YOUTH VIOLENCE AND VICTIMIZATION: EXPLORING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

by

Aimee Smith

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

In the
School of Criminology

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Spring 2010

APPROVAL

Name: **Aimee Smith**

Degree: **Master of Arts**

Title of Thesis: **Youth Violence and Victimization: Exploring the Cycle of Violence**

Examining Committee:

Chair: **Dr. Brian Burtch**

_____

Dr. Raymond Corrado
Senior Supervisor

_____

Dr. William Glackman
Supervisor

_____

Dr. Irwin Cohen
External Examiner

Date Defended/Approved: 7 April, 2010

Declaration of
Partial Copyright Licence

SFU SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
THINKING OF THE WORLD

STATEMENT OF ETHICS APPROVAL

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

(a) Human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics,

or

(b) Advance approval of the animal care protocol from the University Animal Care Committee of Simon Fraser University;

or has conducted the research

(c) as a co-investigator, collaborator or research assistant in a research project approved in advance,

or

(d) as a member of a course approved in advance for minimal risk human research, by the Office of Research Ethics.

A copy of the approval letter has been filed at the Theses Office of the University Library at the time of submission of this thesis or project.

The original application for approval and letter of approval are filed with the relevant offices. Inquiries may be directed to those authorities.

Simon Fraser University Library
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, BC, Canada

Last update: Spring 2010

ABSTRACT

During the last 20 years, there has been considerable debate about the relationship between early childhood maltreatment and later antisocial behaviour in adolescence. This study focuses on incarcerated serious and violent youth in B.C., Canada. Based primarily on the literature from life-course theories and the cycle of violence concept, several hypotheses are examined asserting that different types of childhood maltreatment are associated with aggressive, defiant, or compliant behaviours in adolescents. Bi-variate correlations, principle component analysis, and sequential multiple regressions are used to examine the hypothesised relationships. While the majority of previous research indicated that childhood maltreatment was related to increased levels of aggression and defiance, this study also found a positive relationship with compliance. From a policy perspective, an assessment of these hypotheses can assist in understanding the needs of incarcerated young offenders who experience victimization by reducing their vulnerability to future re-victimization.

Keywords: youth justice; child abuse; childhood maltreatment; adolescent behaviours; delinquency; aggression; defiance; compliance; cycle of violence; life-course theory; victimization; internalized behaviour; externalized behaviour.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to send my heartfelt thanks to all of those who helped me successfully complete this thesis. A special thank you goes to Dr. Corrado and Dr. Glackman for remaining patient and always having an open door when I needed guidance. I was able to accomplish many things while writing this thesis and that would not have been possible without you both. Also, thank you Dr. Cohen for your valuable feedback and for your careful attention to my thesis. I would also like to thank my fellow graduate students in the School of Criminology who offered an endless amount of advice and support, and were always willing to help and listen when needed. I send thanks to my family and friends for supporting me and for their unconditional love, even during the most stressful times. Finally, thank you to the SFU School of Criminology for providing me with this opportunity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

1: INTRODUCTION

Research on young offenders is often focused on understanding the individual's behaviour prior to entering the justice system, and far less on their behaviour within custodial institutions. While it is important to continue research on young offenders, this study focuses on incarcerated serious and violent youth who have experienced childhood maltreatment. The hypothesis that will be examined involves the assertion that different types of childhood maltreatment are associated with different types of adolescent behavior. A related hypothesis is that different forms of childhood maltreatment will be associated with aggressive, defiant, or compliant behaviours in youth custody. From a policy perspective, an assessment of these hypotheses can assist in understanding the needs of incarcerated young offenders who experience victimization, including reducing their vulnerability to victimization, aggression, and the cycle of violence.

Regarding the key independent variable in the above hypotheses --early childhood maltreatment--, previous research indicated that childhood maltreatment was related to increased levels of aggression in later life stages. This research will be reviewed in the following section.

2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theory

During the last 20 years, there has been an enormous amount of theorizing and debate about the relationship between early childhood maltreatment and later antisocial behaviour in adolescence. Several theories, usually life-course based, assert that the earlier the onset of antisocial behaviour, the longer the youth will continue a criminal lifestyle (Moffitt, Caspi, Harrington, and Milne, 2002). Other life-course theories emphasize an interactional approach as opposed to age of onset; the focus, is on the propensity of deviant and criminal behaviour at any of the developmental stages, including adulthood (Sampson and Laub, 1992). Despite these theoretical differences, all these theories can inform the understanding of the potential consequences of early childhood maltreatment and criminal behaviour generally, and different forms of behaviour in youth custody environments.

Another theoretical perspective relating to violent trajectories is based on the key concept of the “cycle of violence” i.e., violence leads to victimization, which, in turn, causes violence and the continuous repetition of this sequence. Similar to life-course theories, the cycle of violence perspective emphasizes early childhood experiences and their impact later on adolescent criminality. In order to understand how these two theoretical perspectives explain the relationship between early childhood victimization experiences and later adolescent criminal

behaviours and reactions to custodial behaviours, it is important to review these perspectives in much greater depth.

2.1.1 Life-Course Theory(s)

Although the main purpose of most life-course theories are the same, *to examine the effect of early childhood experiences and antisocial behaviour, and its impact on adult offending*, there are several different approaches to explaining delinquent behaviour over the life-course. The predominant theory currently is the typology-based view of Moffitt et al.. (2002) which focuses on the age of onset delinquency/criminal trajectories; life-course persistent (LCP) and adolescent-limited (AL). According to Moffitt et al. (2002), LCP individuals were those "whose antisocial behaviour begins in childhood and continues worsening thereafter" (p.179), whereas AL offender's "antisocial behaviour begins in adolescents and desists in young adulthood" (p.179). Given that the hypotheses in this thesis involves serious and violent youth, both LCP and AL offender types are important, especially the former. While youth under 12 in Canada cannot be charged with criminal offences or status offences as they once were under the Juvenile Delinquents Law (1908), most life-course theories hypothesized the early onset of such behaviours as highly predictive of serious and violent offending, more frequent incarceration, and more aggression in custody (Moffitt et al, 2002). In effect, LCP offenders are of particular theoretical and policy concern.

More specifically, Moffitt et al. (2002) hypothesized that early childhood antisocial behaviour, such as difficult temperament, hyperactive behaviour, or

other cognitive deficits, would increase the chances of serious antisocial behaviour later in adult life. These subsequent adult behaviours include victimization of partners and children, violent behavioural tendencies, antisocial personality, and maladjustment in the work-life (Moffitt et al., 2002). Additionally, LCP offenders are characterized by high-risk social environments, including poor parenting, poverty, and poor family bonds. However, Caspi et al. (2002) further asserted that the key to explaining LCP trajectory was the combination of early major childhood trauma and a genetic variation associated with the production of the enzyme, **Monoamine oxidase A (** MAOA). This enzyme affects the production of serotonin, which assists in mediating aggressive and violent impulses. Moffitt et al. (2002) explained that the interaction of these two factors were related to the frontal lobe of the cortex of the brain which causes deficits in executive brain functions, most importantly the ability to plan and the to control impulsive and, often, anti-social behaviours. In other words, the theoretical explanation of LCP offenders is complex since it involves a highly controversial genetic factor interacting with a range of possible major childhood traumas. Part of the controversy is that several studies have not been able to replicate this relationship, while several other studies have (Moffitt et al., 2002).

In contrast to LCP offenders, Moffitt et al. (2002) asserted that AL antisocial behaviour was initiated approximately with puberty or adolescence and ended in young adulthood. Moffit et al. (2002) acknowledged that several trajectory studies have indentified two additional types; those who initiate anti-social/criminal behaviours in adolescence and continue into adulthood and those

who initiate in adulthood. The explanation of AL offenders is based on the strain caused by the concept of the “maturity gap” (Moffitt et al., 2002). This concept is defined by the differences in physical development /maturity and emotional maturity where the adolescence seeks to engage in adult behaviour, yet is not allowed to because of legal age restrictions prohibiting desired behaviours, such as consuming alcohol, no time curfews, driving, and certain consensual sexual acts. The frustration or strain caused by these prohibitions cause AL young offenders to often engage in illegal behaviours with older adolescents and young adults. As the youth enters late adolescence, they are given more responsibilities and more adult privileges, which reduces the strain or maturity gap and, consequently deviant/criminal involvement. Moffitt et al. (2002) further proposed that the AL offenders were less likely to continue a delinquent trajectory when there are strong pre-delinquent family bonds and socialization. Yet, delays in desistance occur depending on the severity of the criminality or “snares” that effect these youth. Still, Moffitt et al. (2002) maintained that an extremely high proportion of AL offenders desisted from crime and turned to more conventional lifestyles once they aged into adult roles.

Regarding the types of crime, who commits them, and why, Moffitt et al. (2002) found “the LCP path is differentially associated in males with weak bonds to the family, early school leaving, and psychopathic personality traits of alienation, impulsivity, and callousness and with conviction for violent crimes” (p.181). In contrast, “the AL path is differentially associated with delinquent peers, a tendency to endorse unconventional values and personality traits called

social potency, and with nonviolent delinquent offenses" (p.181). However, both the LCP and AL young offenders offend far more than the general population, and the earlier onset of delinquent behaviour, the higher the frequency of violent offenses compared to their adolescent counterparts.

Moffitt et al. (2002) also examined the mental status of their LCP and AL cohort samples from Dunedin, New Zealand; both the LCP and AL groups had more mental health issues than their control sample, while LCP male offenders had more mental health issues than their AL counterparts. Again, this information includes measures of adolescents, but is primarily focused on the outcome behaviour in adulthood. Regardless, it could be hypothesized that issues, such as mental health, stability, aggression, and behavioural problems found in adulthood, were also present during adolescents. In addition, male LCP offenders had more violent convictions than the male AL. Also, males with an early onset of violence records had more serious crime records than those with a later age of onset. Finally, Moffitt et al. (2002) found that, at the age of 26, the LCP group were the most violent group and the most likely to recidivate. In other words, Moffitt et al. (2002) asserted, "the LCP group comprised males with stable pervasive, and extreme antisocial behaviour in childhood plus extreme delinquent involvement in adolescents" (p.197).

Unfortunately, because of the nature of this current study, it is difficult to apply information regarding age of onset of delinquent behaviour and its impact on behaviour in adolescence; however, the general idea of this life-course theory is considered when looking at early childhood maltreatment and the

consequences on later adolescent behaviour. Moffitt et al. (2002) found that delinquent behaviour was more extreme and lasted longer with regards to those individuals with an early age of onset; however, the experiences and behavioural traits identified early in life can follow an individual through their life. This helps us better understand and explain the effects of early childhood maltreatment on later adolescent delinquent behaviour. However, as the LCP and AL perspective only explains a portion of the relationship between early childhood maltreatment and later adolescent behaviour, other life-course perspectives must be examined.

Another set of well known life-course theorists are Sampson and Laub (1992) who "explore the extent to which deviant childhood behaviours have important ramifications, whether criminal or noncriminal, in adult later life" (p.67). They compiled a comprehensive review of 16 studies on aggressive behaviour, one which was conducted by Caspi (1987, as cited in Sampson and Laub, 1992). Caspi (1987) argued that particular personality traits identified during childhood could potentially manifest in diverse situations and also appear across the life-course. For example, Caspi (1987) "found that the tendency toward explosive, undercontrolled behaviour in childhood was recreated over time, espectially in problems with subordination and in situations that require negotiating interpersonal conflicts" (Sampson and Laub, 1992: 69). With regards to its relevance to the current study, it could be hypothesized that early childhood maltreatment could create childhood antisocial behaviour and, if so, incarcerated youth could potentially recreate this explosive uncontrolled behaviour since they

are often faced with situations of subordination and interpersonal conflicts. We will return to this potential relationship later.

