



Exploring the Causes of Juvenile Delinquency: Qualitative Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency is burning issue round the globe. The study was conducted to find out the causes of juvenile delinquency. District Jail Okara, Punjab, Pakistan was the universe of the research. Qualitative research method with convenient sampling technique was used to complete the research. Overall, 25 male inmates of juvenile ward of District Jail Okara were taken as research subjects. Self-developed semi-structured interview was developed and used. Reliability of the tool was calculated.

Nature of delinquency was discussed in three perspectives; age-wise, qualification-wise and nature of crime-wise. Majority of juveniles who committed delinquency were at the age of 17 years. Majority of illiterate juvenile delinquents committed high ratio of crime. The literate juveniles were mostly committed crimes like theft and unnatural intercourse.

Keywords: Juvenile, Delinquency, Causes, Crime, Behavior,

Introduction

Juveniles are the assets of any society and their indulgence in delinquency is a great loss. Violation of the law and other offences that children commit who are under the age of 18 are term as juvenile delinquents. They are the deprived population of the community. The offending behavior of juveniles results unlawful consequences which is against the well-being of the community. Ascendency of juvenile delinquency is prevailed in developing and developed countries (Ferdousi, 2013). These delinquents become master mind for destruction in prisons instead of being corrected. Socialization of juvenile delinquents in traditional way is very awkward and feels difficult in form of developing relationship, guidance and interaction with others properly. The young adults have to deal with poverty, unemployment, decline in autonomy of local community, ineffective educational system, fragmentation of family and unacceptable views for community (World Youth Report, 2003).

Poor condition in socioeconomic negative, peer pressure, emotional disturbance, parental problems, home disturbance and issues of negative community affect the young children and engage them in such behavior that disturbs others' lives (Simoes, Matos, & Batista-Foguet, 2008).

Every community set rules to control behaviour but the young ones avoid following them that collapse the relationship among peers, parents, siblings and blood relations that upset socialization, it is the way that juveniles become delinquents (World Youth Report, 2003).

Literature Review

Beijing Rule of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the administration of Juvenile Justice defines a juvenile as, "a young one commits an offence in a way that is different from an adult" (Godswill, 2013). Ghanian criminologists defines that youth having age group of 12-20 commit public criminal acts which are habitual and regular are categorized as juvenile delinquents. It ranges from mere violating rules in schools known as bad acts to young persons involved in adult offences, such as; cyber fraud, car snatching, sexual offences (Boyce-Doe, 2008).

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Setyorini, Astuti, Adi, and Aprilianda (2014) explore that complex circumstances are the factors that result in delinquency. Troubled domestic background, bad peer influence, and unsettled neighborhood are the factors that shape the behavior. Some of these complex and difficult circumstances are family tension, parental relationships, poverty, uneasiness at home and witnessing regular conflicts at home and around that might result in orphanage (Setyorini, et al. 2014). Youth is always considered to be the asset of any society and country. Their welfare should be the top most priority in policy making of every country to avoid young ones in engaging criminal acts and offences (Ashiabor, 2014).

1.1 Theoretical Prospective in juvenile delinquency.

Several schools of thought defined different viewpoints. There is always difference among various schools of thought in explaining delinquency and crime. As a result, there emerged various theories about multiple factors about juvenile delinquency. Naturalism and demonology were considered to be reasons that influenced the attitude of young people who victim of delinquency. It was considered that young delinquents were not in good connection with metaphysical powers which resulted young people to become delinquents. Individual or individual behavior was shaped up by having certain type of relationship with these forces.

If they were to be in good connection, they would have a positive behavior and if they had conflicting relationship, it had young people to be punished.

These punishments were thought to be spiritual sins and divinely sanctioned. Delinquency was considered to be acts against nature and supernatural powers. It manifested conflicting relationships with nature and supernatural powers. Offences and crimes were considered to be against Holy church and God in medieval and renaissance period too. Influence of demonic creatures was discussed in that era and exorcist punishment was common to throw out demons from the delinquents (Martin, 2005).

1.1.1 Psychological Perspective

This perspective believes that behaviors are shaped up by personality and stimulus interactions. The classical conditioning and psychoanalytic theories will be explored in this paper. According to Freud, Id, Ego and Super ego are main components that have influence on human behavior. He highlights that if these components are looked after and developed well at early part of life, it can have positive impact on personality (Martin, 2005b).

On the other hand, unhealthy development of these components may lead young people to delinquency and criminal acts. Hence, conflict in Super Ego, Ego and Id results in delinquency. Freud explored various stages of personality development. Malfunction in any stage leads individual to involvement in conflicting practices that are considered unlawful. In conditioning theory, the environment becomes a stimulus that shapes individual's behavior. Individuals carry on their acts based on stimuli that they receive from the environment and remain delinquents (Benveniste, 2015).

