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ABSTRACT

This study explores and describes the experiences of ten dual status youth in Taylor County, Texas by examining the factors of race, sex, child welfare allegation, and juvenile justice offense. A review of the literature suggests that this population has unique challenges in and outside the courtroom, including being at increased risk for disparate outcomes in later adolescence and adulthood. This study compared single-system child welfare and juvenile justice data from Texas DFPS Region 2 and Taylor County to raw data provided on a sample of ten dual status youth identified in Taylor County from 2017–2021. Findings included a disproportionately higher representation of males and youth of color in the dual status group. Regarding child welfare allegations, Refusal to Accept Parental Responsibility allegations were associated with 50% of the dual status group, but less than 1% of all removals in Taylor County over the same time period. Regarding juvenile offenses, felonies and misdemeanors accounted for 95% of offenses in the dual status group, compared to 86% of all offenses in Taylor County over the same time period. This study is significant because it provides important data for professionals in and around the juvenile justice and child welfare systems in Taylor County to utilize when choosing the best evidence-based practices and interventions with this unique population. Additional implications of this study for policy, practice, and research are provided.

Crossing Over: A Description of Dual Status Youth in Taylor County, Texas

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of School of Social Work

Abilene Christian University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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By

Kimberly S. Putnam

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This thesis, directed and approved by the committee for the thesis candidate Kimberly Putnam, has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Programs of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Science in Social Work


Assistant Provost for Residential Graduate Programs

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This thesis is dedicated to my past, present and future clients, colleagues, and peers.

*When we surround ourselves with encouraging people, make small and steady steps
towards our goals, and wholeheartedly believe in our worth and ability...*

We can do really, really hard things.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	v
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Research Questions.....	2
Research Gap and Purpose of Study.....	3
Significance of Study.....	4
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
Introduction	5
Policy History and Definitions of Terms.....	6
Policy History	6
Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act (JJDP) Act (JJDP).....	7
Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)	7
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)	8
Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)	9
Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).....	9
Definitions of Terms.....	10
Reviewing Existing Literature.....	10
The Current Study	12

Sex and Race as Moderators.....	13
Sex	13
Race	15
Intersection of Sex and Race among Crossover Youth	17
Trauma and ACEs	18
The Impact of Trauma	18
Criminalization of Trauma Behaviors	19
Cross-System Collaboration.....	21
Data Sharing	23
Trauma-Informed Care	23
System Updates and Innovation	24
Literature Informing the Methods of the Current Study.....	25
Exploring Reasons for System Contact.....	25
The Importance of Pathways	26
Qualitative Analysis of Lived Experiences	27
Taylor County Dual Status Pilot Program.....	28
Conclusion.....	29
III. METHODOLOGY	31
Introduction	31
Sample	31
Data Collection Methods	32
Instruments and Boundaries of Data Collection.....	33
JJS Offense Categories	33

	CWS Allegation Categories.....	34
	Race/Ethnicity Categories	34
	Analysis Method.....	35
	Risks and Confidentiality	36
	Summary.....	37
IV.	RESULTS.....	38
	Results from Single-System Data Analyses	38
	CWS Analyses.....	38
	Race and Sex	38
	Allegations.....	39
	JJS Analyses	40
	Race and Sex	41
	Offenses	41
	Results from Dual Status Data Analyses.....	42
	Race and Sex	42
	Allegations.....	43
	Offenses	44
V.	DISCUSSION.....	45
	Discussion of Findings	45
	CWS Allegations	45
	JJS Offenses.....	46
	Dual Status Disproportionalities.....	48
	CWS Allegations	48

JJS Offenses.....	49
Race and Sex	50
Race	50
Sex	51
Intersection of Race and Sex	52
Limitations.....	52
Barriers to Data Collection.....	52
Limitations of Data Analysis.....	53
Implications of Findings.....	54
Implications for Policy	54
Implications for Practice.....	56
Implications for Future Research	56
Conclusion.....	57
REFERENCES	58
APPENDIX A: ACU IRB Approval Letter.....	67
APPENDIX B: TJJD Data Use Agreement Form.....	68
APPENDIX C: 2INgage Data Use Agreement	69

LIST OF TABLES

1. Table 1: Race/Ethnicity Categories	35
2. Table 2: CWS Removals for ages 10–16 in DFPS Region 2 by Race and Sex.....	39
3. Table 3: CWS Allegations by Allegation Category and Geographical Area	40
4. Table 4: Taylor County Juvenile Referrals by Race and Sex.....	41
5. Table 5: TJJD Referrals by Offense Category and Geographic Area	41
6. Table 6: Dual Status Group Race and Sex	43
7. Table 7: CWS Allegations by Allegation Category for Dual Status Group and Taylor County	43
8. Table 8: JJS Referrals by Offense Category for Dual Status Group and Taylor County	44

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Figure 1: Study Groups, Factors, and Comparisons.....	36
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The child welfare, foster care, and juvenile justice systems in the United States seem to be under constant public scrutiny. When it comes to the treatment of children and youth by national, state, and local human services agencies, everyone seems to have an opinion. These human service systems are intricate and complex on their own and become even more so when they start to interact with one another. This same level of compounded complexity applies to the children being served by multiple systems, simultaneously. Pre-existing risk factors or often further intensified due to the trauma the children experience due to removal from their homes and entrance into foster care and family court systems. Often, youth involved with the juvenile justice system have experienced similar levels of trauma, in addition to the adverse effects of a rigid and punitive judicial system. When an individual is involved with both systems, they are called a dual status youth, also known as a crossover youth.

Statement of the Problem

Studies report that as many as 30% of youth in the child welfare system eventually crossover into the juvenile justice system, and in one county, 83% of the youth exiting juvenile corrections placements had previously experienced contact with the child welfare system (Herz et al., 2019). While youth only involved in one system have their own challenges, studies have shown that crossover youth are statistically more likely to experience mental health and substance abuse issues, in addition to exhibiting higher

patterns of truancy, lower school attendance rates, lower academic marks, and more serious behavioral issues than their single-system peers (Herz et al., 2019). Crossover youth often experience complex trauma, adversity, and toxic stress because of their experiences, which can bolster the existing foster-care-to-prison pipeline (The Children's Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, 2018). Long-term, crossover youth are more likely to experience homelessness, recidivism, incarceration as adults, and unemployment (Herz et al., 2019). Too many young people are entering into this crossover status, and little research is being done to understand the experiences of crossover youth and create action steps to reduce the overrepresentation of crossover youth in our child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Research Questions

System involvement is multi-faceted and complex, and one study cannot cover all the possible ways and means a child may be involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. To specify the scope of this study and guide my research, I decided on four overarching research questions:

- What are the most common allegations for all child welfare removals in Taylor County?
- What are the most common juvenile offenses for all adjudicated youth in Taylor County?
- Do dual status youth in Taylor County experience certain abuse/neglect allegations and/or juvenile offenses at disproportionate rates to youth in Taylor County only involved in one system?

- Are there any disproportionalities present when examining the race and sex of dual status youth compared to youth only involved in one system?

Research Gap and Purpose of Study

Taylor County, Texas, is currently involved in multiple pilot programs involving their child protective and juvenile justice systems, one of which specifically addresses the experiences of dual status youth in the courtroom (Dual Status Task Force, 2021; Tiano, 2022). While the current study has no direct connections to the pilot programs, the presence of the programs themselves set the experiences of Taylor County youth apart from those of youth in other counties. Studies targeting the specific life experiences of the youth relevant to their entry into the child welfare and juvenile justice systems have been conducted elsewhere in the United States (The Children’s Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps, 2018; Herz et al., 2019), but none have been conducted in west-central Texas. In addition, little research has explored the experiences of system-involved youth using their allegations and delinquency charges as factors. The purpose of this study is to provide Taylor County professionals with a relevant analysis of current data to inform their practices with the youth of the area. To accomplish this, this study aims to compare dual status youth to child welfare-only youth and juvenile justice-only youth regarding abuse and neglect allegations, juvenile justice offenses, sex of the youth, and race of the youth. Specifically, this study hopes to learn if dual status youth experience certain allegations and delinquency charges at different rates than children only involved in one system or the other, and if race and sex play a role in the legal outcomes of the youth.

Significance of Study

According to 2021 Census data, approximately 35,000 (25%) of the residents in Taylor County are under the age of 18 (Census Reporter, 2021). In 2020, there were approximately 858 children and youth aged 0–17 in foster care in Taylor County, which equals approximately 1 in 40 (Kids Count Data Center, n.d.). Taylor County is home to three accredited universities, multiple public-school districts, countless religious communities, and many child- and youth-centered nonprofit agencies that want nothing but the best for the children and youth of Taylor County. As will be discussed further in Chapter II of this study, system-involved youth are particularly vulnerable to continued victimization and trauma. It is the duty of both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems to protect the physical and mental well-being of the children in their care, as well as the broader community. This study is significant because it connects and analyzes data points with specific, intentional regard to the lives of system-involved youth in a local community. Utilizing existing data to get a glimpse into the lives of dual status youth can encourage a re-evaluation of child welfare and juvenile justice referrals and processes, as well as active community participation in reducing the number of system-involved children and advocating for the prevention of youth “crossing over” into both systems. This study encourages the use of research-informed practice and practice-informed research to directly improve the lives of the most vulnerable in Taylor County.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to present information from the current literature surrounding crossover and dual status youth, review state and national policies that impact youths' experiences, provide context for the key terms and acronyms, and discuss the complexities found at the intersections of sex and race with particular attention given to youth with selected minoritized identities. In addition, the effects of trauma and other adverse childhood experiences impacting youth involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems is presented, including the assertion that the criminalization of trauma behaviors is an important reason why youth "cross over" from one system to the other. The next section of the review presents recommendations for cross-system collaboration set forth by researchers, government agencies, and non-governmental agencies familiar with the dual status population. The researcher then briefly recounts the current, existing literature and information on dual status youth in the United States, followed by an introduction to the Dual Status Pilot Project currently underway in Taylor County. This chapter is concluded with a summary of the research gap, purpose of the study, and significance of the study, as introduced in Chapter I.

This review utilizes multiple types of literature, including journal articles, data sets, reports, news articles, issue briefs, legal policies, and more. Academic sources were located using the Abilene Christian University Library's OneSearch database, Google

Scholar, and through the reference sections of other academic sources. All other sources were located through Internet searches, government documents, agency databases, and through communications with system professionals.

