FACTORs CORRELATED TO GRADUATING FROM THE FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT (LOUISIANA) ADULT DRUG TREATMENT COURT PROGRAM

by

Robert D. Broussard

An Abstract of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in the Department of Criminal Justice University of Central Missouri

November, 2011
Drug courts have gained immense popularity throughout the United States as alternatives to traditional sentencing. For programs to continue to be effective, administrators have to understand which factors are correlated to graduation. This study used a retrospective cross-sectional design with a sample consisting of the entire population (n=38) of past participants in the Fourteenth Judicial District (Louisiana) Adult Drug Treatment Court Program between June 2007 and January 2011. Bivariate analysis and t test results indicated that older white participants, who were employed and had attained a high school diploma or GED prior to entering the program, were more likely to graduate than others without these specific characteristics. Policy and research implications include limiting the size of the program and developing standard definitions for offender characteristics to be used for future studies.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis committee, Dr. Lynn Urban, Dr. Gregg Etter, and Mr. Dane Miller, for their assistance during this project. As my thesis chair Dr. Lynn Urban’s patience and guidance were greatly needed and appreciated. I would like to thank Calcasieu Parish District Attorney John DeRosier for granting me access to the Fourteenth Judicial District (Louisiana) Adult Drug Treatment Court Program files and Amanda Foret for her assistance in collecting data for this study. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Celeste, and my sons, Tristin and Gabe, for their support while I worked on my studies.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The abuse of illicit and prescription drugs in the United States has become an epidemic, which has created problems affecting the entire country. The crisis is so great that elected leaders across the United States routinely proclaim their willingness to declare a “war on drugs” to combat the problem. The Drug Enforcement Administration’s website reflects the total amounts of drugs seized annually in the United States and the data reflects the “war on drugs” has been ineffective in consistently decreasing the total amount of illicit drugs entering the country (Drug Enforcement Administration, 2010). The “war on drugs” has also been ineffective in decreasing the total number of persons abusing legal and illegal drugs (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2009). Jail and prison populations in the United States have soared dramatically because of the increasing number of drug abusers being incarcerated instead of the persons responsible for distributing the drugs that plague our society (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2008; Sabol, West, & Cooper, 2009).

Drug crimes are often reported as “victimless crimes,” even though each of these crimes typically impacts the offender’s friends, family, and community. Friends and family members must live daily with the stress of worrying about the fate of their loved one who suffers from an addiction. Drug abusing offenders are also responsible for a number of crimes other than drug offenses (Office of National Drug Control Policy [ONDCP], 2000). These offenders frequently commit crimes such as burglary, theft, and robbery to support their drug addictions (Mumola & Karberg, 2006; ONDCP, 2000).

In order to be successful in combating the high recidivism rates among drug addicts, incarceration must be supplemented with or replaced by treatment. Cooper (2003) described
how one court’s experiment became the catalyst for a national trend of substituting rehabilitation for incarceration for drug addicted offenders. In 1989 the circuit court in Miami, Florida began an innovative process of combining drug treatment with the court process, which later became known as drug court. The court closely supervised defendants who were in the judicial process for drug possession charges and offered drug treatment as part of the process. The court experienced success with reducing the recidivism rates among drug court participants and this success led numerous other jurisdictions nationwide to develop their own drug courts. Drug courts are now considered to be a model alternative sentencing technique, which can successfully decrease the recidivism rates of persons with drug addictions (Cooper, 2003).

Due to the success of drug courts, several studies have focused on ways of improving programs by determining factors that increase or decrease a participant’s ability to successfully complete the program. The purpose of this study is to analyze the factors that are positively and negatively correlated to graduation from the Fourteenth Judicial District (Louisiana) Adult Drug Treatment Court Program. This study will use life course theory as a frame to review eight specific variables related to graduation from the program. This study will use a retrospective cross sectional design. Data will be collected from the available records of participants in the Fourteenth Judicial District (Louisiana) Adult Drug Treatment Court Program. The results of this study can be used to improve the program graduation rates and will add to the existing literature on factors relating to drug court graduation success.

**Background**

The purpose of the background section is to provide a brief review of the drug court process, which varies greatly from the traditional court process. The background also provides a review of the impact of drug use in the United States.
Belenko (1998) discussed the evolution of drug courts, and he noted “drug courts did not emerge out of a vacuum” (p. 13). Specialized courts were used in Chicago and New York in the 1950s and 1970s solely to prosecute drug cases, but these courts rarely incorporated treatment to aid in the offender’s rehabilitation. Treatment had been used as a condition of pretrial release and probation as well as with other programs, but treatment was often ineffective, primarily due to a lack of supervision.

Drug courts offer a different scenario for the offender than traditional court processes. In the drug court setting the offender has the ability to receive regular treatment, which is difficult to obtain in the traditional processes (Cooper, 2003). The drug court model also allows participants to receive close supervision without incarceration. From a life course theory perspective, the participant’s criminal history is a trajectory and the drug court process is a transition. The drug court process allows the participant the ability to change their trajectory by offering the ability to participate in the program.

Drug court operations vary across the country, but many share the same basic goals and processes. Belenko (1998) reviewed 24 courts and identified the following goals: reduce drug use and criminal activity, offender program and treatment retention, allow those with knowledge of drug cases to work together in one courtroom, use assessments and case management to address offender needs, and allow the traditional adjudication process to concentrate on non-drug cases. Belenko (1998) also identified the following processes that occur in most drug courts: community based treatment, timely identification and referral of offenders to the program, judicial monitoring, graduated sanctions and rewards, and random drug testing.

Cooper (2003) identified two basic drug court models in operation today. The first is the post-plea or post-conviction model, which is used by the majority of the courts in the U.S. This
model requires the offender to plead guilty to their criminal charges to qualify for entry into the program. Upon successful completion of the program, the offender’s charges can be dismissed or the sentence can be reduced. The second is the pre-plea or pre-trial model. This model was used primarily in early drug courts, but has become less popular.

As drug courts continue to evolve and their popularity continues to increase, some patterns or trends have emerged. Rural communities have recognized the benefits of drug court programs and more programs have begun to surface in jurisdictions servicing smaller populations (Cooper, 2003). Many drug courts are now targeting chronic abusers and recidivists with extensive criminal histories (Cooper, 2003; Huddleston, Marlowe, & Casebolt, 2008). Drug court administrators across the country recognize the impact of alcohol abuse by participants and over 80% of all drug courts test for alcohol use as well as drug use (Cooper, 2003). In fact, the drug court model is increasingly becoming more popular as a means of treating DWI offenders with alcohol dependence (Huddleston, Marlowe, & Casebolt, 2008).

