



PERSONALITY DISPOSITION OF JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

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Abstract

Juvenile Delinquency-‘An Alarming Crisis’ does not have a constant or definite meaning. Some say that delinquents are those who violate the law, habitually disobedient and truant. But delinquents shouldn’t be treated as criminals but as maturing persons who need utmost guidance, love and support while they find their way towards life. They shouldn’t be treated as criminals, but being a delinquent is not an excuse to manifest distress and confusion. It is very true that two major components of delinquency is the society and the family. But since each and every one of us has, what we call “logical” mind, we get to choose what is right and what is not. Exploring new stuffs is precisely what you call ‘part of growing up’. Delinquency is when you break a certain rule or law that is accepted by the society or the environment you are into. Criminal’s behavior is influenced by various personal traits. The current research focused to investigate the relationship between personality traits of juvenile delinquency among delinquents and non-delinquent juveniles taking Tripura as a model state. This study was mainly carried out at Agartala city, Tripura and its sub-urban areas covering 10 male juvenile delinquents and 10 male non-delinquent juveniles/adolescents (matched in terms of age and gender). The sample was collected from juvenile home following purposive sampling techniques. Background information schedule and multidimensional personality inventory (MPI) were administered to them. Findings revealed that the juvenile delinquents differed with their normal counterparts in regard to all the dimensions of personality. It is observed that juvenile delinquents were more extroverts, possesses high self-concept, more dependent in nature, short tempered, have poor adjustment capacity and are less anxious than those of their normal counterparts.

Keywords: *Juvenile Delinquency, personality disposition, extrovert, self-concept*

Juvenile crime in urban areas in India rose by 40% between 2001-2010, says a new report. Juvenile delinquency is becoming a global problem in this new era. In developed society, the criminal justice system has the highest and strongest values in providing rule of law and fair play to citizens. Juvenile is the term used for children under the age of 18 and Delinquency is a term that is defined by the law for criminal behavior which is often the result of extreme problematic behavior.

According to Schwartz and Johnson the term delinquency is used for the juvenile (usually under the age of 18) who has committed an act that would be considered illegal for an adult. When an individual commit an illegal act below the age of seven, they are called problem child not the delinquent. Because it is felt that they are not mature enough to differentiate between the legal & illegal and right & wrong. Delinquency is an environmental and social illness. Deviant behaviors are skilled and gained. Child is not born as a delinquent nor is its genes responsible for delinquent behaviors. In this way, delinquents are not a single type of human beings that are born with any such innate, physical, mental or emotional characteristics. These individuals are normal with normal needs and desires. Like other normal children, they also want love, security and to be recognized as normal children. The refusal of these basic needs leads to adjustment problem and as a result, these children become enmity and protest against the society. Consequently, delinquent behavior is produced that is indignant against social and environmental conditions. The condition of juvenile delinquency in India has become serious problem for the psychological and moral development of these children and society. Criminal’s behavior is influenced by various personal traits. Over the last three decades personality traits are major determinants of criminal and delinquent’s behavior in children. A juvenile delinquent is the individual who sustains a pattern of delinquency over a long period

of time, and whose life and identity are organized around a pattern of deviant behavior.

Criminal behavior is influenced by single personality traits or particular group of personality traits. There is a relationship between personality and delinquency and perpetration of crime. Juvenile deviation related studies generally presented two theoretical perspectives- sociological and psychological. Psychology forces the personal and inner control that is made up by super ego or skilled by behavior patterns. Sociology gives attention on society or community institutions that have a direct effect on the processes of external social control. According to Reiss, deviations rely both on the personal and social control. The lack of personal and social control may result in crime involvement.

