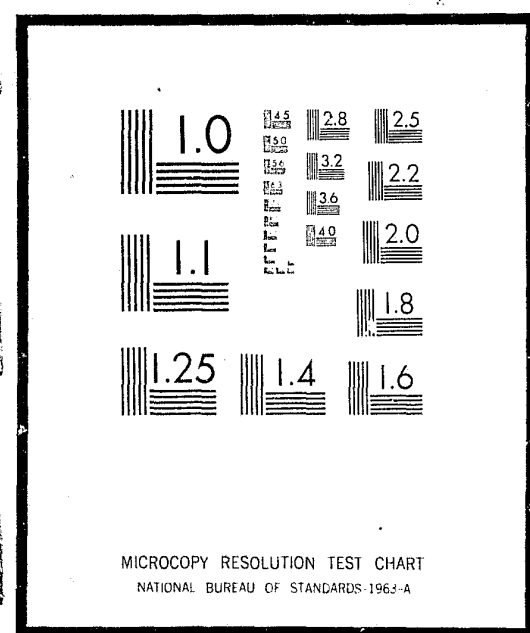


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SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT
VICTORIA

ANALYSIS OF ESCAPEES FROM YOUTH TRAINING CENTRES

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Melbourne - Australia
1973

SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT

Victoria

Research and Statistics Division

ANALYSIS OF ESCAPEES FROM

YOUTH TRAINING CENTRES

by

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Director of Research and Statistics

NOTES

DEC 28 1976

ACQUISITIONS

MELBOURNE - AUSTRALIA

1973

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NOTE: For the purposes of this paper 'Not significant' means a $P > 0.05$, 'Significant' $P < 0.05$ to $P > 0.01$, 'Very significant' $P < 0.01$, and 'Highly significant' means that probability is well below this level.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this analysis is to determine whether certain of the 'hard data' available to the Classification Committee of the Youth Welfare Division (when it is making its decision relating to the placement and treatment of a newly-received youth) gives an indication whether the youth is more or less prone to escape than the 'average' trainee.

METHOD USED

This study is built into a census of the population of youth training centres in Victoria on the night 11-12 March, 1972. This census analyses both male and female detainees by various personal characteristics such as age, ethnic background, marital status of parents, type of prior accommodation, education, employment and so on. It also shows the reason why the youths are detained and their delinquent history. All the information which was included in the census is gathered at the time when the youth is admitted and, therefore, is available to the Classification Committee.

When the census was taken, excluding the 30 youths who were detained on remand, 129 male youths were detained. Of these 129, or about one-quarter, had a history of escape from a youth training centre: 86 had escaped once, 28 twice, 7 three times, 7 four times and 1 five times.

FINDINGS

1. Age.

The analysis of the age when these youths escaped, or the age at the first escape of the 43 multiple-escape cases, shows that almost three of every five who escaped had not yet reached their 16th birthday and that only one in seven was 17 years or older.

	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
15 years and under	76	58.9
16 years	35	27.1
17 years	11	8.5
18 years	5	3.9
19 years and over	2	1.6
	<u>129</u>	<u>100.0</u>

2. Living with.

Living with immediately before the youth's admission gives very significant results. Those who had been living with 'mother only' have

shown themselves a small risk, while those who had been living with non-relatives or in an institution have a very high propensity to escape.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
Both parents	257	61	23.7
Mother only	77	10	13.0
Father only, wife, other relative	63	16	25.4
With non-relative	39	16	41.0
Institution	22	11	50.0
All other	61	15	24.6
	<u>519</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>24.9</u>

Very significant

3. Number of children in family.

While the number of children in the family does not show any statistical significance, the figures are still indicative that as the number of children increases so does the likelihood of escape.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
1	19	2	10.5
2 - 3	129	32	24.8
4 - 5	163	33	20.4
6 - 7	123	35	28.5
8 and over	85	27	31.8
	<u>519</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>24.9</u>

Not significant

4. Religion.

Religion, as stated by the youths, shows no statistical significance. The only thing one might note is that the Presbyterian and Methodist group shows a slightly higher proneness than other groups.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
Catholic	199	51	25.6
Church of England	186	42	22.6
Presbyterian and Methodist	71	21	29.6
Other	49	11	22.4
No religion and not known	14	4	28.6
	<u>519</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>24.9</u>

Not significant

5. Type of accommodation.

The type of accommodation before admission has no significance at all. Housing Commission accommodation does not mean that the degree of escape risk has been affected.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
Private house	307	76	24.6
Private flat	53	12	22.6
Housing Commission	102	26	25.5
Other	57	15	26.3
	—	—	—
	519	129	24.9
	==	==	==

Not significant

6. Country of birth.

While the country of birth of the youth does not show statistical significance, it is still of interest that those born in Britain and Ireland seem to be twice as escape-prone as other migrant youths.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
Australia	459	113	24.6
Britain and Ireland	20	8	40.0
Other	40	8	20.0
	—	—	—
	519	129	24.9
	==	==	==