**Impact of Drug Abuse in the U.S.**

Drug abuse is a major problem in the United States. According to the FBI 2008 Uniformed Crime Report, drug law violations accounted for more arrests than any other type of crime. An estimated 1,702,537 arrests were made for drug law violations, which was equivalent to 12.2% of the total number of reported arrests nationwide. Over 82% of these arrests were made for drug possession offenses. Since the majority of individuals entering the criminal justice system for drug related offenses are drug abusers and not distributors, more attention needs to be focused on determining ways of assisting these individuals in coping with and defeating their addictions. Mumola and Karberg (2004) reported that 53% of state inmates and 45% of federal inmates were dependent on or abusing drugs and a number of these inmates, 53%
of state and 32% of federal, had a minimum of three convictions and sentences of probation or incarceration.

Arresting and subsequently incarcerating drug abusers at such a high rate adversely impacts the correctional system by contributing to prison overcrowding. Sabol, West, and Cooper (2009) reported on the status of American prisons at the end of 2008. Over 2.4 million persons were incarcerated in the U.S., which led 18 state prisons to operate above their highest capacity. All other state prisons were operating within 3% of their highest capacity. According to the report over 50% of all federal inmates in 2008 and 20% of all state inmates in 2006 were incarcerated on drug offenses. The report also reflected a 2.2% increase in the prison population in the state of Louisiana from 35,207 in 2007 to 38,281 in 2008.

Incarcerating so many people in the U.S. has also proven to be costly. Stephan (2004) estimated the annual cost of incarcerating a person to be $22,650.00 in a state prison and $22,632.00 in a federal prison. Stephan (2004) estimated the total cost for operating adult state prisons in the U.S. in 2001 to be $29.5 billion. Louisiana’s Department of Public Safety and Corrections website listed the average costs of incarcerating an inmate to be $56.44 per day and the budget for state correctional facilities for the 2010-2011 fiscal year at nearly $670 million, which represented an increase of over $4 million from the prior year. Even though the costs for incarcerating a prisoner in Louisiana are less than the national average, the state still spends a large sum of money funding prisons.

The economic losses attributed to drug abuse in the United States are astronomical. In 2004 the Office of National Drug Control Policy concluded a study to determine the costs of drug abuse in the U.S. and it was estimated to cost $180.9 billion in 2002 alone. This amount was determined to have steadily risen over 5% each year since 1992. The costs associated with
prosecuting and incarcerating drug offenders were considered major causes for these increases each year. Lost productivity accounted for more than $128 billion or 71.2% of the total costs. Health care costs were estimated to be nearly $16 billion or 8.7% of the total costs. Other costs, which include costs associated with criminal justice administration and crime victims, were estimated to be $36.4 billion or 20.1% of the total costs. Crime related costs were calculated using the aforementioned totals and were estimated to be approximately $107.8 billion, which amounted to nearly 60% of the total costs. It was estimated that the costs of drug abuse in the United States rose over $73 billion dollars in the last decade and there are no signs that the amount will level off or decline.

Two decades after the first drug court was formed, American University (2009) reported there were 2,038 drug courts operating in the United States and 226 more drug courts being planned. Even though drug courts operate independently of one another and the processes may vary from one jurisdiction to another, their ultimate goal of decreasing offender recidivism through the use of intensive treatment and supervision is the same (Cooper, 2003). Drug courts have proven to be successful alternatives to traditional sentencing by decreasing recidivism rates for participants and by providing net savings for the jurisdictions, but participant graduation rates range between 27 and 66 percent (U.S. Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2005).

**Program Description**

The Fourteenth Judicial District (Louisiana) Adult Drug Treatment Court Program, hereinafter referred to as ADTCP, is managed by the Calcasieu Parish District Attorney’s Office. Calcasieu Parish is located in the southwest region of Louisiana and Lake Charles is the parish seat. According to the 2010 United States Census Bureau, Calcasieu Parish has a total
population of 192,768. Females comprise 51% of the population and most of the residents are either white (71%) or black (25%).

The Calcasieu Parish District Attorney’s Office provides a description of the ADTCP on its website (Calcasieu Parish District Attorney’s Office, 2010). ADTCP was established on April 1, 2007 with the primary goal of rehabilitating non-violent drug addicted offenders. ADTCP seeks to achieve this goal through the use of therapy, random drug screens, and intensive supervision. ADTCP also assists participants with education and employment to aid their adjustment into the community. The program’s staff includes two judges, a program coordinator, who is also an Assistant District Attorney, two case managers, a probation officer, an attorney from the Public Defender’s Office, and two counselors (Fourteenth Judicial District Adult Drug Treatment Court, 2007). The program is considered small and allows a maximum of 35 participants at a time (A. Foret, personal communication, August 13, 2010).

**Screening participants.**

ADTCP is a post–conviction program. Most participants enter the program following their guilty plea to their criminal charges, and the program is part of their sentence of probation. Other participants enter the program after being recommended while serving sentences of probation. Prior to being accepted into the program, participants are screened by a case manager, who may disqualify the participant based on the screening. Case managers use a screening form and screening questions consist of standard demographics questions, such as age, race, and income, along with specific questions concerning the participants past and present drug use (See Appendix A for a sample screening form). A participant will be disqualified following the screening, if he or she does not take the program seriously or if the case manager doubts the
participant’s ability to be dedicated to the program. If the participant passes the initial screening, a final decision on program acceptance is made by the entire staff.

After being accepted into the program, participants are issued a “Client Handbook” (A. Foret, personal communication, August 13, 2010). The handbook serves as the participants guide to completing the program. The handbook explains the process of the program and supplies necessary information pertaining to rules, fees, sanctions, and other program requirements (Fourteenth Judicial District Adult Drug Treatment Court).

Participants are allowed 14 days to evaluate the program and the program staff is allowed 30 days to evaluate the participant. This is considered the “Opt-Out” period and the participant does not suffer any consequences if he or she decides not to continue the program or is terminated during this period of time. Some participants are not prepared for the rigors and the structure of the program, which can be very time consuming and requires a complete investment into the program. These participants typically choose to “Opt-Out” of the program. Other participants do not devote themselves to the program or require a stricter in-patient program. These participants are usually terminated by the staff. Participants, who are terminated from the program by staff or by their own decision during the “Opt-Out” period, are returned to the traditional adjudication process for sentencing. Dismissals from the program after the “Opt-Out” period have their probation revoked and are sentenced by a judge.

**Basic rules, procedures, and fees.**

Participants must be enrolled in school or maintain employment while in the program and must also meet other financial obligations. Participants who attend less than five hours of school per day must be employed at least part-time. Court assessment fees total $120 each month while
in the program and fees associated with drug testing range from $25 to $52 per test. Participants, who fail a drug screen, must also pay an additional $15 fee.

ADTCP like most other drug court programs, utilizes drug treatment and testing, intensive supervision and monitoring, and graduated sanctions and rewards. Drug testing is conducted seven days a week on a random basis on all participants for the duration of their involvement in the program. The program is divided into four separate phases and requires a minimum of one year of participation to complete. Sanctions are used for rule infractions, such as drug or alcohol use, curfew violations, missing meetings, or visiting nightclubs, and include a verbal reprimand, performing community service, jail sentences, and revocation (See Appendix B for list of rules). Incentives involve receiving reward points, which may be redeemed with the staff. An example of an incentive would be receiving a box of chocolates from the staff. Participants must complete all four phases and must remain totally drug free for 365 consecutive days to qualify for graduation. A failed drug screen results in the participant continuing in the program for another year from the date of his or her next drug free screen, even if the participant is near completing the phases of the program. Each phase of the program involves varying levels of treatment and counseling and participants must complete written assignments to qualify for advancement to the next phase. After successfully completing the program, the judge can vacate the judgment of conviction and dismiss the criminal proceedings or discharge the participant from probation. Either action by the judge is equivalent to an acquittal.

