Forensic Psy, Research Paper

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Juvenile Offenders

**Introduction**

The environment, society, yet the whole world hold a massive impact on how youngsters or adolescents behave and act in a given condition. In most cases, adolescents are much effectively influenced by their environment, and they look upon others for the directions in their life. The conduct is the outcome from the influence of their peers and parents or guardians. The leading role is, however, of the parents in the life of a child. The friends also have a very determining part either in a good way or bad, as they tend to spend most of the time with their mates in school. Therefore, the way a person mold depends mostly on his/her company or brought-up. The teen years are the most vulnerable and delicate years of a child's life; in these years they indulge in dangerous activities. The crime rate in juveniles has increased in the past decade; delinquency has reached its peak. Regardless of crime control, the offenses are regularly made by youths or adolescents. The juvenile offenders are present in almost all the serious crimes which take place in the United States. The following paper will explore the whole area of juvenile offense, including the offenders, their types, risk factors, prevalence, the justice system, and preventive measures.

**Discussion**

**Identification**

Juvenile offenders are adolescents whose age ranges between ten to seven years are involved in illegal activities or behavior, also known as juvenile delinquents. The behavior exhibited by the juveniles is either persistently mischievous or disobedient and out of their parent's control, such that they become subject to subsequent legal action through the court or justice system. Delinquency is the minor act of crime which can be of extreme nature, but it is not punishable through life incarceration or sentence (Greene, & Heilbrun, 2016). When a teenager or adolescent crosses the limit or violates the criminal stature, he is said to be a juvenile offender.

**Predictors or Risk Factors**

There are numerous predictors and causes of delinquency in juveniles, but the most influential ones are parenting style and peer group association. The parenting styles are exhibited differently from persons to persons. However, two types of parenting are the most likely predictors of juvenile delinquency, i.e., permissive and authoritarian. The permissive style is characterized by the parenting in which there is a lack of discipline based on the consequences, and it encompasses the neglectful and indulgent way of parenting (Pusch & Holtfreter, 2018). Neglectful parenting is in which a parent is unaware of the child's activities and lacks in monitoring the child, whereas, tolerant is where a parent is affirmatively dominant over a child. The authoritarian parenting style is characterized by a strict and harsh discipline based way of parenting, in which children have no say in their life choices and decisions.

The second factor is an association with peers or classmates because friends and age-fellows are most influential while doing mischievous activities or felonies. Teenage years are the most adventurous, yet vulnerable years for juveniles. Also, antisocial peer groups are dangerous for adolescents if they are left unsupervised. The other factors may include higher hormonal activities, poor socioeconomic status, and other genetic and environmental factors which lead the juveniles towards youth crimes or youth gangs.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theories based on the causes of crimes are mostly applicable to juvenile delinquency. For instance, the method of social disorganization focuses on the absence of institutes (i.e., schools, family system, social groups, and churches) in a community to be the root cause of criminal behavior in the juveniles (Gavin, 2018). The other crime theory which best fits with juvenile offenses is a rational choice theory. According to this theory, the cause of the crime is not in the outer environment, but it is within the person committing the act. It occurs due to the self-interests of a person or his free will. Therefore it totally relies on a person to choose a good way or a wrong way (Thornberry, 2018).

Furthermore, the strain theory is of the view that the cause of crime is due to the problematic pathways for achieving a stable financial or socio-economic status. Thus juveniles from poor backgrounds are mostly indulged in the illegitimate or wrong ways, like theft or burglary, to acquire even basic necessities of life shelter, food, or clothes. The other theory in this connotation is the labeling theory which is associated with the deviant behavior of a juvenile from the societal norms and tradition. It says that when a youth is socially linked to a crime, it is more likely to occur frequently.

**Types of Offenders**

The offenders can be further divided into two main types; age-specific and life-course delinquents. The age-specific offenders are most likely to leave the crime at a certain age, contrarily the life-long offenders do not go the offense even after their adolescent years, and they continue to do the criminal activities in the later period. The type of offender a teenager becomes depends on the preventive measures taken during the onset of delinquencies. If a child is not stopped or looked after in the beginning, he creates a big name in the criminal world in his adult age.