According to Siegel, traits theories emphasize on the psychological side of crime, including the relationship among personality, intelligence, learning and criminal behavior. Psycho- dynamic perspective focuses on early childhood experience and its effects on personality. Williams argued that psychoanalytical theorists claim, that criminal behavior is the result of mental conflicts and these conflicts may arise in the subconscious or unconscious mind. According to social learning theorists, crime is the result of learning the values, norms and behavior attached with criminal activity. Differential association is a process of learning, in which law-abiding people and criminals learn their behavior from association with other. Delinquency is skilled behavior that is gained by the interaction of these people in engaged in criminal lifestyle. So offenders are differentiated from non-offenders on the basis of individual’s choices. Sutherland theorized that those who are strongly attached with delinquents have more chances to become a delinquent and delinquency and crime are produced when the people are bringing up in criminal environment with deviant values.

A personality trait is an interrelated cluster of mental and /

or behavioral characteristics. According to Allport, the coherent core of personality is attributable to traits which underlie personality. Trait enable individuals to respond to heterogeneous stimuli in a typical manner, and traits influences their thoughts and actions in diverse but chrematic ways. Freudian psychoanalytic theory provided major impetus to the scientific study of early childhood experience as the foundation for later behavior. This, logically enough, led to the study of the young child and his pre-criminal and delinquent behavior.

Objective

To explore the personality profile of the delinquents
To compare the delinquents with that of non-delinquent adolescents in terms of six different personality traits.

Hypotheses

There is no difference between the delinquents and non-delinquents in terms of their Extroversion-Introversion Personality trait.

There is no difference between the delinquents and non-delinquents in terms of their Self Concept Personality trait.

There is no difference between the delinquents and non-delinquents in terms of their Independent-Dependent Personality trait.

There is no difference between the delinquents and non-delinquents in terms of their Temperament Personality trait.

There is no difference between the delinquents and non-delinquents in terms of their Adjustment Personality trait.

There is no difference between the delinquents and non-delinquents in terms of their Anxiety Personality trait.

Sample

Participants of the present study consisted of 20 male adolescents (10 delinquent and 10 non-delinquents) with age range from 14 to 17 years. Data have been collected from Narsingarh Juvenile Home and different high schools of Agartala, Tripura. The purposive sampling method was used. Only those delinquents were selected who were educated upto six grades.

Procedure

One of the most important steps of the present research was to collect data from delinquents. We personally visited the home for the administration of inventory. Informed consent of the participants was obtained. They were briefed about the purpose of the study in detail. They were assured that all information would be kept confidential. The delinquents and non-delinquents approached after formal permission from the Superintendent of the juvenile home and principals of high schools respectively. Necessary explanation has been provided to the responds to make the questionnaire easier and clear. Time limit was given one hour to complete the questionnaire. Other relevant demographic data was also collected.

Measure

After going through the related previous literature, the following subscales of Multidimensional Personality Inventory (MPI) were used in the present study to compare the personality dispositions of delinquents and non-delinquents. It is a 3 point scale. Each response is recorded against three modes of responses like 'YES', 'SOMETIMES'

and 'NO'. To collect the quantitative data six subscale each containing 20 items of MPI was used: extroversion-introversion, self-concept, independent-dependent, temperament, adjustment, and anxiety.

Scoring and Statistical Treatment

All the data were properly scrutinized. Tabulation was done for two groups (delinquents and non-delinquents). Mean and S.D. were calculated for all the subscales. Quantitative analysis was done. Comparisons were made by applying t-test.

Results and Discussions

The vales inserted in Table – 1 reveal the Personality dispositions of the subjects, under study.

Table 1 - Comparison of personality traits between delinquents and non-delinquents

Variables	Groups	N	Mean Score	SD	t-value	Remark
Extroversion - Introversion	Delinquents	10	40.8	6.5	2.7*	High score indicates extroversion and vice-versa
	Non Delinquents	10	32.5	7.2		
Self – Concept	Delinquents	10	33	10.1	2.64*	High score indicates better self concept and vice-versa
	Non Delinquents	10	46.4	12.4		
Independent – Dependent	Delinquents	10	41.2	9.2	2.02	High score indicates Independence and vice-versa
	Non Delinquents	10	30.7	13.6		
Temperament	Delinquents	10	48.4	6.3	6.23**	High score indicates ill temperament and vice-versa
	Non Delinquents	10	32.7	4.9		
Adjustment	Delinquents	10	26.9	16.1	3.45**	High score indicates better adjustment and vice-versa
	Non Delinquents	10	47.2	9.3		
Anxiety	Delinquents	10	32.1	11.2	2.48*	High score indicates high level of anxiety and vice-versa
	Non Delinquents	10	46.6	14.7		