In addition to Moffitt et al. (2002) and Sampson and Laub (1992), Thornberry and Krohn (2005) contributed to the discussion of antisocial behaviour over the life-course. Although Thornberry and Krohn (2005) can be categorized as life-course theorists, their approach differs from that of Moffitt et al. (2002) and Sampson and Laub (1992). Moffitt et al. (2002) categorized their offenders based on age of onset labelling them, for example, as LCP or AL offenders; however, Thornberry and Krohn (2005) did not divide offenders into types based on their age of onset. Instead, they believe delinquent behavious emerged at any age. Instead of categorizing offenders into groups, Thornberry and Krohn (2005) looked at the initiation of offending based on four different stages of development: preschool; childhood; adolescents; and late adolescents/early adulthood.

Most relevant to this analysis is Thornberry and Krohn's (2005) discussion about experiences and delinquent behaviour that begins in early childhood (preschool and childhood) as this is the age when it is most common for childhood maltreatment to occur. Thornberry and Krohn (2005) asserted that there was only a small portion of their population that initiated antisocial behaviour in toddlerhood and childhood; however, those who *did* were more likely found to "persist in delinquency, especially serious delinquency, over long portions of the life-course" (p.190). Individuals displaying antisocial behaviour in the early developmental stages had more problems with regards to temperment,

aggression, impulsivity, and negative emotionality later in life (Thornberry and Krohn, 2005). In addition, Thornberry and Krohn (2005) found that these individuals not only displayed antisocial behaviour, but they also had parents who displayed various parenting deficits. They found that the parents of these children displayed an “inability to monitor and reward prosocial behaviours, to provide guidance in the development of problem solving skills, and to monitor and effectively punish antisocial behaviour” (Thornberry and Krohn, 2005:190). Parenting deficits are considered to be extremely problematic because, as the child already displays early signs of antisocial behaviour, they are now at a greater risk of developing a more coercive relationship with their parents that could potentially increase the risk of childhood maltreatment. Thus, this coercive relationship increases the chances that the youth will develop later aggressive and violent behavioural traits which, in turn, increases the potential for an endless cycle of defective behaviour.

2.1.2 Cycle of Violence

Cathy Spatz Widom is a well-known researcher who has been testing the cycle of violence perspective for years by following a cohort of maltreated children into their adult years. Widom (1998) examined the cohort’s official criminal records “during adolescents and young adulthood and found that childhood victimization increases the likelihood of delinquency, adult criminality, and violent criminal behaviour” (p.226). She found that individuals who experienced childhood maltreatment (physical and sexual abuse, and neglect) were almost twice as likely to be arrested as a young offender for a violent crime

than children who were not maltreated and were “of the same gender, age, and race who grew up in the same neighbourhood or who was born in the same hospital at the same time” (p.226). Widom (1998) found that maltreated children were not only involved in criminal behaviour earlier than the comparison group, but were convicted more frequently, were more likely to recidivate, and were more likely to become chronic offenders. Overall, Widom (1998) asserted “childhood victimization significantly increases a person’s risk of arrest as follows: by 59% as a juvenile, by 27% as an adult, and by 29% for a violent crime” (p.226).

As discussed in this paper, it is the concern that childhood maltreatment not only increases the risk of criminal offending and violent behaviour, but also has a profound impact on the mental and behavioural development of youth later in life. Because a relationship was found between both criminal offending and violent behaviour with mental deficits, it is important that we consider not only the impact of childhood maltreatment on the former, but also consider its consequences on the latter. Widom (1998) considered the impact childhood maltreatment has on any mental or cognitive deficits in youth later in life. Consistant with most child abuse literature, she found that childhood maltreatment increased the risk of suicide attempts and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms; it was also more likely to manifest both cognitive and intellectual deficits and also increased the risk of aquiring antisocial personality disorders.

In addition to examining the impact childhood maltreatment had on mental and behavioural development, in a later analysis, Widom, Czaja, and Dutton (2008) considered the impact childhood maltreatment had on the risk of future (re)victimization. In their recent study of the same cohort of individuals, Widom et al. (2008) found “abused and neglected individuals reported a higher number of traumas and victimization experiences than controls and all types of childhood victimization (physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect) were associated with increased risk for lifetime revictimization” (p.788). This information is important when discussing the cycle of violence perspective because it shows a relationship between early childhood maltreatment, later criminal offending and violent behaviour, and an increased risk of revictimization which, in turn, could lead to a further increase in criminal offending and violent behaviour.

Interestingly, Widom et al. (2008) found certain types of childhood maltreatment that increased the risk of later revictimization. According to their study, “compared to the control group, the neglected only group and those who experienced multiple forms of childhood abuse and neglect reported significantly higher numbers of lifetime traumas and victimization experiences” (p.791). It is important to note that these findings do not suggest that children who experience sexual abuse are not at an increased risk of revictimization. As Widom et al. (2008) explained, compared to the control group, those who experienced sexual abuse indicated a higher risk for later lifetime revictimization.

Although the life-course theories tend to focus much of their attention on the impact of early childhood behaviours on later adult behaviour, the main premise behind the life-course theories can serve to be beneficial when combined with the cycle of violence concept. As Moffitt et al. (2002) described, based on the age of onset, early childhood antisocial behaviour and mental deficits have been found to persist later in an individual's life which is useful for this analysis as it lends support to the notion that effects of early childhood maltreatment can still shape the behaviour of an individual as they pass through their adolescent years. In addition, Thornberry and Krohn (2005) added to this discussion by arguing that those who manifest behavioural problems in early childhood were most likely to presist in serious delinquency over the life-course and display problems with temperment, aggression, impulsivity, and emotionality. In addition to these behavioural characteristics, Thornberry and Krohn (2005) also mentioned to the impact parental deficits can have on children with behavioural problems.

Even though these life-course theories are extremely helpful in understanding life trajectories of delinquent individuals, they tend to lack specific attention to behavioural patterns of youth during their adolescence as a consequence of early childhood experiences. However, these theories do provide us with reason to believe that what happens in early childhood can still affect how ad adult acts. Regardless, it is important to understand and consider why these individuals develop delinquent behaviours in the first place which is now better understood by looking at the cohort study examined extensively by

Widom. She demonstrated that early childhood victimization was related to later violent and aggressive behaviour.

Furthermore, early childhood maltreatment can also increase the risk that an individual may experience later revictimization. Taking this cycle of violence perspective and combining it with the general concept of life-course theories, it is possible to examine the impact that early childhood experiences and behaviour have on later adolescent characteristics. Perhaps if a better understanding of the impact early childhood victimization has on youth who are at this stage of development, can result in more appropriate interventions that are specific not only to young offender's current needs, but also their past histories and experiences. However, in order to make a step towards these specialized interventions, more attention and discussion is needed with regards to understanding childhood maltreament pre-incarceration, reasons for increased risk of (re)victimization and/or violent behaviour, and also how this risk is displayed in the adolescent behaviour of incarcerated serious and violent youth. In doing so, it is hoped we will be able to better identify the specific needs of those who have suffered from childhood maltreatment and also identify if we are able to predict those who are more likely to be aggressive based on their childhood maltreatment experiences.

2.2 Childhood Maltreatment on the “outs”

2.2.1 Frequency of Childhood Maltreatment

According to Runyon, Kenny, Berry, Deblinger, and Brown (2006) in the United States, statistics suggest that approximately 2.6 million reports of possible child maltreatment are made to child protective service agencies each year. In 2002, 896,000 substantialed cases of child maltreatement were made with 81% involving abuse or neglect from a parent, and 60% of the victims being female. Moreover, 60% of the substantiated cases were related to neglect, 19% were related to physical abuse, and 10% related to sexual abuse (Runyon et al., 2006).

In Canada, exact numbers and statistics with regards to youth victimization are sometimes difficult to obtain. Many authors and agencies (Hay and Allen, 1997; Education Wife Assault Association, 2001; The Department of Justice Canada, 2008; Brozowski, 2007) reported that obtaining accurate and reliable information about youth victimization in Canada is largely difficult because, at times, it remains a hidden crime. Regardless of the challenges, information is gathered by the Department of Justice (2008) in an attempt to illustrate or estimate the frequency of childhood victimization in Canada. The Canadian Incident Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS) (2003) estimated the extent of child abuse in Canada and found there to be 135,573 child maltreatment investigations in Canada in 1998 with almost half (45%) of those cases substantiated. Furthermore, of those substantiated cases, 31%

involved physical abuse and 10% involved sexual abuse (Department of Justice, 2008:3).

The Canadian Center for Justice Statistics provides information about violence and childhood victimization within the family. Brozowski (2007), who was in charge of creating a statistical profile of maltreatment, agreed that acquiring information about the frequency of child physical and sexual youth victimization was extremely difficult. Moreover, Brozowski (2007) asserted that youth victimization happened more frequently than estimated because, in many instances, children often suffer violence without ever reporting it. Furthermore, her overall findings suggested that youth victimization rates were five times higher than that suffered by adults, and more attention needed to be focused on addressing and preventing violence against children.

2.2.2 Types of Childhood Maltreatment

There are many different types of child maltreatment, including physical and sexual abuse and neglect. Widom et al. (2008) mentioned that different types and frequencies of childhood victimization influenced the degree of violent and aggressive behaviour later in life, as well as increased the risk of later (re)victimization. With that being said, it is important to establish a clear understanding of what is meant by childhood maltreatment when attempting to understand the effects it has on later behaviour. This section will briefly discuss the different types of child maltreatment with a later emphasis on the consequences for subsequent behaviour.

2.2.2.1 Physical Abuse

The Department of Justice Canada defines child abuse as the mistreatment or neglect that a child or adolescent may experience while in the care of someone he or she either trusts or depends on and is in a position of authority. The Department of Justice defines physical maltreatment as an instance involving an adult deliberately using force against a child in such a way that a child is injured. These acts include things such as; beating, hitting, spanking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking, or assaulting a child with a weapon. In the U.S., Runyon et al. (2006) reported that children at ages 3 to 6 were at the highest risk for experiencing physical victimization, which is important to consider when we know, according to life-course theories, age of onset can have an effect on the persistence of delinquent and aggressive behaviour. In order to examine this connection, it is necessary to understand the impact childhood maltreatment can have on adolescent behaviour, which will be further discussed below.

2.2.2.2 Sexual Abuse

Hay and Allen (1997), as members of the Department of Health Canada, defined sexual abuse as an instance that occurs when an adult uses a child for sexual purposes and involves exposing a child to any sexual activity or behaviour. Furthermore, sexual victimization can include fondling, inviting a child to touch or be touched sexually, intercourse, or rape (Allan and Hay, 1997; Department of Justice Canada, 2008; Brozowski, 2007).

2.2.2.3 Neglect

According to Runyon et al. (2006) one of the most common types of child maltreatment is neglect. However, neglect is often the type of child maltreatment that ends up receiving the least amount of attention from agencies (Runyon et al., 2006). Moreover, neglect is often under-reported because it is not always the case that evidence, such as bruises and other marks that make the maltreatment identifiable, are present. The reason for this is because neglect occurs when there is a lack of parental or environmental care and the child does not receive the attention or basic necessities needed for healthy development. Instead of actively abusing a child, parents neglect the child and withhold life's essential needs, such as food, water, and positive attention.