Policy History and Definitions of Terms

Policy History

Policies that provide protections for youth have long been a priority in the United States. Since the establishment of early child labor laws that prevented the exploitation of youth in factories and industry, and child welfare legislation aimed at preventing abuse, abandonment, and neglect, America has sought to protect children from harm. In recent years, dual status youth have been identified as a particularly vulnerable population.

In Texas, a Dual Status Task Force convened from July 2019 through December 2020 to study this population of youth and provide recommendations for policy and practice within the state (Dual Status Task Force, 2021). This task force reviewed the existing literature and relevant policy and listed five relevant federal regulations: the Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act (JJDP); the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA); the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA); and the combination of medical insurance regulations applicable to foster care and juvenile justice youth, including the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and Medicaid (The Children's Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, 2018). These pieces of legislation refer to dual status youth in various ways and provide regulations and protections for high-risk youth in the fields of child protection, juvenile justice, public education, and healthcare.

Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act (JJDP)

According to the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (n.d.), the JJDP was established in 1974 to assist state and local efforts in preventing delinquency and improving the juvenile justice system. It was reauthorized with bipartisan support in 2018 and provides for a nationwide juvenile justice advisory and planning system; federal funding for state and local delinquency prevention and improvement practices; and the operation of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), a federal agency dedicated to technical assistance, training, program modeling, research, and evaluation for state and local juvenile justice efforts. The JJDP has four core requirements: a) the deinstitutionalization of status offenders, b) a status offender being a juvenile charged for conduct that would not be a crime if committed by an adult, c) the removal of juveniles from adult detention centers and from institutions where contact with adult offenders is possible, and d) the requirement that states recognize and work to eliminate the racial and ethnic disparities present in their systems (Coalition for Juvenile Justice n.d.). Regarding crossover youth, the JJDP requires that juvenile justice and child welfare agencies interact with one another for the safety of the public and the child, including the collaboration of services for youth who are victims of abuse, neglect, and/or maltreatment (The Children's Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, 2018).

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

According to the Child Welfare Information Gateway (2019), CAPTA was established in 1974 and was most recently amended in 2019 by the Victims of Child Abuse Reauthorization Act of 2018. The report also asserts that much like the JJDP, CAPTA provides federal funding and guidance to state and local authorities to support

assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse and neglect; clarifies the role of the Federal Government in providing research and evaluation tools, technical assistance, and data collection methods; and establishes the Office of Child Abuse and Neglect. CAPTA set forth federal definitions of child abuse and neglect, which were previously left up to state and local authorities. Since 2003, CAPTA has acknowledged the relationship between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and amendments have included improvements to service delivery and treatment for crossover youth, discretionary grant funding to support state efforts of cross-system collaboration, and the requirement to report annual data on children who entered the juvenile justice system while in the care of the child welfare system (The Children's Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, 2018).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Established in 2015, the ESSA called for increased transparency and shared accountability between systems to support disadvantaged students, including students in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (The Children's Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, 2018). The pay-for-success initiatives provide funding and resources to schools to provide appropriate prevention and intervention services for at-risk students encountering one or both systems (The Children's Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, 2018). This is done, in part, by increasing protections for the most high-need students, including system-involved students (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This law requires that all American students be taught to high standards that will prepare them well for success in the future and outlines the

procedures for annual assessments to measure the progress of the students (U. S. Department of Education, 2015).

Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)

The Children’s Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps (2018) stated that the goal of FFPSA, signed into law in 2018, is to reduce the number of children removed from their families and placed into foster care by restructuring the child welfare system investigation process. Federal funds are allotted towards evidence-based, in-home prevention and early intervention services tailored to children and families of children who are at risk of removal. By limiting out-of-home placements and increasing access to evidence-based interventions, the authors of the legislation hope to keep children in the child welfare system out of the juvenile justice system. Texas House Bill 3041 established two pilot programs to begin enforcing the FFPSA through court-ordered services: one of those programs was put into effect in Taylor County, Texas, in September of 2022 (H.B. 3041, 2021).

Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Many individuals in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems have serious and complex mental, emotional, behavioral, and physical health needs, some of the most common being substance abuse disorders, unmet mental health needs, and traumatic physical injuries (Acoca et al., 2014). The passing of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) strengthened the existing opportunities provided by Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to improve the health and wellbeing of child-welfare- and juvenile-justice-involved youth, even up to age 26 (Acoca et al., 2014; The Children’s Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps, 2018). Many individuals in

one or both systems are eligible for Medicaid, and such coverage is necessary for system-involved youth due to the increased medical and behavioral health needs present in this population (The Children's Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps 2018). According to the Child Welfare Information Gateway (2022), Medicaid benefits of relevance to crossover youth include behavioral health and trauma services, psychotropic medications, home- and community-based services, reproductive and sexual health services, and health homes for individuals with chronic medical conditions. Medicaid also offers comprehensive physical health care, including dental and vision services (Acoca et al., 2014). With all the complexities youth and their families must navigate with dual-system involvement, legislation such as the ACA, Medicaid, and CHIP aim to increase access to healthcare for crossover and dual status youth.

Definitions of Terms

Across the literature, this population of youth that contact both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems is defined in multiple ways with nuanced differences concerning the child's pathway into care and jurisdiction of the systems, whether the child is involved in the systems concurrently or non-concurrently, and the laws of the region in which the child is located. This section will first briefly review the definitions for this population provided by existing literature and policies. Then, the researcher will define and explain the two chosen titles for the population, the abbreviations, and the sample group titles that will be used in the current study.

Reviewing Existing Literature

Herz et al. (2019) investigated the pathways of dual system contact among youth involved in both the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system. The term

crossover youth was used as an umbrella term to describe individuals who experience maltreatment and engage in delinquency, regardless of the outcomes of either experience. *Dual system youth* were defined as any crossover youth that touch both systems through referral or involvement, and *dual contact youth* as those who touch both systems non-concurrently. Youth who are involved with both systems concurrently are called *dually-involved*, and youth that are concurrently in the conservatorship of the state and under the formal supervision of the juvenile justice system are considered *dually-adjudicated* (Herz et al., 2019, p. 2436). These same definitions were used in Herz and Dierkhising's (2019) report to the OJJDP.

In November 2018, The Children's Partnership and the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice released a brief including policy and practice recommendations for working with dual status youth. They use the term *dual status* to mean any youth who has "come into contact with both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, to any degree, in any order, and at any point in time" (p. 5). *Dually-identified* youth are defined as youth with current juvenile justice involvement and a history of non-concurrent child welfare involvement. As with the definitions mentioned above, *dually-involved* youth are involved concurrently, and *dually-adjudicated* youth are both dependent on the state and formally delinquent (The Children's Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, 2018).

The term *dual status* is established in Texas law: Section 51.02 of Title 3 of the Texas Family Code defines a dual status child as any child who has been referred to the juvenile justice system while also either 1) in the temporary or permanent managing conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS); 2) the

subject of a case involving or requiring family-based safety services; 3) an alleged victim of abuse, maltreatment, or neglect in an open child protective investigation; or 4) a victim in a case in which the department finds reason to believe that abuse, neglect or maltreatment had occurred (Tex. Fam. Code Ann. § 51.02, 2021). When Texas formed a Dual Status Task Force to explore best policy and practice for this population, they also analyzed the many definitions present in the literature (Dual Status Task Force, 2021). To reduce confusion, the Task Force settled on using only two terms: *dual system* and *dual status*. *Dual system youth* were identified by historical, non-concurrent involvement in one or both systems, and *dual status youth* were identified by simultaneous contact with both systems (Dual Status Task Force, 2021).

The Current Study

This study will predominantly use *crossover youth* to identify and describe the population of individuals who touched both systems, either concurrently or non-concurrently, before the age of 18. The acronym *CWS* will represent the child welfare system, and the acronym *JJS* will represent the juvenile justice system; as such, *CWS-only* will describe children and youth that have had contact with the CWS but not the JJS, and *JJS-only* will describe youth that have had contact with the JJS but not the CWS. Involvement in the CWS will be defined by a child or youth having a child protection court case opened on their behalf and must include removal from the home and placement into foster care or kinship placement. Involvement in the JJS will be defined by a youth having any involvement as a perpetrator in a formal juvenile court case that may or may not result in probation, parole, placement in a residential treatment center (RTC), and/or placement in a juvenile detention center (JDC). The term *dual status* will

be used to describe youth with formal involvement with both systems, as defined above, both concurrently and non-concurrently. The *dual status sample group* will contain individuals who have been formally adjudicated as a victim in a child welfare case and a perpetrator in a juvenile justice case, both concurrently and non-concurrently. This group will be further explained in chapter three of this study.

Sex and Race as Moderators

Sex

A youth's sex assigned at birth is often an important aspect of their formation and identity. Differences in the experiences of dual status youth could be moderated by this aspect of their identity. The literature indicate that females are overrepresented in populations of crossover youth across the nation, and that their experiences have unique challenges (Cioffi, 2022; Flores et al., 2018; Kolivosky, 2022; Saar et al., 2015; Williams-Butler, 2018; Zahn, 2008). A qualitative study involving 33 incarcerated girls over a two-year period revealed three unique challenges faced by crossover youth not faced by JJS-only and CWS-only youth: female crossover youth spend more time in detention, receive different treatment, and are more likely to experience probation and punishment for minor offenses than their male and non-crossover counterparts (Flores et al., 2018).

A surge of female arrests and entry into the juvenile justice system in the 1990s led the OJJDP to form the Girls Study Group to increase the understanding of female delinquency in the United States (Zahn, 2008). This group, along with Saar et al. (2015), discusses the phenomenon that more and more girls are being arrested, even though their rates of criminality and violence have not increased proportionally. This could be

attributed to changes in law enforcement policies and arrest laws over the past 20 years, including lowering the threshold for classifying and reporting assaults, “mandatory arrest” laws in cases of domestic violence, and schools’ zero-tolerance policies (Zahn, 2008). Zahn (2008) also states that domestic violence charges are particularly pertinent to females, as family conflicts (e.g., girls assaulting a parent in an argument,) account for a larger proportion of girls’ arrests than boys’ arrests. Additional risk factors mentioned in this resource include hormone surges due to earlier puberty among girls, a higher rate of sexual abuse and maltreatment among girls compared to boys, and a higher frequency of anxiety and depression diagnoses among girls compared to boys.