**Phase I.**

Phase I of the program requires a minimum of two months in length and includes a minimum of six therapeutic contact hours per week. This phase requires weekly meetings with a judge and two individual counseling sessions per month with a treatment counselor. Participants
must attend at least three Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings per week and provide their case manager with a verification of attendance form. Participants have a mandatory writing assignment on drug history that must be submitted to their treatment counselor. Participants cannot have any sanctions for one month to qualify for advancement to the next phase. Participants do not earn credit for time spent in jail for sanctions, so their time begins again upon release. It is estimated that 2-4 months will be needed to complete the phase.

**Phase II.**

Phase II of the program requires a minimum of four months in length and includes a minimum of three therapeutic contact hours per week. This phase requires bi-weekly meetings with a judge and one individual counseling session per month with a treatment counselor. Participants must still attend at least three AA or NA meetings per week and furnish their case manager with a verification of attendance form, and obtain a 12-step sponsor, who must be approved by their case manager. Assignments for this phase include a presentation on their drug history during group therapy and writings on the consequences (for the individual) of drug or alcohol abuse, 15 ways drug or alcohol abuse negatively impacted family or loved ones, and their personal defense mechanisms. After six weeks of continuous success in Phase II, participants may work jobs in the oil field or other jobs, which require the participant to work a similar schedule as the oil field (typically seven days on and seven days off). Participants cannot have any failed drug screens for two months and no sanctions for one month to qualify for advancement to the next phase. Again, participants do not earn credit for time spent in jail for sanctions. It is estimated that 4-6 months will be needed to complete this phase.
Phase III.

Phase III of the program requires a minimum of three months in length and includes a minimum of two therapeutic contact hours per week. This phase requires meetings with a judge every three weeks and one individual counseling session per month with a treatment counselor and one group counseling session per week. Participants must still attend at least three AA or NA meetings per week and furnish their case manager with a verification of attendance form and a sponsor letter once a month. Assignments for this phase include writings and presentations on the identification of relapse warning signs and triggers and a plan to address warning signs and triggers. Participants cannot have any failed drug screens for two months and no sanctions for one month to qualify for advancement to the next phase. Again, participants do not earn credit for time spent in jail for sanctions. It is estimated that 6 months will be needed to complete this phase.

Phase IV.

Phase IV lasts for the remainder of the probation period. This phase requires one individual counseling session per month and one group counseling session per month for twelve weeks. Participants must still attend at least two AA or NA meetings per week and furnish their case manager with a verification of attendance form and a sponsor letter once a month. During this phase participants prepare for graduation and for life outside of drug court by developing a continuing care plan with their counselor.

Theoretical Framework-Life Course Theory

This research is based on the life course theory as an explanation as to why some participants do or do not graduate from drug court. The drug court model allows participants to receive drug treatment and close supervision without incarceration. According to Sampson and
Laub (1993) incarceration could be detrimental to reducing criminal behavior because it reduces an individual’s ability to bond socially. Since many drug court participants are non-violent drug abusers, the drug court process allows them to build and maintain social bonds, which aids in preventing future delinquent activity.

Sampson and Laub (1990) developed the life course theory, which evolved from social control theory and the work of Durkheim, Hirschi, and Kornhauser. Hirschi (1969) believed that every human being was capable of committing crimes and strong social bonds with family, friends and school were the primary factors that prevented people from becoming delinquent. According to Hirschi the social bond consisted of four elements: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Attachment is related to an emotional connection to others and the will to understand the needs of other people. Commitment refers to an individual’s time and energy invested in abiding by the norms and rules of society. Involvement refers to an individual’s ability to remain involved in acceptable, constructive activities to limit the person’s availability for delinquent behavior. Belief involves an individual believing that rules apply to everyone and that everyone should abide by the rules.

Sampson and Laub were not the first to recognize the importance of the life course. Elder (1985) defined life course as “pathways through the age differentiated life span” (p. 17). Elder identified trajectories and transitions as the two primary forces that guide the life course. Trajectories are “long-term patterns of behavior and are marked by a sequence of life events and transitions” and transitions are “specified life events that are embedded in trajectories and evolve over shorter time spans” (Sampson & Laub, 1990, p. 610). Transitions and an individual’s response to them influence trajectories.
Unlike other sociology and criminology researchers, Sampson and Laub (1990) theorized that adult antisocial behavior was linked to childhood antisocial behavior and to a lack of social bonds, specifically work and marriage, that were developed over the life course. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) pointed out that simply being married or employed did not necessarily increase social bonds for individuals. According to Sampson and Laub (1990) the quality or strength of the social bonds had a greater effect on a person than the occurrence or timing of events in a person’s life. If a person had strong social bonds to marriage and work, then that person would be less likely to participate in anti-social behavior because of the risks and consequences involved that may cause those social bonds to deteriorate. Laub, Nagin, and Sampson (1998) later pointed out that “As the investment in social bonds grows, the incentive for avoiding crime increases because more is at stake” (p. 225).

Sampson and Laub (1990) also recognized that social control variables differed over the life course. For younger people social control came in the form of family, school and social or peer groups. As they aged the social control came from higher education, vocational training, marriage, and work. In the latter stages of their lives social control came from work, marriage, parenthood, and their social investment, which could also been seen as their perceived status in the social group.

**Plan of the Study**

Since the many issues related to drug dependence and abuse continue to rise each year, research into ways of solving the complex problem of drug abuse needs to continue. Chapter one has provided a background for the necessity for drug court programs, research into the success of drug court programs, and the purpose of this study. Chapter two will review the existing literature relating to drug court graduation rates and factors that are related to graduation
rates. Chapter three will outline the research methodology used for this study by identifying the research design, the population, and the key variables. Chapter four will provide a complete discussion of the results of the research using bivariate analysis. Chapter five will identify weaknesses in the study and discuss conclusions based on the research.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

When drug courts first began forming across the country, many people were skeptical about the true benefits of the programs. Numerous drug courts have been evaluated and declared to be successful in treating offenders and reducing criminal activity (Belenko, 1998, 1999, 2001; Kalich & Evans, 2006; Rempel et al., 2003; GAO, 2005). Drug courts have also been evaluated and determined to provide an overall cost savings for jurisdictions (Carey, Finigan, Crumpton, & Waller, 2006; Finigan, Carey, & Cox, 2007; Belenko, 2005). Current research trends have been directed towards determining ways of improving program success.