2.3 Consequences of Childhood Maltreatment and Family Violence

2.3.1 Impact of Physical Victimization

When studying the impact of childhood physical victimization, Runyon et al. (2006) reported the possibility of various emotional, behavioural, psychological, and interpersonal difficulties experienced later in life. To mention a few, Runyon et al. (2006) reported "common emotional responses included anger, hostility, guilt, shame, anxiety, and depression...and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder" (p.30). With regards to the current study, the outcomes of childhood physical victimization could potentially explain why incarcerated youth who have experienced childhood maltreatment have manifested different characteristics in adolescents. For example, those who experienced childhood

physical victimization often display behaviours, such as poor-problem solving, aggressive outbursts, lack of empathy, and lack of communication skills (Runyon et al., 2006). In addition, when compared to non-abused youth, children who experience physical maltreatment sometimes alienate themselves from others and commonly interpret social interactions with peers as hostile, resulting in them acting out.

It is important to continue to monitor the behavioural outcomes of childhood physical abuse because, as mentioned by Briere (1992), childhood physical abuse can increase violent and aggressive behaviours later in the individual's life. Briere (1992) asserted that physical abuse was repeated in adulthood, and aggressive criminality committed by those who experienced physical abuse in childhood may not be best dealt with through incapacitation. He suggested that abuse specific programs should be administered to those who have suffered from physical abuse in the past as a way to mediate or decrease the chances of future aggression and violent offending. Johnson et al. (2002) examined the behavioural and emotional outcomes of child abuse and also found that victimization was a significant predictor of aggression and depression. In Johnson et al.'s (2002) study, they examined the different internalized and externalized behavioural outcomes of physical abuse. According to their study, internalized behavioural outcomes associated with previous childhood physical abuse included problems, such as withdrawal, anxiety, and depression; externalized problems included conduct disorder, aggression, and delinquency.

2.3.2 Impact of Sexual Victimization

Child sexual abuse has been well researched and the impact and outcomes of this type of victimization has been documented by many (Johnson and Kenkel, 1991; Leitenberg, Geenwald, and Cado, 1992; 35, as cited in Runyon et al., 2006). Females are often more at risk than males for experiencing childhood sexual abuse, and both are at an increased risk when living without a natural parent (Runyon et al., 2006). The impact of child sexual abuse can vary depending on the developmental stage of the child when the abuse happened, but also depending on the coping strategies of the child. Various studies (Johnson and Kenkel, 1991; Leitenberg, Geenwald, and Cado, 1992; 35, as cited in Runyon et al., 2006) reported coping strategies, such as avoidance, self-blame, or denial fostered more negative emotional and psychological reactions to childhood sexual victimization. Runyon et al. (2006) reported that “although some children suffer full-blown PTSD, major depression, sexual behaviour problems, and other severe and sometimes long –lasting psychiatric difficulties, other children appear to be asymptomatic, particularly in the immediate aftermath of a disclosure and investigation” (p.34). These findings were supported in a study conducted by Beitchman, Zucker, DrCosta, Akman and Cassavia (1992) who found evidence of long-term negative behavioural characteristics in a sample of females who were sexually abused in childhood. According to Beitchman et al. (1992), these negative characteristics included “sexual disturbances, depression, anxiety, fear, and suicidal ideas and behaviour” (p.1119).

Those at an increased risk of sexual abuse during childhood are individuals who live in an environment without a biological mother or father at some point during childhood (Sink, 1988). According to Sink (1988), school-aged children who have experienced sexual abuse in earlier childhood exhibit serious psychological disturbances, including aggression, impulsivity, destructive behaviour, and fearfulness. When looking at the behavioural characteristics of adolescents who have experienced sexual abuse in childhood, Sink (1988) found "24% were symptomatic with anxiety, depression, and obsessive concerns and 21% showed dependent, inhibited qualities" (p.85). Evidence indicating inappropriate sexual behaviour was also noted within the sample of sexually abused youth. In a study by Friedrich, Urquiza, and Beilke (1986), externalized problems were found as a behavioural outcome of sexual abuse with slight gender differences. Friedrich (1986) found that 35% of the boys and 46% of the girls show externalized problems, such as aggression, depression, and social withdrawal and inappropriate sexual behaviour from the sexually abused boys.

Of significant concern is the fact that these outcome behaviours could place youth at an increased risk of adult sexual victimization. In a study by Biere (1984, as cited by Beitchman et al., 1992), 40% of sexually abused women reported victimization in adult relationships. It is suggested that one of the reasons for the high frequency of revictimization is that women who experience childhood sexual abuse may have a feeling of worthlessness and blame themselves for what happened to them. As a result, women seek men who are exploitive and will confirm their negative self-image.

Understanding and identifying the effects of childhood sexual abuse can be difficult. Dietrich (2002) illustrated that sexual abuse may not have the same physical indications as physical abuse. She mentioned that one way to identify those who may have suffered from sexual abuse is they may separate themselves from family members and may express knowledge about sex and sexual language that, in most cases, would not be considered normal for children of that age. The impact childhood sexual abuse can have on later adolescent behaviour is important to consider when examining aggression in adolescence as it is important for counselling and interventions.

2.3.3 Impact of Neglect

With regards to the impact of neglect on behavioural tendencies later in life, Runyon et al. (2006) found both short-term and long-term effects of neglect. Some impacts of neglect include the development of anxious attachments, lacking enthusiasm, being easily frustrated and angered, being non-compliant, and being overly dependent on their mothers for help. According to Runyon et al. (2006), “observations indicate that young children (ages 3.5 – 6 years) display poor impulse control, rigidity, a lack of creativity, and general adjustment problems” (p.27). In addition, neglected children are often emotionally withdrawn, inattentive, and lacking in self-esteem and self-confidence.

2.3.4 Impact of Witnessing Family Violence

When looking at the previous experiences of youth, they can be effected by violence even if they do not physically experience it (Office for Victims of

Crime, 2002). Long term consequences include PTSD, increased risk of being physically injured, and increased feelings of terror, isolation, guilt, helplessness, and grief (Office for Victims of Crime, 2002). Furthermore, the Office for Victims of Crime (2002) argue that children may also become more violent because they will act out what they see. Being exposed to domestic violence can increased violent behaviour later in the child's life. As discussed by Meadows (2002), a study by Spaccarelli, Coastworth, and Bowden (1995) found that, among a sample of 213 incarcerated adolescent boys, those who reported witnessing family violence believed more than others that acting aggressively is a way to enhance a person's self-image and reputation. In addition, the Office for Victims of Crime (2002) found that children present during a sexual assualt were at a significant risk of developing PTSD, and, if the sexual assualt was against their mother's they, were more likley to report feeling depressed, anxious, vulnerable, and angry.

In another study by Meadows (2001), with a sample of 550 undergraduate students, those who reported witnessing family violence as a child reported more externalized problems, such as hostility and aggression and increased levels of depression, trauma-related symptoms, and lower levels of self-esteem. Kashani and Allan (1998) also discussed the impact of children witnessing family violence and found externalized problems, such as anger and distress, a greater risk for adolescent boys of developing externalized problems, and using physical force during conflict resolution. It is often the case that when we think of childhood maltreatment we only think about neglect, physical abuse, or sexual abuse, but it

has become evident that witnessing family violence can also have significant impacts on behavioural deficits later in life. As such, this is a type of violent experience that should be taken into consideration when furthering our understanding of the vulnerabilities and aggressive tendancies of incarcerated youth.

2.3.5 Multiple Forms of Abuse

It can be hypothesized that when a child is a victim of sexual abuse, they are a victim of physical abuse as well. Additionally, when a child has experienced physical abuse, there is a strong possibility that they have also witnessed family violence. Some researchers have suggested that experiencing multiple forms of abuse can have a more detrimental effect on the development of the maltreated child. For example, Widom (2007) suggested that those individuals who experienced multiple forms of abuse showed a significant increase in the number of their life-time traumas. In an earlier study, Wind and Silvern (as cited in Beitchman et al., 1992) reported that the combination of multiple forms of abuse was associated with higher levels of adult victimizations than either physical or sexual abuse alone.

Many studies reported depression and PTSD as amongst the most prevalent outcomes of childhood maltreatment (Kashani and Allan, 1998; Runyon et al., 2006; Office for Victims of Crime, 2002; Meadows, 2001). Kashani, Shekin, Burk, and Beck (1987; as cited in Kashani and Allan, 1998) documented how children who were abused displayed symptoms of depression more often than their control group. Certain symptoms of depression included sad affect,

social withdrawl, and low self-esteem. Furthermore, in a study by Kazdin, Moser, Colbus, and Bell (1985; as cited in Kashani and Allan, 1998), children who experienced childhood abuse also displayed higher levels of depression. In Kazdin et al.'s (1985) study, of their 79 participants, 33 were physically abused and 46 were not abused and served as the contorl group. As discussed by Kashani and Allan (1998), "results demonstrated that children who were physically abused had higher levels of depression and hopelessness and lower self-esteem than the nonabused control group" (p.25).

In addition to these findings, Kazdin et al. (1985) found that children who not only had a history of previous childhood maltreatment, but who also experienced current maltreatment, has higher levels of hopelessness and depression, and lower levels of self-esteem. With regards to PTSD, Famularo and colleagues (1992; as cited in Kashani and Allan, 1998) found that children who experienced previous childhood maltreatment were diagnosed with PTSD more often than the control group.

2.4 Childhood Maltreatment and Adolescent Behaviour

With an understanding of the impact of childhood victimization on later behavioural characteristics, it is of value to discuss the connection between these negative behavioural deficits and later adolescent behaviour. We will first discuss the characteristics that increase the potential for an individual to be considered an aggressor or defiant followed by a discussion of how childhood maltreatment can be related to what seems to be compliant characteristics.

According to the various life-course theories and the cycle of violence hypothesis, what happens to a person while they are a child can effect their life trajectory which includes shaping their future behavioural characteristics. With that being said, it can be hypothesized that because early childhood maltreatment has an effect on the manifestation of later aggressive and antisocial tendencies, those who have experienced childhood maltreatment are also at a greater risk for developing delinquent behaviours. This hypothesis is supported in Widom's (1989, 2002) longitudinal cohort study (as discussed by Hosser, Raddatz, and Windzio, 2007) as her study demonstrated that children who experienced early maltreatment and neglect were at a greater risk to become delinquent during adolescence. Widom (1989,2002) asserted that youth who experienced early childhood maltreatment were not only more likely to be incarcerated earlier in adolescence, but they were more likely to committ twice as many offenses. In addition, she suggested "maltreatment or neglect in childhood increased the likelihood of being imprisoned to about 59% during adolescence and to 25% during adulthood" (as cited in Hosser et al., 2007:319).

With regards to an increased potential for developing delinquent behaviours, negative family dynamics and family violence can increase the manifestation of later delinquent behaviour. While discussing various studies regarding the impact of family dynamics on later delinquent behaviour, Dahlberg and Simon (2008) found that "a number of family characteristics increase the probability of involvement in violent and delinquent behaviour" (p.108). More specifically, they made reference to the Cambridge study by Farrington (2003)

who found that poor parenting (including poor supervision, punishment, and authoritarian child-rearing perspectives) was one of the most significant predictors of later violent offending. With that being said, taking into consideration what was discussed within the life-course theories and the cycle of violence hypothesis, one might infer that poor parenting, such as abusive or explosive behaviour, will predict later violent offending and violent behaviour.

Similair to Dahlberg and Simon (2008), Shirk (1998) examinined the impact family violence could have on later violent behaviour and found that families categorized as aggressive, produced children with higher rates of adversive behaviour. Shirk (1998) made special reference to adversive behaviour of high frequency and concluded that “with threatening commands and negative physical behaviours such as hitting others…children were more aggressive and less compliant than control children” (p.72). In addition, Shirk (1998) noted that children who belonged to aggressive families often misbehaved more in their families than the control group.

