

dealing with the Juvenile Delinquency

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Introduction

Delinquency refers to young or underage people committing crimes and offending the law, which can be both violent and non-violent. Minors who participate in illegal behavior are usually unaware of the law regarding the matter or immature and naïve to understand the difference between right and wrong. They are often faced with consequences depending on the type of crime they committed. Children under the age of 18 and 17, in a few states, are considered minors or underage to be treated equally to adults for committing a crime. Hence, there are juvenile detention centers and other procedures to deal with the issue instead of straight imprisonment.

Juvenile Delinquency is considered a mental disorder, and children who participate in such violent behavior are mentally unstable. Delinquent crimes are blamed on mental instability that is caused by personal issues that the child faces. Children often inherit their behavior and personality traits from their parents. Violent attitudes and domestic abuse at home can encourage similar habits among the children, as well. The seriousness of this issue is often underestimated. This is because children committing minor crimes such as shoplifting, destroying someone's property, involvement in small thefts, and other similar levels of crimes are considered to be the immaturity of children. However, criminal and violent behaviors at early ages can lead to severe crimes in adulthood.

Parents regret being irresponsible for ignoring the symptoms of delinquency in their children. Neglecting children during their growing age can lead them to be misled and misguided by other influencers, including their spoiled friends and bad examples of adults. Moreover, parents are unable to provide their children with a proper upbringing due to their financial responsibilities and pressure from work. Children who are not monitored and kept checked on and their activities are attracted to criminal and inappropriate activities that risk their future and affect their personalities.

Domestic violence and abusive behavior are seen at home by parents towards each other, and the child can damage the child's perception of acceptable and appropriate behavior. Teenagers who are treated aggressively by their parents and grow up under multiple restrictions that frustrate them are more likely to adopt violent behavior and indulge in illegal and immoral activities that can affect other children and society as a whole.

Mental illness and disorders are the primary causes of delinquency. This is because the child is unable to recognize his weakness and take out his frustration in violent and illegal activities. Bullying at school, depression due to academic failure, romantic breakups, and personal issues with parents can cause mental instability, which can also attract the minor towards immoral activities, aggressive attitudes, and crimes.

Juvenile Delinquency is a serious matter that requires to be the subject of further scrutiny and provide possible solutions. Teenage delinquency can be as bad as mass shootings at schools and colleges, murdering pets, parents, and friends, and being involved in drug abuse and criminal activities that can harm society. Hence, the subject needs to be considered, and the symptoms need to be recognized by parents, teachers, and other adults in society to prevent further problems.

Literature Review

Several research studies explain the causes and trends of juvenile delinquency in order to increase awareness about the symptoms and prevent criminal activities among young people and minors. For example, to create a link between a child's attachment to parents and chances of delinquency, Hoeve (2012) carried out a meta-analysis of 74 published and unpublished manuscripts. The research concluded that poor attachments with parents were the primary cause of delinquency among young girls and boys.

Hoeve's study showed that distance from mothers, misunderstanding, and poor attachments with mothers had a greater impact on children than attachments with fathers. This is because a child learns to be loving, nurturing, and supportive and develops a kind attitude toward others under the guidance of their mother. Additionally, Hoeve's meta-analysis showed a pattern of increased delinquency rates among the detachments from a cross-sex parent than similar sex. A daughter is expected to develop anxiety, depression, and incomplete feelings in the absence of a father and male support, while sons learn their values and caring nature from their mothers, which are eliminated in the absence of their mother, hence leading to more violent and selfish behavior.

Hoeve (2012) created a detailed study into the investigation of the relationship between parent attachments and a child's delinquency. He considered not only the physical distance between parents and children but also the misunderstandings and detachments between parents and their children, even when they are in the same house. Parents often overlook their children's needs and personality traits and how these affect their activities and attitudes. This leads to them feeling neglected and unwanted. The research justifies the noticeable difference in delinquency rates among males and females. In his research, Hoeve combined the two theories behind the link between parent attachment and delinquency, including the social control theory presented by Hirschi in 1969 and the attachment theory by Bowlby in 1944.

Another famous experiment carried out by McCord (2001) showed that children who were mistreated, rejected, abused, and neglected turned out to be serious criminals, alcoholics, and mentally unstable. McCord studied the cases of 233 males collected between 1939 and 1945 to divide them into different groups of the neglected, rejected, abused, or loved. He found out that children who were rejected or mistreated were more likely to adopt delinquency and juvenile years.

