

Neuroticism and Juvenile Delinquents

Menaka N.^{1*}, Dr. U. L. Bhuvaneshwari²

ABSTRACT

The study was intended to find out the effectiveness of eclectic counseling in reducing the neuroticism level of juvenile delinquents. The sample for the study was 47 convicted juveniles from Tamilnadu, India. All the samples were boys. Purposive sampling design was used. Demographic datasheet and Eysenck personality questionnaire for juniors were used for the study. Based on the test results, eclectic counselling was provided for a period of three months and the participants were assessed again. Before intervention, the mean value of neuroticism among the juvenile delinquents is 12.51 which is interpreted as high. Eclectic counseling was provided after analyzing the causes of their neurotic behavior. After intervention, the mean value of neuroticism has reduced to 6.36 and the t value was 13.302, indicating significant level of reduction in the level of neuroticism. Thus, the study showed the prevalence of high level of neuroticism among the male juvenile delinquents and the eclectic counselling is effective in reducing the neuroticism level.

Keywords: *Neuroticism, Eclectic Counselling, Juvenile Delinquents*

According to legal dictionary, juvenile delinquency is the behavior of a minor child that is marked by criminal activities, persistent antisocial behavior, or disobedience which the child's parents are unable to control. It is the violation of the law by a minor, which is not punishable by death or life imprisonment (2015). The juvenile delinquency can be predicted by the developmental delays, difficulty in developing self-perception, serious violation of rules and laws in childhood, emotional instability and aggressive behavior. These factors make them neurotic.

Neuroticism is a personality trait where the individual tends to be in negative and in anxious emotional state (Felman & Legg, 2018). Highly neurotic people have emotional response to the events in life and they are emotionally reactive. The neurotic people perceive normal situations as 'threatening' and react to it. Hence, they experience negative emotions like hopelessness, depression, self-consciousness, emotional instability, aggression and frustration.

A neurotic child expresses the repressed conflict in the form of negative emotions whereas a neurotic delinquent 'act out' the repressed emotional conflict (Stern, 1945). Thus, these

¹Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, Government Arts College, Coimbatore, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Government Arts College, Coimbatore, India

*Corresponding Author

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children need help from outside. Counseling can be used to bring awareness about the negative emotions and methods to handle them.

Eclectic counselling is defined as a combination of directive and non-directive technique depending on the situational factors. This approach in counselling is characterised by its freedom to the counsellor to use whatever procedures or techniques seem to be the most appropriate to any particular time for any particular client (Kashyap, n.d.).

Based on the interaction with the participants, the general causes for the neuroticism were found to be low self esteem, aggression, addiction and faulty family pattern and interaction. The eclectic approach of the intervention included relaxation training, self monitoring, introspection, anger management and cognitive behaviour therapies.

REVIEWS

A study was conducted by comparing the male and female delinquents and non-delinquents in the city of Valencia. The dependent variables were extraversion, neuroticism, intelligence and dogmatism. Extraversion, neuroticism and rigidity questionnaire, criminal propensity scale and Raven's Progressive matrices were used. Results indicated significant differences in dogmatism, neuroticism, and criminal propensity with the delinquents having scored higher than the non-delinquents. But the reverse was true in the case of intelligence. Neuroticism predicted delinquency better in the females than males. Intelligence and criminal propensity discriminated the male and female delinquents from non-delinquents (Diaz, Belena & Baguena, 1994).

Antisocial behavior, extraversion, neuroticism, rigidity, motivation, anxiety and locus of control of the 675 adolescents were studied. The sample was divided into three groups- a problem children group consisting of 86 boys and 46 girls, a delinquent group comprising of 79 boys and 43 girls and a control group with 224 boys and 197 girls. Delinquents scored higher in antisocial behavior, dogmatism, neuroticism and externality when compared to non delinquents. The personality profile of the delinquent girls was almost similar to that of boys in other groups. Girls from the entire three group, took more responsibility for their actions, were less neurotic and had internal locus of control (Baguena & Diaz, 1991).

Case study method was used to study the causes of juvenile delinquency. The sample of 604 cases was studied. The case study consisted of detailed history, psychiatric examination, dreams, appearance and other features. The author stressed the significance of neuroticism in causing criminal behavior (Hirsch, 1937).

Need and Significance of The Study

Adolescence is a transitional stage and characterized by the physical, mental, biological and emotional changes. Most of the adolescents adapts well to the changes in the environment. Few individuals who are not able to adapt, show maladjustive coping strategies like consuming alcohol, being rebellious and impolite and involve in delinquent behaviours. Thus, the delinquent adolescents experience roller coaster of emotions.