In addition to being at an increased risk for developing later delinquent and antisocial behaviour, studies suggesed that youth who experienced serious and frequent family violence while growing up were also at an increased risk of being violent themselves. For example, Dahlberg and Simon (2006) discussed what they considered weak family environments and found that those who came from this type of environment were more at risk to develop violent behaviour. In addition, the Office for Victims of Crime (2002) suggested that children who came from violent families tended to be more violent themselves because of modeling;

the children act out what they see. More specifically, Dahlberg and Simon (2006) reported “38% of youth from nonviolent families reported involvement in violent behaviour, the rate increased to 60% for youth exposed to one form of family violence, 73% for youth exposed to two forms of family violence, and 78% for youths exposed to three forms of family violence” (p.109).

As discussed, early childhood maltreatment and family violence can lead to the manifestation of delinquent and adversive behaviour. In addition to these potential behavioural outcomes, early childhood maltreatment can lead to an violent offending and behaviour. One of the many reasons why childhood victimization may lead to later violent actions is because, as previously discussed, the impact of childhood maltreatment increases behavioural tendencies, such as anxiety, aggression, and low-self esteem. Furthermore, as Dahlberg and Simon (2006) reported “there is some evidence that factors such as hyperactivity, oppositional behaviour, and poor behavioural control may be particulairly related to persistant violent offending” (p.103). In addition, Dahlberg and Simon (2006) found that youth with aggressive attitudes, who had a serious level of distrust and lacked empathy and guilt had an increased risk of being involved in later violent behaviour and arrests for violent offenses.

In a more recent report conducted by Widom (2003), amongst a sample of individuals at the age of 33, the chances of being arrested during adolescence for a violent offence increased 96% with those individuals who reported experiencing childhood maltreatment. In addition, Vandergoot (2006) reported that the type of childhood maltreatment can affect the probability that an

individual will committ a violent crime during adolescence. Overall, findings reported by Vandergoot (2006) suggested a combination of physical abuse, neglect, and also verbal abuse had the strongest impact on an individual's later quality of life, and also propensity towards adolescent violent offending.

Other studies (Vandergoot, 2006; Hosser et al., 2007; Widom, 2003) also paid particular attention to the effect of previous childhood victimization on the development of later violent behaviour. For example, Vandergoot (2006) examined various studies and found within a sample of 11 to 17 year old males that there was a direct link between previous childhood maltreatment and later violent offending. In addition, Hosser et al. (2007) argued that childhood victimization and trauma play a "central role in the development and persistence of violence" when compared to adolescents who had not experienced childhood victimization (p.318). These findings were supported by Widom (2003) who reported that maltreated children were 30% more likely to committ an act of violence later in life and further by Hosser et al. (2007) whose reults indicated that individuals who experienced frequent childhood victimization had a 33% increased likelihood of becoming frequent violent offenders. These results further strengthened the hypothesis that there is a relationship between early childhood victimization and the later manifestation of violent behaviours.

In addition to the relationship between early childhood victimization and later violent behaviours, one may hypothesize that these two aspects may also increase the difficulity a person has with peers and adjustment which could further perpetuate stress and violent outbursts. For instance, Dahlberg and

Simon (2006) found that youth who reported they had been frequently maltreated during childhood also had significant problems with their peers both during school and within the community. One reason for this peer rejection was because of the fact the rejected youth exhibited extremely antisocial and aggressive behavioural tendezcies. Dahlberg and Simon (2006) suggested that these maltreated youth were not only being rejected by their peers during adolescence, but the presense of a recurring event that has followed them throughout childhood. Being rejected by peers for many years not only increases aggression and the propensity towards violent outbursts, but it also creates difficulities with regards to adjustment.

Furthermore, problems with adjustment amongst youth who have experienced childhood abuse was also discussed years before in a study conducted by Galambos and Dixon (1984; as discussed by Straus, 1988). Galambos and Dixon (1984) found that adolescents who had experienced abuse since childhood exhibited serious adjustment problems when compared to control youth. Straus (1988) argued that youth who experienced abuse over a long period of time not only had difficulities with adjustment to new situations, but they also had ego deficits and demonstrated severe violent emotional and behavioural reactions. The impact early childhood victimization has on violent adjustment problems is important to consider when discussing the various adjustment problems youth have upon entering custody and the outcome of those adjustment problems on their violent behaviour towards other inmates. However, before this discussion, it is important to understand not only the

manifestation of aggressive and defiant/delinquent behaviour, but also factors that could associate childhood maltreatment with compliant characteristics.

Some authors have argued that individuals who experienced childhood maltreatment may have internalized problems that would appear to make them more compliant to certain situations. Compliant characteristics could include instances when people are well behaved, they do as they are told, they are considered relatively quiet and generally keep to themselves. According to Dietrich (2002), individuals who have experienced maltreatment and withdrawal from associating with others could be at an increased risk of adult revictimization. Dietrich (2002) suggested that individuals displayed behavioural characteristics considered compliant because they felt they have no control over the situation and it was a form of learned helplessness. In addition to this notion of learned helplessness, Shirk (as cited in Straus, 1988) argued that youth who experienced maltreatment tended to withdrawal from group settings and avoid social interactions. Shirk (1988) argued that abusive parents contributed to the "maladaptive interactions with peers because their children lack essential social experiences with others" (p.68). In support of this finding, Howes and Espinosa (as cited in Straus, 1988) examined the social interactions between groups of children who experienced abuse and those who did not and found that abused children were no different from non-abused children in well established social settings; however, they differed in newly formed settings. Their study also concluded that abused children were less competent in peer interaction, which increased levels of social withdrawal. Information regarding social interactions is

important to consider when looking at the effects of abuse within the current study because it is important to identify those who are suffering from past abusive experience, but do not display the negative behavioural outcomes normally associated with such abuse. It is important to provide an intervention to those who have experienced previous childhood maltreatment, but have internalized the negative behaviours associated with the maltreatment and are now potentially suffering in silence.

Due to the nature of the data included in this analysis, specific measures for adolescent re-victimization were not included. However, although re-victimization is not a direct measure included within this analysis, it is still important to consider the relationship between early childhood maltreatment and later re-victimization in life. Identifying a relationship between childhood maltreatment and revictimization, based on past research, adds to the importance of this study as one of the objectives is to draw more attention to the effects of child abuse on later adolescent characteristics and to the importance of developing specific interventions for incarcerated youth based on their past experiences.

Research on victimization suggested that individuals who are smaller in size and younger are at most risk of experiencing victimization. In addition, the Office for Victims of Crime (2002) found that “certain children are targeted more frequently, including those labelled “bad kids”; those who are shy, lonely, and compliant kids and also emotionally disturbed or ‘needy’ adolescents” (p.81). In addition, the Office for Victims of Crime (2002) argued that youth with physical,

emotional, or developmental disabilities were at greater risk of experiencing victimization. This is particularly important because those who experienced childhood maltreatment often develop many emotional and developmental difficulties later in life, such as depression, anxiety, and aggression, which can contribute to an increased vulnerability to victimization.

With regards to the effect of childhood maltreatment on later potential for (re)victimization, Hosser, Raddatz and Windzio (2007) found that those who experienced childhood maltreatment had double the risk for later victimization in adolescence. Furthermore, Heitmeyer and colleagues (1996; as cited in Hosser et al., 2007) also found higher rates of adolescent re-victimization amongst those who experienced childhood maltreatment. In addition to these results, more support for the relationship between early childhood maltreatment and later re-victimization comes from a study by Becker-Lausen, Sanders, and Chinsky (1995; as cited in Hosser et al., 2007) who also found that childhood abuse increased later re-victimization; but instead of twice the risk of being victimized, they found four times greater risk for later re-victimization. We found more support for the relationship between early childhood victimization and subsequent adolescent victimization in an analysis by Hosser et al. (2007). Specifically, they asserted a positive correlation between childhood victimization and later victimization in adolescents. Furthermore, their results indicated maltreated children “consisted of the highest amount of ‘frequent victimizations’ (33.5%). Those who were never corporally punished, 20.3% of them reported frequent victimization… The risk of victimization in adolescents was 2.33 times

higher for children who experienced maltreatment as for persons who did not" (p. 323 – 325).

When looking at the relationship between behavioural characteristics and vulnerability to victimization, Hosser et al. (2007) reported the following;

Maltreatment Experience	*Level of Aggression*	*Probability of being Victimized*
NO	*NO*	*18.6%*
NO	*YES*	*49.6%*
YES	*YES*	*69.6%*
Results from Hosser et al. (2007:326).		

Those who did not report any victimization or indicate levels of aggression, had an 18.6% probability of being victimized in adolescence. Furthermore, those who did not experience childhood maltreatment, but indicated aggressive tendencies had a 49.6% probability of experiencing victimization. At most risk were those who experience childhood maltreatment and display aggressive behaviour; as this group had a 69.6% probability of experiencing later victimization.

Hosser et al. (2007) found a clear connection between those who experienced maltreatment or serious punishment as children and an increased risk for later victimization during adolescents and suggested this was partly because of the "trauma-induced offense cycle" termed by Greenwald (2002). The trauma-induced offence cycle can be compared with the cycle of violence hypothesis; it hypothesizes that previous abuse and trauma make an individual react to situations triggering trauma-related effects with a heightened sense of fear, aggression, sense of helplessness, and heightened risk of violent "reactions

and re-victimization furthering sensitivity to trigger situations" (p.329). In general, the trauma-induced offense cycle intensifies fear and anxiety within an individual who previously experienced victimization and increases their chances of a violent outburst which increases the likelihood they will be re-victimized. In support of this hypothesis, Geenwald (2002; as cited in Hosser et al., 2007) provided results indicating that maltreated children who showed aggressive behaviour in childhood had a much higher probability of revictimization in adolescence than control children.

As we have discussed, there are various characteristics that can increase a person's vulnerability to victimization, and these are further discussed by Meadows (2001) who distinguished various offender "types" that included the depressed, dull normals, and the lonesome (p. 14 – 16). In addition to the Office for Victims of Crime (2002), Meadows (2001) argued that not only was depression a potential behavioural outcome of childhood maltreatment, but it was also a predictor of later re-victimization. As explained by Hentig (as cited in Meadows, 2001), "depressed people are likely to become victims because of their apathetic state of mind. A depressed person is generally a submissive person, frequently weak in both mental and physical strength, gullible, and easily swayed" (p.14).

In addition to depression being a predictor of later victimization, it is suggested that being classified as dull normal and lonesome increases the risk of later re-victimization. The reason for this is that dull normals are assumed to have lower IQ levels, thus their intellectual status increases their vulnerability to

later victimization. Those classified as lonesome were known to seek intimate relationships with others and desire companionship so desperately that they were most likely to succumb to victimization (Meadows, 2001; 15). Knowing these specific types of individuals who are at a heightened risk of later victimization can add to the importance of this study when looking at the relationship between childhood maltreatment and adolescent characteristics, such as aggression, defiance, and compliance. However, before we can begin to identify these individuals, we must first discuss the experiences of youth while they are incarcerated in order to gain a better understanding of our population and the potential impact incarceration can have to further or correct their cycle of violence.

As discussed above, early childhood victimization leads to violent and delinquent behaviour which means we can hypothesize that childhood maltreatment increases the chances these abused children will be incarcerated as adolescents. This hypothesis is supported by Widom's (1998, 2002; as cited in Hosser et al., 2007) cohort study as she asserted that children who experienced maltreatment or neglect were at an increased risk of later imprisonment. More specifically, she argued that previous childhood maltreatment increased the likelihood of imprisonment to about 59% during adolescents and 25% during adulthood. In addition to these findings, Straus (1988) also found that significant numbers of incarcerated youth were also abused as children. Within his literature review of youth incarceration, Straus (1988) asserted that between 40% and 90% of all incarcerated youth had been

previously victimized as children “often repeatedly or brutally” (p.117). In addition to these findings, Straus (1988) also reported that incarcerated youth were more likely to be convicted of a violent offense.

