

TITLE: The influence of delinquent peers on academic achievement: Direct effects or genetic predispositions?

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KEYWORDS: gene-environment correlation, academic achievement, delinquent peers, adolescence, twin study

ABSTRACT: Affiliation with delinquent peers has been associated with negative outcomes in adolescents' academic achievement¹. Homophilia, a process by which individuals create friendships with peers who share similar characteristics, could partly explain the affiliation with delinquent peers². Moreover, the association between academic achievement and affiliation with delinquent peers could stem from underlying genetic factors involved in homophilia, rather than from an actual effect of peers. The aims of this study were to determine if the academic achievement of adolescents was associated with their affiliation with delinquent peers, and if this association was explained by genetic factors. The sample was drawn from the Quebec Newborn Twin Study, a longitudinal follow-up of a birth cohort of twins ($n = 421$ pairs of twins)³.

Delinquent behaviors and academic achievement were measured when adolescents and their peers were 15 years old. Questionnaires were completed by the twins, their parents, and their peers. Results showed that adolescents' academic achievement was associated with their affiliation with delinquent peers and that this association was completely explained by adolescents' genetic factors. These results suggest that adolescents' academic achievement is explained by their own genetic predispositions rather than influenced by the delinquent behavior of their peers.

¹Gremmen et al. (2019). *Child Dev*, 90(2), e192–e211.

²McPherson et al. (2001). *Annu Rev Sociol*, 27(1), 415-444.

³Boivin et al. (2019). *Twin Res Hum Genet*, 22(6), 475-481.

GRANT SUPPORT: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC),
The Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR)