

1996

The portrayal of prison inmates and their families in juvenile literature

Maleea Dudney
University of Northern Iowa

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright ©1996 Maleea Dudney

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp>

Recommended Citation

Dudney, Maleea, "The portrayal of prison inmates and their families in juvenile literature" (1996). *Graduate Research Papers*. 1969.

<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/1969>

This Open Access Graduate Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Research Papers by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

The portrayal of prison inmates and their families in juvenile literature

Find Additional Related Research in UNI ScholarWorks

To find related research in UNI ScholarWorks, go to the collection of [School Library Studies Graduate Research Papers](#) written by students in the [Division of School Library Studies](#), Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, at the University of Northern Iowa.

Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to determine if juvenile literature portrays some characteristics of family members of male prison inmates in a realistic manner. Twenty five juvenile books were analyzed and compared to data gathered regarding characteristics of actual family members of prison inmates. This comparison revealed that juvenile literature does not portray the families of prison inmates in a realistic way.

The Portrayal of Prison Inmates and Their Families
in Juvenile Literature

A Graduate Research Paper

Submitted to the

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Division of School Library Media Studies

in Partial Fulfilment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Maleea Dudney

December 5, 1996

Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to determine if juvenile literature portrays some characteristics of family members of male prison inmates in a realistic manner. Twenty five juvenile books were analyzed and compared to data gathered regarding characteristics of actual family members of prison inmates. This comparison revealed that juvenile literature does not portray the families of prison inmates in a realistic way.

Table of Contents

	Page
List of Tables	vi
Chapter	
1. Introduction	1
Purpose of This Study	2
Limitations	3
Definitions	3
Assumptions	4
Significance	4
2. Review of Related Literature	5
Children of Prison Inmates	5
Family Ties and Visitation of Prison Inmates	9
Wives of Prison Inmates	12
Summary	15
3. Methodology	17
4. Data Analysis	22
Marital Status of Prison Inmates	22
Wives/girlfriends of Prison Inmates	23
Children of Prison Inmates	24
5. Conclusions, Recommendations, and Summary	26
Conclusions	26
Marital Status of Prison Inmates	26
Wives/girlfriends of Prison Inmates	27
Children of Prison Inmates	28

Recommendations	28
Summary	29
Bibliography	32
Appendixes	
A. Content Analysis Checklist	34
B. Bibliographies	36
C. Books Selected for Content Analysis	37

List of Tables

Tables	Page
1. Marital Status of Prison Inmates in Juvenile Fiction	22
2. Wives/Girlfriends of Prison Inmates	23
3. Children of Incarcerated Fathers	25

Chapter 1

Introduction

"If children do gain ideas and impressions about the world around them from the books they read, as is generally believed, it is surely important for adults to know what kind of world the books portray" (Bekkedal, 1973, p. 124). Juvenile literature portrays or mirrors real life situations. Authors rely on "everyday occurrences" and show the "world as we know it" (Norton, 1990, p. 409). Huck, Hepler, and Hickman (1993) write that realistic fiction "reflects life as it was lived in the past or could be lived today" (p. 527). Juvenile literature is written about every realistic subject. Many children have a family member in prison and there is a great deal of children's literature on this topic.

A recent anecdote by a teacher illustrates this issue. Sandra Beezy engaged her students in a discussion that included "one wish they would have for their family that they could not buy in a store" (Beezy, 1994). The teacher was surprised to find out that one student's wish was to have his father out of jail. A dozen other students indicated that this was also a desire for their families. The teacher sought literature that could be helpful for her students with this special kind of pain (Beezy). This research will identify and analyze

juvenile literature in which a father of the family is incarcerated.

Much juvenile literature attempts to bring the reality of the world into the story. But is juvenile literature accurate in its portrayal of family members of prison inmates? When attempts are made to portray the family of a prison inmate in juvenile literature, are the adverse effects on family members seen in juvenile literature? Juvenile literature does address personality characteristics of family members of prison inmates. This literature, however, may not portray these characteristics accurately.

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this paper is to determine whether if juvenile literature portrays some characteristics of family members of male prison inmates in a realistic manner.

Hypotheses

The following statements are hypotheses for this study.

1. The majority of identified juvenile literature accurately reflects the demographic data about mothers of children of prison inmates.

2. Ninety percent or more of identified juvenile literature shows mothers as exhibiting one or more of the identified social, physical and emotional conditions when husbands are incarcerated.

3. Ninety percent of child characters in juvenile literature will portray one or more of the social, physical, emotional and academic characteristics when fathers are incarcerated.

Limitations

The literature for this study will be about families with incarcerated fathers. The juvenile literature for this study will be limited to fiction books for kindergarten through twelfth grade children and young adults with the settings in English speaking countries. This study will not deal with books about female prison inmates and their family members during incarceration. It will also exclude parolees, those who reside at half-way houses and prisoners of war.