2.5 Youths’ Experience on the “ins”

2.5.1 Adjustment

With a link between early childhood victimization and later youth incarceration, it is important to understand the experiences of youth while incarcerated. One problem youth could have from the beginning of their prison term is with adjusting to the new schedule, the new people, and the loss of freedom. Not only is it typical that most young offenders experience adjustment problems to this new environment, it is suggested that youth who have experienced early childhood victimization have an increased difficulty with adjustment in general. For example, as previously mentioned, Straus (1988) cited the study by Galambos and Dixon (1984) who supported the notion that adolescents who experienced childhood abuse also demonstrated several adjustment problems. However, Kashani and Allan (1998) found in that a child’s adjustment problems could be moderated by certain factors like perceived social support while incarcerated; support either from outside family members or correctional staff. This is important to note because if increased familial support or perceived support from correctional workers can improve an abused adolescent’s adjustment to custody and thus decrease their violent behaviours or levels of vulnerability, the cycle of violence and the adolescent’s life-course trajectory may be adjusted.

Another elaborate discussion about adolescent adjustments to incarceration comes from Toch and Adams (2002). Toch and Adams (2002) proposed five group “types” of adjustment and suggested that the type of adjustment the youth manifests will affect their experiences while incarcerated. One group or type of custody adjustment, as identified by Toch and Adams (2002) were those labelled as individuals who functioned based on “gratifying impulses”. Those who are concerned with gratifying impulses are known to be the aggressors because they are more concerned with the short-term objectives, rather than what will happen in the long term (Toch and Adams, 2002). Some of the main reasons these individuals are classified as the aggressors is because they resort to violent behaviour in order to achieve their objects of satisfaction and, if their plans are obstructed, they have violent outbursts. This can be related back to our discussion about the impact of childhood maltreatment on adolescents because one of the effects of maltreatment is modeling. If, while growing up, all a child sees is violence in his family and he gets abused when he gets in the way, then perhaps this will become his immediate reaction when someone gets in his way in custody.

The second type of adjustment groups are those interested with “enhancing esteem” (Toch and Adams, 2002). The authors suggested that these individuals are primarily concerned with the reputation they create for themselves and strive to be seen as the “tough guy”. These individuals are more likely to be the aggressors in prison as they will victimize other peers who either get in their way when they are developing this tough image, or they will victimize others to

prove how tough they are. In addition, Toch and Adam (2002) found that individuals in this category “feel easily disparaged and affronted, and [react] violently when [feeling] offended or slighted” (p.130). In addition, Toch and Adams (2002) argued “this person expects to be rejected and reacts with provocation and hostility in anticipation of rejection, thus documenting his assumptions” (p.130). This can be related back to our previous discussion about the many consequences of experiencing childhood victimization. It was mentioned that individuals who experienced victimization as a child become more aggressive and violent and, as a consequence to this aggression, they are continuously rejected by their peers from early childhood throughout adolescence. If they have been dealing with rejection from their peers for multiple years, it is likely this fear of rejection will carry over into prison when they are faced with new individuals and a new environment, thus it may foster even more aggression and violent outbursts.

In addition to these two adjustment groups, Toch and Adams (2002) proposes that there were groups of individuals who adjusted in a way that could increase their vulnerability to victimization in custody. These groups are those who seek autonomy and refuge. Individuals considered to be seeking autonomy alternate between being dependent on others and rebellious against the system. In addition, they often challenge authority and are defiant as they refuse to have others tell them what to do. This could potentially increase their vulnerability to victimization because they may become an outcast and be disliked by staff and others at the institution, thus alienating and further rejecting them. Since we know

those who were abused as children are sometimes considered weak and loners, and those who are perceived weak and lonely are at an increased risk of being victimized, this alienation could increased their vulnerability to revictimization.

In addition to individuals who seek autonomy, those who seek refuge are at an increased risk of being victimized. According to Toch and Adams (2002), individuals who seek refuge are those who have “victim attributes or self-assign victim attributes that place him in situations which inspire retreat into protective settings or the need to be placed into such settings” (p. 132). In addition, Toch and Adams (2002) suggested that a person who seeks refuge experiences a certain degree of anxiety that he cannot cope with, leading him to request protective custody. Since we know that one of the many consequences of childhood maltreatment is an increased level of anxiety, it could be that this anxiety is too much for the individual to handle, so they request protective custody. In addition, because of the nature of a youth detention facility, word travels very quickly amongst the residents and as soon as an individual requests protective custody they are perceived as weak and a coward which could increase the likelihood that they will become a target of victimization.

The fifth group Toch and Adams (2002) identified were those who were “maintaining sanity” (p.133). Toch and Adams (2002) suggested that individuals who were trying to keep it together while incarcerated often withdraw from their surroundings and try to live by themselves in their own world. This type of person can be both an aggressor and a victim because, as Toch and Adam (2002) discussed, “this person for the most part withdraws but on occasion explodes

and attacks other people in his environment or attempts self-destructive acts" (p.133). This person can be considered a violent aggressor because their outbursts happen at random and are often unpredicted; however, they are also at an increased risk for victimization because they withdraw themselves from others and at times appear delusional and scared which suggests to other inmates that they are weak and easy to take advantage of.

In accordance with the life-course theory and the cycle of violence hypothesis, early childhood victimization has impacts and consequences that can follow an individual throughout their life and continue to affect them many years later. Their trajectory begins with a victimization that fosters aggression and anxiety during their development into adolescence, which increases rejection from their peers and further perpetuates feelings of self-hate, violent and aggressive behaviour, and loneness. As these behaviours manifest within the individual, they react to their environment in ways that either increase their future vulnerability to later (re)victimization, or at times it will increase the likelihood that this individual will become violent towards others and victimize other individuals. Their behaviour of aggression and anger towards others increases their chances of committing a violent offense or other delinquent behaviours and leads them to incarceration during adolescence. In addition, feelings of self-hate, anxiety, aggression, and loneliness impact their experiences while they are incarcerated; affecting adjustment, seeking refuge, needing to express a "tough guy" image, or displaying vulnerabilities, such as withdrawal, sadness, and weakness. The way they adjust to their new environment can impact whether or not they become the

violent aggressors amongst their peers, or they experience (re)victimization while they are incarcerated. If they are left to fend for themselves and adjust to their best ability, the outcomes of incarceration can further the cycle of violence and perpetuate this antisocial life-course trajectory.

3: METHODS

3.1 Proposed Hypotheses and Research Question

Previous research has been able to take information about early childhood victimization and apply it to gain a better understanding of later adolescent characteristics. This study proposes that we can take information regarding prior childhood maltreatment and apply it to identify a relationship between later adolescent characteristics, such as aggression, defiance, and compliance. Thus, this study will attempt to address the following research question and hypotheses:

Research Question: Can we predict that incarcerated youth who have experienced childhood maltreatment will have higher levels of aggression, defiance, or compliance in adolescence. If so, does the type of abuse or violence witnessed have a different predictive strength of adolescent characteristics?

> H1: Incarcerated youth who have experienced one or more types of maltreatment, when compared with those without extensive levels of maltreatment, are predicted to have an increased level of aggression.
>
> H2: Incarcerated youth who have experienced one or more types of maltreatment, when compared with those without extensive levels of maltreatment, are predicted to have an increased level of deviance.
>
> H3: Incarcerated youth who have experienced one or more types of maltreatment, when compared with those without extensive levels of maltreatment, are predicted to have a decreased level of compliance.

H4: The type of maltreatment experienced in childhood will have different predictive capabilities of behavioural characteristics during adolescents.

3.2 Sample

Information for this project includes data collected from a sample of serious and violent young offenders located in a Canadian youth detention facility. Data used in this study is based on self-report data and information collected from file codes and incident reports provided by the youth detention facility. Interviews were conducted by trained research assistants between the dates of January 14, 1998 and January 08, 2002. Incarcerated youth agreed to participate in a series of interviews in which they were asked information regarding demographics and known risk factors contributing to delinquent behaviour. During one of these interviews, youth were asked questions regarding their previous experiences of childhood maltreatment. In addition, staff at the youth detention facility were responsible for recording information regarding the youth's institutional behaviour. This information was included in the young offenders file codes which was later analyzed by research assistants who coded it as absent/present when looking for specific adolescent behaviours.

3.3 Independent Variables

3.3.1 Demographics

Information regarding the demographics of youth included in this sample was collected through self-reported data and file code information. During the interviews, youth provided information regarding their age and gender which was

matched with information included in the file codes. Gender was coded as male (1) and female (2). Information regarding ethnicity was collected through self-reported data as youth were asked to describe the group or ethnicity that they felt they most identified with. For the purpose of the multiple regression that is being conducted in this analysis, ethnicity was dummy coded into two dichotomous groups which included White (1) non-white (0), and aboriginal (1), non-aboriginal (0) which left “Ethnicity Other” as the reference group.

3.3.2 Physical Victimization

Information regarding past childhood physical abuse was collected through self-reported data during the interview with incarcerated youth. One concern with collecting sensitive information through self-report measures is that the respondent may not feel comfortable providing information regarding past violent experiences. In addition, it may also be the case that the youth may have a different understanding of what constitutes physical abuse.

Thus, instead of asking one single question regarding past history of abuse, multiple questions were asked including open-ended questions. Youth were asked specifically if they have a history of child abuse which was scored as 1 (yes) and 0 (no). Additionally, the individual was asked if their parents had ever intentionally struck them causing bleeding or bruising, which was also scored as 1 (yes) and 0 (no). Finally, individuals were asked about whether or not their parents have ever punished them before, which was followed up with an open-ended question about their parent’s punishing techniques. This open-ended question was examined to see if the individual’s responses to the first question

about abuse matched with the punishment experienced from their parents. It was found that some youth reported being slapped, beaten, whipped, and punched numerous times by their parents; however, they answered “no” to the previous abuse question. Information from the above questions were combined and recoded to make the “Physical Abuse” variable.

3.3.3 Sexual Abuse

Information regarding sexual abuse was collected through self-reported data. Youth were asked whether or not they have a history of experiencing sexual abuse with yes being coded as (1) and no (0). Additionally, youth were asked an open-ended question requesting them to explain an event in their life that has made them extremely sad. Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, some youth may not feel comfortable sharing with the research assistant that they have been a victim of sexual abuse until they developed a rapport. Thus, the open-ended question which was asked later in the interview was examined to see if any of the youth had reported sexual abuse as a response to a negative life event. The combination of responses from these two interview questions were re-coded and used to create the “Sexual Abuse” variable.

3.3.4 Witness Family Abuse

As mentioned within the literature review, previous research has found that witnessing family violence can have negative outcomes similar to those who have personally experienced a physical or sexual attack. In order to examine the relationship of witnessed family violence and later adolescent characteristics,

information was collected through self-reported data which asked the individual whether or not a member of their family experienced physical or sexual abuse; both coded as yes (1) and no (0). Information from these two questions was combined to create the “Witness Family Violence” variable which was dichotomous with responses coded as yes (1) and no (0).

3.3.5 Multiple Maltreatments

Previous research has suggested that multiple forms of childhood maltreatment can have a different outcome than experiencing a single form of abuse. Creating the “multiple maltreatment” variable required a count of those who had experienced two or more forms of childhood maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse, witness family violence). If individuals experienced two or more forms of childhood maltreatment, they were coded as a “1” and those who experienced only one or zero forms of maltreatment were coded as “0”.

3.4 Dependent Variables

The scales that measured adolescent characteristics were created based on information provided in the young offenders’ file codes. These file codes were analyzed by research assistants, each who had a list of particular institutional behaviours. These file codes were analyzed and coded so that if a behaviour or incident on their list was present, that particular institutional behaviour was assigned a 1 for “present” or a 0 or “absent”. The original information in the file codes was recorded and provided by staff at the detention facility. The purpose

of creating the adolescent characteristics scales was to see if previous childhood maltreatment could predict higher or lower scores on that particular scale.

