

Ramoutar and Farrington (2007) assessed the variables that correlated with offending in a sample of 118 male and 93 female offenders in Trinidad. The offenders were interviewed in order to obtain the data. Ramoutar and Farrington collected data on social learning, labelling and personality.

In respect of labelling, respondents were asked about informal and formal labelling. *Informal labelling* was defined as the respondent's perception that others (e.g. family members, neighbours etc.) thought of them as 'bad' or a 'troublemaker' etc. *Formal labelling* was defined as whether the respondent had ever been 'processed' by the criminal justice system e.g. by being arrested, charged, tried or convicted for any offence before the one they were currently in prison for.

Ramoutar and Farrington looked for correlations between these variables and both *participation* (i.e. whether or not they got involved with violent/property crime) and *frequency* (i.e. how often they committed offences).

For males, the strongest predictor of participation in crime was the availability of different types of reinforcement for offending. For females, the strongest predictor of participation was labelling, particularly labelling by the parents, which increased the risk of violent offending by a factor of 19.2 for violent offending and 7.0 for property offending. For males, the odds ratios for parental labelling were 2.9 for both violent and property offending. Where it came to frequency of offending, labelling had no significant relationship for either men or women.

McGrath (2014) interviewed 69 female and 325 male adolescent offenders in Youth Courts and Detention Centres in New Zealand. The respondents were interviewed immediately after sentencing or while in custody. The respondents had received a range of sentences from community service orders to up to 36 months detention.

The respondents were asked questions about the impact of being labelled as criminal by the courts. Example questions included:

“Even though the court case is over, do you still feel that others will not let you forget what you have done?”;

“During the court case, did any of the people who are important to you reject you because of the offense?”;

“Were you treated in the court case as though you were likely to commit another offense?”

The respondents were tracked after their sentence was finished for any further offending.

Levels of perceived stigmatisation were higher where the respondent received a custodial sentence, had more previous convictions and was younger at their first offence. Where it came to reoffending, perceived stigmatisation was significantly related to reoffending for female but not male offenders. The higher the level of stigmatisation, the more likely a female offender was to reoffend but this relationship was absent for males.

Chiricos et al (2007) exploited a peculiarity of state law in Florida. A person convicted of a *felony* offence (a more serious type of crime) loses some of their civil rights. For example, they may not hold public office, serve on a jury or purchase firearms. However, Florida law allows a judge the 'withhold adjudication' if a person convicted of a felony offence is sentenced to probation. This means that two people in Florida might be convicted of the same offence and given the same sentence, but one will have a felony conviction and the other will not. So one will have a 'convicted felon' label and the associated loss of rights, and the other will not.

Chiricos et al examined the court records of 'adjudication withheld' felons and compared them with 'formally adjudicated' ones. In total 95,919 offenders' records were used. They had been convicted of a variety of offences including violent, property and drugs offences. All had been sentenced to probation. Chiricos et al were interested in whether these offenders went on to be convicted of any further offence subsequently.

The researchers found that being given the 'felony' label significantly increased the probability of subsequent convictions. They also found that the effect of labelling was particularly strong amongst white offenders, female offenders and those who were aged above 30 years at the time of their first conviction.

Restivo and Lanier (2013) did a longitudinal study of 677 adolescents randomly selected from a larger study of children at risk. The sample included children who had been officially labelled 'criminal' through contact with the justice system and also children who had not.

The data were obtained by structured interview at three points over two years. The respondents were asked about any official contact they had had with the criminal justice system (e.g. being arrested, charged with a crime etc.). They were also asked about any criminal activities they had been involved in (e.g. theft, 'joyriding', criminal damage, assaults etc.). They were also asked questions about their self concept using Likert scale items such as "I do not have much to be proud of," "I am a person of equal worth to others," "I wish I could have more self-respect.". They were also asked about the involvement of their peers in a variety of criminal and delinquent activities.

Restivo and Lanier found that official labelling was associated with an increase in criminal activity. That is, those who were arrested in the course of the study showed a significant increase in their criminal activity *after* they had been arrested. They found that arrest was also followed by a negative change in self concept and a significant increase in association with delinquent peers.