While females may be more vulnerable to crossing over between the JJS and CWS, the higher number of delinquent males means that many services for crossover youth are not tailored to the unique needs of crossover females (Kolivosky, 2022). The biological timing of puberty in females has been suggested as one of the many reasons for a difference in protective factors between males and females (Williams-Butler, 2018). Cioffi et al. (2022) conducted a study exploring the relationships between pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes, as well as suicide rates and substance abuse rates among female crossover youth. The researchers found that female crossover youth experience adolescent pregnancy, suicide, and substance abuse at higher rates than youth not involved with either the JJS or the CWS. The study also found that adolescent pregnancy, regardless of the outcome, among female crossover youth was associated with an increased risk for suicide attempts, and pregnancy ending in miscarriage further increased that risk.

Currently, there are no policies and procedures in practice that account for the unique experiences of pregnancy and miscarriage among crossover youth assigned female at birth. Saar et al. (2015) describe the “sexual abuse to prison pipeline” as another unique experience of girls in the JJS, including female crossover youth (p. 1). Between the years of 2013 and 2017, 12–15% of new entries into the Texas JJS, all genders included, had experienced childhood sexual abuse (Texas Juvenile Justice Department [TJJD], 2017). Saar et al. (2015) assert that the trauma of girls who have experienced sexual abuse or maltreatment leads to behavioral reactions that are criminalized and exacerbated by their involvement with the JJS. It becomes a cycle of trauma, imprisonment, and abuse that is difficult to stop. The criminalization of trauma behaviors and the relationships between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and crossover youth will be discussed later in this chapter.

Race

A youth’s race is a part of their identity and life experience that they cannot change or choose. As is the case with any social construct, race can have known and unknown effects on the experiences of dual status youth. Several studies indicate that implicit racial biases present at the systemic, family, and individual levels affect the experiences of youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (Baumle, 2018; Kolivosky, 2022; Marshall, 2012; Marshall & Haight, 2014). The 2020 AFCARS (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System Report) revealed that the abuse victim rate per 1,000 children of that race was 13.2 in African Americans, 15.5 in American Indians/Alaska Natives, 7.8 in Hispanics, 10.3 among children of multiple races, and 9.0 in Pacific Islanders (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

[HHS], 2021). The rate among White children was 7.4, and the rate among Asian children was 1.6. In 2017, the TJJD reported that between 2013 and 2017, the percentage of African American youth in the Texas JJS generally increased from 35.2% to 43.6%, while the percentage of Hispanic youth generally decreased from 45.8% to 39.0%, and the percentage of White youth also generally decreased from 18.5% to 17.0%. Criminal justice system contact is so common among African Americans that some scholars have begun to consider justice involvement a “de facto” stage in the transition to adulthood among the African American population (Yi & Wildeman, 2018, p. 39).

Racial bias can affect crossover youth at multiple levels. Kelly and Varghese (2018) explore four types of institutional oppression experienced by Black Americans: latent oppression, which is more subtle and often presents as microaggressions; belligerent oppression, which is overt unjust treatment involving violence and the direct removal of freedoms; manifest oppression, which involves cruel and unjust treatment that can be observed, but is not necessarily violent; and benevolent oppression, which is an oxymoron of sorts that includes policies that appear to be designed to assist vulnerable individuals, but do not actually create equality, equity, or social justice. This “benevolent oppression” can be seen in the child welfare system: it is a system designed to protect abused and neglected children, but it is also a system rampant with racial disproportionalities in number of removals, number of placements, length of time spent in foster care, and disparate treatment by child welfare professionals (Kelly & Varghese 2018, p. 880).

Marshall’s qualitative study (2012) revealed that different professionals interacting with the crossover youth population have differing opinions on how race

disproportionality should be handled: 24% of participants specifically discussed in crossing over as a manifestation of institutional racism, and 24% of participants asserted that the deep entrenchment of African American youth in the JJS and CWS is due to their distrust in authority, often as modeled by their parents. Communication barriers between the White-dominated systems and African American families were also discussed by several professionals, as African American professionals may be more direct in their communication with families than White professionals. Eighteen percent of participants in the study cited unconscious race and class biases among court professionals as another contributing factor to disproportionate outcomes. To better understand the crossover population, it is important to understand the impact of bias and work backwards to explore the roots of the present disproportionalities.

Intersection of Sex and Race among Crossover Youth

For African American girls, the intersection of racism and sexism creates unique challenges and opportunities for increased discrimination and oppression (Williams-Butler, 2018). Development is one of the largest concerns for this population, as at-risk African American females may face more social disadvantages if involved with the CWS and JJS than their White and/or male counterparts (Williams-Butler, 2018). Kolivosky (2022) uses Critical Race Theory (CRT), which suggests that race is a social construct and differences between races are rooted in society, and the accompanying principle of intersectionality, the idea that every individual is simultaneously part of multiple groups that can expose them to multiple forms of bias, to analyze the experience of African American crossover girls. Kolivosky brings forth common assumptions held by professionals, families, and community members that interact with crossover youth,

including the idea that Black girls are more mature and independent, less reliant on others for protection, and more informed about “adult topics” such as sex, drugs, and alcohol at an earlier age. These assumptions indirectly contribute to the higher rates of African American girls crossing over.

Trauma and ACEs

The Impact of Trauma

The impacts of childhood trauma on adolescent and adult functioning are continuing to be researched and understood. Dual status and crossover youth are victims of trauma due to their involvement with the CWS and JJS, and often due to other experiences in their lives as well. The importance of using trauma-informed care with this population will be expanded upon in a further section. Felitti’s (1998) landmark study investigated the impact of ACEs on adulthood health risk factors. The study found a strong, positive relationship between the number of ACEs and the number of health factors for the leading causes of deaths in adults present in the population. The study asserts that dangerous behaviors such as smoking, substance abuse, eating disorders, and risky sexual behaviors were used by those with multiple ACEs as coping devices, whether consciously or unconsciously. In adolescents, higher ACEs scores were linked to increased mental health symptoms, and ACEs have been shown to indirectly impact young adult trauma symptoms through adolescent mental health symptoms (Franz et al., 2019). Franz et al.’s (2019) study echoed Felitti’s discovery that the more ACEs and trauma a child experiences, the greater their risk for developing mental health symptoms during adolescence. In addition, ACEs increase the risk of repeated involvement with the JJS (Baglivio et al., 2014).

Exposure to multiple types of traumatic events, such as multiple ACEs, is known as *polyvictimization* (Modrowski et al., 2022). Polyvictimization in early childhood may contribute to continued polyvictimization in adolescence, which has serious implications for mental health and harmful behaviors in adolescence and beyond (Dierkhising et al., 2019). Polyvictimization is incredibly common among individuals in the CWS and JJS separately, and it is likely that crossover and dual status youth also experience high rates of polyvictimization (Modrowski et al., 2022; Simmons-Horton, 2021). In fact, system involvement on its own is a traumatic experience: removal from one's family of origin and experiencing juvenile court are both traumatic events that dual status youth experience as a detriment to their future abilities to function as a regular member of society with healthy attachments and coping skills (Simmons-Horton, 2021).

Criminalization of Trauma Behaviors

Childhood and adolescent trauma can present and manifest in many ways. According to Modrowski et al. (2022), two of the most common traumas that crossover youth are exposed to aside from polyvictimization are attachment-related trauma and betrayal trauma. The study states that attachment-related trauma often occurs within the primary caregiving relationship, such as the relationship between a parent and a child, and can include unanticipated or prolonged separation from an attachment figure, abuse or neglect by an attachment figure, abandonment or isolation from an attachment figure, and/or death of an attachment figure. This type of trauma is particularly relevant to individuals involved with the CWS who experienced abuse, neglect, maltreatment, or abandonment at the hands of their families before being removed from their families. This can also relate to JJS youth who have been removed to detention facilities.

Modrowski et al. (2022) explain that betrayal trauma involves a trusting relationship being broken due to a traumatic event perpetrated by someone in the relationship (e.g., maltreatment of a child by their parent or trusted adult). Emotional dysregulation and abnormal behaviors due to attachment-related and betrayal trauma have been linked to increased risk of JJS involvement. In the study, emotional dysregulation is defined as difficulty understanding one's emotions, providing appropriate emotional responses to given situations, and/or controlling impulsive behaviors when one is upset.

The concept of the "trauma-to-prison" pipeline is not new to child welfare and juvenile justice literature. This is in part due to the criminalization of trauma behaviors (Baumle, 2018; Saar et al., 2015; Tiano, 2022). Many of the offenses that lead to justice system involvement are common reactions to the traumas discussed above: engaging in dangerous, self-destructive, and reckless behaviors is a common posttraumatic response, and a common way that adolescents get into trouble with the law (Baumle, 2018; Modrowski et al., 2022). For example, law enforcement involvement is often the first response in residential group home settings, where large amounts of traumatized youth are in the same place and emotional and physical outbursts are common (Tiano, 2022). Hitting a group home worker in an emotional outburst, assaulting another student in school during an argument, and getting involved with illegal drug usage to cope with their stress are all examples of how trauma and criminal behaviors can overlap.

Baumle (2018) suggests that one of the primary ways that juvenile trauma is criminalized is through status offenses such as truancy, running away, alcohol possession, curfew violations, and ungovernability, or repeated rebellious behavior that a caregiver cannot control. These offenses would be lawful if committed by an adult; however, they

are criminal if committed by a juvenile. Rebellious behaviors, such as underage drinking and staying out late, and avoidance behaviors, such as running away from home and skipping school, can all be considered reactions to trauma, according to Baumle. Alcohol use and other substance abuse issues can be an act of rebellion, but they can also be a way of self-medicating to avoid or numb the emotional pain of the trauma these youth have experienced (Baumle, 2018; Saar et al., 2015).

