

## Family Relationship, Neuroticism and Psychoticism among Male Juvenile Delinquents and Non-delinquents

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### Abstract

*The aim of the present research was to study the difference between juvenile delinquents and non-delinquents on psychoticism, neuroticism, and family relationship. The sample (N=70) of juvenile delinquents was collected from a juvenile home in Pune city and sample of non-delinquents was collected from a school situated in the same city through the technique of purposive sampling. The sample used in this research ranged from 13 to 18 years (mean age=16.54years). The tools used in this research were Family Environment Scale (Bhatia & Chaddha,1993) , Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire-Revised (Eysenck & Eysenck,1985). The results suggests that juvenile delinquents were high on psychoticism ( $t=7.59, p<0.01$ ) and neuroticism ( $t=5.90, p<0.01$ ) whereas non-delinquents were high on expressiveness( $t=3.24, p<0.01$ ) and acceptance & caring( $t=4.93, p<0.01$ ).*

**Keywords:** Juveniles Delinquents, Family Relationship, Psychoticism, Neuroticism, Personality and Delinquency

The present study was an effort to study the difference between male juvenile delinquents and non-delinquents on family relationship, psychoticism, neuroticism. The study specifically assesses differences in Family relationship, psychoticism and neuroticism between male juvenile delinquents and non-delinquents. Implication of this research would be consideration of teenager's

mental health, being an adolescent, what problems they go through and ultimately that affect the family environment and their social life. So, there is a very important need to emphasize more on the family environment of the juveniles in relation to their parents.

The study explores the concepts of family relationship, neuroticism and psychoticism among the juvenile delinquents and non-delinquents.

### ***Juvenile Delinquency***

Juvenile delinquency, often known as "juvenile offending," pertains to minors indulging in illegal activities (juveniles, i.e. individuals younger than the statutory age of majority) (Ashebir, K. 2018). Most legal institutions, such as juvenile detention centres and courts, have specialised processes for dealing with juveniles. (Ashebir, K. 2018). A juvenile delinquent in India is a person who is typically below 18 years of age and commits an act that otherwise would have been charged as a crime if they were an adult. (Nandini, L., n.d.) People under the age of 18 may be charged and treated as adults depending on the type and severity of the offense committed.

Although some researchers have determined that this may reflect more harsh criminal justice and zero-tolerance policies more than changes in juvenile conduct, a higher proportion of youth have been arrested by their early 20s in recent years than in the past. Status offenses (such as underage smoking), property crimes, and violent crimes are all examples of juvenile crimes. (Kraut, M. E., n.d.) Juvenile delinquency, on the other hand, can be considered typical adolescent behaviour. This is due to the fact that most teenagers offend by committing nonviolent offenses just once or twice during their adolescence. Repeated and/or violent offenses are likely to lead to more frequent and violent offenses in the future. When this happens, the offender frequently exhibits antisocial conduct before adolescence.

### ***Family Relationship***

The family is the oldest and the most important of all the institutions that man has devised to regulate and integrate his behavior as he strives to satisfy his basic needs. The family is basically a unit in which parents and children live together. Its key position rests on its multiple functions in relation to overall development of its members, their protection and overall well-being. Therefore, it would emerge not only the social and physical well-being of the individual is taken care of by the family, but the psychological well-being as well. Basically, the family environment

becomes the primary agent of socialization. The family environment “involves the circumstances and social climate conditions within families. Since each family is made up of different individuals in a different setting, each family environment is unique.

Walter Prather and Jeannie A. Golden (2003) studied that the major environmental determinants that impacted the quality of parent-child relationships and associated antisocial behavior in children, and the relevant but implicit behavioral principles operating in the home were examined. They found that learning and reinforcement history had a greater impact on the quality of parent-child relationships than family structure, and provided a theoretical rationale for analyzing and developing effective interventions for a problem of social importance. It means that family environment and especially Parent-child Relationship was a major factor in delinquency. Gorman-Smith and others (1996), examined the relationship between family influences and participation in violent and nonviolent delinquent behavior among African American and Latino male adolescents living in the inner city. Families in the violent delinquent group reported poorer discipline, less cohesion, and less involvement than the other two groups (Gorman-Smith et al., 1996).

