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An Analysis of the Influence of Gang Membership on Truancy and School Dropout

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

AN ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF GANG MEMBERSHIP
ON TRUANCY AND SCHOOL DROPOUT

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

RONN L. GIBBS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JANUARY 1997

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Loyola University of Chicago

AN ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF GANG
MEMBERSHIP ON TRUANCY AND SCHOOL DROPOUT

The purpose of the study was to determine the possible relationship of gang membership to that of truancy and school dropout. Additionally, the collection of the data aided in a comparative analysis between gang and nongang members.

A triangulation by method approach was used to collect the data. Quantitative data were derived from a self-administered general questionnaire completed by 128 former high school dropouts located at a retrieval center in a large urban school district in Illinois. The survey established demographics; attitudes and motivations concerning school attendance patterns; reasons for school dropout, gang membership and related matters; and future expectations of the respondents. These data were coded and tabulated according to the frequency of responses. Comparisons were made between the responses of current or former gang members to that of nongang members, in addition, a Chi-square (x^2) test was employed to determine significant relationships.

The qualitative data were derived from 20 personal interviews conducted with admitted gang members (10) and nongang members (10) as established by responses of

key questions in the general survey and from records kept at the retrieval center. The interview questions were formulated from key questions in the survey and designed to either substantiate or refute the results of the survey. The interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes were transcribed immediately following each interview.

Concurrently with the quantitative analysis, the interviews were compared to key responses from the survey. The field notes were coded, classified and placed in a matrix for review. The data were compared and analyzed in terms of similarities, differences and in patterns of responses.

The major conclusions of the study were:

1. Membership in an organized street gang has no relationship on attendance and truancy patterns.
2. The reasons for school dropout do not differ between gang members and nongang members.
3. Neither gender nor ethnicity (between African-American and Hispanics) affect truancy and school dropout.
4. There is a new, emerging philosophy promoting school attendance by organized street gangs.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The term "truant," according to the Illinois State School Code, is a child under the age of sixteen who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent from school without a valid cause during a full school day or some portion thereof.¹ A chronic truant, according to the same code, is a child who has been absent from school without a valid cause for ten percent of the previous one hundred-eighty regular school attendance days.² On a daily basis, in the state of Illinois, tens of thousands of students fall within both of these categories, resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost revenue to the local school districts and more importantly, lost educational opportunities to the youth living within the state. Throughout the state, in the 1989-1990 school year, an average of "approximately 120,000 students are missing from Illinois classrooms due to truancy"... resulting in lost state reimbursement in excess of \$142 million, accredited to truancy.³

In the Chicago Public School System, the Office of Research and Evaluation determined that in the 1990-1991 school year that there was an average of 30,646 truants

¹ Illinois. The School Code of Illinois and Related Laws (1992), sec. 26-2a.

² Ibid.

³ Illinois. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Trends and Issues 91: Education and Criminal Justice in Illinois (1991), 74.

daily and 17,051 chronic truants daily.⁴ Truancy is a serious problem for some systems across the state. In many circles, by perception, truancy is considered preliminary to the much more serious problem of dropping out of school.

A dropout, as defined by the Illinois State School Code (chapter 122-26), is any child in grades one through twelve whose name has been removed from the district enrollment roster for any reason other than death, extended illness, graduation or completion of a program of studies and who has not transferred to another public or private school.⁵ As truancy produces untold cost upon school systems, dropouts produce untold cost upon society in general.

The definition of a gang, as defined by the Chicago Crime Commission, states that "a gang is a cohesive group of youth, usually between the ages of eleven and twenty-three, who have recognizable geographical territory, leadership, a purpose, and various levels of an organized, continuous course of criminal activities."⁶ Gangs have proven to be destructive forces within the communities of this nation. Communities across the country are seeking answers in combating the growing tide of gang proliferation into their neighborhoods.

⁴ "Comparative Data on School Dropouts and Truants During the Past Two School Years- 1990-92," a publication of the Chicago Public School's Research, Evaluation and Planning Department, October, 1993, 1.

⁵ Illinois. The School Code of Illinois and Related Laws..., 261.

⁶ "Gangs: Public Enemy Number One," a publication of the Chicago Crime Commission, 1995, 5.

Purpose of This Study

Within the past decade a proliferation of illegal drugs has spurred the development of well-organized street gangs which control the distribution of drugs within communities throughout the United States. As an adjunct to this control, gang related activities over the past few years have directly related to the destruction of many lives and to the demise of thousands of adolescents across this nation. Locally, over the past few years, gang activities have had direct influence upon senseless taking of adolescent lives within our communities, and have been well documented by media reports. Community leaders are gathering their forces in order to discuss solutions to overcoming the direct influence which gangs have within their neighborhoods. Not only does it appear that gangs have some effects on the community in general terms, it also appears that gang membership, and its related activities, have far reaching effects upon the youth who are affiliated with such organizations. If such influence can cause the taking of human life, then, logically, it would follow, that the gangs may influence, not only delinquency, but also truancy behaviors.

Research studies have documented the relationships between chronic truancy and dropping out of school. Concurrently, research has shown a relationship between truancy and academic frustrations (low grades due to absences). Questions which have not been fully explored empirically or socially include:

1. What, if any, is the role of the gang in contributing to, or not contributing to truancy behaviors?
2. What are some reasons students who are gang members drop out of school?

3. Are factors which influence truancy and dropout different among Hispanic, African-American, male or female gang members?
4. Do the regulating codes of the gang promote or inhibit educational pursuits?
5. Does the involvement in gang activities preclude the individual gang member from planning an occupational career beyond gangdome (gang tenure)?

This study seeks to illuminate these issues by using the questions above as the central focus of this research.

As Americans attempt to compete in a global marketplace, truancy and the dropout rate both have astounding effects upon our society in terms of economics, social welfare programs, and in an academic agenda which should educate every citizen. Working within the parameters of this premise, by using the aforementioned guide questions as the focus, then, the general purpose of this study is: (a) to develop an understanding between the relationship of adolescent gang membership to school truancy; (b) to develop an understanding between gang membership and its relationship to students who have dropped out of school; and, (c) to explore the implications gang membership has on the truancy and dropout rate.

Sources of Data

In a treatise on qualitative research by Patton, each chapter begins with a parable taken from Halcolm's Epistemological Parables.⁷ One of these parables speaks of three masters students seeking to increase their wisdom and knowledge. The three students

⁷ Michael Quinn Patton, Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, 2d ed. (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1990), 43.

limited to the ways of the world sought guidance from Halcolm to gain this wisdom.

Halcolm sent the three students, in vow of silence, on a six month journey in which the students were to observe the ways of the world. On their return to Halcolm, two of the students reported that they had all of the answers after observing the people in the marketplace. The third student said that he observed the same things as his fellow students; however, he was perplexed that they knew all of the answers. As for himself, his mind was filled with questions.

It was intended that this study produce an intimate understanding of the inner thoughts and motivating behaviors of the participants. Therefore, the methodological approach to this study was one which included both quantitatively and qualitatively generated data. As this project centered on contemporary social issues, wherein, the setting was ideal in affording this data collection, the triangulation by method approach was determined most desirable.

Approximately twenty-thousand students in Chicago public schools drop out each year. Located on the premises of the Chicago Board of Education's main office, the setting of this study, is a retrieval center for high school students who have previously dropped out. Of those who leave school, a small percentage enter the retrieval center in an effort to continue their education. Each semester the retrieval center services over two-hundred students, of which approximately ninety percent belong to, or have belonged to, an organized gang, including both males and females, as acknowledged by the center's manager. Each semester, at the center, there are approximately five gang members who have attended one of the four public schools with the highest dropout rates. Additionally,

these schools are located in areas identified as having the highest reported gang activity, as corroborated by the Chicago Police Department's Youth Patrol Unit.

Methodology

Originally, based upon the manager of the Retrieval Center, it was presumed that ninety percent of the students housed at the center were either current or former gang members. However, once the study began, it was discovered that there was almost an equal distribution of gang members and non-gang members, thereby slightly changing the procedural process. Instead of concentration on non-gang member responses to the survey, the data suggested that there should be a comparison of both groups. Moreover, an additional factor was added to the criteria for the interviewees, outlined later in this section.

The study began with the collection of quantitative data and was completed with the collection of qualitative data. Quantitative data were derived from a self-administered general questionnaire which established demographics; attitudes and motivations concerning school attendance patterns; reasons for school dropout; gang membership and related matters; and future expectations of the respondents. A copy of this questionnaire is located in Appendix (A). Following an orientation and an instructional period during the week of June 5-9, 1995, the survey was self administered in the retrieval center by 128 former dropouts. The survey contained 88 questions, the demographics comprising 9.0 percent, 69.1 percent comprising Likert-scale type questions and 21.9 percent used an open-ended format. The scaled questions gave the respondents a choice of five selections

ranging from "strongly agree" to strongly disagree;" from "strongly approve" to "strongly disapprove;" and from "very beneficial" to "not beneficial at all." The survey took the respondents approximately thirty minutes to complete.

The quantitative data were coded and tabulated according to the frequency of responses. Percentages of responses were calculated. In the analysis, comparisons were made between the responses of current or former gang members to that of nongang members. The statistical measure of Chi-Square was employed in order to determine significant relationships. Additional analysis included descriptive information describing how both groups responded to each questionnaire item.

The collection of the qualitative data followed the procedures illustrated by authors such as Miles, Huberman, and Bernard. Qualitative data were derived from interviews conducted with admitted gang members and nongang members as established by the general survey and through student records kept at the retrieval center. An interview schedule was used, developed from the responses of key questions established in the general survey, wherein each subject was asked to respond to identical stimuli. The interview schedule was designed to either substantiate or refute the results of the study. And, according to Miles and Huberman, "using them (interview schedules) as they are designed, is the best guarantee of dependable and meaningful findings."⁸ Presented in Appendix (B) is the schedule which was used for these interviews.

The interviews, lasting approximately 20-30 minutes, were conducted over a four

⁸Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1984), 43.

week period, from November 27-December 27, 1995. Notes were taken during the interviews and transcribed immediately following each interview. Written notes were taken so as not to jeopardize any possible free expression which the respondent may have shared.

The qualitative sample was composed of twenty students extracted for participation in the in-depth interviews. Twenty students (10 gang members and 10 nongang members) were selected as a representative number (see criterion #1) for the individual interviews, to either corroborate or refute the data collected from the general survey. Because the subjects were at liberty to discuss their attitudes, feelings and motivations of the key questions in the survey, heavy emphasis was placed on the qualitative aspect of this research. With the appropriate coding of the demographics in the general survey, the sample (twenty students) was derived wherein the subjects met the following criteria:

1. Former students of four selected high schools identified as having high dropout rates and which were located in areas exhibiting high gang activity.
 2. The above student who was currently, or had been, involved in gang membership/activities.
- or
3. The above student who had never been involved in gang membership/activities.
 4. The student was willing to be interviewed.

Concurrently with the quantitative analysis, the qualitative interviews were compared to key responses from the survey which would indicate similarities or differences. The interview questions were developed from the survey; therefore, specific questions in the interview were linked together according to the results of Chi-Square. The responses were compared and analyzed in terms of similarities, differences and patterns, as well as in the review of the literature were applicable. The field notes were coded, classified and placed in a matrix for review. Topologies were developed by reviewing both field notes and the data, resulting in a grounded theory.⁹ Results and conclusions were established and recommendations formulated.

In addition to the literature review in Chapter II, an inspection of documents were completed from local and state organizations concerned with the issues of truancy, school dropout, and gang activities. Those documents assisted in gathering background information; assisted in the analysis; and assisted in the interpretation of significant trends related to this study. Additional, documents related to truancy and school dropout were secured from the Board of Education's Research and Evaluation Office and from reports by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Gang related documents were ascertained from the Chicago Crime Commission.

Collectively, this approach, triangulation by method, provided not only construct validity but also internal validity to this study.¹⁰ Stage and Russell believe that

⁹Corrine Glesne and Alan Peshkin, Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction (White Pines: Longman Publishing Group, 1992), 19.

¹⁰Robert K. Yin, Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1989), 40-41.

triangulation by method, "can capture a more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the issue studied."¹¹ Correspondingly, as to the value of method triangulation, they advise that, "multiple viewpoints allow for greater accuracy in describing the entire phenomenon."¹²

Limitations of The Study

This study focused on former dropouts who had entered the retrieval center meeting the criteria set forth in the methodology section. Therefore, the number of respondents who participated in the study may not, in the findings, be generalizable to a larger segment of gang and non-gang members in the general population. Also, this study and its triangulated method of analysis created limitations which, again, may not be generalizable and are limited to this study. As such, additional research may be needed to further explore this subject and the related circumstances.

Definition of Terms

1. Retrieval Center: a unit of the Department of Student Support of the Chicago Board of Education which offers high school credit for those students who have previously dropped out of the regular high schools or who have had extreme difficulties in a regular high school placement.
2. Gangdome: The period of membership in an organized street gang.

¹¹Francis K. Stage and Ruth V. Russell, "Using Method Triangulation in College Student Research," Journal of College Student Development 65 (November 1992): 487.

¹² Ibid.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this review is to survey the literature related to the various aspects of gang phenomena and their possible relationship to truancy and the dropout rate.

Although the literature search yielded scant data directly pertinent to gang-related school attendance problems, the information and ideas obtained through this search provided a basis for understanding the depth to which gang involvement has influenced members of gangs and illuminated aspects of how that involvement affected the gang member's educational pursuits.

Several topics were researched in the literature review to assist in the development of the research questions set forth in the Purpose section. This chapter discusses (1) the relationship of gang membership to age; (2) the role of gangs in facilitating delinquent behaviors; (3) the public policy regarding gangs; (4) the potential for employment in the labor market for dropouts; and (5) some reasons that students drop out of school. The focus on these components assisted in guiding the data collection of this study.

Age and Gang Membership

There is a considerable amount of attention being given to gangs and their relationship to an orderly society. Much attention has been given over the years to research regarding the relationship between age and crime, but the effect of age and gang

membership has received comparatively little attention. James Lasley states, regarding age and gangs, that there is belief in the idea of an acceptable age of gang membership:

Since Thrasher's (1927) pioneering study of Chicago gangs, age has been considered a constant rather than a variable in the calculus of gang behavior. That is, a majority of gang studies have adopted the traditional etiological notion that collective deviance is largely an adolescent phenomenon that seldom persists beyond Early Adulthood...¹

This study completed by Lasley sought to determine whether gangs were becoming generationalized by many levels of the age distribution.² His findings revealed that gang membership "tends to peak between the ages of 16 and 17 years and tends to decline monotonically thereafter."³ This quantitative study made use of statistical procedures to compare gang membership to age and socioeconomic status. But for its relevance to this study, the concern was with the age factor and gang membership. Therefore, it has been determined by Lasley's study that the average age of gang membership corresponds to the age at which school-age children are legally permitted to drop out of school. Lasley states: "In this study the tendency toward adult gang membership was clearly the exception and not the rule. For the most part, gangs investigated here were composed primarily of adolescents."⁴

¹James R. Lasley, "Age, Social Context, and Street Gang Membership: Are Youth Gangs Becoming Adult Gangs?", Youth and Society, Vol. 23, No. 4 (June, 1992), 435.

² Ibid., 434.

³ Ibid., 443.

⁴ Ibid., 446.

