

The Effects of Educational Attainment on Incarceration Sentence Length

A Thesis submitted  
To the Graduate School  
Valdosta State University.

In partial fulfillment of requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

In Criminal Justice

In the College of Humanities and Social Sciences

June 2021

Gilbert Johnson

BA, Columbus State University, 2017

AA, Columbus Technical College, 2015

©Copyright 2021 Gilbert Johnson

All Rights Reserved

This thesis, "The Effects of Educational Attainment on Incarceration Sentence Length," by Gilbert W. Johnson, is approved by:

**Thesis Committee Chair**

DocuSigned by:  
*Shani P. Wilfred*  
60600000DD004FC...

---

Shani P. Wilfred, Ph.D.  
Professor of Criminal Justice

**Committee Member**

DocuSigned by:  
*F. E. Knowles, Jr.*  
ABDEA9E61FF14FB...

---

Fred E. Knowles, Ph.D.  
Professor of Criminal Justice

DocuSigned by:  
*Deborah Robinson*  
80SA8344D7B04F0...

---

Deborah M. Robinson, Ph.D.  
Professor of Criminal Justice

**Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research**

DocuSigned by:  
*Becky da Cruz*  
04AFF646070449F...

---

Becky K. da Cruz, Ph.D., J.D.  
Professor of Criminal Justice

**Defense Date** July 26, 2021



## ABSTRACT

Education is known to be valuable, which in turn can be a critical component to the rehabilitation process. Reasoning behind the apparent disparity in sentencing decisions is extrinsic and complicated, although research has provided multiple avenues of explanation. The empirical literature on education and crime has focused almost exclusively on the effects of educational attainment on post-school criminal activity; however, a few studies have attempted to estimate the ‘effects’ of educational attainment on contemporaneous crime. This study will evaluate the level of education that has been attained by federal inmates and see if inmates with some education background have lesser sentences than inmates with no educational background. In order to get the full scope of the independent variable effect on sentence length this study will use crosstabulation. This study plan on using cross-tabulations to describe the relationship between educational attainment and sentence length, while controlling for serious crimes and maximum sentence length. Variable coding will support the analysis. The results from this study showed educational attainment plays a role in sentencing and criminal offenses. The discussion of the findings is important because it will show that educational attainment plays a role in the criminal sentencing process. This study hopes to find educational attainment a key factor in how people are sentenced. Results from this study showed educational attainment play a role in sentencing but it does not do a good job in helping predict sentence length.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FAIR USE.....	4
DUPLICATION.....	4
ABSTRACT.....	i
LIST OF TABLES.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
CHAPTER 1 .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	7
History of Sentencing	7
Norval Morris Theory of Punishment	8
Focal Concerns Theory and Development Life-Course Criminology	10
Inmates Level of Education	14
Sentence Length	15
Current Study	17
CHAPTER 3 .....	19
METHODOLOGY .....	19
Data and Sample	19
Analytic Strategy	20
Variables and Measurement	20
CHAPTER 4 .....	22
Analysis and Results.....	22
Table 1. Crosstabulations Education and Maximum Sentence	22

Table 2. Chi-Square Test	25
Table 3. Symmetric Measures Kendall's tau-b	25
Table 4. Crosstabulation Education and Time Served	26
Table 5. Chi-Square Test	28
Table 6. Symmetric Measures	28
Controlling For Offense Level.....	29
Table 7. Crosstabulation Education and most serious Offenses	29
Table 8. Crosstabulation Education, Maximum Sentence, Serious offense	36
CHAPTER 5 .....	45
Culture/Social Capital behind Bars	48
Limitations of study	50
APPENDIX.....	58

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Crosstabulations Education and Maximum Sentence.....	22
Table 2. Chi-Square Test .....	25
Table 3. Symmetric Measures Kendall's tau-b.....	25
Table 4. Crosstabulation Education and Time Served.....	26
Table 5. Chi-Square Test .....	28
Table 6. Symmetric Measures.....	28
Table 7. Crosstabulation Education and most serious Offenses .....	29
Table 8. Crosstabulation Education, Maximum Sentence, Serious offense.....	36

## DEDICATION

For my late grandmother and parents, they have fully supported my dreams and my goals at attaining a higher level of education.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my appreciation to the members of my thesis committee for the time and effort that were given to me and my area of study. Also, Dr. Wilfred for the help that she has given to me. Dr. Wilfred has been with me through every step of the way, from helping me plan and edit my thesis, to providing valuable insight into the thesis writing process. Dr. Wilfred has also provided me with the tools and guidance to help me complete my study.

To the people and staff that helped me along the way at Columbus Technical College, you pushed me to become a better student. That push made me work even harder and for that I am grateful. To the great people I met while attending Columbus State University. You help me grow into a better person and showed me that higher education was in my future. These two places of learning helped me grow into the person I am today and once again I am grateful.

Finally, to my caring parents Gilbert and Carolyn Johnson who have helped me immensely in my goals. With their guidance, encouragement, and financial support, none of this would have happened. It was of great comfort and relief to know that you had my back every step of the way through this process. I want to send my heartfelt thanks to my greatest supporters. I also want to add the support of my late grandmother who would have loved to see this moment.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

When looking at education most people would say that “it’s the key to staying on the right path.” Most would agree that education increases wage rates (and reduces the likelihood of unemployment), it increases the opportunity costs of crime, and will tend to reduce post-school criminal activity (Lochner, 2007, p. 811-43). Throughout life, people tend to get into trouble and sometimes are incarcerated. There are many factors that influence criminal behavior, some of these factors include age, sex, race, religion, and so many more. The belief that education is the key to reducing recidivism is a widely shared view in the criminal justice system around the county and world.

Educational attainment and sentencing have some form of indirect connection to one another. In past studies education has been linked to economic factors and less time has been spent studying educational as it relates to sentencing. Studies have shown that most criminals tend to be less educated or have a low amount of education. Education plays a role in the increase of wages which in turn lowers the crime rate. Most crime can be traced back to financial reasons. This also ties to sentencing, judges might take into consideration that a person has an education and might give them a second chance. Education also plays a role in what type of crimes are committed. This goes back to sentencing because people with low education and high education are going to receive different sentences because of the crimes their committing.

This study will evaluate the level of education that has been attained by U.S federal inmates and see if inmates being held for federal offenses with some education attainment have lesser sentences than inmates with low educational attainment. When looking at educational attainment, it will be simply defined as highest level of education attainment by the inmate. That means inmates with low educational attainment with most likely refer to inmates with no high

school diploma/ GED. Inmates with high school diploma or GED will be referred to as some educational attainment. Lastly inmates with some college or college degree will be referred to as high educational attainment. My interest in this subject arose from the growing prison population. Observing federal inmates educational attainment can hopefully shed light on why people commit crime. The research about when federal inmates educational attainment was earned is unknown. Meaning inmates could've earned their educational attainment before sentencing or while imprisoned. The research points out that the data from inmates educational attainment was collected at different times.

Education is known to be valuable, which in turn can be a critical component to the rehabilitation process. Reasoning behind the apparent disparity in sentencing decisions is extrinsic and complicated, although research has provided multiple avenues of explanation (Walker, Spohn, & Delone, 2016). The empirical literature on education and crime has focused almost exclusively on the effects of educational attainment on post-school criminal activity; however, a few studies have attempted to estimate the 'effects' of school enrollment on contemporaneous crime (Lochner, 2007, p 811-43).

When looking at sentence length, inmates who have longer sentences are more likely to have a low or non-existence educational background. Also, this study wants to look at offenders with higher educational backgrounds and see if they have lower sentences compared to their peers without any educational background. Previous literature had concentrated on variables such as age, race, ethnicity, and social class. This study will focus its energy on the highest level of education of an inmate, sentence length, and age at admission. By looking at how judges sentence offenders we can see if having a higher level of education pays off when it's time to determine an offender punishment.

It is also important to note that younger offenders will often have a lower level of education than older inmates because of time. However, though prison and court statistics have remained constant over time, researchers and scholars cannot agree to a definitive explanation as

to why younger inmates receive harsher sentences. Younger offenders often receive a higher sentence because of their age. The many statistics that are provided to researchers by criminal justice organizations assist researchers with creating a basis on which to form their hypothesis, but the question of why education effects sentencing length is left in the hands of individual researchers and the criminal justice community.

Crime is a negative externality with enormous social costs. There are multiple reasons as to why education will affect subsequent crime. First, schooling has a possibility to decrease illicit behavior. Additionally, punishment for crime typically entails incarceration. By raising wage rates, schooling makes this “lost time” more costly. Second, education may directly affect the financial or psychic rewards from crime itself. Finally, schooling may alter preferences in indirect ways, which may affect decisions to engage in crime. For example, education may increase one’s patience or risk to aversion. I expect that most of these channels will lead to a positive relationship between education and crime.

Despite the many reasons to expect a causal link between education and crime, empirical research is not conclusive. According to Witte and Tauchen (1994) “... neither years of schooling completed, nor receipt of a high school degree has a significant effect on an individual’s level of criminal activity.” But this conclusion is based on only a few available studies, including Tauchen et al. (1994), which find no significant link between education and crime after controlling for a number of individual characteristics. While Grogger (1998) estimates a significant negative relationship between wage rates and crime, he finds no relationship between education and crime after controlling for wages. (Of course, increased wages are an important consequence of schooling.) More recently, Lochner and Moretti (2004) estimates a significant and important link between high school graduation and crime using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). Other research relevant to the link between education and crime has examined the correlation between crime and time spent in school (Gottfredson, 1985; Farrington et al., 1986; and Tauchen, et. al 1994). These studies find that time spent in

school significantly reduces criminal activity—more so than time spent at work—suggesting a contemporaneous link between school attendance and crime. Previous empirical studies have not controlled for the endogeneity of schooling.