### ***Personality Traits as Predictors of Delinquency***

Eysenck (1964,1976) and Eysenck and Eysenck (1985) suggested that, compared to non-delinquents are more extroverted, neurotic and psychotic(tough-minded). The last factor can be seen as a combination of low agreeableness and low conscientiousness, which, together with extroversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience (or autonomy), are known as the Big Five personality factors (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Furnham and Thompsons(1991) study on how personality correlates with crime indicated that there is a relationship between delinquency and psychoticism.

Heaven (1996), investigating the relationship between the Big Five and delinquency, found that neuroticism and conscientiousness were significantly associated with the level of delinquency in high school students, while extraversion and openness were not. Wit and Van Aken (1998) reported that incarcerated adolescent boys who were treated in a residential institution scored higher on conscientiousness and neuroticism, and lower on agreeableness, than did a non-delinquent group.

Elements of Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) general theory of crime can be considered to support the position that personality traits are predictive of delinquency. For example, the result of meta-analysis by Pratt and Cullen (2000) suggested that low self-control was a good predictor of crime. Low self-control included the following factors: lack of resistance to immediate gratification, impulsiveness, insensitiveness, physical risk-taking, shortsightedness, and being unable to express problems. These low self-control factors were described as stable individual characteristics. They also partly resembled the description of a personality trait, and Pratt and Cullen's meta-analysis found that a trait- opportunity or trait-situation relationship was present. Inclusion of the situation or opportunity improved the power of the control variable to predict criminal behavior.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

The participants for this study were 35 boys incarcerated in one correctional institution in Yerwada, Pune and 35 school going children from Pune itself. The boys were from lower socio-economic status. Their ages ranged from 13 to 18 years ( $M=15.23$  years). Purposive sampling was done for this study.

### *Measures*

*Delinquency.* The boys who were incarcerated were considered as delinquents and the school going children were considered as non-delinquents.

*Family Relationship.* The Family Environment Scale (Bhatia, H. and Chadha, N. 1993) was used for family relationship dimension. It includes three factors i.e. expressiveness, conflict, acceptance and caring. The total number of items for the family relationship dimension were 33. The split-half reliability ranges from 0.48-0.92, overall test reliability coefficient is 0.95. The test has satisfactory face and content validity.

The participants were asked to respond to the items by marking any one of the items by marking any one of the five responses options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. On the basis of the total score of subjects, the group was divided into

two- a high score group and low score group.

*Neuroticism and Psychoticism.* Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire-Revised (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1952) was used to measure neuroticism and psychoticism. The total number of items for both neuroticism and psychoticism were 48. The test-retest reliability coefficient for Neuroticism is 0.78 and for Psychoticism is 0.86. Validity is confirmed factor validity, correlations with other personality measures (MMPI-2, ACL, STAI).

The participants were asked to respond to the items by marking any one of the two response options: yes or no. On the basis of the total score of subjects, the group was divided into two- a high score group and low score group.

### ***Procedure***

The 70 boys completed the questionnaires in groups of four to eight. A researcher was present to answer any questions they had and to clarify items when needed. For reasons of privacy, the institution did not allowed to collect any other information (i.e. criminal records, family circumstances, or other socio-demographic data).

## **RESULTS**

Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values for family relationship, neuroticism and psychoticism (N=70).

Table 1:-

### *Participant Characteristics*

Variables	Non-delinquents		Delinquents		t(df=68)	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
Expressiveness	39.89	3.65	37.37	2.77	3.24	<.001
Conflict	40.91	3.87	42.54	3.59	1.82	Not significant
Acceptance & Caring	42.63	1.84	39.54	3.20	4.93	<.001

Neuroticism	7.20	1.67	9.26	1.19	5.90	<.001
Psychoticism	4.97	1.58	8.57	2.31	7.59	<.001

### ***Family relationship***

It was hypothesized that, expressiveness will be higher in the family of non delinquents than juvenile delinquents. The t-test showed (see table 1) that there is significant difference between the mean scores of both the groups ( $t= 3.24(df=68)$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The mean score showed that expressiveness is higher in the family of non-delinquents than juvenile delinquents ( $M=39.89$ ,  $37.37$  resp.). Thus, the hypothesis should be accepted.

