of a more accepting attitude toward aggressive behaviors. The item on the scale which the respondents rated the highest was “Suppose a boy hit another boy, John; Did you think it was OK for John to hit him back?” the overall response to this item was “It’s Sort of OK.” The item which the respondents rated the lowest was “Suppose a girl said something bad to a boy; Did you think it was wrong for the boy to hit her?” this indicated that the respondents felt that this action was “Really Wrong.” The “Normative Beliefs about Aggression” scale was further composed of three sub-scales: 1) General Approval of Aggression, 2) Approval of Retaliation Aggression, and 3) Total Approval of Aggression (overall normative beliefs about aggression).

The “General Approval of Aggression” sub-scale was calculated by summing participants’ responses to nine (9) of the 20 items and dividing by the total number of items. A maximum score of four (4) indicates a belief that it is generally acceptable to aggress against others. A minimum score of one (1) indicates that they believe that aggression against others is generally unacceptable. When the participants’ data was examined regarding their “General Approval of Aggression” Scale, the scores ranged from a low of 1.00 (the lowest possible score) to a high of 3.56.
The second sub-scale, “Approval of Retaliation Aggression,” was calculated by summing participants’ responses to 11 of the 20 items and dividing by the total number of items. A maximum score of four (4) indicates a belief that it is acceptable to aggress against others in specific provocation situations. The minimum score of one (1) indicates the belief that it is unacceptable to aggress against others in specific provocation situations. Scores for participants in this study ranged from a low of 1.00 (the lowest possible score) to a high of 3.45.

The third sub-scale “Total Approval of Aggression” scale was calculated by averaging all 20 items. This was utilized as a measure of participants’ overall normative beliefs about aggression. When data was examined regarding participants’ “Total Approval of Aggression” Scale, the scores ranged from a low of 1.00 (the lowest possible score) to a high of 3.20.

Objective #3 of the study was to: “Determine the environmental conditions experienced while enrolled in school as perceived by young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States.” The researcher attempted to identify environmental conditions experienced by young adults enrolled in adult education programs while they were in school. Four scales were used to measure participants’ perceptions of their environmental conditions. These scales measured the participants’ perceptions about family bonding, neighborhood/block conditions, neighborhood satisfaction and neighborhood/community action.

The first scale utilized in this study to measure environmental conditions was the “Family Bonding—Individual Protective Factor Index” (Phillips & Springer, 1992). The scale consisted of six items designed to measure participants’ perceptions of their
level of family bonding and communication. The item on the scale that received the highest rating was, “My family let me down when I was in school.” The item that received the lowest rating from the respondents was, “My family expected too much of me when I was in school.”

The second scale utilized in this study to measure environmental conditions was the “Neighborhood/Block Conditions” Assessment. The items receiving the highest scores by the respondents regarding neighborhood/block conditions were: lack of supervised activities for youth, drug dealing, physical fighting, and groups of young people hanging around. The items receiving the lowest ratings by respondents regarding neighborhood block/conditions were: feeling unsafe in your home, feeling unsafe while out alone on your block during the day and organized gangs.

The 13-item “Neighborhood/Block Conditions” scale was summarized to produce an overall perception of neighborhood/block conditions score. This score was defined as the mean of the responses to the 13-items with all items coded such that a perception of a more serious problem regarding their neighborhood/block conditions received the higher response value (three).

The third scale utilized in this study to measure environmental conditions was the “Neighborhood Satisfaction” scale. Values were assigned to the items on the scale such that higher values indicated a higher level of satisfaction with the neighborhood and lower values indicated a lower level of satisfaction with the neighborhood (as a place to live) and their expectations about the future for their block. The individual item on which the participants had the highest level of neighborhood satisfaction was, “I am satisfied with this block as a place to live” and the item which participants rated lowest on
“Neighborhood Satisfaction,” was “The year after I left high school, the general conditions on my block were probably better.”

The four-item “Neighborhood Satisfaction” scale was summarized to produce an overall score related to the level of neighborhood satisfaction as a place to live and their expectations about the future of their block. The overall neighborhood satisfaction score ranged from a low of 2.00 to a high of 2.44.

The last scale utilized to measure environmental conditions was the “Neighborhood Community Action” scale. This six-item scale measured participants’ perceptions of the likelihood that a neighbor would intervene when presented with a problem in the neighborhood (e.g., break up a fight, stop drug selling). Respondents were presented with six problems that may or may not happen on their block, and were asked to determine the likelihood of a neighbor responding appropriately. Values were assigned to items on the scale such that the higher scores indicated higher levels of expressed likelihood that the respondent, or a neighbor, would intervene when presented with a problem on their block.

Analysis of the individual items revealed that respondents rated the highest likelihood of intervention for the problem, “If some 10 to 12 year-old youths were spray painting a street sign on the block, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have told them to stop?” and “If someone on your block was firing a gun, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have done something about it?” The items that the respondents felt were least likely to receive intervention included: “If someone on your block was playing loud music, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have asked them to turn the music down?” and “If teenagers were
The overall score on the “Neighborhood/Community Action” scale was defined as the mean of the responses to the six-items. The overall score ranged from a low of 1.85 to a high of 2.21.

Objective #4 of the study was to: “Determine if a relationship exists between the level of violence and violent behavior while enrolled in school and the selected perceptual, behavioral and environmental measures among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States.”

