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**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS
THAT ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIGH SCHOOL
DROPOUT IN DOUGHERTY COUNTY AND TEN
OTHER COUNTIES**

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The problem of high school dropouts is one that school administrators and parents have had to deal with for the past several decades nationwide. While the rates of high school dropouts may vary from region to region, from state to state, or even from county to county, nationally, it is still a problem which needs to be thoroughly addressed by school administrators, parents, and public policy makers because of the social implications it has on society.

As a student of public administration, I am interested in this issue because I am convinced that by examining the cause and impact of high school dropouts on society, I would be contributing to an understanding of the problem, so that school administrators and policy makers can formulate appropriate policies for addressing this matter.

The need to closely examine the issue of high school dropouts in Dougherty County and ten other counties is based on the perspective that high school students are segments or entities of society. Therefore, the activities that they engage in as a result of their inability to attend high school tend to affect other segments of the society, consequently, the whole society. In essence, since high school students make up part of the social system which we call society and they contribute to the functioning of the system, their activities affect negatively or positively how the society functions. Hence, as a student of public administration, it is my view that examining the factors that are responsible for high school dropouts in Dougherty County by comparing it with ten other counties would contribute to

finding meaningful solutions for addressing this phenomenon which has a significant impact on society.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Americans are known for many achievements; a high standard of living, discoveries, invention, and the ability to organize and overcome problems. In terms of material things, they have the space shuttle, computers, and have accomplished other technological successes. However, as important as these achievements are, they are really by products of Americans' greatest achievement or an even greater American accomplishment: education.

However, according to the US Department of Education, the dropout rate of students whose ages were 15 through 24 and who did not complete high school and dropped out in the 10th grade through 12th grade in the single year of 1999, was 5.0 percent.¹

¹US Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1999*, (Washington, DC: US Department of Education, 2000) Available from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/dropout/>; Internet; accessed 25 October 2001.

The National Center for Education Statistics reported that Georgia's high school completion rate for the 1997-1999 reporting cycle was 83.7 percent. This figure places Georgia ahead of 10 other states for a completion rate.²

The high school dropout rate for Dougherty County in the 1999-2000 school year was 10.7 percent.³ This places the county at 21st out of 173 school systems in the state of Georgia in the ranking of a dropout rate for grades 9th through 12th. Why was the dropout rate in Dougherty County higher than the ones for other counties? Even though, the dropout rate is high and the completion rate is low, the state of Georgia does not have a dropout prevention program. Although the Department of Education in Georgia uses a system of withdrawal codes to account for students who leave local school systems, the code provides limited information on why high school students drop out of schools.⁴

To find out the factors that are responsible for causing high school dropout in Dougherty County, this research will compare Dougherty County with ten counties that have high schools with the

²Georgia Department of Education, *Superintendent Schrenko Issues Statement Concerning Mortention Dropout Report*. Available from www.doe.k12.ga.us/communications/releases/05201.html Internet; accessed 02 September 2001.

³Georgia Department of Education, *Georgia Public Education Report Card Dougherty County Schools*, Available from www.doe.k12.ga.us; Internet; accessed 02 September 2001.

⁴Georgia Department of Education, *State Of Georgia Program Evaluation, Dropout Prevention Efforts*, Available form; www.legis.state.ga.us/Depertments/AUDIT/pao/dropout.pdf Internet; accessed 23 October 2001.

lowest high school dropout rates in order to analyse possible factors that contribute to dropout rates in Georgia. In that respect, this study examines such factors as crime rate, poverty level, and educational attainment. The ten counties to be compared to Dougherty County are Lee, Jones, Crawford, Oconee, Fayette, White, Wilkes, Early, Bleckley, and Thomas. These counties are selected because there are the ones that have high schools with the lowest dropout rates in the state of Georgia.