Especially in female youth, the impacts of childhood sexual abuse and other forms of childhood trauma can manifest as hypersexual and rebellious behaviors (Baumle, 2018; Saar et al., 2015). JJS-involved females tend to be sexually victimized at an earlier age than youth not involved with the system, and girls in the JJS are up to four times more likely to have experienced sexual abuse than boys (Saar et al., 2015). Prostitution is a common charge that brings female minors into the JJS, and these charges are often a direct result of a girl's victimization, whether through sexual assault or sex trafficking. Even though the girls are victims of sexual assault and human trafficking, regardless of their hypersexual behaviors, they are often criminally penalized as perpetrators for prostitution and other sex crimes (Baumle, 2018).

Cross-System Collaboration

Both the CWS and the JJS are highly monitored, highly regulated, and highly protected systems that deal with incredibly vulnerable individuals. Each system requires specific professionals with specific training to function properly. With the complexity of the experiences of dual status youth, it is important that the CWS and JJS work together for the best interests of the youth and their communities.

For generations, research has linked experience in foster care to criminal behaviors, both in adolescence and in adulthood (Dual Status Task Force, 2021; Herz et al., 2010; Herz et al., 2019; Herz & Dierkhising, 2019; Kolivosky et al., 2017; Yi & Wildeman, 2018). Because of this known connection, some wonder if the foster care system could provide at-risk children, youth, and their families with the services and support they need to keep foster youth out of the juvenile justice system (Yi & Wildeman, 2018). Criminal activity among young people peaks during mid- to late-adolescents, which happens to align with the time youth can age out of the foster system and be tried as legal adults; Yi and Wildeman (2018) assert that it is important for the child welfare system to collaborate with the juvenile justice system and other agencies to connect youth to much-needed resources, ideally keeping more foster youth out of the justice system.

As system professionals and researchers have become more aware of the increasing numbers of crossover and dual status youth, several studies and reports have published recommendations for collaboration between the CWS and the JJS (The Children's Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, 2018; Dual Status Task Force, 2021; Herz & Dierkhising, 2019). Following The Children's Partnership and Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps' model, brief descriptions of the recommendations for cross-system collaboration on dual status cases have been organized into three categories: data sharing, trauma-informed care, and system updates and innovation.

Data Sharing

Every governmental system and agency have documentation requirements and different software applications, databases, and websites that they use for documentation and data collection. Since 2002, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) has encouraged states to share child welfare information with the juvenile court when delinquency occurs (National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2015). The Children's Partnership and Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps (2018) suggest that the adoption of further policies, protocols, and procedures for enhanced service coordination between systems is needed to provide the best care and accountability possible. It is important that the information shared is kept confidential. In addition, data-sharing can prevent the re-traumatization of these youth by not requiring them to repeat their stories for different systems to document (Dual Status Task Force, 2021). Administrative data should not only be shared between the CWS and JJS agencies, but also between child protective judges and juvenile delinquency judges (Dual Status Task Force, 2021). Judges have a unique opportunity to lead in these collaborative efforts, as will be discussed below (Herz et al., 2010). A 2019 study on the pathways of dual status youth contact with the CWS and JJS systems is one example of the research and evaluation that can be completed with the use of data shared across systems (Herz et al., 2019).

Trauma-Informed Care

Early identification of crossover and dual status youth are crucial to providing the best possible services and care to this population (Herz & Dierkhising, 2019; Kolivosky et al., 2017; National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2015). In addition to preventing re-traumatization, as discussed above, having knowledge of a young person's experience in

the juvenile and child welfare systems can inform best practices moving forward before even interacting with the youth themselves (National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2015). This can also help identify other systems involved in the life of the youth that may work together to support youth on all sides (Kolivosky et al., 2017). In the legal system, the Dual Status Task Force recommends that the prosecutors on juvenile justice cases receive training on the impact of trauma to look beyond how the individual is behaving and question what is leading to and driving the behavior—in other words, asking, “What happened to [this child]?” rather than, “What is wrong with [this child]?” (Dual Status Task Force, 2021, pp. 46-47). Increasing the access to trauma-informed training tailored to the professionals that interact with dual status youth can shift the culture surrounding this population, as well as encourage the use of multi-disciplinary teams in providing proper services, rehabilitation, and accountability (The Children’s Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps, 2018; Herz et al., 2019; Herz & Dierkhising, 2019).

System Updates and Innovation

As American society becomes increasingly technology-based, it is important that the CWS and JJS stay up to date in their communications and services. Regarding dual status youth, multiple child welfare research and advocacy groups recommend the recruitment of quality volunteers, resources, and placement options using technology-based solutions (The Children’s Partnership & Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps, 2018; Dual Status Task Force, 2021). In addition, as research continues to inform these systems about the experiences of those within their reach, it is important that legal actors, child protective actors, and social service actors are continuously reevaluating their practices and innovating new ways of serving their relevant populations. Herz and

Dierkhising (2019) partnered with the OJJDP for their research and recommendations for policy and practice with dual status youth and stress the importance of partnerships between CWS and JJS agencies and professional research and evaluation teams, specifically for system updates and innovation. With new data and research coming into the systems, they can move towards preventing cross-system contact among youth altogether.

Literature Informing the Methods of the Current Study

While this study will be among the first to explore the experiences of dual status youth in Taylor County, many studies have researched this population in several ways. Reviewing relevant, timely literature on the CWS, JJS, crossover, and dual status populations is important to the development of a new study because it informs the researcher of ethical and efficient research practices. The final section of this literature review highlights three empirical studies and one pilot program whose methodology contributed to the development of my study.

Exploring Reasons for System Contact

Baidawi (2020) conducted a study in Australia examining justice system contact among youth in child protection. When investigating the entry of these youth into the systems, Baidawi found that a disturbance or breakdown of the living situations of children with their families was the most common precursor to children being put into out-of-home care. Several common situations played into this statistic: the parents were often dealing with mental health and substance abuse difficulties on their own, and family violence, caregivers' inability to manage the children's behavioral issues, mental health needs of the children, and neuro-disability needs of the children compounded to result in

situations where it was unsafe to leave the children in their homes. In their exploration of the criminal offenses of dual status youth, they also found that crossover youth were three times more likely to be arrested and charged before the age of 14 than JJS-only youth, and offenses involving bodily harm or threat of bodily harm were the most common and most serious charges given to dual status youth. The current study aims to gather similar data related to the reasons for involvement in the CWS and JJS, so that trends present among dual status youth in Taylor County can be identified and used to inform policy, practice, and further research.

The Importance of Pathways

Herz et al. (2019) introduced the field to the importance of the pathways through which dual status youth enter into the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. While concurrent involvement is often the easiest to identify and collect data from to analyze, not all youth that have contacted both systems have done so at the same time. The researchers break the pathways down into six possibilities, beginning with non-concurrent involvement: those in the “dual contact/child welfare pathway” engaged with the CWS first, and those in the “dual contact/juvenile justice pathway” touched the JJS first (p. 2436). The next four pathways involve youth who touch both systems concurrently, which their study defines as dually involved. Dually involved individuals can enter through either the JJS or the CWS, similarly to the non-concurrent pathways defined above; however, those two possibilities can be further broken down to specify the presence of historical involvement in the CWS.

Using these pathways, the researchers found that across all three counties involved in the study, non-concurrent contact was more common among dual status

youth than concurrent contact. This study compared data points from the dual status sample populations to the JJS-only and CWS-only populations to identify differences in multiple factors of the system-involved experience: the ages at first JJS petition and first CWS investigations were collected and compared, as well as the amount of time spent in CWS dependency care and JJS detention. The researchers also compared the three groups regarding race and sex. The current study aims to follow a similar data analysis plan involving three sample groups, as will be explained in Chapter III of the present study.

Qualitative Analysis of Lived Experiences

Simmons-Horton (2021) recently published a qualitative study of ten former crossover youth in the Houston, Texas area between the ages of 18 and 24 years old. Their research provides a glimpse into the lives of these youth by using interviews with open-ended research questions about their experiences in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Echoing Herz, et al.'s study (2019) discussed above, Simmons-Horton found that the pathway through which the youth entered the systems had an impact on how they experienced the systems. However, when talking with the study participants, many attributed their dual status involvement to situations they found themselves in once they had entered foster care; in other words, they believe that they would not have experienced involvement with the JJS had they not entered the CWS. In addition, multiple participants recognized the negative influence that their status had on their treatment in care: many felt that the labels and stereotypes they carried as individuals involved in one or both systems led to feelings of stigmatization among the youth and differential treatment by child welfare professionals and juvenile justice professionals. This study points to the need for further cross-system collaboration efforts for crossover

and dual status youth in Texas systems, in addition to the need for an increased knowledge base of the situations surrounding these youth.

Taylor County Dual Status Pilot Program

In 2021, the Dual Status Task Force began the implementation of a Dual Status Pilot Program in three Texas child protection courts, including the Child Protection Court of Taylor County (Dual Status Task Force, 2021). This pilot uses the “one-family, one-judge” model, which consolidates an individual’s juvenile justice case and child protection case into one court under one judge, with the goals of increased cross-system collaboration, more streamlined and specific service provision to limit further system involvement, and improved ability for judges to make informed choices regarding the safety and wellbeing of the child(ren) and the larger community (Dual Status Task Force, 2021, p. 43).

This model was introduced to the field of juvenile justice as early as 2012 by Project ONE, an initiative of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges [NCJFCJ], 2012). The first key principle of this initiative is the one-family, one-judge model, which states that all members of a family are to be served by one judge to the greatest extent possible, through all court cases and all court processes (NCJFCJ, 2012). If this is not possible—for example, if the youth involved is charged with a serious felony that does not seem to match the risk factors involved with the youth—the courts should develop and follow protocols for integrated communication and coordination to best serve the needs of the youth and their family (Dual Status Task Force, 2021; NCJFCJ, 2012). The other key principles of Project ONE are judicial leadership, the implementation of recommended

practices, just and timely decisions, respect, family engagement with the court, multiculturalism and diversity, community collaboration, adequate resources, use of data, system accountability, victim safety and empowerment, and offender accountability for juveniles and adults (NCJFCJ, 2012). Each of these principles work towards the goal of equal and coordinated access to justice for families.

The Taylor County Pilot Program began in 2021 and continues to the time of the current study. Evaluations of the pilot are currently underway by researchers brought in by the Task Force from Texas universities. Along with this evaluation, the current study will inform the CWS and JJS professionals and associated agencies of the specific needs and experiences of dual status youth in Taylor County.