Definitions

The definition for **juvenile literature** in this study is literature with an intended audience of grades kindergarten through twelve. The **personality characteristics** that will be studied in this literature are those of the family members of prison inmates including sons and daughters of prison inmates and the mothers of children of prison inmates. This study will also research the literature for accurate portrayal of the **inmates' marital status**. The indicators for these relationships will be discussed in the methodology for this research.

Assumptions

A substantial number of fiction books have appeared on the topic of a family member in prison.

Fiction books can be more or less accurate in their portrayal of real life situations and character relationships. Stories about incarcerated family members, because of the negative stigma attached to such family circumstances, this may create a desire to hide unattractive facts from the juvenile reader.

The researcher can recognize evidence of social, physical, academic and emotional conditions of the characters in the juvenile literature to be reviewed for this research.

Significance

The researcher hoped to draw to the attention of teachers and librarians that this body of literature exists and these books may be important to children experiencing the incarceration of a family member. Children not experiencing the incarceration of a family member may gain understanding of the situation by reading fiction literature on this topic.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

There have been many studies of families when a member of the family is incarcerated. This literature review will deal with three areas of this research. It will look at research on children, visitation of families to the incarcerated member, and at women who have relationships with incarcerated men.

Children of Prison Inmates

In a 1965 study, Friedman and Esselstyn attempted to answer the specific question about how children are affected by the imprisonment of their father. They sought to find out if children whose fathers are prison inmates are indeed different from children whose fathers are not in prison (p. 55). Friedman and Esselstyn selected 328 children of which two groups were control groups and a third group was the experimental group. All of the fathers of the third group were jail inmates (p. 56). The measuring device used to rate the children in various personality traits and characteristics was the University of Pennsylvania Pupil Adjustment Inventory, Short Form (p. 57). The results of this rating scale revealed a lower performance level by the children of inmates in all areas of school subjects. The fact that daughters of inmates scored lower than sons is an

indication that they are even more affected by their father's incarceration (p. 59). This research provided evidence that the jail confinement of a father has an adverse affect on the education and development of their sons and daughters (p. 59).

A literature review by Hannon, Martin, and Martin (1984) found that children will sense emotional strain in the home, display feelings of insecurity and "may respond with acting out behaviors" (p. 259). They concluded that "behavioral affects on children of imprisoned parents require further study" (p. 260).

Lowenstein (1986) studied the situations of prisoners' children in Israel. One hundred eighteen inmates participated in this research. Lowenstein used various inventory and performance instruments to gather data on the inmates and their wives (p. 80). These instruments measured personal and interpersonal characteristics of the family. Lowenstein discovered that wives of inmates deceived their children as to the location of their father; this duplicated the findings of Schneller (1976) who studied the effects of imprisonment on the families of ninety three black prisoners from the District of Columbia. This disruption in the lives of children produced emotional and behavioral problems. Morris's (1967) study revealed that "parents do not tell the children the truth about their father's whereabouts" (p. 426). Sack, Seidler, and Thomas (1976) also found

that parents deceived their children as to the imprisonment of the parent.

When mothers were able to cope with the stress of the situation, they were better able to help their children adjust to the forced single parent household (Lowenstein, 1986, p. 34). Lowenstein recommended family counseling and an increase in contact between the imprisoned father and his family.

In a three year study by Sack (1977), the male children of six families of prison inmates participated in clinical observations that found sons exhibiting aggressive antisocial behavior towards siblings and school mates following their fathers' incarceration. In one case, a young boy not only displayed aggressive behavior but began to wet and soil himself (p. 169). The children of all six families found difficulty in accepting the fact "that their fathers were now socially considered in need of punishment and as potentially dangerous" (p.172).

Morris (1967) reports on her three year research in Great Britain that children are affected by the imprisonment of their fathers. Morris studied selected inmates and wives of the inmates by extensive interviewing. This study is in agreement with the studies by other researchers in this literature review. Wives of inmates reported uncontrollable behavioral problems of their children: eating problems, insomnia,

fretting, and clinging (p. 425). "Anger, sadness or grief" are also common emotional responses of children of offenders (Gabel and Johnson 1995, p. 75). Morris concluded in her study that half of the wives of prisoners she interviewed said their "children missed their father a great deal" (p. 427). Schneller (1976) also found in his study that children missed their incarcerated fathers.

A study by Sack, Seidler, and Thomas (1976) involved a selected group of Caucasian men and women prisoners from state correctional institutions in Salem, Oregon. The prisoners were chosen with the criteria that they had at least one child between the ages of five and fourteen years and that the prisoner had contact with the child the year before imprisonment (p. 619). The information for this research was gathered using questionnaires and by interviewing the spouse of inmates and the inmates. The children were not interviewed.