DEFINING CONCEPTS (MEASUREMENT)

The National Centre for Education Statistics states that high school completion rate represents the proportion of 18 through 24 years old who have completed a high school diploma or equivalent credential, including a General Educational Developments (GED) credential.⁵

According to the Georgia Department of Education, dropouts are counted for the October FTE (Full Time Equivalent) count of the prior year until the October FTE of the current year. The dropout rate is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by the total enrollment.⁶

⁵US DEPARTMENT of Education. National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1999*, (Washington, DC: US Department of Education, 2000) Available from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/dropout/>; Internet; accessed 25 October 2001.

⁶Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Public Education Report Card, Available from www.doe.k12.ga.us; Internet; accessed 02 September 2001.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been a lot of research on high school dropout rates in the United States. The research shows that most of the dropouts fall into two general categories: a large portion of the research on high school dropouts has focused on the identification of variables associated with at-risk students or causes of dropouts, while a second group of studies deal with dropout prevention strategies. It is the intention of this research to focus on the reason or cause for a high school dropout; hence its emphasizes is primarily on identifying variables associated with these dropout rates.

The literature shows that socioeconomic status is one of the variables that has been looked at as a contributing factor to school dropouts. In 1958, Tesseneer and Tesseneer reviewed 20 dropout studies. And, in 1984, Steinberg, Blinde, and Chan reviewed 12 additional studies.⁷ Both research teams concluded that the socioeconomic status of the family is a variable which most clearly and consistently distinguishes high school dropouts from graduates. Likewise, in 1983 and 1987, Rumber concluded that socioeconomic status was a primary contributing factor in high school dropouts.⁸ There are many other variables, for example, family background, psychological factors,

⁷Tesseneer, R.A., and Tesseneer, L.M., "Review of the literature on school dropouts," *Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals* 42 (1958): 141-153, quoted in Frank Jean R, "High School Dropout: A New Look At Family Variables," *Social Work in Education* 13 (1990): 34-47.

⁸Ibid.

marriage and pregnancy, crime and drinking related problems, environmental factors, and school related problems which have been looked at. Also, in general, it is much easier to predict dropout behaviour from various factors than to identify what really motivates a student to leave a school.

Again, previous studies have identified several aspects of family background that affect the likelihood of dropping out of high school. The educational attainment of both parents represents two important aspects.⁹ According to these studies, better-educated parents tend to have fewer children that drop out of high school. There are some possible reasons why this is the case. The better-educated parents could influence their children's educational aspirations and they could spend more time with their children.¹⁰ A research by Governmental Research and Services as well as Public Policy Research Series deals with dropouts in Georgia. It says that dropping out is concentrated among youth whose parents are dropouts, including the fact that the

⁹Hill, C. R., "Capacities, opportunities, and educational investments: The case of high school dropout," *Reviewing Economics and Statistics* 61 (1979): 9-20, Mare, R. D., "Social background and school continuation decisions," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 75 (1980): 295-305, quoted in Rumberger W. Russell, "Dropping Out of High School: The Influence of Race, Sex, and Family Background," *American Educational Research Journal* 20 (1983): 199-220.

¹⁰Hill, C. R., and Stafford, F. P., *Family background and lifetime earnings* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1977), quoted in Rumberger W. Russell, "Dropping Out of High School: The Influence of Race, Sex, and Family Background," *American Educational Research Journal* 20 (1983): 199-220.

problem may be rooted in social/cultural factors.¹¹

Income is another aspect of family background that tends to influence a high school dropout rate. The reason is that children from poor families may feel pressure to contribute to their families' incomes. Thus, they may be more likely to drop out of school to seek work.¹² According to *A Snapshot of America's Families*, children in lower-income families are more likely than those who live in wealthier households to have behavioural and emotional problems and are less likely to be highly engaged in school.¹³

Family structure also appears to be important and related to high school dropout rates. Children from broken families, where one or both parents are absent, may be less likely to find the support and encouragement that need to keep them in school.¹⁴

¹¹Lawrence R. Hepburn and Rudolph A. White, "School Dropouts: A Two Generation Problem," *GRS-Public Policy Research Series*; available from www.cviog.uga.edu; Internet; accessed 28 September 2000.