Lasley continues by illustrating, with a table distribution, that the majority of gang members surveyed in this study, as previously mentioned, were between the ages of 16 and 17 years of age (35.9%), and that the second largest age range was between 18 and 19 years of age (21.8%).⁵ In the conclusion of Lasley's study, he emphasized that there should be no misunderstanding in the belief that gangs are becoming adult entities:

Throughout decades of gang research, one assumption regarding the etiology of street gang membership has remained largely unchallenged: specifically, that gang membership is primarily a youthful activity.⁶

Additionally, Lasely is supported by other studies on the issue of age and gangs:

By and large most first-generation gang research... indicates that there are distinct age-linked boundaries defining the onset and desistence of street gang involvement: This is what Klein (1971) terms the gang age; for Kantor and Bennett (1968), the gang age ranged from 10 to 25 years. It was 11 to 25 years for Cooper (1967), and 12 to 22 years for the New York Youth Board (1960).⁷

M. W. Klein in a report on Los Angeles street gangs observed:

The typical gang has two five age-graded subgroups. Thus there may be a small group of 12-13 year olds, a large group of 14-15 year olds, and still a large group in the 16-18 year old bracket, and a smaller disintegrating group of older boys.⁸

Although Klein's study was completed in 1971 the distribution of the age factor

⁵ Ibid., 447.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷Ibid., 435.

⁸M.W. Klein, Street Gangs and Street Workers (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1971), 65, quoted in James Lasley, "Age, Social Context, and Street Gang Membership: Are Youth Gangs Becoming Adult Gangs?", Youth and Society, Vol. 23, No. 4 (June, 1992), 436.

continues to be substantiated by later studies such as Lasley's.

Finally, Lasley makes in his conclusion an unmistakable comment that gangs are a youthful entity. He states "In sum, general findings from data examined here indicates that most street gang members are likely to be adolescents who give up their street gang affiliations upon reaching adulthood."⁹

Kay McKinney, in an article written about juvenile gangs, succinctly states that gang "ages range from preteen to adult, but the average age is dropping -- from 15 in 1984, to 13.5 in 1987."¹⁰ The Chicago Crime Commission establishes the age of gang membership to include those persons who should be attending school regularly. The Commission believes that gang members are "... usually between the ages of eleven and twenty-three years."¹¹ The age of twenty-three represents one year beyond the legal age for receiving a free public school education. This places the majority of gang members at the school attendance age and illustrates that, by law, the majority of gang members should be attending school.

The intent of this section was to provide evidence which would substantiate the relationship between gang membership and the age at which these members should be attending school regularly.

⁹Lasley, 448.

¹⁰Kay C. McKinney, "Juvenile Gangs: Crime and Drug Trafficking." Juvenile Justice Bulletin, (September, 1988): 1-8 (U.S. Department of Justice).

¹¹ "Gangs: Public Enemy Number One," A publication of the Chicago Crime Commission, 1995, 5.

Role of Gangs and Delinquent Behavior

This topic was investigated in order to establish how gang involvement contributes to delinquent behavior and how this behavior may affect the adolescent's school attendance patterns.

A study conducted by Thornberry, Krahn, Lizotte, and Chard-Wierschem suggests that "the link between gang membership and delinquency appears (to be) indisputable."¹² Their study examined the delinquent careers of gang members before, during, and after their involvement with gangs and compared this behavior to that of nongang members.

This qualitative approach examined delinquent behavior as it related to (1) drug use; (2) crimes against persons; (3) crimes against property; and (4) drug sales. Their findings revealed that "there is little dispute that gang members are more likely to commit more offenses, especially serious and violent offenses, than are nongang members."¹³ Additionally, it was found that gang members are recruited from adolescents who are already delinquent or who have a high propensity for delinquency.¹⁴

Curry and Spergel suggest that "most authors concur that the connection between gang involvement and delinquency must to some degree be reciprocal over the duration

¹²Terence P. Thornberry, Marvin D. Krahn, Alan J. Lizotte, and Deborah Chard-Wierschem, "The Role of Juvenile Gangs in Facilitating Delinquent Behavior," Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, Vol. 30, No.1, (February, 1993), 56.

¹³ Ibid., 79.

¹⁴ Ibid.

of adolescence."¹⁵ It appears to some educators that many of the disruptions within the inner-city schools are caused extensively by known gang members. Concurring with this premise, Fagan states that "gang-identified youths exhibit higher levels of delinquency and drug involvement than other youths."¹⁶

Thornberry, et al. believe that research studies have overwhelmingly proven the connection between gang involvement and delinquent behavior.

Studies that rely on official data to compare gang and nongang members also report a strong relationship between gang membership and criminal involvement... Finally, studies that use survey research techniques find that gang members report higher rates of criminal involvement than nongang members.¹⁷

The questions one may ponder concern the propensity for gangs to be involved in delinquent behaviors. As one observes the activities with which gangs are primarily concerned (the distribution of drugs within their territories), it becomes obvious that ancillary criminal activities attached to this control and distribution are certainly criminatory behaviors. Thornberry, et al. concluded that "this finding is hardly surprising because gangs are groups that are organized to some extent around delinquent conduct."¹⁸

¹⁵David G. Curry and Irving A. Spergel, "Gang Involvement and Delinquency Among Hispanic and African-American Adolescent Males," Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, Vol. 29, No. 3, (August, 1992), 287.

¹⁶ Jeffrey Fagan, "The Social Organization of Drug Use and Drug Dealing Among Urban Gangs," Criminology, Vol. 27 (November, 1989), 633.

¹⁷ Thornberry, et al., 56.

¹⁸ Ibid.

W.B. Miller in a report submitted to the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention advised that:

A gang is a group of recurrently associating individuals with identifiable leadership and internal organization, identifying with or claiming contact over territory in the community, and engaging either individually or collectively in violent or other forms of illegal behavior.¹⁹

Cohen describes the delinquency of gangs as "collectivities that engage in deviant, disruptive, antisocial, or criminal behavior."²⁰ Spergal feels that the participant criterion currently used to define a "gang" may be the group's participation in illegal activity.²¹

Thornberry, et al. confirm that drug use is an additional element of the gang phenomenon: "The gang will occasionally engage in delinquent and criminal activities, ranging from shoplifting cigarettes and intimidating the elderly to using heavy drugs and participating in drive-by shootings directed at no one in particular."²² Studies have shown that drug use and gang involvement are synonymous. Fagan says in the conclusions of his study that "there is a positive association between drug involvement and serious

¹⁹W.B. Miller "Violence by Youth Gangs and Youth Groups as a Crime Problem in Major American Cities," (1975), 9, quoted in James Lasley, "Age, Social Context, and Street Gang Membership: Are Youth Gangs Becoming Adult Gangs?", Youth and Society, Vol. 23, No. 4 (June, 1992), 436.

²⁰Albert K. Cohen, "Forward and Overview." in Gangs in America, edited by C. Ronald Huff (Newberry Park: Sage 1990) 7-21, quoted in Thornberry, et al.; 56-57.

²¹Irving A. Spergel, "Youth Gangs: Continuity and Change." Crime and Justice: A Review of Research, Vol. 12, edited by Michael Torry and Norval Morris, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1990), 171-275, quoted in Thornberry, et al., 57.

²²Michael Gottfredson, and Travis Hirschi, A General Theory of Crime (Stanford, Ca: Stanford University Press 1990), 209, quoted in Thornberry, et al., 58.

collective gang acts." ²³

The Chicago Sun-Times, in a series of articles on gangs following the murder of an innocent young child walking to school with his mother, delineated the activities of the three largest gangs in the Chicago area. The articles provided fuel to the issue regarding the barbarism of gang activities. Additionally, the articles address the sophistication which gang activities have become. Regarding criminal activities of one such well-known gang, the newspaper articulated:

Police say they include narcotics dealing and extortion of money from independent drug dealers; murder, including drive-by shootings; robbery; theft; weapons violations; battery; assault; extortion; and intimidation.²⁴

To substantiate the reports by the Sun-Times, the Chicago Crime Commission, in its published report on gangs states:

Gangs are formed for the primary purpose of carrying out illegal activity, protecting their home turf from the influx of rival gangs, and expanding beyond a neighborhood sphere of influence. Today, the importation and trafficking of narcotics is the most dominant criminal pursuit of street gangs, followed by murders for hire, chop shop operations, and residential/commercial burglaries. In addition, gangs involve themselves with the commission of hate crimes, extortion, robberies, and other crimes for financial gain.²⁵

Additionally, wherever gang members may congregate, according to the Crime Commission, "the potential for violent crime is far greater than any other group within

²³Fagan, 660.

²⁴ Alt Siewers, "Street Gang Violence," Chicago Sun-Times, 18 December, 1992, 17.

²⁵ "Gangs: Public Enemy Number One," A publication of the Chicago Crime Commission, 1995, 5.

society."²⁶ Further, the Commission believes that:

The life of a hardened gang member well-versed in the way of the streets encompasses an on-going criminal career. A member must give all to the gang, total alliance. Their own life becomes secondary to the gang objectives.²⁷

Another aspect of delinquency and gangs to be considered here is the relationship to criminal behavior and school dropout. Several studies have found a relationship to dropping out of school and criminal behavior. Fagan, et al. state that "dropouts report considerably higher rates of school delinquency than their counterparts who remain in school."²⁸ Thornberry, et al. spoke of early studies:

Hathaway, Reynolds, and Monaches; (1969) also followed: dropouts and graduates into the mid-twenties and report consistently higher rates of criminal involvement for dropouts. Finally, Bachman and O'Malley (1978) examined this relationship from a nationally representative sample of adolescents. Through the early twenties they find higher rates of criminal activity for the high school dropouts than any other educational group (Bachman and O'Malley, 1978).²⁹

In the conclusion of the same study, Thornberry, et al. surmised that:

One ineluctable conclusion emerged: dropping out of high school is positively associated with later criminal activity... Indeed, for two of the three age-at-dropout groups, criminal behavior increased in the year following departure from school. Moreover, dropping out of high school was also found to have a positive long-term effect on criminal behavior.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 6.

²⁸ Jeffrey Fagan, E. Piper and M. Moore, "Violent Delinquents and Urban Youths," Criminology, Vol. 24, No. 3, (1986), 454.

²⁹ Terence P. Thornberry, M. Moore and R.L. Christenson, "The Effect of Dropping Out of High School on Subsequent Criminal Behavior," Crimonology, Vol. 23, No. 1, (1985), 6.

Throughout the early twenties dropouts have consistently higher rates of arrests than do graduates...³⁰

Trends and Issues 91 reports that "rates of delinquency are far higher among adolescents who drop out (especially male dropouts) than among teenagers who stay in school, and the association between dropping out and later criminal behavior has been shown to persist into early adulthood."³¹ Elliott confirms, "Delinquency is...associated with frustration and failure particularly experienced in school."³² Moreover, regarding criminal activities which result in incarceration, Steurer reports that "more than 70 percent of the inmates of jails and prisons in the United States have not completed a high school education."³³

Even with a cursory view of the above accounts, the vista becomes clear that there is little doubt of the relationship that gang involvement and school dropout have on delinquent behaviors and deviant criminal activity.

³⁰Ibid., 17.

³¹Illinois. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Trends and Issues 91: Education and Criminal Justice In Illinois (1991), 5, citing Romeria Tidwell, "Dropouts Speak Out: Qualitative Data on Early School Departures," Adolescence, Vol. 23 (Winter 1988), 939; and Timothy Hartnagel and Harvey Krahn, "High School Dropouts, Labor Market Success and Criminal Behavior," Youth and Society, Vol. 20 (June 1989), 416-44.

³²D.S. Elliott, "Delinquency, School Attendance and Dropout," Social Problems, Vol. 13, (1966), 313.

³³Stephen Steurer, Executive Director of the Correctional Education Association as quoted by George Nicholson, "Reading, 'Riting or Doing Time," ABA Journal (June 1990), 66.

Public Policy and Gangs

Public policy regarding gang activity generally has its roots in reactionary tactics based on after-the-fact delinquency. A study completed in Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio, conducted by Huff, attempts to analyze the present public policy and makes recommendations designed to address both prevention and control of youth gangs.³⁴

Huff's qualitative study interviewed gang members, former gang members, police officers, community representatives, social service agencies, and school officials in Cleveland and in Columbus. Huff states that "law enforcement is viewed as having the primary responsibility in controlling gang behavior in these two cities."³⁵ Moreover, when this study was completed in 1988, school principals in these cities revealed a moderate level of concern about gangs, and in some instances refused to acknowledge gang activity in their schools.

Although Huff's study concentrates on two Ohio cities, it can be shown that other cities, including Chicago, have at some point refused to acknowledge that there may be criminal elements operating in and around their school buildings. Trends and Issues 91 reports that:

According to (police) officers who work in Chicago and in inner-city neighborhoods in other cities, the more serious the crime problem in the school, the less cooperation they tended to receive from school authorities. In both cases, the reluctance of school administrators to cooperate in reporting crimes, according to the officers, is related to their desire to

³⁴ Ronald C. Huff, "Youth Gangs and Public Policy," Crime and Delinquency, Vol. 35, No. 4 (October, 1989), 524-537.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 525.

protect the reputations of their schools.³⁶

Stover confirms this approach in his report:

Without school board reassurances that principals' calls for help won't reflect adversely on their careers, school administrators are reluctant to step forward when gang activity gets out of hand. No one wants the reputation of failing to maintain discipline, says Rivera. No one wants to admit there's a problem.³⁷

For many years, in larger metropolises of our country, gangs were not believed to be a major threat to society. And in many suburban areas, this concept continues to be a plausible perception. Huff states that, except for Columbus,

While three of Ohio's largest cities have youth gangs, until recently only (Columbus) had officially acknowledged their existence... for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the protection of the city's image, political leaders and others in key leadership roles are reluctant to acknowledge the existence of gangs.³⁸

Although this appeared to be the situation for these Ohio cities, major cities such as Chicago and states like Illinois have made major strides in the awareness of their gang problem and have developed strategies to combat the proliferation of gang activity. Other cities are not unaware of the devastations of gang activity and have developed policy to deal with the problem. A report written by William Skalitzky explains how major cities have been infiltrated with drug distribution by the Los Angeles based gangs, the Bloods and the Crips. Denver, Chicago, Kansas City, Minneapolis and

³⁶Trends and Issues 91, 49.

³⁷Del Stover, "Dealing with Youth Gangs in the Schools," Educational Digest, Vol. 52, (February, 1987), 32.

³⁸Huff, 530.

St. Paul, Baltimore, Washington and Omaha were each mentioned as targets of gang distribution centers. The report detailed how federal laws were established to combat local criminal enterprises conducted by these groups.

Our law enforcement sector has responded to the burgeoning crack trade with force and effectiveness. Our legislatures have responded with tougher laws and stiffer penalties. Finally, our prosecutors have responded with new and innovative applications of existing statutes, including the Continuing Criminal Enterprise ("CCE") and the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act ("RICO"), to the gang-controlled drug networks.³⁹

Kansas City agencies have joined forces and are cooperating in order to combat their drug problem.⁴⁰ A report by Mancuso proves that Rhode Island's law enforcement official have entered into agreements for "mutual aid, cooperation and assistance in combating organized criminal activity relative to narcotics in the greater New England area."⁴¹

James Sibley, in an article, chronicles the development of legislation and laws which assisted California in addressing the problem of gang crime. He states:

...the California courts' willingness to enjoin typical gang activities is demonstrative of a new era of cooperation between legislators, police, prosecutors and courts to meet a recognized and serious new problem. ...leaders in the criminal justice system nationwide recognize the threat to public health, safety and welfare which modern youth gangs represent

³⁹William G. Skalitzky, "Aider and Abettor Liability, The Continuing Criminal Enterprise and Street Gangs: A New Twist in an Old War on Drugs," Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, Vol. 81, No.2, 348-349.

⁴⁰David Barton, "The Kansas City Experience: Crack Organized Crime Cooperative Task Force," Police Chief, Vol. 55, No. 1, 28.