3.4.1 Defiant Characteristics Scale

The adolescent defiant measure that was used in this analysis is an 5 item scale (α =.570). Items included in the scale were Verbal abuse, Disrespectful to staff, Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour, refusal to Participate in Programming, and Poor Attitude. The sum of scores on the scale ranged between 0 and 4 ($\bar{x}$=1).

3.4.2 Aggressive Characteristics Scale

Aggressive characteristics in adolescence were measured using a 7 item scale α=.712. Items included in this scale were; Aggressive Behaviour, Victimizer, Assault in Custody, Threats of Violence, Fighting, Physical Aggression, and Verbal Aggression. Scores on these characteristics were summed with a distribution of scores ranging between 0 and 6, ($\overline{x}$=2).

3.4.3 Compliance Characteristics Scale

To look closer at a potential group of young offenders who may have internalized reactions to childhood maltreatment or who have characteristics that are less aggressive, a compliance characteristics scale was created. This scale consisted of a sum of scores across 5 items such as; Polite, Abides by Rules, Well Behaved, Good Program Participant, and Quiet with a distribution of scores between 0 and 6 (α=.607, $\overline{x}$=1).

3.5 Analysis

The incarcerated youth in this sample were first examined to see what proportion had experienced previous childhood abuse and what types of abuse they had experienced. A missing value analysis was conducted to examine missing data which confirmed it was missing completely at random. Cases that had missing data on two or more abuse variables were removed from the analysis. Because institutional behaviour was recorded as “absent/present”, data that was missing for these variables were considered absent and coded as “0”.

A principle component analysis was conducted for each scale to ensure that the three scales measuring adolescent characteristics were all loading on their own individual factor. Bivariate relationships between the sample and each of the forms of maltreatment were analyzed, followed by an assessment of the correlations between types of abuse, demographics and adolescent characteristics.

Sequential multiple regression was used to assess the relationship and predictive contribution of demographic characteristics and types of maltreatment with regards to adolescent characteristics. A sequential multiple regression model was used to examine whether or not different types of childhood maltreatment had different behavioural outcomes. The order of entry for the model began with demographics followed by entering physical abuse first, sexual abuse second, and witness family abuse third. As will be discussed later, the multiple abuse variable was entered on its own with the demographics and was not included in the same model as the other three abuse variables.

The reason that physical abuse was entered into the model first is based on previous research conducted by Vandergoot (2006) and Johnston et al. (2002). In their analysis, Johnston et al. (2002) asserted that physical abuse was a significant predictor of aggression. This conclusion was supported by Vandergoot (2006) who found that physical abuse had the strongest impact on an individual's propensity towards violent offending. Sexual abuse was entered second so that both types of "experienced" abuse were in the model and controlled for before witness family violence was included.

4: RESULTS

4.1 Sample

The sample for the current study consisted of 278 incarcerated youth considered serious and violent young offenders. Their ages ranged from 12 years to 19 years with the mean age being 16.4 years old. The sample consisted of 209 males and 69 females with the majority of youth being Caucasian (161). In total participants identified themselves as aboriginal. Respondents who either refused to answer this question or did not identify with a particular ethnicity (including an “other” category) were coded as “unknown” (4%).

Table 1 : Sample Demographics

	n	% Sample
Gender		
Male	209	75.2
Female	69	24.8
Age		
12	1	.4
13	8	2.9
14	23	8.3
15	50	18.0
16	66	23.7
17	99	35.6
18	28	10.1
19	3	1.1
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	161	57.9
Black	9	3.2
Aboriginal	62	22.3
Indian	3	1.1
Asiatic	17	6.1
Other	15	5.4
Unknown	11	4.0
***N* = 278**		

Information regarding the sample's previous experience with maltreatment was analyzed. In line with previous research that suggested a high percentage of the young offender population experienced childhood maltreatment, it was found that the majority of youth in the sample experienced some sort of past maltreatment (75%). When looking at the specific types of childhood

maltreatment experienced, 60.4% had a past history of physical abuse victimization. Furthermore, it was found that 20.5% had experienced sexual victimization. Furthermore, 52.5% reported that they had witnessed family violence. When considering those who have experienced multiple forms of maltreatment, there were 44% individuals who had experienced two or more forms of maltreatment (including witnessing family violence).

Table 2 History of Abuse and Family Violence

	n	% Sample
Childhood Maltreatment		
No	68	25
Yes	210	75
Physical Abuse		
No	110	39.6
Yes	168	60.4
Sexual Abuse		
No	221	79.5
Yes	57	20.5
Family Violence		
No	132	47.5
Yes	146	52.5
Multiple Maltreatment		
No	155	55
Yes	123	44
***N* = 278**		

In order to create the dependent variables, a reliability analysis of the scales was conducted. As mentioned above, the alpha's for the three scales

were: Defiance Scale α=.570; Aggression Scale α= .712; and Compliance Scale α=.607. Table 3 presents the loadings of three separate principle component analyses which included items that made each of the adolescent characteristics scales. As you will see, despite the relatively low α for the "Defiance" scale and the moderate α for the "Compliance" scale, the items loaded on their component. Items included within the aggression scale had loadings between .43 and .91 (% variance = 37.2%). Items included to make the defiant scale all fell within the range of .45 and .78 (% variance = .36.8) and the items on the compliance scale fell between .40 and .73 (% of variance = .40). This principle components analysis demonstrated that it was appropriate to include these items in their individual scales to measure adolescent behavioural characteristics.

Table 3: Loadings of Scale Items PCA

Aggressive Scale α.712	
PCA % of Variance = 37.2	
Aggressive Behaviour	.434
Victimizer	.467
Assault in Custody	.566
Threats of Violence	.444
Fighting	.665
Physical Aggression	.917
Verbal Aggression	.633
Defiant Scale α.570	
PCA % of Variance = 36.8	
Verbal Abuse	.618
Disrespect Staff	.789
Innap. Sexual Behav.	.639
Refuse Programm.	.458
Poor attitude	.471

Compliance Scale α.607	
PCA % Of Variance = 40	
Good Program Partic	.403
Well Behaved	.733
Polite	.716
Abides Rules	.690
Quiet	.563

4.2 Bivariate Correlations

The first set of analyses examined the relationship between our sample demographics and experiences of past victimization. Due to the research hypothesis being directional, a 1-tailed bivariate correlation was examined. Table 4 presents the bivariate correlations between childhood maltreatment and sample demographics. It was found that past experience of sexual abuse was significantly correlated with Aboriginal ethnicity (r = .156, p<.01), those categorized as “ethnicity other” (r = -.140, p<.01), and gender (r= .430, p< .001). Physical abuse was significantly correlated with gender (r= .141, p< .01), and had a moderately significant relationship with both Aboriginal ethnicity (r=.098, p=.05) and Ethnicity “other” (r= -.097, p=.05). Witnessing family violence was also significantly correlated with Aboriginal ethnicity (r= .146, p<.01) and Ethnicity “other” (r= -.197, p<.001) as well as gender (r=.129, p<.05). The experience of multiple forms of abuse was significantly correlated with Aboriginal Ethnicity (r = .124, p<.05), ethnicity “other” (r= -.159, p<.01), and gender (r= .133, p<.05).

Table 4: Correlations - Past Abuse/Demographic

	Sexual Abuse	Physical Abuse	Witness Fam.	Multiple Forms
Gender	**.430*****	**.141****	**.129***	**.133***
Age	-.015	-.018	.022	-.001
Caucasian	-.018	-.004	.036	.023
Aboriginal	**.156****	**.098**^{x}	**.146****	**.124***
Ethnicity Other	**-.140****	**-.097**^{x}	**-.197*****	**-.159****

*. p< 0.05 (1-tailed tests) ***. p<0.001
**. p< 0.01 ^{X} p=.05

Table 5: Correlations between Past Abuse and Adolescent Characteristics

Scales	Gender	Age	Caucasian	Aboriginal	Ethnicity Other	Sexual Abuse	Physical Abuse	Witness Fam.	Multiple Forms
Defiance	**-.108***	-.046	**.088**^{xa}	-.043	-.065	-.011	**.085**^{xa}	.073	.055
Aggression	**-.274*****	.038	**.116***	-.022	**-.121***	-.033	**.097**^{x}	.046	**.089**^{xa}
Compliance	-.056	.077	**-.195****	**.154****	.082	**-.101***	**-.096**^{X}	.005	-.084

N=278 ^{X} p=.05 (1-tailed tests)
*. p< 0.05 ^{xa} p=.07
. p< 0.01 *. p< 0.001

The second set of analysis was to examine correlations between demographics and past experiences of violence with the three different measures of adolescent characteristics; defiance, aggression, and compliance. Table 5 presents these correlations, which found that defiant adolescent characteristics

was significantly correlated with gender (*r*=-.108, p<.05) and Caucasian ethnicity (*r*=.088, p=.07) and also with past experiences of physical abuse (*r*=.085, p=.07). With regards to our Adolescent Aggression scale, it was found that physical abuse was significantly correlated, *r*= .097 (p=.05), as well as Gender (*r* = -.274, p<.001), Caucasian ethnicity (*r* = .116, p<.05), and Ethnicity "other" (*r* = -.121, p<.05). Furthermore, a moderately significant correlation was found between the aggression scale and those who have experienced multiple forms of abuse (*r*=.089, p=.07). Our third scale which included compliance characteristics was negatively correlated with past sexual abuse, *r*= -.101 (p<.05) and with physical abuse, *r*= -.096, (p=.05). The compliance characteristics scale was also significantly correlated with Aboriginal ethnicity, *r*=.154 (p<.01), and Caucasian ethnicity, *r*= -.195, (p<.01).

4.3 Multiple Regression

The first regression analysis completed was a multivariate linear regression controlling for demographics with prior violence and abuse as predictor variables for scores on the aggression scale. VIF and tolerance tests indicated high collinearity when "multiple forms" of abuse was included in the regression analysis at the same time as physical, sexual, and witness family abuse. Thus, the 5th block is actually a representation of a linear regression including demographics and "multiple forms" as a single predictor of aggression, defiance, and compliance.

Table 6: Regression Models of Prior Abuse and Aggressive Characteristics

6 displays the results from the sequential multiple regression. Entering only demographics into the first block, we see that Gender and Caucasian ethnicity contribute significantly to the prediction of aggression scores with β=-.278 for Gender (p<.001) and β = .178 (p<.05) for Caucasian (R^2 = .094, F=7.095, p<.001). The second block (R^2=.110, F=6.751, p<.001) in this regression included physical abuse which was a significant predictor (β=.129, p<.05), and gender (β=-.295) and Caucasian ethnicity (β=.167) were still significant contributors to the prediction of aggression scores. Physical abuse maintained its significant contribution (β= .118, p<.05) in the third block (R^2=.113, F=5.782, p<.001), when sexual abuse was introduced again in the fourth (R^2=.114, F=4.962, p<.001) and when witnessing family violence was included in the regression. Gender and Caucasian ethnicity remained as significant contributors throughout all levels, including the fifth (R^2=.106, F=6.456, p<.001) which only included “multiple forms of abuse” with demographics in the regression analysis and found that multiple forms of abuse did contribute significantly to the prediction of aggression (β=.112, p=.05).