The purpose of the literature review is to identify similar studies that have been conducted to evaluate graduation rates for drug court programs and to determine where future research should be directed. For this study 12 reports documenting the results from prior studies were located in peer reviewed journals and in these reports nine factors, which were previously identified by Hickert, Boyle, and Tollefson (2009), were consistently studied to determine their correlation to drug court completion. These nine factors were age, gender, race, criminal history, education, employment, drug use, psychological issues, and family and social bonds.

Age

The research outcomes are divided when it comes to accessing the correlation between age and success in drug court programs. In five of the studies older participants were more likely to graduate than younger participants (Newton-Taylor, Patra, & Gliksman, 2009; Wolf, Sowards, & Wolf, 2003; Rempel et al., 2003; Hartley & Phillips, 2001; Rempel & Destefono, 2001). Mateyoke-Scrivner, Webster, Stanton, and Leukfeld (2004) found that older participants in rural drug courts were more likely to graduate, but no differences were observed in urban drug courts.
In seven other studies there were no differences in the ability of older participant to successfully complete the programs (Hickert et al., 2009; Roll, Prendergast, Richardson, Burdon, & Ramirez, 2005; Butzin, Saum, & Scarpitti, 2002; Miller & Shutt, 2001; Sechrest & Shicor, 2001; Gray and Saum, 2005).

**Gender**

The majority of the studies found no significant difference in the participant’s graduation rates based on gender (Hickert et al., 2009; Newton-Taylor et al., 2009; Roll et al., 2005; Mateyoke-Scrivner et al., 2004; Butzin et al., 2002; Sechrest & Shicor, 2001; Miller & Shutt, 2001; Hartley & Phillips, 2001). Rempel and Destefano (2001) found that women waited longer than men to be placed into a program and were more likely to drop out, but gender was not a factor when both sexes were placed in the program at the same time. Gray and Saum (2005) found that female participants had a greater chance of succeeding in the program even though there were more male participants.

**Race**

Race was a factor for predicting drug court graduation in six studies. In these studies white participants graduated at a higher rate than non-white participants (Butzin et al., 2002; Sechrest & Shicor, 2001; Miller & Shutt, 2001; Hartley & Phillips, 2001; Wolf et al., 2003; Gray & Saum, 2005). The study by Miller and Shutt (2001) was limited because the majority of the participants were white and the Wolf et al. (2003) study noted that the minority participants fared better with a case manager of the same race.

Race was analyzed as a factor in four other studies, but no considerable difference was observed between graduates and drop outs. Hickert et al. (2009) determined that race was not a factor, but like Sechrest and Shicor (2001) the majority of the participants were white.
Mateyoke-Scrivner et al. (2004), Rempel and Destefano (2001), and Roll et al. (2005) found that race could not be considered a factor in determining graduation rates.

**Criminal History**

Criminal history as a variable was measured by calculating the number of arrests or the number of convictions and was positively correlated to success or failure in all but one of the studies that analyzed participant’s criminal history. Sechrest and Shicor (2001) noted that graduates had a slightly higher number of prior offenses, but this was not considered a significant predictor for success or termination from the program. Hickert et al. (2009) found that graduates were charged with fewer offenses before entering the program. In the studies by Newton-Taylor et al. (2009), Miller and Shutt (2001), and Wolf et al. (2003) expelled or terminated participants had more convictions than graduates. Gray and Saum (2005) noted graduates had half as many arrests and each additional arrest decreased the likelihood of not completing the program by 17.7%. Rempel and Destefano (2001) observed that misdemeanor convictions were more likely to lead to drop out and felony convictions were not a factor for success or failure in the program, but Mateyoke-Scrivner et al. (2004) found that the number of charges was less significant than the type of charge and the participant’s ability to adhere to the terms of probation. The authors noted that participants who had violated terms of probation were more likely to be terminated and graduates were charged with drug or alcohol offenses more than other crimes.

**Education**

The studies did not overwhelmingly support education level as having a positive or negative effect on graduation rates. Higher education levels were attributed to various degrees of graduation increases in four of the studies (Newton-Taylor et al., 2009; Mateyoke-Scrivner et al., 2004; Butzin et al., 2002; Hartley & Phillips, 2001). Rempel and Destefano (2001) found no
effect from education background, but the authors also found few of the program participants attended or graduated college and less than half of the participants completed high school. In three other studies the difference in education level was not significant enough to be used as a predictor for success in the programs (Roll et al., 2005; Sechrest & Shicor, 2001; Gray & Saum, 2005).

**Employment**

Employment was another factor that did not equate to success in all programs, but employment did have a positive effect on the graduation rates in four of the studies. In these studies graduation rates increased for participants who were employed prior to entering the program, maintained full-time employment during the program, or both (Roll et al., 2005; Mateyoke-Scrivner et al., 2004; Hartely & Phillips, 2001; Butzin et al., 2002).

Employment could not be used to predict success in the studies by Wolf et al. (2003) and Miller and Shutt (2001). Three other studies found no significant difference in employment between graduates and non-graduates, but in each of these studies the sample was unevenly distributed due to the majority of participants being unemployed at intake or during the program (Sechrest & Shicor, 2001; Newton-Taylor et al., 2009; Hickert et al., 2009; Rempel & Destefano, 2001).

**Drug Use**

Drug use was measured differently and had definite effects on the participant’s graduation rates. Five studies reported that cocaine or crack cocaine use decreased the participants’ chances of graduating from the program (Hickert et al., 2009; Mateyoke-Scrivner et al., 2004; Miller & Shutt, 2001; Hartley & Phillips, 2001; Wolf et al., 2003). Two studies reported heroin use decreased the chances of graduation (Rempel & Destefano, 2001; Rempel et
al., 2003). Sechrest and Shicor’s (2001) study found that graduates used marijuana less, but the results were slightly skewed because amphetamine use was a criterion for program admittance.

Three studies reported that graduates used drugs less frequently than non-graduates (Newton-Taylor et al., 2009; Gray & Saum, 2005; Butzin et al., 2002). Roll et al. (2005) found that participants who had a history of abusing drugs intravenously were more than five times more likely to not complete the program. The authors pointed out that needle use is often associated with chronic drug addiction, which may require inpatient treatment.

