

The Effect of College Students Growing Up in Poverty-Stricken Areas

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The effect of college students growing up in poverty-stricken areas

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HYPOTHESES:



College students who grew up in poverty-stricken areas are more likely to engage in criminal activity due to financial strain, exposure to high-crime environments, and limited access to resources; however, access to higher education and support systems can serve as protective factors that reduce this likelihood. There is no correlation between finances and deviance within college students, $r(56) = .027, p = .845$. Therefore, our hypothesis was not supported.

PARTICIPANTS:



Participants were enrolled college freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors from a Historically Black University. They were selected based on their enrollment in upper-level courses.

The total number of participants was 78
Demographics included gender, age (ranging from 18 to 52, race, ethnicity, income level, etc.

Most participants were African American.

Minimal missing responses across demographic variables.

MEASURES:



Low Reliability:

Neighborhood Safety ($\alpha = .638$): Below the acceptable threshold, indicating limited consistency in responses.

Acceptable Reliability:

Deviant Behavior (TOTDEVIANCE) ($\alpha = .769$): Shows normal, acceptable reliability.

Social Identity (Social Skills) ($\alpha = .767$): Also falls within the acceptable reliability range.

Good Reliability:

College Belongingness ($\alpha = .803$): Demonstrates strong reliability.

Life Satisfaction ($\alpha = .840$): Indicates very good internal consistency.

RESULTS:



Descriptive Findings:

Average perceived safety: $M = 7.07$

Deviant behavior levels: $M = 21.08$ (relatively high)

Social skills: $M = 16.54$

Life satisfaction: $M = 9.90$

Sense of belonging: $M = 16.36$

Inferential Findings:

Positive correlation between social skill and life satisfaction.

Negative correlation between deviant behavior and perceived safety.

Students with adequate financial resources had higher life satisfaction ($t(df) = \text{value}, p < .05$).

DISCUSSION:



Even though attending college is sometimes seen as a means of achieving upward mobility, students from low-income families may still be burdened by environmental hazards and stresses from their early lives.

Although the majority of kids in the sample did not report significant levels of reckless behavior, findings that are supported by General Strain Theory and previous research indicate that exposure to crime and a lack of resources in underprivileged communities might impact deviant behavior. The findings emphasize how crucial focused assistance programs are to ending poverty cycles

Strength: Broad sample with detailed psychosocial variables gives insight into risk and protective factors.

Limitation: Wide age range (18–52) may affect generalizability, especially when comparing younger vs. older students.