¹²Lerman, R. I., "Some determinants of youth school activity," *Journal of Human Resources* 7 (1972): 366-383, Stroup, A. L., and Robins, L.N., "Elementary school predictors of high school dropout among black males," *Sociology of Education* 45 (1972): 212-222, quoted in Rumberger W. Russell, "Dropping Out of High School: The Influence of Race, Sex, and Family Background," *American Educational Research Journal* 20 (1983): 199-220.

¹³Georgia Department of Education, "Children's Engagement in School," *Publication Review* 4, 1999; Available from www.doe.k12.ga.us; Internet; accessed 31 October 2000.

¹⁴Masters, S. H., "The effects of family income on children's education: Some findings of inequality of opportunity," *Journal of Human Resources* 4 (1969): 158-175, Howell, F. M., and Frese, W., "Early transition into adult roles: Some antecedents and outcomes," *American Educational Research Journal* 19 (1982): 51-73, quoted in Rumberger W. Russell,

Family size, housing conditions, and geographic location also affect the propensity to drop out of school.¹⁵

A more detailed investigation of family variables in research on the family has been done in 1990, particularly, research on the effects of family problems and stressors. It shows a number of household stressors as independent variables; single parent (separated, divorced, widowed, never married), three generations of family members in the household, six or more persons in the household, person with serious health problems, a member hospitalized for six or more days in a previous year, parents whose health problems limit functioning, persons with a serious emotional or behavioural problem, persons reported as mentally retarded, presence of a teen who is pregnant or is a parent, two or more family moves in the last two years, a person with problems involving police or accusation of a crime, persons abusing drug or alcohol, serious family arguments, adult or child abuse explanation, a person not covered by health insurance, day care arrangements necessary for members, a problem with establishing or collecting child support, law-related child problems (paternity,

□ Dropping Out of High School: The Influence of Race, Sex, and Family Background, □ *American Educational Research Journal* 20 (1983): 199-220.

¹⁵Hill, C. R., □ Capacities, opportunities, and educational investments: The case of high school dropout, □ *Reviewing Economics and Statistics* 61 (1979): 9-20, Mare, R. D., □ Social background and school continuation decisions, □ *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 75 (1980): 295-305, quoted in Rumberger W. Russell, □ Dropping Out of High School: The Influence of Race, Sex, and Family Background, □ *American Educational Research Journal* 20 (1983): 199-220.

visiting, custody), and member supporting someone, who lives elsewhere. And, it concludes that the number of stressors in a household is positively related to the probability that the household contains a youth that is a dropout or at high risk for dropout.¹⁶

Several psychological factors influenced dropout behaviour as well. The role of "ability" has been widely studied. Most studies concluded that people who drop out demonstrated lower levels of ability than students who finished high school did or they were unable to perform in the class well.¹⁷ (1968) 343-363, Hill, C. R., "Capacities, opportunities, and educational investments: The case of high school dropout," *Reviewing Economics and Statistics* 61 (1979): 9-20, quoted in Rumberger W. Russell, "Dropping Out of High School: The Influence of Race, Sex, and Family Background," *American Educational Research Journal* 20 (1983): 199-220.

Measures of self-confidence and sociability have also been used to distinguish between high school dropouts and graduates.¹⁸ In addition, educational and occupational aspiration also appears to be important factors.¹⁹

¹⁶Frank Jean R, "High School Dropout: A new Look at Family Variables," *Social Work in Education* 13 (1990): 34-47.

¹⁷Combs, J., and Cooley, W. W., "Dropouts: In high school and after high school," *American Educational Research Journal* 5

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Howell, F. M., and Frese, W., "Early transition into adult roles: Some antecedents and outcomes," *American Educational Research Journal* 19 (1982): 51-73, quoted in Rumberger W. Russell, "Dropping Out of High School: The Influence of Race, Sex, and Family Background," *American Educational Research Journal* 20 (1983): 199-220.