Conclusion

The purpose of this literature review was to examine the recent and current discussions surrounding crossover and dual status youth. The researcher found that while multiple studies have been conducted on this population in other areas of the nation and world, very little literature exists on the unique experiences and patterns of dual status youth in Taylor County, Texas. While this study has no direct connection to the pilot projects currently underway in Taylor County, the presence of these programs sets Taylor County apart from other rural counties. In addition, little to no studies have compared the experiences of crossover youth to single-system youth using allegation and criminal charge data. This study is significant because it aims to describe the experiences of this population through a child welfare lens and a juvenile justice lens, in order to locate trends in the specific behaviors, on the parts of caregivers and offending youth, are leading to dual-system involvement. The findings of this study will increase the

knowledge base of the CWS and JJS professionals and associated agencies in Taylor County, with the long-term goal of establishing policies and practices to prevent the “crossing over” phenomenon from occurring in already vulnerable populations.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this exploratory descriptive study was to identify whether patterns exist between CWS-only youth, JJS-only youth, and dual status youth regarding the reasons they entered the systems. A primary aim of this study was to describe the experiences of dual status youth in Taylor County, Texas, specifically. This study also explored whether the youth’s experiences differ based on race and sex.

The data for this study included de-identified agency records for CWS, JJS, and dual-system-involved youth who have entered one or both systems due to a formal Child Protection Court investigation that resulted in removal from the home and a charge resulting in formal adjudication as a juvenile offender. The following section details the targeted population’s characteristics. Public data was accessed through the DFPS Data Book, and private data was accessed and used with permission from Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJJ) and 2Ingage, the Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) for Child Protective Services in Taylor County (See Appendices B and C).

Sample

This study aimed to describe the experiences of three populations of youth—CWS-involved individuals, JJS-involved individuals, and dual status youth—and to compare certain demographic markers and experiences of single-system youth to those of dual-system youth. The study contained three sample groups. The first group included all

children and youth who were removed from their home in a child welfare case opened in Taylor County between in the calendar years 2017–2021. The second group included all youth who were the perpetrator and formally charged in a juvenile delinquency case opened in Taylor County between the calendar years 2017–2021. The third group contained ten individuals identified by 2INgage to have been dual status youth with involvement in one or both systems beginning between the calendar years 2017–2021.

The five-year period for data collection was chosen for several reasons. First, it provided the opportunity for a larger sample size of dual status youth, as it is likely that there are less dual status youth than single-system youth. The intention of a larger sample size is to increase internal and external validity. Second, extending the collection period to substantially before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 provides some insight into the trends that were present during a time perceived as “normal.” The five-year period allows the researcher to account for the implications of the pandemic on child welfare and juvenile justice as the height of the lockdown distress in 2020–21 is decreasing, while also providing ample data from before the pandemic. Finally, recent changes in Texas legislation, including changes to the definitions of *abuse* and *neglect* in the Texas Family Code, are beginning to be implemented across the state. This data collection period ends before substantial effects of new legislation introduce additional moderating factors into the experiences of dual status youth.

Data Collection Methods

With approval from Abilene Christian University’s Institutional Review Board, data was collected from the DFPS Data Book, TJJD, and 2INgage. This study utilized deidentified secondary data, first collected for governmental and organizational record-

keeping purposes. The researcher did not interact with the individuals connected to the data in any way while completing her research. As such, this study qualifies as exempt, non-human research. The data that was collected and utilized in this study includes Race, biological Sex assigned at birth, child welfare Allegations that resulted in removal, and juvenile justice Offenses that resulted in adjudication.

Instruments and Boundaries of Data Collection

I did not use any instruments in my analysis of the secondary data for the current study. However, it is important to understand the instruments used by the entities that collected the original data. Due to the highly protected nature of the child welfare and juvenile populations, IRB and thesis committee approval was necessary before I could access and understand the collection methods of the data (See Appendix A).

JJS Offense Categories

In their public data releases, the TJJD organizes offenses into six categories: Violent Felony, Other Felony, Misdemeanor, Violation of Probation (VOP), Status, and Other Conduct Indicating the Need for Supervision (CINS; TX DFPS Data and Decision Support, 2022, November 16). Specific criminal acts fall under certain categories according to legislation. The dual status data I received from 2Ingage provided the specific criminal charges put upon the youth but did not provide the category or punishment level for every charge. For the purposes of this study, I sorted the relevant charges into the six offense categories using information gathered from the Texas Penal Code (§ 22.01-22.011, 2021; § 28.03, 2017; § 28.08, 2015 § 29.03, 1993; § 30.04, 2017; § 31.03, 2017; § 38.03, 1994; 38.113, 1995; § 42.12, 1995), the Texas Family Code (§ 54.05, 2021), the Texas Health and Safety Code (§ 481.121, 1993), and the Abilene City

Code of Ordinances (§ 20.1, n.d.). For several of the offenses in the dual status group, the Penal Code required punishments on a scale from misdemeanor to felony. For those offenses, I created a seventh category, *Unspecified Felony or Misdemeanor*, which will be discussed in Chapter V of this thesis.

CWS Allegation Categories

DFPS public data releases, including the DFPS Data Book, list CWS allegations in ten categories. The categories are Abandonment, Emotional Abuse, Labor Trafficking, Medical Neglect, Neglectful Supervision, Physical Abuse, Physical Neglect, Refusal to Accept Parental Responsibility (RAPR), Sex Trafficking, and Sexual Abuse (TX DFPS Data and Decision Support, 2023a).

Race/Ethnicity Categories

Every location from which data were collected for this study defined *race* and *ethnicity* in slightly different ways. The U.S. Census and other common data sources that collect race and ethnicity data classify Hispanic as a binary ethnicity, whereas Black, Asian, Native American, White, and Other are classified as races (New Jersey Department of Health, n.d.). Therefore, it is possible for one individual to be White and Hispanic, or White and Non-Hispanic. The term *Caucasian* is often used interchangeably with and preferred to the terms *White* and *Anglo* (Office of Management and Budget, n.d.). It is assumed that, because both White/Hispanic and Caucasian/Hispanic were reported as race and ethnicity combinations in the dual status group, the former is referring to an individual who identifies as Hispanic and the latter is referring to an individual who identifies as mixed-race White/Caucasian and Hispanic. For the purposes of this study, one term was chosen to define each of the racial and/or ethnic groups

represented in this study. If a dual status youth was described by 2Ingage to have two or more races, they were coded as *Other* in the current study. Therefore, if a dual status youth was described to be Caucasian in race and Hispanic in ethnicity, they were also coded as *Other*. If a dual status youth was described to be White in race and Hispanic in ethnicity, they were coded as *Hispanic*.

Because not all racial groups were represented in the dual status group, not all the race/ethnicity labels used by 2INgage for regular reporting are known for this study. The implications of this coding system will be described in Chapter V of this thesis. Table 1 lists the categories as seen in public data from the CWS and JJS data sets used in this study, and the categories I used in the current study for comparisons between groups.

Table 1

Race/Ethnicity Categories

DFPS	TJJJ	2Ingage	Current Study
African American	Black	Black	Black
Anglo	White	Caucasian (race), White (race)	White
Asian	[none]	[unknown]	[Other]
Hispanic (race and ethnicity)	Hispanic (race and ethnicity)	Hispanic (ethnicity)	Hispanic (race and/or ethnicity)
Native American	[none]	[unknown]	[Other]
Other	Other	[unknown]	Other

Analysis Method

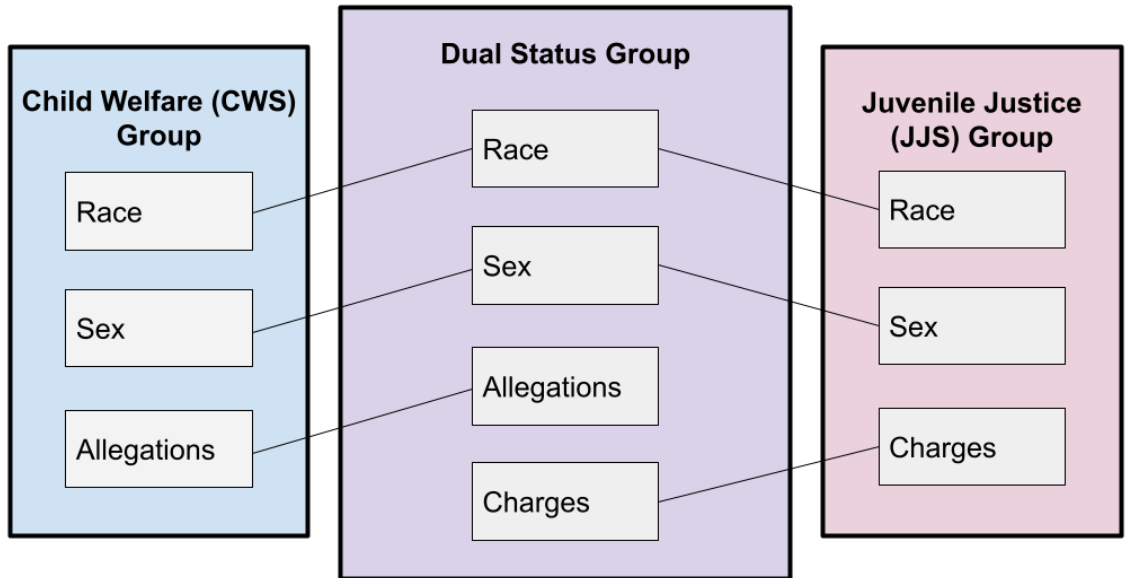
The data for the dual status group were the only raw data used in this study. All data collected from DFPS and TJJJ were analyzed and organized in disaggregated frequencies. I used that information to create average frequencies for the years 2017–

2021, then calculated the percentages each category of the relevant factor represented.

Figure 1 displays the factors explored in each group.

Figure 1

Study Groups, Factors, and Comparisons



Note. Each factor is listed in a gray box within the three study groups. Each line represents where information will be compared between groups to explore patterns and disproportionalities, if present. As illustrated, both single-system groups will be compared to the dual status groups, but not to each other.

Risks and Confidentiality

Because this study utilized deidentified data, there is minimal risk to the population being studied. Taylor County is home to several rural, close-knit communities, and there is a very small possibility that an individual's legal and demographic information could be recognized. However, as this study was built on average frequencies

and percentages, individuals' specific data will not be published in this study. CWS- and JJS-involved children and youth are incredibly vulnerable due to their system involvement, and it is the researcher's highest priority to maintain the safety and confidentiality the individuals whose data was used in this study.

