



The Relationship Between Parental Neglect and Delinquency

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Introduction

- Children are equally susceptible to delinquent tendencies, but, their ability to defer juvenile acts comes from personal social controls (Snyder 2014, Chung 2006).
- Situational factors are a driving contributor to delinquency, the most prominent situational factor being a lack of tangible guardians (Van 2009, Vanderminden 2019).
- Findings demonstrate the significant effect that the environment surrounding youth, and who the youth associate with, has a negative impact on their behavior (Kurpiel 2024, Yan 2023).

Research Question

- Is there a relationship between early exposure to parental neglect and juvenile delinquent tendencies?

Methods

Sample

- Respondents (n=6,504) were drawn from Wave 1 of The U.S. National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), a study surveying students between the grades of 7 and 12 in the United States on their overall health.

Measures

- Delinquency was defined by three categorical dummy variables describing participants engagement in violence, graffiti, and shoplifting.
- Participants' perception of how much parental attention they received and how well they were understood by their family made up the variable neglect. Possible responses ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).
- Learned conflict is a dummy third variable added to control for any additional effects.

Results

Bivariate

- Chi-Squared analysis showed that delinquency was significantly associated with both 5-level explanatory variables, independently ($p < 0.001$).
- There was a higher frequency of delinquent behavior for adolescents who reported lower attention (Fig. 1).

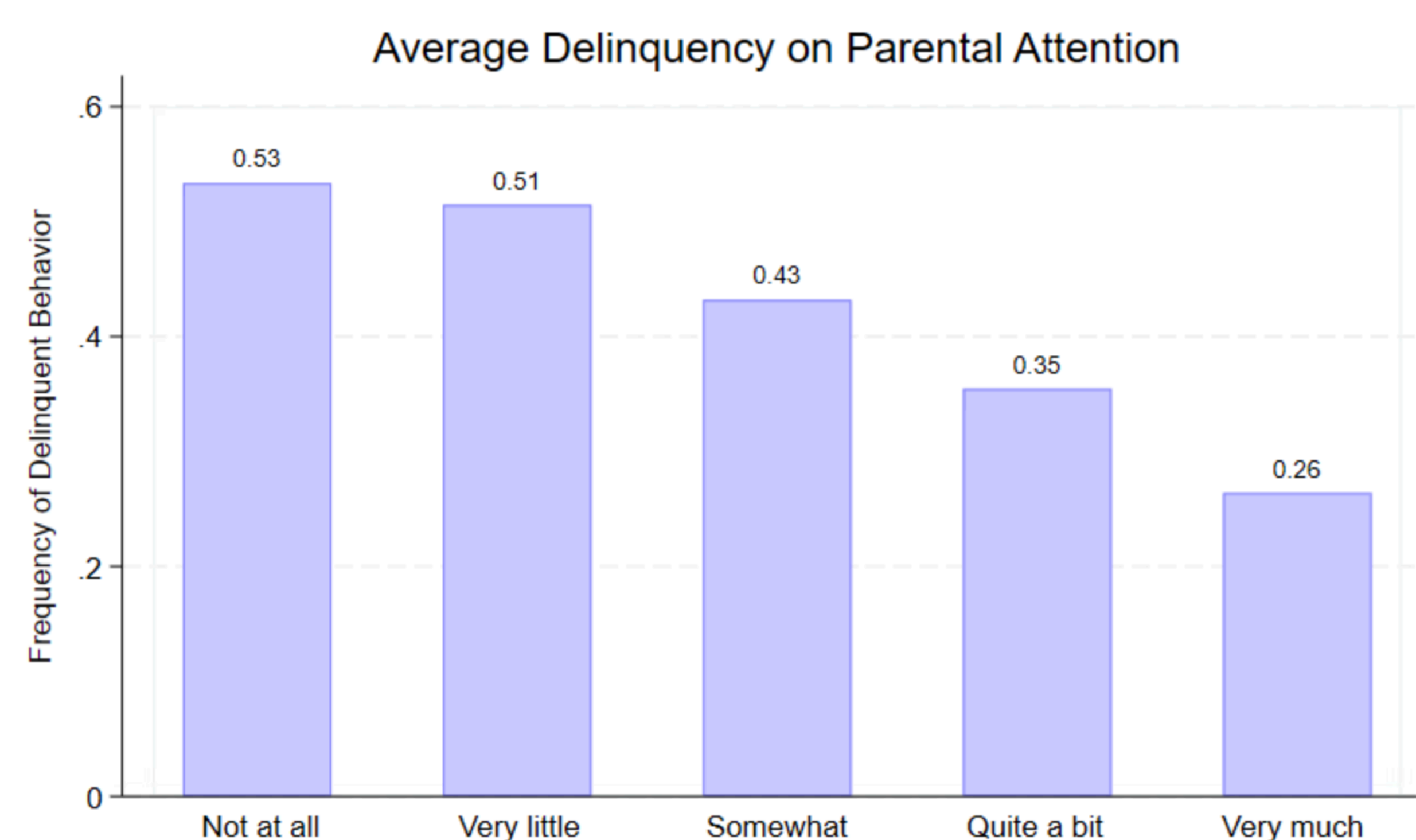


Figure 1: The Frequency of Delinquency to Parental Attention (main explanatory variable)

Multivariate

- Logistic regression analyses showed that more parental attention is significantly less likely to influence delinquency (OR 0.347, $p < 0.000$), compared to those who receive little attention (OR 2.08, $p < 0.001$).
- Learned conflict significantly controls for the relationship between delinquency and parental attention (OR 0.166, $p < 0.000$) (Fig. 2).
- Learning how to deal with conflict can decrease delinquency by 14.3%.