⁴¹Anthony J. Mancuso, "Joint Task Forces in Rhode Island," Police Chief, Vol. 55, No. 1, 24.

...the arsenal of weapons available to these prosecutors is being bolstered by legislators who, in rapid response to the public outcry over gang activity, are proposing and implementing a broad spectrum of new laws to curtail the expansion of gang violence.⁴²

Across the nation, school systems, with the assistance of state and local governments, are actively making their schools "safe zones" or "drug-free zones" (crimes committed around schools receive stiffer penalties), and are developing programs within the schools to make attendance safe for staff and students. Teachers in Illinois who have been victims of attacks on school grounds are "more apt. . . to believe that their attacks were street-gang related."⁴³ A 1988 Illinois law created drug-free zones, substantially increasing the penalty for delivery (or manufacture) of a controlled substance on or within 1,000 feet of school property.⁴⁴

Similar reports show that, in addition to drug-free zones, gun-free zones have been enacted: "Many states, including Illinois, have enacted laws to create gun-free school zones, following the passage of similar legislation at the federal level."⁴⁵

Moreover, students at many public elementary and high schools must enter the school through metal detectors. As indicated in Trends and Issues 91:

School district officials said that increased police patrols and the installation of metal-detecting gates at school entrances are needed to eliminate weapons and curb drug dealing and gang activities in the

⁴²James B. Sibley, "Gang Violence: Response of the Criminal Justice System to the Growing Threat," Criminal Justice Journal, Vol. 11, 421.

⁴³Trends and Issues 91, 28.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 35.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 40.

schools.⁴⁶

Many police departments in Illinois have hired juvenile officers to deal specifically with the problem of juvenile delinquency. These officers are trained to address youth and gang-related problems through alliances formed with families, "a variety of community services, including schools and mental health and social service agencies."⁴⁷

The above reports confirm that concerns for the safety of our school environments and the community-at-large are being addressed; however, many school communities have not yet begun to address the problem related to retrieval methods of either gang members and nongang members. Huff did make some attempts to suggest some preventative measures in addressing the gang problem and it is encouraging that he found a link between gang involvement and "skipping school." However, the matter remains open as an exploratory issue. Moreover, public policy development should include creative methods for discouraging our youth from participating in gangs and delinquent behaviors.

Dropouts and the Labor Market

There are a number of studies which chronicle the relationship between school failure and delinquency, indicating that those who fail, specifically males, are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior. Hartnagel and Krahn cite four studies concerning this

⁴⁶Trends and Issues 91, 47, citing Lorraine Kee Montre, "East St. Louis Schools Seek Security Help," St. Louis Post-Dispatch (August 16, 1990).

⁴⁷Ibid., 46.

matter.⁴⁸ The study completed by Elliott, 1966, claims that dropping out of school is followed by a reduction in delinquency.⁴⁹ However, the other three studies completed by Schafer and Polk,⁵⁰; Schreiber, 1963,⁵¹; Pronovost and LeBlanc, 1980⁵² all have identified a positive correlation between dropping out and the "official delinquency rates." Although Pronovost and LeBlanc say, "we have observed that dropping out of school is directly linked to reduction of delinquency in late adolescence,"⁵³ they have established a link between dropping out of school and delinquency. Hartnagel and Krahn suggest, however, that these studies did not examine the variety of labor market and economic status variables that may influence criminal behavior among dropouts. Hartnagel and Krahn's research attempts to understand how the labor market may be related to criminal behavior among school dropouts, wherein they examined the relationship between work and crime for school dropouts. The results of the study found

⁴⁸ Timothy F. Hartnagel, and Harvey Krahn, "High School Dropouts, Labor Market Success, and Criminal Behavior," Youth and Society, Vol. 20, No. 4 (June, 1989), 416-443.

⁴⁹D. S Elliott, 307-314.

⁵⁰Hartnagel and Krahn, 416, citing W. E. Schafer and K. Polk, Delinquency and Schools. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration Of Justice, Task Force Report: Juvenile Delinquency and Crime. Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, (1967).

⁵¹Hartnagel and Krahn, 416, citing D. Schreiber, "The Dropout and the Delinquent," Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 44, (1963), 215-221.

⁵²Hartnagel and Krahn, 416, citing L. Pronovost and M. LeBlanc, "Transition Statuaire et Delinquence," Canadian Journal of Criminology, Vol. 22, (1980), 228-297.

⁵³L. Pronovest and M. LeBlanc, 288.

that there was a positive correlation to the unemployment of youth and to the youth's delinquent behavior.⁵⁴

Duster, in his study on crime and unemployment, discovered that the work of Viscusi found a connection between crime and delinquency:

However, there is now a wealth of data that show that individuals who experience unemployment are, in fact, more likely to have higher rates of crime. One recent investigation of young unemployed black males explicitly concludes that a fundamental influence on criminal behavior is the role of economic factors, such as labor market status. Respondents who were in school or employed were much less likely to engage in crime.⁵⁵

Rumberger, while at the University of California in Santa Barbara, declared that there are serious and great consequences to dropping out of school:

Dropping out of high school has long been viewed as a serious educational and social problem. By leaving high school prior to completion, most dropouts have serious educational deficiencies that severely limit their economic and social well-being throughout their adult lives. The individual consequences lead to social costs of billions of dollars.⁵⁶

A study conducted by Stephens about incarcerated male felons in a New York State prison found that it was difficult for dropouts to find employment opportunities after leaving school. Stephens proclaims that:

⁵⁴ Hartnagel and Krahn, 421.

⁵⁵ Troy Duster, "Crime, Youth Unemployment, and the Black Urban Underclass," Crime and Delinquency, Vol. 33, No. 2 (April, 1987), 302, citing W.K. Viscusi, "Market Incentives for Criminal Behavior," in R.B. Freeman and H.J. Holzer (eds.), The Black Youth Unemployment Crisis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 301-346.

⁵⁶Russel W. Rumberger, "High School Dropout: A Review of Issues and Evidence," Reveiw of Educational Research, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Summer 1987), 10.

Compared to graduates, dropouts experience greater unemployment shortly after leaving school... Dropouts also reported having more unskilled jobs and worked for shorter periods of time.⁵⁷

On this issue, Trends and Issues 91 asserts:

If black men and Hispanics fail to obtain the necessary education to move out of declining job sectors and into the new, higher-skill occupations, economic and social conditions for those workers will decline even further.⁵⁸

Kaplan phrases it in this manner:

Chronic school absenteeism, academic failure, and early school departure are links in a long chain of interconnected problems. In the self-perpetuating system of poverty and deprivation, they are both causes and effects of a vicious circle of correlate phenomena: low socioeconomic status; broken homes; lack of educational tradition; low career expectation; low self-image; shabby and overcrowded homes, schools, and neighborhoods; peer group pressures; drugs; crime; welfare; racial discrimination; and unemployment, for example.⁵⁹

In an age where a college undergraduate degree is nearly a basic requirement to enter corporate America, those who drop out of school may be relegated to subsistence, low-level jobs and/or criminal activity. Duster articulates: "Service work especially (but not exclusively) is seeking out new employees who possess relatively high levels of qualifications (such as college degrees, if not graduate study) for entry-level positions,

⁵⁷ Robert Thomas Stephens, "Educational Histories of Incarcerated Male Felons With An Emphasis on Perceptions of School, Causes of Dropping Out, and Participation in Prison Educational Programs" (Ph.D. diss., New York University , 1990), 186.

⁵⁸Trends and Issues 91, 7.

⁵⁹Jay L. Kaplan and Edward C. Luck, "The Dropout Phenomenon as a Social Problem," Educational Forum, Vol. 42, 41.

sometimes at least some experience in the industry."⁶⁰ He continues to say: "It is the teenager attempting to enter the work force directly from secondary school who is increasingly aware that there is little room in the labor force for those with limited education or experience."⁶¹ Moreover, "the undereducated adults of the present will continue to be a drain on . . . social services and criminal justice agencies for their lifetimes."⁶² Santana's study found that "dropping out of school hinders the potential of these ex-students to develop skills for the future world and places them in a disadvantageous position within society."⁶³ Rumberger, on this issue, continues with:

Overall,..., most evidence supports the notion that dropping out has negative individual and social consequences. Individual dropouts suffer because many have difficulty finding steady, well-paying jobs not just when they first leave school, but over their entire lifetimes. Society suffers as well because of unemployment and lost earning, lower tax revenues and increase demands on social services.⁶⁴

The climate is now ripe for the federal government to begin limiting the years for welfare recipients to collect payments and to encourage the recipients to seek employment. It appears, according to Duster and Santana that there is a high probability that the welfare system may experience a large percentage of recipients that are without high school diplomas or may be former dropouts, thereby placing untold burdens upon

⁶⁰Duster, 311.

⁶¹Ibid., 312.

⁶²Trends and Issues 91, 8.

⁶³ Jose L. Santana, "The Puerto Rican Dropout In Chicago: Implications for the Education of Young Adults" (Ed.D. diss., Northern Illinois University, 1993), 170.

⁶⁴Rumberger, 112.

the welfare system currently in place. Moreover, once a program is instituted to remove large numbers of recipients, the problem of unemployability becomes a factor. As Santana enunciates regarding dropouts, "They need more social services and contribute less to the economy than peers who stay in school."⁶⁵ The State of Illinois foresees a problem in the global market place with an undereducated populace. "As Illinois competes with other states and countries for new industry, especially in the high-technology area, the education level of the work force will become an important factor in the state's future economic development or failure."⁶⁶ Trends and Issues 91 asserts: "It is estimated that, of every 100 new jobs in Illinois, 57 will require a high school diploma, and 35 others will require at least some college training. That leaves only eight jobs available for individuals lacking a high school diploma."⁶⁷ This is a sad commentary for the individual who does not graduate from high school.

The report mentioned previously, published by the State of Illinois, takes an intriguing look at how society is affected by both truancy and school dropout. This report believes that, in tandem, truancy and school dropout are a "prelude to crime," placing a burden on society in terms of housing the criminal element.⁶⁸ The report quoted Hodgkinson's assessment of incarcerated persons in relationship to school dropout.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶Trends and Issues 91, 8.

⁶⁷Daniel T. Layzell, "Will Future Labor Demand Fit Supply?", Illinois Issues, (May, 1990), 18, quoted in Trends and Issues 91, 7.

⁶⁸ Trends and Issues 91, 80.

States with the highest graduation rates tend to have the lowest rates of prisoners per 100,000 population, and conversely, those with the highest incarceration rates also have the highest dropout rates.⁶⁹

The report continued to accentuate the fact that truancy and school dropout are detrimental to society.

Both national and local statistics show that very high percentages of offenders are high school dropouts. A 1989 report by the National Institute of Justice on people in 1988 in 20 major U.S. cities indicated that more than 50 percent of the people arrested in Chicago had not completed high school.⁷⁰ A 1987 study found that 71 percent of all prison inmates nationwide never completed high school.⁷¹

In another similar report by the U.S. Congress, it is suggested that "dropouts consume more public services than do graduates."⁷² Continuing this line of thought, the Illinois report (Trends and Issues 91), states that "for each additional year of secondary education completed, there is a 35-percent decrease in the probability of welfare dependency."⁷³

⁶⁹ Harold Hodgkinson, The Same Client: The Demographics of Education and Service Delivery Systems (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership, Center for Demographic Policy, 1989) 15. quoted in Trends and Issues 91, 80.

⁷⁰ National Institute of Justice, "Drug Use Forecasting: Cocaine Use: Arrestees in Washington, D.C., December 1989) 7, quoted in Trends and Issues 91, 80.

⁷¹ Dealing With Dropouts: The Urban Superintendents' Call To Action (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, November, 1987) 2, quoted in Trends and Issues 91, 80.

⁷² U.S. Congress, Report of the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, 1987. Update On Drugs and Dropouts (100th Congress, 2nd Session, 1987) 11, quoted in Trends and Issues 91, 81.

⁷³ Trends and Issues 91, 81.

Rumberger also believes that:

The social consequences and social costs of dropping out go beyond forgone income and revenues, however. As Levin documented, high school dropouts are more likely to require a wide range of social services, including welfare, medical assistance, and unemployment assistance. They are also more likely to engage in crime, have poorer health, have lower rates of intergenerational mobility, and lower rates of political participation.⁷⁴

Concluding this subject on the cost to society of school dropout, it is apparent that when students decide to leave school before graduation they subject themselves to tremendous obstacles to finding adequate employment opportunities, remaining free from the criminal justice system, and remaining free from a state of dependency on the welfare system.

The same Illinois report quotes Hess and Lauber, who describe best the untold cost of school dropout:

The cost to the country must be counted in terms of lost productivity, foregone taxes, and increased criminal justice costs created by those dropouts who become criminal offenders.⁷⁵

Some Reasons Students Drop Out of School

There are many reasons that students drop out of school. It was imperative that some reference was established in order to discern the similarities or differences in the reasons for school dropout between gang members and nongang members. Therefore, the

⁷⁴Rumberger, 115.

⁷⁵Alfred G. Hess, Jr., and Diana Lauber, Dropouts From The Chicago Public Schools. Analysis Of the Class of 1982-1984 (Chicago: Chicago Panel on Public School Finances, 1985) 17, quoted in Trends and Issues 91, 81.

literature review includes an investigation of such reasons. Several similarities occurred in various resources, albeit the lack of gang-related variables was apparent.

A study conducted by Iribarren centered on the factors which would influence Hispanics to drop out of school.⁷⁶ Iribarren's results considered factors ranging from poor school achievement to the family structure:

The findings that achievement scores, age vs. grade level, students' attitude concerning societal norms, sense of powerlessness, and perceptions about their relationships with parents and teachers, students' motivation, students' career maturity, socioeconomic status, parents' level of education, family structure, number of children per family, students' career expectations and school staff, parents and peers contribute to students' dropping out of school.⁷⁷

A qualitative study presented by Tidwell also attempted to examine the various reasons why students dropped out of school.⁷⁸ Tidwell discovered that students left school for one of eight reasons. Those reasons, again, did not include gang involvement. Tidwell found that poor school performance; dislike of school; expulsion; desire to work; financial difficulties; home responsibilities; pregnancy; and marriage contributed to school dropout.⁷⁹

Stephens, in his doctoral dissertation, found that the "major reasons for dropping

⁷⁶ Norma Carmen Iribarren, "Factors That Influence Hispanic Students to Drop Out From High School: A Case Study" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1986), 143.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Romeria Tidwell, "Dropout Speaks Out: Qualitative Data on Early School Departures," *Adolescence*, Vol. 23, No. 92, (Winter 1988), 939-954.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 940.

out were wanting to work and (students were) bored with courses."⁸⁰ This study, conducted in a New York correctional facility, also concurs with Iribarren, in that Stephens believes that "adverse socioeconomic conditions...probably contributed to dropping out."⁸¹ Both studies agree that the family economic status is a very important variable in a student's desire to leave school.

In Trends and Issues 91, a variation of the theme is presented. Although this publication agrees with the previous two studies regarding low-income being a factor for school dropout, the publication also suggests that "the typical dropout is a minority male (especially a language minority) who had been held back at least once in a previous grade."⁸² Additionally, this publication concurs with the previous studies in that "pregnancy, marriage and holding a job outside of school increases the risk of an individual leaving school."⁸³

Rumberger, while at Stanford University, found that:

Females, especially blacks, most often cited marriage and pregnancy as reasons for leaving school. A large number of males reported leaving school because they disliked it. Almost 40 percent of Hispanic males dropped out for economic reasons-home responsibilities, good job offers, or financial difficulties. Economic reasons were often cited by black and white males as well. Other reasons included lack of ability, poor grades,

⁸⁰ Stephens, 186.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Trends and Issues 91, 83.