The outcome measure, “Aggressive Behavior” (as measured by the “Aggressive Behavior” scale) was correlated with each of the other perceptual, behavioral and environmental measures to determine if relationships existed with the measures. Strong correlation coefficients existed between the dependent variable, aggressive behavior score, and three (3) of the independent variables. The variable that was found to be the most highly correlated with the aggressive behavior score was “Weapon Carrying Anywhere” ($r = .85, p < .001$). This relationship was described using Davis’ descriptors as a “Very strong association.” Two other measures were found to have “Very strong” associations with the aggressive behaviors score. These measures were “Weapon Carrying on School Property” ($r = .79, p < .001$) and “Weapon Carrying Going To and From School” ($r = .78, p < .001$). The variables, “Weapon Carrying – Guns” ($r = .62, p < .001$) and “Attitude toward Gangs” ($r = .53, p < .001$) were found to have “Substantial” association (Davis, 1971) with the “Aggressive Behavior” score.

Only three (3) of the 14 remaining variables were found to be unrelated to the aggressive behavior score. These variables included the following measures:
“Acceptance of Male on Female Violence,” ($r = .14, p = .08$); “Neighborhood Satisfaction,” ($r = -.15, p = .08$) and “Neighborhood Community Action,” ($r = -.17, p = .06$).

Objective #5 of the study was to: “Determine if a model exists to explain the level of violence and violent behavior while enrolled in high school among young adults enrolled in adult education programs in an urban area in a southern state in the United States.” The results of multiple regression analysis found that the variable, “Weapon Carrying Anywhere” by young adults enrolled in adult education programs when they were last enrolled in school, when considered alone explained 72.7% of the variance in the dependent variable (aggressive behavior).

Two other variables entered the regression equation and explained an additional 6.7% of the variance in the dependent variable (aggressive behavior) of young adults enrolled in adult education programs when they last attended school. The three variables were the following: weapon carrying anywhere, weapon carrying on school property and normative beliefs about aggression (general approval aggression). Therefore, 79.4% of the variance in the dependent variable (aggressive behavior score) was explained by the variations in three independent variables.

The nature of the influence of these significant explanatory factors was such that individuals with higher scores on the “Weapon Carrying Anywhere” subscale tended to have higher “Aggressive Behavior” scores; those with higher scores on the “Weapon Carrying on School Property” subscale tended to have higher “Aggressive Behavior” scores; and those whose “Normative Beliefs” were more accepting of aggression and aggressive behavior tended to have higher “Aggressive Behavior” scores.
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective posed by this research was, “to determine the influence of selected perceptual and demographic factors on the self-reported aggressive/violent behaviors of young adults while enrolled in school.” Based on the findings in this study, a number of significant conclusions, implications and recommendations can be made.

First, the researcher concludes that youth violence remains a complex issue. In this study, 16 of the 19 perceptual independent variables were found to have a significant relationship with the dependent variable – aggressive behavior. Three of the variables were found to have a very strong relationship with the dependent variable, and three (3) significant relationships were classified as substantial associations (Davis, 1971).

In addition, three (3) of the 24 variables that were entered into the regression model contributed significantly to the model which explained 79.4% of the variance in the dependent variable. This further supported the researcher’s conclusion that youth violence is a complex phenomenon.

The findings from this study are consistent with previous studies that attempted to identify predictors for violence and violent behavior in youth. The Surgeon General’s 2001 Report had major research findings and conclusions that identified factors that increased the risk or statistical probability that a youth would become involved in violence and the developmental pathways that would lead a youth into a violent lifestyle. This report concluded that youth violence is a complex issue, but it is not an intractable problem (Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

Another study conducted by Leary (2001) investigated five research questions involving independent variables believed to predict violent behavior in African American
male youth. The first three questions investigated stressors experienced by African Americans: violence witnessing, violence victimization and daily urban hassles. Questions four and five addressed socio-cultural characteristics of racial socialization and pro-social attitudes toward respect.

Leary (2001) found that all five independent variables significantly predicted use of violence in separate regression equations. Multiple regression analyses revealed that the strongest predictor of the use of violence was victimization which accounted for 43.3% of the total variance in the use of violence. The second step of the regression, witnessing was added to the equation which increased the explained variance to 49.2%. The final two steps added pro-social attitudes toward respect to the regression equation, which accounted for a total of 51.2% of the variance attributed to the use of violence. Leary’s (2001) study supports the conclusion that predictors of violence and violent behavior can be identified.

The results of this research are encouraging given the amount of explained variance in the dependent variable (79.4%). However, the possibility exists (especially in light of the convenience sampling procedure used in the study) that the findings are sample specific. Therefore, the researcher recommends that this study be replicated in other settings and with other groups of subjects to determine if these findings can be confirmed.

A second conclusion from this study is that perceptual and environmental risk factors that influence violence/violent behaviors can be identified. In this study, three significant predictors were identified and 17 other factors were found to have significant bivariant correlations with the dependent variable.
The implications from this study can provide youth development professionals with identified risk factors so that they can use them to develop and design interventions to combat youth violence and violent behavior. Findings from this study can significantly add to the current body of knowledge for youth development practitioners and professionals. It is the recommendation of the researcher that youth development professionals and researchers design interventions such as capacity building programs in schools to reduce violence and violent behavior among youth by using the three predictors as the basis for their design. These programs are designed to empower students to address problem issues in the schools related to violence and school safety by planning, organizing and initiating the change.

Another intervention would be community-based positive youth development programs. These would include organized after-school programs (recreational, tutorial, music and dance) during hours when youth are most at-risk for violence/violent behavior. These programs could also be designed by using the capacity building program approach.

