

0043 **THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL VARIABLES ON THE DEVELOPMENTAL TRAJECTORIES OF DELINQUENCY FOR ASIAN, AFRICAN AMERICAN, HISPANIC, AND WHITE YOUTH**

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The age-crime curve suggests that delinquency increases during preadolescence, peaks between mid to late adolescence and then decreases thereafter, but that context can moderate psychological and behavioral outcomes of youth. Using two nationally representative data sets, the Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) and the National Longitudinal Study of Youth (NLSY97), this study examined the effects of school context on the developmental trajectories of delinquency for Asian, African American, Hispanic and white youth in the US. Trajectories were modelled using Mplus 5.21 statistical software. In the Add Health data, greater student ethnic diversity resulted in higher initial delinquency estimates at age 13 for all groups and highest for Asians, but teacher diversity had no effect. Instead, greater proportion of female teachers decreased initial estimates for all groups except African American, whereas a larger school size increased the estimates except for Hispanic youth. In both data sets and for all ethnic groups, lower socioeconomic status and being US born increased the initial estimates of delinquency, but more positive perceptions of school and higher school achievement lowered the initial estimates. In addition, regardless of initial delinquency at age 13 years, all groups eventually converged to low values in young adulthood, at age 21 years. These results lend support to the age-crime curve theory that different racial/ethnic groups have similar developmental trajectories for delinquency. It also highlights the importance of school context in moderating the initial value of growth patterns for delinquency.