

## INDIVIDUAL RISK VARIABLES: KEY PREDICTOR OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR AMONG JUVENILES

**Geetika Saxena**

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Forensic Science,  
Mody University of Science & technology,  
Lakhmangrh, Sikar

**Dr. Richa Saxena**

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Psychology,  
Gurukul Kangri Deemed to be University,  
Dehradun, Uttarakhand

### Abstract

*In the past few years, the number of adolescents who commit serious crimes has grown by leaps and bounds all over the world. This is a big problem for social and criminal justice.*

*Juvenile delinquent behavior is not the manifestation of just one risk factor and can never be predicted with complete certainty; rather, it is predominantly affected by the presence of more than one risk factor, such as family, individual, environment, etc. The purpose of this article is to illustrate and explain the intersection between the effects of individual factors (Psychological Factors and Personality) and their involvement in juvenile delinquency.*

**Key Words:** *Juvenile Delinquency, Adolescence, Individual risk variables*

### Introduction

Delinquent behavior is any conduct that is absurd, wrongful, and contrary to society's normative expectations. According to sociologist William Graham Sumner (1906), deviance is a violation of existing context-specific, cultural, or societal expectations, including folkways, mores, or codified law. The delinquent youth is someone whose conduct is overly aggressive or frightening, who is actively involved in fighting with family members, seeks publicity, attempts to damage or vandalize property, steals money from individuals, and appears to hold a family in distress

Juvenile Jurisdiction defines a juvenile as "a child or youth at the age of 7 or below the upper age who has committed a crime, violated probation, or engaged in indecent or immoral conduct," with emphasis on their nature vs. nature worldwide. It is difficult to describe, quantify, explain, and prevent the perplexed phenomenon of juvenile delinquency in the modern era with numerous adverse effects on the wellbeing, societal, academic, and legal systems. Therefore, juvenile delinquency is a broad, generic term that covers a child's different forms of antisocial behavior and can be legally defined. Due to the differences in social contexts and laws of the land, juvenile delinquency is conceptualized accordingly, so it has been described separately in the various literatures where scholars have suggested that child delinquents are therefore two-to-three times more likely than adolescents whose delinquent conduct tends to begin to graduate to more serious, aggressive, brutal,

and chronic offenders in their adult age.

Individual delinquent behavior is not the manifestation of one pre-reason and can never be predicted with complete certainty rather it's predominantly affected by multiple interrelated factors such as dysfunctional families, cultures, social media, poorly maintained schools, peer scrutiny, law enforcement agencies, and juvenile justice status or other variables worldwide results of multiple interrelated factors rather affected by only one (Mbiriri et al., 2017); (Ojo, 2012). For example, the modus operandi of every crime manifests the individual personality traits of a person such as age, height, motive, perception, and so on. Risk factors or variables are generally categories in three areas, called individual, social and environmental, results in increased likelihood of criminal behavior (Jung et al., 2018); (Farrington et al., 2015).

The purpose of this article is to illustrate and explain the intersection between the effects of individual factors (Psychological Factors and Personality) and their involvement in juvenile delinquency.

### **Psychological Risk Factor**

Understanding the Psychological Dimensions of juvenile offenders is an inescapable measure towards addressing their problems. Like adult offenders, juvenile Delinquents with extreme mental disabilities have a fundamental right to show their competence (Maniadaki et al., 2009).

In juvenile offenders, the prevalence rates of psychiatric disorders are higher than the prevalence rates seen in the overall population, and the presence of comorbid disorders is widely seen, such as emotional distress with depression (Hovey et al., 2017); (Colins et al., 2010); (Wasserman et al., 2003). According to study findings in Europe, a high proportion of juvenile offenders with Mental Health disorders in custody have been identified, ranging from 69% to 100%. (Hovey et al., 2017).

Comparative studies between delinquents and non-delinquents have indicated a higher incidence of internalizing symptoms (anxiety, depression) relative to externalizing symptoms (aggressiveness, law, breakdown, hyperactivity) among adolescent offenders in correctional facilities (Jurma et al., 2014).

Depression is substantially higher among juvenile offenders than among other young people. Nevertheless, depression can be predictors of antisocial behavior may pose a significant risk of involvement in property crime, violent behavior among youths (Ozkan, 2017). Several empirical findings suggest that depressive processes are not primarily responsible for offending among juvenile offenders, but that such depressed activity is correlated with a significantly impaired history of victimization (Hall et al., 2017).

Anxiety has also been related to delinquency and criminal behaviour. Similarly, violent behavior is inexorably related to subsequent psychological distress, so it would be expected that depression and anxiety would also be exacerbated by measures that prevent violence (Jolliffe et al., 2019).