The findings from this study suggest that many youth reported incidences of weapon carrying. Higher frequencies of “Weapon Carrying Anywhere” and “Weapon Carrying on School Property” were higher predictors of “Aggressive Behavior.” In this study, weapon carrying anywhere and on school property were the strongest predictors of aggressive behavior among youth. This conclusion has certain implications for youth. It implies that certain needs in their lives are not being met. The level of incidence of weapon carrying might be interpreted to mean that youth have a need for protection, status and/or self-esteem. Youth are looking for that sense of protection by carrying weapons. They carry a weapon as an attempt to meet that need.
Some youth carry weapons for protection because the environment in which they live dictates that survival is only possible if they have a weapon. Individuals cannot survive alone. Other youth view weapon carrying as a source of achieving power and status among their peers. Being recognized as a person who carries a weapon may be viewed as a way to build one’s self-esteem even though that self-esteem is constructed in a negative way.

A recommendation from this study is that interventions should be designed to develop self-esteem of youth to reduce defense mechanisms that are created around violence. Interventions to increase self-esteem such as the Arts (music, dance, art and drama) service learning, job skill training and adventure training (camping, Rope obstacle course) will strengthen the developmental achievements as a means to teach youth how to successfully confront a stressor. Youth with matured developmental moral reasoning should be able to cope with internal and external stressors that can place them at risk for violence and violent behavior.

Additionally, community interventions should be developed that promote weapon control, community policing, neighborhood unity and community pride to reduce weapon availability and friction among youth regarding gangs and enhance neighborhood safety. Interventions that meet the specific needs of youth are needed so that youth can identify with and have a sense of ownership and purpose that relates to them and their desires.

It is the researcher’s belief that if youth cannot cope with the number of risk factors they are exposed to, violence/violent behavior is inevitable. The complexity of the issues regarding youth violence and violent behavior and the number of identified risk factors suggest that many youth engage in violent behavior due to difficulty coping with
challenges at home, family life, school, neighborhood conditions, community
cohesiveness and peer pressures whereas the only way to survive is through violence.
The challenge faced by practitioners is to break this cycle of violence, and to researchers
is to find the way to break this cycle.

No single intervention is the answer nor is there a single agency that can solve
this problem. A comprehensive approach must be taken to reduce youth violence and
impact the lives of youth. Since this study identified predictors, intervention studies need
to be implemented that address investigating the effectiveness of alternatives to violence
such as anger management and conflict resolution and peer mediation training at all grade
levels in school. These programs will foster an environment of tolerance and peaceful
resolution of conflicts.

It is the researcher’s belief that interventions need to be developed that actively
involve family in the nurturing and education process of youth. Parents need to reclaim
their active role and participation in parent/school activities. Another suggested
intervention is to incorporate service learning into middle and high school curricula to
promote an environment of caring for the needs of others as well as the environment in
which they live.

School and community-based job training programs can teach job and
occupational skills to youth so that they could enter and compete in the world of work.
For this to be successful, students must be able to understand the connection between job
training, the work environment and the benefits of being a contributing member in
society. Partnerships between businesses and industry must be created to provide
opportunities for youth to enter the work force and be productive.
It is the researcher’s belief that interventions designed to combat youth violence and violent behavior must be comprehensive and incorporate collective involvement from parents, family, schools, community, government agencies and corporate America. These interventions must be designed to develop self-esteem, problem solving, conflict resolution skills, education and job/skill training so that they provide a gleam of hope and opportunities for youth as an alternative to violence and violent behavior.
REFERENCES


Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH), (1993b). Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion New York City Youth Violence Survey. Atlanta, GA: Center for Disease Control and Prevention.


APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) for
HUMAN RESOURCE SUBJECT PROTECTION

LSU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) for
HUman Research Subject Protection Office: 203 B-1 David Boyd Hall

APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM INSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT

Unless they are qualified as meeting the specific criteria for exemption, ALL LSU research projects using living humans as subjects, or samples or data obtained from humans, directly or indirectly, with or without their consent, must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU IRB. This Form helps the PI determine if a project may be exempted, and is used to request an exemption.

Instructions: Complete this form.

Exemption Applicant: If it appears that your study qualifies for exemption send:

(A) Two copies of this completed form,
(B) a brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts A & B),
(C) copies of all instruments to be used. If this proposal is part of a grant proposal include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment material.
(D) the consent form that you will use in the study

to: ONE screening committee member (listed at the end of this form) in the most closely related department/discipline or to IRB office.

If exemption seems likely, submit it. If not, submit regular IRB application. Help is available from Dr. Robert Mathews, 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu or any screening committee member.

Principal Investigator Nathaniel McClinton Student? X/N

Ph: 225-356-4306 E-mail natmcclinton@yahoo.com Dept/Unit SHREWD

If Student, name supervising professor Dr. Michael Burnett Ph: 578-5748
Mailing Address 142 Old Forestry Bldg, LSU, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803
Ph 578-5748

Project Title The Influence of Selected Perceptual and Demographic Factors on the Involvement of Youth in Violent Behaviors

Agency expected to fund project Student Subject pool (e.g. Psychology Students) Students enrolled in adult education centers located in East Baton Rouge School System

Circle any "vulnerable populations" to be used: (children <18, the mentally impaired, pregnant women, the aged, other). Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.

I certify my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changed I will resubmit for review. I will obtain written approval from the Authorized Representative of all non-LSU institutions in which the study is conducted.