1.1.2 Sociological Perspective

Sociological school throws light on learning criminal behavior by having continuous interaction with delinquent people. When a young man is continuously engaged with deviant/criminal people, he learns the values, attributes and Norms of breaking laws. Persistent interaction with these deviants is dangerous. This makes them learn the delinquent behavior. According to this school, delinquents are influenced by the family, peers and social relationship. The role of peer and social relationship is highlighted because it determines the delinquency (Wood & Alleyne, 2010).

General theory of crime- This theory argues that delinquents have one thing in common that they do have low self-control. This exposes them as vulnerable to criminal offerings. Their unhealthy development at early stages of life results in having low self-control. This lack of development and low self-control makes the young people aggressive and they start avoiding the routine accepted social patterns by indulging themselves in criminal acts that result in low self-esteem (Osei-Boakye, 2012).

Probing the factors behind the delinquency brings to light the interaction between family and social relationships. Family relationship does play a big role in shaping juveniles' behavior when it comes to their relationship with deviant fellows. When there is distorted relationship between parents and juveniles, there is a greater chance that juveniles may resort to criminal peers. When it comes to the period of adolescence, the young ones try to be prominent and desire to be identified as separate individuals trying out various things.

They try to share more of their time with their peers and this is the time that shapes their behaviors. The balance between family and peer relationship here can be a positive outcome and if there is increasing gap between them, there can be a conflict that may lead them to be delinquents (Bosiakoh & Andoh, 2010). The road to delinquency is dangerous but juveniles march on because of the above mentioned conflict.

The increasing number of crimes in society that involves juveniles is the result of their family breakdown. In this materialistic age, the parents are busier in fulfilling material desires than spending more time with family to form a healthy family relationship. Therefore, delinquency is an outcome of socio-economic and family problems (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). To do and have more as a symbol of achievement in this materialistic era has become a factor as well. There is a dire increase of aspirations of individuals to become successful. However, Martin says that the behavior becomes deviant when there is gap between aspirations of individuals and actual opportunities that society has to offer to aspirants. Thus, as for as Ghana is concerned, there is less number of resources and opportunities for citizens of Ghana as compared their aspirations for wealth, political power and academic achievements.

In the beginning juveniles don't become aware of their crimes and their outcomes. They start realizing the outcome when they are caught and incarcerated. In many countries the young kids are at great risk of not being properly dealt with and facilitated at the place of incarceration. The proper guidance and counseling facility is scarce and chance for the juveniles who want to return to education is lost there. As a result their interest in education is lost and route to delinquency is paved (Levitt, 1996).

Contrary to this, the community focuses on materialism which is status symbol and considered success. The family pressurizes the young for better earning by hook and crook. In such situation, extra emphasis on materialism is factor that contributes a lot for juvenile delinquency (Farnworth & Leiber, 2007). Delinquency has a major impact on family and family suffers a lot due to lack of support, guidance and counseling to young delinquents. Resultantly, the society fails to achieve its desired goals.

Juvenile delinquency is not only threat for the society but for the country as well. Enhancing circle of delinquency disturbs the family fames and community declaring the notoriousness. The increasing rate of delinquency needs to study entitled "Exploring the Causes of Juvenile Delinquency: Qualitative Perspective".

The objective set pathway for the research to find out the destination. Therefore the objective of the study was to identify the causes of juvenile delinquency.

Research Methodology

Population

All the male juveniles incarcerated in juvenile wards in the Punjab province were the population of the study.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample. Inmates of juvenile ward of district jail Okara, Punjab province were the sample of the study. Total number of participants was thirty and twenty-five of them remain present during treatment. Ten participants stayed in prison ward for some days and majority of them had to attend courts to show safe presence and some were called in courts on date of hearing. During the study, five juveniles were released on bail. Other five juveniles entered in juvenile wards when the treatment near to end. So they were not included in the research process.

Table 1: Age-wise Detail of Sample

Sr. No.	Age in years	Frequency
1	14	2
2	15	5
3	16	7
4	17	8
5	18	3
Total		25

Table 1 shows the detail of sample according to age of the juveniles. The table depicts that 2 juvenile were age of 14 years, 5 were age of 15 years, 7 were age of 16 years, 8 juveniles were age of 17 years, and 3 juveniles were at the age of 18 when they committed delinquency. In this perspective, majority of juveniles who committed delinquency were at the age of 17 years whereas minimum frequency was the age of 14 years.

Table 2: Qualification-wise Sample

Sr. No.	Level of Qualification	Frequency
1	Illiterate	13
2	Primary	3
3	Elementary	3
4	Secondary	6
Total		25

Table 2 elaborates detail of sample according to level of qualification. Illiterate juveniles were 13, 3 juveniles were at primary level, 3 were at elementary level, and 6 juveniles were at secondary level. It means that majority of juvenile delinquents were illiterate and minimum

number of juveniles of primary level and elementary level because both the levels are equal in numbers.