When committing crimes, a staggering number of delinquents express utter emotionlessness. (Lance, 2003). Previous research investigated the advantages and pro-social behaviour of emotional intelligence but paid less attention to how emotional intelligence might have unfavorable and detrimental effects (Austin &

O'Donnell, 2013; Hyde & Grieve, 2018). Emotional intelligence (EI) is conceptualized as "the capacity to detect and identify one's own and other people's emotional states and to integrate this information to influence one's thoughts and behavior" (Davis & Nichols, 2016). A review of previous research found a link between low EQ and antisocial behaviour such as violence, hostility, substance abuse, and antisocial attitudes (Garca-Sancho et al., 2017); empathy (Milojevi et al., 2016); poor mentalization (Fonagy et al., 1997), impulsivity, and sensation seeking (Gomà-i-Freixanet, 1995).

Research suggests that adolescents who exhibited cognitive impairment at an extremely young age were more likely to suffer from impulsive behavior, responding without foresight and planning to sensations, impaired self-control, lack of tenacity, failure to withhold sexual satisfaction, attention problems, lack of concentration (Farrington, 2009); (Moeller et al., 2001). In fact, (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990) Criminality's general theory posits that psychosis is a central key of delinquent predisposition, and is supposed to continue in later periods of life. In risk-taking behavior, highly impetuous youth and teenagers are more frequently involved than moderately reckless Adults (Stanford et al., 1996).

Earlier Studies also postulates that Conduct disorder is a pervasive psychological disorder in juvenile offenders, who tend to commit more violent acts and show more cognitive impairment than defendants who have not had conduct disorder and openly present in comorbidity with substance abuse disorder, mood disorder, and ADHD (Choi et al., 2017).

Similarly, the co-occurrence of other diseases, such as alcoholism, personality problems, and mostly ADHD, is an added factor (Biederman et al., 1999) and the association or resemblance between ADHD and bipolar disorder in adolescents is causing significant concern.

### **Psychopathic Personality trait**

Psychopathic traits as a peculiar attribute of seriousness and resilience for child and youth conduct difficulties. A prominent role in the coherent hellish experience of Western civilization has long been practiced by psychopaths. 'They are' callous" intraspecies beast of prey" and remorseless to others even to those who are relatively close to them. In the conflation of a much more severe psychiatric subgroup of socially incompetent young people, psychopathy has become notable.

In their childhood and adolescence, teenagers with extreme psychopathic characteristics begin their criminal behavior, perpetrate pettier misdemeanors, are far more likely to use weapons and witness real evil against their targets (Pechorro et al., 2014). In contrast to perpetrators without such characteristics, more interpersonal violence higher percentages of re-offending, and a smaller ratio between discharge and recidivism was substantially correlated with psychopathic features in criminals.

A constellation of behavioral (e.g. impulsivity, irresponsibility), interpersonal (e.g. coercion, deception, egocentricity), affective (e.g. lack of empathy, remorse, or guilt), and antisocial (e.g. weak anger management, severe criminal behaviour) traits identifies the psychopathy concept. For example, youngsters with higher psychopathic characteristics, for example, engage in violent acts earlier in life, are referred to the justice system earlier in life, and indulge in much more delinquent

acts (Pechorro et al., 2014). Young people who manifest more extreme manifestations of these characteristics are known to commit an unprecedented number of crimes, are more susceptible to violent violence, appear unfazed by the brutal repercussions of their actions, and are more likely to re-offend or resist recovery rehabilitation initiatives (Blair et al., 2001); (Forth & Burke, 1998).

Callous-unemotional (CU) psychopathic personality traits (i.e. Lack of conscience and remorse) have been shown to substantially enhance the prediction of antisocial activity and suggest that adolescent aggressive and risk-taking behaviors are associated with inability in adolescence to regulate emotions and emotionally induced behavior's (Aucoin, 2006). Male youth offenders were found to be less precise and similarly juvenile sex offenders to be less specific about their emotions in recognizing their emotional states, and less capable of overcoming poor moods and prolonging good ones (Savitsky & Czyzewski, 1978). The Juvenile offenders struggled to manage their rage and were born in emotionally disengaged families (Moriarty et al., 2001).

### Conclusion

Juvenile delinquency is adequately conceptualized because of the disparity in social environments and laws of the country, therefore various studies indicated that child delinquents are thus two to three times more likely than adolescents whose delinquent activity appears to engage in more extreme violent, brutal, and persistent offenders in their adult age.

As the aforementioned official statistics and perspectives lead us to some discomfoting conclusions about the nature of delinquency as it relates to a broad spectrum of risk and protective factors and when addressing an individual's risk factors, youth involved in multiple crimes such as sexual assault, murder, and theft; substance abuse may be more receptive to strategies and interventions. Furthermore, individual variables play a vital role in the advancement of understanding for self-identity and a sense of justice, rationale, adoption of adult offender peer models, and the quest for their dysfunctional personality models.

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