Through questionnaires the researchers asked prisoners' wives about their children. Overall, wives of inmates felt their children were "more disruptive and aggressive and less obedient" especially pubertal children (1976, p. 624). Gabel and Johnston (1995, p. 76) in their book entitled Children of Incarcerated Parents also found children of offenders displayed aggressive behavior. Wives reported that their children had some academic problems since the fathers' confinement

in prison. "Achievement in school...may be significantly impaired by parental crime, arrest, and incarceration" (p.76). Gabel and Johnston found teenage children of prisoners to have "negative attitudes toward law enforcement" and at a high risk of becoming involved in crime (1995, p. 82). Sack, Seidler, and Thomas (1976) drew conclusions that some pubertal children are prone to antisocial behavior and recommend these strategies: family counseling that would address issues of housing, finances, parenting, prison visitation aid and marital counseling, plus the inclusion of the family in prisoner rehabilitation as well as evaluation of family needs (p. 627).

Family Ties and Visitation of Prison Inmates

A paper by Hairston in 1991 undertook the task of reviewing research on the importance of family ties during incarceration. Hairston states that continuing family ties during imprisonment maintains the "family unit," enhances "the well-being of individual family members," and facilitates "the prisoner's post-release success" (p.88). This study recognized imprisonment places severe stress on a marriage and prison visitation may be difficult to arrange because of lack of funds. Hairston's research further revealed that maintaining family ties is essential to the well being of the inmate, wife, children and the general public.

Family ties are instrumental in reducing the stress felt by individuals separated from their loved ones, in assuring families that their imprisoned relative is all right, in promoting the prisoner's mental health, in maintaining family bonds, in decreasing recidivism and increasing public safety. (p.101)

In Morris's (1967) research it was reported that prison visiting conditions were difficult and unpleasant as was noted in the study by Hannon, Martin, and Martin (1984) where they discussed the description of prison visitation and how family visitation is not conducive to the strengthening of family relationships (p. 254). Morris evaluated the prison situation by suggesting better visitation facilities for mothers and young children that would include refreshments after a long and awkward trip and a play area for children. She also advised counseling for school age children and a realization by prison welfare officers that treating the inmate alone is not enough (p. 430).

The implications of imprisonment on family members was investigated in the literature review by Hannon, Martin and Martin (1984). Families of prison inmates must adjust to extreme changes within their family structure (p. 253). They found that family support is frequently removed because of the stigma attached to incarceration. Family members are embarrassed and feel shame when a member is incarcerated and wives are encouraged to leave their inmate husbands.

Financial loss for the family of the inmate contributed to an inability to maintain contact with the inmate through prison visitation because funds were simply not available for travel. This contributed to the prison inmate's feeling of alienation from society.

Many families of prison inmates needed to move following incarceration (Sack, Seidler, & Thomas, 1976). This may be due to loss of income or desire to be closer to prison facilities.

Wives of prisoners in Great Britain made irregular visits to prison inmates and failure to do so was attributed to the expense and travel distance (Morris, 1967), replicating the finding of Hannon, Martin, and Martin (1984). The study of the affect of imprisonment upon the families of male, Black American inmates by Schneller (1976) reported that prison visitation was frequently very difficult because of the distance to the prison and insufficient funds to provide transportation. This absence of visitation had a detrimental effect on the family of the prison inmate. Schneller's research recommended an increase in family counseling, visitation privileges, introduction of a free visitors' transportation service for poor families and home furloughs for married inmates (p. 90). Hairston (1991) found prison visitation difficult for families for the same reasons as other researchers.

Wives of Prison Inmates

Fishman (1988) describes her research as a "case history approach" (p.172) centering on common law and legally married wives of prison inmates in Vermont. Fishman interviewed thirty women for this study. The results of this research agree with previous cited studies but traced the lack of prison visitation beyond finances and to the treatment of wives according to prison rules and by prison guards. Wives felt "degraded and diminished" when subjected to treatment equal to that of an inmate simply because they desired to visit their husbands (p. 181). Examples of such treatment are the searching of the wives possessions and in some institutions strip searches that are required before wives are allowed to visit their husbands.

The study by Hannon, Martin, and Martin (1984) also reviewed the hypotheses of other researchers on how some families of prisoners experienced improvement in their relationships. This improvement may be based on the simple fact that a wife continued to "stay married" to the inmate and this perseverance towards marital commitment was interpreted as marital satisfaction (p. 257). The inmate may also express erroneous marital satisfaction in a desperate attempt to continue contact with the outside world (p. 258).

In Schneller's (1976) study of black prisoners he chose prison inmates that were either legally married or

had common law wives for his research. The inmates and their wives were interviewed for this study using a family-change scale created by the researcher and the Locke Short Marital-Adjustment Test (p. 25-27).

This study revealed that wives of inmates frequently deceived their children as to the whereabouts of their father. This same deception was carried through in their relationships with extended family members and some friends. Wives indicated that the incarceration of husbands caused depression and loneliness. Sixty-one of the ninety-three families related they "experienced only changes for the worse" (p. 90).