Also, there may be cultural differences between population subgroups in the importance attached to completing high school that could also lead to different reasons for dropping out among race-ethnic minorities of each sex. Some traditional Hispanic families may not expect their female children to complete high school to fulfill their later valued roles as wives and mothers.²⁰ Rural populations may similarly place less emphasis on completing high school on the road to adulthood.²¹ Some inner-city-African American youth may also question the value of a high school diploma in the face of high levels of unemployment regardless of high school attainments and the existence of underground economics, for example, drugs, in their neighbourhoods where educational credential has no meaning.²²

²⁰Valdivieso, R., and Nicolau, S., "Look me in the eye: A Hispanic cultural perspective on school reform," *Schools and students at risk: Context and framework for positive change* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1994), 90-115, quoted in Jordan, Will. J., and Lara, Julia., "Exploring the cause of early dropout among race-ethnic and gender groups," *Youth and Society* 28 (1996): 62-93.

²¹De Young, A. J., "Children at risk in America's rural schools: Economic and cultural dimensions," *School and students at risk: Context and framework for positive change* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1994), 90-115, quoted in Jordan, Will. J., and Lara, Julia., "Exploring the cause of early dropout among race-ethnic and gender groups," *Youth and Society* 28 (1996): 62-93.

²²Ogbu, J., "A cultural ecology of competence among inner-city Blacks," *The social and affective development of black children* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1985), "Minority education in a comparative perspective," *Journal of Negro Education* 59 (1990): 45-57, quoted in Jordan, Will. J., and Lara, Julia., "Exploring the cause of early dropout among race-ethnic and gender groups," *Youth and Society* 28 (1996): 62-93.

Early school leaving often appears to be related to early marriage and pregnancy.²³ Dropouts are also more likely than other young people to engage in crime and have drinking problems.²⁴

Environmental factors, such as geographic location of current residence and local employment conditions, influence dropping out as well.²⁵ Not only the family but also neighbourhood peer groups, community organizations, and religious, legal, and health institutions often play a critical role in the stability and development of the adolescent.²⁶

Wehlege emphasized a need to study school-related variables

²³Howell, F. M., and Frese, W., "Early transition into adult roles: Some antecedents and outcomes," *American Educational Research Journal* 19 (1982): 51-73, Marini, M. M., "The transition to adulthood: Sex differences in educational attainment and age at marriage," *American Social Review* 43 (1978): 483-507, Waite, L. J., and Moore, K. A., "The impact of an early first birth on young women's educational attainment," *Social Forces* 56 (1978): 845-865, quoted in Rumberger W. Russell, "Dropping Out of High School: The Influence of Race, Sex, and Family Background," *American Educational Research Journal* 20 (1983): 199-220.

²⁴Stoup, A. L., and Robins, L. N., "Elementary school predictors of high school dropout among black males," *Sociology of Education* 45 (1972): 212-222, quoted in Rumberger W. Russell, "Dropping Out of High School: The Influence of Race, Sex, and Family Background," *American Educational Research Journal* 20 (1983): 199-220.

²⁵Dentler, R. A., and Warshaver, M. E., *Big city dropout and illiterates*, (New York: Praeger, 1968), quoted in Rumberger W. Russell, "Dropping Out of High School: The Influence of Race, Sex, and Family Background," *American Educational Research Journal* 20 (1983): 199-220.

²⁶Jordan, Will. J., and Lara, Julia., "Exploring the cause of early dropout among race-ethnic and gender groups," *Youth and Society* 28 (1996): 62-93.

associated with student dropouts in addition to the characteristics of student dropouts.²⁷ Will and Julia show three dimensions of this aspect; general student alienation from school dimension that includes failing in school work, not getting along with teachers, and not liking or feeling welcome to school, a school safety factor that covers whether a student is worried about attacks or hostile treatment from others or is having serious difficulties in getting along with other school mates, a factor of having been expelled or suspended.²⁸

Wood found that changing schools increased the probability that a student would drop out of school.²⁹ In a study of middle school dropouts, Rumberger found that policies affecting student transfers would influence a student's decision to stay in school. The transition of students from elementary school to middle school can be compared to a student transfer requiring the adjustment of all students to a new learning environment.³⁰

²⁷Wehlage, G. G., "At-risk student and need for high school reform," *Education* 107 (1986): 18-28, quoted in Alspaugh, John. W., "The relationship of school to school transitions and school size to high school dropout rates," *High School Journal* 81 (1998): 154-159.