**Psychological Issues**

Most studies did not analyze psychological issues as a variable in determining completion from the program, but the studies that did had mixed results. Gray and Saum (2005) found that participants who noticed signs of depression following their first 30 days in the program were 55.2% less likely to graduate and participants who began a medication regimen for psychological or emotional issues 30 days prior to beginning the program increased their chances of graduation by nearly 700%. The authors also reported that men were less likely to report psychological issues. Hickert et al. (2009) found that psychological issues were linked to graduation, taking medication did not increase the chances of graduation, and self-reported depression resulted in more than double the risk of dropping out. Miller and Shutt (2001) and Mateyoke-Scrivner et al. (2004) did not find any significant differences between graduating the drug court program and dropping out based on psychological issues, but Mateyoke-Scrivner et al. did note that self-reporting instead of clinical diagnosis may have been a limitation. Roll et al. (2005) did not find any significance between taking medication for mental disorders and drug court outcomes, but the majority of the sample, 90%, did not take any medication.
Family and Social Bonds

The effects of family and social bonds varied because these bonds were defined and measured differently in most of the studies. Hickert et al. (2009) reviewed several family variables and found that the bond created by a participant spending the majority of his free time with family instead of alone or with friends resulted in a decreased chance of early termination from the program. Newton-Taylor et al. (2009) and Mateyoke-Scrivner et al. (2004) found that graduates were less likely to be married, but Roll et al. (2005) and Miller and Shutt (2001) found no difference in the marital status of graduates and non-graduates. In the study by Rempel and Destefano (2001) higher neighborhood isolation for participants increased the risk of dropping out of the program. Sechrest and Sichor (2001) found that program success was not affected by the number of children in the participant’s home. Since the definition of family and social bonds ranged so much, it is difficult to compare these studies using this particular factor.

Life Course Theory

Sampson and Laub (1990) tested their life course theory using data that was collected by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck for a study of 500 delinquent and 500 non-delinquent males from Boston, Massachusetts. Sampson and Laub discovered that there was a link between childhood delinquency and numerous adult antisocial behaviors and problems. They were also able to validate their theory that social bonds in work and marriage caused a decrease in adult antisocial behavior. Sampson and Laub recognized that employment and marriage alone were not enough to create a strong social bond to influence social control, but a strong, close marriage and a stable, fulfilling job were.

Sampson and Laub (1996) continued their research into the effects of the life course on individuals. Using the data from the Glueck’s study, Sampson and Laub determined that over-
seas military service, in-service training, and the G.I. Bill were important transitions that positively influenced the trajectories of the study group. Laub, Nagin, and Sampson (1998) applied the data from the Glueck’s study to their research of the effects of strong marital bonds on the reduction of criminal deviance and discovered that there was a positive correlation between the two, but the influence of the strong marital bond on criminal deviance was not immediate and occurred over time.

Simons, Johnson, Conger, and Elder (1998) tested the life course theory against latent trait theory in their study of stability of adolescent antisocial behavior. For their study Simons et al. used a sample of 179 boys and their families from a longitudinal data set from the Iowa Youth and Families Project. The findings of the study reflected that improved parenting, increased school commitment, or reduced affiliation with deviant peers reduced the probability that troubled youth would become delinquent in their adolescence. The study supported the life course theory’s premise that deviant behavior developed over time without proper social controls, and did not support the latent trait theory.

Benda (2005) tested the life course theory in his study to determine gender differences of recidivism. Benda reviewed the recidivism rates of 300 men and 300 women, who graduated from a boot camp correctional program. Job satisfaction and education were determined to decrease antisocial behavior among men, whereas relationships and number of children were determined to decrease antisocial behavior among women. These results supported the life course theory’s premise that strong social bonds would lead to decreased anti-social behavior.

**Contribution to Literature**

The continued success for drug court programs is dependent upon selecting candidates that have the best chance of succeeding in the programs. The previously mentioned studies
reflect a pattern that older, white, male participants, who do not use crack cocaine, have the best chance of succeeding in the drug court program. This study will add to the existing literature and can be used to further the research into increasing the number of graduates from drug court programs by further studying the most frequently cited factors that contribute to drug court program success.

The previously mentioned studies were conducted at numerous locations throughout the United States and Canada. The geographical locations for these programs provided differences in the factors that were studied. Drug use was highly dependent upon the location due to drug availability. Other factors such as age, race, and gender were also dependent upon the demographics of the program location. No study of factors related to drug court completion was found for any program in the state of Louisiana. This study will provide valuable data for programs in the state of Louisiana to assess potential drug court candidates.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the methodology chapter is to describe the strategy of the research project. For this study specific variables that are correlated to graduating from drug court were identified from prior studies. Using files from ADTCP for the individuals who previously participated in the program and either graduated or were removed from the program, data pertaining to these variables was collected. The data was then analyzed to understand which of the variables were positively or negatively correlated to graduation from ADTCP.

Research Design

For this study a retrospective cross-sectional design was used. A cross-sectional design uses data that is collected on a sample on one occasion (Adler & Clark, 2008). The term retrospective refers to something occurring in the past. The design was retrospective because the data was collected from the files of participants who were no longer in the program.

This design was selected because it was more appropriate for this particular study for various reasons. This design allowed all the past participants to be studied at the same point in the program, which was at the end of the program. For some participants the end of the program was marked by graduation, but for others it was marked by termination from ADTCP. Since participants enter and exit the program at different times, the design also allowed for all past participant records to be reviewed and evaluated. Time was another consideration when making the determination for this study design. Other designs such as a longitudinal design, which collects data on a sample on a minimum of two different occasions, are time intensive and not suitable for this type of project (Adler & Clark, 2008). Since ADTCP is a relatively new, a longitudinal design would have also limited the sample size, which was already small.
Sample Selection

In order to conduct a proper study, the first step was to determine the population and to select a proper sample from that population. A population is the entire group of subjects being studied and a sample is a small set of the population, which is used to make inferences about the population (Adler & Clark, 2008). For this study the population consisted of all past participants who either graduated or were removed from ADTCP between June 2007 and January 2011.

Prior to beginning this research study, consent was obtained from the Calcasieu Parish District Attorney, who manages the program. As previously mentioned the District Attorney was amenable to the study being conducted and provided written consent, which was necessary to obtain approval from the University of Central Missouri’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). IRB approval was granted on January 28, 2011 and this approval was effective for one year (See Appendix C for Human Subjects Approval letter).

Since the Calcasieu Parish District Attorney’s Office manages the program, the office maintains the program’s records as well. The researcher worked with a program case manager, who was also an employee of the District Attorney’s Office, to determine the total population of participants who had entered the program and either graduated or were removed from ADTCP from June 2007 until January 2011. The population for this time period was 38 participants.

In making the determination for the sample selection, the researcher took into account the amount of time that ADTCP had been operating and the small number of participants that had entered the program. Since the population was so small, the entire population was used for this study.
Data Collection

Data for this study was obtained through a review of the available files for ADTCP participants who either graduated or were removed from the program from June 2007 until January 2011. These records provided all of the necessary information needed to collect the data on the specific variables to conduct this type of study. As was the case with the research design, time was again a factor in choosing this type of method for data collection. With the small number of participants in the program, data collection was conducted in a short amount of time. The researcher provided a detailed explanation of the required data to a case manager who reviewed the existing files between April 4, 2011 and April 7, 2011. The case manager compiled a data set using an Excel spreadsheet and forwarded the data to the researcher.

Variables

Variables for this study were divided into two categories, dependent and independent. There was only one dependent variable, which was the program outcome. Participants either graduated or were terminated from the program. Program outcome was coded 0 for termination and 1 for graduation. The independent variables were the eight participant characteristics that were analyzed to understand the correlation between the characteristics and drug court graduation. The characteristics included age, gender, race, criminal history, education, employment, drug use, and family and social bonds.

