

8-2002

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**Student Perception of Parental Responses to Their Adolescent Behaviors: The
Characteristics of Those Who are Labeled Negatively and the Impact of the Labels**

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ABSTRACT

The following research uses labeling theory to determine what type of individual is most likely to be labeled negatively by their parents during adolescence. Labeling theory hypothesizes that if an individual is negatively labeled they are more likely to engage in secondary deviance than an individual who is not labeled negatively.

The assumptions of labeling theory will be identified. Types and levels of deviance will be identified. Prior research will also be examined to identify what types of characteristics have already been identified as to increase the likelihood of being labeled negatively. Next, the sample and methodology will be identified. The characteristics that are tested include gender, race, level of parental education, religion of the parents, and class of family.

Then the types of behaviors or activities that the respondents were involved in during junior high and high school will be summarized and then divided into three categories: conforming behaviors or activities, deviant behaviors or activities, and dating and sex. The respondent's perceived parental responses to their behaviors or activities during junior high and high school have been identified as parental disapproval as a prevention of primary deviance; parental disapproval as a prevention of secondary deviance; parental disapproval as a prevention of secondary deviance; parental disapproval did not prevent secondary deviance, which is further divided into disappointment and labels; and parental apparent approval or acceptance of deviant behavior.

Finally, each respondent's responses will be summarized and tested against the hypotheses. Then limitations of this research will be identified to conclude this research.

INTRODUCTION

Labeling theory hypothesizes that labeling an individual negatively may lead to secondary deviance by the negatively labeled individual. The focus of this research is to discover what type of person is likely to be labeled negatively by their parents. For this research, college students were interviewed to recall their perceived parental responses to their adolescent behavior. Overall this was an attempt to discover whether or not college students perceived their parents labeled them negatively during their adolescence and what the characteristics of those who perceived to be negatively labeled by their parents actually are. If it can be predicted who is most likely to be labeled negatively by their parents then it could be predicted who is likely to engage in secondary deviance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

First labeling theory will be explained, which provides the basis of this research. Labeling theory hypothesizes that if one is labeled delinquent, then further delinquency may result. Next deviance will be defined and the types of deviance will be identified because deviant behavior, real or perceived, can lead to negative labels being applied by parents. Then research by Matsueda, Koita and Triplett, and Zhang will be examined to identify what type of person is most likely to be labeled negatively by their parents.

Labeling Theory

The first assumption of labeling theory is that there are a variety of factors that cause an individual to participate in their first act of delinquency (Shoemaker 2000:197). The second assumption of labeling theory is that “the primary factor in the repetition of delinquency is the fact of having been formally labeled as a delinquent” (Shoemaker 2000:197). The third assumption is that “repeated acts of delinquency are influenced by

formal labels because such labels eventually alter a person's self-image to the point where the person begins to identify himself as a delinquent and act accordingly" (Shoemaker 2000:197). The fourth assumption of labeling theory is that there are other factors besides the deviant behavior that cause a delinquent label to be applied to an individual. Other factors leading to a formal delinquent label could be the person's "age, sex, race, and social class, as well as the organizational norms of official agencies and departments" (Shoemaker 2000:197).

A goal of labeling theory is to explain why someone engages in deviant behavior. But first, what exactly is deviant behavior? Deviant behavior is defined and "created by society" (Becker 1973:8). This means that what is defined as deviant varies over time and varies by culture. Most simply, deviance is "the failure to obey group rules" (Becker 1973:8). The deviant label is a result of others' response to an individual's behavior and is not necessarily an accurate description of someone (Becker 1973:9). The deviant label is not uniformly applied, meaning that some individuals, due to their age, race, gender, etc., are more likely than others to be given the deviant label (Becker 1973:12). The purpose of this research is to discover what type of individual is most likely to be labeled negatively.

Types of Deviance

There are two levels of deviance, primary deviance and secondary deviance. Primary deviance is the first act of delinquency that either is not noticed or "not recognized, as deviant by others" (Shoemaker 2000:198). Secondary deviance occurs as a result of the effects of the delinquent label. Subsequent deviance may occur because of the internalization of the deviant label (Shoemaker 2000:198). Secondary deviance is a

result of “the connection between” the delinquent act and the reaction to the delinquent act by others (Shoemaker 2000:199).