Table 6: Regression Models of Prior Abuse and Aggressive Characteristics

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5
	β	β	β	β	β
Demographics					
Gender	**-.278*** **	**-.295*** **	**-.320*** **	**-.320*** **	**-.291*** **
Age	.005	.005	.002	.001	.003
Caucasian	**.178***	**.167***	**.160***	**.156***	**.160***
Aboriginal	.122	.104	.093	.089	.098
Prior Abuse/Violence					
Physical		**.129***	**.118***	**.114***	
Sexual			.064	.059	
Witness Violence				.024	
Multiple Forms					**.112[x]**
R^2	.094***	.110***	.113***	.114***	.106***

N=278

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (1-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

x. Moderately Significant p=.058

The second multiple regression analysis examined the predictive strength of previous experiences of maltreatment on levels of defiance in adolescents. According to Table 7, when considering only demographics in the first block, no predictors were significant contributors to the model (R^2= .023, p>.05). Within the second block (R^2=.033, p>.05), physical abuse was included in the model resulting in gender becoming a significant contributor (β -.128, p<.05). Gender

remained as the only significant predictor of defiance when sexual abuse was included (R^2=.033, gender β =-.136, *p*<.05), when witness family violence was included (R^2= .037, gender β =-.137, *p*<.05), and when multiple forms of abuse was included (R^2=.027, gender β =-.122, *p*<.05). The model as a whole was not significant.

Table 7: Regression Models of Prior Abuse and Defiant Characteristics

	Block 1	**Block 2**	**Block 3**	**Block 4**	**Block 5**
	β	β	β	β	β
Demographics					
Gender	-.114x[a]	-.**128***	**-.136***	**-.137***	**-.122***
Age	-.061	-.061	-.062	-.065	-.062
Caucasian	.103	.094	.092	.081	.092
Aboriginal	.032	.018	.015	.001	.018
Prior Abuse/Violence					
Physical		.101x[b]	.097	.084	
Sexual			.022	.010	
Witness Violence				.065	
Multiple Forms					.067
R^2	.023	.033	.033	.037	.027

Note: F was non-significant for all 5 models
N=278
***. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (1-tailed). x[a] p=.06
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed). x[b] p=.09
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

The third and final multiple regression analysis is shown in Table 8 and considered the significance of previous maltreatment with regards to its

prediction of compliance characteristics. When considering only demographics in the model (R^2= .050, p<.01) , Caucasian ethnicity came out as a significant predictor of compliance with a negative relationship (β= -.158, p<.05). Caucasian ethnicity remained a significant predictor (β=-.150,p<.05) in the second block which included physical abuse (R^2= .059, p<.01), but not in the third block with the addition of sexual abuse (R^2= .065, p<.01). Interestingly, when witness family abuse was added to the model in block 4 (R^2= .067, p<.01) Caucasian ethnicity retained significance (β =.-.148, p<.05) and remained significant (β =-.145, p<.05) when multiple forms of abuse was included (R^2= .056, p<.01)

Table 8: Regression Models of Prior Abuse and Compliance Characteristics

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5
	β	β	β	β	β
Demographics					
Gender	-.062	-.049	-.012	-.013	-.051
Age	.072	.073	.077	.075	.074
Caucasian	-.158*	-.150*	-.140	-.148*	-.145*
Aboriginal	.064	.078	.093	.083	.082
Prior Abuse/Violence					
Physical		-.096	-.080	-.089	
Sexual			-.092	-.101	
Witness Violence				.049	
Multiple Forms					-.084
R^2	.050**	.059**	.065**	.067**	.056**

N=278

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (1-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between childhood maltreatment and later adolescent characteristics, such as aggression, defiance, and lack of compliance, and to see if childhood maltreatment was a predictor of these characteristics in adolescence. Our results have found weak, but significant correlations between prior abuse and adolescent characteristics, as well as evidence suggesting a weak predictive capability of prior abuse with regards to adolescent characteristics. The meaning of these findings will be discussed as well as the implications and limitations of the study.

Similar to previous studies, this study found that a large majority of youth in this sample experienced some form of childhood maltreatment. Previous research (Widom, 1998) also found that individuals who experienced childhood maltreatment were almost twice as likely to be arrested than children who were not maltreated and were “of the same gender, age and race who grew up in the same neighbourhood or who was born in the same hospital at the same time” (p.226). In the current study, three times as many incarcerated youth reported experiencing childhood maltreatment than not.

Having found that such a high proportion of the sample experienced some form of childhood maltreatment is important to consider as it confirms the findings of previous studies and draws attention to the importance of identifying and treating the impacts of childhood maltreatment not only within correctional

facilities, but also prior to entering the justice system. It is also important since previous research has indicated that, not only are abused children most likely to be incarcerated during adolescence, but they are also more likely to commit twice as many offenses (Widom, 2003). Since 75% of this sample indicated that they experienced childhood maltreatment, we could speculate that a high percentage of these youth are at an even higher risk of reoffending later in life which increases the importance of developing effective intervention strategies to help youth cope with previous experiences of maltreatment.

When looking at the relationship between gender and childhood maltreatment, a positive and significant relationship was found between females and experiencing childhood maltreatment with the strongest relationship being between females and sexual abuse. This finding has been found n previous research (Runyon et al., 2006) and is important to consider because, as discussed earlier, various studies (Johnson and Kenkel, 1991; Leitenberg, Geenwald, and Cado, 1992; 35, as cited in Runyon et al., 2006) suggested that coping strategies of those who experienced sexual abuse included avoidance, self-blame, or denial which tended to foster more negative emotional and psychological reactions to childhood sexual victimization.

When looking at the bivariate correlations, it was interesting to find that Aboriginals were at an increased risk of experiencing all forms of childhood maltreatment, but they had a positive significant relationship with compliant characteristics, which is the opposite of what we would expect to find. For example, according to previous research, common emotional responses to

abuse include anger and hostility, aggressive outbursts, and other externalized violent behaviour (Runyon et al., 2006; Briere, 1992; Johnston et al., 2002). This leads us to question why Aboriginals, although correlated with childhood maltreatment, were considered more compliant in this detention facility. One of the reasons why our results indicated that Aboriginals had an increased chance of experiencing sexual abuse and were found to have increased levels of compliance could be related to a sense of learned helplessness or internalized reactions to childhood abuse.

As mentioned above, some authors have found that youth who experienced childhood maltreatment may have internalized problems that would make them seem more compliant. Dietrich (2002) found that internalized reactions to childhood maltreatment could consist of behaviours, such as youth being well behaved, doing as they are told, and being very quiet. Dietrich (2002) suggested that individuals displayed these compliant behavioural characteristics because they felt they had no control over their life situation and formed a sense of learned helplessness. Furthermore, according to Dietrich (2002), youth who reacted by internalizing their feelings were at an increased risk of adult revictimization. Thus, it is important that if it is the case that sexually abused Aboriginal young offenders internalize their behaviours and appearing to be more compliant or have developed a sense of learned helplessness, they do not go through the system without their internalized problems being addressed.

Another interesting result of this analysis was the weak relationship between defiance/aggression and prior abuse. As mentioned before, many

studies (Dahlberg and Simon, 2008; Shirk, 1998; Hosser et al., 2007; Widom, 1998; Vandergoot, 2006; Straus, 1988) found that youth who have experienced childhood maltreatment are more likely to be aggressive and violent, have more incidence of hitting others and violent outbursts, and are less compliant. One reason for such a weak relationship could be the current sample population. Widom's (1998;2003) study consisted of a longitudinal study that followed a cohort of maltreated children and, although her findings indicated maltreated youth were more likely to be aggressive and defiant, her sample consisted of both criminal and non-criminal youth. The sample for the current study included only incarcerated youth which would minimize the variation of defiance and aggression amongst the sample. In future studies, it would be beneficial to conduct this analysis with a sample that is both criminal and non-criminal.

It is important to focus on the multiple regression which was conducted in response to the research question and research hypotheses which are first repeated and then discussed below.

Research Question: Can we predict that incarcerated youth who have experienced childhood maltreatment will have higher levels of aggression, defiance, or compliance in adolescence. If so, does the type of abuse or violence witnessed have a different predictive strength of adolescent characteristics?

> H1: Incarcerated youth who have experienced one or more types of maltreatment, when compared with those without extensive levels of maltreatment, are predicted to have an increased level of aggression.
>
> H2: Incarcerated youth who have experienced one or more types of maltreatment, when compared with those without extensive levels

of maltreatment, are predicted to have an increased level of deviance.

H3: Incarcerated youth who have experienced one or more types of maltreatment, when compared with those without extensive levels of maltreatment, are predicted to have a decreased level of compliance.

H4: The type of maltreatment experienced in childhood will have different predictive capabilities of behavioural characteristics during adolescents.

With regards to the first hypothesis, we found that physical abuse did contribute significantly to the prediction of aggressive characteristics, but sexual abuse and witness family abuse did not. We also found that experiencing multiple forms of abuse was a significant predictor of aggressive characteristics in adolescence; however, both physical abuse and multiple forms of abuse were not strong predictors. These findings within the first multiple regression analysis would suggest that we would reject the first hypothesis since the predictive strength of types of abuse was so weak. Again, it is surprising that the different types of prior abuse did not have a stronger predictive capability of aggression since, as mentioned above, this was a consistent finding in previous studies. Again, perhaps the lack of strong predictive significance can be attributed to the sample distribution.

The second research hypothesis was also rejected. The result indicated that no types of prior abuse enabled us to predict the level of defiance in adolescence. These findings were also inconsistent with previous research (Dahlberg and Simon, 2008; Shirk, 1998; Hosser et al., 2007; Widom, 1998;

Vandergoot, 2006; Straus, 1988) which consistently found increased levels of defiance amongst those who had experienced previous childhood maltreatment. Again, the lack of significant findings could be attributed to the research design and also to the sample distribution.

Similar to the first two research hypotheses, the third hypothesis was also rejected as no types of prior abuse were significant when predicting levels of compliance. We would have expected that prior abuse or certain types of abuse would predict lack of compliance, however none of them came out as a significant predictor. Again, these findings are inconsistent with previous research as described earlier.

The final hypothesis was closest to being validated. When looking at the regression model focused on aggressive characteristics, physical abuse was a significant predictor of that characteristic, where other types of childhood maltreatment were not significant. Physical maltreatment remained significant even when the other types of maltreatment were entered into the model one by one. However, the predictive strength of physical abuse was quite weak, so it is difficult to confidently accept the fourth hypothesis.

When attempting to explain the weak or no predictive strength of prior abuse, it is necessary to consider the time frame following the childhood maltreatment. Since this study was unable to control for age-of-onset for abuse, it is not possible to identify how much time has passed between the abuse incident and incarceration. One of the reasons why there may not have been a stronger significant predictive capability could be because not enough time had passed to

allow the effects of the abuse to take place. As mentioned by Runyon et al. (2006), some children might suffer from PTSD, depression, and other severe psychological disorders immediately following their abuse, other children were found to seem asymptomatic and it was not until years later that they started to show signs of trauma. Perhaps as more time passes, youth will start to show stronger behavioural reactions to abuse experienced in childhood which could be captured in a follow up study.

6: IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATION

6.1 Implications

It is important to conduct more research to gain a better understanding of the consequences of childhood maltreatment. As discussed by Widom et al. (2007), individuals who are abused and neglected are at an increased risk of re-victimization later in adulthood. Not only is this a problem that will continue the vicious cycle of violence, but childhood maltreatment can increase levels of violence and aggression, thus increasing the potential for more victims of abuse. Hosser et al. (2007) argued that the links between child maltreatment and later victimization can be the starting point for a potential chain reaction of violence across the lifetime. In addition, the increased levels of aggression and delinquent behaviour is troublesome when considering the intergenerational transmission of aggression. Shirk (1992) proposed that abused children were more likely to become abusive parents, and until their previous experiences of maltreatment are dealt with, the cycle of violence will not be corrected.