PI Signature ___________________ Date 2-2-04 (no per signatures)
Part A: DETERMINATION OF "RESEARCH" and POTENTIAL FOR RISK

This section determines whether the project meets the Department of Health and Human Services definition of "research" and if not, whether it nevertheless presents more than "minimal risk" to humans that makes IRB review prudent and necessary.

1. Is the project a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge?

(Note "systematic investigation" includes "research development, testing and evaluation"; therefore some instructional development and service programs will include a "research" component).

☐ YES

☐ NO

2. Does the project present physical, psychological, social or legal risks to the participants reasonably expected to exceed those risks normally experienced in daily life or in routine diagnostic physical or psychological examination or testing? You must consider the consequences if individual data inadvertently become public.

☐ YES Stop. This research cannot be exempted--submit application for IRB review.

☐ NO Continue to see if research can be exempted from IRB oversight.

3. Are any of your participants incarcerated?

☐ YES Stop. This research cannot be exempted--submit application for IRB review.

☐ NO Continue to see if research can be exempted from IRB oversight.

Part B: EXEMPTION CRITERIA FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS

Research is exemptable when all research methods are one or more of the following five categories. Check statements that apply to your study:

☐ 1. In education setting, research to evaluate normal educational practices.
Consent Form

1. Study Title: The Influence of Selected Perceptual and Demographic Factors on the Involvement of Youths in Violent Behaviors
2. Performance Site: Adult Education Centers East Baton Rouge School System
3. Investigators: The following investigator is available for questions about this study, M-F, 8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
   Nathaniel McClinton 225-356-4306
4. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of selected psychological and demographic characteristics on the self-reported aggressive/violent behaviors of young adults while they were enrolled in high school.
5. Subject Inclusion: Individuals between the ages of 18 and 26 who are enrolled in adult education programs in East Baton Rouge Parish Schools
6. Number of Subjects: 70.
7. Study Procedures: The researcher will briefly visit with each student as they enter the center and ask for their consent to participate in the study. A brief explanation of the study will be provided along with a guarantee of complete anonymity. Completed surveys will have no identification numbers and subjects will not be asked to identify themselves anywhere on the instrument. Potential subjects will also be made aware that a small token of appreciation will be provided for each individual that participates in the study. If students agree to participate in the study, they will be asked to sign the consent form.
   
   Benefits: Subjects will be given a certificate for a hamburger meal at McDonald's to participate in the study. Additionally, the study may yield valuable information about causes of youth violence.

8. Risks: The only study risk is the inadvertent identification of a survey to a specific respondent. However, every effort will be made to ensure all responses are anonymous.
9. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.
10. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain anonymous unless disclosure is required by law.

Study exempted by
Louisiana State University
Institutional Review Board
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692
Robert C. Mathews, Chair
12. Signatures:
The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Mathews, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-6688. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Signature of Subject          Date
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Scale/Assessment</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Target Groups</th>
<th>Reliability/Validity</th>
<th>Developer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Aggression</strong></td>
<td><strong>A1. Normative Beliefs about Aggression; 20 items</strong></td>
<td>Measures a child, adolescent, or young adult's perception of how acceptable it is to behave aggressively, both under varying conditions of provocation and when no conditions are specified. Can be administered individually or in groups.</td>
<td>Children in nursery school through college in several countries and with different racial/ethnic groups.</td>
<td>Internal consistency: .90. One-year stability: .39 (Huesmann, Guerra, Zelli &amp; Miller, 1992; Guerra, Huesmann, &amp; Hanish, 1995; Huesmann &amp; Guerra, 1997).</td>
<td>Huesmann, Guerra, Miller &amp; Zelli, 1992 Copyright 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2. Attitude Toward Interpersonal Peer Violence; 14 items</strong></td>
<td>Measures a passive or violent attitude orientation as well as knowledge and skill in resolving conflict non-violently.</td>
<td>Middle school students, grades 6 – 8.</td>
<td>Internal consistency: .75.</td>
<td>Slaby, 1989 Adapted by Houston Community Demonstration Project, 1993</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Couple Violence</strong></td>
<td><strong>B1. Acceptance of Couple Violence; 11 items</strong></td>
<td>Measures acceptance of couple violence. Has three subscales: male on female violence; female on male violence; and acceptance of general dating violence.</td>
<td>Students in grades 8 – 9.</td>
<td>Internal consistency: .74, .71, and .73.</td>
<td>Foshee, Fothergill &amp; Stuart, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D. Gangs</strong></td>
<td><strong>D1. Attitudes</strong></td>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>Students in</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Nadel,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct</td>
<td>Scale/Assessment</td>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Target Groups</td>
<td>Reliability/Validity</td>
<td>Developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION II: BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Aggressive and Violent Behavior (Continued)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1. Aggressive Behavior-Joyce Foundation Youth Survey; 6 items</td>
<td>Measures whether respondent or anyone in household has recently (in the past month) been a victim or perpetrator of violence.</td>
<td>Middle school students, grades 6 – 8; adults 18 and older.</td>
<td>Internal consistency: .72.</td>
<td>LH Research Inc., 1993</td>
<td>Items added by Houston Community Demonstration Project, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Disciplinary and Delinquent Behavior</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toward Gangs; 9 items</td>
<td>attitudes toward gangs.</td>
<td>grades 9 – 12</td>
<td>consistency: .74.</td>
<td>Spellmann, Alvarez-Canino et al., 1996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## SECTION III: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Scale/Assessment</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Target Groups</th>
<th>Reliability/Validity</th>
<th>Developer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Family Environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Quality of Neighborhood</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1. Neighborhood/Block Conditions; 13 items</td>
<td>Measures residents' perceptions of neighborhood conditions (e.g., severity of problems, sense of safety).</td>
<td></td>
<td>Urban residents, aged 18 and older.</td>
<td>Internal consistency: .90.</td>
<td>Perkins, Florin &amp; Rich, 1990 Adapted by Houston Community Demonstration Project, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2. Neighborhood Satisfaction; 4 items</td>
<td>Measures residents' attitudes toward their neighborhood (e.g., good place to live).</td>
<td></td>
<td>Urban residents, aged 18 and older.</td>
<td>Internal consistency: .70.</td>
<td>Perkins, Florin &amp; Rich, 1990 Adapted by Houston Community Demonstration Project, 1993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D
LETTER OF PERMISSION
This message is not flagged.

