

Analyses the Home, Health, Social and Emotional Adjustment of Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Adolescents

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ABSTRACT:

In this paper, it is also stated that delinquency includes not only the more serious offenses, such as burglary, assault, robbery, and rape, but also 'status offenses' – acts such as curfew violation truancy, running away, sexual activity or incorrigibility that if committed by an adult would not constitute violation of the law. In general, juvenile delinquency involves wrong doing by a child or by a young person who is under an age specified by the law of the place. This is basically a social concept. In every society there is an accepted pattern of behavior with its belief and attitudes, when an individual disregards the social norms, he may get into conflict with society and law. The laws of society are formulated to help in building up conduct which will enable the members of the groups to lead a harmonious life.

Key words: violation, society.

INTRODUCTION:

In the view of some observers, young people are more rootless, more troubled emotionally, more promiscuous sexually, and less idealistic than their peers in earlier generations. As evidence, they point to rising rates of delinquency, drug use, adolescent suicide, the current epidemic of adolescent pregnancy, and a growing pre occupation with self-fulfillment at the expense of societal concerns (Conger, 1981; Wolf, 1986). Other observers assure us that today's youth are better informed about the world in which they live than any generation in history; no less idealistic, though more pragmatic and less sentimental; more open, honest and tolerant, and less given to viewing others in terms of simplistic stereotypes; no more, and perhaps less promiscuous than their elders were at the same age; and more caring and responsible but less hypocritical. We are informed by these optimistic observers that youth today have, if anything, a cleaver sense of their own identity and are less emotionally conflicted than their parents were at the same age. Yet another group of observers feels that presumed differences – good or bad between today's adolescents and those of earlier generations are largely illusory and more a matter of form than substance; or that they stem from unwarranted generalizations based on the behavior of numerically small numbers of atypical young people. Proponents of this latter view remind in that there have always been difference between generations in social and political beliefs, tastes and fashions, and fundamental liberalism or conservatism (Mussen, et. al., 1974).

Young children do not have as complex and realistic a view of themselves and their world as they will have at a later age. They have less self-understanding and have not yet developed a stable sense of identity and an adequate frame of reference regarding reality, possibility and value. Immediately perceived threats are tempered less by considerations of the past or future and thus tend to be seen as disproportionately important. As a result, children often have more difficulty in coping with stressful events than do adults (Compas & Epping, 1993; Kepel Benson & Ollendick, 1993).

Children also are more dependent on other people than are adults. Though in some ways this dependency serves as a buffer against other dangers, it also makes them highly vulnerable to experiences of rejection, disappointment, and failure. On the other hand, although their inexperience and lack of self-sufficiency make them easily upset by problems that seem minor to the average adult, children typically recover more quickly from their hurts (Carson, Butcher & Mineka, 1998). Moreover, many problematic behaviors and threats to adjustment emerge over the course of normal development (Kazdin, 1992). Indeed, several behaviors that characterize maladjustment or emotional disturbance are relatively common in childhood. Despite the somewhat distinctive characteristics of childhood disturbances at different ages, there is no sharp line of demarcation between the maladaptive behavior patterns of childhood and those of adolescence, nor between those of adolescence and those of adulthood.

Delinquent and Non-delinquent

It has been observed that the delinquents differ more or less from the normal population in their range of intelligence, educational achievement, personality, their adjustment to the problems of life and both the nature and the rate of their emotional development.

The I.Q. of several delinquent groups have been found out to distributed themselves in a normal scatter, but with the centre at some point between 82 and 88 instead of at normal 100. The extreme usually vary from below 50 to above 150. The majority of these delinquents (60%) could be classed as normal or low normal, 4 per cent were bright and 2 per cent brilliant, 11 per cent border line and 21 per cent definitely defective (Quay, 1965).

There seems to be little, if any thing the matter with the native social capacities of the delinquents, although many of them become maladjusted because they express their social talents in anti-social ways. In general, they make friends readily. Some delinquents have district qualities of leadership. Williams (1934) has observed the participation in social activities of 100 delinquents and 100 non-delinquents boys of the same age and intelligence. The delinquent boys showed greater increase in participation from the lower to high ages than the non-delinquent and a consistently higher average participation at all ages. In his paper, delinquents were unpopular, enough with their teachers and other school officials. But once they are on playground, they participate freely and naturally in whatever is going on.

Those who have studied delinquents, regard them as emotionally unstable individuals. They are bored with ordinary ways of living and thus they want excitement and change. They have unusual reactions to the stressed of everyday life. They will not submit to normal social restrictions but set about making their own rules. All observations and tests show that delinquents differ from normal children mainly in their emotional reactions. In the study of Williams (1934), it was found that of 1343 delinquents 97 per cent showed emotional disturbances in their home relationship.