Perhaps a better understanding of the impact that early childhood victimization has during adolescence can assist in the development of more appropriate interventions that are specific not only to young offender's current needs, but also their past histories and experiences. However, in order to make a step towards these specialized interventions, more attention and discussion is needed with regards to understanding childhood maltreatment pre-incarceration,

reasons for increased risk of victimization and/or violent behaviour, and also how this risk is carried over and manifested in adolescence to better identify the specific needs of youth and minimize the continuance of the cycle of violence.

Once more information is gathered about the impacts of childhood victimization on behaviour later in life, it is important to intervene in a way that will interrupt the cycle of violence and offset the adolescent's delinquent and violent life trajectory. Briere (1992) recommended that specific programs should be administered to those who have suffered from physical abuse in the past as a way to mediate or decrease the chances of future aggression and violent offending. The following points are a few suggestions and possible implications of this study:

1) It is important that we make sure any incidents of childhood victimization are well documented to intervene later in life if these youth return to custody.

2) We need to better understand what distinguishes abused youth who fall into the category of becoming aggressive, defiant, or compliant after experiencing childhood maltreatment.

3) According to the literature, adjustment problems can predict institutional behaviour, thus attention should be directed towards mediating any adjustment problems that the young person may experience as they become more familiar with their new surroundings. In relation to adjustment problems, Vandergoot (2002) found that adjustment problems can be moderated by social support from significant others and from correctional staff. With that being said, focus should

be placed on increasing perceived social support of the young offender in an attempt to reduce their adjustment difficulties, which could result in fewer aggressive outbursts.

6.2 Limitations

Because this information was collected primarily based on self-report interviews, there could always be limitations with the data accuracy. It is possible that the individual may not have felt comfortable answering the question or talking about past childhood experiences to the research assistant which would result in false results.

It is also possible that the study did not captured the outcome behaviours or consequences of child abuse because, as mentioned before, it can sometimes take many years or even decades for the effects of child abuse to be recognized. According to Smith and Sagarzi (2003), “the emotional toll on a juvenile who has been a victim of neglect or maltreatment can never truly be measured” (p.95) and it is likely that reports of abuse may underestimate the prevalence of maltreatment. To address this limitation, it would be valuable to conduct a follow-up study with individuals included in this sample to see if there is a difference between the abused versus non-abused with regards to adult characteristics.

This study is also limited with regards to its generaizability to all children and adolescents. Because the sample consists of youth who were incarcerated, the sample cannot be considered representative of the general public. Future research should consider collecting information from a sample that is both

criminal and non-criminal in order to obtain more accurate and generalizable results.

7: CONCLUSION

The goal of this thesis was to examine the relationship between childhood maltreatment and adolescent characteristics. Our objective was to determine if childhood maltreatment could act as a significant predictor of later adolescent characteristics, such as aggression and defiance, or if some youth became more compliant. To do this, various statistical analyses were conducted, including bivariate correlations, principle component analysis, and sequential multiple regression. The sample included violent young offenders located in a secure youth detention facility located in B.C.

The results found that a large majority of incarcerated young offenders had experienced some form of childhood maltreatment This finding supported previous research literature which indicated that a large percentage of abused children later become violent or criminal during adolescents and adulthood. This study also found a of weak but significant correlation between childhood maltreatment and aggression.

Interestingly, within the bivariate correlations, it was found that, even though Aboriginal young offenders had significant correlations with all forms of childhood maltreatment, which according to the literature would suggest that they would be more aggressive and defiant. The results indicated that that they were significantly more compliant. This finding is important as it suggests that there is a possibility that Aboriginal young offenders internalize their reactions to the

abuse they experienced which, in the long-run, could be more detrimental as it is possible the internalized problems they are dealing with are going unidentified and untreated. It is important that we do not see compliance not necessarily be seen as a healthy behavioural outcome of childhood maltreatment, but that we continue to monitor the behaviour of these youth and offer appropriate interventions.

The sequential multiple regression was used as a means to identify whether or not we could adequately predict adolescent characteristics based on previous childhood maltreatment. Due to the weak predictive capability of childhood maltreatment on all three of our adolescent characteristics scales, all four of our hypotheses were rejected. These findings are not supported in the literature, as previous research has indicated that physical abuse, sexual abuse, witnessing family violence, and experiencing multiple forms of childhood maltreatment are all significant predictors and highly correlated with adolescent aggression and defiance. One of the possible reasons why stronger correlations and predictions were not found in this study could be attributed to the research design, the self-reported data, or perhaps not enough time passed between the event in childhood and the interview during adolescents. Previous research has indicated that there is, at times, a delay between the event and the subsequent negative behaviour, which means it could take many years for the effect of the abuse to become externalized.

When looking into the relationship between previous childhood abuse and adolescent characteristics, future research should take into consideration the age

of onset of the abuse, whom the abuser was, and the duration of the abuse. This information was not included in the current study due to availability; however, it is believed that the more information gathered about childhood abuse, the more specialized interventions can become which will enable us to effectively treat those who have suffered.

REFERENCE LIST

Beitchman, J., Zucker, K., Hood, J., daCosta, G., Akman, D., Cassavia, E. (1992). *Child Abuse and Neglect*. 16(1).

Boney-McCoy, S., Finkelhor, D. (1995). Prior Victimization: A risk factor for child sexual abuse and for PTSD-related symptomatology among sexually abused youth. *Child Abuse and Neglect*. 19(12).

Briere, J., (1992). Child Abuse Trauma: Theory and Treatment of the Lasting Effects. Sage Publications:London.

Chaffin, M., and Schmidt, S. (2006). An Evidence-Based Perspective on Interventions to Stop or Prevent Child Abuse. In J. Lutzker, *Preventing Violence: Research and evidence-based intervention strategies.* (pp. 49 - 68). Washington, D.C. : American Psychological Association.

Dahlberg, L., and Simon, T. (2006). Predicting and Preventing Youth Violence: Developmental Pathways and Risk. In J. Lutzker, *Preventing Violence: Research and evidence-based intervention strategies.* (pp. 97-124). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

The Department of Justice Canada (2008) Child Abuse Fact Sheet. canada2.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/fv-vf/child-enf.pdf Retrieved February 11th, 2008.

Dietrich, A. (2002). Childhood Maltreatment and Re-Victimization: The role of affect deregulation, interpersonal relatedness difficulties, and post traumatic stress disorder. A report conducted for the Vancouver General Hospital.

Desai, S., Arias, I., Thompson, M., Basile, K. (2002). Childhood victimization and subsequent adult revictimization assessed in a nationally representative sample of women and men. *Violence and Victims*. 17(6).

Education Wife Assault (2001). www.womanabuseprevention.com. Retrieved January 5th, 2008.

Harvey, J. (2007). *Young Men in Prison: Surviving and adapting to life inside.* Portland, OR. : Willian Publishing.

Hay, Tom, David Allen (1997). Childhood and Youth Division. Health Canada.

Hosser, D., Raddatz, S., and Windzio, M. (2007). Child Maltreatment, Revictimization and Violent Behaviour. *Violence and Victims*, 318 - 333.

Johnson, R., Kotch, J., Catellier, D., Winsor, J., Dufort, V., Hunter, W., Amaya-Jackson, A. (2002). Adverse behavioural and emotional outcomes from child abuse and witnessed violence. *Child Maltreatment*. 7(3).

Kashani, J. H., and Allan, W. D. (1998). *The Impact of Family Violence on Children and Adolescents.* Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Koenig, L., Doll, L., O'Leary, A., Pequegnat, W. (2004). From Child Sexual Abuse to Adult Sexual Risk: Trauma, Revictimization, and Intervention. American Psychological Association: Washington DC.

MacMillian, H., Boyle, M., Wong, M., Duku, E., Fleming, Jan., Walsh, C., (1999). Slapping and spanking in childhood and its association with lifetime prevalance of psychiatric disorders in a general population sample. CMAJ, 161 (7).

Meadows, R. J. (2001). *Understanding Violence and Victimization.* Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Moffitt, T. E., Caspi, A., Harrington, H., and Milne, B. (2002). Males on the life-course-persistant and adolescent-limited antisocial pathways: Follow-up at age 26. *Development and Psychopathology , 14*, 179-207.

Morgan, R. (2009). Children in Custody. In M. Blyth, R. Newman, and C. Wright, *Children and young people in custody: Managing the risk.* (pp. 9-22). Portland, OR. : The Policy Press.

Office for Victims of, C. (2002). Children as Victims and Witnesses. In D. Shichor, and S. G. Tibbets, *Victims and Victimization* (pp. 81- 102). Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc.

Rich, C., Gidycz, C., Warkentin, J., Loh, C., Weiland, P. (2005). Child and adolescent abuse and subsequent victimization: A prospective study. *Child Abuse and Neglect*. 29 (p.1373 -1394).

Runyon, M. K., Kenny, M. C., Berry, E. J., Deblinger, E., and Brown, E. J. (2006). Etiology and Surveillance in Child Maltreatment. In J. R. Lutzker, *Preventing Violence: Research and Evidence-Based Intervention Strategies* (pp. 23 - 47). Washington, D.C.: American Psychology Association.

Sagarzi, J., and McDevitt, J. (2002). *Victimology: A study of crime and their roles.* Prentice Hall:USA.

Sampson, R. J., and Laub, J. H. (1992). Crime and Deviance in the Life-course. *Annual Review of Sociology* , 63-84.

Sampson, R. J., and Laub, J. H. (1993). *Crime in the Making: Pathways and turning points through life. .* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Schaaf, K., McCanne. T., (1998). Relationship of childhood sexual, physical, and combined sexual and physical abuse to adult victimization and posttraumatic stress disorder. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 22(11).

Shirk, S. R. (1988). The Interpersonal Legacy of Physical Abuse of Children . In M. B. Straus, *Abuse and Victimization across the Life Span* (pp. 57-81). Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press.

Sink, F. (1988). Sexual Abuse in the Lives of Children. In M. B. Straus, *Abuse and Victimization across the Life Span* (pp. 82 - 106). Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press.

Straus, M. B. (1988). Abused Adolescents . In M. B. Straus, *Abuse and Victimization across the Life Span* (pp. 107 - 123). Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press.

Thornberry, T. P., and Krohn, M. D. (2005). ApplyingInteractional Theory to the Explanation of Continuity and Change in Antisocial Behaviour. In D. Farrington, *Integrated Developmental and Life-Course Theories of Offending* (pp. 183-209). New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Toch, H., and Adams, K. (2002). *Acting Out: Maladaptive Behaviour in Confinement.* Washington, DC.: American Psychological Association.

Tyler, K. A., and Johnson, K. A. (2006). A Longitudinal Study of the Effects of Early Abuse on Later Victimization Among High-Risk Adolescents. . *Violence and Victims* , 287-306.

van der Lann, A. M., Vervoorn, L., van der Schans, C. A., and Bogaerts, S. (2008). *Being Inside: An explorative study into emotional reactions of juvenile offenders to custody. .* Netherlands: Boom Juridische uitgevers.

Vandergoot, M. E. (2006). *Justice for young offenders: Their needs, our responses.* Saskatoon, SA: Purich Publishing Ltd.

Widom, C. S. (1998). Child Victims: Searching for opportunities to break the cycle of violence. *Applied and Preventive Psychology , 7*, 225-234.

Widom, C. S. (2003). Understanding Child Maltreatment and Juvenile Delinquency: The Research. In J. Wiig, C. Widom, and J. Tuell, *Understanding child maltreatment and juvenile delinquency. From research to effective program practice and systematic solutions* (pp. 1-10). Washington, DC.: CWLA Press.

Widom, C. S., Czaja, S. J., and Dutton, M. A. (2008). Childhood victimization and lifetime revictimization. *Child Abuse and Neglect , 32*, 758-796.

Wind, T., Silvern, L. (1992). Type and extent of child abuse as predictors of adult functioning. *Journal of Family Violence*. 7(4).