⁸³ Ibid.

and expulsions or suspensions.⁸⁴

A variable which has not been mentioned previously is that of truancy being a contributor to school dropout. The Illinois report states: "Poor academic performance-- particularly low verbal ability--and truancy are also attributes of many dropouts."⁸⁵

Ekstren, et. al says that, "...about one-third of all dropouts leave high school because they do not achieve in school and/or because they are alienated from school."⁸⁶

In a paper presented at the National Dropout Prevention Conference held in Indianapolis, Indiana, on March 19, 1995, Hannon discusses reasons for school dropout in the Elkhart Community Schools. She reveals that:

In fact, there is some indication that the behaviors causing employers the most grief (i.e., absenteeism, lack of initiative, social difficulties, and personal problems) are the same behaviors causing the students to leave school without diplomas.⁸⁷

Another interesting variable which school systems should be concerned with is the special education student. It appears that these students "drop out at a higher rate than the regular education population."⁸⁸

⁸⁴Russell Rumberger, "Dropping Out of High School," American Educational Research Journal, Vol. 20. (1983), 201.

⁸⁵ Trends and Issues, 83.

⁸⁶Ruth B. Ekstrom, Margaret E. Goertz, Judith M. Pollack and Donald A. Rock, "Who Drops Out of High School and Why? Findings from a National Study," Teachers College Record, Vol. 87, No. 3, (Spring 1986), 364.

⁸⁷ Sahwn M. Hannon, "Who Dropped Out and Why?", Paper presented at the National Dropout Prevention Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, (March 19, 1995), 8.

⁸⁸ Paul Butler-Malin and Christine Paudilla, "Dropouts: The Relationship of Student Characteristics, Behaviors, and Performance for Special Education Students,"

Delinquency and criminal behavior appear also to be contributors to school dropout. From a survey of the criminal behavior of gang members, this variable probably comes closest to the intent of this research study. Several studies have found a relationship to school drop out and subsequent delinquency. In the summer of 1990, the Illinois Department of Corrections interviewed inmates entering prison in an effort to discover the attitudes of inmates toward education.⁸⁹ This study showed that 72.3 percent of the male inmates had failed to graduate from high school and that 60 percent of the female inmates did not finish high school.⁹⁰ These figures alone should spur those concerned with elevating society to initiate educational programs which would combat the desire to enter into criminality.

Conclusion

The purpose and intent of the review of literature, as stated in the overview, is to inquire into the phenomena of gang-related issues initiated by truancy and school dropout. Each subject under review aided in the presentation of the various influences which may contribute to truancy and school dropout. Numerous studies, articles, and books have been written on both gangs and dropouts. It was necessary to concentrate on the literature which honed in on the pertinent data related to this study, and to lay a foundation for the study, otherwise, the literature could have become redundant or could have thwarted the direction and intent herein.

SRI International, (March, 1989) 1.

⁸⁹Trends and Issues 91, 88.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 88-89.

According to the specific topics of the literature investigation, these inferences can now be made. From the average age of gang membership, it can be inferred that those who are gang members generally should be in school pursuing an education. It can also be inferred that gang members contribute overwhelmingly to sundry delinquent behaviors. As a result of the review, it can be concluded that, if the gang problem is ignored, it creates dastardly results upon society in terms of economic cost factors related to incarceration expense, erosion of the tax base, and in social welfare programs. As Nicholson says, "we can count the cost to this country in terms of an estimated \$224 billion each year-due to crime, welfare, job incompetence, remedial training, taxes and lost revenue."⁹¹ Finally, as America attempts to compete globally, it becomes clear that an uneducated populace is not well served by the causes and the effects of truancy and school dropout.

⁹¹Nicholson, 66.

CHAPTER III
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This study was conducted for three reasons:

1. to develop an understanding between the relationship of adolescent gang membership to school truancy;
2. to develop an understanding between gang membership and its relationship to students who have dropped out of school; and
3. to explore the implications gang membership has on truancy and school dropout.

At the onset of this study it was believed that ninety percent of the students located at the retrieval center were either current or former gang members; however, those students who responded to the survey revealed that 52% were current or former gang members and that 48% were nongang members. This result was ideal for a statistical comparison between the responses of the two groups. The survey contained 88 questions and was self administered by 128 former dropouts. These quantitative data established demographics; attitudes and motivations concerning school attendance patterns; reasons for school dropout; gang membership and related matters; and some future expectations of the respondents. The survey contained both Likert-scale and open-ended questions. The scaled questions (69.1%) offered the respondents a choice of five

selections. Each open-ended question (21.9%) offered free expression and the demographic questions (9.0%) established gender, age and ethnicity. A copy of the survey is located in Appendix (A).

This chapter describes the sample population relative to a demographic analysis of the survey in addition to the results of the qualitative treatment of twenty in-depth interviews, each in terms of the research questions presented in Chapter I. A copy of the interview questions is located in Appendix (B).

A study of this nature generates a great deal of data for analysis. The data generated by the survey which are pertinent to the five research questions posed in Chapter I are analyzed in this section. Chi-square (x^2) was used to test the significant relationships as they may relate to the research questions and were subsequently used to develop questions for the in-depth interviews. These personal interviews are analyzed in relationship to both Chi-square (x^2) significance and to the five research questions posed in Chapter I. Twenty interviews were conducted (10 gang members and 10 nongang members). The responses were placed into clusters of similar themes and presented here to either support the survey findings, illuminate the results of the survey or to add further understanding posed by the research questions.

Where statistical procedures were conducted statistical significance was measured at the .05 level of probability.

In the following presentation and analysis the essence of each question is stated in parenthesis after each specific question is cited, i.e. Survey Question (Absence Patterns).

Population Profile of the Sample

A frequency distribution procedure was conducted to gather information which profiles the students in the sample population. Gender of the respondent was an initial variable to consider. Table 1. illustrates the frequency distribution of males versus females. Within the sample population, males represent 57.8 percent (74) of the sample. Females represent 42.2 percent (54) of the sample population.

Table 1. --Frequency Distribution by Gender

Variable	N	Frequency	Percent
Male	74	74	57.8
Female	54	54	42.2
Total	128	128	100.0

The current age of the student was another independent variable for which data were gathered. As illustrated in Table 2., 68.8 percent of the students were between the ages of 15-17 years, placing the majority of the respondents in this age category.

Table 2. --Frequency Distribution by Age

Variable	N	Frequency	Percent
under 15	2	2	1.6
15-17	88	88	68.8
18-21	31	31	24.2
over 21	7	7	5.5
Total	128	128	100.0

Ethnic background was another independent variable for consideration. Table 3. illustrates the frequency distribution of respondents located at the retrieval center.

Table 3. --Frequency Distribution by Ethnic Background

Variable	N	Frequency	Percent
Oriental	1	1	.8
Hispanic	78	78	60.9
African American	43	43	33.6
Caucasian	6	6	4.7
Total	128	128	100.0

The highest grade completed prior to the participation in the survey was an additional variable to consider. Table 4. illustrates the frequency distribution of the highest grade completed by the sample population. The majority of the respondents had completed at least 1-2 years of high school (49.2 percent).

Table 4. --Frequency Distribution by Highest Grade Completed

Variable	N	Frequency	Percent
8th grade	11	11	8.6
1-2 years of high school	63	63	49.2
3-4 years of high school	54	54	42.2
Total	128	128	100.0

Presentation and Analysis of Data by Research Question

The raw data pertaining to the sample responses in the survey and the results of the personal interview responses pertinent to the research questions are reported and analyzed following the data.

Research Question 1

What, if any, is the role of the gang in contributing to, or not contributing to, truancy behaviors?

Questionnaire items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15 and 28 were pertinent to this question and are illustrated by individual tables. Data which address Research Question 3 (Are factors which influence truancy and dropout different among Hispanic, African-American, male or female gang members?) are interspersed where applicable.

Survey Question 7 (Absence Patterns)

Table 5. --Frequency Distribution of Absence Patterns at Last School Attended

Response	N	Frequency	Percent
absent hardly ever	10	10	7.8
absent sometimes	14	14	10.9
absent somewhat frequently	27	27	21.1
absent frequently	26	26	20.3
absent most of the time	51	51	39.8
Total	128	128	100.0

Note: See summary question 7 in Appendix (A) for meanings.

Table 5. illustrates the responses of the sample related to attendance patterns of students at the retrieval center. Of the 128 students surveyed 51 (39.8%) were absent most of the time; 27 (21.1%) were absent somewhat frequently; (20.3%) were absent frequently; 14 (10.9%) were absent sometimes; and 10 (7.8%) students were absent hardly ever.

The largest group of respondents (absent most of the time, 39.8%) indicate that they had a difficult time attending school regularly. Two to three days per week, regardless of the reasons, could indicate a real potential for school dropout. The group which was absent somewhat frequently (21.1%) indicated that students were absent 10-11 days a quarter. There are forty days to the school quarter; these students were missing school at least 35% of the time, again, a strong indicator for potential school dropout. Students who were absent frequently (20.3%) were missing at least one day per week. At this rate the student, by years end, would be absent almost 40% of the required days of attendance. The two variables which are much less threatening, absent sometimes (10.9%) and absent hardly ever (7.8%), may indicate that school truancy was not a reason for these students dropping out of school.

Table 6. demonstrates the Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance for the data from Question 7 of the survey, arranged according to gang or nongang membership.

Table 6. -- Absence Patterns Arranged by Gang and Nongang Membership

Response	n	Percent Gang Member	n	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
absent hardly ever	4	40.0	6	60.0	100.0	10
absent sometimes	8	57.1	6	42.9	100.0	14
absent somewhat frequently	12	46.2	14	53.8	100.0	26
absent frequently	12	46.2	14	53.8	100.0	26
absent most of the time	30	58.8	21	41.2	100.0	51
Total	66	52.0	61	48.0	100.0	

N=127

Significance = .66471

* $p \leq .05$

Note: Because of rounding, percentages may vary slightly

The general perception that membership in a gang would cause a student to be truant from school is not proven by the Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance. Chi-square proves that, in this case there is not a significant relationship at $p \leq .05$. However, Table 6. illustrates that a greater percentage of those students who are affiliated with gangs responded to being "absent most of the time" (58.8%), whereas, those students who responded to being "absent hardly ever" generated a larger percentage rate of nongang member responses (60.0%).

Of the students who were "absent sometimes," 57.1% were gang affiliated, whereas only 42.9% of this category of responses were nongang members. This category

combined with "absent somewhat frequently" and "absent frequently" agree with the statistical treatment that there is no significant relationship to school attendance patterns of either gang or nongang member.

Gender

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .90452 there is no significant relationship between gender of gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Ethnicity

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .17244 there is no significant relationship between Hispanic and African-American gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Survey Question 8 (a.-g.) (Reasons for Absences)

Question 8 (a.-g.) was included in the survey to test a variety of reasons which students have been known to be truant from school. It was hoped that there would be a significant difference in the responses from gang and nongang members to the variety of possibilities that exist within this question. The frequency distribution is presented below followed by the presentation and analysis of responses by gang affiliation.

Table 7. -- Frequency Distribution of Reasons for Student Absences

Category	% Strongly Agree	% Agree Somewhat	% Neither Nor	% Disagree Somewhat	% Strongly Disagree	Total Percent
a. Teachers didn't like me	17.2	9.4	27.3	14.8	31.3	100.0
b. Had help at home	11.0	20.5	24.4	13.4	30.7	100.0
c. Didn't like school	26.6	26.6	20.3	12.5	14.1	100.0
d. Classes were too hard	13.3	20.3	18.0	15.6	32.8	100.0
e. Afraid to go to school	14.8	14.1	20.3	7.8	43.0	100.0
f. Gangs and related problems	28.9	16.4	13.3	8.6	32.8	100.0
g. Classes were boring	40.6	27.3	12.5	11.7	7.8	100.0

N=128

There are three categories which demonstrate positive indicators when the responses "strongly agree" and "agree somewhat" are combined. As such, categories c., f., and g. are the only categories in this frequency distribution given consideration as they relate to Research Question 1.

Of the students who responded to Question 8, 68 (53.2%) agreed that they "didn't like school," 58 (45.3%) agreed that they had experienced "gangs and related problems," and 57 (67.9%) of the students responded positively to the category of "classes were boring."

Tables 8 c., f., g., demonstrate the Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance for the data from question 8 of the survey (categories c., f., and g.), arranged according to gang and nongang membership.

Table 8. - Didn't Like School

Response	n=66	Percent Gang Member	n=61	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
Strongly agree	20	58.8	14	41.2	100.0	34
Agree somewhat	17	51.5	16	48.5	100.0	33
Neither/nor	14	53.8	12	46.2	100.0	26
Disagree somewhat	7	43.8	9	56.3	100.1	16
Strongly disagree	8	44.4	10	55.6	100.0	18

N=127

Significance = .82297

*p < = .05

Note: Because of rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

Table 8. (didn't like school) illustrates that there is no significant relationship of gang affiliation to those responding to this category. However, both groups tend to overwhelmingly agree (strongly or somewhat) that they did not like school. Of those who responded positively to these two categories the gang members (37) dislike school most (56.1%); however, a total of 30 nongang members (49.2%) also responded similarly to these categories.

Nongang membership reflected a larger percentage of disagreement to this category than did gang members. The category "disagree somewhat" shows that 56.3% of the respondents were nongang members and the response "strongly disagree" (55.6%) were also nongang members. Again, the Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance demonstrates

that there is no significance; however, these percentages imply that gang members are more likely to dislike school than their counterparts.

Gender

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .25973 there is no significant relationship between gender of gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Ethnicity

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .0662 ethnic background is almost close to being significant; however, there is no significant relationship between Hispanic and African-American gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Survey Question 8-f

Table 9. demonstrates the Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance for the data from category f. (gangs and related problems) in the survey, arranged by gang affiliation.

Table 9. -- Gangs and Related Problems

Response	n=66	Percent Gang Member	n=61	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
Strongly agree	22	59.5	15	40.5	100.0	37
Agree somewhat	11	55.0	9	45.0	100.0	20
Neither/nor	11	64.7	6	35.3	100.0	17
Disagree somewhat	4	36.4	7	63.6	100.0	11
Strongly disagree	18	42.9	24	57.1	100.0	42

N=127

Significance = .34489

*p < = .05

Note: Because of rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

Once again Chi-square (χ^2) indicates that there is no significant relationship between gang members and nongang members responding to the variable "gangs and related problems." Albeit, there is a clear indication that those who are gang affiliated responded to "strongly agree" (59.5%) and "agree somewhat" (55.0%) more readily than nongang members. Conversely, those students who are not gang affiliated responded to "disagree somewhat" (63.6%) and "strongly disagree" (57.1%) more frequently.

The percentages in agreement with the variable 8-f (gang members) may reflect the problems encountered by rival gangs within the same school. It is highly unlikely that problems within the same gang would cause truancy since most organizations, including gangs, have their own mechanisms for the adjudication of conflicts.

Those students who disagreed with the variable 8-f (nongang members) were more than likely approached at an earlier age by gang members but have avoided gang recruitment tactics long enough for the gangs to have left them alone. These students were not intimidated by gangs nor their related problems enough to refrain from going to school.

Gender

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .12031 there is no significant relationship between gender of gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Ethnicity

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .13283 there is no significant relationship between Hispanic and African-American gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Survey Question 8-g

Table 10. illustrates the Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance for the data from category g. (classes were boring) in the survey, arranged by gang affiliation.