Sack's (1977) case study work with six families of prison inmates gives valuable data in this field of personality characteristics of prison inmate family members. All six families had male children and this is where Sack concentrated his efforts. The method of research used for this study was clinical observations over a three year period.

The imprisonment of the fathers soon led to divorce in three of the six families. These three marriages were failing before the imprisonment of the husbands, and the researcher concluded that the husbands incarceration gave the wife a convenient time to end the relationship (p. 168). The other three couples remained married. Sack describes the wives' responses to their discomfort of being married to a prison inmate as "self enforced exile"

(p.172). The wives also felt isolated and depressed. Depression was also a characteristic of the wives in the Schneller research (1976). Schneller found the third and fourth most cited problem of wives of inmates is "depression" and "nerves" (p. 70). Fishman studied wives of inmates and found "they felt ashamed and embarrassed" and "were somehow guilty" of their husbands crime (p. 174). Fishman discovered that wives "were most fearful about being the object of gossip, ridicule, rejection, and hostility" (p. 175). The study by Sack, Seidler, and Thomas (1977) revealed that the wives isolated themselves socially from neighbors and friends which was confirmed in a 1977 study by Sack.

Sack (1977) observed that the marriages that were most stable before the imprisonment survived the husbands' incarcerations intact, and those marriages that were failing were dissolved during the imprisonment. Sack concluded that the condition of the marriage prior to incarceration is a major factor in whether the marriage will survive the husband's imprisonment (p. 172).

Hannon, Martin, and Martin (1984) concluded much the same in their study of prison inmate families.

The researchers, Sack, Seidler, and Thomas (1976) found that imprisonment was only one factor in the breakup of a marriage. "Imprisonment, then, may be seen as being often only a part of a process of prior family upheaval" (p. 627).

Summary

The research in this literature review indicates that imprisonment affects not only the inmate but the spouse and children as well. All of the studies stress the importance of strengthening the family unit of prison inmates. The studies revealed that wives of inmates have emotional and social difficulties. This research also indicates a trend of emotional and behavioral problems among children of prison inmates and lack of healthy acceptance and adjustment to the situation.

Researchers have found the following to be characteristics of prison inmates and their families. Anderson (1985) reports that prison inmates may request not to have visitors, including family members. The U.S. Bureau of The Census report in Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1993 (U.S. Bureau of the Census) reveals that during the time period of 1986 to 1991, 79% of state prison inmates were unmarried, divorced or separated. The children of inmates were frequently not told the truth about the absence of their father (Lowenstein, 1986) (Morris, 1967) (Sack, Seidler, and Thomas, 1976) (Schneller, 1976). Studies have shown sons of inmates to be "rated below average in the school world" (Friedman, 1965, p. 58) while daughters were more adversely affected than boys (Friedman, 1965). Gabel (1995) also found children of incarcerated fathers to have academic problems. Some social, physical and

behavior, insomnia (Morris, 1967), anger, sadness (Gabel, 1995), disobedience (Sack, Seidler and Thomas, 1976), aggressive (Gabel, 1995) (Sack, Seidler and Thomas, 1976) (Sack, 1977), and a longing for their father (Schneller, 1976) (Morris, 1967). Most of the family relationships were fragile even before the incarceration of the family member. Many inmates have a girlfriend or common-law relationship and these situations can not withstand the added intense stress this separation places on the relationship (Anderson, 1985). Those women often felt isolated (Schneller, 1976) (Sack, 1977), depressed (Schneller, 1976) (Sack, 1977), guilty of husbands crime (Fishman, 1988), the object of ridicule or gossip (Fishman, 1988), and overwhelmed by financial problems (Sack, 1977).

Chapter 3

Methodology

This study will discover if juvenile literature portrays male prison inmates and their family members in a realistic manner. In order to do this the researcher will use a content analysis. A content analysis is a systematic analysis that can describe the content of books and provide "concrete information about various aspects" of selected books (Bekkedal, 1973). Content analysis is appropriate for this study to gain an objective description of the content of books portraying prison inmates and their families.

The researcher will read the identified juvenile literature and determine if the characteristics found in the research studies of prisoners' families exists in the juvenile literature. The literature will be selected on the basis of the existence of a male prison inmate as a father or stepfather to at least one character in the book.

The researcher will endeavor to determine the reality of the social, emotional and physical condition of the prisoners families. A checklist of personality characteristics found in the literature review studies will be compared with the material in the juvenile literature. The checklist will be divided into

categories based on family relationships. These categories will contain social, emotional, physical, and academic characteristics that are most frequently revealed in the family members of prison inmates in the research in the literature review.

The checklist of social characteristics for wives of inmates will contain items such as isolation. Items describing the emotional characteristics will be depression, loneliness, and deceiving children as to the fathers' whereabouts. The physical item on the checklist will be financial needs indicated by lack of funding for housing, prison visitation of the inmate and child care.