The delinquent child has usually failed to develop normal emotional ties with his family. He generally shows little attachment to his parents. He does not want to follow their guidance or to obey them and he reacts against them by doing deliberately the things to which they object. Such degree of maladjustment with the home is likely to produce a neurotic child. Many delinquents are neurotic but they differ from non-delinquent neurotic children by being more aggressive, more active, and more sociable (Stern, 1946).

Two special type of delinquents might be mentioned briefly as the defective delinquents and the psychopathic delinquents. The former is below normal in mentality and the shows marked inability to adjust to his environment. He differs from the non-defective delinquents by being stupid showing less vitality and having an inferior constitutional endowment. The progress of such a child is poor. He develops inferior timidity, extreme maladjustment and insufficient intelligence to compensate for either the psychopathic delinquent. According to Shotwell (1946) psychopathic delinquents are definitely abnormal in his reaction to environmental pressures. Many chronic sex offenders are of this type.

Hearly and Broner (1946) have given a most comprehensive picture of the difference between delinquent and non-delinquent children with the findings for 105 delinquent each of whom was paired with a non-delinquent sibling. The two children of each pair, therefore, had the same home and neighbourhood influences although the treatment of the two by their parents was sometime dissimilar. Both members of each pair were carefully studied. However, the delinquents were more nervous and neurotic; hyperactive and dominating; they felt unwanted and inferior.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

So far we have been examining the theoretical explanations of delinquency, its meaning and concept, types, causes, characteristics, rehabilitation and its linkage with anxiety, socio-economic status and adjustment with regards to home, health, social, emotional and overall areas. In this connection, it is now proposed to highlight empirical bases of delinquent behaviors and their linkage with certain socio-psychological variables.

Home adjustment

Adjustment is a psychological process by means of which the individual manages or copes with various demands or pressures. The adjustment patterns and process are indicators of individual's personality and behavioral patterns. Psychologists have tried to know the adjustment patterns of the individual in different areas, like, home, health, social, emotional, school and so on. It is matter of fact that well adjusted person would show less delinquent behaviors and vice- versa. Home adjustment is interlinked with delinquent behaviors of the adolescent? To answer this question, it was hypothesized that delinquents would have poor home adjustment than non-delinquents. To test this hypothesis high and low scorers on JDI were compared in terms of their home adjustment and findings were presented in table 1

Table – 1
Comparison of High and Low Scorers on JDI in terms
Of their Home adjustment

Mothers	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Working	High	100	12.96	6.80	3.82*
	Low	100	9.36	6.54	
Non working	High	100	13.11	7.52	2.95**
	Low	100	10.24	6.90	

*Significant at 0.01 level

It is evident from table-1 that high scorers on J.D. inventory have scored significantly higher (mean = 12.96) in comparison to the low scorers (Mean= 9.36) in case of working mothers. The comparison between the two means has yielded a t- value of 3.82 which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. Needless to mention that high scores on Bell Adjustment Inventory are indicative of poor adjustment. Thus it can be concluded from the present findings that high scorers on delinquency having poor home adjustment and vice-versa. Therefore, the hypothesis that delinquents have poor home adjustment than non delinquents gains support from the present findings. A similar trend of data has been found for the respondent, of non-working mothers. The obtained t-value (t-2.95) between the mean scores of these two variables is also significant beyond chance. Moreover, a further analysis was done to explore the association between these two variables by the help of product moment coefficient of correlation. The correlation value was 0.198 which is significant beyond chance.

Health Adjustment

Health adjustment was defined in terms of mental and physical illness. Physically as well as mentally unhealthy person are sad, depressed, short tempered, anxious and showing maladjusted behaviors. Is any connection exists between health adjustment and delinquency among the adolescents? To answer this question, in the present paper, it was hypothesized that "the two groups, identified as delinquents and non-delinquents do not differ significantly from each other in terms of their health adjustment". To verify this hypothesis the two groups were compared in respect of their scores on health adjustment dimensions. The findings were summarized in table 2.

Table-2

Comparison of Delinquent and Non-delinquent Subjects in respect of their Health Adjustment

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Delinquent	120	13.11	7.52	3.11*
Non-delinquent	120	10.24	6.90	

* Significant at .01 level.

From table-2, it is evident that the delinquent subjects have scored (Mean = 13.11) significantly higher (indicative of poor adjustment in health dimension) on Bell Adjustment Inventory in respect of their no delinquent counterparts (Mean = 10.24). The comparison of two means ($t=3.11$) was also found to be significant beyond .01 level of confidence. It indicates that the two groups, the delinquent and non-delinquent differ significantly in terms of there health adjustment. It is also obvious from the findings as presented in table, that delinquents have more health problem than non-delinquents or normal adolescents. Therefore, the null hypothesis formulated in the present context is being rejected by the present findings.