Not significant

7. Age when left school.

The age when the youth left school is highly significant. Those who left school before their 15th birthday - that is, before education ceases to be compulsory - represent a high risk; while those who had passed their 16th birthday when they left school, or who were still at school at the time of their admission, represent a relatively low risk.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
14 and under	182	69	37.9
15	227	44	19.4
16 and over	49	6	12.2
Still at school	61	10	16.4
	—	—	—
	519	129	24.9
	==	==	==

Highly significant

8. Last level attended at school and the level of those still at school.

The last level of school attended merely reinforces the findings in 'age when left school'. It is statistically highly significant that those who did not reach Form II have a one in two probability of escaping, while those who have reached Form IV have a one in six probability.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
Primary and Form I	60	32	53.3
Form II	137	35	25.5
Form III	230	46	20.0
Form IV and over	92	16	17.4
	—	—	—
	<u>519</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>24.9</u>

Highly significant

9. History of truancy from school.

A history of truancy from school while statistically significant is only moderately so.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	277	85	30.7
No	242	44	18.2
	—	—	—
	<u>519</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>24.9</u>

Significant

10. Employment.

Whether a youth is still at school, employed or unemployed is also a very significant factor. While those still at school (as already mentioned) represent a relatively low risk, those unemployed have a high probability of escaping.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
Still at school	61	10	16.4
Employed	234	45	19.2
Unemployed	224	74	33.0
	—	—	—
	<u>519</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>24.9</u>

Very significant

11. Longest time on a job.

The length of time a youth had spent on a job has very high significance. The longer he lasted in a job the less likely he is not to escape. Those who did not hold a job for more than six months represent a high risk, while those who held a job for more than one year represent a low risk.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
3 months or less	96	35	36.5
4 to 6 months	118	40	33.9
7 to 12 months	129	25	19.4
13 months and over	98	15	15.3
Never had a job (school, etc.)	78	14	17.9
	<u>519</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>24.9</u>

Highly significant

12. Wardship.

Whether the youth is or was a ward of the State is another very significant factor. 'Wards not under sentence' who had been admitted into the care of the Department as a result of a care and protection application, plus all the non-wards who had been sentenced to detention, represent a relatively small risk. On the other hand, wards and ex-wards who are detained in the youth training centre because they are under sentence represent a high risk.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
Wards not under sentence:			
For offences	59	16	27.1
Other	44	6	13.6
Wards (past and present) under sentence	163	65	39.9
Non-wards under sentence	253	42	16.6
	<u>519</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>24.9</u>

Very significant

13. Whether offence committed alone or in company.

Whether the youth has committed the offence alone or in company has no significance as regards his proneness to escape.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
Alone	147	34	24.1
In company	372	95	25.5
	<u>519</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>24.9</u>

Not significant

14. Did alcohol/drug play a part in the offence?

Whether alcohol or a drug played a part in committing the offence for which sentenced to detention is another matter of no significance.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
No	382	97	25.4
Yes	137	32	23.6
	519	129	24.9
			<u>Not significant</u>

15. Number of known previous offences.

Finally, the number of known previous offences is a very significant factor. As the number of known previous offences increases so does the likelihood of escaping. Those who have no known previous offences have a one-in-ten, while those who have committed five or more known previous offences have a one-in-six, proneness to escape.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Escapees</u>	<u>%</u>
0	70	7	10.0
1 to 2	225	42	18.7
3 to 4	170	49	28.9
5 and over	54	31	57.4
	519	129	24.9
			<u>Very significant</u>

CONCLUSION

In sum, eight factors seem to give an indication whether a youth is prone or not prone to escape from a youth training centre. They are: his age, with whom he was living immediately before admission, age when he left school, last level of school attended, employment, longest time in a job, number of known previous offences, and his history of wardship. No doubt there are other significant factors within the hard data ambit. Among these may be the length of the sentence to detention, level of intelligence and various psychological aspects. These factors were not included because insufficient data was available. One can only guess whether the inclusion of these variables would have represented an important improvement as regards this study.

The Classification Committee may find it worthwhile to have a roneoed form, as the one set out on the next page, that can be marked for every youth before he appears before it. The information this would reveal could assist the Committee when it makes its decision.

In conclusion one point must be stressed. The information derived from the form will not predict whether the youth will escape or not - it will only indicate that, if certain circumstances should arise that will tempt him to escape, whether he is more or less likely to do so.

DEGREE OF ESCAPE RISK

	Low	Average	High
Age	17 years and over	16 years	15 years and under
Living with	Mother only	Other	With non-relatives or institutions
Age when left school	16 years and over	15 years	14 years and under
Last level of school attended	Form IV or above	Forms II and III	Form I or below
Employment	Still at school	Employed	Unemployed
Longest time on a job	1 year or more	6 - 12 months	Less than 6 months
Wardship	Wards not under sentence: Protection Application. Non-wards under sentence	Wards not under sentence: Offenders Uncontrollable application	Wards (present or past) under sentence
Number of known previous offences	None	1 - 2	3 or more

END

7. 11. 1941