It was hypothesized that conflict will be lower in the family of non-delinquents than juvenile delinquents. The t-test showed (see table 1) that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of both the groups ( $t= 1.82$ ). Thus, the hypothesis should be rejected.

It was hypothesized that acceptance & caring will be higher in the family of non-delinquents than juvenile delinquents. The t-test showed (see table 1) that there is significant difference between the mean scores of both the groups ( $t= 4.93(df=68)$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The mean score showed that acceptance & caring is higher in the family of non-delinquents than juvenile delinquents ( $M=42.63$ ,  $39.54$  resp.). Thus, the hypothesis should be accepted.

### ***Neuroticism and Psychoticism***

It was hypothesized that neuroticism will be higher in the family of juvenile delinquents than non-delinquents. The t-test showed (see table 1) that there is significant difference between the mean scores of both the groups ( $t= 5.90(df=68)$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The mean score showed that neuroticism is higher in the juvenile delinquents than non-delinquents ( $M=9.26$ ,  $7.20$  resp.). Thus, the hypothesis should be accepted.

It was hypothesized that psychoticism will be higher in the family of juvenile delinquents than non-delinquents. The t-test showed (see table 1) that there is significant difference between the mean scores of both the groups ( $t= 7.59(df=68)$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The mean score showed that psychoticism

is higher in the juvenile delinquents than non-delinquents ( $M = 8.57, 4.97$  resp.). Thus, the hypothesis should be accepted.

## **DISCUSSION**

The aim of the study was to explore the differences in family environment, neuroticism and psychoticism among juvenile delinquents and non-delinquents. The results obtained were interesting and mostly as hypothesized.

The first hypothesis stating that Expressiveness will be higher in the family environment of non-delinquents than juvenile delinquents was supported. The mean value of the first group was higher than the mean value of the second group and the t-value of both groups were found to be significant at 0.01 level of significance.

The second hypothesis stating that conflict will be lower in the family environment of non-delinquents than juvenile delinquents was rejected. Although the mean value of the first group was lower than the mean value of the second group, but t-value of both groups were found to be not significant at 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance.

The third hypothesis stating that Acceptance & Caring will be higher in the family environment of non-delinquents than juvenile delinquents was supported. The mean value of the first group was higher than the mean value of the second group and the t-value of both groups were found to be significant at 0.01 level of significance.

The above-mentioned variables are the subscales of the Family Environment Scale by (Bhatia & Chadha, 1993), which determines the family environment of the participants in this research study. According to the results obtained, it was found that non-delinquents were high on expressiveness and acceptance & caring whereas the difference between the mean values of conflict were found to be not significant.

The findings of the present study were consistent with earlier findings. According to Prather and Golden (2005), family environment and especially Parent-child Relationship was a major factor in delinquency. The major environmental determinants that impacted the quality of parent-child relationships and associated antisocial behavior in children. Haan, Prinzie, and Dekovic (2010), found that Parents of children who are less extraverted, benevolent and conscientious, or more

imaginative, are in particular need of being supported in developing and maintaining effective disciplinary techniques. This meant that parenting played an important role in delinquent behaviour. According to Gorman-Smith(1996), Families in the violent delinquent group reported poorer discipline, less cohesion, and less involvement. It means that children from such backgrounds tend towards delinquency. The results of a study conducted by Scott W Henggeler, Gary B. Melton and Linda A. Smith also suggested that family is one of the most important factors influencing personality of children. The hypotheses were formulated on the basis of international research and studies. The results of those studies suggested that the family environment plays an important role in the social behavior as well as personality of the children. The impulsivity, anxiety and aggression comes from disturbed family environment. Hence the results are found to be significant.