Becker (1973) has identified three types of deviance and defined conformity as the standard that deviance is judged by (p. 19). Conformity consists of one obeying society’s rules and is perceived by others as obeying the rules (p. 19). A pure deviant breaks the rules and is identified by society as breaking the rules (p. 20). A falsely accused deviant is someone who does not break the rules but has been perceived as breaking the rules by others (p. 20). A secret deviant is someone who does break the rules but is either unrecognized as deviant or not noticed by others as a deviant (p. 20).

Negatively Labeled Individual’s Characteristics

Labeling theory hypothesizes that negative labels are “more likely to apply to the powerless, the disadvantaged, and the poor” (Weis et al. 2001:441). According to Weis, et al. (2001), past research on labeling theory has found that parents who label their youths as deviant, are parents of youths that are already delinquent, a minority, or live in urban areas (p. 448).

Matsueda (1992) researched what type of individual is labeled negatively and why that type of individual is more likely than others to be labeled negatively (p. 1588). Matsueda (1992) hypothesized that parents are more likely to label their children delinquent, if their children actually are involved in delinquent activities. This does not mean that all parents who label their children delinquent actually have delinquent children, it means that if the child is actually delinquent they are more likely than nondelinquent children to be labeled as delinquent by their parents. Parents also may

base their label choice on their own real or perceived disadvantages or base their label on stereotypes (p. 1589).

Matsueda (1992) also hypothesized that older youths, youths who live in urban areas, and youths who are from a broken home are more likely to commit delinquent acts on average (p. 1597). He also found that a youth's involvement in prior delinquency increases their chances of being labeled as delinquent by their parents (p. 1597).

Matsueda concluded that the reason that older youths, youths who live in urban areas, and youths from broken homes are more likely to be labeled delinquent is because on average these types of individuals commit more delinquent acts (p. 1597, p. 1600).

Koita and Triplett (1998) researched the effect of race and gender based on Matsueda's findings (p. 1). Gender and race may influence how others apply labels based on role expectations of different genders and races (p. 2). The greater one deviates from their role expectations, the more intense the response to the deviation is from others, meaning the more likely an individual will be labeled negatively (p. 2).

Koita and Triplett (1998) hypothesized that based on past delinquency, parents would be more likely to label their daughters delinquent than their sons. They also hypothesized that in families with white children, parents would be more likely to label their children as deviant than in families with African American children because delinquent behavior is viewed as violating white children's role expectations (p. 2; Harris 1977:12).

Koita and Triplett's (1998) study used data from the National Youth Survey (p. 3). They examined how the sample varied and what kind of effect there was for "parental

appraisals on reflected appraisals, parental appraisals on delinquency, and reflected appraisals on delinquency” based on the groups’ varied characteristics (pp. 4-5).

Findings from this study support the idea that behavior that deviates from role-expectations will result in stronger reactions. White female adolescents were more likely to be labeled as deviant than males even though males are more likely to be involved in deviant behavior (Koita and Triplett 1998:7). Race and gender may be a factor in determining who is more likely to be labeled negatively by their parents but it does not have an impact on how an individual internalizes the negative label applied by their parents (Koita and Triplett 1998:7).

Zhang (1997) hypothesized and found that females are more likely to be labeled negatively than males by their parents (p. 5; p. 8). However, males were more likely than females to be subsequently delinquent after being labeled (p. 8). Zhang found that an individual’s gender, level of parental education, and parental income levels affect how the adolescent interprets or perceives the label applied to them (p. 7).

Females were more likely to be labeled delinquent than males after their involvement in delinquent behavior (Zhang 1997:8). Zhang (1997) also found one is more likely to be labeled as a deviant the younger the youth is, if they are a non-minority, and the higher parental education level (p. 8). Zhang’s findings do not support labeling theory’s assumption that social disadvantages increase the chance of being labeled delinquent. Also, the weaker the social bonds a youth has with significant others, the more likely the youth will perceive that their parents are labeling them as deviant (p. 8).

Labeling theory predicts that if one is labeled delinquent they are more likely to participate in secondary deviance. According to the previously mentioned studies, those

who are most likely to be labeled delinquent by their parents are already involved in delinquent acts. Other factors that increase one's likelihood of being labeled delinquent by their parents according to the previously mentioned studies are age, environment, home stability, gender, race, parental education levels, and parental income levels.