The checklist of sons and daughters of inmates will contain emotional, physical, academic, and social qualities. Some emotional characteristics on the list will be sadness, withdrawal, aggression, anger, nightmares, and missing the inmate. Social items will be disciplinary problems and friendships. A sample of physical problems on the list could be bedwetting, illness, and use of illegal drugs. Academic characteristics on the questionnaire will contain items such as low school performance, lack of attendance, and general attitude at school.

The marital status of the inmates will be reported as being single, legally married, a common law marriage, divorced, or separated.

The data gathering instrument will indicate the relationship of the main character and other characters to the prison inmate. The character may be wife, common law wife, girlfriend, stepson, stepdaughter, son or daughter of the inmate.

A prototype of the checklist will be used with a book not part of the study to test the validity of the instrument. This research tested a prototype book against the checklist. This checklist contains the following marital status options for the prison inmates: legal marriage, common law marriage, divorced, separated, girlfriend and single. Characteristics on the checklist for wives/girlfriends are: financial difficulty, degrade, treated like inmates, deception (of children), isolation, depression, ashamed and embarrassed, feeling guilt for husbands crime, fear of being object of gossip, rejection, hostility, or ridicule and marital instability. Characteristics for sons and daughters of prison inmates are: lack of school attendance, illness, use of illegal drugs, academic problems, insomnia, disruptive and aggressive, less obedient, miss their father, sadness and anger. The checklist was then used with a book not part of this research. The checklist is Appendix A.

The books for this study were located through library catalogs, the Iowa union catalog, and the union catalog of schools within the Iowa Area Education Agency

11. The following bibliographies (Appendix B) will be used as well: Adventuring with Books A Booklist for Pre-K-Grade 6 edited by Mary Jett-Simpson, Young Reading A Booklist for Junior High and Middle School Students edited by Alleen Pace Nilson, Fiction for Youth A Guide to Recommended Books edited by Lillian Shapiro, Books to Help Children Cope with Separation and Loss by Reedman, Marsh Kabakow, Kathleen Dunne Gagne, and Joanne E. Bernstein, Through the Eyes of a Child by Donna E. Norton, Best Books for Junior High Readers edited by John T. Gillespie, The Bookfinder by Sharon Spredmann Dreyer, Books and Real Life by Nancy Polette and Fiction Catalog by Juliette Yaakov and John Greenfeldt.

The researcher identified subject headings from Sears List of Subject Headings (H.W. Wilson) and the Library of Congress Subject Headings (Library of Congress). The subject headings searched are **Children of prisoners--United States, Prisoners--United States--Family relationships, Prisoners' families--United States, Prisoners' families--Washington Metropolitan Area, Crime and Criminals, Criminals, and Prisoners' spouses.**

The juvenile literature for this study was limited to fiction books for kindergarten through twelfth grade children and young adults with the settings in English speaking countries. All books were published during the second half of the twentieth century. These books were obtained from the Des Moines Public Library, Urbandale

Public Library and through interlibrary loan. Books identified as appropriate for this research are listed in Appendix C.

For each book significant characters will be identified. Significant characters are characters so important to the story that data can be collected for analysis. A checklist was completed for each. This may or may not include the main character or secondary characters related to the imprisoned character.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Twenty-five books (Appendix C) were selected for this research and read by this researcher and a checklist (Appendix A) was completed for each character significant to this study with sufficient data to analyze.

Marital Status of Prison Inmates

Hypothesis 1 stated "The majority of identified juvenile literature accurately reflects the demographic data about mothers of children of prison inmates." The researcher looked for the words wife and/or husband when determining the marital status of the inmates and tallied the resulting data. Table 1 shows the results of that analysis.

Table 1: Marital Status of Prison Inmates in Juvenile Fiction

	<u>Married</u>	<u>Divorced</u>	<u>Widowed</u>	<u>Separated</u>	<u>Insufficient Data</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>No. of Inmates</u>	15	3	3	2	2	25

Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1993 (U.S. Bureau of the Census) states that 79% of prison inmates were unmarried, divorced or separated.

Fifteen of the twenty-five inmates in the selected books are married (60%). Three inmates are divorced (12%), three widowed (12%), two separated (8%) and two (8%) did not have sufficient data to analyze marital status. This data shows that only eight (32%) of the twenty-five inmates are unmarried, divorced, or

separated. Therefore the first hypothesis, "The majority of characters in juvenile literature accurately reflects the demographic data about marital status of prison inmates," is rejected.

Wives/Girlfriends of Prison Inmates

Hypothesis 2 stated "Ninety percent or more of identified juvenile literature will show mothers as exhibiting one or more of the identified social, physical and emotional conditions when husbands are incarcerated." The following information results from data gathered on the wives/girlfriends of the incarcerated men.