The findings of the present paper are in expected direction and matched with our day-to-day observations. Delinquents due to their criminal environment face more restrictions and apathy from their family members as well as from the society. In particular, they appeared to feel less capable of establishing close personal relationships with either peers or adults, especially the letters. They described themselves as having fearless interests in life, and emerged as generally lacking in enthusiasm. Not expectedly, they appeared significantly less impressed by the dominant ethical values and goals of own culture than their non-delinquent matches. These all conditions produce more tension, anxiety and stresses among them and ultimately they suffer from certain health problems.

Emotional Adjustment

To examine the linkage between emotional adjustment and delinquent behaviors of the respondents, it was hypothesized that delinquents would have poor emotional adjustment than their non-delinquents counter parts. To test this hypothesis high and low scorers of working mothers on Juvenile Delinquency inventory were compared in terms of their emotional adjustment. The findings were presented in table 3.

Table -3

Comparison of High and Low Scorers on JDI in terms of their Emotional Adjustment.

Mothers	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Working	High	100	15.87	5.76	3.35**
	Low	100	13.22	5.37	
Non working	High	100	14.72	7.02	0.46*
	Low	100	15.18	7.05	

* Significant at 0.01 level

** Not Significant.

Data as presented in table-3 reveal that high scores on JD- inventory on emotional adjustment than low scorers on the inventory (Mean = 13.22) in case of working mothers. The comparison of two means has yielded a t -value of 3.35 which is significant beyond chance ($t = 3.35$, $df = 198$; p is less than 0.01). It means the two groups differ significantly in terms of their emotional adjustment. It is also evident from the results of table-3 that delinquents have a poor emotional adjustment than non-delinquents. Thus the hypothesis formulated for the empirical verification gains support from the present findings. But a reverse trend of data was observed for the respondents of non-working mothers. Here, the high scorers on the JD- inventory scored slightly lower (Mean = 14.72) on emotional adjustment than their low scorer counterparts (Mean = 15.18). However the obtained t -value ($t = 0.46$) is not significant beyond chance. However, the correlation coefficient between these two variables has yielded a r -value of 0.213 which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence.

Social Adjustment

Social adjustment is expressed in terms of shyness, submissiveness, introversion, affiliation, belongingness etc. A person's behavior depends upon his social interactions, relations, and so on. Keeping this in view, in the present paper, it was hypothesized that "the two groups identified as delinquent and non-delinquent do not differ significantly in terms of their social adjustment. To test this hypothesis the two groups were compared statistically and findings were summarized in table-4.

Table-4
Comparison of Delinquent and Non-delinquent Subjects in respect of their Social Adjustment

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Delinquent	120	12.25	4.86	1.70*
Non-delinquent	120	11.16	5.24	

* Not Significant.

The findings as summarized in table-4 reveal that delinquents have scored (Mean = 12.25) higher (indicative of poor adjustment in social area) on social dimension of Bell Adjustment Inventory in comparison to the non-delinquents. The obtained t -value between the two groups was, however, found to be insignificant beyond chance ($t = 1.70$, $df = 238$, $p > .05$). It indicates that the two groups do not differ significantly in terms of their social adjustment. In other words, we can say that the social adjustment of the respondents does not corroborate significantly to the delinquency among them. Thus, the null hypothesis formulated in the present paper gains support from the present findings. The findings of the present paper are in expected direction and matched with our day to day observations. In fact, in behavior or in practice delinquents/ criminal are not less social than any non-delinquent adolescents. In some studies, it was found that delinquents are intelligent and contact better in the society. Nevertheless, most delinquents are at least average in I.Q. and of it does not appear to be a primary factor in delinquency in majority of cases. However, in some studies, it was found that delinquents appeared to feel less capable of establishing close personal relationship with either peers or adults, especially the letters. Not expectedly, they appeared significantly less impressed by the dominant ethical values and goals of own culture than their non-delinquent matches. They also appeared significantly more likely than the non-delinquents to respond to environmental pressures with hostility, rejection, or simply withdrawal from the situation, rather than by acceptance, either for their own sake or that of others. On the basis of above discussion, it is obvious that social adjustment of the adolescents has direct or indirect link with their delinquency. However, due to the lack of empirical support and insignificant research findings, the findings of the present paper cannot be generalized. Some more and more studies are needed in this direction.

CONCLUSION

Home, Health, social & emotional adjustments were also found to be significant in affecting the delinquent behavior among the subjects. Delinquents have scored significantly higher in these three adjustment areas as compared to the non-delinquents. Social adjustment was found to be insignificant in affecting the delinquent behavior among the subjects. Although delinquents have scored higher on this dimension than non-delinquents, the statistical analysis was found to be insignificant beyond chance. It may be pointed out that psychological variables as covered in the present paper are not exhaustive. Some attempts should also be made to highlight the role of motivational structure, parental behavior, insecurity and value system of the male as well as female adolescents in the development of delinquent behaviors. In spite of certain limitations of the present paper, it may prove to be a guideline for further researches conducted in this area.

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