The key difficulty in estimating the effect of education on criminal activity is that unobserved characteristics affecting schooling decisions are likely to be correlated with observable characteristics influencing the decision to engage in crime. For example, individuals with high criminal backgrounds are likely to spend much of their time engaged in crime rather than work regardless of their educational background. To the extent that schooling does not lower criminal returns, there is little reward to finishing high school or attending college for these individuals. As a result, we might expect a negative correlation between crime and education.

There has been a resurgence of interest in recent years in expanding higher education in prison at the federal and state levels, particularly expansions that offer a path to degrees or tools that will enable the offender to succeed when released. In this regard, an important initiative that has helped to propel the creation of college programs for incarcerated individuals was the U.S. Department of Education three-year Second Chance Pell Experimental Sites Initiative in 2015 that temporarily lifted the federal ban on Pell Grants to incarcerated individuals who otherwise met Title IV eligibility requirements (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Under the initiative, Pell Grants can be used to help pay for incarcerated individuals' PSE and training, as long as an individual is eligible to be released from prison. Sixty-four colleges and universities in 26 states participated in this experiment, which allowed up to 12,000 students to receive Pell Grants to pursue a degree or credential (U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

Many individuals incarcerated in U.S. prisons are disadvantaged in terms of low educational attainment, which, when they get released, makes it challenging for them to find employment that provides a living wage. The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) is the most recent survey of the literacy and numeracy skills of individuals incarcerated in U.S. state and federal prisons. As such, it represents an important data

point in our understanding of the education needs of this population. According to the November 2016 PIAAC report, 30 percent of individuals incarcerated in U.S. state and federal prisons lack a high-school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) equivalency. In addition, one-third of U.S. incarcerated adults performed at low levels of literacy and about one-half of them had low levels of numeracy skills compared with the general U.S. population (Rampey et al., 2016).

The subject of sentencing disparity is important to the American court system and its operation within various communities across the nation. The United States promotes justice, fair treatment, and equality, but in this case these values are not always present in the courtroom or in when it comes to sentencing. Researchers have questioned the integrity of giving offenders special or preferential treatment based on their physical qualities as opposed to using uniform sentencing guidelines for all offenders based on the qualities and characteristics of the offense itself (Nagel & Johnson, 1994). For example, the compassionate treatment of female offenders is often seen as a positive to those involved, but it leads society further away from the notion of equal treatment of women. The same goes for older inmates who commit crimes and get lesser sentences because of their age and most cost associated with housing them. Therefore, sentencing researchers have focused on the extent of the sentencing disparity problem and what may be causing judges to use bias against certain offenders when it comes to education.

The current study will focus on the above-mentioned variables that may have an effect on sentencing decisions made by judges across the United States. The purpose of this study is to analyze the effects of educational backgrounds in prisoners and see does this play a role in prisoners sentence length. Inmates from the National Corrections Reporting Program 1991-2016 will be use as respondents of this research. This research is all about focusing on the educational background of an inmate and his or her sentence length. This thesis aim is to try and answer if inmates with higher educational backgrounds and will have lower sentences compared to their peers without any educational background.

Over the past 100 years, criminal justice researchers have tried to nail down a reason as to why people offend and commit crimes. Crime has dramatically been reduced since the 1980s and with the increase footprint of social media and more access to cable in more homes, crime looks like it is always on the rise. The public feels like more should be done to address these issues. The best way to address these issues is to try to understand why people commit crime and what the rewards are for committing the crime This thesis wants to explore the educational side of this problem we face. Researchers in the past have looked at behavior, social status, and more to see why people commit crime. There is little information on education and how it relates to someone committing a crime.

This thesis will cover five chapters with chapter 1 covering the topic to be studied, the importance of the problem, and the purpose of the study. Chapter 2 will cover the literature, which will include theories and information that relates to the study. Chapter 3 will involve the proposed research method. Research questions, the study plan on gathering the data, and how I will analyze the data. Chapter 4 will cover the results of my research which will use crosstabulation. Lastly, is Chapter 5 which will include my discussion. This is where I will discuss the thesis in whole.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter will provide a brief history of sentencing and judicial discretion when it comes to focusing on sentence length. This chapter will also address a theoretical perspective of the topic at hand and introduce previous literature on sentencing length in regard to highest level of education of inmate, sentence length, and age at admission. From past research and literature, studies have found that the strongest correlation with sentencing disparity is the intersection of race, gender, and age (Doerner & Demuth, 2010; Steffensmeier et al., 1998; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2006). The current study will focus on something similar but will address the research that involves level of education and how it might affect sentencing. There is a lack of research when it comes to this type of topic. The literature review will focus primarily on sentencing research that has been used in many areas of research. My plan is not to focus on one particular group or body of research but instead focus on multiple areas. Lastly, the hypothesis will be presented after introduction of the current study.

#### History of Sentencing

By looking at our criminal justice system you will see a widespread use of discretionary decision making. Judges, prosecutors, and even law enforcement are encouraged to use their best judgement when interacting with the public. At times people in these positions might make a different decision from the guidelines or what the law states. Judicial discretion in the U.S. dates back to the creation of our federal laws and has been used, tested, and debated by legal scholars and agents ever since (Stith & Koh, 1993). There was a need to fix the sentencing disparity in our country in the 80s. In order to provide fair and equal justice to all, the United States Sentencing Commission was created in 1984 to provide guidelines of which judges were to follow in their courtrooms at the federal level (Stith, 2008).

The reason behind these new guidelines was to limit the discretionary decision-making power that judges had at the time. Judges were then required to follow strict procedures for a wide range of offenses. Within these new guidelines, it outlined that judges needed to provide reasoning for any and all sentencing decisions that deviated from specific sentencing guidelines. The guidelines created during this sentencing reform specifically state that a judge may not use race, gender, income, or ethnicity as an influence on Judge's sentencing decisions (Mustard, 2001). As a result of these new guidelines, there were many states that decided to follow suit and form their own sentencing guidelines. Judicial discretion became limited, and the public started to believe that sentencing will finally become fair.

In the face of these guidelines, federal and state judges continued to operate as if there were no guidelines in place. Particular treatment still occurs in American courts (Johnson, 2003; Nagel & Johnson, 1994; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2001; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2006). Even though highest level of education of an inmate, sentence length, and age at admission are the focus of the current study, researchers have found other factors that may influence judicial decisions e.g., criminal background, offense severity, type of legal counsel. In order to understand sentencing theories better, a man by the name of Norval Morris created "Norval Morris's Theory of Punishment". Norval Morris's theory of punishment is a theory of "limiting retributivism," in which concepts of "just deserts" set upper and occasionally lower limits on sentencing severity; within these broad outer limits, other purposes and principles provide the necessary "fine-tuning." (Frase, 1997).

#### Norval Morris Theory of Punishment

In Norval Morris's "limiting retributivist" theory of punishment, considerations of "just deserts" set upper and occasionally lower limits on sentencing severity. Other purposes, including general deterrence, considerations of equality, and "parsimony," provide the necessary "finetuning." Proponents of just deserts, such as Andrew von Hirsch, give much greater weight to

retributive and equality values and would allow almost no role for other sentencing goals in the determination of the severity of individual sentences.

There are other purposes and principles that include not only universal crime control objectives (deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation) but also applications of impartiality (uniformity) and a concept Morris calls "parsimony": a preference for the least severe alternative that will achieve the purposes of the particular sentence (Frase, 1997). However, Morris dismissed coerced reconstruction as a reason for incarceration or for continuing a prison term. He also rebuffed basing the type or continuity of sentences on individual forecasting of dangerousness, except in limited situations. His later writings express strong support for sentencing guidelines, provided such guidelines are flexible, and prescribe intermediate sanctions as well as prison terms.

Morris presented sentencing data that documented the extent of existing disparities and proposed a number of reforms. So, at the start of Morris career, he identified and began to address the analogous dilemma of sentencing disparity and the adverse purposes of sentencing. His earliest works also show his strong belief in the importance of relating sentencing theory to sentencing practice or "the actual functioning" of penal sanctions (Frase, R. 1997). Morris is a person who relies on the study of empirical evidence, but as a realist he wants to know how judges and other professionals think and act. Equipped with this instruction, sentencing theory may reflect the accumulated knowledge of the past and may also avoid imposing highly unpopular rules which will only be sidestepped in practice.

During Morris' early assessment of sentencing disparity, and during the time he was focus on proposals for reform, he foreshadowed a fundamental change to the American sentencing process. Although most of his early reform proposals were intended to improve the quality of sentencing within the traditional "indeterminate" model (e.g., improved presentence investigations), several of his suggested reforms involved procedures that would later become central features of sentencing guidelines (Frase, R. 1997). Morris was ahead of the time because

he suggested that sentences should be subject to appellate review. At the time this was unheard of in the United States. He also stated that trial courts should offer some type of reason behind their sentences.

Morris's theory of punishment began in his 1964 book called *Studies in Criminal Law*. In an essay by Morris, entitled "Penal Sanctions and Human Rights," Morris argued that "power over a criminal's life should not be taken in excess of that which would be taken if reform were not considered one of our purposes" (Morris & Howard 1964, p. 175). He continued with his book *The honest Politician's Guide to Crime Control*, Morris challenged whether in person treatment programs were effective and defended community-based sentencing and treatment, which was a better route to go. In his literature he also defended more fines instead of short prison terms that will do more damage than a fine. During this time, statutes for mandatory prison were rampant.

Morris was ahead of his time with a lot of his theories on sentencing. A lot of his practices are still in place today in the American criminal justice system. Reformers should not lose sight of the original goal of sentencing guidelines so as to promote more rational and fair sentencing. There is still much more that can be done to fix the issues that plague sentencing. Research has shown that there are better ways to punish an offender without sending them to prison. In due time I believe we will begin to see more of Morris's ideals in place in the criminal justice system.

#### Focal Concerns Theory and Development Life-Course Criminology

The focal concerns theory looks at how racial stereotypes play a role in sentencing. They may be used to inform the blameworthiness, culpability, and dangerousness of the offender. For example, one stereotype for Black people is that they're aggressive, violent, and are prone to criminal behavior, which could result in judges perceiving Black defendants as being more dangerous and threatening to society (Steffensmeier et al., 1998). This belief might cause judges to see them as unable to alter their dangerous behaviors.