²⁸Jordan, Will. J., and Lara, Julia., "Exploring the cause of early dropout among race-ethnic and gender groups," *Youth and Society* 28 (1996): 62-93.

²⁹Wood, D., "Impact of family relocation on children's growth, development, school function, and behaviour," *Journal of American Medical Association* 270 (1993): 1334-38, quoted in Alspaugh, John. W., "The relationship of school to school transitions and school size to high school dropout rates," *High School Journal* 81 (1998): 154-159.

³⁰Rumberger, R. W., "Dropping out of middle school: A multilevel analysis of student and schools," *American Educational Research Journal* 32

This research examines factors responsible for a school dropout in Dougherty County by utilizing some of the suggested variables in the literature review. This will be carried out to test whether these factors are also responsible for increased high school dropout rates in Dougherty County when compared to the ten other counties.

HYPOTHESIS

A causal hypothesis is that high school dropout is caused by higher poverty level, higher crime rate, and lower educational attainment of school age parents 25 and older.

A null hypothesis is that there is no reason to believe that higher poverty level, higher crime rate, and lower educational attainment of school age parents 25 and older causes high school dropout.

VARIABLES

Independent variables are poverty level, crime rate, and educational attainment of school age parents 25 and older.

Dependent variable is a high school dropout rate.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection and sampling

Data for the study is secondary. I obtained the secondary data

(1995): 583-625, quoted in Alspaugh, John. W., "The relationship of school to school transitions and school size to high school dropout rates," *High School Journal* 81 (1998): 154-159.

of dropout rate, poverty level, crime rate, and educational attainment in Dougherty County and the ten other counties that rank low in the ranking of a high school dropout rate in Georgia, from the Georgia Department of Education, and the Department of Community Affairs.

The 1999-2000 Georgia Public Education Report Card is provided by the Georgia Department of Education for Georgia's 180 school systems and 1,887 schools. This data shows the high school dropout rates for each high school. The number of dropouts was reported by the school system on the October 2000 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) count and the percentage of dropouts, calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by the total enrollment for the 1999-2000 school year.³¹

The 1999 Community Indicators provided by the Department of Community Affairs shows poverty level, crime rate, and educational attainment of adults who are 25 and over and have a high school diploma, and argues that communities with a better educated adult population tend to have a better economic status and a higher standard of living. Consequently, such communities with lower poverty and crime rate and higher educational levels tend to experience lower dropout rates than those with higher poverty and crime rates and lower educational levels. The crime rate is the number of index crimes reported per 1,000 persons and collected by Georgia law enforcement agencies and reported by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in its annual Uniform Crime Report.

³¹Georgia Department of Education, *Georgia Public Education Report Card*, Available from www.doe.k12.ga.us; Internet; accessed 02 September 2001.

The poverty level is an estimated percentage of total population with incomes below the federal poverty level originally from US Bureau of the Census. The educational attainment for adults is originated from US Bureau of the Census.³²

Population: All the students who dropout of high school in Dougherty County and the other ten lowest counties that have high schools in the ranking of a high school dropout rate in a 1999-2000 school year in Georgia.

Parameter: Names of high schools and number of the students are shown below.

Table 1: Dougherty and the other ten lowest counties that have high schools in the ranking of a high school dropout rate 1999-2000 school year in Georgia reported by Georgia Department of Education³³