Date: Thu, 15 Jan 2004 13:27:05 -0600
From: Nathaniel McClinton <nmclinton@ebrpos.k12.la.us>
To: Husmann@umich.edu
CC: natmclinton@yahoo.com
Subject: The Normative Beliefs about Aggression Assessment Tool

Dear Dr. Husmann,

I am a Ph.D candidate at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana and I am interested in using the Normative Beliefs about Aggression assessment tool that was originally developed by you and Nancy Guerra.

This message is to request permission to use this instrument in my dissertation project. I obtained a copy of the tool from a compendium of assessment tools published by the Division of Violence Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Center for Disease Control and Prevention. I further request permission to modify questions if necessary as long as it does not change the context of the original question.

Please send your reply to . I can be contacted by telephone number 225-356-4306 (W) between the hours of 7:00am-2:30 (central) and 225-923-1017 (H) after 5:00pm and anytime on weekends.

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Nathaniel McClinton

APPENDIX E

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS:
MEASUREMENTS OF VIOLENCE--RELATED ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND
BEHAVIORS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

Mail Message

From: huessmann <huessmann@umich.edu>
To: Nathaniel McClintock
Date: Thursday - January 16, 2004 1:27 PM
Subject: Out of email contact (Re: The Normative Beliefs about Aggression Assessment Tool)

Mime: 822 (928 bytes)

Please Note: Your message to HUESMANN has been delivered; however, he is out of the country and may not read e-
mail again until Wednesday, January 28, 2004.
APPENDIX E
SURVEY INSTRUMENTS:
MEASURES OF VIOLENCE-RELATED ATTITUDES, BELIEFS
AND BEHAVIORS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS
Measurements of Violence – Related Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors among Young Adults

Please complete each item below by circling the appropriate number.

1. Are you between 18 – 25 years of age?
   1 = No       Thank you. Please return the survey to the site administrator
   2 = Yes      Continue the survey

2. Are you enrolled in one or more programs at the adult education center?
   1 = No   Thank you. Please return the survey to the site administrator
   2 = Yes      Continue the survey

3. Are you enrolled in an ABE program?
   2. = Yes        Thank you. Please return the survey to the site administrator
   1. = No        Continue the survey

4. Did you successfully graduate from high school with a high school diploma (non GED)
   2 = Yes  Thank you. Please return the survey to the site administrator
   1 = No        Continue the survey

SECTION I ATTITUDE AND BELIEF ASSESSMENTS

Normative Beliefs about Aggression

Please select the one choice that best describes your ideas or experience when you were in school.

Retaliation Belief Questions

Suppose a boy says something bad to another boy, John.

When you were enrolled in school…. 

5. Did you think it was OK for John to scream at him?
   □ It’s Perfectly OK       □ It’s Sort of OK       □ It’s Sort of Wrong       □ It’s Really Wrong

6. Did you think it was OK for John to hit him?
Suppose a boy said something bad to a girl.

7. Did you think it was wrong for the girl to scream at him?
   □ It’s Really Wrong □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Perfectly OK

8. Did you think it was wrong for the girl to hit him?
   □ It’s Really Wrong □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Perfectly OK

Suppose a boy said something bad to another girl, Mary.

9. Did you think it was OK for Mary to scream at him?
   □ It’s Perfectly OK □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Really Wrong

10. Did you think it was OK for Mary to hit him?
    □ It’s Perfectly OK □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Really Wrong

Suppose a girl said something bad to a boy.

11. Did you think it was wrong for the boy to scream at her?
    □ It’s Really Wrong □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Perfectly OK

12. Did you think it was wrong for the boy to hit her?
    □ It’s Really Wrong □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Perfectly OK

Suppose a boy hit another boy, John?

13. Did you think it was wrong for John to hit him back?
    □ It’s Really Wrong □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Perfectly OK

Suppose a boy hit a girl.

14. Did you think it was OK for the girl to hit him back?
    □ It’s Perfectly OK □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Really Wrong
Suppose a girl hit another girl, Mary

15. Did you think it was wrong for Mary to hit her back?
   □ It’s Really Wrong □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Perfectly OK

Suppose a girl hit a boy.