It is important to study and understand the emotional state of the delinquents to rehabilitate them. Neurotic delinquents experience an ocean of negative emotions whereas an extraverted neurotic delinquent experience an ironical mixture of positive and negative emotions. These personality traits play a huge role in designing the treatment plan for the delinquents. But there are minimal studies available in India to understand the neuroticism

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of the juvenile delinquents. On the other hand, the incident rate of juvenile delinquency has been growing steadfast. Failure to accomplish this, will fail the future of the entire country.

Statement Of the Problem

A study on the effectiveness of eclectic counseling in reducing the Neuroticism of juvenile delinquents.

Objectives

- To find out the level of neuroticism among the juvenile delinquents before interventions.
- To find out the difference in the neuroticism level of the juvenile delinquents after intervention.

Hypothesis

- There will be high level of neuroticism for juvenile delinquents before intervention.
- There will be a significant difference in the level of neuroticism for juvenile delinquents after intervention.

Sample and Sampling Design

The sample for the study was juvenile delinquents. Hence purposive sampling design was used. All the samples were boys and between age 15 and 18. The total number of sample was 47.

Tools Used

- A semi structured biographic sheet consisting of personal and family details of the delinquents, socio economic details, number and details of the offences were collected.
- Eysenck personality questionnaire for juniors was used. It consists of 81 items. It measures four dimensions namely- extroversion, neuroticism, psychoticism and lie scale. The respondents have to answer either “yes” or “no” to the items. The lie score helps to identify the socially desirable answer. The overall reliability of the questionnaire is 0.75. The reliability of the neuroticism dimension is also 0.75.

Procedure

The samples were seated comfortably and prior information about the purpose of the study was given. After getting consent, the volunteered samples were given the biographic datasheet and Eysenck personality questionnaire for juniors. Necessary instructions were given. The responses were scored and tabulated. Results were analysed and discussed. Conclusions were drawn.

Statistical Analysis

Mean, standard deviation, percentage, correlation and t test were used. SPSS software and MS Excel were used to do statistical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Table I: Neuroticism Level Among the Juvenile Delinquents in Before Intervention Conditions (N=47)**

LEVELS	NEUROTICISM	PERCENTAGE
VERY LOW	1	2.13%
LOW	9	19.15%
AVERAGE	13	27.66%
HIGH	20	42.55%
VERY HIGH	4	8.51%

The above table shows that most of the juvenile delinquents have high level of neuroticism (42.55%). Thus, the juveniles tend to experience and act out the negative emotions to a higher level. They may be tensed, withdrawn and stressed out most of the time. They perceive uncertain situations in a negative manner and fuel the situation further by reacting negatively. Studies have shown that neuroticism predicts delinquency much better in females than males (Diaz, Belena & Baguena, 1994). As the samples involved in the study are males, the neuroticism level is nearer to average score, even though it falls under high category. Thus, the first hypothesis suggesting that the juvenile delinquents will have high level of neuroticism can be accepted.

Table II: Neuroticism Level Among the Juvenile Delinquents in After Intervention Condition (N=47)

LEVELS	NEUROTICISM	PERCENTAGE
VERY LOW	17	36.17%
LOW	18	38.3%
AVERAGE	11	23.4%
HIGH	1	2.13%
VERY HIGH	0	-

The above table indicates the frequency and percentage of the level of neuroticism of the participants in the after-intervention condition. Most of the participants have low level of neuroticism (38.3%) and very low level of neuroticism (36.17%). The neuroticism level of the participants has reduced from high to low level. Thus, the eclectic counseling which was provided as intervention has proved to be effective for the participants in handling their negative emotions. This has helped in reducing the neuroticism level of the participants.

Table III: Neuroticism Level in The Before and After Intervention Conditions Among the Juvenile Delinquents

Dimension	Condition	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value
Overall Aggression	Before Intervention	12.51	3.413	13.302*
	After Intervention	6.36	3.259	

*Significant at .000 level (2 tailed)

The above table shows the mean value and standard deviation of the neuroticism for the same group of juveniles in before and after intervention conditions. The table reveals that the mean value before intervention and after intervention is 12.51 and 6.36 respectively and the t value is 13.302, implying significant reduction in the level of neuroticism. Thus, it can

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be confirmed that eclectic counselling addresses the problems and nature of the juveniles. The intervention has been highly effective in reducing the neuroticism. Thus, the second hypothesis has been proved right.

CONCLUSION

The level of neuroticism is high among the juvenile delinquents. Eclectic counselling is effective in reducing the neuroticism level of the juvenile delinquents significantly.

Limitations

Sample size is minimal. The research was pertained only to the institutionalized juvenile delinquents. It can be extended to non-institutionalized juvenile delinquents. Female juvenile delinquents were not included in the study.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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