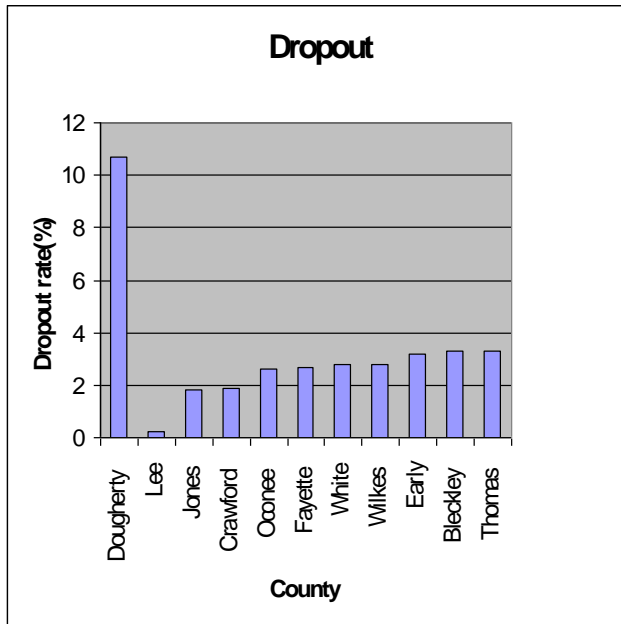
³²Georgia Department of Community Affairs, *Data sources for 2000*, Available from www.dca.state.ga.us/commind/Datasources1.asp?state=1; Internet; accessed 24 September 2001.

³³Georgia Department of Education, *Georgia Public Education Report Card*,

County	High School	Students	Dropouts	%
Dougherty	Albany	859	125	12.9
	Dougherty Comprehensive	1310	188	12.8
	Monroe	1234	125	9.5
	Westover	1128	95	7.6
	Total for Dougherty	4531	533	10.7
Lee	Lee county	1593	3	0.2
Jones	Jones county	1365	25	1.8
Crawford	Crawford county	554	12	1.9
Oconee	Oconee county	1545	42	2.6
Fayette	Fayette county	1925	18	0.9
	McIntosh	1456	33	2.2
	Sandy creek	1211	41	3.2
	Starrs mill	1497	19	1.2
	Total for Fayette	6089	111	2.7
White	White county	788	24	2.8
Wilkes	Wilkes county	582	17	2.8
Early	Early county	727	25	3.2
Bleckley	Bleckley county	640	22	3.3
Thomas	Thomas county	1429	50	3.3

Figure 1: Dropout rate of Dougherty and other ten counties

Available from www.doe.k12.ga.us; Internet; accessed 02 September 2001.



Sampling frame: All the students who drop out of high school in Dougherty County and the other ten lowest counties that have high schools in the ranking of a high school dropout rate in a 1999-2000 school year in Georgia; Lee, Jones, Crawford, Oconee, Fayette, White, Wilkes, Early, Bleckey, and Thomas.

Sampling design: Probability Sampling

Sample: All the students who drop out of high school in Dougherty County and the other ten lowest counties that have high schools in the ranking of a high school dropout rate in a 1999-2000 school year in Georgia.

Unit of Analysis: Those who dropped out of high school in Dougherty County and the other ten lowest counties that have high schools in the ranking of a high school dropout rate in a 1999-2000 school year in Georgia.

DATA ANALYSIS USING SPSS

A dropout rate is a dependent variable and poverty level, crime rate, and educational attainment as three independent variables.

Data has been tested to determine if there is a relationship between dependent and independent variables. The relationship has been measured using dropout rates, poverty level, crime rate, and educational attainment by SPSS.

Goodman and Kruskal's Gamma and Pearson correlation coefficient has been used to measure the strength of the relationship and the direction of the relationship by putting each independent variable against dependent variables in cross tabulation. The gamma is calculated based on the difference between the number of concordant

pairs (Q) and the number of discordant pairs (P) by using all distinct pairs of observations. You calculate the difference between the number of concordant and discordant pairs (P-Q) and divide this difference by the sum of the number of concordant and discordant pairs (P+Q). If the value of the gamma turns out to be 0, which means there is no relationship. If the value of the gamma turn out to be positive or falls into between 0 and 1, that means there is a concordant relationship. If the value of the gamma turns out to be negative or falls into between 0 and -1, that means there is a discordant relationship. Pearson correlation coefficient shows the strength of the linear association between two variables. Two variables are linearly related if in a scatterplot the points cluster around a straight line. Pearson correlation coefficient is calculated using the actual data values. If all of the points fall exactly on a line with a positive slope, the correlation coefficient is 1. If they fall exactly on a line with negative slope, the correlation coefficient is -1. The absolute value of the correlation coefficient tells you how tightly the points cluster around the line. Both of these coefficients range in value from -1 to +1. With these measurements, I tested how tight the relationship is and the direction of the relationship of two variables.