Table 10. -- Classes Were Boring

Response	n=66	Percent Gang Member	n=61	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
Strongly agree	32	61.5	20	38.5	100.0	52
Agree somewhat	12	35.3	22	64.7	100.0	34
Neither/nor	12	75.0	4	25.0	100.0	16
Disagree somewhat	8	53.3	7	46.7	100.0	15
Strongly disagree	2	20.0	8	80.0	100.0	10

N=127
Significance = .01034
*p <= .05

The Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance indicates that there is a significant relationship between the responses of gang and nongang members. Forty-four (66.7%) gang members and 44 (72.%) nongang members responded positively, either "strongly agree" or "agree somewhat" to the variable "classes were boring." For the majority of both groups to respond similarly indicates that classes were unattractive to them before they decided to drop out of school. The possibility exists that these students were also truant from the very classes they felt were boring and probably contributed to the final decision to leave school before graduation.

Those students responding to the category "strongly disagree" were overwhelmingly nongang members (80.0%). These eight students were more than likely not to have been truant very often. On the converse, only 20% (2) of the responses to this category were gang members who also may not have been truant for reasons of boredom.

Gang members (53.3%) and nongang members (46.7%) responses varied by less than eight percentage points to the category "disagree somewhat." With only 11.8% of the total percent of responses the significance appears negligible in this category.

Gender

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .91676 there is no significant relationship between gender of gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Ethnicity

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .31473 there is no significant relationship between Hispanic and African-American gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Survey Question 9

Question 9(other reasons for absences), an open-ended question, was included in the survey as a tool to substantiate or to re-enforce the listed possibilities in Question 8. As such, the open-ended questions allowed the respondents the opportunity to express any additional reasons for which the students were generally absent. According to state law, any student who stated a category other than "medical reasons" was truant from school. A copy of the coded responses are located in Appendix (C).

The frequency distribution is presented below followed by the presentation and analysis of responses by gang affiliation.

Table 11. -- Frequency Distribution of Other Reasons Students were Absent

Category	n=128	Frequency	Percent
a. no reason stated	52	52	40.6
b. medical problems	22	22	17.2
c. had to work	5	5	3.9
d. too tired	8	8	6.3
e. boring	12	12	9.4
f. with friends	8	8	6.3
g. gang problems	5	5	3.9
h. other	14	14	10.9
i. attended/cut classes	2	2	1.6
Total	128	128	100.1

Note: Because of rounding, percentages may vary slightly.

Table 11. highlights the responses of the sample related to reasons for student absences prior to dropping out of school. The majority of the students taking this survey chose not to answer this open-ended question. Fifty-two students (40.6%) stated that there were no additional reasons for them to be absent from school. However, the second largest percentage of responses did indicate that medical problems (17.2%) were at the root of their school absence. The results of this distribution suggest that testing for significant differences in gang affiliation should be considered.

Table 12. illustrates the Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance for the data from Question 9 in the survey, arranged by gang affiliation.

Table 12. -- Other Reasons Students were Absent

Response	n=66	Percent Gang Member	n=61	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
a. no reason stated	32	61.5	20	38.5	100.0	52
b. medical problems	4	19.0	17	81.0	100.0	21
c. had to work	1	20.0	4	80.0	100.0	5
d. too tired	5	62.5	3	37.5	100.0	8
e. school was boring	5	41.7	7	58.3	100.0	12
f. with friends	7	87.5	1	12.5	100.0	8
g. gangs	5	100.0	0	0.0	100.0	5
h. other	6	42.9	8	57.1	100.0	14
i. attended/cut classes	1	50.0	1	50.0	100.0	2

N=127
Significance = .00327
*p <= .05

The Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance indicates that there is a significant relationship between the responses of both gang members and nongang members. This relationship is primarily due to the high percentages of non-responses to the open-ended format. A total of 40.9% of the respondents did not complete this question. However, meaningful analysis can be made from the responses that were completed.

A significant difference is shown in categories (f) "with friends" (87.5%) and (g) "gangs" (100.0%) wherein gang members overwhelmingly listed these items as other reasons for being absent. Conversely, nongang member responses for (f) 12.5% and (g) 0.0% illustrates that neither of these reasons was important for their absences. Whereas more nongang member absences were due to illness (81.0%) few gang members (19.0%)

listed illness as a cause of absence. Additionally, more nongang members stated that holding a job, (80.0%) to (20.0%) for gang members, was more important than attending school.

Noteworthy also is category (d) "too tired." The responses from both groups tend to substantiate the responses in Question 8-g "classes were boring." Each group indicated in Question 8-g and in Question 9 that school was boring at approximately the same proportion.

Survey Question 10

In Question 10 (typical day when absent), two of the possible choices showed a significant relationship. The frequency distribution, Chi-square (χ^2) results and the analysis for each are presented below.

Table 13. (Q 10-a) -- Frequency Distribution of Students when Absent-Hung Out with Friends

Response	N	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	59	59	46.1
Agree somewhat	28	28	21.9
Neither/nor	11	11	8.6
Disagree somewhat	9	9	7.0
Strongly disagree	21	21	16.4
Total	128	128	100.0

Table 13. highlights the responses of the sample related to students "hanging out with friends" during their absences. Sixty-eight percent (68.0%) agreed with the statement, whereas, approximately twenty-three percent (23.4%) disagreed with the statement. It was important to determine where the division between gang members and nongang members occurred. Therefore, a Chi-square (χ^2) analysis was performed.

Below are the results.

Table 14. -- When Absent - Hung Out with Friends

Response	n=66	Percent Gang Member	n=61	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
Strongly agree	39	66.1	20	33.9	100.0	59
Agree somewhat	13	48.1	14	51.9	100.0	27
Neither/nor	6	54.5	5	45.5	100.0	11
Disagree somewhat	2	22.2	7	77.8	100.0	9
Strongly disagree	6	28.6	15	71.4	100.0	21

N=127
Significance = .01281
*p <= .05

Table 14. illustrates that the Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance determined that there is a relationship found in the responses of gang and nongang members. Overwhelmingly, gang members agreed that when absent they tended to hang out with friends more often than did nongang members. The nongang members responded heavily toward disagreement to this statement.

Gender

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .28716 there is no significant relationship between gender of gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Ethnicity

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .35431 there is no significant relationship between Hispanic and African-American gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Survey Question 10-c

The second relationship shown related to attending gang meetings when absent from school. This aspect of the question was included in the survey to determine if the gang, as an organization, influenced its members to be truant.

Table 15. (Q10-c) -- Frequency Distribution of Students when Absent - Attended Gang Meetings

Response	N	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	20	20	15.6
Agree somewhat	9	9	7.0
Neither/nor	23	23	18.0
Disagree somewhat	10	10	7.8
Strongly disagree	66	66	51.6
Total	128	128	100.0

Note: See summary question 7 in Appendix (A) for meanings.

Table 15. demonstrates that a majority of the students responding to this questionnaire item either "disagreed somewhat" or "strongly disagreed." Seventy-six students stated that attending gang meetings was not a reason for their absences. However, twenty-nine students either "agreed somewhat" or "strongly agreed" to this item. It was important to determine a possible relationship to gang membership; therefore the Chi-square (χ^2) test was performed.

Table 16. -- When Absent - Attended Gang Meetings

Response	n=66	Percent Gang Member	n=61	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
Strongly agree	20	100.0	0	0.0	100.0	20
Agree somewhat	8	88.9	1	11.1	100.0	9
Neither/nor	14	63.6	8	36.4	100.0	22
Disagree somewhat	6	60.0	4	40.0	100.0	10
Strongly disagree	18	27.3	48	72.7	100.0	66

N=127
Significance = .0000
*p <= .05

The Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance reveals in Table 16. that some gang members do attend gang meetings during school hours, albeit, the majority of the members appear not to attend organized meetings during these hours. Also, as expected, it appears that overwhelmingly the Chi-square significance shown here is determined as a result of the gang members attending these meetings. It is reasonable that nongang

members would not attend such meetings as is illustrated in the "strongly agree" response (0.0%) and in the "strongly disagree" response (72.7%).

Gender

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .58785 there is no significant relationship between gender of gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Ethnicity

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .87894 there is no significant relationship between Hispanic and African-American gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Survey Question 11

Providing an opportunity for respondents to express other activities which they may have participated in during their absences, which was not listed in Question 10, Survey Question 11. (other things done when absent), an open-ended format, was included for additional responses. This question allowed for multiple responses; therefore, a statistical cross-tabulation for multiply responses was administered instead of Chi-square (χ^2) to determine the differences in the responses of gang or nongang membership. Table 17. illustrates the various responses from the sample.

Table 17. --Other Activities Involved In When Absent

Category	Frequency Gang Member	Percent Gang Member	Frequency Nongang Member	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
a. No answer	9	42.9	12	57.1	100.0	21
b. Slept	21	53.8	18	46.2	100.0	39
c. Visited friends	16	48.5	17	51.5	100.0	33
d. Medical appointments	0	0.0	10	100.0	100.0	10
e. Make money	3	42.9	4	57.1	100.0	7
f. Partying	11	84.6	2	15.4	100.0	13
g. Read	3	60.0	2	40.0	100.0	5
h. Drugs	14	87.5	2	12.5	100.0	16
i. other	3	42.9	4	57.1	100.0	7
	n=80		n=71			N=151

Note: Number of responses in each category may be greater than the number of members in either gang or nongang membership in the population sample due to multiple response possibilities.

Of the 127 students responding to this question, 21 (16.5%) failed to answer, 39 (30.7%) slept while absent, 33 (26.0%) visited friends, 10 (7.9%) had medical appointments, 7 (5.5%) made money, 13 (10.2%) partied, 5 (3.9%) read, 16 (12.6%) used drugs, and 7 (5.5%) participated in other activities which could not be placed into a category.

Overall, Table 17. displays slight differences in the responses of both gang and nongang members; however, three categories showed a significant difference in percentage rates of each group. A total of 10 (100%) students listed medical appointments as other

activities which they were involved in during days of absence, substantiating similar responses of category (b) in Table 12. Two other categories, Partying and Drugs displays greater differences than most other categories. More gang members tended to be involved in these types of activities than nongang members. More detail on these subjects will be supplied in the personal interview presentation and analysis.

Survey Question 15

With the assumption that gangs influence its members into truant behaviors, Question 15 (blame for poor attendance) was included in the survey to test the significant blame placed on others beyond the respondent.

The frequency distribution is presented below in a similar manner as Question 11.

Table 18. -- Frequency Distribution of Who to Blame for Poor Attendance

Category	N=128	Frequency	Percent
Parents/home environment	26	26	20.3
Friends	43	43	33.6
School	19	19	14.8
Community	7	7	5.5
Social problems	24	24	18.8
*Missing	9	9	7.0

*Missing - Students who did not answer this question.

Of the 119 students responding to this question 43 (33.6%) placed blame for poor attendance on their friends, 26 (20.3%) on their parents or home environment, 24 (18.8%) on social problems, 19 (14.8%) on the school, and 7(5.5%) on the community. Nine

students (7.0%) did not respond to this question.

With slightly less than thirty-four percent of the sample placing blame on their friends it was important to determine the extent of the "friends" which may be gang related; therefore the Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance was performed.

Table 19. -- Blame for Poor Attendance

Response	n=63	Percent	n=55	Percent	Total Percent	Total Frequency
		Gang Member		Nongang Member		
Parents/home environment	12	46.2	14	53.8	100.0	26
Friends	24	57.1	18	42.9	100.0	42
School	14	73.7	5	26.3	100.0	19
Community	4	57.1	3	42.9	100.0	7
Social problems	9	37.5	15	62.5	100.0	24

N=118

Significance = .17094

* $p \leq .05$

While there are some slight variations in response categories between gang and nongang members, especially in the categories of Community and Parent/Home Environment, it was expected that a greater difference would be shown in the category of Friends as reported in Question 10-a; however, the difference is statistically insignificant here. A greater difference does appear in the categories of Social Problems and School,

albeit, with a Chi-square (χ^2) of .17094 an overall statistical significance is negligible at the .05 level.

Gender

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .22053 there is no significant relationship between gender of gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Ethnicity

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .37117 there is no significant relationship between Hispanic and African-American gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Survey Question 15-a.

This open-ended question also offered an opportunity for multiple responses and is therefore presented to reflect a statistical cross-tabulation for multiple responses. Table 20. illustrates additional responses from the sample which are not listed in Question 15.

Table 20. -- Others to Blame for Absences

Category	Frequency Gang Member	Percent Gang Member	Frequency Nongang Member	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
a. No other person	17	54.8	14	45.2	100.0	31
b. Myself	18	52.9	16	47.1	100.0	34
c. No	20	46.5	23	53.5	100.0	43
d. Work	1	20.0	4	80.0	100.0	5
e. Gangs/Racial Problems	2	100.0	0	0.0	100.0	2
f. Police/Legal Problems	3	75.0	1	25.0	100.0	4
g. Drugs	1	100.0	0	0.0	100.0	1
h. Principal/Teachers	3	60.0	2	40.0	100.0	5
i. Specific Friend/other	1	20.0	4	80.0	100.0	5
	n=66		n=64		N=130	

Note: Number of responses in each category may be greater than the number of members in either gang or nongang membership in the population sample due to multiple response possibilities.

The responses were clustered and coded into nine different categories. Of the 127 students who responded to the question, 43 (33.9%) and 31 (24.4%) indicated "no" or "no other person" respectively as the blame for their poor attendance, 34 (26.8%) listed "myself," 5 (3.9%) listed a "specific friend/other," 4 (3.1%) listed "police/legal problems," 2 (1.6%) indicated "gangs/racial problems," and 1 (.8%) listed "drugs" as others to blame.

In the sample, the largest group of students (approximately 58%) refused to place the blame on any other person, wherein a reasonable conclusion can be made that they

accept full responsibility for their truant behaviors as is indicated by approximately twenty-seven percent (27%) of the sample who blamed themselves. Because the difference between gang and nongang responses are minimal no determination can be made regarding a statistical meaning. Although the remaining categories show large differences in percentages between gang and nongang responses the overall students who responded is small (22 students). Noteworthy, however, are the gang members who responded to "gangs/racial problems" and to "drugs" as causes for blame. These two categories and the above major categories will be illuminated later in the personal interviews.

Survey Question 28

The literature generally reports that gangs influence the communities which they exist in various ways; therefore the final question in this series to test the effect which gangs may have upon truant behavior is Question 28 (gang members truancy). Below is the frequency distribution, presentation and analysis of this question.

Table 21. -- Frequency Distribution of Gang Member Truancy

Response	N=128	Frequency	Percent
Yes	91	91	71.1
No	29	29	22.7
*Missing	8	8	6.3

*Missing - Students who did not answer this question

Of the 128 students in the sample, 91 (71.1%) answered in agreement to gang members normally being truant, 29 (22.7%) answered in the negative and 8 (6.3%) avoided answering the question entirely.

With such large numbers answering "yes" to the question, it was necessary to determine if there was a statistical significance; therefore the Chi-square (χ^2) treatment was applied.

Table 22. -- Are Gang Members Normally Truant

Response	n=66	Percent Gang Member	n=53	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
Yes	48	53.3	42	46.7	100.0	90
No	18	62.1	11	37.9	100.0	29

N=119
Significance = .41042
*p <= .05

Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance reveals in Table 22. that there is no significant relationship in the responses of gang affiliation. However, 48 (53.3%) of those who are gang members answering "yes" believe that their constituents are normally truant from school. It could reasonably be assumed that they experience or observe many of their fellow members away from school during school hours. Additionally, those 42 (46.7%) students who are not gang members answering "yes" also have experiences or observations of similar behavior. Conversely, a large percentage difference does exist between gang and nongang members answering "no" to this question. It could be possible that the gang

members, subject to indiscretion, chose a response that would not shed a negative light on gang activities and those nongang members actually may not have observed any such behavior. The results of the personal interviews will provide more insight into this matter.