Summary

This study analyzed deidentified secondary data. There were three study groups: CWS-involved individuals, JJS-involved individuals, and dual status youth. For the CWS group, I calculated average frequencies and percentages of race, sex, and child welfare allegations. For the JJS group, I calculated average frequencies and percentages of race, sex, and criminal charges. The dual status group contained frequencies and percentages of race, sex, child welfare allegations, and criminal charges. Finally, the average frequencies and percentages of the single-system groups were compared to the frequencies and percentages of the dual status group to explore any patterns or disproportionalities present, paying particular attention to findings that did and did not align with the literature review in Chapter II of this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Results from Single-System Data Analyses

The following results consist of average frequencies from the five-year period described in Chapter III of this thesis, 2017–2021. Averaging the frequency distributions over the studied time period provides a singular data point representative of the time period that can be compared equitably to all single-system data analysis and to the dual status group analyses.

CWS Analyses

Tables 3 and 4 represent data collected for the CWS population using public data from DFPS. I chose to only include removals for the age range 10–16 years in the relevant analyses because those are the years during which a youth is eligible for juvenile justice involvement: children under ten years of age are not within a juvenile court’s jurisdiction, and youth aged 17 years and older are tried as adults (TJJD, n.d.).

Race and Sex

Table 2 depicts the average number of removals for ages 10–16 in DFPS Region 2 by Race and Sex for the years 2017–2021. The information in this table comes from data set *CPS 2.1* (TX DFPS Data and Decision Support, 2023b).

Table 2*CWS Removals for ages 10-16 in DFPS Region 2 by Race and Sex*

Race	Referrals	%	Sex	Referrals	%
African American	18.0	10.82	Male	80.2	48.20
Anglo	51.68	51.68	Female	85.8	51.56
Asian	0.00	0.00	Unknown	0.4	0.24
Hispanic	49.2	29.57			
Native American	0.4	0.24			
Other	12.8	7.69			
Total	166.4	100.00	Total	166.4	100.00

When exploring the population of CWS-involved youth for this study, data for race and sex could only be gathered at the region level. For DFPS Region 2, the average number of removals between 2017 and 2021 was 166.40. The numbers of males removed versus females were very similar, with just over 2% more females than males removed. Most of the youth removed were White (51.68%), followed by Hispanic (29.57%) and African American (10.82%). When disaggregated by combined race and sex, White males were the most highly represented (26.20%), followed by White females (25.36%) and Hispanic females (15.63%).

Allegations

Table 3 depicts the average number of allegations and the percentages they represent in DFPS Region 2 and Taylor County, from 2017–2021, by allegation category. The allegation data represented in Table 3 could not be disaggregated by age, race, or sex, and therefore includes all removals for children and youth aged 0–17 of all sexes and from all racial/ethnic groups. The information in this table comes from data set *CPI 3.6* (TX DFPS Data and Decision Support, 2023a).

Table 3*CWS Allegations by Allegation Category and Geographical Area*

Offense Category	DFPS Region 2	%	Taylor County	%
Abandonment	18.4	0.15	7.0	0.20
Emotional Abuse	274.0	2.20	80.6	2.29
Labor Trafficking	2.8	0.02	0.6	0.02
Medical Neglect	435.8	3.50	114.2	3.25
Neglectful Supervision	6512.2	52.36	1958.2	55.65
Physical Abuse	2227.4	17.91	683.0	19.41
Physical Neglect	1165.4	9.37	177.0	5.03
RAPR	49.8	0.40	14.6	0.41
Sex Trafficking	13.4	0.11	1.8	0.05
Sexual Abuse	1737.0	13.97	481.8	13.69
Total	12436.2	100.00	3518.8	100.00

CWS allegation data was collected at the Region and county levels. For nine of the ten allegation categories, Region 2 and Taylor County average allegation frequencies were within 2–3% of one another: this is to say that there were no significant differences in the frequencies of certain allegations reported over others between Taylor County and Region 2. The one exception is the Physical Neglect category, in which Region 2 reported over 4% more allegations of that type than Taylor County. The most frequently reported allegation for Region 2 and Taylor County was Neglectful Supervision (52.36% and 55.65%, respectively), followed by Physical Abuse (17.91% and 19.41%) and Sexual Abuse (13.97% and 13.69%).

JJS Analyses

Tables 4 and 5 represent data collected for the JJS population using public data from TJJD and private Taylor County juvenile data. These data were used with permission by TJJD (see Appendix B for data use agreement).

Race and Sex

Race and Sex data for JJS involvement were available only for Taylor County through formal data request from TJJD (Texas Juvenile Justice Department, 2023). Table 4 represents this information.

Table 4

Taylor County Juvenile Referrals by Race and Sex

Race	Referrals	%	Sex	Referrals	%
Black	88.2	27.72	Male	205.2	64.49
White	99.0	31.11	Female	113.0	35.51
Hispanic	130.0	40.85			
Other	1.0	0.31			
Total	318.2	100.00	Total	318.2	100.00

From 2017-2021, Taylor County Juvenile Probation Department (JPD) referrals, on average, consisted of 64.49% males and 35.51% females. From the 318.20 average referrals over the five-year period, the highest percentage of youth identified as Hispanic (40.85%), followed by White (31.11%), Black (27.72%), and Other (0.31%).

Offenses

The data depicted in Table 5 were gathered from publicly available data through the DFPS Data Book data set *TJJD* (TX DFPS Data and Decision Support, 2022).

Table 5

TJJD Referrals by Offense Category and Geographic Area

Offense Category	DFPS Region 2	%	Taylor County	%
Violent Felony	182.2	15.66	52.8	16.64
Other Felony	206.2	17.72	51.4	16.19
Misdemeanor	561.6	48.26	167.2	52.68
VOP	193.8	16.65	42.6	13.42
Status	11.6	1.00	1.0	0.32
Other CINS	8.4	0.72	2.4	0.76
Total	1,163.8	100.00	317.4	100.00

Similar to the CWS allegation comparisons described above, five of the six JJS offense categories reported within 2–3% of one another from the county to region level. The exception was the Misdemeanor category, in which Taylor County reported over 4% more of that offense type than all of Region 2 combined. The most frequently recorded offense for both Region 2 and Taylor County was Misdemeanor (48.26% and 52.68%, respectively). A slightly higher percentage of Other Felonies were reported in Region 2 (17.72%) than Taylor County (16.19%), and Violations of Probation were also reported at a higher rate in Region 2 (16.65%; 13.42% in Taylor County). However, Taylor County reported a higher percentage of Violent Felonies (16.64%) than Region 2 (15.66%). The incidences of reported Status and Other CINS offenses were less than 1% each in both Region 2 and Taylor County.

Results from Dual Status Data Analyses

Data for the dual status group were collected by 2Ingage using word of mouth. For use in this study, 2Ingage employees provided information for ten youth whose interactions with the CWS fell within the five-year time period, as discussed in Chapter III of this thesis. Due to the small sample size, no statistical significance can be drawn from comparison of this group to single-system groups due to increased Type 1 error. To protect the confidentiality of these individuals, the individual lines of data will not be published in this study.

Race and Sex

Table 6 shows the race and sex frequencies in the dual status group (Putnam, 2023). To protect the identities of the youth, the associated races and sexes of the individuals will not be reported in full in this study.

Table 6*Dual Status Group Race and Sex*

Race	%	Sex	%
Black	20.00	Male	70.00
White	20.00	Female	30.00
Hispanic	30.00		
Other	30.00		
Total	100.00	Total	100.00

Of the ten dual status youth, 70% were male and 30% were female. The most frequently reported races in the dual status group were Hispanic (30%) and Other (30%, includes those of two or more races), followed by Black (20%) and White (20%).

Allegations

Table 7 shows the CWS allegations present in the dual status group alongside those present in Taylor County as presented above (Putnam, 2023; TX DFPS Data and Decision Support, 2023). Note that one individual can be associated with multiple allegations: therefore, the allegation frequencies may total to a higher number than the number of individuals represented by the data.

Table 7*CWS Allegations by Allegation Category for Dual Status Group and Taylor County*

Allegation Category	Dual Status	%	Taylor County	%
Abandonment	2	14.29	7.0	0.20
Emotional Abuse	0	0.00	80.6	2.29
Labor Trafficking	0	0.00	0.6	0.02
Medical Neglect	1	7.14	114.2	3.25
Neglectful Supervision	5	35.71	1958.2	55.65
Physical Abuse	1	7.14	683.0	19.41
Physical Neglect	0	0.00	177.0	5.03
RAPR	5	35.71	14.6	0.41
Sex Trafficking	0	0.00	1.8	0.05
Sexual Abuse	0	0.00	481.8	13.69
Total	14	100.00	3518.8	100.00

The most frequently reported abuse/neglect allegations among the dual status youth were RAPR and Neglectful Supervision (35.71% each), followed by Abandonment (14.29%), Medical Neglect (7.14%), and Physical Abuse (7.14%). These were the only five of the ten possible allegation categories represented in the dual status group.

Offenses

Table 8 shows the JJS offenses present in the dual status group alongside those present in Taylor County as presented above (TX DFPS Data and Decision Support, 2022; Putnam, 2023). Note that one individual can be associated with multiple offenses: therefore, the offense frequencies may total to a higher number than the number of individuals represented by the data.

Table 8

JJS Referrals by Offense Category for Dual Status Group and Taylor County

Offense Category	Dual Status	%	Taylor County	%
Violent Felony	7	33.33	52.8	16.64
Other Felony	3	14.29	51.4	16.19
Unspecified Felony or Misdemeanor	4	19.05	n/a	n/a
Misdemeanor	6	28.57	167.2	52.68
VOP	1	4.76	42.6	13.42
Status	0	0.0	1.0	0.32
Other CINS	0	0.0	2.4	0.76
Total	21	100.00	317.4	100.00

Only five of the seven possible JJS offenses were represented in the dual status group. Violent Felony offenses represented the largest percentage reported in the group (33.33%), followed by Misdemeanor offenses (28.57%), Unspecified Felony or Misdemeanor offenses (19.05%), Other Felony offenses (14.29%), and offenses that constituted a Violation of Probation (4.76%).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Discussion of Findings

This section of the thesis will be loosely organized by the four research questions introduced in Chapter I:

- What are the most common allegations for all child welfare removals in Taylor County?
- What are the most common juvenile offenses for all adjudicated youth in Taylor County?
- Do dual status youth in Taylor County experience certain abuse/neglect allegations and/or juvenile offenses at disproportionate rates to youth in Taylor County only involved in one system?
- Are there any disproportionalities present when examining the race and sex of dual status youth compared to youth only involved in one system?