**Prevalence**

The juvenile offenders are present in almost all the serious crimes which take place in the United States. According to a national report, 8% of lethal (homicides and murders) crimes occur by the hands of juveniles or their groups. However, 25% of general offenses are done by adolescent criminals. The most commonly occurring widespread crimes by the juveniles are theft, vandalism, alcohol offenses, disorderly conduct, assault, substance abuse, and curfew violations. The peak years of youth to commit crimes is 15-19; it is in these years of their life when the hormonal rage and societal pressure is highly present in the teens. Even the gang involvement occurs in the age of 16 or 17, and the drug intake habit also happens while these years of their life.

The prevalence of juvenile crime varies according to the nature and type of crime. The offenses such as sex, substance abuse, and vandalism are most high in the juveniles. The arrest rate of juveniles is high as well according to the official data. The crime and substance abuse is the rate to be the first biggest worry for the youths in America.

**Juvenile Justice System**

The juvenile justice system is different in its ruling and procedures than the adult justice system. Likewise, the difference between laws and regulation is diverse in every state while dealing with juvenile offenders. The juveniles get arrested in various forms, and some are caught while doing delinquent acts and parents, peers or familiar people report others. The foremost step while the police come into contact with the juvenile offenders is to issue the warning and bail out the offender. The further step involves the juvenile court, such that their case is referred to the subsequent court of laws.

In the court, the case is in the hand of intake officer, who then meets with the parents of the juvenile offender and handles the situation informally by referring the individual to a probation officer. This officer has the right to either file the case or dismiss the charges. While doing so, he has to consider certain things, i.e., the type of offense, its intensity, offender's age, education, and social history, and also the parent's future role. In informal dealing the juvenile in order to pay fines, enter probation, and attend treatment or to do community work. In case of charges, the individual has to appear before a judge, and the judge decides whether to release or detain the offender (Downes, Rock, & McLaughlin, 2016). The court procedure occurs in three steps; plea agreement, diversion, an adjudicatory hearing.

1. Request Agreement is the minor may enter a supplication concurrence with the court. This frequently requires the adolescent to conform to specific conditions, for example, going to advise, complying with a time limitation, or paying compensation.
2. Diversion is the judge may redirect the case, which implies he holds authority over the issue until the adolescent effectively finishes treatment programs or performs network administrations. On the off chance that the adolescent neglects to consent, formal charges might be reestablished.
3. Adjudicatory Hearing is the judge may choose to have an adjudicatory hearing, which is preliminary in an adolescent case. While the two sides contend the evidence and present proof, an adolescent introductory happens before a judge, not a jury. In the event that, toward the finish of the consultation, the judge chooses the adolescent is reprobate, he may arrange disciplines, for example, probation, network administration, or even detainment in an adolescent focus.

The juvenile justice system seeks to correct the offenders by making rehabilitative punishments or prosecutions. In which an individual is detained in a juvenile center of rehabilitation and is provided counseling and correction therapies.

**Preventions**

The preventative measures are provided by the government, NGOs and private agencies, such that, family counseling, individual counseling, substance abuse treatment, parenting education and family planning services. These preventions help the child in abstaining from the delinquencies and encourages them towards better living style. The training is influential towards promoting social cohesion and keeps a child to make good decisions and choices in life and also to maintain self-control and regulation. The rehabilitation programs are necessary for every individual in the growing years of their experiences it will teach them to control the factors which lead them towards criminal activities and behavior (Gudjonsson, & Haward, 2016).

**Conclusions**

The paper on juvenile offender explored and covered the whole area of young offense, including the offenders, their types, risk factors, prevalence, the justice system, and preventive measures. The behavior exhibited by the juveniles is either persistently mischievous or disobedient and out of their parent's control, such that they become subject to subsequent legal action through the court or justice system. There are numerous predictors and causes of delinquency in juveniles, but the most influential ones are parenting style and peer group association. The other factors may include higher hormonal activities, poor socioeconomic status, and other genetic and environmental factors which lead the juveniles towards youth crimes or youth gangs. The other factors may include higher hormonal activities, poor socioeconomic status, and other genetic and environmental factors which lead the juveniles towards youth crimes or youth gangs. The criminal theories are applicable to the juvenile delinquency, i.e., social disorganization, strain, rational choice, and labeling theory. The offenders can be further divided into two main types; age-specific and life-course delinquents. The juvenile justice system is different in its ruling and procedures than the adult justice system. The crime and substance abuse is the rate to be the first biggest worry for the juveniles in America. Also the difference between laws and regulation is diverse in every state while dealing with juvenile offenders. The juvenile justice system seeks to correct the offenders by making rehabilitative punishments or prosecutions.

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