Dropout and Poverty Level

Table 2: Dropout and Poverty Level

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
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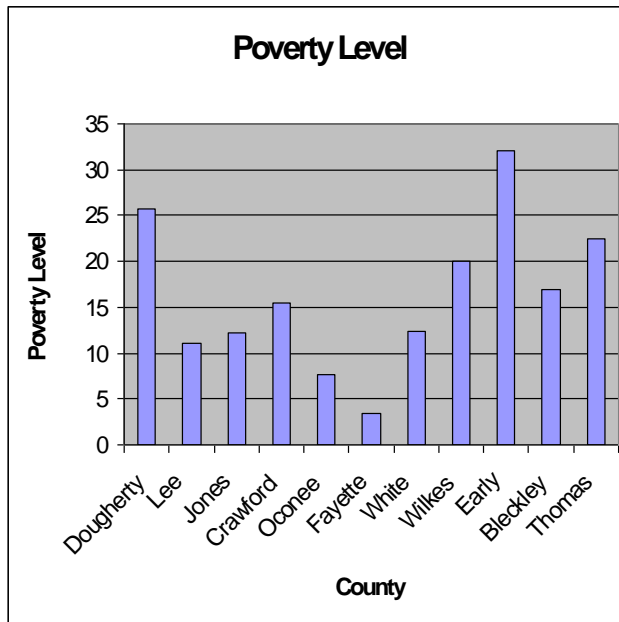
Ordinal by Ordinal	Gamma	.547	.131	4.465	.000
	Spearman Correlation	.735	.100	3.254	.010
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.481	.139	1.645	.134
N of Valid Cases		11			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c Based on normal approximation.

Figure 2: Poverty Level of Dougherty and other ten counties³⁴



³⁴Georgia Department of Community Affairs, *Data sources for 2000*, Available from www.dca.state.ga.us/commind/Datasources1.asp?state=1; Internet; accessed 24 September 2001.

Table 2 shows that the value of the Gamma of DROPOUT *POVERTY is 0.547 and the value of Pearson's R is 0.481. The value of Gamma indicates that there is relatively strong concordant relationship between dropout rate and crime rate. The value of Pearson's R indicates that there is a relationship between dropout and poverty level rate.

Dropout and Crime Rate

Table 3: Dropout and Crime Rate

Symmetric Measures

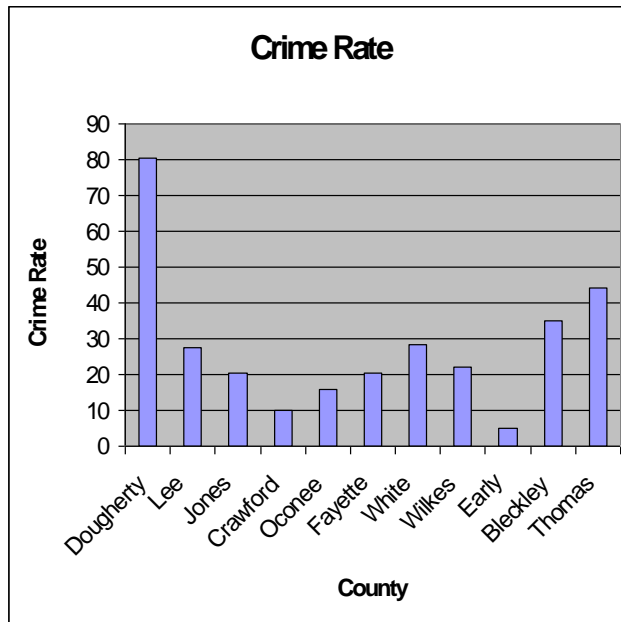
		Value	Asymp. Std. Error	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Gamma	.462	.281	1.678	.093
	Spearman Correlation	.558	.297	2.019	.074
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.820	.147	4.297	.002
N of Valid Cases		11			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c Based on normal approximation.