CWS Allegations

For Taylor County, the three most frequently reported allegations were Neglectful Supervision, Physical Abuse, and Sexual Abuse. Neglectful Supervision is defined as “placing a child in or failing to remove a child from” situations that the child cannot navigate safely due to a lack of maturity or ability of the child, or due to substantial risk of immediate mental, emotional, or physical harm to the child (Tex. Admin. Code §

707.467, 2022). This includes exposure to sexual conduct that is harmful to the child (e.g., if a parent knew that their partner was sexually abusing the child but left the child in the care of the abuser anyway). In personal conversations with professionals in the CWS in Taylor County, drug use, either by adults or children in the home, accounts for many removals due to Neglectful Supervision in Taylor County. Similarly, drug and alcohol abuse during pregnancy may result in the infant being removed after birth under the allegation of Neglectful Supervision (Tex. Admin. Code § 707.467, 2022) Children living in a home with exposure to domestic violence may also fall into this group.

Chapter II of this thesis discussed a studied overlap between trauma behaviors and behaviors that get youth in trouble with the JJS (Baumle, 2018; Modrowski, 2022; Saar et al., 2015; Tiano, 2022): it is reasonable to assert that the trauma youth experience from exposure to violence, drugs, and physical and sexual abuse may manifest itself as dangerous, self-destructive, and reckless behaviors. It is possible that lack of adequate supervision from responsible adults magnifies the intensity of these behaviors and increases the likelihood that the youth encounter law enforcement. While Neglectful Supervision may not appear as serious as allegations such as Physical and Sexual Abuse, it is important to understand the implications of a lack of a responsible adult presence in the life of a child on their experiences and behaviors.

JJS Offenses

For both geographical areas, the highest percentage of reported offenses were misdemeanors. Examples of misdemeanors in Texas include most assaults (not including sexual assault, sexual assault of a minor, or repeated offense assaults, which are felonies), resisting arrest, and burglary of a vehicle (Tex. Penal Code § 38.03, 1994; § 30.04, 2017;

§ 22.01, 2019; § 22.011, 2019). Each of these behaviors could be considered dangerous, risky, or rebellious, which means that it is possible that some of the misdemeanor offenses, particularly the assault offenses, may be related to trauma the youth has experienced or is experiencing (Baumle, 2018; Saar et al., 2015; Tiano, 2022). Adding Violent Felonies and Other Felonies together, felonies made up approximately 30% of the reports from both areas, making felonies the second most reported juvenile charge. VOP offenses made up 13-15% of the reports in this study, meaning that 13-15% of the reports from 2017-2021 involved youth who were already involved with the JJS and on probation when they committed that VOP offense—this is an example of recidivism or re-offense within the JJS. As discussed in Chapter II, dual status youth are at an increased risk for recidivism than their single-system peers (Herz et al., 2019).

In general, I found that Taylor County reported a higher percentage of more serious offenses than DFPS Region 2. After summing the percentages of Violent Felonies, Other Felonies, and Misdemeanors in both geographical areas, I found that those offenses represented 81.64% of DFPS Region 2's reports, and 85.51% of Taylor County's reports: a 3.87% difference. It is difficult to draw much meaning from this information without additional context, but I believe it is worth noting that the youth in Taylor County are behaving in ways that are resulting in higher penal consequences than the youth in the surrounding 29 counties, on average.

Dual Status Disproportionalities

CWS Allegations

The most striking finding when comparing CWS allegations between Taylor County as a whole and the dual status group in this study is the disproportionately high prevalence of RAPR allegations in the dual status group. RAPR is considered a subset of the definition of neglect, but is reported individually as it involves the specific acts of the parent or guardian to “permit the child to return to the child’s home without arranging for the necessary care for the child,” particularly after the child has been absent from the home for any reason, including residential placement, correctional placement, or having run away (Tex. Admin. Code § 707.473, 2022, sec. (a)). The law goes on to say that if a parent or guardian can prove that 1) the child has a severe emotional disturbance, 2) the refusal to accept responsibility is solely because the parent/guardian cannot obtain the necessary mental health services for the safety of the child, and/or 3) the parent/guardian has “exhausted all reasonable means available to you” to obtain the necessary mental health services for the safety of the child, then no report or allegation against the parent/guardian will be filed to the DFPS (Tex. Admin. Code § 707.473, 2022, sec. (b)(3)). Unfortunately, in my personal conversations with child welfare professionals, I have learned that it is rare that caregivers attempt to prove these stipulations to the court, even if they are met. It appears that for some families and caregivers, the only option for them is to surrender their troubled child to the Department so the caregivers are no longer responsible for or affected by the repercussions of the child’s behavior, nor for getting the child the services they need to improve their behavior and outcomes in adulthood.

Children and youth involved in the CWS due to RAPR allegations, by the nature of the allegation, are difficult to control, supervise, and raise. For the criteria of this allegation to be met, it must be true that the child was away from the home for a significant reason and duration: well-behaved, emotionally regulated children with adequate caregiver supervision are not often away from their homes for extended periods due to placement in a residential treatment center, doing time in a correctional facility, or running away from home. As it is, running away from home is legally considered a status offense, which could result in JJS system contact if the youth is arrested (Baumle, 2018). Half of the youth in the dual status group were associated with a RAPR allegation, whereas RAPR represented only 0.41% of the Taylor County allegations. While this finding is not generalizable to dual status youth in other areas or time periods, it is an important factor to note when identifying those at risk for dual-system involvement.

JJS Offenses

For the purposes of this study, I sorted the specific offenses of the dual status youth from the data given to me by 2Ingage into the offense categories outlined by TJJD in their public access data. To do this, I consulted the Texas Penal Code, Texas Family Code, Texas Health and Safety Code, and the Abilene City Code of Ordinances.

In addition, I created an additional JJS offense category, Unspecified Felony or Misdemeanor, for offenses I could not sort completely into the existing JJS categories due to lack of information on the criminal behavior. Certain crimes are punished on a scale from Misdemeanor to Felony depending on the severity of the crime. One of the ways this can be measured is the amount of financial loss due to the crime: for example, a punishment for graffiti can range from a Class C misdemeanor for a loss of less than

\$100 to a first-degree felony for a loss of \$300,000 or more (Texas Penal Code § 28.08, 2015). For several of the offenses represented in the dual status group, I did not have enough information to determine the exact level of the punishment, only that it was either a misdemeanor or a felony. In order to portray the information as accurately as possible while preserving confidentiality, I chose to create the additional category.

Felonies and Misdemeanors accounted for over 95% of the offenses of the dual status group compared to a nearly 86% representation in all of Taylor County JJS. This shows that this dual status sample committed a disproportionately greater number of felonies and misdemeanors compared to all youth in the Taylor County JJS. While the literature indicated that status offenses are often common offenses for dual status youth, this was not the case with this sample: zero status offenses were reported for the 10 dual status youth in this study (Baumle, 2018). Status offenses may carry more weight with the dual status population elsewhere, just not within the bounds of this study. Prostitution and sex crimes, particularly among female dual status youth, were also mentioned in the literature, but were not present in my sample (Baumle, 2018). Without additional, private details on the nature of the crimes, it is impossible to determine if the criminal behaviors could be linked to past traumatic experiences as suggested in the literature.

Race and Sex

Race

Regarding the race breakdown of the dual status group, 80% of the youth were identified as people of color (Black, Hispanic, or Other) or people of 2 or more races (included in Other; see Table 2 in Chapter III of this thesis), while 20% were identified as White. Youth identified as White represented approximately 52% of those aged 10-16

removed by the CWS in DFPS Region 2 and approximately 31% of those referred to the Taylor County JJS from 2017-2021. This information presents a disproportionately higher number of youths of color in the dual status group than what could be expected considering the percentages calculated in the single-system analyses. This aligns with the assertions in the literature that institutionalized racial biases may be factors in the involvement of youth in the CWS and JJS (Marshall, 2012; Kelly & Varghese, 2018).

When the information gathered from this study is examined further, it begins to divert from the literature. Black youth do not represent the highest percentage in the dual status group or in Taylor County juvenile referrals. The experiences of Hispanic youth and youth of two or more races, which have the greatest representation in the dual status group, are not as frequently discussed in the literature as the experiences of Black youth (Kelly & Varghese, 2018; Yi & Wildeman, 2018). While the disparate and disproportionate treatment of Black people in the CWS and JJS is an issue that needs to be addressed at the local, state, and national levels, the statistical disproportionalities to suggest the presence of these experiences in Taylor County are not present in my study.

Sex

Of the ten dual status youth in my study, seven were male and three were female. While the ratio of males to females removed in CWS investigations in DFPS Region 2 was approximately 1:1, the ration of males to females referred to the Taylor County JJS was approximately 3.5:6.5, which is much closer to the 3:7 ratio in the dual status group. These ratios align with the literature that suggests that most dual status youth are involved in the CWS before the JJS: it is likely that a sample of JJS-involved youth who crossed over from the CWS would represent the sex breakdown of the general JJS

population rather than the general CWS population (Herz et al., 2019). However, it is important to remember that the findings of this study are not generalizable to other areas due to a low sample size and high Type 1 error.

Intersection of Race and Sex

To preserve the confidentiality of the dual status group, I will not be publishing nor discussing the race and sex combinations present in the sample group. Suggestions for further research in this area will be discussed in the “Implications of Findings” section of this chapter.