The Focal concern of offender blameworthiness was further explained as the liability of the offender as well as the degree of harm inflicted upon the victim. For example, a crime involving physical harm to a victim may warrant a stricter punishment than a victimless crime, such as drug crimes. Researchers agree, according to Steffensmeier and his colleagues (1998), this is the most significant factor in judicial sentencing. Factors that are typically taken into account by the judge in regard to offender blameworthiness include prior criminal history, prior victimization, and the offender's role in the offense (Steffensmeier et al., 1998). These variables are commonly referred to as legal variables and are typically incorporated into state's sentencing guidelines. Offenders with extensive prior criminal histories are more likely to receive a harsh sentence. Defendants who were an accomplice to the crime at hand and helped put the offense into motion, but did not actually commit the act, may receive a more lenient sentence than the defendant who is ultimately at fault for the offense. Other legal factors include offense severity, number of charges, and the method of conviction (e.g., plea bargain or trial) (Doerner & Demuth, 2010).

Legislators and Law Makers may change laws in response to social change or outcry from the community. Judges may allow societal influences to modify their decision-making strategies. Research has found that race and age are two variables that are highly influential within the court of law. Steffensmeier and his associates (1998) found that being young and Black increases one's chances of receiving discriminatory dispositions. While the variables of age and race have been found to have effects on judicial discretion, the intersection of the two has been found to be more statistically significant than the individual variables (Walker et al., 2012).

There are many ways researchers have measured sentencing departures in regard to age and race. While there have not been many significant studies assessing the validity of this theory, there have been some tests done incorporating this theory into other criminological related issues. For example, a study has been conducted on how the Focal Concerns Theory influences the

sentencing outcomes by judges within their courtrooms (Hartley, et al., 2007). Judges are humans, and humans are judgmental by nature.

People are going to bring their own biases into account when they must judge something of importance, especially the severity of crime. Statistics show that female offenders usually get sentenced more leniently than male offenders, based on the lack of perceived threat of dangerousness of females as well as other factors that are associated with females and not males. Today, the application of this theory has expanded beyond the judging disparities between males and females to include race, ethnicity, and age. The study states that judges' sentencing decisions reflect three primary concerns: "(1) their assessment of the blameworthiness or culpability of the offender; (2) their desire to protect the community by incapacitating dangerous offenders or deterring potential offenders; and (3) their concerns about the practical consequences, or social costs, of sentencing decisions" This shows why judges develop "perceptual short-hands", because they do not have enough information on the criminals' background to correctly and fairly declare a sentence, even though they might have the best intentions at heart. The primary findings of the study indicate that sentencing tends to be harsher for males than females, blacks than whites, and lower-class citizens more than upper or middle-class citizens. This is significant because findings and qualitative results support the Focal Concerns Theory because "the interconnected effects [age, race, and ethnicity] culminate in the disproportionately severe sentencing of young black, lower class males" (Hartley, et al., 2007). While it might seem that the focal concerns theory directly support that these learned focal concerns can be the causes for lower-class members to commit crime, It just doesn't cover the whole spectrum of the argument.

The Education Development Life Course Theory better explains this study theories. Developmental and life-course criminology are both concerned with the study of changes in offending and problem behaviors over time. Although these two theoretical approaches share some common features, they also differ in the concepts that they deem to be of focal concern. The life-course perspective gives increased importance to social structure, whereas the developmental

approach generally tends to focus more on psychological factors to explain developmental processes. In many instances, these two approaches have been employed in the context of similar studies but with slightly different focuses. Many of the issues addressed in criminal career research are also relevant to developmental and life-course criminology.

The origin of developmental life-course criminology research can be traced back to the emergence of the criminal career paradigm, which summarize Piquero, et al. (2003) as the “characterization of the longitudinal sequence of crimes committed by an individual offender.” This statement highlights the longitudinal/developmental or life-course focus of this perspective and suggests that there are initiation points for criminal activity along with points of termination. For instance, some individuals may have an earlier onset age for criminal behavior such that they begin their offending career in late childhood/early adolescence, whereas others may not begin offending into mid/late adolescence or may have an adult onset. Similarly, other individuals may commit crime at one developmental phase of the life-course and desist from crime in this same developmental phase; others may continue to participate in crime in several developmental phases of the life-course before desisting at some point later in life (if at all). This assumption of a point of initiation and termination of criminal activity implies that the length or duration of an individual's criminal career can be determined and calculated as well.

Many studies have suggested that juveniles who are academically deficient are more likely to be involved in delinquent activities (Anderson, 1992; Batiuk, Moke, & Wilcox-Roundtree, 1997; Farrington, 1992; Jarjoura, 1993; Ross & Ross, 1989; Short, 1990). Specifically, current criminological literature indicates that youths who are not committed to school (Cernovich & Giordano, 1992; Jenkins; 1995), demonstrate low academic achievement (Cohill, 1991; Farrington, 1992; Jarjoura, 1993; Junger-Tas; 1992; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1999; Maguin & Loeber, 1996; Monk-Turner, 1989; Short, 1990; Tracy, Wolfgang, & Figlio, 1990; Vazonyi & Flannery, 1997), have poor school attendance (Elliott& Voss, 1974; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1999; Thornberry, Moore, & Christenson, 1985), exhibit negative

attitudes towards school (Kelly & Balch, 1971; Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, Van Kammen, & Farrington, 1991; Farrington & Hawkins, 1991; Mak, 1991; Sederstrom & Weis, 1981), demonstrate school disciplinary problems (Flannery, Vazsonyi, Rowe, 1996; Flannery & Rowe, 1994), and are truant or drop out of school (Farnworth & Lieber, 1989) are consistently more likely to engage in delinquent behavior. Moreover, the correlation between academic difficulties and juvenile delinquency is consistent across gender in that both males and females with deficient academic skills offend more frequently, commit more violent and serious offenses, and persist longer in their delinquent behavior than juveniles who are academically on grade level (Maguin & Loeber, 1996). Further, these academic deficiencies often translate into limited life opportunities in later adolescence and adulthood, which, in turn, possibly promote and perpetuate criminal behavior (Monk-Turner, 1989).

Given the established relationship between poor school performance and juvenile delinquency, providing quality education services to incarcerated youths could promote positive modifications to life course trajectories. In general, academic improvement while in confinement appears to enhance adjustment into the community upon release (Foley, 2001; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1999). Moreover, educational achievement could potentially have long lasting positive effects on broader social contexts, which in turn affects the lives of these youths throughout later adolescence and adulthood, including continued education, employment, involvement in community activities, family, peer relationships, and decreased criminal activity (Tjaden et al., 2019).

#### Inmates Level of Education

According to Harlow (2003) about 41% of inmates in the Nation's State and Federal prisons and local jails in 1997 and 31% of probationers had not completed high school or its equivalent. In comparison, 18% of the general population age 18 or older had not finished the 12th grade. Harlow (2003) stated, between 1991 and 1997, the percent of inmates in State prison without a high school diploma or GED about 40% in 1997 and 41% in 1991. Of inmates in State

prisons, 293,000 in 1991 and 420,600 in 1997 had entered prison without a high school diploma, a 44% increase. State prisons provided educational programs for their inmates 90% of the time. Half of State prison inmates reported they had participated in an educational program since their most recent admission to prison. About a quarter of State inmates had taken basic education or high school level courses, and almost a third, vocational training.

People in correctional populations were more likely than those in the general population to have passed a test, which indicates the same level of knowledge as those with a high school diploma. The Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials of the American Council on Education develops the General Educational Development (GED) test for persons who are not enrolled in a school. The test assesses academic skills and knowledge expected of high school graduates. Employers and educational institutions usually accept the GED as the equivalent of a high school diploma.

It also important to point out the gap between minority inmates and white as far as their level of education is concerned. According to Harlow (2003) minority State inmates were generally less educated than their white peers. About 44% of black State prison inmates and 53% of Hispanic inmates had not graduated from high school or received a GED compared to 27% of whites in State prisons. Harlow (2003) also pointed out that minorities were less likely than whites to have attended college or some other institution of higher learning. About 1 in 10 blacks and 1 in 13 Hispanics had studied beyond high school compared to 1 in 7 whites. Minorities were also less likely than whites to have earned a high school diploma or a GED: 26% of blacks and 17% of Hispanics, compared to 30% of whites, had a high school diploma; 30% of blacks and Hispanics passed the GED compared to 43% of whites.

#### Sentence Length

Sadly, however, history teaches that sometimes individuals are treated differently because of the racial, ethnic, or gender group to which they belong. Discrimination may reflect intentional

or conscious bias toward members of a group, or it may result from a distortion of rational judgment by unconscious stereotypes or fears about a group or greater empathy with persons more similar to oneself. Whatever the cause, discrimination is generally considered the most onerous type of unwarranted disparity and sentencing reform was clearly designed to eliminate it.

According to the United States Sentencing Commission (2017) black male offenders continue to receive longer sentences than similarly situated White male offenders. Black male offenders received sentences on average 19.1 percent longer than similarly situated White male offenders during the post-report period (fiscal years 2012-2016), as they had for the prior four periods studied.

Violence in an offender's criminal history does not appear to account for any of the demographic differences in sentencing. According to the United States Sentencing Commission (2017), black male offenders received sentences on average 20.4 percent longer than similarly situated White male offenders, accounting for violence in an offender's past in fiscal year 2016, the only year for which such data is available. This figure is almost the same as the 20.7 percent difference without accounting for past violence. Thus, violence in an offender's criminal history does not appear to contribute to the sentence imposed to any extent beyond its contribution to the offender's criminal history score determined under the sentencing guidelines.