The data for many of the participant characteristics was collected from the initial screening form that was completed at the beginning of the program and other program records that were retained in the participants’ program files. Age was defined as the participant’s age upon entering the program. Gender was defined as the sex of the participant and was categorized
as either male or female. Males were coded 0 and females were coded 1. Race was defined as either white or black because there were no participants from any other racial group. White was coded 0 and black was coded 1. Education was defined as the highest grade level of education the participant had received upon entering the program. Education was coded 0 through 12 for grade levels through high school. Participants who acquired a GED were coded as 12 for the equivalent of a high school diploma. Employment status was defined as whether the participant was employed or not upon entering the program. Employment status was coded 0 for unemployed and 1 for employed. Prior drug use was defined as the primary type of drug the participant abused. Family and social bond was defined as whether the participant was married or not and was coded 0 for married and 1 for not being married.

Participants’ criminal history was obtained from official criminal history reports that were maintained in each participant’s file at the District Attorney’s office. Criminal history was defined as the total number of arrests for the participant prior to enrolling into the program. The total number of arrests for each participant was selected because any arrest during the program could lead to a technical violation. The researcher wanted to learn if more law enforcement contacts prior to entering the program would lead to greater difficulty in completing the program.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

The purpose of the results section is to document the findings of the study. This section will discuss the participant demographics as well as the results of bivariate analysis and t test. These techniques were chosen because the sample size was small and the goal of the study was to identify the differences between graduates and non-graduates and any relationships between the variables.

Descriptive Statistics

This research study collected data on eight specific offender characteristics of past participants of ADTCP (n=38) and Table 1 reflects this data. The average age of the participants

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Between Group Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total Sample (n=38) Mean (standard deviation)</th>
<th>Graduates (n=30) Mean (standard deviation)</th>
<th>Non Graduates (n=8) Mean (standard deviation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>27.63 (6.415)</td>
<td>29.13 (5.894)</td>
<td>22.00 (5.264)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>.18 (.393)</td>
<td>.10 (.305)</td>
<td>.50 (.535)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.39 (.495)</td>
<td>.43 (.504)</td>
<td>.25 (.463)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrest Record</td>
<td>3.18 (1.312)</td>
<td>3.07 (1.285)</td>
<td>3.63 (1.408)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>11.58 (1.030)</td>
<td>12 (.000)</td>
<td>10 (1.414)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>.84 (.370)</td>
<td>.97 (.183)</td>
<td>.38 (.518)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Social Bonds</td>
<td>.76 (.431)</td>
<td>.70 (.466)</td>
<td>1.00 (.000)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Months in program</td>
<td>19.71 (7.188)</td>
<td>19.47 (7.238)</td>
<td>20.63 (7.405)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at the p < .001 level
**Significant at the p < .01 level
***Significant at the p < .05 level
was 27.63 years. The majority of the participants were white (82%, n=31) and male (61%, n=23). The mean number of arrests for participants was 3.18. Most of the participants completed high school or acquired a GED prior to enrolling into the program and the mean level of education was 11.58 years. Most of the participants were single (76%, n=29) and employed (84%, n=32) upon entering the program. The mean number of months spent in the program was 19.71.

Table 2 reflects the drug of choice for the two groups. Opiates (29%, n=11) and cocaine (32%, n=12) were the most commonly abused substances among participants. Half (n=4) of the non-graduates reported cocaine as their drug of choice. Opiates (33.3%, n=10) was the most commonly reported drug of choice among graduates followed by cocaine (26.7%, n=8) and methamphetamine (16.7%, n=5).

Table 2: Drug of Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grad (Yes/No)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Valid</td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opiates</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PCP</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes Valid</td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benzo</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ecstasy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meth</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opiates</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bivariate Correlation

This study used a bivariate analysis to understand the impact that the independent variables had on one another and on the dependent variable, drug court graduation. By understanding which variables positively or negatively impact one another or graduation rates, drug court staff can better assess specific needs of participants to assist them through the program. Bivariate analysis is a data analysis technique that focuses on the relationship between two separate variables (Adler & Clark, 2008). Multivariate analysis, which is a technique that focuses on the relationship between several variables, was not appropriate for this study because of the small sample size (Adler & Clark, 2008).

Table 3 reflects the results of the bivariate analysis. Education, age, employment status, and race were all significantly correlated to graduation from ADTCP. There was a strong positive correlation between education and graduation, which meant that participants with higher levels of education were more likely to graduate from the program. There was a high positive correlation between employment status and graduation and a moderate positive correlation between age and graduation, which meant that older participants and participants who were employed upon entering the program were more likely to graduate. Race had a moderate negative correlation to graduation, which meant that black participants were less likely to graduate.

There were also correlations between the variables. There was a weak positive correlation between age and education while there was a high negative correlation between race and education. This meant that older participants were more educated and black participants were less educated. There was a strong positive correlation between education and employment...
Table 3: Bivariate Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Arrest Record</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Family Relationships</th>
<th>Months in program</th>
<th>Grad (Yes/No)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Age</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.080</td>
<td>-.635</td>
<td>-.245</td>
<td>-.138</td>
<td>-.115</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.192</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>.610</td>
<td>-.081</td>
<td>.246</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrest Record</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>.299</td>
<td>-.115</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.181</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.348*</td>
<td>-.605**</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.921</td>
<td>-.277</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>38</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.328*</td>
<td>-.539**</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.921</td>
<td>-.277</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Social Bonds</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.326*</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>-.057</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>-.231</td>
<td>-.241</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Months in Program</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.249</td>
<td>-.182</td>
<td>-.081</td>
<td>.246</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad (Yes/No)</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.450**</td>
<td>-.421**</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>-.176</td>
<td>.802**</td>
<td>.662**</td>
<td>-.288</td>
<td>-.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.359</td>
<td>.291</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
status and a weak positive correlation between age and employment status, but there was a moderate negative correlation between race and employment status. This meant that older, more educated participants were more likely to be employed upon entering the program, but black participants were less likely to be employed. There was a weak negative correlation between age and family and social bonds, which meant that younger participants were less likely to be married.

**T Test Results**

Table 1 reflects the descriptive statistics for the full sample as well as the two groups of graduates and non-graduates and results from an independent t test comparing the two groups. Among all the independent variables family relationships had the strongest impact on graduation. Even though 70% (n=21) of the graduates were not married, all (n=8) of the non-graduates were single. Age was another important variable because older participants performed better in the program. Graduates (n=30) were more than seven years older than non-graduates (n=8). Race, specifically being black, had a negative effect on graduation. Only 10% (n=3) of the graduates were black, but 50% (n=4) of the non-graduates were black. Education and employment status also had an impact on graduation. The mean years of education for graduates was 12, which meant that they had either graduated high school or received a GED, but the non-graduates mean years of education was 10. Nearly all (n=29) of the graduates were employed prior to beginning the program, but only three of the non-graduates were. Gender and arrest record did not significantly impact participants’ ability to complete the program. Drug of choice was not a significant variable affecting participants’ performance in the program.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a discussion of the research project and conclusions that the researcher formulated as a result of the research. This chapter will begin with an overall discussion of the research project, and the discussion will include findings of the research and the identification of weaknesses and other issues experienced with the research. This discussion will be followed by a conclusion section which identifies current trends, how this research compared to prior research of a similar nature, and specific policy and research implications.