Limitations

Barriers to Data Collection

Due to the highly vulnerable natures of the child welfare, juvenile justice, and dual status populations, data can be difficult to access. When designing the ideology of this study, I met with professionals from several organizations to gauge the types and availability of data, particularly data on dual status youth. This proved to be more difficult than originally anticipated, because the prominent child protective services agency in Taylor County does not track the incidences of dual status youth. In addition, current data system configuration and CWS and JJS reports have not been made in a way that dual status youth can be easily identified, grouped, and tracked with specified data points across the state’s DFPS system. To collect specific data on the target population, coordination with staff and administrators of 2Ingage was required to identify youth who fit the criteria for inclusion in the study, locate the records to collect the relevant information, and provide de-identified data that was used in this study. At the completion of this process, ten dual status youth and their data were identified.

A second barrier to the collection of data for this study includes the discrepancies between how different data points are collected and reported within the CWS and between the CWS and JJS. For example, the public access data including the demographic markers that were needed for this study are collected and reported by region, while the public access data including the allegation information needed for this study are collected and reported by county and region. This is a barrier because it prevents the analysis of parallel groups across data points. In addition, the only data available for dual status youth comes from Taylor County. These discrepancies affect the quality and quantity of parallel data that was available for this study.

Limitations of Data Analysis

Because of the small sample size of this study, I was limited in the types of data analyses I could perform with high validity and reliability measures. In addition, all of the data used for the single-system analyses had already been analyzed and organized in some way before being released to the public, and I did not have access to the raw lines of data. This also limited the amount and types of data analyses I could reliably perform, as the information was not properly formatted for statistical analysis. Despite these limitations, the exploratory and descriptive nature of this study allowed me to use the available data to the fullest within the scope of the guiding research questions. The information that was able to be gathered, analyzed, and discussed introduces new ideas and understanding into the field with particular relevance to CWS and JJS professionals in Taylor County and the surrounding West Texas area.

Implications of Findings

Implications for Policy

There are several proposed pieces of legislation currently active in the 88th session of the Texas Legislature that apply directly to dual status youth. The first bills that I want to discuss are HB 2066 by Representative Cook, and its companion SB 441 by Senator Menendez (H.B. 2066, 2023; S.B. 441, 2023). These bills require the design and implementation of behavior management and crisis intervention programs in residential group homes for foster youth in order to avoid law enforcement involvement if possible. They also suggest deferred prosecution for youth in group homes or other such placements due to the unstable nature of the youth's home environment. These bills are encouraging preventative measures and equipping placements to handle problematic behaviors in a more trauma-informed way. The second set of bills I want to discuss is HB 77 by Representative Neave Criado and SB 83 by Senator Johnson (H.B. 77, 2022; S.B. 83, 2022). These bills clarify and reduce the severity of regulations for the detention of a youth only convicted of a status offense. In addition, it removes the act of running away from the list of status offenses. These bills also serve as preventative by decreasing the number of individuals that can be adjudicated, therefore decreasing JJS contact, preventing further system entrenchment, and encouraging community partnerships to rehabilitate the child in more trauma-responsive ways. Finally, HB 506 by Representative Wu serves to preserve the dignity of juveniles during their JJS court proceedings by requiring the use of least force restraints and allowing juveniles to wear appropriate civilian clothing to their hearings (H.B. 506, 2022). It is incredibly difficult to separate the humanity of a youth from their crime when they are presented to the court in

handcuffs and an orange jumpsuit—by allowing youth to dress appropriately and by prohibiting intensive, forceful restraint measures unless absolutely necessary, these youth are restored some of their dignity and power to seek what is best for their growth, rehabilitation, and future life experiences.

There are many bills circulating the state and national legislatures regarding the protection and support of children, especially at-risk and system-involved children. This study exemplifies the need for increased cross-system collaboration to provide whole-person, wraparound care to children and families to support their best interests and improve their functioning in their society and communities. In addition, it is imperative that these services are available to the children and families that need them. According to the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Taylor County and many of the surrounding counties are designated as severe mental health professional shortage areas (HRSA Data Warehouse, 2023). Policies to encourage equitable education, hiring, payment, and retention of mental health professionals, especially in rural areas, are needed to address this crisis. Finally, as dual status youth are an incredibly vulnerable population, human trafficking initiatives and policies are necessary to prevent system-involved youth from getting caught in trafficking rings. Due to its proximity to the border and several state and interstate highways, Taylor County is at an increased risk for hosting traffickers (McKinney, 2022; McMullen, 2023). Human trafficking is an incredibly complex issue to define and measure, so while my study does not suggest that it poses a risk to dual status youth, it is regardless an important factor to consider when working with system-involved youth.

Implications for Practice

The information presented in this thesis broadens the knowledge base of relevant professionals in the area. One implication for practice is the development and implementation of trauma-informed practice within the CWS and JJS to avoid re-traumatization of vulnerable populations and to provide the best evidence-based care. A second implication is the importance of appropriately tracking, reporting, and sharing data for the evaluation of the agencies and systems working with our youth, and to increase possibilities for additional ethical research to pinpoint specific areas needing growth for the sake of the wellbeing of our communities and children. Third, my literature review and findings suggest that preventative measures must be put into place to reduce the number of youth involved in traumatizing government systems such as the CWS and JJS. These programs and practices can target preventing behaviors, preventing arrests and charges, preventing removals, and more. Finally, the development and engagement of community support and resources, specifically with mental health and rehabilitation as their foci, is strongly indicated by this study as something that would be beneficial to system-involved individuals across their lifetimes.

Implications for Future Research

Throughout the process of designing and completing this study, there were two main questions that I had to leave unanswered. Are there certain abuse/neglect allegations that correlate to juvenile justice involvement? Similarly, are there certain juvenile offenses that correlate to prior child welfare involvement? Making these connections would greatly contribute to the literature base by identifying points of intervention for prevention and evidence-based practices. In addition, my study suggests that the child

welfare and juvenile justice systems, and the agencies that provide them with services, need to be constantly evaluated for areas of improvement. It is imperative that the programs that serve our children and youth are reducing trauma rather than causing it and building up communities and families rather than breaking them apart.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the experiences of dual status youth in Taylor County, Texas using the factors of race, sex, child welfare allegation, and juvenile justice offense. The literature suggested that a child's race and sex does have an impact on how they are brought into and treated within the systems. In addition, the literature found that dual status youth are at an increased risk for negative outcomes in later adolescence and adulthood. This study compared the study factors present in DFPS Region 2 and Taylor County to those present in a sample of ten dual status youth in Taylor County over a five-year time period. The study found that there were some race and sex disproportionalities present between county- and region-level data and the dual status sample group, and that certain child welfare allegations and juvenile justice offenses were reported at a higher rate in the dual status group than in the single-system data sets. This study suggests that policies, practices, and further research avenues need to be explored to improve the lives of the children and families in our communities by addressing and preventing dual-system involvement.

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APPENDIX A

ACU IRB Approval Letter

Date: November 15, 2022

PI: Kimberly Putnam

Department: RES-Residential Student, 20531-Masters in Social Work

Re: Initial - IRB-2022-78

An Description of the Experiences of Crossover Youth in Taylor County

The Abilene Christian University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for *An Description of the Experiences of Crossover Youth in Taylor County*.

Decision: Exempt

Research Notes: The study is Non-Human Research.

Additional Approvals/Instructions: The study is Non-Human Research.


Any modifications to the approved study must be submitted for review through Cayuse IRB. All approval letters and study documents are located within the Study Details in Cayuse IRB.

Sincerely,

Abilene Christian University Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B

TJJD Data Use Agreement Form

	Data Use Agreement for Research or Statistical Projects Section 58.009(c)(5), Family Code, and Section 203.007, Human Resources Code	TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT
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This Agreement is made by and between the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, hereinafter the "Department," and Abilene Christian University, hereinafter the "Requester."

The Requester has submitted a written request for information and/or data to the Department on 1/11/2023 for a research or statistical project.

The Department may, pursuant to Section 58.009(c)(5), Family Code, and Section 203.007, Human Resources Code, grant certain entities access to confidential juvenile justice information for research and statistical purposes or any other purpose approved by the Department or for a purpose beneficial to and approved by the Department. The Department determines that Requester is an entity that may receive juvenile justice information and is requesting juvenile justice information for an approved purpose. The information and/or data to be provided does not contain personally identifiable information for any juveniles.

The Department has determined that it will release the requested juvenile justice information to the Requester as allowed by Section 58.009(c)(5), Family Code, Section 203.007, Human Resources Code, and this Agreement. The Department will provide the Requester the following information and/or data for the purpose stated herein: To explore the prevalence of youth involved with the juvenile justice system in Taylor County, the Requester requests the number of referrals to Taylor County juvenile probation department disaggregated by biological sex, race/ethnicity, and offense category for calendar years 2017-2021.

The Requester shall:

- 1) Use the information and/or data provided only for the research and/or statistical purpose stated above;
- 2) Use the information and/or data in a manner that does not misrepresent or misconstrue the information and/or data obtained during the research or statistical project;
- 3) Immediately notify the Department of any material changes in the purposes or objectives of the project or in the manner in which the information and/or data will be used;
- 4) Prohibit the disclosure of the information and/or data in any form that identifies an individual, including information that, if linked, could identify an individual, if applicable; and
- 5) Retain the information and/or data obtained under this Agreement (as well as any derivative files) until the Agreement Expiration Date. Requester may request an extension of the retention period by submitting a written request and justification for the requested extension no later than 60 days prior to the Agreement Expiration Date. If approved, and unless otherwise noted, the retention extension will be granted for a one-year period.

Agreement Expiration Date: The expiration date of this Agreement shall be one year from the date of full execution of this Agreement, unless an extension is provided. Full execution is deemed to have occurred on the date last written below.

REQUESTER

TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

Kimberly Putnam

Jocelyn Lewis

(Printed Name)

(Printed Name)



3/2/2023
(Date)



3/2/2023
(Executive Director or Designee Signature) (Date)

APPENDIX C

2INGage Data Use Agreement



April 11, 2023

To: Kimberly Putnam

Re: Permission to Utilize Data for Thesis

Ms. Putnam,

Please accept this letter as confirmation of permission being granted for you to utilize the data provided to you by myself and 2INGage on February 3, 2023 as part of your Thesis.

Thank you for letting 2INGage be a part of your study.

Sincerely,

Cassandra Browne, MSW

Cassandra Browne, MSW

Director of Permanency



Pathway Family Services
An agency of TFI



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www.tlifamily.org | www.pathwayfs.org | www.teamnns.org | www.2ingage.org