16. Did you think it was OK for the boy to hit her back?
   □ It’s Perfectly OK □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Really Wrong

General Belief Questions

17. In general when I was enrolled in school, I believed it was wrong to hit other people.
   □ It’s Really Wrong □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Perfectly OK

18. When you were angry did you feel it was OK to say mean things to other people.
   □ It’s Perfectly OK □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Really Wrong

19. In general, was it OK to yell at others and say bad things.
   □ It’s Perfectly OK □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Really Wrong

20. It was usually OK to push or shove other people around if you were mad.
   □ It’s Perfectly OK □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Really Wrong

21. It was wrong to insult other people.
   □ It’s Really Wrong □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Perfectly OK

22. It was wrong to take it out on others by saying mean things when you were mad.
   □ It’s Really Wrong □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Perfectly OK

23. It was generally wrong to get into physical fights with others.
   □ It’s Really Wrong □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Perfectly OK
24. In general, it was OK to take your anger out on others by using physical force.
   □ It’s Perfectly OK □ It’s Sort of OK □ It’s Sort of Wrong □ It’s Really Wrong

**Attitude Toward Interpersonal Peer Violence**

Please indicate how you felt about fighting, defined as physical fights with pushing and hitting, not just arguments when you were in school.

25. If I had walked away from a fight, I would have been called a coward (“chicken”).
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot

26. The best way to stop a fight before it started was to stop the argument (problem) that caused it.
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot

27. Anyone who wouldn’t fight was going to be “picked on” even more.
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot

28. Students in school didn’t need to fight because there were other ways to deal with being mad.
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot

29. It was OK to hit someone who hit you first.
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot

30. If my friends wanted to go someplace where a fight might happen, I found it easy to say I didn’t want to go with them.
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot

31. When actions of others made me angry, I usually dealt with it without getting into a physical fight.
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot

32. If a kid teased me or “dissed” me, I usually could not get them to stop unless I hit them.
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot

33. If a kid at school hit me, it was harder to report them to a teacher or other adult than it was to just hit them back.
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot
34. If I really wanted to, I could usually talk someone out of trying to fight with me.
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot

35. My family would have been mad at me if I had gotten in a fight with another student, no matter what the reason.
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot

36. If a student had hit me first, my family would have wanted me to hit them back.
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot

37. I usually could tell when things were bothering me or getting on my nerves.
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot

38. If things were bothering me or getting on my nerves, I did things to relax.
   □ Disagree A Lot □ Disagree A Little □ Agree A Little □ Agree A Lot

Acceptance of Couple Violence

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

When I was enrolled in school I believed that….

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39. A boy angry enough to hit his girlfriend must have loved her very much.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Violence between dating partners could improve the relationship.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Girls sometimes deserved to be hit by the boys they dated.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. A girl who made her boyfriend jealous on purpose deserved to be hit.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Boys sometimes deserved to be hit by the girls they dated.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. A girl angry enough to hit her boyfriend must have loved him very much.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
45. There were times when violence between dating partners was okay.

46. A boy who made his girlfriend jealous on purpose deserved to be hit.

47. Sometimes violence was the only way to solve their problems.

48. Some couples had to use violence to solve their problems.

49. Violence between dating partners was a personal matter and people should not interfere.

**Attitudes Toward School**

Please check the response that best corresponds with your beliefs about school while you were attending.

50. When I was a student in school, homework was a waste of time.
   - □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

51. I tried hard while I was in school.
   - □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

52. Education was so important that it was worth it to put up with things about school that I didn’t like.
   - □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

53. In general, I liked school.
   - □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

54. I didn’t care what teachers thought of me.
   - □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

55. When I was in school, my teachers liked me.
   - □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

**Attitudes Toward Gangs**

These items measure your attitude toward gangs. Please indicate how true certain statements about gangs were for you while you were in school. Circle the correct response.
56. I think in school you are safer, and have protection, if you join a gang.
0 1

57. When I was a student in school, I joined a gang.
0 1

58. Some of my friends belonged to gangs when I was in high school.
0 1

59. I thought it was cool to be in a gang while I was in school
0 1

60. My friends would have thought less of me if I had joined a gang while I was in school.
0 1

61. I believed it was dangerous to join a gang; because I would have ended up getting hurt or killed by belonging to a gang.
0 1

62. I thought I would have probably gotten into trouble if I had joined a gang while I was in school.
0 1

63. Some people in my family belonged to a gang, or had belonged to a gang while I was in school.
0 1

64. I belonged to a gang while I was in school.
0 1

SECTION II BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENTS

Aggressive Behavior – Joyce Foundation Youth Survey

These items measure whether you or anyone in your household was a victim or perpetrator of violence during the last 30 days (month) you were in school. Please select the best choice that corresponds with your experiences or actions regarding aggressive behavior.
65. During the last 30 days you were in school, had you
   a. Been punched or beaten by another person? □ Yes □ No
   b. Been threatened with or actually cut with a knife? □ Yes □ No
   c. Been threatened with a gun or shot at? □ Yes □ No

66. Within the last 30 days you were in school, had anyone you lived with…
   a. Been punched or beaten by another person? □ Yes □ No
   b. Been threatened with or actually cut with a knife? □ Yes □ No
   c. Been threatened with a gun or shot at? □ Yes □ No

67. Within the last 30 days you were in school, did you…
   a. Become violent while under the influence of alcohol or drugs? □ Yes □ No
   b. Become violent while buying or selling drugs? □ Yes □ No
   c. Punch or beat another person? □ Yes □ No
   d. Use a knife or gun against another person? □ Yes □ No

68. Within the last 30 days you were in school, had anyone you lived with…
   a. Become violent while under the influence of alcohol or drugs? □ Yes □ No
   b. Become violent while buying or selling drugs? □ Yes □ No
   c. Punch or beat another person? □ Yes □ No
   d. Use a knife or gun against another person? □ Yes □ No