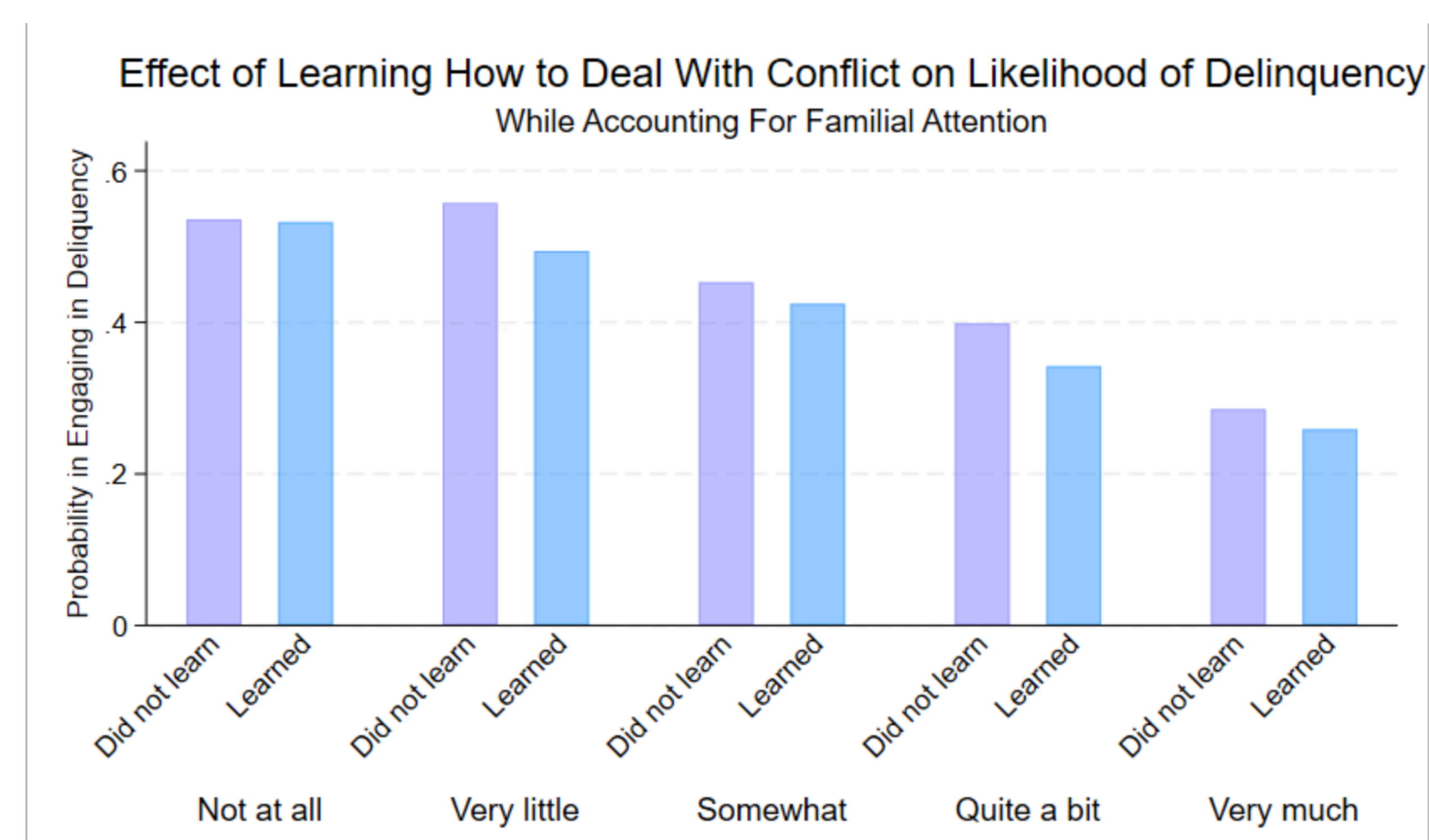


Figure 2: Frequency of Engaging in Delinquency by Whether or Not Adolescents Learned to Deal With Conflict on Parental Attention

Discussion

- As parental attention and familial acknowledgment increase, adolescents are less likely to engage in delinquent behaviors.
- These findings can help identify roles parents must take, and programs we must implement to decrease crime.
- Future research can control other confounders for delinquency, and can also study delinquency in other context to contribute to further understanding.

References

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