Similarly, Widom's articles and studies proved that mistreated and abused children were 50 percent

more likely to be involved in juvenile crimes than loved children. She also compared these results with those of the demographical groups based on their sex, age, race, and social class. Widom (2001) concludes that ignorance and neglect of children are more closely related to juvenile delinquency than physical abuse at early ages. Furthermore, her studies show that the abused child is more likely to adopt general delinquency, such as offending private property, but violent behavior and delinquency can't be associated with an abusive history.

Moreover, another research study conducted by Cummings (2016) explored the influence of emotional insecurity about family and community among children on the rates of juvenile delinquency. Cummings considered the youth between the ages of 10-20, which included 999 individuals, of which 482 were boys and 517 were girls. These children belonged to socially deprived regions that had experienced political violence. The purpose of the study was to relate the child's domestic issues with criminal behavior in society. Cummings concluded that youth delinquency rates could be easily associated with emotional insecurity at home and in the community.

On the other hand, James V. Ray (2016) associated delinquency with callous-unemotional (CU) traits and impulse control and declared them as the risk factors of violent delinquency. Ray further investigated the impact of neighborhood conditions on a child's personality development and behavior that can lead to juvenile delinquency. He conducted research that included minors between the ages of 13 and 17 who belonged to diverse ethnic groups and different neighborhoods. Variables such as CU traits and impulse control were judged independently. The study concluded that the neighborhood environment had a major impact on the child's behavior and chances of involvement in delinquency. This is because bullying at home and in the community can be discouraging for children at an early age, and seeing criminal activity as a normal and acceptable act will lead them to adopt similar traits.

Finally, Sara Vidal's research paper provides insight into the patterns and traits of the juvenile justice system and the risk factors of delinquency. Vidal (2017) sheds light on the transition of about 10,850 maltreated children and how their risk factors are evaluated. The justice system considers age as the primary determining factor in judgment and consequences. Moreover, social factors such as gender and race are the other factors that influence the transition. Men are more likely to develop further criminal profiles, while blacks and Hispanics are easily associated with illegal activities. Although this is a racist and stereotypical judgment, the poverty rates and poor living conditions of the minority race contribute to the delinquency rates in their neighborhood.

Conclusion

Juvenile delinquency is a serious psychological problem among American children. The rates of criminal activities among the youth decreased during the 1990s. However, the issue is still significant enough to be catered to and recognized, as it might lead to mass shootings, killings, and major illegal activities by immature and naïve minors. Delinquency is associated with mental instability and

domestic abuse that can be noticed earlier.

Researchers relate juvenile crimes with family detachments and rejection from the community. Children who are neglected and distanced from their parents are more likely to fall for immoral and illegal activities than children who are controlled and kept a check on. Nevertheless, studies also found that extremely strict parents encourage the child to break the boundaries and reach out for their freedom, which can later turn into adopting violent and criminal activities such as theft and property offenses. Rates of criminal activities that are considered to be small and minor for arresting and punishing the youth have increased significantly. This is because these behaviors are constantly ignored and unrecognized due to a lack of awareness regarding the seriousness of the issue. Parents, teachers, and other adults in society fail to acknowledge that such minor and general delinquency acts can lead to major crimes that will harm the whole community.

Parents are the core cause of every personality trait of a child, including delinquency and mental disorders. Parents who ignore their kids and are unable to give them the time they require are more likely to lose their children to peer-pressured illegal activities. Domestic abuse and immoral behavior shown by parents teach the child that such an attitude is acceptable and normal. Hence, a juvenile with a family history of physical and verbal abuse has a higher chance of adopting violent behavior and indulging in criminal activities.

Moreover, the rates of delinquency are reported to be higher among men and the black and Hispanic communities. This is because women who experience detachment from their parents or rejection in society develop anxiety and depression, while men believe in taking their frustration out; hence, they turn to aggressive and criminal attitudes. High rates of juvenile delinquency among the black and Hispanic groups can be entirely blamed on the family and neighborhood environment and particularly poverty. Parents who suffer from poverty are usually working two jobs or focusing on earning for their children to provide for their basic needs. In this case, the failure to provide emotional support and keep a check on their activities.

It is crucial to acknowledge the seriousness of the issue and the way the justice system addresses the crimes of these young and naïve offenders. There is more research required when it comes to the reason behind the criminal and violent behavior and the age limit provided for treating youth crimes as a minor. It is more important to focus on the level of crime than the age, race, and gender of the offender. Additionally, mental disorder seems to be the better explanation for delinquency rather than the family history and neighborhood conditions.

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