

Basic skills of social research article review examples

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



The article by Richard Peets entitled Family and Religious Characteristics' Influence on Delinquency Trajectories from Adolescence to Young Adulthood was selected by this student as the springboard for the discussion about basic social research skills. The succeeding sections present the main components of a research paper and examples are taken from Peet's article to illustrate such components.

Research Question

Peet's article talks about religion and family and how these relate to delinquency. The specific question posed by the study is " How do family and religious characteristics influence individual level delinquency trajectories from early adolescence through young adulthood?" (Peets 465). This is a researchable question because it specifically looks into a particular group and the topic is broad enough to allow a deeper investigation into the factors that influence the unit of study. This topic is likewise relevant as it touches on two main institutions, the family and religion.

Three more questions deepen the inquiry and these are as follows:

- What patterns of delinquent behavior do youths exhibit from early adolescence through young adulthood?
- How do family and religious characteristics early in adolescence influence individual's delinquency trajectories? and
- How do family and religious changes in adolescence and young adulthood alter delinquency trajectories?

Literature Review

Research about family structure, and social control contribute to the formation of Peets's research question. The studies conducted by Demuth and Brown in 2004, McLanahan and Sanderfur in 1994, and that of Warr in 1993 all claim that "parents play an essential role in children's lives by teaching norms and values, regulating behavior, and providing emotional and financial support" (Peets, 467). The role of religion in regulating the youth's behavior is discussed by Johnson et al. in 2001 and also by Smith in 2003. Both authors argue that membership in religious activities "provide normative standards and guidelines" (Peets, 467). All these studies show that family and religion have an impact on children's lives therefore it is highly probable that these institutions would also influence delinquency trajectories.

The unit of analysis in Peet's study is the youth. They may also be referred to as the adolescents who have transitioned into young adulthood.

Population and sample

The youth is the particular group that Peets was interested in. The source of the data was the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) of 1979. From the entire respondents, Peets focused on the Child and Young Adult Sample. They are the ones who were from 14 to 21 years of age back in 1979.

Surveys of the child and also of the young adult beginning in 1988 until 2004 were also assessed by the researcher. The final sample numbered 2, 472 and these individuals were those who have also been interviewed when they were between the ages of 15 to 19 as well as when they were aged 20-25.

Thus, the final sample was comprised of youths who have entered into the young adulthood stage.

Key concepts and measures

The key variables in the study are grouped according to (a) family structure; (b) family processes; (c) parental resources; (d) religious characteristics; and (e) religious participation. Family structure could either be a two-parent biological family, a stepfamily, or a single parent family. For the family processes, eight variables fall under this category. The first is parental engagement. This is measured by asking the youth how many times he/she joined his/her parent in the conduct of seven activities within the past 30 days. The parental affection measure comes from the mother's response to the question about the number of times that she praised her child or showed affection in the past seven days. The variable parental supervision was derived from asking the youth if their parent/s set limits in watching TV, dating, homework, and their whereabouts. The variable parent-child decision-making was measured by asking the number of times that parents consult the youths about important decisions. The last variable under this category, parent-child conflict was measured through the youth's response on the frequency that youth and their parent/s argue. For each of the family processes variables, the researcher would either use as indicator the sum of the responses or mean value of the responses to get the indicator of the variables.

Under the category of parental resources, Peets used the variables parent's education (the highest level of education completed) and mother's age when

her child was born. For religious characteristics, the variables are religious family environment, parent-child heterogamy, and religious participation. The religious family environment variable is said to exist when (a) parents and the youth attend religious services together, and (b) the mother believes that her children should attend religious training. Parent-child heterogamy is measured by asking if parents and youth have separate religious affiliations. Meanwhile, religious participation is measured by a scale corresponding to how frequent family member attends religious activities. The researcher also included control variables as well as variables that specifically focused on the delinquency. Thus, there was a variable delinquent peers which was measured by mother's reports of the frequency that the youth hang out with kids who get into trouble.

Works Cited

Peets, Richard J. " Family and Religious Characteristics' Influence on Delinquency Trajectories from Adolescence to Young Adulthood." *American Sociological Review* 74 (2009): 465-483. doi: 10.1177/000312240907400307.