Score range: 20 to 60, *p<0.05; **p<0.01

The comparison between EI personality traits of delinquents and non-delinquents was found out. The result (Table 1) shows that the mean score of EI of delinquents and non-delinquents are 40.8 and 32.5 respectively and t-value=2.7 which reflects significant difference in EI personality trait, indicating that the delinquents are more extrovert than those of non-delinquents. The following studies are in accordance with the present finding, where Gluecks (Glueck and Glueck, 1950), identified a number of personality traits that they felt were associated with violence, including self-assertiveness, defiance, extroversion, narcissism and suspicion and delinquents exhibit higher level of extroversion traits than non delinquents (C.A. Daramola). The comparison between Self-concept personality traits of delinquents and non-delinquents was calculated. The result from the above table shows that the mean value of Self concept for delinquents and non-delinquents are 33 and 46.4 respectively and t-value=2.64 which also reflects significant difference in self concept among both the groups, signifying poor self-concept of the delinquents. In support with the present investigation, a study clears depicts that young children who commit offences have a lower self-concept compared to young children who do not commit offences (Donnellan et al, 2005; Murphy, Stosny, & Morrel, 2005; Trezniewski et al., 2006). It is also evident from the findings that the mean score of independence-dependence personality trait of both the examined groups are 41.2 and 30.7 respectively and t-value=2.02 which does not represent significant difference



in independence-dependence personality trait. Thus, the Hypothesis – III which postulates. ‘no difference in independence-dependence personality trait among both the groups’-is accepted in this investigation. Comparisons were also made between the groups on temperament personality trait (data inserted in Table – 1). There exists a high significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups under consideration. This comparative picture says that the delinquent adolescents possess ill-temperament. Data inserted in Table 1 reveals a comparative picture between the adolescent delinquents and non-delinquents in terms of their adjustment pattern. Here also an elevated significant difference has been noticed. Delinquents wear a poor adjustment pattern in comparison to the counter group. Finally talking about the Anxiety trait, the result shows noteworthy difference between the groups in terms of their anxiety they experience. The non-delinquent adolescents are likely to be more anxious than the juvenile offenders.

The delinquents are found out to be ill-tempered probably because of their lack of maturity, tolerance, wisdom, impulsivity and self-discipline (Joanne,2010). Delinquents are seen to be resentful, incapable of establishing and maintaining close interpersonal ties, lack social skill, motivation, poor education, mental support, poor socio-economic status, lack of aspiration, to some extent the ordinal position which might result in poor adjustment dragging one towards criminal offences. Defiant, devoid of feelings of remorse or guilt, reckless disregard for safety of self might be the factors responsible for less anxiety among delinquent adolescents. Constitutionally it appears that the personality of delinquents differ in several interesting and significant respects from the personality of a normally adjusted individuals (Mervin A. Durea).

Implication & Recommendation

The policy implication derived from these results is that increases the education and controls the personality traits of delinquents. Environment has been in a good condition so that the personality be grown up in a positive way. Overall, sociocultural artifacts and socializing agents of the society should promote healthy personality traits.

Conclusion

It is concluded that there exist a relationship between personality traits and juvenile delinquency. In the light of the findings of the present study, it is seen that personality dispositions of Juvenile Delinquents and Non-Delinquents differ in respect to six dimensions of personality, i.e., Juvenile Delinquents are more extrovert, more independent, have high self-concept as well as less anxious in comparison to Non-Delinquent Adolescents. On the contrary, Non-delinquent adolescents are more adjusted, well tempered than those of delinquent adolescents.

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