METHODOLOGY

The respondents in this study came from a convenience sample of college students. Specifically, the sample was recruited from among the sociology classes that were offered in the summer of 2002 at a midwestern university. My recruiting pool consisted of three sociology classes totaling between 100-150 undergraduate students. One of the instructors offered extra credit for students who participated in this research. Half of the sample came from this class.

Four of the respondents were male and eight were female. Their ages ranged from 19 to 25. The mean age was 21.5. The mode age was 20 and the median age was 21. The sample was to be interviewed and at the time of the interview each respondent chose his or her own code name, which is what will be used to identify each person in this paper.

Four of the respondents were African American. One respondent was Latina. Seven respondents were Caucasian. None of the respondents were raised in interracial families. This sample does not accurately represent the diversity of the Midwestern university where the sample was gathered. At the Midwestern university, there are 68.32 percent Caucasian students compared to 58.33 in the sample, 13.38 percent African American compared to 33.33 percent in the sample, and 2.99 percent Latino compared to 8.33 percent Latina in the sample ("Enrollment by Ethnicity"). There were seven parents

that were identified as African American, 14 parents that were identified as Caucasian, and one parent that was identified as Latina by the respondents.

I asked the students to identify the religious background of their parents. There were seven parents that were identified as Catholic. Eleven parents were identified as Protestant, which included those parents identified as being Christian, Methodist, Episcopalian, and Baptist. Four parents were identified as having no religious affiliation, not applicable, or non-practicing for their religious affiliation.

The twelve respondents identified 22 people who raised them. Six respondents were raised by both their mom and dad. Three respondents were raised by either their mom or their dad. Two respondents were raised by at least one parent and a stepparent and one respondent was raised by her mom and grandma.

There were five parental education level categories. Two parents were identified as having an eighth grade education. Eight parents were identified as having a high school degree, which includes a high school degree or a GED. Two parents were identified as having an education beyond high school but not a bachelor's degree, making up the category of parental education level of beyond high school. Nine parents were identified as having a college degree, which is having a bachelor's degree. One parent was identified as having a PhD.

None of the respondents were raised in upper class families. Nine respondents were raised in middle class families and three were raised in lower class families.

I interviewed the respondents about their adolescence during grades six through 12. They were asked about the types of behaviors or activities they participated in during that time period. They were also asked about the verbal responses they were given by

their parents regarding their participation in certain behaviors or activities and how important their parents' approval of them was to them. The goal was to discover whether or not these particular college students perceived to be labeled negatively by their parents during their adolescence and what the characteristics of those that perceived to be labeled negatively by their parents are.

The first hypothesis is that female college students are more likely to perceive that they were labeled negatively by their parents as adolescents than male college students. Koita and Triplett and Zhang's research found that gender plays a role in determining whether or not one is more likely to be labeled negatively or not.

The second hypothesis is that minority college students are more likely to perceive that they were labeled negatively by their parents as adolescents than nonminority college students. Koita and Triplett's research found that minority adolescents are more likely to be labeled negatively by their parents and Zhang's research found that nonminority adolescents are more likely to be labeled negatively by their parents.

The third hypothesis is that the higher level of parental education, the less likely college students will perceive that they were negatively labeled by their parents as adolescents. Zhang's research found that the higher the level of parental education the more likely one is to be labeled negatively.

The fourth hypothesis is that if college students identify that their parents were religious during the college student's adolescence then they were more likely to perceive being labeled negatively by their parents during their adolescence. None of the prior

research examined in this paper researched what role parental education has in the labeling process.

The fifth hypothesis is that if a college student came from a lower class home, then they were more likely to perceive being labeled negatively during their adolescence by their parents. Zhang found that parental income has an effect on whether or not one is labeled negatively by their parents.

RESULTS

First, the types of behaviors and activities reported by the respondents will be identified. Then, four types of perceived parental responses to their adolescent's behavior or activities will be identified. Next, I will provide a summary of each respondent's characteristics, the types of behaviors or activities they were involved in during junior high or high school, whether their parents approved or disapproved of their behaviors or activities, and whether parental disapproval prevented or led to secondary deviance.

Behaviors or Activities

Behaviors or activities have been divided into three categories. These categories are: conforming behavior or activities, deviant behavior or activities, and dating and sex. Deviant behaviors or activities are behaviors or activities that are illegal. Dating and sex are in a third category than conforming behaviors or activities and deviant behavior or activities because dating and sex are not always seen as conforming activities by parents but they are not illegal behaviors or activities. Some of the respondents stated that their parents would not approve of their participation in dating or sex; therefore, it is in its own category.