The hypothesis stating that conflict will be lower in the family environment of non-delinquents than juvenile delinquents was rejected, because the difference between the mean values of the two groups was not significant. As we observe the sample of the present study, both the groups of the study were from lower socio-economic status. So these groups were only compared on the basis of delinquency which is a single affecting factor. However the study is based on a small sample collected only from a single institution. The assumptions were made on the basis of international research and studies. The socio-economic status affects the family environment, therefore further research can be done on this topic.

The fourth hypothesis stating that Neuroticism will be higher in the family environment of juvenile delinquents than non-delinquents was supported. The mean value of the second group was higher than the mean value of the first group and the t-value of both groups were found to be significant at 0.01 level of significance.

According to D. T. L. Shek and R. Y. Lee, Their study on Hong Kong Chinese adolescents showed that neuroticism plays a very important role in the delinquency of adolescents. Their study found that antisocial behavior was positively associated with psychoticism and neuroticism. It means that there is a significant relation between neuroticism and delinquent personality. In another study by Margaret E. Arrison, the study suggests that there is role of role-taking deficits in the genesis of delinquent behavior in psychopathic and neurotic delinquents. It is consistent with

the other findings. T.B. Hinmon (2000) found that attachment factors (e.g., empathy for others, capacity for relationships) relate directly to non-violent crime and inversely to violent crime. Also the study done by E. Nederlof, J. M. Van der Ham, J. A. Dingemans and T. I. Oei found that subtypes of maltreatment are distinctively related to dimensions of personality and personality pathology, possibly due to specific gene-environment interactions and suggested that early identification of children at risk could aid to limit the long-term consequences of maltreatment.

The fifth hypothesis stating that Psychoticism will be higher in the family environment of juvenile delinquents than non-delinquents was supported. The mean value of the second group was higher than the mean value of the first group and the t-value of both groups were found to be significant at 0.01 level of significance. The results are consistent with previous researchers' findings.

Eysenck's original work produced a set of two temperament distinctions, introversion / extraversion and neuroticism. Later, when he began to study patients in mental institutions, he added another dimension to his temperament scale; psychoticism (Boeree, 1998; Hollin, 1992). Many other researchers and psychologists have developed theories similar to Eysenck's and have also made uses of factor analysis research techniques to extend the study of criminal behaviour (Anastasi, 1988; Darley, Glucksberg & Kinchla, 1991; Hollin, 1992; Link & Mealey, 1992).

The findings of the present study were consistent with earlier findings. According to L. M. Cravens-Brown, there is a relationship between psychoticism and antisocial behavior. Also the study says that extraversion may play a protective role in the presence of high levels of psychoticism. The study done by William E. Copeland, Shari Miller-Johnson, Gordon Keeler, Adrian Angold and E. Jane Costello suggests that children with specific patterns of psychopathology with and without conduct disorder were at risk of later criminality. In study "Impulsive and Callous Traits Are More Strongly Associated With Delinquent Behavior in Higher Risk Neighborhoods Among Boys and Girls" by Madeline H. Meier, Wendy S. Slutske, Stephan Arndt and Remi J. Cadoret, Results suggested a robust moderating effect of neighborhood context on personality risk for delinquency. The relation between impulsivity and delinquency was greater in neighborhoods low in collective efficacy compared to neighborhoods high in collective efficacy.

It might be possible that the two adolescent groups are basically or originally alike except that one group was apprehended and institutionalized and as a consequence became more introverted

and neurotic. A similar interaction was found for callous personality traits, indicating the consistency of the moderating effect of neighborhood context on personality risk for delinquency. Jennifer L. White, Terrie E. Moffitt, Avshalom Caspi, Dawn Jeglum Bartusch, Douglas J. Needles, and Magda Stouthamer-Loeber found that, that behavioral impulsivity was especially related to serious delinquency that is stable over time.

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