Concern over possible racial or ethnic discrimination in federal sentencing remains strong today, fifteen years after implementation of guidelines designed to eliminate it. No sentencing issue has received more attention from investigative journalists or scholarly researchers. In recent years, feature articles in major newspapers have undertaken analyses of federal sentences and concluded that racial discrimination persists (Frank, 1995; Flaherty & Casey, 1996). Support for these allegations has been strengthened by academic researchers who reached similar conclusions in studies presented at conferences and published in professional journals (Albonetti, 1997, 1998; Herbert, 1998; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2000, 2001; Kautt & Spohn, 2002; Mustard 2001;

KempfLeonard & Sample, 2002; Everett & Wojtkiewicz, 2002; Schanzenbach, 2004; Wilmot and Spohn, 2004).

### Current Study

While most research is focused on education and how it plays a role in preventing criminal behavior, very little research has been dedicated to examining educational attainment and its role on sentencing. In Travis W. Franklin study on *Sentencing Outcomes in U.S. District Courts: Can Offenders' Educational Attainment Guard Against Prevalent Criminal Stereotypes*, Franklin examined the role of educational attainment on sentencing decisions. Franklin believed that the focal concerns theory provides reason to suspect that greater educational attainment may insulate offenders from the effects of criminal stereotypes, He contended that little to no research was done prior on this topic.

Using federal data on inmates Franklin employed a sample of 115,674 federal offenders to test his assumption on the in/out and sentence length decisions. The results of the in/out models demonstrate a general pattern where the effects of several extralegal factors (i.e., race, ethnicity, age, sex, and detention) are reduced, and in some cases fully moderated, by offenders' educational attainment. Findings from the in/out model demonstrate a small but statistically significant advantage for high school graduates, whose odds of incarceration are 10.3% lower than similarly situated offenders with less than high school education. The effects of college graduates were not statistically significant.

Research on the effects of educational attainment on sentence length is important to the advancement of the criminal justice system on the basis that everyone is treated fairly and have the right to due process. Although other variables play a major role in sentencing like offense committed, previous crimes, and counsel, no one should receive special treatment because of their opportunity to take advantage of their educational attainment. Every offender that is sentenced does not have the privilege of attending college and even in some cases completing high school. These factors cannot be changed and should be treated as such.

The current study aims to provide a more nuanced analysis of the role of offenders' educational attainment in the sentencing process. Current literature on the topic lacks relevant research regarding educational attainment and sentence length. There is a duty to researchers to examine aspects of the criminal justice system and to study issues that can create equality within the criminal justice system. The current study provides insight into federal inmates sentencing lengths while examining their educational attainment. Educational attainment was focused on to detect if offenders were sentenced differently because of their educational attainment. The study adds a perspective to the subject, as previous research focused on the intersectionality of gender, race, and age.

CHAPTER 3  
METHODOLOGY  
Data and Sample

The data that will be used for this study will come from the United States Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics. National Corrections Reporting Program, 1991-2016: Selected Variables. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2018-08-30. This study agrees to reference the recommended bibliographic citation in any publication that employs resources provided by ICPSR. By agreeing to reference the data, I agree to reference the recommended bibliographic citation in any publication that employs resources provided by ICPSR. Authors of publications based on ICPSR data are required to send citations of their published works to ICPSR for inclusion in a database of related publications ([bibliography@icpsr.umich.edu](mailto:bibliography@icpsr.umich.edu))

The study involved all persons admitted to state prison, or in state prison at year end from 1991 to 2014 in the United States. The data is comprised of administrative records data. The time method used was cross-section. The three composers of the data collected the data annually. The composers used voluntary participation for the sampling procedure, though not all states participated each year. All cases within the target population will have an equal chance of being chosen for the study.

Once the sample was selected for each state, data was collected from the case files chosen. This data included demographic information, that specifically showed age, race, highest level of education attained, sentence length, and age at admission. There was other identifying information that was collected such as inmate identification, name, and date of birth. Identifying information will be omitted from my study to protect the identity of the inmate(s). This study will be using a dummy code. This is to reduce any bias that may occur based on the identity of said

offender or inmate. This study was approved by the IRB, the approval form will be attached to the appendix.

### Analytic Strategy

Statistical analysis was used to test the following hypothesis:

H1. Inmates with a higher level of educational attainment significantly increases the likelihood of a lower sentence length.

- HA. Inmates with higher educational attainment have lower sentences compared to their peers without any educational background.
- HB. When looking at sentence length, inmates who have longer sentences are more likely to have no educational attainment.

H2. Inmates with higher educational attainment will have more property crime offenses than violent crime offenses.

H3. Inmates with a low educational attainment will have a higher maximum sentence length, serve more time, and have more severe offenses.

In order to get the full scope of the independent variables, effects on sentence length this study will use crosstabulation. Descriptive statistics examining each of the variables will be conducted. This study plans on using cross-tabulations to describe the relationship between highest level of education obtained and sentence length. Variable coding will support the analysis.

### Variables and Measurement

The variables that will be measured is level of education attainment, sentence length, timed served, and 5-level categorization of most serious sentenced offense. The dependent variables in this study included sentencing length. Sentence length is measured by (0) <1 year, (1) 1-1.9 years, (2) 2-4.9 years, (3) 5-9.9 years, (4) 10-24.9 years, (5) >=25 years, (6) Life; LWOP; life plus additional years; Death; (9) missing.

The independent variable in the study includes education attainment. The education variable values included <HS diploma/GED, HS diploma/GED, Any college, and Ungraded/Unknown. These values were coded as 1 for <HS diploma/GED, 2 for HS diploma/GED, 3 for Any college, and 99(M) for Ungraded/Unknown. This study will control for time served, and 5-level categorization of most serious sentenced offense. Time served which will be measured (0) < 1 year, (1) 1-1.9 years, (2) 2-4.9 years, (3) 5-9.9 years, (4)  $\geq 10$  years, (9) (M) Missing. Lastly is 5-level categorization of most serious sentenced offense measured as (1) violent, (2) property, (3) Drugs, (4) public order, (5) other/unspecified, and (9) missing.

## CHAPTER 4

### Analysis and Results

The purpose of this study was to examine educational attainment and how it affects sentence length. This chapter contains detailed presentation of data analysis and the results of this study. This chapter will include 8 tables that will aid in the analysis of the results. Data was collected from 12,342,783 inmates from federal prisons across the United States. All inmates used in this study were male, the study used the male inmate's educational status as well. The study did not use age, race, or employment status. The tables in this chapter include crosstabulations, symmetric measures (Kendall's tau-b), and chi-squared test.

Table 1. Crosstabulations Education and Maximum Sentence

		Crosstab					9	Total
		HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE						
			<HS diploma/GED	HS diploma/GED	Any college			
MAXIMUM SENTENCE LENGTH FOR INMATE	< 1 year	Count	560522	468527	87578	2847	1119474	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	15.6%	16.4%	16.1%	6.0%	15.9%	
	1-1.9 years	Count	285881	189996	39140	4876	519893	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	7.9%	6.7%	7.2%	10.3%	7.4%	
	2-4.9 years	Count	1172790	911060	159440	12316	2255606	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	32.6%	31.9%	29.4%	26.0%	32.0%	

5-9.9 years	Count	840950	672797	123339	12789	1649875
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	23.4%	23.6%	22.7%	27.0%	23.4%
10-24.9 years	Count	548859	451490	95525	11563	1107437
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	15.2%	15.8%	17.6%	24.4%	15.7%
>=25 years	Count	130000	113979	27479	1751	273209
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	3.6%	4.0%	5.1%	3.7%	3.9%
Life, LWOP, Life plus additional years, Death	Count	60299	44495	10482	1188	116464
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	1.7%	1.6%	1.9%	2.5%	1.7%
Total	Count	3599301	2852344	542983	47330	7041958
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Looking at Table 1, we can see maximum sentence length for inmates is the row percentage. The highest level of education is the column percentage. Regarding inmates who were sentenced to 1 year or less. There were 15.9% of total inmates who fell into this category. Inmates with no high school diploma/GED accounted for most this category with 560,522 (15.6%), while inmates who had a college education accounted for 87578 (16.1%). When looking at 1-1.9 years, you can see that the total amount of inmates accounted for 7.4%. There was a difference in inmates with less than a high school diploma/GED, only 285,881 fell into this group. A sharp decrease from inmates that had less than 1 year. This decrease was seen in the 3 education categories.

When looking at 2 years to 4.9 years you can see an uptick in sentencing. This category contains the most inmates with 2,255,606 (32.0%). As we can see, inmates with less than a high school diploma/GED accounted for 1,172,790. That is more than the first two categories combined. This trend continues for inmates with a high school diploma/GED and inmates with a college education. This category is very important because it tells us that judges are sentencing a lot of offenders to 2 to 4.9.

Continuing, inmates that fall under the 5 to 9.9 years decrease from the previous 2 to 4.9 years. This category still accounts for the second highest percentage of inmates, 23.4% of total inmates. Once again, most of the inmates' sentenced in this category fall under the high school diploma/GED category with 840,950. Inmates with a high school diploma/GED and inmates with a college education accounted for 672,797 and 123,339 cases, respectively.

The category of 10 to 24.9 years was very interesting because it similarly to the first category (less than 1 year). Once again inmates with less than a high school diploma/GED were the highest count with 548,859. While inmates with a high school diploma/GED and college education accounted for 451,490 and 95,525, respectively. Inmates with a college education in the 10-to-24.9-year category were higher than inmates with a college education in the 1-year category. This number is a little surprising to the study, because the study was expecting to see inmates with a college education receive more lenient sentencing. With further analysis this subject could be understood and described better.

In the category of 25 year plus, we see a low count across the board. This category accounts for the second lowest inmates at 273,209 total. Once again, the inmates with less than a high school diploma/GED accounted for 130,000. While inmates with a high school diploma/GED and college education accounted for 113,979 and 27,479, respectively. Lastly is life, life without parole, life plus additional years, and death. This category accounts for the least number of inmates with a total of 116,464. Once again inmates with less than a high school

diploma account for the most inmates in this group with 60,299. While inmates with a high school diploma/GED and college education account for 44,495 and 10,482, respectively.