Table 2: Wives/Girlfriends of Prison Inmates

	Financial Difficulty	Deceived Children	Shame Embarrassment	Guilt for Crime	Total
No. of Wives/Girlfriends	10	2	1	1	14

This researcher found ten (58.8%) of the seventeen wives/girlfriends in the twenty-five selected books experienced financial difficulty. Financial difficulty was based on the existence of welfare handouts (Wood, 1992), use of donated items (De Clements, 1989) worry about paying bills (Butterworth, 1993) (Gifaldi, 1986) (De Clements, 1990) or concerns about debts (Shreve, 1980). Two other wives/girlfriends (11%) experienced deception (of children), and one (5.8%) other experienced ashamed and embarrassed as listed on the checklist while one (5.8%) wife/girlfriend felt guilt for husbands crime. Four (23.5%) wives/girlfriends related one of each of the following characteristics not identified on the

checklist: sadness, lonely, miss the inmate or a nervous breakdown. None of the identified wives/girlfriends experienced degradation, treatment like inmates, depression or fear of being object of gossip, rejection, hostility, or ridicule as listed on the prepared checklist. Fourteen (82.3%) of the seventeen wives/girlfriends in the twenty-five books experienced one or more of the characteristics listed on the checklist. The second hypothesis, "Ninety percent or more of identified juvenile literature shows mothers as exhibiting one or more of the identified social, physical and emotional conditions when husbands are incarcerated", is rejected.

Children of Prison Inmates

Hypothesis 3 stated "Ninety percent of child characters in juvenile literature will portray one or more of the social, physical, emotional and academic characteristics when fathers are incarcerated". The study revealed that fifteen of the twenty-one sons of the twenty-five inmates had sufficient information to analyze with the prepared checklist. Sixteen of the twenty-two daughters had sufficient information to analyze. This researcher filled out a checklist for thirty-one juvenile characters with an incarcerated father leaving twelve other juvenile sons and daughters with insufficient data to analyze. The effects of a

father's incarceration upon sons and daughters is reflected in the following table.

Table 3 : Children of Incarcerated Fathers

	Anger	Miss Father	Sadness	Insomnia	Lack of School Attendance	Total
No. of Children	15	6	2	1	1	31

Ten sons and five daughters experienced anger (48.3%). Two other sons and four daughters miss their father (19.3%) while two (6.4%) other sons exhibited sadness. One (3.2%) other daughter experienced insomnia and another daughter (3.2%) lack of school attendance. Two (6.4%) sons experienced sadness. The characteristics on the checklist not exhibited by the twenty-five sons and daughters are the 1) use of illegal drugs and 2) less obedient. Twenty-five (80.6%) sons and daughters of the thirty-one characters analyzed experienced one or more of the characteristics listed on the checklist. Therefore the third hypothesis, "Ninety percent of child characters in juvenile literature will portray one or more of the social, physical, emotional and academic characteristics when fathers are incarcerated", is rejected.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Summary

Conclusions

If children gain ideas from books and if authors write reflecting the real world then the ideas gained by juvenile readers should give them accurate impressions about the world in which they live. But if the majority of authors do not mirror or reflect real life situations then the ideas juvenile readers gain are inaccurate. This content analysis focused on the life situations of families of prison inmates as they are portrayed in twenty-five juvenile fiction books in order to analyze the accuracy of these books.

Marital Status of Prison Inmates

This researcher found that the marital status of the majority of prison inmates in the selected books did not agree with the report in Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1993 (U.S. Bureau of the Census). This report states that 79% of state prison inmates were unmarried, divorced or separated. Only 32% of the twenty-five inmates from the selected juvenile literature were unmarried, divorced or separated, leaving 68% as legally married men.

It is generally accepted that a normal, happy or traditional family consists of a father, mother and

children. The findings of this research on marital status of prison inmates lead us to believe that most authors prefer to have married inmates waiting for an end to their incarceration to allow a future reuniting of the family or a happier ending for their story. Therefore the juvenile readers gain the erroneous impression that the majority of prison inmates have the normal, traditional family waiting for the end of the father's incarceration.

Wives/girlfriends of Prison Inmates

This researcher identified seventeen wives/girlfriends that fulfill the criteria for inclusion in this research on the portrayal of prison inmates and their families in juvenile literature. Fourteen (82.3%) of the seventeen identified wives/girlfriends experienced one or more of the social, emotional and physical characteristics listed on the checklist. This researcher finds less than 90% of these women experienced one or more characteristic on the checklist.

This researcher draws the conclusion that most authors do not want to confront the traumatic negative social issues of marital instability, isolation, degradation or physical conditions such as financial difficulty and treatment as criminals or emotional issues of degradation, depression, shame, embarrassment, guilt for husbands crime or fear of gossip, rejection, hostility or ridicule that are a part of being a wife of

a prison inmate. Therefore most authors choose fewer negative issues for juvenile literature, leaving readers to draw the untrue conclusion that the characteristics under which wives/girlfriends of prison inmates live is not as traumatic as it is in real life.

Children of Prison Inmates

This researcher identified thirty-one of the forty-three sons and daughters with incarcerated fathers portrayed in the selected books with sufficient data to analyze. Twenty-five (80.6%) sons and daughters of the thirty-one experienced one or more of the negative social, physical, emotional and academic conditions of children whose fathers are incarcerated. Less than 90% of sons and daughters experienced one or more of the characteristics on the checklist.