Findings.

This study yielded results that were both expected and unexpected. The findings from the research indicated that there was a correlation between certain ADTCP participant characteristics and graduation from the program. It was expected that there would be a correlation between some of those characteristics and there were. Specifically, older white participants who were employed and had attained a high school diploma or GED prior to entering the program, were more likely to graduate than others without these specific characteristics. From a theoretical perspective, older, more educated participants tend to have stronger social bonds than younger, less educated participants. Older participants have a greater likelihood of having families that depend on them for support, therefore, requiring them to refrain from anti-social behavior. Higher education usually tends to allow for more opportunities for employment and for better quality jobs with better pay and incentives. Better quality jobs increase the social control on participants because they stand to lose more. There was a positive
correlation between age and education and between education and employment. This correlation was consistent with the general assumption that older participants would have more opportunities to obtain a higher education which would lead to more life skills and experiences, and a greater opportunity to gain employment. Older participants may have obtained life skills and experiences through prior jobs, military service, and learning from their past actions and mistakes as well as those of others. Older participants would also be more mature, which would lead to better opportunities for employment.

It was expected that other participant characteristics would be correlated to graduation from the program, but the research indicated that they were not. For instance, participant’s criminal history and family relationships were not significant in terms of being correlated to graduating from the program. The mean number of arrests (3.18) indicated that most participants did not have a large number of law enforcement encounters. For family relationships, even though all eight of the participants who were removed from the program were single, the majority of the graduates (70%, n=21) were also single. Marriage can be perceived as a type of informal of social control, because married people are typically dependent upon and accountable to one another. Even though the single participants in ADTCP were not married, they were receiving support throughout the process from family members and staff.

It was not expected that there would be such a negative correlation between race and education, and race and employment status. An individual’s race should not affect his or her ability to acquire a quality education or job. Any public school offers free education to anyone living in the school’s district and financial assistance through grants and loans are available for higher education. Federal and state laws prevent employers from discriminating against someone due to their race. Even so, some disparity still exists between black and white citizens.
According to Dannerbeck, Harris, Sundet, and Lloyd (2006), this disparity could be the result of prevailing social conditions.

Overall, the results supported the hypothesis that the life course theory could be used as an explanation as to why some participants do or do not graduate from drug court. The results supported some of the basic beliefs of the theory such as age, employment and education creating stronger social bonds and leading to less anti-social behavior. Even though family relationships in the form of marriage did not prove to be positively correlated to graduation, the single participants were receiving support from family and staff.

**Weaknesses.**

There were some weaknesses or limitations to the research project. The sample size was a limitation because of the extremely small number of participants. This was unavoidable because of the short period of time that ADTCP has been in operation and the small number of participants that are allowed. Since the total number of participants was so small, the entire population was used for analysis, but the entire population was still a small number. A small sample can sometimes be misleading because it does not always give an accurate reflection of the overall population.

This small number of past participants also created two other limitations on the research project, the variation between participants and the test available for data analysis. The lack of variation between participants was evident after reviewing the racial makeup, family relationships, and employment status of the population. Participants fell into one of two races, black or white, and the majority (82%, n=31) were white. Most of the participants were also single (76%, n=29) and employed (84%, n=32). The small population allowed for the use of an
independent t test to be used to compare graduates with non-graduates, but the population was too small for other analytical tests to be used.

External validity was another unavoidable weakness because the study only reviewed one jurisdiction. Using sample data from only one jurisdiction limits the ability to generalize about others because variables could change drastically depending on the geographic location.

**Conclusion**

Over the past two decades, drug courts have evolved and proven to be successful, which has allowed some trends to emerge. Two trends identified by Cooper (2003) are broadening the eligibility requirements for participants and allowing crimes other than drug offenses to be prosecuted in drug court. Neither of these two trends are recommended by this researcher.

Some jurisdictions with successful drug courts are attempting to expand the courts to allow offenders who would not have been selected to participate in most drug court programs. This could have a negative impact on the success of the drug court programs. Drug courts have traditionally been very selective in choosing the proper persons to invite to participate in the program. The success of these programs is correlated to this selectiveness. Broadening the eligibility requirements for drug court participation could have a negative impact by inserting a strain on the program. A study conducted by Roman, Townsend, and Bhati (2003) found that larger drug courts had higher rates of recidivism, which could be a reason for the success of ADTCP.

Another trend identified by Cooper (2007) is the reform of areas of public policy, such as housing, public welfare benefits, and educational benefits, to make drug court graduation feasible for more participants. Reform in these areas could positively impact drug courts across the country by providing participants with the necessary assistance to lessen their financial
burdens and decrease the amount of stress while participating in the program. These reforms could also increase the participants’ social bonds through attaining higher education, which would lead to quality jobs and a higher social investment.

The results of this research project were consistent with numerous similar studies that were previously conducted and discussed in the literature review. Age, race, education, and employment were correlated to graduation in this study as they were in several others as indicated in the literature review, but there was not overwhelming support among all of the studies concerning the correlation between any of these variables and graduation. Generally, the research was divided when it came to these variables. Most of the prior studies found no correlation between gender and graduation, and this study also found that gender had no significant effect. Although there is still some bias towards women in certain areas, women today have plenty of opportunities to compete with men in the work environment on a level field. Greater work opportunities and bonds created with family through child bearing and rearing build stronger social bonds between the women and the community. Criminal history was correlated to graduation in nearly all but one of the previous studies but it had no significant impact on the graduation rates in this study. ADTCP participants had an average of 3.18 law enforcement contacts, which is a relatively low number and could be the reason for criminal history not significantly affecting graduation rates. Family relationship was not correlated to graduating from the program in this study, but it is difficult to determine how this compared to other studies because this variable is measured in so many different ways. Drug use was another variable that was measured in different ways and it is difficult to compare drug of choice results because the drug of choice often depends on the geographical location of the program. With that being said, in this study half (n=4) of the non-graduates reported cocaine as their drug of choice,
which was consistent with five studies reporting the use of cocaine or crack cocaine had a negative correlation to graduation.

Research into the effectiveness of drug court programs needs to continue. Future research for drug courts should focus on the effects that other variables such as housing environment and participants’ ability to fulfill basic needs have on their capability to complete the programs, remain drug free, and refrain from antisocial behavior. For ADTCP future research should focus on recidivism rates for graduates. Some participants may perform extremely well only while they are under strict supervision in a drug court program. Studying recidivism rates of graduates is the only way to learn if the program is an effective long term solution to rehabilitating drug addicted offenders.