Table 2. Chi-Square Test

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17648.666 <sup>a</sup>	18	.000
Likelihood Ratio	18019.186	18	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4903.653	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	7041958		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 782.77.

Table 2 presents the Chi-Square test, by looking at the results we can see that the Pearson Chi-Square is 17648.666, the degrees of freedom is 18, and the p value is  $p < .001$ . This means the results were highly significant, which means it was very unlikely to have occurred by chance alone. The result from the test is strong evidence that the null hypothesis is invalid. The study was found to have a statistically significant relationship between educational attainment and sentencing.

Table 3. Symmetric Measures Kendall's tau-b

<b>Symmetric Measures</b>					
		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error <sup>a</sup>	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate Significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.016	.000	49.087	.000
N of Valid Cases		7041958			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

This study used symmetric measures of association, the study used a Kendall's tau-b because of the multiple ordinal variables. The value of Kendall's tau-b is .016 and the p value is  $p < .001$ . With the Kendall's tau-b value being close to zero, educational attainment does not show much when it pertains to predicting sentence length. Even though the chi-square test states there is a relationship, this relationship is minimal at best. Educational attainment does not do a good job in helping me predict sentence length. Even though chi-square states there is a relationship it is just surface.

Table 4. Crosstabulation Education and Time Served

		Crosstab					Total
		HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE					
			<HS diploma/GED	HS diploma/GED	Any college	9	
TIME SERVED BY INMATE	< 1 year	Count	1709840	1338578	253548	19063	3321029
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	52.2%	52.6%	52.6%	46.3%	52.3%
	1-1.9 years	Count	700294	542670	100452	9755	1353171
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	21.4%	21.3%	20.8%	23.7%	21.3%
	2-4.9 years	Count	600220	465055	84703	8396	1158374
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	18.3%	18.3%	17.6%	20.4%	18.3%
		Count	185070	139356	28048	2802	355276

	5-9.9 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	5.6%	5.5%	5.8%	6.8%	5.6%
	>=10 years	Count	81745	59939	15241	1197	158122
	>=10 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	2.5%	2.4%	3.2%	2.9%	2.5%
	Total	Count	3277169	2545598	481992	41213	6345972
	Total	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4 shows the educational attainment as it pertains to timed served. To start the numbers are very interesting because most of the inmates (52.6%) fall into the category of 1 year or less served. This tells use a few things, inmates are receiving multiple punishments instead of just prison time. For instance, federal inmates could receive a mandatory one-year sentence and serve the rest on federal probation. Another thing is inmates could be charged with low level federal crimes, which could explain the high number of inmates serving a year or less.

Dropping down to 5-9.9 years served we can see a sharp decline in inmates who served five or more years. The numbers kept declining when looking at inmates who served more than 10 years. This tells us that violent crimes do not account for majority of the crimes committed in the United States. Another thing we must look at is drug offenses. As we all know during President Ronald Reagan campaign on the “war on drugs”, an increase in prison sentences was one way of stopping the flow of drugs. Now that drugs are becoming decriminalized such a marijuana. This can be attributed to the low number of federal inmates serving high sentence lengths. Further analysis would

have to be done to support this hypothesis. Controlling for drug offenses, timed served, and year of admission.

Table 5. Chi-Square Test

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2058.515 <sup>a</sup>	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	1991.311	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	174.187	1	<.001
N of Valid Cases	6345972		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1026.90.

Table 5 presents the Chi-Square test for education and timed served, by looking at the results we can see that the Pearson Chi-Square is 2058.515, the degrees of freedom is 12, and the p value is  $p < .001$ . This means the results were highly significant, which means it was very unlikely to have occurred by chance alone. The result from the test is strong evidence that the null hypothesis is invalid. The study was found to have a statistically significant relationship between educational attainment and timed served.

Table 6. Symmetric Measures

<b>Symmetric Measures</b>					
		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error <sup>a</sup>	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate Significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.002	.000	-4.966	<.001
N of Valid Cases		6345972			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

For this table a symmetric measure of association was used, the study used a Kendall's tau-b because of the multiple ordinal variables. The value of Kendall's tau-b is -.002 and the p value is  $p < .001$ . With the Kendall's tau-b value with it being close to negative zero, educational attainment does not show much when it pertains to timed serve. Even though the chi-square test states there is a relationship, this relationship is minimal at best. Educational attainment does not do a good job in helping me predict time served. Education increases and timed serve decreases.

#### Controlling For Offense Level

Table 7. Crosstabulation Education and most serious Offenses

**TIME SERVED BY INMATE \* HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE \* 5-LEVEL CATEGORIZATION OF MOST SERIOUS SENTENCED OFFENSE Crosstabulation**

5-LEVEL CATEGORIZATION OF MOST SERIOUS SENTENCED OFFENSE			HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE				Total	
			<HS diploma/GED	HS diploma/GED	Any college	9		
Violent	TIME	< 1 year	Count	271736	202624	36761	3679	514800
	SERVED BY		% within	33.7%	34.7%	32.6%	30.6%	34.0%
	INMATE		HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE					
		1-1.9	Count	153965	110534	20566	2241	287306
		years	% within	19.1%	18.9%	18.2%	18.6%	19.0%
			HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE					
		Count	210059	148305	27612	3315	389291	

	2-4.9 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	26.1%	25.4%	24.5%	27.6%	25.7%	
	5-9.9 years	Count	106578	75741	15534	1814	199667	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	13.2%	13.0%	13.8%	15.1%	13.2%	
	>=10 years	Count	63624	47185	12249	979	124037	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	7.9%	8.1%	10.9%	8.1%	8.2%	
	Total	Count	805962	584389	112722	12028	1515101	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Property	TIME SERVED BY INMATE	< 1 year	Count	571019	448349	91017	6331	1116716
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	57.0%	57.4%	57.5%	51.4%	57.2%	
	1-1.9 years	Count	225221	173353	34847	3151	436572	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	22.5%	22.2%	22.0%	25.6%	22.4%	
		Count	162881	127098	25485	2222	317686	

	2-4.9 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	16.3%	16.3%	16.1%	18.1%	16.3%	
	5-9.9 years	Count	33531	25935	5537	480	65483	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	3.3%	3.3%	3.5%	3.9%	3.4%	
	>=10 years	Count	9121	5926	1409	122	16578	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%	1.0%	0.8%	
	Total	Count	1001773	780661	158295	12306	1953035	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Drugs	TIME SERVED BY INMATE	< 1 year	Count	535555	410174	70133	5399	1021261
			% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	57.3%	57.5%	58.2%	51.7%	57.4%
		1-1.9 years	Count	207386	155549	25610	2734	391279
			% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	22.2%	21.8%	21.3%	26.2%	22.0%
			Count	155965	121506	19798	1912	299181

	2-4.9 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	16.7%	17.0%	16.4%	18.3%	16.8%	
	5-9.9 years	Count	29544	22660	4066	336	56606	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	3.2%	3.2%	3.4%	3.2%	3.2%	
	>=10 years	Count	5405	3660	814	59	9938	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	0.6%	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	
	Total	Count	933855	713549	120421	10440	1778265	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Public order	TIME SERVED BY INMATE	< 1 year	Count	311752	263561	53278	3461	632052
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	61.9%	59.2%	61.7%	56.4%	60.7%	
	1-1.9 years	Count	107542	99339	18636	1584	227101	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	21.4%	22.3%	21.6%	25.8%	21.8%	
		Count	66882	65033	11135	904	143954	

	2-4.9 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	13.3%	14.6%	12.9%	14.7%	13.8%
	5-9.9 years	Count	14258	14196	2683	159	31296
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	2.8%	3.2%	3.1%	2.6%	3.0%
	>=10 years	Count	3120	2887	658	31	6696
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	0.6%	0.6%	0.8%	0.5%	0.6%
Total		Count	503554	445016	86390	6139	1041099
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Other/unspecified TIME SERVED BY INMATE	< 1 year	Count	11388	6977	1569	42	19976
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	57.2%	53.9%	53.7%	34.7%	55.6%
	1-1.9 years	Count	4191	2748	583	31	7553
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	21.0%	21.2%	19.9%	25.6%	21.0%
		Count	3231	2391	501	33	6156

	2-4.9 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	16.2%	18.5%	17.1%	27.3%	17.1%	
	5-9.9 years	Count	736	599	177	10	1522	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	3.7%	4.6%	6.1%	8.3%	4.2%	
	>=10 years	Count	376	223	93	5	697	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	1.9%	1.7%	3.2%	4.1%	1.9%	
	Total	Count	19922	12938	2923	121	35904	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total	TIME SERVED BY INMATE	< 1 year	Count	1701450	1331685	252758	18912	3304805
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	52.1%	52.5%	52.6%	46.1%	52.3%	
	1-1.9 years	Count	698305	541523	100242	9741	1349811	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	21.4%	21.3%	20.9%	23.7%	21.3%	
		Count	599018	464333	84531	8386	1156268	

2-4.9 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	18.3%	18.3%	17.6%	20.4%	18.3%
5-9.9 years	Count	184647	139131	27997	2799	354574
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	5.7%	5.5%	5.8%	6.8%	5.6%
>=10 years	Count	81646	59881	15223	1196	157946
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	2.5%	2.4%	3.2%	2.9%	2.5%
Total	Count	3265066	2536553	480751	41034	6323404
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7 contains a crosstabulation that is controlling for five levels of most serious sentenced offense. By controlling for most serious offenses as it pertains to educational attainment, we can see that in the violent crime category inmates most likely served one year or less (34.0%). It important to point out that a large percentage of inmates that served time for violent crimes had less than a high school diploma/GED.

If we look at other categories, we can that the statistics are almost similar compared to the group. This can be described as fair sentencing practices in the criminal justice system. By looking at table 7, My third hypothesis is confirmed. Inmates with a low educational attainment will have a higher maximum sentence length, serve more time, and have more severe offenses. Of the 6,323,404 inmates controlled in this group,

3,265,066 (which is over 50%) fell into the category of less than a high school diploma/GED.