Conforming behaviors or activities. Conforming behaviors or activities are not behaviors or activities that are illegal; they also were not mentioned by the respondents as behaviors or activities that their parents did not approve of. These include extracurricular activities and free time activities or hobbies. Extracurricular activities are school related activities. Extracurricular activities named by the respondents include, soccer, track and field, cheerleading, football, wrestling, basketball, baseball, school band, drama, student council, yearbook, Beta Club, Chicago Children's Choir, Field House (an after school program), and ROTC. All but one of the respondents were involved in some sort of extracurricular activity during junior high and/or high school. Eight respondents were involved in extracurricular activities throughout both junior high and high school. One respondent was involved in one extracurricular activity during junior high only. Two respondents were only involved in extracurricular activities during high school.

Only two of the respondents were employed during high school and none were employed during junior high. All but two mentioned other free time activities or hobbies they participated in during junior high and high school. Two mentioned attending Church as something they participated in, with one of the respondents attending Church four times per week. Three did not mention hanging out with friends as one of their activities they participated in, whereas the other respondents did. Going to the movies, theater, or renting movies was a hobby of all but three respondents.

Deviant behaviors or activities. Deviant behaviors or activities included alcohol use, cigarette use, and marijuana use because they are illegal. Alcohol and cigarette use are illegal for most high school students so that is why it is in this category. Marijuana use is always illegal. Attending parties is also included in this category because some of

the respondents said that their parents did not know they attended parties or their parents did not approve of them attending parties. Even though attending parties is not illegal, this is where most respondents engaged in illegal behaviors of alcohol use or were around other illegal behaviors at these parties.

All but two respondents used alcohol in junior high and or high school. Two said that their alcohol use was rare, which they meant as consuming alcohol only once or twice a year. Two others said that they did not have their first alcoholic drink until the 12th grade. Three of the respondents began drinking alcohol during high school and three did not identify when they began consuming alcohol. One respondent said that she was around alcohol but did not consume it.

None of the subjects said that they used cigarettes during junior high and/or high school. Two respondents disclosed that they used marijuana. One began respondent using marijuana during high school and the other respondent who used marijuana did not identify when he began using marijuana.

Half of the respondents said that they attended parties during junior high and or high school. Two did not begin attending parties until 12th grade. One said he did attend parties but it was rare, about one or two times a year.

Dating and sex. Six of the respondents said that they dated. Two said that they had sex during high school. One respondent became pregnant in 12th grade.

Perceived Parental Responses

Parental disapproval as a prevention of primary deviance. Parents' disapproval as a prevention of primary deviance means that the respondent did not participate in any deviant acts because they did not want their parents' disapproval of either their self or

their behaviors or activities. Parents' disapproval as a method of preventing primary deviance was identified for only one respondent, named Dog. Dog did not participate in primary deviance because she did not want her parents' disapproval. She answered that of the behaviors and activities she participated in, none were such that if her parents had known, they would have disapproved.

Dog is a 21-year-old, Caucasian, female. Her mom and dad raised her in a middle class home. Her parents were both Catholic and both had a college degree

Dog was involved in extracurricular activities and had hobbies during both junior high and high school. She said that it was important to have her parents' approval of both her and the activities or behaviors she participated in. "I joined clubs for them [her parents]," Dog answered.

Parental disapproval as a prevention of secondary deviance. Parents' disapproval as a prevention of secondary deviance means that the respondent did participate in primary deviance and was caught by at least one parent. The reaction by the parent(s) was disapproval; parental disapproval was the factor what the respondent identified as the reason that they did not participate in the deviant behavior or activity a second time. Only one of the respondents fit into this category. Parental disappointment was the method identified by the respondent that was used by the respondent's parent(s) to prevent secondary deviance.

Hank, the only respondent that fit into this category, is a 22-year-old, Caucasian male. His mom and step dad raised him in a middle class home. His parents did not practice any religion and both had college degrees.