**Policy and Research Implications**

Prior studies have failed to produce an overwhelming consensus concerning offender characteristics that are correlated to graduating from drug court. One of the issues with studies of these variables is the sometimes extreme variety in the ways that the variables are measured. Race, sex, and gender are fairly simple to define, but other factors such as drug use and family relationships allow for many different variations of measurement. For instance, the literature review cited three different ways that data was collected pertaining to drug use: drug of choice, frequency of use, and intravenous use.

Since there is such variation between the results of different studies, more research is necessary to understand how specific offender characteristics or factors are correlated to graduation rates, but standard definitions must be designed for these characteristics or factors and instituted for all future research. These standard definitions will ensure that all future research is measuring the variables in the same manner.
The standard definitions will help future research only if the programs are collecting data according to these definitions. For future research to be successful, programs must be trained to understand the importance of recording data within these specified parameters. This would also allow for researchers to compare drug courts around the country without the limitation of differing definitions for the same variables.

ADTCP appears to be a successful program. Most of the participants (79%, n=30) that are allowed in the program graduated. Using available data collected by the Louisiana Supreme Court between 2004 and 2010 the average graduation rate for all Louisiana drug courts was estimated to be 37% (P. Angell, personal communication, October 5, 2011). The high graduation rates for ADTCP could be questioned as being the result of a biased selection process. In 2010 there were 65 individuals screened for participation in the program and only 21 (32%) were accepted (A. Foret, personal communication, October 19, 2011). The positive graduation results could also be the result of the size of the program and the small number of total participants that are allowed to be enrolled in the program at one time.

The program managers should bear in mind that any increases in the number of participants puts more strain on the program staff. Increased numbers of participants would limit staffs’ ability to devote ample amounts of time to each case without hiring other case managers. Allowing staff to maintain smaller caseloads permits more interaction with the participants and strengthens their social bond to the program and eventually the community.

ADTCP can build off of the results of this study. Education and employment status prior to enrollment were the highest correlates to graduating from the program. The program requires participants to maintain employment or enrollment in school, but more can be done to assist the participants who are proven to be reliable and are vested in the program. Program staff should
work with local businesses and government leaders to establish some form of financial aid for further education beyond a high school diploma or GED. Whether through a trade school or a university, higher education would provide participants with more marketable skills during their job searches. According to the ADTCP Client Handbook (2007) case workers may be able to assist participants with job placement. To better assist participants, program staff should consider building relationships and partnerships with local businesses to assist participants with placement in quality jobs. Gaining a higher education or a quality job are two ways participants can increase their social bonds, which may increase the probability that they graduate from the program while decreasing the probability that they return to anti-social behavior.

ADTCP should also consider maintaining participant records in digital format. Responses to questions that were asked during the initial screening were hand written on the screening form and the form was placed into the participant’s file. Hand written records are sometimes useful, but data collection is time consuming when the data is derived from these records. Storing data in digital format would aid during any future research into the program.

Drug courts have proven to be an effective alternative to the traditional adjudication process. Although drug court programs can vary between jurisdictions, their overall goal of rehabilitating offenders through close supervision is the same. Incapacitation has not proven to be effective in decreasing an individual’s dependence upon controlled substances, so the number of drug courts across the United States will continue to increase. As new programs are created to keep up with the demand for alternative sentencing and rehabilitation techniques, the traditional model of the drug court program will continue to change and evolve.
References


APPENDIX A

INITIAL SCREENING FORM

NAME/________________________________________________________
PDO  OR PRIVATE ATTY

AGE/_________DOB_________________________SS#_______________________
MARRIED/ YES/NO DIVORCED/ WIDOWED/ SEPERATED
SINGLE KIDS/

WHAT IS YOUR DRUG OF
CHOICE?________________________________________________________
WHEN DID YOU LAST USE?________________________________________
WHERE DO YOU WORK OR WHERE DID YOU LAST WORK?_______________

HOW MANY DAYS HAVE YOU BEEN IN JAIL___2
WEEKS __________________________

DID YOU GRADUATE/ WHAT YEAR/SCHOOL?
________________________________________

DO YOU HAVE ANY DOM VIO OR SEX
CRIMES?______________________________________________
WHAT GRADE DID YOU GO TO?____________________________________

DO YOU HAVE TRANSPORTATION?________________________________
IS IT YOUR VEHICLE/__________________________________________
DO YOU HAVE A LICENSE?

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO GET TO THE DA’S OFFICE EVERY DAY?
 __________________________________________________________

WHAT RELIGION ARE YOU?
__________________________________________________________

WHICH CHURCH DO YOU
ATTEND?____________________________________________________

WHAT MEDICINE ARE YOU ON, OR WHEN YOU ARE NOT IN JAIL?

____________________________________________________________

CURRENT MEDS/
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
WITH WHO AND WHERE DO YOU PLAN ON LIVING?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

HOW MUCH DO THEY DRINK OR USE DRUGS?

THEIR NAME/ADDRESS/CONTACT NUMBERS

ADDITIONAL NOTES
APPENDIX B
CLIENT RULES

1. Confidentiality is mandatory.
   A. What goes on in group, stays in group.
   B. Do not discuss other clients with anyone outside the group.

2. No use or possession of alcohol or drugs.

3. No possession of contraband.
   A. Drug paraphernalia.
   B. Anything that could be used as a weapon.

4. No verbal abuse, physical abuse, or assaultive behavior toward others.
   A. No profanity.
   B. No derogatory statements, name calling, or rude statements.
   C. No intimidating or threatening behavior.
   D. No physical contact that could harm others, such as tripping, pushing, etc.

5. No destruction of property.
   A. Ex: Writing or scraping on walls and/or furniture.

6. No stealing.

7. No sexual contact between drug court clients. No sexual or profane gestures.

8. No physical contact with staff, except that handshakes and hugs are occasionally appropriate.

9. No self-destructive behaviors, i.e. drinking, drug use, self-mutilation, prostitution, etc.

10. No cell phone calls to be taken during court or group. Phones off/on vibrate.

11. No smoking, eating, or drinking during court or group.
1/28/2011

Robert Broussard
5730 Gene Lake
Lake Charles, LA 70605

Dear Mr. Robert Broussard,

Your research project, 'Factors correlated to graduating from the Fourteenth Judicial District (Louisiana) Adult Drug Treatment Court Program', was approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee on 1/28/2011. This approval is valid through 1/28/2012.

Please note that you are required to notify the committee in writing of any changes in your research project and that you may not implement changes without prior approval of the committee. You must also notify the committee in writing of any change in the nature or the status of the risks of participating in this research project.

Should any adverse events occur in the course of your research (such as harm to a research participant), you must notify the committee in writing immediately. In the case of any adverse event, you are required to stop the research immediately unless stopping the research would cause more harm to the participants than continuing with it.

At the conclusion of your project, you will need to submit a completed Project Status Form to this office. You must also submit the Project Status Form if you wish to continue your research project beyond its initial expiration date.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the number above.

Sincerely,

Janice Putnam Ph.D., RN
Associate Dean of The Graduate School
putnam@ucmo.edu

cc: Yeok-il Cho