Table 8. Crosstabulation Education, Maximum Sentence, Serious offense

**MAXIMUM SENTENCE LENGTH FOR INMATE \* HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE \* 5-LEVEL CATEGORIZATION OF MOST SERIOUS SENTENCED OFFENSE**

**Crosstabulation**

5-LEVEL CATEGORIZATION OF MOST SERIOUS SENTENCED OFFENSE			HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE				9	Total
			<HS diploma/GED	HS diploma/GED	Any college			
Violent	MAXIMUM SENTENCE LENGTH FOR INMATE	< 1 year	Count	66489	52139	10042	428	129098
			% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	6.7%	7.1%	7.0%	2.7%	6.8%
		1-1.9 years	Count	46438	28995	6104	1003	82540
			% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	4.7%	3.9%	4.2%	6.3%	4.4%
		2-4.9 years	Count	244202	182754	28221	3241	458418
			% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	24.7%	24.7%	19.6%	20.5%	24.3%
		5-9.9 years	Count	239291	179222	31880	3727	454120
			% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	24.2%	24.2%	22.1%	23.6%	24.1%
			Count	255683	193491	42001	5144	496319

	10-24.9 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	25.9%	26.2%	29.1%	32.6%	26.3%	
	>=25 years	Count	85715	67864	17125	1172	171876	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	8.7%	9.2%	11.9%	7.4%	9.1%	
	Life, LWOP, Life plus additional years, Death	Count	49571	34777	8872	1082	94302	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	5.0%	4.7%	6.2%	6.8%	5.0%	
	Total	Count	987389	739242	144245	15797	1886673	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Property	MAXIMUM SENTENCE LENGTH FOR INMATE	< 1 year	Count	184936	155243	29973	1212	371364
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	17.5%	18.5%	17.7%	9.1%	17.8%	
	1-1.9 years	Count	99441	67810	14630	1673	183554	
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	9.4%	8.1%	8.6%	12.5%	8.8%	
	2-4.9 years	Count	372906	289934	56354	3643	722837	

	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	35.3%	34.5%	33.2%	27.3%	34.7%
5-9.9 years	Count	245188	194542	38394	3738	481862
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	23.2%	23.2%	22.6%	28.0%	23.2%
10-24.9 years	Count	134583	110463	24947	2846	272839
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	12.7%	13.2%	14.7%	21.3%	13.1%
>=25 years	Count	18461	19842	5014	203	43520
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	1.7%	2.4%	3.0%	1.5%	2.1%
Life, LWOP, Life plus additional years, Death	Count	2188	2049	432	46	4715
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%
Total	Count	1057703	839883	169744	13361	2080691
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Drugs	< 1 year Count	166911	143660	24016	541	335128

MAXIMUM SENTENCE LENGTH FOR INMATE	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	17.0%	18.8%	18.4%	4.8%	17.7%
	Count	84864	55873	10257	1353	152347
1-1.9 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	8.6%	7.3%	7.9%	11.9%	8.1%
	Count	334624	239505	40327	3029	617485
2-4.9 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	34.0%	31.3%	31.0%	26.6%	32.6%
	Count	251126	195581	31706	3352	481765
5-9.9 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	25.5%	25.5%	24.4%	29.5%	25.5%
	Count	119711	105406	19324	2735	247176
10-24.9 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	12.2%	13.8%	14.8%	24.1%	13.1%
	Count	20003	20297	3779	312	44391
>=25 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	2.0%	2.6%	2.9%	2.7%	2.3%
	Count	7359	5824	795	48	14026

	Life, LWOP, Life plus additional years, Death	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	0.7%	0.8%	0.6%	0.4%	0.7%
Total		Count	984598	766146	130204	11370	1892318
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Public order SENTENCE LENGTH FOR INMATE	MAXIMUM < 1 year	Count	134968	111922	22811	649	270350
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	24.9%	22.9%	24.0%	9.8%	23.9%
	1-1.9 years	Count	53424	36640	7930	836	98830
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	9.9%	7.5%	8.4%	12.6%	8.7%
	2-4.9 years	Count	213220	194390	33485	2376	443471
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	39.3%	39.9%	35.3%	35.8%	39.2%
	5-9.9 years	Count	98505	98900	20404	1926	219735
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	18.2%	20.3%	21.5%	29.0%	19.4%
		Count	35938	39035	8650	779	84402

	10-24.9 years	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	6.6%	8.0%	9.1%	11.7%	7.5%
	>=25 years	Count	4946	5495	1336	63	11840
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	0.9%	1.1%	1.4%	0.9%	1.0%
	Life, LWOP, Life plus additional years, Death	Count	981	1300	318	11	2610
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
	Total	Count	541982	487682	94934	6640	1131238
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Other/unspecified	MAXIMUM < 1 year SENTENCE LENGTH FOR INMATE	Count	2999	1490	407	9	4905
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	13.9%	10.6%	12.7%	6.3%	12.5%
	1-1.9 years	Count	1567	595	196	11	2369
		% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	7.2%	4.2%	6.1%	7.6%	6.1%
	2-4.9 years	Count	6930	3923	926	23	11802

	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	32.0%	27.8%	28.8%	16.0%	30.2%
5-9.9 years	Count	6455	4242	870	43	11610
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	29.8%	30.1%	27.1%	29.9%	29.7%
10-24.9 years	Count	2693	2925	558	56	6232
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	12.5%	20.7%	17.4%	38.9%	15.9%
>=25 years	Count	824	441	214	1	1480
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	3.8%	3.1%	6.7%	0.7%	3.8%
Life, LWOP, Life plus additional years, Death	Count	158	495	39	1	693
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	0.7%	3.5%	1.2%	0.7%	1.8%
Total	Count	21626	14111	3210	144	39091
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	< 1 year Count	556303	464454	87249	2839	1110845

MAXIMUM SENTENCE LENGTH FOR INMATE	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	15.5%	16.3%	16.1%	6.0%	15.8%	
	1-1.9 years	Count	285734	189913	39117	4876	519640
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	8.0%	6.7%	7.2%	10.3%	7.4%	
	2-4.9 years	Count	1171882	910506	159313	12312	2254013
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	32.6%	32.0%	29.4%	26.0%	32.1%	
	5-9.9 years	Count	840565	672487	123254	12786	1649092
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	23.4%	23.6%	22.7%	27.0%	23.5%	
	10-24.9 years	Count	548608	451320	95480	11560	1106968
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	15.3%	15.9%	17.6%	24.4%	15.7%	
	>=25 years	Count	129949	113939	27468	1751	273107
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	3.6%	4.0%	5.1%	3.7%	3.9%	
	Count	60257	44445	10456	1188	116346	

	Life, LWOP, Life plus additional years, Death	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE	1.7%	1.6%	1.9%	2.5%	1.7%
Total	Count		3593298	2847064	542337	47312	7030011
	% within HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF INMATE		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In table 8 the study controlled for five levels of most serious sentenced offense when looking at maximum sentence length. When observing the five categories of crime, we can see that inmates with college educations receive the maximum sentence length more when it pertains to property crime. This tells us that college educated offenders are committing a lot of property crime versus other types of crime.

Inmates with less than a high school diploma/GED, tend to also get the maximum sentence when it pertains to property crimes. Not far behind is drugs, inmates with less than a high school diploma/GED accounted for 933,855 inmates to receive the maximum sentence length. This observation tells us that property crime accounts for a large percentage of crime that happens in the United States. When looking at my second hypothesis, inmates with higher educational attainment will have more property crime offenses than violent crime offenses. This crosstabulation supports my hypothesis.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This study attempted to add to the limited literature by delving into inmate's education and analyzing its effect on sentencing. Specifically, the study predicted that the independent variable such as education would have a positive correlation with sentencing. The crossing of education was especially expected to have a significant relationship with the sentence length given to an offender. Since previous research has found that high school graduates are 10 percent less likely to be sent to prison than similarly situated offenders who did not finish high school. Offenders with college degrees do not have a statistically significant advantage or disadvantage. (Franklin, , 2017, p.137-165).

Crosstabulation produced a significant relationship, the null hypotheses were not supported by the statistical analysis of the sample provided by the study. Additionally, the Chi-squared measurement indicated that the p value is  $p < .001$ . This means the results were highly significant, which means it was very unlikely to have occurred by chance alone. The result from the test is strong evidence that the null hypothesis is invalid. The study has found a statistically significant relationship between educational attainment and sentencing.

As formerly declared in the results, the higher the time given for the crime there was little to no significant findings on inmates who had a college education. Regarding the first hypothesis, inmates with a higher level of educational attainment significantly increases the likelihood of a lower sentence, table 3 crosstabulation did support this hypothesis. In table 3 we observed more inmates with less than a high school diploma/GED account for most of inmates receiving a sentence. Inmates who had low educational attainment had the highest percent when looking at the higher sentences given.

Looking at my third hypothesis, inmates with low educational attainment will have a higher maximum sentence length, serve more time, and have more severe offenses. Observing table 7 shows us 6,323,404 inmates controlled in this group, 3,265,066 (which is over 50%) fell into the category of less than a high school diploma/GED. This tells us that most inmates that are serving time have no educational attainment. Table 8 follows the same trend, inmates with less than a high school diploma/GED accounted for 3,503,298 of 7,030,011 inmates. (fix this statement Remove majority of crime) This trend shows federal inmates with low educational attainment are committing majority of the crime. This information is vital because further research can be done to see if increasing educational attainment or even looking at socioeconomic factors will lower criminal behavior.

Lastly my second hypothesis, inmates with higher educational attainment will have more property crime offenses than violent crime offenses. Looking at table 8 you can see a large population of inmates that fall into the property crime category. This observation tells us that property crime accounts for a large percentage of crime that happens in the United States. This crosstabulation supports my hypothesis. By observing table 8 it seems like violent crimes are on the decline and property crimes are on the rise. This information would be vital in a future study in examining the reason behind this trend.