During junior high, Hank would hang out with friends and participated in outdoor activities most of the time. In high school he began participating in school athletics, football and wrestling. High school sports ended for Hank during his junior year. According to Hank, “my junior year, I had a knee injury, so I couldn’t do sports anymore, so I kind of became a bum.” In 12th grade he began to skip school. He went to parties, used alcohol, and used marijuana throughout high school.

Hank’s mom caught him using marijuana. Hank said, “I was sitting at the fridge and she came up out of nowhere and said, ‘so you’re pretty high right now.’ I felt real bad, and that was actually the last time I smoked pot. She didn’t get hysterical. I’d never seen her like that. She said ‘it’s your life.’ But this look on her face, she didn’t need to say nothing. I’d never seen her that disappointed.”

Hank’s parents also caught him using alcohol, but he still continued using alcohol after being caught because there was no punishment. He says, “they [his parents] didn’t ground me. They figured that if they yelled at me, I’d probably do it more. They just kind of messed with me. Wake me up and be real loud, vacuuming my room at 8:00 in the morning.” Hank’s parents also did not approve of him skipping school and wished that he was more focused on school. He said that his parents’ approval of him and his behavior and activities was important to him.

Hank was the only respondent that was caught by his parents using marijuana. He was also the only respondent where parental disappointment was enough to stop his deviant behavior of marijuana use.

Parental disapproval did not prevent secondary deviance. For this category, there was parental disapproval but that did not prevent the respondent from participating

in secondary deviance. There are two categories of parental disapproval for this category: disappointment and labels. Three respondents are in the disappointment category and three respondents are in the category that was labeled.

Parental disappointment. Parental disappointment was specifically identified by the respondents as a way that their parents responded to their activity or behavior.

Parental disappointment did not prevent secondary deviance.

Miranda is a 20-year-old, Caucasian, female. Her mom and dad raised her in a middle class home. One of her parents was Protestant and her other parent did not practice religion. One parent had a college degree and her other parent's education level was beyond high school.

Miranda was involved in extracurricular activities and had hobbies during both junior high and high school. She did not use alcohol or attend parties until the 12th grade. She said that she was around cigarette use and marijuana use but did not participate. After Miranda began going to parties, she says, "I would let it slip and test them [her parents] out to see how they would react and they said to be safe, be aware and if you are doing stuff with your friends that is real deviant I don't want to know about it."

Miranda said, "they [her parents] would guilt trip me every once in awhile, which seemed to work wonders. Mostly I don't think they knew what to say. They would give me real worried looks, kind of you know, disapproving looks, like you know you shouldn't be doing this and questioning, sizing me up, seeing if I really knew what I was doing, whether or not they should restrict what I was doing." Her parents' approval of her was more important to her than their approval of her behaviors or activities.

Josh is a 20-year-old, Caucasian, male. Josh's mom and dad raised him in a middle class home. One of his parents was Catholic and his other parent was Protestant. Both of his parents had a high school degree.

Josh did not participate in many extracurricular activities during junior high but in high school he was involved in at least one extracurricular activity each year. He had hobbies throughout both junior high and high school. He was employed during high school. Josh said that he went to three or four parties during high school and drank alcohol at each party. These were the only times he drank alcohol.

Josh was caught using alcohol by his parents once. He said, "they found out one time about a party I went to and drank at. My mom was disappointed but then she also realized that she couldn't necessarily stop it and she was happy that I didn't drink and drive." He said that his parents' approval of him and his behaviors or activities was very important, but that it is more important now than when he was in junior high and high school.

Shawnda is a 25-year-old, African American, female. Shawnda's mom and grandmother raised her. She was involved in extracurricular activities and had hobbies during both junior high and high school. Most of her extracurricular activities and hobbies revolved around the Field House, an after school program, that she participated in throughout junior high and high school. She used alcohol rarely, dated, and had sex.

Shawnda was caught having sex. Her parents disapproved because she says "[they] felt I shouldn't have sex until I graduate, it wasn't like wait until you're married or anything like that." She said, "when they actually found out I was having sex, they were disappointed but especially my grandmother." Shawnda also said that, "my mom's

approval was ok but my grandmother's approval was very important. I wanted my grandmother's approval. I had to have her approval for everything."

Labels. I asked the respondents what types of verbal responses their parents had towards behaviors or activities that were considered unacceptable by their parents. This category is different from disappointment because specific words used by the respondent's parents were identified by the respondents. The respondents in this category identified specific words that their parents used towards them, regarding their behavior or activities. These were all negative responses. All of the respondents that were labeled did participate in secondary deviance.

