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Course -	Juvenile delinquency
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Personality factors

Juvenile Delinquency, is the unlawful activities by minors in their teen or pre-teen years. It is influenced by four main risk factors namely; personality, background, state of mind and drugs.

Gender

Gender is another risk factor in regards to influencing delinquent behavior. The predictors of different types of delinquency vary across females and males for various reasons, but a common underlying reason for this is socialization.[1][2] Different predictors of delinquency emerge when analyzing distinct offending types across gender, but overall it is evident that males commit more crimes than females.[3] Across all offenses, females are less likely to be involved in delinquent acts than males.[1] Females not only commit fewer offenses, but they also commit less serious offenses.[2]

Socialization plays a key role in the gender gap in delinquency because male and female juveniles are often socialized differently. Girls' and boys' experiences are heavily mediated by gender, which alters their interactions in society. Males and females are differently controlled and bonded, suggesting that they will not make the same choices and may follow different paths of delinquency. Social bonds are important for both males and females, but different aspects of the bond are relevant for each gender.[4] The degree of involvement in social settings is a significant predictor of male's violent delinquency, but is not significant for females. Males tend to be more connected with their peer relationships which in effect has a stronger influence on their behavior.[5][6] Association with delinquent peers is one of the strongest correlates of juvenile delinquency, and much of the gender gap can be accounted for by the fact that males are more likely to have friends that support delinquent behavior. Delinquent peers are positively and significantly related to delinquency in males but delinquent peers are negatively and insignificantly related to delinquency for females.[6] As for females, familial functioning relationships have shown to be more important. Female juveniles tend to be more strongly connected with their families, the disconnect or the lack of socialization between their family members can significantly predict their likelihood of committing crimes as juveniles and even as adults. When the family is disrupted, females are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior than males.[3] Boys, however, tend to be less connected to their family and are not as affected by these relationships.[7] When it comes to minor offenses such as fighting, vandalism, shoplifting, and the carrying of weapons, differences in gender are limited because they are most common among both males as well as females. Elements of the social bond, social disorganization, routine activities, opportunity, and attitudes towards violence are also related to delinquent behavior among both males and females.[2]

Neurological

Individual psychological or behavioral risk factors that may make offending more likely include low

intelligence, impulsiveness or the inability to delay gratification, aggression, lack of empathy, and restlessness. Other risk factors that may be evident during childhood and adolescence include, aggressive or troublesome behavior, language delays or impairments, lack of emotional control (learning to control one's anger), and cruelty to animals.[7]

Children with low intelligence are more likely to do badly in school. This may increase the chances of offending because low educational attainment, a low attachment to school, and low educational aspirations are all risk factors for offending in themselves.[7] Children who perform poorly at school are also more likely to be truant, and the status offense of truancy is linked to further offending.

Impulsiveness is seen by some as the key aspect of a child's personality that predicts offending. However, it is not clear whether these aspects of personality are a result of "deficits in the executive functions of the brain" or a result of parental influences or other social factors.[6] In any event, studies of adolescent development show that teenagers are more prone to risk-taking, which may explain the high disproportionate rate of offending among adolescents.

Psychological

Juvenile delinquents are often diagnosed with different disorders. Around six to sixteen percent of male teens and two to nine percent of female teens have a conduct disorder. These can vary from oppositional-defiant disorder, which is not necessarily aggressive, to antisocial personality disorder, often diagnosed among psychopaths. A conduct disorder can develop during childhood and then manifest itself during adolescence.

Juvenile delinquents who have recurring encounters with the criminal justice system, or in other words those who are life-course-persistent offenders, are sometimes diagnosed with conduct disorders because they show a continuous disregard for their own and others safety and/or property. Once the juvenile continues to exhibit the same behavioral patterns and turns eighteen he is then at risk of being diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder and much more prone to become a serious criminal offender.[5] One of the main components used in diagnosing an adult with antisocial personality disorder consists of presenting documented history of conduct disorder before the age of 15. These two personality disorders are analogous in their erratic and aggressive behavior. This is why habitual juvenile offenders diagnosed with conduct disorder are likely to exhibit signs of antisocial personality disorder early in life and then as they mature. Some times these juveniles reach maturation and they develop into career criminals, or life-course-persistent offenders. "Career criminals begin committing antisocial behavior before entering grade school and are versatile in that they engage in an array of destructive behaviors, offend at exceedingly high rates, and are less likely to quit committing crime as they age." [5]

Quantitative research was completed on 9,945 juvenile male offenders between the ages of 10 and 18 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the 1970s.[6] The longitudinal birth cohort was used to examine a trend among a small percentage of career criminals who accounted for the largest percentage of crime activity.[6] The trend exhibited a new phenomenon among habitual offenders. The phenomenon indicated that only 6% of the youth qualified under their definition of a habitual offender (known today as life-course persistent offenders, or career criminals) and yet were responsible for 52% of the delinquency within the entire study.[7] The same 6% of chronic offenders accounted for 71% of the murders and 69% of the aggravated assaults.[7] This phenomenon was later researched among an adult population in 1977

and resulted in similar findings. S. A. Mednick did a birth cohort of 30,000 males and found that 1% of the males were responsible for more than half of the criminal activity.[8] The habitual crime behavior found among juveniles is similar to that of adults. As stated before most life-course persistent offenders begin exhibiting antisocial, violent, and/or delinquent behavior, prior to adolescence. Therefore, while there is a high rate of juvenile delinquency, it is the small percentage of life-course persistent, career criminals that are responsible for most of the violent crimes.

References-

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