This study is important to the field of criminal justice. Researchers have always tried to explain crime and the reasons why people commit crime. The whole goal of studying criminal behavior is to see what changes can be done to prevent criminal behavior. This study shows that people with low educational attainment are committing a large majority of crime. It also shows that people with high educational attainment also commit crimes, but their crimes are different in nature compared to people with no educational attainment. You have inmates with low educational attainment committing a lot of violent crimes, while inmates with high educational attainment are committing a lot of property crimes. This information supports current literature on who is committing violent crime.

The study shined light on an area that is rarely studied. Educational attainment and sentencing, observing these types of sentencing practices can enhance sentencing overall. The biggest issue within the criminal justice system is fairness. Everyone is treated differently, depending on your educational status, socioeconomic status, and even down to race and age. By looking at educational attainment and sentencing, we can observe if offenders with educational attainment is receiving preferential treatment versus offenders who have no educational attainment.

No one has made the claim that the criminal justice system is perfect, but I believe that there is a majority that want to see changes to the system. I am one of those people that want to see changes made to improve the fairness of the system. The study and research can be used to improve sentencing practices with judges. The data can be used to improve sentencing and promote fairness in the criminal justice. This study sheds light on the importance of educational attainment, but everyone is not able to obtain a high level of educational attainment. Those people who are not able or do not want to increase their educational attainment should be treated the same as people with a high level of educational attainment.

Recommendations that I want to give regarding educational attainment and sentencing start with funding for school. There needs to be a change in the way school is funded for. Colleges have increase in price since the 50's, there is no way a student can work minimum wage and pay tuition. Funding or incentives for students to further their education could be a start to improving educational attainment. Also, looking at the first two years of college, a student can earn an associate degree in two years. Making school free for the first two years can be a way of improving educational attainment. This study has shown that people with high educational attainment commit fewer crimes than people with low educational attainment. This can be related to people with an education having more opportunities than people without an education.

I want to see changes in the practice of sentencing. In the last decade we have seen a reduction to drug charges. Some drug charges have become misdemeanors, which is great in

terms of sentencing. Further examination on sentencing when it pertains to drugs offenses can be modified. Looking at rehab, or offender counselling instead of prison time can be option. Lastly, re-examining probation and how we can improve upon the system. The goal is rehabilitating the offender, not locking them up and throw away the key.

I also want to see further research done on the topic. Studies on educational attainment and sentencing at the state and local levels. The next step would be researching state level practices and comparing them to federal level practices to see if there are any differences in sentencing. Also, age and race play a major role in sentencing. Future studies can control for these variables to see the outcomes. The impact this study can have on the area of criminal justice can be limitless. The different variation of topics that branch out from this research is limitless.

Lastly are federal inmates with low educational attainment. Federal inmates with low educational attainment are more likely to be seen in front of a judge than people with high educational attainment. As stated above people with different levels of educational attainment commit different crimes. The data showed people with low educational attainment are committing violent crimes, while people with high educational attainment commit a lot of property crimes. People that commit property crimes in some cases pay restitution and receive no sentence while people that see a judge for violent crimes have a greater chance of being incarcerated because of the nature of the crime. The type of crime is very important when observing sentencing practices.

#### Culture/Social Capital behind *Bars*

I believe this study will benefit from talking about Mr. Lenny Foster. Mr. Lenny Foster of the Diné Nation is the former Director of the Navajo Nation Corrections Project and the Spiritual Advisor for more than 2,000 Native American inmates in ninety-six state and federal prisons in the Western U.S. He has co-authored legislation in New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado allowing Native American spiritual and religious practice in prison and resulting in significant reductions in prison returns.

Thousands Native people incarcerated in Federal and State prisons have expressed interest in using sweat lodges, but only to maintain their personal 'religious' faith, but as a way to combat the hostile, sometimes dehumanizing experience of prison and begin their own reformative processes. Many prison chaplains and administrators have noted the benefits for inmates' rehabilitation and have been vocal advocates for sweat lodges to the community of correctional workers and administrators. Mike Linderman, speaking in the American Correctional Chaplains Association Newsletter, argued. "Since the basic concept of the sweat lodge ceremony is to provide an opportunity for its participants to cleanse themselves in order to be in the proper attitude for prayer, it causes them to evaluate their conduct, and be accountable for their actions."

Lenny Foster, a Navajo spiritual adviser, and head of the tribally funded Navajo Nation Corrections Project built his first sweat lodge for inmates at Arizona State Prison in 1980 and said he has seen the positive effects. "The intense heat or the steam, what we call grandfather's breath, opens up not only the pores, the physical aspect, but it opens up the mind and the spirit, and there's a real purification and a cleansing of the soul that takes place," Foster said. Prison officials have learned that sweat lodges — which are supposed to cleanse the body, mind, and soul — can have a calming influence on inmates and help keep order behind bars.

A lot of inmates are normally locked up because of problems with drugs, alcohol, and anger. The detox from the sweat lodge can help with detox and also help purify inmates so that they have a clarity of mind and realize the mistake that landed them behind bars. Many experts have begun to utilize the sweat lodge as a kind group therapy for Native and non-Native youth in reform programs. The author of "Sweat Therapy" from The Journal of Experimental Education notes many important benefits of using sweating as a medium for group therapy. Specifically, the author praises the process as being a "challenging experience while promoting therapeutic factors beneficial to group psychotherapy" and cited evidence that it "promoted moral-cognitive development and fortified cultural identity."

These findings are significant in supporting a secondary claim by advocates of sweat lodge use in prison, that it is a constructive and beneficial process to all parties involved in the correctional system. According to the Navajo Nation Corrections Project (2005), the potential for encouraging healthy growth of prisoners is tremendous, as is the potential for asserting the rights of all citizens to religious freedom. Importantly though, many advocates hasten to point out that the sweat lodge is not solely religious in nature: it is, like so many facets of Native American religious traditions, also a practice promoting health, hygiene, and general wellbeing, with meanings that are as cultural as they are religious.

#### Limitations of study

Overall, the current study's findings were limited due to not knowing the exact reason for the inmate's crime and if the inmates were a repeat offender. Knowing if the inmate were a repeat offender could have shed light on why the inmate received a longer sentence compared to their peers. The study was not able to control for the severity of the offense in regard to the type of crime, which may have affected the significance of the results.

There may have been intervening variables that were not controlled within the analysis that were affecting the results. Other variables such as age and gender could have been controlled for, but for limitations of this study I decided to focus on educational attainment and sentencing. Variables such as socioeconomic status would have been difficult because the data did not record or include any information on employment or financial status.

In conclusion, the current study attempted to explore the effect of educational attainment on sentence length. Using Crosstabulation to present the results of the entire group of respondents so that the study could examine the relationships within the data. The study also ran a chi-square test and used a Kendall's tau-b for a measure of association. Results of the study found a strong relationship between the variables educational attainment and sentence length. Overall, significant associations were found in relation to the hypothesis presented in chapter 3.

The study supplements the limited literature and research we have by adding a fresh perspective to the study of educational attainment and sentence length. In future research, the study should be replicated to enhanced reliability. Maybe the study could be replicated while controlling for variables such as age and race to see if there is racial and age discrimination present in the study.

## REFERENCES

- Albonetti, C. (1997). Sentencing under the federal sentencing guidelines: effects of defendant characteristics, guilty pleas, & departures on sentence outcomes for drug offenses, *1991-1992, Law & Society Review* 31:789.
- Batiuk, M.E., Moke, P., & Wilcox-Rountree, P. 1997. *Crime and rehabilitation: Correctional* Blumstein, Alfred, Jacqueline Cohen, Jeffrey A. Roth, and Christy A. Visher, *Books.*
- Cernkovich, S. A., Giordano, P. C., & Rudolph, J. L. (2000). Race, crime, & the American dream. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 37(2), 131–170.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427800037002001>
- Cohill, M. B. (1991). Why do I like broccoli? *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 82, 125-132
- Doerner, J. K. & Demuth, S. (2010). The independent & joint effects of race/ethnicity, gender, and age on sentencing outcomes in U.S. federal courts. *Justice Quarterly*, 27(1), 1-27.
- eds. (1986). *Criminal careers & career criminals*. 2 vols. panel on research on career criminals, committee on research on law enforcement & the administration of justice, commission on behavioral & social sciences and education, national research council. *Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press*
- Elliott, D. S., & Voss, H. L. (1974). *Delinquency and dropout*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Everett, R., & Wojtkiewicz, R. (2002). Difference, disparity, & race/ethnic bias in federal sentencing. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 18(2), 189-211. Retrieved November 5, 2020, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23366801>
- Farnworth, M., & Leiber, M. J. (1989). Strain theory revisited: Economic goals, educational means, & delinquency. *American Sociological Review*, 54(2), 263–274.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2095794>

- Farrington, D. P. (1986). Age & crime. *Crime & Justice*, 7, 189–250.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147518>
- Farrington, D. P., & Hawkins, J. D. (1991). Predicting participation, early onset & later persistence in officially recorded offending. *Criminal Behavior and Mental Health*, 1, 1-33.
- Farrington, D. P. (1992). Explaining the beginning, progress and ending of antisocial behavior from birth to adulthood. In: *McCord, J. (ed.) Facts, frameworks, and forecasts: Advances in Criminological Theory Vol. 3*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, pp. 253–286
- Flaherty, M. & William, C. (1996). Judges hand blacks longer prison times in district has wider than average discrepancy series, #4/5, *Washington Post*, 9 Oct., sec. A, p. 27.
- Flannery, D. J., & Rowe, D. C. (1994). An examination of environmental & trait influences on adolescent delinquency. *The Journal of Research in Crime*, 3(14).
- Flannery, D. J., Vazsonyi, A.T., & Rowe, D. C. (1996). Caucasian & Hispanic early adolescent substance use: Parenting, personality, and school adjustment. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 16(1).
- Foley, R. M. (2001). Academic characteristics of incarcerated youths and correctional education programs: A literature review. *Journal of Emotional and Behavior Disorders*, 9(4), 248-260.
- Frank, L. (1995). Tough crack law targeting blacks? *Tennessean*, 25 Sept., sec. A, p. 1.
- Franklin, T. W. (2017). Sentencing outcomes in US district courts: Can offenders' educational attainment guard against prevalent criminal stereotypes? *Crime & Delinquency*, 63(2), 137-165 from birth to adulthood. In J. McCord (Ed.), *Facts, frameworks, and forecasts:*
- Frase, R. (1997), Sentencing principles in theory & practice, 22 *Crime & Just.* 363, available at [https://scholarship.law.umn.edu/faculty\\_articles/486](https://scholarship.law.umn.edu/faculty_articles/486).