Sabrina is a 19-year-old, Latina, female. Her mom raised her in a middle class home. Her mom is Catholic and has a PhD.

Sabrina had hobbies outside of school but did not participate in any extracurricular activities. She attended Church and spent time with her family every Sunday. She went to parties and used alcohol.

Sabrina said her mom would say, "strong things like you're bad and you're stupid" when she caught Sabrina using alcohol. However, this did not prevent Sabrina from consuming alcohol. She says that her mom's approval is somewhat important of her and her activities and behaviors. She said, "I just feel bad" if she does something that she knows her mom would not approve of but that does not stop her from participating in the behavior or activity.

Natasha is a 22-year-old, Caucasian, female. She was raised in a lower class home by her dad who did not practice religion and who had education beyond high school.

Natasha was involved in two extracurricular activities in high school and had hobbies outside of school. She also used alcohol and marijuana.

She was caught consuming alcohol by her dad but not using marijuana. She said that her dad was mad and said that her drinking was “unacceptable, idiotic, and dangerous.” Natasha said that her dad’s approval of her was “pretty important because after I got caught the first time [using alcohol], it took a long time for me to go out and do it again and then I got caught again and that was the last time I did it.”

Marie is a 23-year-old, African American, female. Marie’s mom and dad raised her in a middle class home. Both of her parents were Protestant and had 8th grade educations. Marie was involved in extracurricular activities in both junior high and high school. She attended Church four times a week. She consumed alcohol, dated, had sex, and became pregnant her senior year of high school. She hid her dating from her parents when she was 14 and 15 but her parents allowed her to date at age 16. She says that her parents would not have approved of her hiding her dating, using alcohol, or having sex because their religion forbids alcohol and premarital sex. Her parents did not discover her premarital sex until she became pregnant in 12th grade. When she became pregnant her dad stopped speaking to her for two years. Prior to the pregnancy they had been close. Her mom called her a “she dog in heat,” when she became pregnant

Marie said that her parents’ approval was important. She said “it was important because my dad worked really hard for us so I didn’t want to disappoint him. It was very important that they approved.”

Parental apparent approval or acceptance of deviant behavior. The respondents who fit in this category did participate in deviant behavior. Their parents were aware that

they were participating in deviant behavior. However, their parents did not punish in any way, including punishment through disapproval, disappointment, or labels. The parents of these respondents apparently either approved of their adolescent's behavior or activities or accepted their involvement.

Hank, who was the only respondent that fit in the category of parent's disapproval as a prevention of secondary deviance, because his parents did not punish or disapprove of his alcohol use. His parents only disapproved of his marijuana use.

Joe is a 21-year-old, Caucasian, male. Joe was raised in a middle class home by his mom and dad. His parents were Catholic and both had high school degrees.

Joe was involved in extracurricular activities while in high school and had hobbies outside of school. Joe says that he did use alcohol and he dated. He did not use alcohol or go to parties until 12th grade because he played school sports. He says, "I didn't really start partying hard until senior year so they [his parents] were a little less strict by then." He said that his parents' approval of him and his behavior and activities was pretty important and that it was also important to have the approval from other family members.

Joey is a 25-year-old, African American, male. Joey's mom and dad raised him in a lower class home. His parents were Protestant. One of his parents had a college education and his other parent had a high school degree.

Joey was involved in extracurricular activities in both junior high and high school. He also was employed all through high school. He went to parties, used alcohol, and dated.

Joey said that his parents' approval of him and his behaviors or activities was pretty important. He said, "its important if I have done something wrong, they make sure to say something."

Rebecca is a 20-year-old, Caucasian, female. Rebecca's mom, dad, and step mom raised her in a middle class home. Two of her parents were Protestant and one parent was Catholic. All of her parents were college educated.

Rebecca was involved in extracurricular activities in junior high and high school and had hobbies outside of school. Rebecca consumed alcohol. Rebecca said, "I guess my mom discovered [alcohol use], my dad ignores the fact if he knows about it at all. I would assume that he does but he ignores it, he tells me the drawbacks of it. She [her mom] told me the consequences and told me if I get in trouble it is going to be all on me and she wasn't going to have any involvement in it and it was my choice I was making because I knew the consequences of it and I was being responsible, like not drinking and driving. She knew I was being as responsible as you can with drinking." Rebecca said that her parents' approval of her and her activities or behaviors was very important, "more so than may be other people my age."

