

What Hobbies Are Linked With Peer Insecurity in a Sample of Detained Youth

Morgan Wirth, Taylor Gusler, and Kelli R. Thompson

Adolescent development is influenced by many different interpersonal factors, as well as other family, peer, school, community, and larger societal influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Extra curricular activities vary in function due to their characteristics, and thus may involve different components of adolescent development. Sporting teams have been associated with higher rates of positive peer relationships when compared to academic clubs, which may require less teamwork (Larsen et al., 2006). Given the impact hobbies can have on adolescent social development, the current study sought to examine how different extracurricular activities were associated with the social development and delinquency in a sample of adjudicated youth.

The sample consisted of male youth ($n = 1,352$) adjudicated for serious delinquent behavior and recruited from a court-mandated residential facility. The Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory was used to measure the outcome variables: peer insecurity and delinquency predisposition. The grouping variable for hobbies had five main categories including active hobbies, passive hobbies, productive hobbies, delinquent activities, and socializing with others. Two separate ANOVAs were used to test for significant mean differences in peer insecurity and delinquency predisposition, according to participant hobbies. Results indicated significant group differences across hobby type for both the peer insecurity ($F(7, 1344) = 3.73, p = .003$) and the delinquency scales ($F(7, 1344) = 6.91, p = .000$). Scheffé's post-hoc analyses were used to balance for unequal group sizes among favorite hobby. Figure 1 shows how each individual hobby relates to peer insecurity and delinquency, respectively. Productive hobbies were found to be significantly higher than both the delinquent hobbies and active sports groups in post-hoc analyses on peer insecurity. Rather predictably, those with antisocial hobbies rated significantly higher on delinquent predisposition than any other type of extracurricular activity.

Overall results indicate the types of extracurricular activities an adolescent engages in may carry certain risk and protective factors for delinquency and peer insecurity.

Adolescents who participated in productive hobbies showed the highest level of peer insecurity, but the lowest level of delinquent predisposition. This means productive hobbies may serve simultaneously as a risk factor for social development and a protective factor against delinquency.

Statement of Research Advisor

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-Kelli Thompson, Psychology

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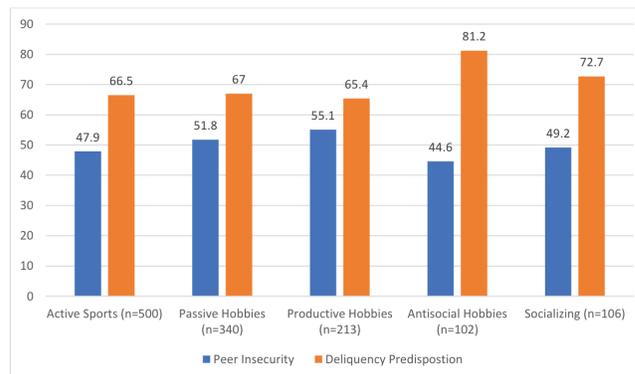


Figure 1. Means of outcome variables (peer insecurity and delinquency) by grouping variable (hobby type).