During the last 30 days you were in school, how often did you
(circle one for each question):

69. Hit someone because you did not like something they said or did?
   Never  Once or Twice  3-4 times  5-9 times  10 or more times
   1       2           3           4          5

70. Gotten involved in a gang fight:
   Never  Once or Twice  3-4 times  5-9 times  10 or more times
   1       2           3           4          5

Friend’s Delinquent Behavior – Denver Youth Survey

Please indicate how many of your close friends engaged in delinquent and high risk behaviors during the last year you were in school.
71. During the last year you were in school, how many of your friends purposely damaged or destroyed property that did not belong to them?
   □ All of them □ Most of them □ Some of them □ Very few of them □ None of them

72. During the last year you were in school, how many of your friends hit or threatened to hit someone?
   □ All of them □ Most of them □ Some of them □ Very few of them □ None of them

73. During the last year you were in school, how many of your friends used alcohol?
   □ All of them □ Most of them □ Some of them □ Very few of them □ None of them

74. During the last year you were in school, how many of your friends have sold drugs?
   □ All of them □ Most of them □ Some of them □ Very few of them □ None of them

75. During the last year you were in school, how many of your friends got drunk once in a while?
   □ All of them □ Most of them □ Some of them □ Very few of them □ None of them

76. During the last year you were in school, how many of your friends carried a knife or a gun?
   □ All of them □ Most of them □ Some of them □ Very few of them □ None of them

77. During the last year you were in school, how many of your friends got into a physical fight?
   □ All of them □ Most of them □ Some of them □ Very few of them □ None of them

78. During the last year you were in school, how many of your friends were hurt in a fight?
   □ All of them □ Most of them □ Some of them □ Very few of them □ None of them

**Weapon Carrying – Youth Risk Behavior Survey/NYC Youth Violence Survey**

To the best extent possible please indicate the number of days you carried a weapon anywhere, to and/or from school, or on school property during the last 30 days you were enrolled in school. Your responses to these questions are anonymous and can not be traced to a specific respondent.
79. During the last 30 days you were in school, on how many days did you carry a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club?
   a. 0 days
   b. 1 day
   c. 2 to 3 days
   d. 4 to 5 days
   e. 6 to 9 days
   f. 10 to 13 days
   g. 14 to 17 days
   h. 18 or more days

80. During the last 30 days you were in school, on how many days did you carry a gun?
   a. 0 days
   b. 1 day
   c. 2 to 3 days
   d. 4 to 5 days
   e. 6 to 9 days
   f. 10 to 13 days
   g. 14 to 17 days
   h. 18 or more days

81. What is the single most important reason that you carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club during the last 30 days you were in school? (Select only one)
   a. I did not carry a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club during the last 30 days I was in school
   b. For protection against attacks by other people
   c. Because my friends carried weapons
   d. Because it made me feel important
   e. To “show off” and impress my friends
   f. Because I wanted to hurt someone
   g. Other, please specify ________________________________

82. During the last 30 days you were in school, where did you get the handgun you carried?
   a. I did not carry a handgun during the last 30 days I was in school
   b. Parent or other family member’s handgun taken from home
   c. Purchased from a store that sells handguns
   d. Purchased “on the street”
   e. Borrowed from a friend or someone I know
   f. Stolen
   g. Other, please specify ________________________________
To/From School

83. During the last 30 days you were in school, on how many days did you carry a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club going to or from school?
   a. 0 days
   b. 1 day
   c. 2 to 3 days
   d. 4 to 5 days
   e. 6 to 9 days
   f. 10 to 13 days
   g. 14 to 17 days
   h. 18 or more days

84. During the last 30 days you were in school, on how many days did you carry a handgun going to or from school?
   a. 0 days
   b. 1 day
   c. 2 to 3 days
   d. 4 to 5 days
   e. 6 to 9 days
   f. 10 to 13 days
   g. 14 to 17 days
   h. 18 or more days

On School Property

85. During the last 30 days you were in school, on how many days did you carry a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property?
   a. 0 days
   b. 1 day
   c. 2 to 3 days
   d. 4 to 5 days
   e. 6 to 9 days
   f. 10 to 13 days
   g. 14 to 17 days
   h. 18 or more days

86. During your last year in school, how many times did someone threaten or injure you with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property?
   a. 0 times
   b. 1 time
   c. 2 or 3 times
   d. 4 or 5 times
   e. 6 or 7 times
   f. 8 or 9 times
g. 10 or 11 times
h. 12 or more times

SECTION III ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS
Family Bonding – Individual Protective Factor Index

Please indicate how strongly you feel each sentence listed below is true regarding family bonding and communication. Mark your response by checking “YES!” if the statement is very true for them; “yes” if it is somewhat true; “no” if it is somewhat false; and “NO!” if it is very false.

87. While I was in school I could tell my parents the way I felt about things.  □ YES! □ yes □ no □ NO!

88. My family expected too much of me when I was in school.  □ YES! □ yes □ no □ NO!

89. Sometimes I was ashamed of my parents.  □ YES! □ yes □ no □ NO!

90. My family let me down when I was in school.  □ YES! □ yes □ no □ NO!

91. I liked to do things with my family when I was in school.  □ YES! □ yes □ no □ NO!

92. I enjoyed talking with my family when I was in school.  □ YES! □ yes □ no □ NO!

Neighborhood/Block Conditions

Based on a list of common neighborhood problems, indicate the extent to which each of the problems existed on your block while you were in school.