Gigi is a 20-year-old, African American, female. She was raised in a middle class home by her mom who was Protestant and had a high school education.

Gigi was involved in extracurricular activities in junior high. She had hobbies outside of school during both junior high and high school. She went to parties and dated.

She says that her mom would not have approved of some of the parties she went to or some of her friends. Her mom talked to her when she was caught drinking. She did not punish her, but did not completely approve because she felt that Gigi had a lot going

for her and did not want her to lose that. Gigi said that her mom's approval of her was very important. Her mom's approval of her behaviors and activities was not as important as her approval of Gigi, "but not enough to stop me from doing something. The approval didn't stop me but the consequences did," Gigi said.

DISCUSSION

Of those respondents who perceive that they were labeled negatively by their parents during their adolescence, their behaviors that their parents disapproved of were alcohol use and pregnancy. Two respondents out of ten were labeled negatively for using alcohol. One of these respondents was the only lower class, Caucasian, female in the sample. The only respondent who became pregnant was labeled negatively by her parents. The only Latina in the sample was also the only one in the sample who had a parent with a PhD. was also labeled negatively. Also, the parents with the lowest education were perceived to label their daughter negatively due to her pregnancy.

Were my hypotheses correct? This section will summarize the characteristics of the parents that were perceived to use labels and those that were not perceived to use labels towards their adolescents by their now college age children.

The first hypothesis was that female adolescents were more likely to be labeled negatively by their parents than male adolescents. This hypothesis was supported. All three of the college students that perceived that their parents labeled them negatively during their adolescents were female. Of those not labeled, five were female and four were male. All four males in my sample did not perceive any negative labels being used towards them by their parents during their adolescents. The research of Koita and

Triplett and Zhang support this finding of females being more likely to be labeled negatively than males.

The second hypothesis was that minority adolescents were more likely to be labeled negatively by their parents than nonminorities. Those in my sample that perceived negative labels by their parents during their adolescence represented each racial/ethnic group in my sample: one was Caucasian, one was African American, and one was Latina. Of those not labeled, six were Caucasian and three were African American. Two of the three labeled were minorities. Weis, et al. found that minorities were more likely to be labeled negatively by their parents. Two of the three labeled in this research were minorities but this finding was not significantly linked to whether one was labeled negatively or not in this particular research.

The third hypothesis was that the higher level of parental education, the less likely parents would label their adolescents negatively. Of the parents who were not perceived as labeling their adolescents negatively, nine had a high school degree, eight had a college degree, and one had education beyond high school. Of the parents who were perceived as labeling their adolescents negatively, two had an 8th grade education, one had education beyond high school and one had a PhD. This shows that the lower parental education, the more likely the parent is to be perceived as labeling their adolescent negatively. However, it also shows that the higher the parental education, the more likely the parent is to be perceived as labeling their adolescent negatively. But, the parent with the PhD., had an adolescent whom is both female and Latina. As a minority and a female she is more likely to be labeled negatively by her parents according to the research. Does the fact she is a female or a minority counteract her parent's educational level? None of

the parents who were perceived to label negatively were parents with either just a college degree or just a high school degree.

Zhang found that the higher level of parental education, the more likely one is to be labeled. This was somewhat supported by this research. Of those that perceived being labeled, the parental levels of education were on both ends of the spectrum. Both the parents with the lowest level of education and the highest level of education were perceived to label their child negatively.

The fourth hypothesis was that if college students identify that their parents were religious during the college student's adolescence then they were more likely to be labeled negatively during their adolescence. Those who were labeled negatively identified four people as a whole, which raised them. Two of these parents were Protestant, one was Catholic, and one had no religion. Three out of the four parents were identified by their college students as having religion when the college student was an adolescent. Of the parents who were not perceived to label negatively, nine were identified as Protestant and six were identified as Catholic. Of the parents who were perceived to label negatively, two were Protestant and one was Catholic. Those parents identified as having religion were less likely to label their adolescent negatively, disproving my hypothesis.

The fifth hypothesis was that if a college student came from a lower class home, then they were more likely to be labeled negatively during their adolescence by their parents. Of those not labeled, seven were middle class and two were lower class. Of those labeled, two were middle class and one was lower class. There were more lower

class families in the group who were perceived to label negatively compared to the families who were not perceived to label negatively.

