Gender Differences in Drug Use: Testing Power-Control Theory

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Research Question
Do patterns of drug use differ by gender?

To what extent can John Hagan’s Power-Control Theory Explain this?

Power-Control Theory
Main Argument: Girls are subject to more social control in the family than boys.

“males in more patriarchal homes are more likely than females to interpret risk taking as pleasurable and believe that they can avoid the negative consequences associated with risky pursuits” (McCarthy, Hagan, Woodward 1999)

Data and Methods
2004 wave of the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH 2004)
Sample Size: 913 adolescents
Target Population: Adolescents ages 12 to 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argue with parents</td>
<td>26.5% more likely to use illicit drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit TV</td>
<td>40% less likely to use illicit drugs</td>
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<tr>
<td>24% less likely to use illicit drugs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Check Homework</td>
<td>29% less likely to use illicit drugs</td>
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</tbody>
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Conclusion
Do adolescent boys report using drugs more than adolescent girls?
No
No significant differences between boys and girls for any of the drugs examined

Hagan’s theory suggests that girls should be more controlled in the family than boys

Support: It was reported that parents limit adolescent girls’ time spent with friends and that girls fight/argue with their parents more than boys

Therefore, there is inconsistent support for Hagan’s Theory.