Gender

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .79397 there is no significant relationship between gender of gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Ethnicity

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .45097 there is no significant relationship between Hispanic and African-American gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Personal Interviews

The interview responses were placed into clusters in order to discern both similarities and differences. Interview questions 2,3, and 9 were directly related to Research Question 1. The results are presented below according to gang and nongang membership. Refer to Appendix (B) for questions 2, 3, and 9.

Responses (Gang Members)

Question 2 was composed of two parts, not only to determine the average number of days a student was absent, but also to determine if the absences constituted days of truancy as defined in Chapter I.

A total of five gang members responded that they were absent 1-2 days per week

prior to dropping out of school (3 African-American Males, 1 Hispanic male and 1 African-American female). Two gang members (both African-American males) responded that they were generally absent 3-4 days per week. One Hispanic male was absent 4-5 days per week and one Hispanic male replied that he would attend school almost every day, yet, when asked what he would do during his days of absence, the response was similar to most of the responses for gang member absences, ..."hanging out with friends." When queried about the nature of the friends the responses were unanimously other gang members.

Interestingly, nine of the ten gang members that were interviewed were truant because they were usually involved in social interaction with their peers, called "partying." Generally, these affairs occurred almost daily and included females, drinking and drug usage. With one exception, a member with his own drug distribution network, would generally go to school daily to monitor the sale of drugs within the high school which he attended. The days in which he did not attend school were used to monitor the accounting books of his organization's transactions.

Responses (Nongang Members)

The nongang member responses to the personal interviews revealed an equal distribution between absences for health related issues and for truancy related matters. Two of the respondents stated that they were seldom absent (1 African-American male and 1 Hispanic male) and when they were absent the reason was due to illness. Two others, generally absent one day per month (1 African-American male and 1 Hispanic male) and

one other (African-American female), missing one day per week, were each absent for illness.

Those nongang members who did not have legitimate reasons for being away from school included three students (2 Hispanic males and 1 African-American female) averaging 2-3 days of absences per week due to truancy. Another student, an African-American male averaged 3-4 days of absences without a valid excuse. A Hispanic male admitted that he would "cut some classes everyday." Each reason given by these students, save one, related to not wanting to go to school because they preferred to hang out with friends who were also nongang members. An African-American female admitted that her mother was aware of her non-attendance, allowing her to stay at home, cleaning the house and watching television, because, as she stated, "mom knew I didn't like going to school."

Summary

The results of the personal interviews substantiated the results of the survey, in that, there is no significant relationship in the attendance patterns for gang or nongang members. Additionally there are apparently few differences in the reasons for these former dropouts for being absent from school. Generally, they were either sick or preferred to "hang out with friends" instead of going to school. Ethnicity nor gender did not distinguish itself in whether or not the reasons for absences varied between gang or nongang membership. Albeit, the nongang members tended to be absent for illness slightly more and generally absent from school less frequently.

Interview Question 3

Responses (gang members).

Question 3 was included in the personal interviews in order to ascertain the extent to which students who have dropped out place blame on their truancy tendencies. Additionally, the question was intended to reveal the extent to which friends or fellow gang members may have influenced these processes.

Of the ten gang members asked this question, without hesitation, six placed the entire blame on themselves for being truant from school. Three other gang members stated that the gang had some influence on their attendance patterns. These responses, placed in a cluster and designated as "in a way," suggested that indirectly gang membership offered them a sanctuary during school days. As one respondent put it, "They had a place that I could hang during the day." Another said, "In a way I guess they do influence you to stay away from school because they offer you a place to go or you can make money or party."

A lone response from a gang member suggested that the gang as an organization did not keep him away from school, but that it was the individual member who chooses to hang out with other members during school hours and that he does not blame anyone but himself for choosing to have done so.

Responses (nongang members).

Seven nongang members expressed that they placed blame directly upon themselves for their truancy behaviors. Another student responded that gang intimidation was the

blame for his truancy and still another student suggested that the gang problems within the school had some impact on his truancy; however, he accepted the blame for his absences. Only one student stated that it was not his desire to be absent from school but that his health condition prohibited him from attending regularly.

Summary

Question 3 revealed that the majority of gang members and nongang members placed the decision to be absent from school, for reasons defined as truancy, directly upon themselves. This substantiates the results found in survey Question 15-a, wherein approximately 58% of the respondents accepted direct blame for their own truant behavior. Those gang members who suggested that the gang had an indirect influence in their truancy patterns did believe that the gang as an organization did not have any bearing upon their behavior, yet, by hanging out with other gang members and choosing to do so had a direct influence on behavior patterns.

Those nongang members who placed blame on gang intimidation tactics felt that they were physically and psychologically affected, resulting in their desire not to attend school regularly. Since the students' views were not expressed to the administrators and no other legitimate reasons were given to their teachers as cause for non-attendance, each day of absence constituted a day of truancy. Only one respondent, the student with poor health, was legitimately absent.

Table 9. illustrates that according to Chi-square (χ^2) there is no significant relationship between gang member and nongang member responses. The personal

interviews tend to substantiate this finding. The overwhelming response, "hang out with friends" was true for both groups. The most notable difference related to the illness issue. Nongang members tended to indicate more health related issues than gang members. (As Tables 11 and 12 illustrate, a small number of respondents, predominantly nongang members, indicated that medical problems caused their absences).

Interview Question 9

Responses (gang members).

Question 9 of the personal interview was asked primarily to determine the extent to which the former dropouts participated in or observed behaviors by gang members which may have influenced student truancy. Secondly, this question served to illuminate possible responses from Interview Questions 2 and 3.

Seven former dropouts stated that the gang as an organization does not encourage, influence or otherwise coerce any of its members to stay away from school unless there is urgent business that would take precedence over attending school. In fact, one respondent attempting to explain the intensity with which the organization wants its members to attend, stated that "education is one of the six points of the star, so it's important to the organization that its members are educated." (The six pointed star is a gang symbol wherein each point represents one of the gang's platforms which is generally known only to its members.)

The three remaining respondents stated that their desire to hang out with fellow gang members was a great influence on them not attending school regularly. Each

respondent suggested that the gang served as a "bad influence" on their school attendance patterns.

Responses (nongang members).

Nongang members were asked to express their observations in Question 9. All respondents, except for one, expressed that they believe it is true that the gangs contributed to the truancy patterns of their members. The lone exception expressed that he did not know and chose not to elaborate any further on the matter.

Summary

The responses from the gang members in the personal interviews substantiates survey Questions 15 and 28. The predominant appearance of gang members responding to being with friends during school hours is repeatedly consistent. The fact that the gang, as an organization, does not directly encourage truant behaviors does not discount the fact that its members are fraternizing away from school during school hours. It was suggested that the gangs now have a different focus and changes are being made within the ranks. (This issue is discussed in detail later in the presentation.)

In Table 22. the responses of the nongang members are consistent with the personal interviews. As observers, the nongang members feel that membership in a gang has a direct relationship on truancy behaviors.

Research Question 2

What are some reasons students who are gang members drop out of school?

Questionnaire items (E) and 6 were pertinent to this question and are illustrated by individual tables. Refer to Appendix (A) for these questions.

Survey Question (E)

This question (reasons for school dropout), and open-ended format, allowed for multiple responses, therefore a Chi-square (χ^2) statistical treatment was not applied. Instead, a statistical cross-tabulation for multiple responses was administered to determine the differences in the responses of gang and nongang membership. Table 23. illustrates the various responses from the population sample.

Table 23. -- Frequency Distribution of Special Reasons For Dropping Out of School

Category	Frequency Gang Member	Percent Gang Member	Frequency Nongang Member	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
a. No special reason	27	58.7	19	41.3	100.0	46
b. Gangs/Fights	11	61.1	7	38.9	100.0	18
c. Bored	9	81.8	2	18.2	100.0	11
d. Kicked out/dropped due to low attendance	14	50.0	14	50.0	100.0	28
e. Medical/Family Problems	4	26.7	11	73.3	100.0	15
f. Job	7	63.7	4	36.4	100.0	11
g. Pregnant	1	12.5	7	87.5	100.0	8
h. Other	0	.0	2	100.0	100.0	2
	n=73		n=66			N=139

Note: Number of responses in each category may be greater than the number of members in either gang or nongang membership in the population sample due to multiple response possibilities.

Again, the responses were clustered and coded into categories. Of the 127 students who responded to the question, 46 (36.2%) stated that there was no special reason for them dropping out of school; 28 (22.0%) said they were either "kicked out" or dropped by the school due to low attendance; 18 (14.2%) of the responses claimed gangs or fighting was at the root of dropping ; 15 (11.8%) of the responses stated that medical reasons and family problems caused them to dropout; 11 (8.7%) of the responses show that students were bored with school; 11 (8.7%) worked a job; 8 (6.3%) were pregnant; and 2 (1.6%) did not fit into any category.

The two primary categories chosen by those surveyed (a.) No Special Reason (46) and (d.) Kicked Out/Dropped for Low Attendance (28) show slight or no difference in the responses of either group. Of those students responding to category (a.) 58.7% were gang members and 41.3% were nongang members. Although gang members listed category (a.) more often, the fact that both groups dropped out for "no special reason" may indicate that there were various causes in their final decision to drop out, as gang membership may not have been the primary focus. An equal division between gang members (50%) and nongang members (50%) occurred in category (d.). Interestingly, the students in the sample were either "kicked out" or were dropped by the school "for low attendance" at exactly the same rate. These two categories encompass more than 58% of the responses, slightly more than all other listed categories combined.

Gang members responded to category (b.) at a higher percentage rate than did nongang members. Although it appears that the response "Gangs/Fights" interfered with

these students' educational process, the overall percentage of students listing these reasons were small (14.2%) and may not be indicative of any trend. Category (e.) indicates that nongang members listed medical reasons or family problems at a higher percentage rate than gang members. These results tend to substantiate the findings in Tables 10. and 15. Nongang members also differed substantially in responses of the remaining categories, (c.), (f.), (g.) and (h.). Although the range in percentage rates are high in each category, the total number of students (36) listing these reasons are less than 26% of the population studied.

Survey Question 6-b

Questionnaire item 6 was used in an attempt to discover if academic achievement provided an incentive for these students to drop out of school. This two-part question gave the students an opportunity to reflect upon his/her grades in both elementary and high school. For the purpose of this research, the high school academic achievement is germane and therefore is discussed here.

Table 24. -- Frequency Distribution of High School GPA

Response	N	Frequency	Percent
Above average	6	6	4.7
Average grades	57	57	44.5
Below average	43	43	33.6
Failing grades	21	21	16.4
*Missing	1	1	.8
Total	128	128	100.0

*Missing - Students who did not answer this question.

Table 24. illuminates the responses of the sample related to their grades prior to dropping out of school. Fifty-seven students (44.5%) were earning average grades before dropping out, forty-three (33.6%) made below average grades, twenty-one (16.4) were failing before dropping out, and six students (4.7%) were making above average grades. One student (.8%) did not respond to this question.

Table 25. demonstrates the Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance for the data from Question 6 of the survey, arranged according to gang or nongang membership.

Table 25. - High School GPA

Response	n=65	Percent Gang Member	n=61	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
Above average	4	66.7	2	33.3	100.0	6
Average grades	28	50.0	28	50.0	100.0	56
Below average	25	58.1	18	41.9	100.0	43
Failing grades	8	38.1	13	61.9	100.0	21

N=126
Significance = .41169
*p <= .05

Table 25. Illustrates that there is no significant relationship of gang or nongang affiliated responses. The Pearson Equivalence of .41169 is much higher than the .05 level, thereby negating any perceived relationship within the sample. The majority of the respondents (44.4%) were equally divided between gang members (50%) and nongang

members (50%) in their response to receiving average grades. A slight variation in responses is revealed in the category of "below average" with gang members receiving 58%, whereas, nongang members responded at 41.9%. The categories at the opposite end of the spectrum revealed interesting results. More gang members (66.7%) were receiving above average grades before dropping out, whereas, nongang members (61.9%) were making failing grades.

Gender

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .23364 there is no significant relationship between gender of gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Ethnicity

According to Chi-square (χ^2) measured at .48678 there is no significant relationship between Hispanic and African-American gang members responding to this question at the .05 level of significance.

Personal Interviews

Again, the interview responses were placed into clusters to discern both similarities and differences. Interview Question 1 was directly related to Research Question 2. Although Research Question 2. specifically addressed reasons for school dropout of gang members, nongang members were also asked this question to either support, refute and/or illuminate differences between the sample population and the related literature. The results are presented below according to gang and nongang membership. Refer to Appendix (B) for Interview Question 1.

Responses (gang members).

Question 1. was composed of several parts; two parts of the question (Why did you drop out of school? and did poor grades have anything to do with you deciding to leave school before graduation?) are presented here.

A total of five gang members responded that the reason for dropping out was their desire to "hang out with friends" (3 African-American males, 1 Hispanic male and 1 African-American female). Only two of these respondents (2 African-American males) also stated that poor grades had an influence on their decision; otherwise academic status had little bearing on the other three members.

Gang conflicts caused three gang members (2 African-American males and 1 Hispanic male) to drop out, each respondent admitting that poor grades did not influence his decision to leave. Another Hispanic male, with poor grades, responded that he was dropped by the school for low attendance. The final respondent (Hispanic male), expelled for fighting, said that once he became a gang member his grades suffered because he did not even think about grades anymore.

Responses (nongang members).

Of the ten nongang members interviewed, three students (2 Hispanic males and 1 African-American male) responded that their respective high schools dropped them for low attendance practices, with only one Hispanic male admitting that poor grades may have also influenced his decision not to attend school regularly. Two other students (1 African-American male and 1 Hispanic male) intimidated by gang members felt it was best for their safety to drop out. Another two students (1 Hispanic male and 1 African-

American female) dropped out due to racial tensions and fights between ethnic groups, neither suggested grades as having any influence on their decisions. One African-American female, choosing not to be intimidated by gang members, was expelled for fighting a gang member. She, too, had poor grades. A single Hispanic male dropped out because of low credits and poor grades in relationship to his projected age at which he could graduate (age 21). Finally, the remaining African-American male dropped out due to health related issues.

Summary

The personal interview responses related to reasons for dropping out tend to vary substantially between gang and nongang membership. Not a single nongang member mentioned that hanging with friends was a reason for them dropping out, whereas, half of the gang members felt it was more important to be with friends than to receive an education. This result tends to be somewhat contradictory to the results found in Table 21., where this reason was not even mentioned for school dropout. A possible explanation for this phenomenon may have occurred due to the fact the interviews allowed for probing, whereas, the survey did not allow students an opportunity to elaborate in question (E) and therefore, the gang members, in answering (E), suggested "no special reason."

Gang conflicts, gang intimidation, and fights were reasons for both groups dropping out of school. This result tends to be supportive of the results found in the survey and in the literature for students leaving school without a diploma.

The personal interviews reveal that more nongang members (3) than gang members

(1) were dropped from schools due to low attendance patterns; once again, indicating a substantial difference from the survey, wherein an equal distribution is found. Health related issues continue to be consistent with nongang members.

Although most of the students interviewed achieved poorly academically, very few believed that grades influenced their decision to leave school. This result applies to both groups.

The division between race and gender had little influence on how either group responded during the personal interviews, substantiating the results found in the survey.

Research Question 4

Do the regulating codes of the gang promote or inhibit educational pursuits? Questionnaire item 27 was specifically asked in order to ascertain the gang's position on education. The pertinent data are presented below.

Survey Question 27

This question (gang codes promoting education) allowed both gang and nongang members an opportunity to express their views on the gangs policy regarding education. The frequency distribution is presented below followed by the presentation of the data.