My perception of my neighborhood based on…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>No problem</th>
<th>A minor problem</th>
<th>A serious problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93. Property damage? Was that…</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94. Drug dealing? Was that…</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95. Groups of young people hanging around?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
96. Physical assaults of people on the street? Was that…  1  2  3
97. Organized gangs? Was that…  1  2  3
98. Physical fighting? Was that…  1  2  3
99. Gunshots? Was that…  1  2  3
100. Lack of supervised activities for youth? Was that…  1  2  3
101. Feeling unsafe while out alone on your block during the day? Was that…  1  2  3
102. Feeling unsafe while out alone on your block during the night?  1  2  3
103. Inadequate recreational facilities available for young people? Was that…  1  2  3
104. Feeling unsafe in your home? Was that…  1  2  3
105. Poor city services, like trash pick-up and police response?  1  2  3

**Neighborhood Satisfaction**

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the four statements listed below regarding the level of satisfaction you had for the neighborhood you lived in while you were in school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>106. I was satisfied with this block as a place to live.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107. Compared to other blocks in this area, my block was a good place to live.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
108. In the last year I was in school, the general conditions on my block have gotten worse.

109. The year after I left high school, the general conditions on my block was probably going to be better.

**Neighborhood/Community Action**

Please indicate your perception of the likelihood of a neighbor responding appropriately to a situation in your neighborhood while you were in school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Not at All Likely</th>
<th>Some what Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

110. If some 10 to 12 year-old youths were spray painting a street sign on the block, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have told them to stop?

111. If a suspicious stranger was hanging around the block, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have noticed this and warned others to be on guard?

112. If someone on your block was playing loud music, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have asked them to turn the music down?

113. If teenagers were fist-fighting on your block, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have attempted to stop it?

114. If someone on your block was firing a gun, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have done something about it?
115. If drugs were being sold on your block, how likely was it that you or some of your neighbors would have done something about it?

116. How old are you?
O 18 years old
O 19 years old
O 20 years old
O 21 years old
O 22 years old
O 23 years old
O 24 years old
O 25 years old or older

117. What is your sex?
O male
O female

118. How do you describe yourself?
O White/Caucasian
O Black/African-American
O Hispanic - Latino
O Asian or Pacific Islander
O American Indian or Alaska Native
O Mixed/Biracial
O Other ______________________________

119. List the members in your household during the last year you were in school (mark all that apply).
1. Biological Mother or Stepmother
2. Biological Father or Stepfather
3. Brother(s) and/or Sister(s)
4. Grandmother and/or Grandfather  
5. Wife or Husband  
6. Boyfriend or Girlfriend  
7. Other Relatives  

120. Last year you attended school.  
1. 7th Grade 
2. 8th Grade 
3. 9th Grade 
4. 10th Grade 
5. 11th Grade 
6. 12th Grade 
7. Other ____________________________________________  

121. Employment Status  
1. No (not employed) 
2. Yes (employed)  

122. If employed during your last year in school how many hours did you worked per week?  
1. 0 - 10 
2. 11 - 20 
3. 21 - 30 
4. 31 - 40 
5. 40 or more  

123. Yearly Income of your family while you were in school  
1. Less than $10,000  
2. $10,001 - $20,000  
3. $20,001 - $30,000  
4. $30,001 - $40,000  
5. $40,001 - $50,000  
6. $50,001 - $60,000  
7. $60,001 or above  
8. Do not know  

124. Please list how many different jobs you have held during the past 12 months.  
__________________________________________________________________  

125. What was the name of the town you lived in during your last year in school?  
__________________________________________________________________  

126. Were you ever suspended from school?
1. No
2. Yes (for fighting)
3. Yes (for reasons other than fighting)

127. Were you ever expelled from school?

  1. No
  2. Yes (for fighting)
  3. Yes (for reasons other than fighting)

128. When you were in school, how many times did you change schools?

  1. 0-2 Times
  2. 3-5 Times
  3. 6-10 Times
  4. 11 or more times

129. Did you drop out of school because you failed to pass the Graduate Exit Exam?

  1. No
  2. Yes

130. Did you have a child while you were in school?

  1. No
  2. Yes
VITA

Lieutenant Colonel Nathaniel McClinton is an experienced educator of secondary and university students. For the past eleven years, he has served as Senior Army Instructor for the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps at Glen Oaks High School. Currently a doctoral student at Louisiana State University (LSU) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Colonel McClinton received his master’s degree in Human Relations/Personnel Management from Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri, and his bachelor’s degree from Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical (A & M) University in Prairie View, Texas. He received additional training at the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution, the National Multi-Cultural Institute and the Professional Development Center, Inc. While at LSU, he was appointed a Southern Regional Education Board Doctoral Scholar and the recipient of the Huel Perkins Doctoral Fellowship Award.

Colonel McClinton is a retired United States Army officer of 23 years, a graduate of the United States Army Command and General Staff College and the Army War College. Professionally, he is a member of the National Association of Community Mediation, Phi Delta Kappa International Fraternity for Educators, and is an Explorer Post Leader with the Istrouma Area Council Boy Scouts of America. Colonel McClinton is listed in *Who’s Who among America’s Teachers* in the 5th, 7th and 8th editions. He has conducted numerous presentations and workshops at the local, state and national levels and an international conference in London, England. He has secured grant funding for youth development programs in the area of conflict resolution and peer medication at
both the state and local levels. He is married to the former Dr. Annette L. Chaney and has two grown children, Nathaniel Jerome “Jerry” and Natalie Denise McClinton.