- Gottfredson, D. C. (1985). Youth employment, crime, & schooling: A longitudinal study of a national sample. *Developmental Psychology, 21*(3), 419–432.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.21.3.419>
- Grogger, J. (1998). Market wages and youth crime. *Journal of Labor Economics, 16*(4), 756-791.  
 doi:10.1086/209905
- Harlow, C. (2003). Education & Correctional Populations. Retrieved November 4, 2020 from  
<https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf>
- Hartley, R. D., Maddan, S., & Spohn, C. C. (2007). Concerning conceptualization and operationalization: Sentencing data & the focal concerns perspective--a research note. *Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice, 4*(1).
- Herbert, S. (1998). Police subculture reconsidered. *Criminology, 36*: 343-370. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1998.tb01251.x>
- Jarjoura, G. R. (1993). Does dropping out of school enhance delinquent involvement? Results from a large-scale national probability sample. *Criminology, 31*, 149-72.
- Jenkins, P. H. (1995). School delinquency & school commitment. *Sociology of Education, 68*, 221-239.
- Johnson, B. D. (2003). Racial & ethnic disparities in sentencing departures across modes of conviction. *Criminology, 41*(2), 449-489.
- Journal of Offender. Counseling, Services & Rehabilitation, *5*(3), 13-25. Retrieved December 6, 2021.
- Junger-Tas, J. (1992). An empirical test of social control theory. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 8*(1), 9-28.
- Katsiyannis, A., & Archwamety, T. (1999). Academic remediation/achievement & other factors related to recidivism rates among delinquent youths. *Behavioral Disorders, 24*(2), 93-101.

- Kautt, P., Spohn C. (2002). Crack-ing Down on black drug offenders? Testing for interactions among offenders' race, drug type, & sentencing strategy in federal drug sentences. *Justice Quarterly Volume:19 Issue:1* Dated: March 2002 Pages:1-35
- Kelly, D. H., & Balch, R. W. (1971). Social origins and school failure: A re-examination of Cohen's theory of working-class delinquency. *Pacific Sociological Review, 14, 413-430.*
- Kempf-Leonard, K., Sample, L. (2002). The questionable advantage of defense counsel in juvenile court (with G. Burruss). *Justice Quarterly 19 (1): 37-68.*
- Lochner, L. (2007). Education and crime. University of Western Ontario
- Lochner, L. & Enrico, M. (2004). The effect of education on crime: Evidence from prison inmates, arrests, & self-reports. *American Economic Review, 94 (1): 155-189.*
- Maguin, E., & Loeber, R. (1996). Academic performance & delinquency. In M. Tonry, & N. Morris (Eds.), *Crime and justice: A review of research. (Vol. 30). Chicago: University of Chicago Press*
- Mak, A. (1991). Psychosocial control characteristics of delinquents & nondelinquents. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 18, 287-304.*
- Monk-Turner, E. (1989). Effects of high school delinquency on educational attainment & adult occupational status. *Sociological Perspectives, 32(3), 413-418.*
- Morris, Norval, and Howard, C. (1964). Studies in criminal law. *Oxford: Clarendon Press.*
- Mustard, D. B. (2001). Racial, ethnic, and gender disparities in sentencing: Evidence from the U.S. federal courts. *Journal of Law and Economics, 44(1), 285-314.*
- Nagel, I. H. & Johnson, B. L. (1994). The role of gender in a structured sentencing system: Equal treatment, policy choices, & the sentencing of female offenders under the United States sentencing guidelines. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, 181-221.*
- Navajo Nation Corrections Project (2005). Sweat Lodges in American Prisons. Retrieved December 6, 2021 from <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2010/jan/15/sweat-lodges-in-american-prisons-2005/>

- Piquero, Alex R., David P. Farrington, and Alfred Blumstein. The criminal career paradigm. *Crime and Justice* 30 (2003): 359–506. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147702>.
- Rampey, B., Shelley, K., Leyla, M., Tom, K., Jianzhu, L., Nina, T., and Jacquie, H. (2014). Highlights from the U.S. pиаac survey of incarcerated adults: Their skills, work experience, education, & training: Program for the international assessment of adult competencies: Washington, D.C.: *National Center for Education Statistics, NCES 2016-040*, 2016. As of June 15, 2019: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>
- Ross, R.R., & Ross, B.D. (1989). Delinquency training through cognitive training. *Educational Horizons*, 67(4), 124-130.
- Schanzenbach, M. M. (2004). Handcuffing justice: The shaky empirical foundations of the Feeney amendment. *Available at SSRN 668563*.
- Short, J.F., Jr. (1990). Schools & communities as behavior settings for juvenile delinquency. In *J.F. Short, Jr. (Ed.), Delinquency and society (pp. 84-105)*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Steffensmeier, D. & Demuth, S. (2001). Ethnicity & judges' sentencing decisions: Hispanic black-white comparisons. *Criminology*, 39(1), 145-178.
- Steffensmeier, D. & Demuth, S. (2006). Does gender modify the effects of race-ethnicity on criminal sanctioning? Sentences for male & female white, black, & Hispanic defendants. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 22, 241-261.
- Steffensmeier, D., Kramer, J., & Ulmer, J. (1995). Age differences in sentencing. *Justice Quarterly*, 12(3), 701-719.
- Steffensmeier, D., Ulmer, J., & Kramer, J. (1998). The interaction of race, gender, & age in criminal sentencing: The punishment cost of being young, black, & male. *Criminology*, 36(4), 763-797.
- Stith, K. (2008). The arc of the pendulum: Judges, prosecutors, & the exercise of discretion. *The Yale Law Journal*, 117, 1420-1497.

- Stith, K. & Koh, S. Y. (1993). Politics of sentencing reform: The legislative history of the federal sentencing guidelines. *Wake Forest Law Review*, 28, 223-290.
- Tauchen, H., Witte, A., & Griesinger, H. (1994). Criminal deterrence: Revisiting the Issue with a Birth Cohort. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 76(3), 399-412.  
doi:10.2307/2109966
- Thornberry, T. P., Moore, M., & Christianson, R. L. (1985). The effect of Dropping out of High School on Subsequent Criminal Behavior. *Criminology*, 23, 3-18.
- Tjaden, J., Rolando, D., Doty, J., & Mortimer, J. T. (2019). The long-term effects of time use during high school on positive development. *Longitudinal & Life Course Studies*, 10(1), 51–85. <https://doi.org/10.1332/175795919X15468755933371>
- Tracy, P. E., Wolfgang, M. E., & Figlio, R. M. (1990). Prevalence of delinquency. In P. E. Tracy, M. E. Wolfgang, & R. M. Figlio (Eds.), *Delinquency careers in two birth cohorts* (pp. 37-56). New York: Plenum.
- U.S. Department of Education (2015) Second chance pell fact sheet. Retrieved December 6, 2021 from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/pell-secondchance.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education (2019) Invitation to participate in the second chance pell experiment under the experimental site’s initiative. Retrieved December 6, 2021 from <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/electronic-announcements/2019-05-20/invitation-participate-second-chance-pell-experiment-under-experimental-sites-initiative-esi>
- Vazsonyi, A. T., & Flannery, D. J. (1997). Early adolescent delinquent behaviors: Associations with family & school domains. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 17(3), 271–293. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431697017003002>
- Walker, S., Spohn, C., & DeLone, M. (2016). *The color of justice: Race, ethnicity, and crime in America*. Cengage Learning.

- Weis, J. G., Sederstrom, J., & National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (1981). *The prevention of serious delinquency: What to do? Seattle: Center for Law and Justice*, University of Washington.
- Wilmot, K. A., & Spohn, C. (2004). Prosecutorial discretion & real-offense sentencing: An analysis of relevant conduct under the federal sentencing guidelines. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 15(3), 324-343.
- Witte, A.D., and Tauchen H. (1994). Work and crime: An exploration using panel data. *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 4794*
- Anderson, D. B. (March 25, 1982). The relationship between correctional education & parole success. *Journal of Offender Counseling Services Rehabilitation*, 5, 13-26.
- United States Sentencing Commission (2017) Retrieved November 4, 2020 from <https://www.ussc.gov/about/annual-report/archive/annual-report-2017>

## APPENDIX



## ***Institutional Review Board (IRB)***

### ***For the Protection of Human Research Participants***

---

**Protocol Number:** 04176-2021

**Responsible Researcher(s):** Gilbert Johnson

**Supervising Faculty:** Dr. Shani Wilfred

**Project Title:** *The Effects of Educational Attainment on Sentence Length.*

---

#### **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:**

This research protocol is **Exempt** from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under Exemption **Category 4**. Your research study may begin immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator ([irb@valdosta.edu](mailto:irb@valdosta.edu)) before continuing your research.

---

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

- *Upon completion of this research study all collected data must be securely maintained (locked file cabinet, password protected computer, etc.) and accessible only by the researcher for a minimum of 3 years. At the end of the required time, collected data must be permanently destroyed.*

*If this box is checked, please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at [irb@valdosta.edu](mailto:irb@valdosta.edu) to ensure an updated record of your exemption.*

---

*Elizabeth Ann Olphie*      05.18.2021  
**application.**

Elizabeth Ann Olphie, IRB Administrator  
253-2947.

**Thank you for submitting an IRB**

**Please direct questions to [irb@valdosta.edu](mailto:irb@valdosta.edu) or 229-**

---

Revised: 06.02.16