Table 3: Nature of Offence-wise Sample

Sr. No.	Nature of Offence	Frequency
1	Adultery (Zina)	4
2	Attempt to Murder	1
3	Drug Possession	1
4	Murder	4
5	Robbery	3
6	Theft	6
7	Unnatural Intercourse	6
Total		25

Table 3 depicts the detail of sample according to type of offence. 4 juveniles were indulge in adultery, 1 juvenile attempted to murder, 1 was involved in drug possession, 4 committed murder, 3 were involve in robbery, 6 juveniles were in theft, and 6 were involved in unnatural intercourse. It revealed that majority of juveniles in committing theft and unnatural intercourse whereas attempt to murder and possession of drugs was the lowest frequency of delinquency in juveniles.

Instrument of the Study

The major target of the research was to find out causes of delinquency in juveniles. It was integral part of qualitative aspect of study to have good rapport and trustworthiness with juveniles first because they were afraid of leakage of secrecy. So, the researcher developed familiarity and friendly environment. Then a semi-structured interview was conducted to find out the causes. Semi-structured interview was developed with the help of literature review, expert opinion, and pilot testing.

Data Collection

Researcher collected information of each individual inmate of juvenile ward personally and with the help of literate juveniles and research assistant. The data were in quantitative and qualitative form. The participants were informed that this information will be for research purpose and your names with offences would not be unveiled. The researcher developed rapport with them to find information.

Results and Interpretations

Data were analyzed qualitatively and derived the causes for committing crimes boldly. Majority of them had no interests in their daily chores and constantly, they disobey their parents and elders. They express their aggression always. Teasing others was their amusement. Their parents were failing to fulfill their needs like purchase of motorbike,

laptop, android cellular phone, car, tractor, cow, buffalo, goat or birds. Some were fell in love with females and the family of females became enemy of the juvenile. The juvenile assassinated her husband.

Puberty brings changes in male and female human body and mentally. The young individuals do not aware of such physical and emotional changes. The sexual desire astray the young people. Many of them committed unlawful intercourse with another boy (became gay) for their sexual emotions satisfaction. Some want to maintain social status with showing aggression and exhibit such condition. They indulge in threatening and teasing others. So, they form gang to develop undue pressure on others. This creates panic which this panic converts into instability of the society.

Nature of Crimes on Age Base:

Majority of juveniles committed crimes in the age of 17 years. The juvenile committed murder, theft, robbery and unnatural intercourse in this age. During the age of 16 years, the juveniles committed the same crimes along with adultery. At the age of 14 years, minimum delinquency was committed. They committed unnatural intercourse and theft. Furthermore, illiterate juveniles were involved in high range of delinquency.

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Nature of Crimes on Qualification Base

Two natures of crimes: theft and unnatural intercourse were most prominent whereas adultery was second in result. Table 3 depicts the detail of sample according to type of offence. 4 juveniles were indulge in adultery, 1 juvenile attempted to murder, 1 was involved in drug possession, 4 committed murder, 3 were involve in robbery, 6 juveniles were in theft, and 6 were involved in unnatural intercourse. It revealed that majority of juveniles in committing theft and unnatural intercourse whereas attempt to murder and possession of drugs was the lowest frequency of delinquency in juveniles.

Discussion and Conclusion

Juvenile delinquency is not only the problem of Pakistan but it is encroaching around the globe as well. The juveniles are the baseline of the nation. The Juvenile are human beings and they desire for things like others. They have emotions and satisfaction of these motions is dire need for them. If their needs (emotional, psychological or physical) are fulfilled, they become normal human beings. They feel honor to help others. The parents' care for adolescents leads them to responsible citizen.

Alive parents are the blessings of Almighty Allah. The juveniles without parents, or living with single parent feel loneliness and they miss their late parents or parent. They miss their love and this situation make them disturb and aggressive. Majority of inmates of juvenile wards have many psychological, emotional and mental problems. They have no proper guidance for leading their lives in proper way.

Aoulakh (1999) explored that broken homes, bad peer company, delinquent locality, sexual attack, poverty, criminal environment, illiteracy, unemployment, old enmity, honor killing and abuse of drugs are the main causes of juvenile delinquency. Shamim, Batool, Zafar and Hashmi (2009) elucidated that juvenile group between the ages of 16 to 18 years involved in high rate of delinquency which supports the current study. Haider and Mahsud (2010) exposed that murder, theft, robbery and adultery (zina) are the high ratio crime committed by juveniles whereas another study by Tahir, Kausar, Tausif, Nazir, Arshad, and Butt (2011) explained that theft, illiteracy, unemployment and domestic issues are the major causes of juvenile delinquency which support the results of the existing study.

Juveniles are the baseline of any nation. Responsible youth are the bright future of the nation. Juvenile are not only deprived of liberty but they have less opportunity for their growth and development. They need training for rehabilitation and readjustment in the community. Their needs are to be fulfilled for their grooming. Juveniles should not be ignored. Neglecting them would be resulted in increasing delinquency which would be proved instability in the society and unstable society can never bring progress for the nation. The study was concluded that mostly juveniles committed delinquency during the period of adolescence and major cause was illiteracy.

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