Table 26. -- Frequency Distribution of Gang Codes Promoting Education

Response	N=128	Frequency	Percent
Yes	39	39	30.5
No	67	67	52.3
*Missing	22	22	17.2

*Missing - Students who did not answer this question

Of the 128 students in the sample, 67 (52.3%) answered in disagreement that gang codes promote education, 39 (30.5%) were in agreement and 22 (17.2%) refused to answer the question entirely.

The Chi-square (χ^2) treatment was applied to determine any possible statistical significance.

Table 27. -- Do Gang Codes Promote Education

Response	n=66	Percent Gang Member	n=39	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
Yes	31	79.5	8	20.5	100.0	39
No	35	53.0	31	47.0	100.0	66

N=105

Significance = .00671

*p < = .05

The Chi-square (χ^2) test of significance indicates that a relationship is found in this question, however, for those students responding to "no" there is not a great departure between gang (53.0%) and nongang (47.0%) responses, therefore the "no" answer is unrelated to membership in a gang. The relationship to membership in a gang occurs in the "yes" response. Overwhelmingly, gang members (79.5%) agree that the codes within the gang structure promote getting an education. Conversely, only 20.5% of nongang members believe that there is such a code. It could reasonably be assumed that one must be involved in gang membership to be aware of such a code. It also could be inferred that these gang members with negative responses either chose not to reveal secret information, a general practice, or may actually be unaware that such codes exist.

Personal Interviews

The interview responses were placed into clusters to discern both similarities and differences. Interview Question 8. was directly related to Research Question 4. Due to the nature of this question only gang members were presented an opportunity to respond since it can reasonably be assumed that nongang members would not have access to this information and further, would not apply in addressing the question. Refer to Appendix (B) for Question 8.

Responses.

There was a unanimous response from the ten gang members asked this question. All were in agreement that a gang code exists which states that each member should attend school regularly and to avoid causing any disruptions within the school. Two gang members, both Hispanic males, elaborated on the six-part star (a gang symbol designating

the gang's platform) indicating that one of the points of the star emphasizes education for each of its members. Another two (1 Hispanic male and 1 African-American male) stated that there are college graduates in the ranks of their respective gangs and further suggested that the thrust of the gang is now shifting. This shift is to a more educated gang populace to the benefit of the organization. The African-American male stated, "The gang wants you to get a good education, become lawyers and doctors or whatever, so you can benefit the organization."

Another three gang members (2 African-American males and 1 African-American female) admitted that many of their colleagues do stay away from school but the codes are on the books but most of the time the code is not enforced, whereas two of the above respondents (1 Hispanic male and 1 African-American male) stated that older members would punish the younger ones if they discovered that they were not attending school. The three remaining gang members (1 Hispanic male and 2 African-American males) were in agreement that education is important to the organization and that gang members should be attending school regularly.

Summary

The results of the personal interviews are substantiated in the "yes" response of the survey by approximately half of the admitted gang members. The interviews revealed that an educational code does exist in the gang organizational structure wherein the members should be attending school regularly. Although it was also revealed that the gangs are now

beginning to focus on developing its membership to serve itself beyond criminal activity, individual gang members continue to be truants and dropouts. It can now be reasonably assumed that gang regulating codes appear to promote, not inhibit, the educational pursuits of its members as evidenced by the findings.

Research Question 5

Does the involvement in gang activities preclude the individual gang member from planning an occupational career beyond gangdome (gang tenure)?

Questionnaire items 45 and 46 were pertinent to this question and are illustrated by individual tables. See Appendix (A) for these questions.

Survey Question 45

This question (plans for the future), another open-ended format, received a statistical treatment for multiple responses, as previously established in similarly formatted questions. Table 28. illustrates the various responses form the population sample.

Table 28. -- Frequency Distribution of Plans for the Future

Category	Frequency Gang Member	Percent Gang Member	Frequency Nongang Member	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
a. no answer/ not considered	36	66.7	18	33.3	100.0	54
b. become successful	4	44.4	5	55.6	100.0	9
c. graduate from high school	0	0.0	1	100.0	100.0	1
d. quit gang	6	85.7	1	14.3	100.0	7
e. get a job	10	28.6	25	71.4	100.0	35
f. go to college	6	37.5	10	62.5	100.0	16
g. see life getting better	1	14.3	6	85.7	100.0	7
h. change	1	100.0	0	0.0	100.0	1
i. other	8	61.5	5	38.5	100.0	13
	n=72		n=71			N=143

Note: Number of responses in each category may be greater than the number of members in either gang or nongang membership in the population sample due to multiple response possibilities.

Once again, the responses were clustered and coded into categories. Of the 125 students who responded to the question, 54 (43.2%) either did not answer the question or had not considered their future plans; 35 (28.0%) responses illustrate that the students are planning to get a job; 16 (12.8%) plan to attend college; 13 (10.4%) stated single items which did not fit into any category; 9 (7.2%) of the responses stated that the students will become successful; 7 (5.6%) are planning to get out of the gang; 1 (.8%) plan to graduate from high school; and 1 (.8%) plan to change their life.

The category receiving the greatest number of responses (54) demonstrates that the respondents chose not to answer this question or have not yet considered what they will do for the future. In either case, it presents a sad commentary for the students who participated in the survey, both gang and nongang members.

There are two important categories which are noteworthy (e. get a job and f. go to college) and in combination received the second highest number of responses (51). More nongang members responded that they plan on getting a job in the future (25) than did gang members (10). In category f. (go to college) similar results are shown in that more nongang members (10) plan to attend college than gang members. (6). Both categories illustrate that more nongang members have considered a future for themselves. This finding could possibly indicate that those students in the sample who are gang members have been influenced negatively in projecting a future for themselves. However, when category b. (become successful) is considered gang and nongang members each want to become successful at slightly different percentage rates. The remaining categories totaled less than twenty-one percent of the responses and really do not identify any definitive future plans regarding future initiatives.

Survey Question 46

This question (goals and objectives), phrased slightly differently than the previous question, was included in the survey in order to embellish and/or to provide additional thought on the part of the respondents regarding their future plans. As in the previous question, this questionnaire item received the identical statistical treatment, a cross-

tabulation for multiple responses. Table 29. illustrates the various responses from the sample.

Table 29. -- Frequency Distribution of Goals and Objectives

Category	Frequency Gang Member	Percent Gang Member	Frequency Nongang Member	Percent Nongang Member	Total Percent	Total Frequency
a. want a good job/ income	36	66.7	18	33.3	42.5	54
b. no answer	5	35.7	9	64.3	11.0	14
c. not considered	7	58.3	5	41.7	9.4	12
d. graduate/go to college	6	30.0	14	70.0	15.7	20
e. named a profession	12	34.3	23	65.7	27.6	35
f. raise a family	4	36.4	7	63.6	8.7	11
g. armed forces	3	50.0	3	50.0	4.7	6
h. stop gang activities	4	80.0	1	20.0	3.9	5
i. other	3	50.0	3	50.0	4.7	6
	n=80		n=83		N=163	

Note: Number of responses in each category may be greater than the number of members in either gang or nongang membership in the population sample due to multiple response possibilities.

The responses were placed into clusters and coded into categories. Of the 127 students who responded to the question, 54 (42.5%) answers projected a good job with a good income for the future; 35 (27.6%) answers named a particular profession; 20 (15.7%) answers anticipated graduation and going to college; 14 (11.0%) refused to answer the question; 12 (9.4%) respondents have not considered any goals for the future; 11 (8.7%) students are projected to raise a family; 6 (4.7%) of the answers did not fit into any category; and 5 (3.9%) believe that they will stop participating in gang activities.

The category receiving the majority of the responses reveal that most of the students have established goals and objectives. However, specific plans have not yet been made, but getting some type of job with a good income is projected by 54 of the answers. Of the 54 responses 36 were gang members as compared to only 18 nongang members. It could be possible that since gang members are involved in an organizational structure they are presently more cognizant of formal survival techniques than nongang members and generally foresee a good job as a mechanism for survival. Additionally, gang members are generally accustomed to "making money" whereas nongang members may not have similar access.

Of the thirty-five responses naming a particular profession 23 were nongang members, illustrating that nongang members, who responded to this question have definitely considered future goals. Gang member responses, on the other hand, reveal that few have figured out exactly what their occupational pursuits may be for the future. This result tends to substantiate the findings from category (a) of Table 28, in that, more gang members than nongang members have yet to consider plans for the future.

A larger percentage of nongang members (70.0%) have revealed that they intend to graduate from high school and pursue a college education, embellishing the results found in categories (c) and (f) of Table 28 (more nongang members than gang members). Since some gang members feel that they may not live to reach adulthood it is possible that planning for the future may seem fruitless and the results exhibited here may reflect such negative responses from gang members in these categories. Additionally, this assessment may hold true for category (c) wherein more gang members (58.3%) responded that they

have not yet considered their futures. Once again, illuminating the results found in Table 28 (category a.). Category (f), "raising a family," may also be attributed to the festering hopelessness of gang membership in the inner-city. More nongang members (63.6%) are planning on raising a family than do gang members.

The only other category which gang member percentages exceed nongang member responses is category (h), "stop gang activities." It can reasonably be concluded that in order to stop gang activities one must first be a member in a gang. Eighty percent of the responses in this category were from gang members. The only response from a nongang member, totalling 20% of the responses, could possibly be an anomalous occurrence.

The remaining categories (g) and (i) were equally divided between gang and nongang members illustrating no significant departure between the desire to enter the armed forces and those planning something which did not fit into any category.

Personal Interviews

Once more, the interview responses were placed into clusters to discern both similarities and differences. Interview Question 12 was directly related to Research Question 5. The results are presented below according to gang and nongang membership. Refer to Appendix (B) for Interview Question 12.

Responses (gang members).

Question 12 was posed during the interviews to gain insight on the future considerations of both gang and nongang members and to illuminate, embellish or to refute the results found in Survey Questions 45 and 46.

A total of nine gang members have made plans for the future, albeit, only three of the nine have made specific plans. Six of the students were vague, responding that they do plan to graduate from high school but are unsure beyond that point, yet, they follow with indications that they do want a good job (4 Hispanic males, 2 African-American males and 1 African-American female). The remaining three students (3 African American males) stated specific goals ranging from entering the Armed Forces to owning their own hair salon. A single respondent, a Hispanic male, admits that he "hasn't worked it our yet," but he has begun to think about the future.

Responses (nongang members).

The nongang member interviews revealed an equal distribution of students between those who have made specific plans for the future and of those who have not.

Of the five which have done so, two students (2 African-American males) stated that they plan to open their own hair salons after attending beauty school. Two students, both African-American (1 male, 1 female) plan on entering the law profession, one as a policeman, the other as an attorney. An African-American female, expressing her specific plans, stated that she would eventually like to become a pediatrician.

In a similar fashion as the gang members, nongang members who had not made specific plans were also vague about plans beyond a high school diploma and once again, each student hopes for a good job (5 Hispanic males). Additionally, two of these respondents added that they would like to raise a family.

Summary

In Question 45. it is revealed that more nongang members are planning on getting a job or are planning to enter college than gang members. However, in Question 46. more gang members indicated that they plan on getting a good job. The results of the personal interviews substantiate the results found in Question 45. and tends to refute the results found in Question 46. In either case, it was found that nongang members have given considerably more forethought regarding specific plans for their future, whereas gang members are somewhat vague about their future plans. Yet, it can reasonably be assumed that membership in a gang does not preclude future plans beyond gangdom.

Conclusion

The presentation and summary of the data pertinent to the research questions were presented in a way to provide a foundation for further inquiry. The following analysis will capulize the data in relation to the specific research questions guiding this study.

Comprehensive Analysis

This section places the data in perspective to the five research questions presented in Chapter I.

Questionnaire items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15 and 28 as well as interview questions 2, 3, and 9 were investigational tools used to ascertain the following data. Based on these data the general perception that membership in a gang would cause a student to be truant from

school is not substantiated. The absence patterns of gang members show no statistically significant relationship from the absence patterns of nongang members. Albeit, slight variation do occur in several responses between the two groups. Considering the variables "absent hardly ever" (more nongang members - 60%) and "absent most of the time" (more gang members - 58%), it was found that a higher percentage of nongang members attend school on a regular basis. Conversely, more gang members tend to be absent from school more frequently than nongang members. If one takes into account the activities gang members are normally involved in (distribution and sales of drugs) and the times of the evening sales are at their peak, it can be assumed that gang members are staying awake well into the early morning hours. It is very difficult to rise at 6:00 a.m. to prepare for school when one has only slept 3-4 hours at night. Additionally, good grades would normally be sacrificed as a result of these same activities; however, the results of Survey Question 6. do not substantiate this premise. In fact, it was shown that more gang members (66.7%) were making above average grades than nongang members (33.3%) before dropping out of school. This result may be attributed to many of the respondents being low-level gang members who are restricted to "look-out" positions or to the fact that a new perspective on education is emerging from the higher ranks of organized gangs. This emerging respect for education is reminiscent of the organized crime elements of the post-bootleg days when illegal organizations legitimized their illicit enterprises. Street gangs now see the necessity to produce educated members in order to protect their gains from the sale and distribution of illegal drugs. Gang members are being encouraged to finish college and to enter the ranks of the legal system by aspiring to become political

leaders, attorneys and other professionals. This sentiment was echoed by several of the gang member respondents, and recent reports have chronicled gang member participation in the local electoral process.

Do the gang codes promote education? According to the findings they do. Those respondents who are involved in gangs overwhelmingly agree (79.5%). As suggested above, there is a new respect for education from organized gangs. Several respondents, during the personal interviews, mentioned that older gang members now escort to school those younger members attending elementary school. It was also mentioned that many of the older members "punish" the younger ones who do not attend regularly. To support this contention, gang members elaborated on the educational component of the "six-point star" which governs their organization.

A question which may arise out of this assessment is, why are so many gang members truants and dropouts? A possible response may be that any organizational shift is not instituted or adapted readily. However, it would be prudent for educators and administrators to be cognizant of what this new focus on education may bring to the schools.

To the question of whether the gangs contribute to truancy behaviors or not, consider the following findings from the study: the frequency of gang members responses were greater than nongang members' responses related to disliking school (20 to 14); more gang members experienced gang related problems which caused them to be truant from school than did nongang members (59.5% to 40.5%); a greater number of gang members believed that boring classes resulted in their truant behaviors (32 to 20); a larger number of

gang members tended to hang out with friends during school hours than did nongang members (52 to 34); more gang members were prone to attend parties than nongang members during school hours (84.6% to 15.4%); and more gang members tended to blame friends for their poor attendance patterns (73.7% to 26.2%). The personal interview results substantiated the statistical findings especially those gang members who felt that classes were boring and preferred, instead, to hang out with friends to "party" during school hours.

Although a statistical difference was not found to be significant by the Chi-square (χ^2) treatment in answering conclusively the question on gang influence on truancy nor in the attendance patterns by either group, the above findings should not be discounted by educators in the design of the school curriculum nor should administrators be remiss in addressing these issues when developing programs which are directed to motivate students who are borderline dropouts.

Now, consider the reasons which may influence gang member dropout. Again, a statistical treatment did not find a significant relationship between gang and nongang reasons for dropping out of school. Albeit, consider these findings: more gang members were bored with school or classes (81.8%) than nongang members (18.2%); and more gang members experienced gang fights (61.1%) than nongang members (38.9%). The personal interviews revealed that more gang members (5) stated that the reason they dropped out was due to the fact that they preferred to hang out with their friends, whereas, none of the nongang members dropped out for this reason. Classes were boring, gang fights and hanging out with friends are issues administrators should be concerned about if the purpose of the public education is to educate all of its citizens. Making the schools

free from bodily injury to students and teachers is progressing diligently, according to the literature, however, these schools housing rival gang factions continue to be explosive enough where members of gangs choose to abandon their education for issues of safety.