The only variable that was significantly linked to whether or not one would be perceived to be labeled negatively by their parents was gender. All other variables were not significantly related to whether or not one perceived they were negatively labeled by their parents.

CONCLUSION

Limitations

The sample used was a small, convenience sample of 12 volunteers, not a random sample. With such a small sample it is nearly impossible to generalize the findings of this research. The finding regarding gender is the only finding that is significant because the sample was so small.

Future Research

Future research should include a larger, random sample. One suggestion is to interview both the child and their parents to see if the child's perception of parental reactions is accurate to how their parents perceived their actual reactions to their adolescent's behavior or activities. The sample could also include adolescents instead of college students. College students were being asked to recall their adolescence, whereas adolescents are currently adolescents and their behaviors and activities are fresher in their memory. One way to make the sample a random sample instead of a convenience sample could be to first randomly select the university at which the sample will be obtained. Randomly selecting classes from throughout the entire university instead of just one particular major to obtain respondents could make the sample generalizable.

Conclusion

Of the six respondents who did engage in secondary deviance, half identified parental disappointment as their reason and the other half identified labels. One respondent did not engage in any deviant behaviors. One respondent was deterred from engaging in secondary deviance because of parental disappointment for marijuana use but had apparent approval or acceptance for alcohol use and continued to participate in this behavior. Four respondents engaged in secondary deviance and had apparent parental approval or acceptance of their behavior.

Using labeling theory, this research found that females were more likely than males to be labeled negatively by their parents during adolescence. Of those who were labeled negatively by their parents, two out of three were minorities but was not significant. There was no noticeable difference with regards to class or religion as to those who perceived they were labeled negatively by their parents. Parental educational levels were on a curve for those who perceived to be labeled negatively. In conclusion, none of the findings can be generalized because the sample was too small but the gender variable did support prior research because all respondents who perceived they were labeled negatively by their parents during their adolescence were females.

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APPENDIX A

Summary of Respondents' Characteristics

	Not Labeled 9 Respondents	Labeled 3 Respondents
Gender of Child		
<i>Female</i>	5	3
<i>Male</i>	4	
Race of Family		
<i>Caucasian</i>	6	1
<i>African American</i>	3	1
<i>Latina</i>		1
Class of Family		
<i>Middle</i>	7	2
<i>Lower</i>	2	1
	Not Labeled 18 Respondents	Labeled 4 Respondents
Religion of Parents		
<i>Protestant</i>	9	2
<i>Catholic</i>	6	1
<i>None</i>	3	1
Educational Level of Parents		
<i>8th grade</i>		2
<i>High School</i>	9	
<i>Beyond High School</i>	1	1
<i>College Degree</i>	8	
<i>PhD.</i>		1

APPENDIX B

Respondent Information Sheet

I. Who are you?

1. Gender _____
2. Age _____
3. Race or Ethnicity _____
4. Class (upper, middle, lower) _____
5. Religion _____

II. Who raised you during junior high and high school (grades 6-12)? Example:
mom, dad, step mom, step dad, grandparents, etc. _____

III. Who are your guardians or parents?

1. Race or Ethnicity _____
2. Class (upper, middle, lower) _____
3. Highest level of education completed _____

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide

1. What type of behaviors or activities did you participate in while in junior high and high school (grades 6-12)? Basically, what did you do in your free time? What did your typical weekend consist of?
2. Were any of these behaviors or activities that you participated in, such that if your parents had known they would not have approved?
3. Why do you think your parents would not have approved?
4. How did your parents respond to you verbally when they discovered your involvement in this behavior or activity? (What types of words or language did they use towards you?)
5. How did this verbal response differ from how they had responded to you before they found out about your involvement in this behavior or activity?
6. How had your parents used these same responses before you actually became involved in this behavior or activity?
7. How did you justify your involvement in a behavior or activity after your parents had verbally responded to you as though you were already involved in that particular behavior or activity?
8. How important was your parents' approval of you? (Very, somewhat, not at all)
9. How important was your parents' approval of your behavior or activities? (Very, somewhat, not at all)
10. Were there any inconsistencies on how your parents verbally responded to your behavior or activities compared to your sibling(s)?

11. In what ways were there inconsistencies?