This researcher concludes that juvenile literature does not portray the social, physical, emotional and academic difficulties of sons and daughters of prison inmates as they are in real life.

Recommendations

Further research could be done on the effects of the incarceration of fathers upon sons compared to the effects upon daughters within juvenile literature. Research could also be done on the incarceration of mothers and the affect upon their children in juvenile literature.

Most of the inmates in this research were imprisoned for stealing or embezzlement rather than for more violent crimes. Further research could be done to determine if most prison inmates with children are imprisoned for stealing or embezzlement.

"There are therefore approximately ... 1.53 million minor children of incarcerated parents in the United States" (Gabel, 1995, p.62). Incarceration affects a huge number of families and yet this researcher had great difficulty locating the twenty-five juvenile literature fiction books for this study. Research could be done on why authors choose not to write about this real life situation that affects approximately one and a half million children.

This researcher hopes that this study helps in the selection of contemporary juvenile literature dealing with the stigma of an incarcerated father. But those involved in the selection process should be aware that all juvenile literature does not depict an accurate portrayal of prison inmates and their families.

Summary

This study purposed to analyze the marital status of prison inmates and social, emotional, physical and academic characteristics of their family members. Three hypotheses were formed and a all available juvenile literature with the intended audience of grades kindergarten through twelfth grade were selected. Each

book was examined by completing a content analysis checklist designed by the researcher to evaluate the marital status of prison inmates and adverse characteristics of wives/girlfriends and sons and daughters of the prison inmates.

Three hypotheses were tested and rejected:

1. The majority of identified juvenile literature accurately reflects the demographic data about mothers of children of prison inmates.
2. Ninety percent or more of identified juvenile literature will show mothers as exhibiting one or more of the identified social, physical and emotional conditions when husbands are incarcerated.
3. Ninety percent of child characters in juvenile literature will portray one or more of the emotional and academic characteristics when fathers are incarcerated.

This researcher found the selected books for the content analysis of the portrayal of prison inmates and their families did not depict the marital status of prison inmates with accuracy. The researcher also discovered that the twenty-five juvenile literature books did not picture the adverse social, physical and emotional conditions of prison inmates wives/girlfriends with accuracy. The adverse social, physical, emotional and academic characteristics of sons and daughters of prison inmates within the literature did not represent the characteristics of children of prison inmates accurately.

Secondary findings of this research is the discovery that there are comparatively few number of books in relationship to the large number of children affected by the incarceration of a parent. Contemporary literature for children generally claims to depict all aspects of real life situations, but where are the fiction books with families dealing with the affects of an imprisoned family member? The researcher speculates that authors do not want to write about the subject of incarcerated family members or they are unaware of the number of children affected, or they have no desire to research the area to depict the situation accurately.

This researcher concludes that juvenile literature intended for an audience of kindergarten through twelfth grade portraying the lives of prison inmates and their families does not accurately depict the real life situation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, George M. "The Uncertain Relationship: Families of Prisoners." America (1985): 258-60.
- Beezy, Sandra. "books about family members who are in jail". Available e-mail:sbeezy@nueva.pvt.k12.ca.us to LM.NET@; December 9,1994.
- Bekkedal, Tekla K. "Content Analysis of Children's Books" Library Trends 22 (1973): 109-126.
- Carlson, Bonnie E., and Neil Cervera. Inmates and Their Wives Incarceration and Family Life. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992.
- Fishman, Laura T. "Stigmatization and Prisoners' Wives' Feelings of Shame" Deviant Behavior. 9 (1988): 169-192.
- Friedman, Sidney, and T. Conway Esselstyn. "The Adjustment of Children of Jail Inmates." Federal Probation 28-29 (December 1965): 55-9.
- Gabel, Katherine, and Denise Johnston, M.D., eds. Children of Incarcerated Parents. New York: Lexington Books, 1995.
- Goudreau, Ronald, ed. Library of Congress Subject Headings. 18th ed. Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1995.
- Hairston, Creasie Finney. "Family ties During Imprisonment: Important to Whom and For What?" Family Ties 18 (March 1991): 87-104.
- Hannon, Ginger, Don Martin, and Maggie Martin. "Incarceration in the Family: Adjustment to Change." Family Therapy 11, No. 3 (1984): 252-260.
- Huck, Charlotte S., Susan Hepler, and Janet Hickman. Children's Literature in the Elementary School. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1993.
- Lowenstein, Ariela. "Temporary Single Parenthood-The Case of Prisoners' Families." Family Relations 35 (1986): 79-85.