Regarding gender and ethnicity, statistically, it was found throughout this study that there was no significant relationship found regarding either. Additionally, the personal interviews substantiated this contention, so administrators can rest assured that programs which address the needs of either ethnic group or either gender will apply to each group and to both male and female in respect to truancy and dropout prevention initiatives.

Finally, what hope is there for the future of current and former gang members? The findings marginally suggest that there is hope. Although more nongang members have definite plans for their futures, fewer gang members have suggested such a positive outlook. Educators and administrators should look at programs which could compete with the allure of gang activities wherein goals could be set by gang members which reach beyond their present circumstance.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This chapter presents a summary of the study, a summary of the procedures used, a summary of the findings, the conclusions based on the findings, recommendations based on the conclusions, and suggestions for further research.

Summary

The purpose of this study was threefold: (1) to develop an understanding between the relationship of adolescent gang membership to school truancy; (2) to develop an understanding between gang membership and its relationship to students who have dropped out of school; and, (3) to explore the implications that gang membership has on truancy and school dropout.

The study used a triangulation by methods approach. The quantitative data were derived by a questionnaire containing eighty-eight (88) questions and the qualitative data from a series of personal interviews. For the collection of the data, a questionnaire was completed by one hundred twenty-eight (128) former dropouts, now returned to school, answering a self-administered survey at a retrieval center for former dropouts in a large mid-western city. This survey taking approximately thirty minutes to complete

established demographics; attitudes and motivations concerning school attendance patterns; reasons for school dropout; and, other gang related matters. The data from the survey were coded and tabulated according to frequency of responses. Percentages of responses were calculated and comparisons were made between gang and nongang members. A Chi-square (χ^2) statistical treatment and a multiple response treatment were used where applicable.

Qualitative data were ascertained from personal interviews with members from both groups. The questions were developed from the responses of key questions established in the general survey. The interviews lasting approximately 20-30 minutes were conducted over a four week period at the same retrieval center. Notes were taken during the interviews and transcribed immediately following each interview. The twenty students who were interviewed, ten students from each group, met a four-point criterion set fourth in the Methodology section. The field notes were coded, classified and placed into a matrix for review. The data from the interviews were compared and analyzed in terms of similarities, differences and patterns of responses, as well as in the review of the literature.

Finally, the quantitative and qualitative data findings were compared, presented and analyzed narratively, identifying both similarities and differences.

Conclusions

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following conclusions are set forth:

1. There are no statistically significant differences in attendance and truancy patterns

- of gang and nongang members.
2. Gang members and nongang members statistically drop out of school for similar reasons.
 3. Gang membership is not a statistical variable which may cause truant behaviors but more so an individual choice which determines such behaviors.
 4. There is a new developing philosophy promoting school attendance and in the discouragement of school dropout by organized street gangs.
 5. Reasons for truancy and school dropout do not statistically differ among African-American and Hispanic gang members.
 6. Reasons for truancy and school dropout do not statistically differ between male and female gang members.
 7. Gang members have general plans for the future but are lacking in specificity.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the conclusions.

1. The State Board of Education and local school districts should provide funding necessary to develop truancy and dropout prevention programs for students from kindergarten through high school. At each grade level, especially at the lower grades, these programs should identify and target students who are at-risk for potential dropouts.
2. Local school districts should develop an anti-gang curriculum which stresses the

- importance of an educated person versus the pitfalls of gangdom.
3. Alternative schools should be established by local school districts for students who cannot adjust socially to a regular classroom environment providing adequate staff to deal with the unique problems of at-risk students.
 4. A national campaign, such as the "war on drugs," should be promoted by the Federal Government, illiciting assistance from state and local entities which would not only discourage children from joining gangs but would also educate them on the dangers of gang membership.
 5. Local Boards of Education should provide administrators, staff, students and community in-services and forums which address the need for cooperation among all parties in the effort to combat the negative impact of truancy and school dropout on society.
 6. School districts should develop staff training programs which address the emerging philosophy on education by organized street gangs and how to effectively motivate and inspire students who are involved in gangs to become independent and product citizens of their communities.

Suggestions for Further Study

This study was limited to students located at a single retrieval center in a large urban city. The confinement therein can be a springboard for additional research. As such, the following suggestions are set forth:

1. It is suggested that a study of this nature be undertaken in other large school districts throughout the country where they are experiencing a combination of increased gang activities and escalating dropout rates.
2. It is suggested that a study similar in nature be conducted with students who are dropouts which have not yet returned to school to earn a high school diploma.
3. It is suggested that a national study similar in nature be conducted with organized street gang members who have dropped out of school.

A professor explained to the writer that the research process should answer some questions while raising others. As the third student returned from the marketplace to his beloved master, Halcolm, with questions, this dissertation hopefully has served the process well.

Appendix

APPENDIX A
SCHOOL TRUANCY AND DROPOUT STUDY
QUESTIONNAIRE

This is a self-administered questionnaire that focuses on issues and concerns regarding education, school, and other related areas. The questions are very common and will be centered on those things that you already know about. Your answers are very important, so take the time to read each question carefully and respond accordingly. Your responses will be treated confidentially and used in combination with the other answers received.

Personal Information

First of all, I would like to know a little about you so your answers can be compared with other respondents. Please circle the number that is appropriate to you.

A. Sex:

male.....1
female..... 2

B. In which of the following age groups does your age fall ?

under 15.....1
15 -17.....2
18-213
over 214

C. Ethnic background:

Oriental.....1
Hispanic.....2

African -American3
 Caucasian4

D. What is the highest grade you have completed ?

8th grade1
 1-2 years of high school..... 2
 3-4 years of high school.....3
 dropped out4
 other5 (specify_____)

E. Are there special reasons you dropped out of school ?

What was the name of the regular school you last attended on a full time basis ? _____ . What year was that when you last attended ? _____.

Educational Area And Truancy

I would like to know something about your past schooling and education in general. Additionally, it is important to know about your school attendance and related concerns.

The following questions are structured so that they will be easy for you to read, understand and answer. Now, I would like you to think about the last school you attended.

Please circle the appropriate number.

agree	agree	neither	disagree	disagree
strongly	somewhat		somewhat	strongly
5	4	3	2	1

1. Would you say that the school you attended:

Understood your needs.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1
 Didn't like classes.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1
 Located too faraway.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1
 Staff helped me a lot.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1

Staff treated me unfairly.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1
 Teachers did not like me.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1
 Other students hated me.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1

1-A. Are there other feelings you may have about your former school ?

2. About how satisfied were you with your last school ?

very	somewhat	neither	somewhat	very
satisfied	satisfied		dissatisfied	dissatisfied
5	4	3	2	1

3. In what way(s) could the school have been more appealing to you ?

Liked most: _____

Disliked most: _____

4. How did the last school you attended compare with others you know about in the city? Please circle the appropriate number.

better than.....1
 about the same.....2
 not as good.....3
 can't compare them....4
 don't know.....5

5. Please circle the level of the last school you attended:

Elementary.....1
 High School.....2

6. What grade average did you have in elementary school and in your regular high school? Circle where appropriate.

Elementary School

- above average.....1
- average grades.....2
- below average grades.....3
- failing grades.....4

High School

- above average.....1
- average grades.....2
- below average grades.....3
- failing grades.....4

7. Would you say that at the last school you attended, you were:

- absent most of the time (2-3 days a week).....5
- absent frequently (5-7 times a month).....4
- absent somewhat frequently (10-11 times a quarter).....3
- absent sometimes (3-4 times a quarter).....2
- hardly ever absent (less than 2 times a quarter).....1

8. Please circle the appropriate response.

strongly	agree	neither	disagree	strongly
agree	somewhat	nor	somewhat	disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Students are absent from school for a variety of reasons. Please tell me about how much you agree with the following statements:

- Teachers didn't like me.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1
- Had help at home.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1
- Didn't like school.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1
- Classes were too hard.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1
- Afraid to go to school.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1
- Gangs and related problems.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1
- Classes were boring.....5.....4.....3.....2.....1

9. Are there other reasons why you were absent ?

15. Who do you believe is mostly the blame for your poor attendance ? Circle as many as apply to you.

- parents and home environment....5
- friends.....4
- school.....3
- community.....2
- social problems.....1

15-A. Are there others to blame _____

Organization Information

16. Please tell me what is your definition a gang? What does the word mean to you ?

17. Now, about your gang affiliation, are you a current or former member? Please circle the appropriate number.

- current.....1
- former.....2
- wannabe.....3
- neither.....4

18. At what age did you first think about joining a gang?

<u>(A) think about joining</u>	<u>(B) age you joined</u>
under 10.....1	under 10.....1
10-15.....2	10-15.....2
16-18.....3	16-18.....3
over 18.....4	over 18.....4

19. What was your primary reason for joining a gang ? About how much do you agree with the following reasons for joining a gang.

Circle the appropriate number.

	strongly agree 5	agree somewhat 4	neither nor 3	disagree somewhat 2	strongly disagree 1
To make friends.....	5	4	3	2	1
Security.....	5	4	3	2	1
Team member.....	5	4	3	2	1
Intimidated by gang members.....	5	4	3	2	1

20. Please tell me of any other reasons.

21. Is there any main experiences you have had or is there something that happened in your life to make you feel the way you responded to questions 19-20 ? Please describe in a few words.

22. What gang activities do you participate in currently ? Please circle all activities.

- education.....1
- recruitment.....2
- training.....3
- protection.....4

23. Name some other activities ?

24. How important are the following to you? Please circle.

	very important 5	somewhat important 4	neither nor 3	not very important 2	not important at all 1
Education.....	5	4	3	2	1
Good Family Life.....	5	4	3	2	1
Being a gang member.....	5	4	3	2	1
Attending school regularly.....	5	4	3	2	1
Graduating from high school	5	4	3	2	1

25. Are high ranking gang members usually high school graduates ?

- Yes.....1
- No.....2
- Don't know.....3

26. How do they feel about school attendance ?

Don't know....[]

27. Is there a code within the gang structure that promotes regular school attendance ?

- Yes.....1
- No.....2

28. Based on what you know, are gang members normally truant from school?

- Yes.....1
- No.....2

29. Has gang membership interfered or enhanced your education in anyway ?

- Yes...1 (continue)
- No...2 (skip to question 30)

interfered.....1 (In what ways?)_____

enhanced.....2 (In what ways?)_____

both.....3 (In what ways?) _____
neither.....4

30. Are there other ways you would like to mention ?

(a). In what ways have you benefited (educationally) by being a gang member?
Please explain in a few words.

benefited most _____

benefited least _____

(b). In what ways have you benefited by attending the re-entry center ? Please
explain in a few words.

benefited most _____

benefited least _____

Family - Affective Elements

31. Please tell me how does your family feel about you being in a gang ?

strongly	approve	neither	disapprove	strongly
approve	somewhat	nor	somewhat	disapprove
5	4	3	2	1

32. What do they feel about school attendance in general ?

very important.....5
somewhat important.....4
neither; nor.....3
not very important.....2
not important at all.....1
don't know.....[]

33. Has your family been supportive in most of the things you do as a gang member ? Would you say they have been:

- very supportive.....5
- somewhat supportive.....4
- neither; nor.....3
- not supportive.....2
- not supportive at all.....1
- don't know.....[]

34. About how much has being a gang member enhanced your self-esteem ?

- very much.....5
- somewhat.....4
- neither; nor.....3
- not very much.....2
- not at all.....1

35. Why do you feel that way ? Please describe in a few words.

36. About how much has attending the alterative school enhanced your self esteem and confidence ?

- very much.....5
- somewhat.....4
- neither; nor.....3
- not very much.....2
- not at all.....1

37. Why do you feel that way ? Please describe in a few words.

38. What do you feel about the future of education ? Is it:

- very beneficial.....5
- somewhat beneficial.....4
- neither; nor.....3
- not very beneficial.....2
- not beneficial at all.....1

39. Please describe any other feelings you have on this subject.

40. What do you feel about the future of gangs in your neighborhood ?

- very beneficial.....5
- somewhat beneficial.....4
- neither; nor.....3
- not very beneficial.....2
- not beneficial at all.....1

41. Please describe any other feelings you have on this subject.

42. Do you feel that people should continue to join gangs ?

- Yes.....1
- No.....2

43. Do you feel that it is possible to stop individuals from joining gangs ?

- Yes.....1
- No.....2

44. Describe in a few words ways in which individuals may be stopped from joining gangs.

45. What have you considered about your future adult life regarding your livelihood (being able to earn a living) ?

46. Have you established goals and objectives for your future? Please describe your perception of the future for yourself as an adult.....your occupation.....livelihood and income.

Thank you kindly for your participation in this study. Again, all responses are anonymous and will not affect you in any way.

APPENDIX B

PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When did you drop out of school? Did poor grades have anything to do with you deciding to leave school before graduation? (Why or why not?). Did you have good grades or poor grades in elementary school? Was there any particular reason for your poor grades if you had them? Why did you drop out of school?
2. Thinking back to the time before you dropped out of school, how often were you absent from school? (per week; per month). What type of activities were you involved in most of the time you were away from school? Were these mostly excused days or unexcused days? Can you explain the reasons for the unexcused days?
3. Do you blame anyone beside yourself for missing school days? Who else and why do you blame them?
4. Have you ever thought about joining a gang? Did you join? Why did you join the gang?

(Skip if nongang member)
5. When you joined the gang why did you feel it was important at that time?

(Skip if nongang member)
6. As a current or former gang member what activities do you or did you participate in?
7. What are your feelings regarding the following:
 - Education
 - A good family life
 - Being a gang member
 - Attending school regularly
 - Graduating from high school
- (Skip if nongang member)
8. As a current or former gang member are you aware of any part of the gang code which may suggest that you should be educated? If so, what does the code generally say?

9. Some people think gangs cause many of its members to stay away from school when they should be attending school. What is your observation?
10. There are some reports that say gangs interfere with getting an education. What are your feelings regarding this subject?
11. If you are in a gang what do your family members feel about you being in a gang? If you are not in a gang what do your family members feel about gangs? As a gang member has your family been supportive of your gang activities?
12. What have you considered about your future life? What goals have you established for your future?

APPENDIX C

CODES FOR OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS?

E. Special reasons you dropped:

- a. no special reason
- b. gangs; fights
- c. bored
- d. kicked out/dropped due to low attendance
- e. medical/family problems
- f. job
- g. pregnant
- h. other

9. Other reasons you were absent:

- a. no reason stated
- b. medical problems
- c. had to work
- d. too tired
- e. boring
- f. with friends
- g. gang problems
- h. other
- i. attended but cut classes

11. What other thing:

- a. no answer
- b. slept
- c. visited friends
- d. medical appointments
- e. make money
- f. partying
- g. read; studying
- h. drugs; drinking
- i. other

15-a. Others to blame for absences:

- a. no other person
- b. myself
- c. no
- d. work
- e. gangs/racial problems

- f. police/legal problems
- g. drugs
- h. principal/teachers
- i. specific friend/other

45. Considerations about your future:

- a. have not considered
- b. become successful
- c. graduate from high school
- d. quit gang
- e. get a job
- f. go to college
- g. see life getting better
- h. change
- i. other

46. Goals and objectives

- a. want a good job; income
- b. no answer
- c. not considered
- d. graduate; go to college
- e. named a profession
- f. raise a family
- g. armed forces
- h. stop gang activities
- i. other

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VITA

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Approval Sheet

The dissertation submitted by Ronn L. Gibbs has been read and approved by the following committee:

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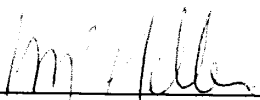
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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

October 10, 1996
Date


Director's Signature