Figure 3: Crime Rate of Dougherty and other ten counties³⁵



³⁵Georgia Department of Community Affairs, *Data sources for 2000*, Available from www.dca.state.ga.us/commind/Datasources1.asp?state=1; Internet; accessed 24 September 2001.

Table 3 shows that the value of the Gamma of DROPOUT *CRIME is 0.462 and the value of Pearson's R is 0.820. The value of Gamma indicates that there is a relatively strong concordant relationship between dropout rate and crime rate. The value of Pearson's R indicates that there is a strong relationship between dropout and crime rate.

Dropout and Educational Attainment

Table 4: Dropout and Educational Attainment

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Gamma	-.170	.139	-1.219	.223

	Spearman Correlation	-.370	.213	-1.194	.263
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.045	.091	-.136	.895
N of Valid Cases		11			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c Based on normal approximation.

Figure 4: Educational Attainment of Dougherty and other ten counties³⁶

³⁶Georgia Department of Community Affairs, *Data sources for 2000*, Available from www.dca.state.ga.us/commind/Datasources1.asp?state=1; Internet; accessed 24 September 2001.

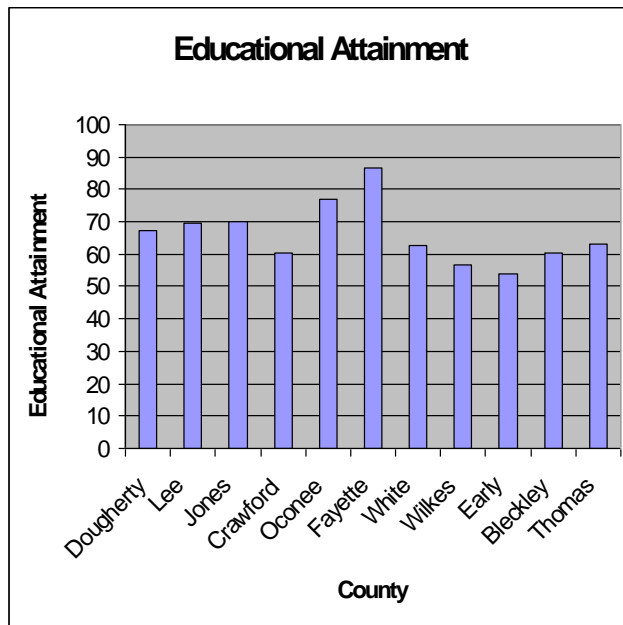


Table 4 shows that the value of the Gamma of DROPOUT*HIGHGRAD is -0.170 and the value of the Pearson's R is -0.045. The value of both Gamma and Pearson's R are too small, so that those are not particularly informative measures to believe that there is a relationship between the variables.

FINDINGS

The three dependent variables; crime rate, educational attainment of adults, and poverty level are related to the dropout rate. They have a concordant relationship with dropout rate. Namely, one goes up as the another goes up.

The measurements do not show that there is a tight relationship between dropout and educational attainment.

CONCLUSION

This research attempted to explore the causes of high school dropout in Dougherty County by comparing it with other ten counties that have the lowest high school dropout rates so as to contribute to the understanding of the problem, and enable school administrators and policy makers to formulate appropriate policies for addressing this matter.

This research indicates that crime rate and poverty level are the ones that could be affecting higher dropout rate in Dougherty County. In a society, school is one of the functioning segments of all the segments that make up the whole society. Due to the fact that each of these segments of society affects each other, it is important that such variables as crime rate, poverty, and educational attainment be

examined so as to address the problem of high school dropout which affects the other aspects of the society.

However, as the literature review shows, there are many other factors that could be causes for high school dropout and many of them could be factors at the same time. In this research, however, only a few of these were examined. More factors should be looked at in future research.

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