- Morris, Pauline. "Fathers In Prison." British Journal of Criminology 7 (1967): 424-430.
- Rovira, C. & Reyes, C., eds. Sears List of Subject Headings (13th ed.). New York: H.W. Wilson, 1986.
- Sack, William H. "Children of Imprisoned Fathers." Psychiatry 40 (1977): 163-174.
- Sack, William H., Jack Seidler, Susan Thomas. "The Children of Imprisoned Parents: A Psychosocial Exploration." American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 46 (1976): 618-628.
- Schneller, Donald P. The Prisoner's Family: A Study of the Effects of Imprisonment on the Families of Prisoners. San Francisco: R And E Research Associates, 1976.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1993. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993.

Marital status of the inmate:

- _____ Legal marriage
 - _____ Common law marriage
 - _____ Divorced
 - _____ Separated
 - _____ Girlfriend
 - _____ Single
 - _____ Other
- _____
- _____
- _____

Effects on sons when father is incarcerated:

- _____ Lack of school attendance
 - _____ Illness
 - _____ Use of illegal drugs
 - _____ Academic problems
 - _____ Insomnia
 - _____ Disruptive and aggressive
 - _____ Less obedient
 - _____ Miss their father
 - _____ Sadness
 - _____ Anger
 - _____ Other
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Effects on daughters when father is incarcerated:

- _____ Lack of school attendance
 - _____ Illness
 - _____ Use of illegal drugs
 - _____ Academic problems
 - _____ Insomnia
 - _____ Disruptive and aggressive
 - _____ Less obedient
 - _____ Miss their father
 - _____ Sadness
 - _____ Anger
 - _____ Other
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Appendix B

Bibliographies

- Dreyer, Sharon Spredmann. The Bookfinder. Circle Pines, MN.: American Guidance Service, Inc., 1994
- Gillespie, John T., ed. Best Books for Junior High Readers. New Providence, NJ: R.R. Bowker, 1991.
- Jett-Simpson, Mary, Ed. Adventuring with Books A Booklist for Pre-K-Grade 6. 9th ed. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1989.
- Nilson, Alleen Pace, ed. Young Reading A Booklist for Junior High and Middle School Students. 8th ed. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1991.
- Norton, Donna E. Through the eyes of a Child. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1991.
- Polette, Nancy, Books and Real Life. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1984.
- Reedman, Marsha Kabakow, Kathleen Dunne Gagne, and Joanne E. Bernstein. Books to Help Children Cope with Separation and Loss. New Providence, NJ: R.R. Bowker, 1993.
- Shapiro, Lillian, ed. Fiction for Youth A Guide to Recommended Books. 2nd ed. New York: Neal-Schuman, 1986.
- Yaakov, Juliette and John Greenfeldt. Fiction Catalog. 13th ed. New York: H.W. Wilson, 1996.

Appendix C

Books Selected for Content Analysis

- Alcock, Vivien. A Kind of Thief. New York: Delacorte, 1991.
- Armstrong, William H. Sounder. New York: Scholastic, 1969.
- Ashley, Bernard. A Kind of Wild Justice. New York: S.G. Phillips, 1978.
- Burch, Robert Joseph. Queenie Peavy. New York: Viking Press, 1966.
- Butterworth, Oliver. A Visit to the Big House. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.
- De Clemments, Barthe. Breaking Out. New York: Dell, 1991.
- De Clemments, Barthe. Five Finger Discount. New York: Dell, 1989.
- De Clemments, Barthe. Monkey See, Monkey Do. New York: Delacorte, 1990.
- Gifaldi, David. One Thing For Sure. New York: Clarion Books, 1986.
- Gordon, Sheila. The Middle of Somewhere: A Story of South Africa. New York: Orchard books, 1990.
- Hickman, Martha Whitmore. When Andy's Father Went to Prison. Niles, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 1990.
- Holland, Isabelle. The Empty House. New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1983.
- Kjelgaard, James. Stormy. New York: Holiday House, 1959.
- Lampman, Evelyn Sibley. The Year of Small Shadow. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971.
- Lichtman, Wendy. Telling Secrets. New York: Harper and Row, 1986.

- Madison, Winifred. Marinka, Katrinka and Me (Susie).
Scarsdale, NY : Bradbury, 1975.
- Marsden, John. So Much to Tell You. Boston: Little,
Brown 1987.
- Maury, Inez. My Mother and I Are Growing Strong.
Berkeley, CA : New Seed Press, 1979.
- Pohlmann, Lillian Grenfell. Sing Loose. Philadelphia:
Westminster, 1968.
- Reaver, chap. Bill. New York: Delacorte, 1994.
- Rodowsky, Colby. A Summer's Worth of Shame. New York:
Franklin Watts, 1980.
- Sachs, Marilyn Stickle. Fourteen. New York: E. P.
Dutton, 1983.
- Shreve, Susan Richards. The Masquerade. New York:
Knopf, 1980.
- Shusterman, Neal. What Daddy Did. Boston: Little,
Brown, 1991.
- Wood, June Rae. The Man Who Loved Clowns. New York: G.
P. Putnam's Sons, 1992.