

## Dimensions of Personality of Delinquent Prone Adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

The personality dimensions of delinquent-prone adolescents are studied to build information regarding the risky and protective factors of personality dimensions among delinquent-prone adolescents and to contribute towards developing interventions for preventing and correcting delinquent-prone behaviors among adolescents. The studied personality dimensions are neurotic, narcissist, psychopathic, and Machiavellianism. The early detection of delinquent-prone behavior among adolescents is very essential for helping adolescents to prevent them from engaging in delinquent activities. Delinquent prone adolescents' personality dimensions reveal particular traits of their personalities, and this early understanding of delinquent prone behavior among adolescents will lead to early modification of their personalities to create a pro-social citizen for the country to catch them young to prevent juvenile delinquency and adult crime in the future. The research methodology of the present study is a systematic review of secondary data (collected literature, information from scholarly articles, relevant online articles, and other relevant online publications). The research study resulted in the finding that personality dimensions like neurotic, narcissist, psychopathic, and Machiavellianism of delinquent prone adolescents need more studies to understand the risky and protective personality factors of their delinquent prone behavior. The findings of the research will be useful for adolescents, psychological counselors, teachers, school authorities, parents, and communities to empower society by preventing and profiling the personality dimensions of delinquent adolescents.

**Keywords:** *Personality Dimensions, Delinquent Prone Behaviour, Adolescent*

At 9:30 pm on December 16, 2012, in Delhi, the capital of India, a 23-year-old girl boarded a private bus with her male friend. Six people were there in the bus, including the driver. They attacked the girl and her male friend very brutally with an iron rod and gang raped her afterwards, throwing them out of the bus. The bus driver even tried to drive the bus over the girl's body but failed to do so. The girl was severely injured and after 13 days of emergency treatment, the girl died. At the time the convicts committed

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the crime, their ages were 30, 28, 26, 20, 19, and the sixth one was a juvenile, below the age of 18 years (Dixit & Shukla, 2016). It is shocking to know of juvenile involvement in such a heinous crime. The other three convicts were in their twenties. Involvement in such a heinous crime at this age is very dangerous to the whole society. The law was amended in relation to the Nirbhaya gang rape in Delhi, in which one of the accused was a few months short of turning 18. The Indian government passed the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015, which amended the age group of juveniles as 16 to 18 years as an adult if involved in heinous offences (Agarwal & Kumar, 2016).

Agarwal (2018) found that juveniles involved in heinous crimes are increasing. Early detection of delinquent-prone behavior among adolescents is essential to catch them young to prevent juvenile delinquency and adult crime in the future. Juvenile delinquency in India is a big concern. It includes theft, murder, smuggling, or sexual crimes. In recent times, we have been witnessing adolescents involved in heinous activities like murder and rape. It is termed juvenile delinquency. The main area of focus is observed to be punishment, not prevention or intervention. Anti-social behavior among adolescents is a predictive factor of adult crime (Kohli et al., 2019). The purpose of studying personality dimensions of delinquents is to detect the relationship between personality and delinquency, which helps to build information regarding the risk and protective factors of personality dimensions that contribute to delinquency among adolescents. This knowledge can be utilized to detect delinquency among adolescents and to provide early interventions to prevent delinquency and correct delinquent prone behaviors among adolescents to prevent them from becoming juvenile delinquents. Researches said that delinquent prone adolescents are very low in the academic achievement and there is a positive correlation between metacognitive awareness and academic achievement. Delinquents have very poor metacognitive awareness tended to have high impulsivity (Jain, Tiwari & Awasthi, 2017).

White-collar crime Edwin Sutherland, a criminologist, introduced the term "white collar crime" in the year 1949; this can be described as a crime that happens in the higher-class society of high socio-economic status. An example of this is financial cheating, bribery, tax corruption, insider trading, etc. White collar crimes are divided into two categories: manipulation of asset values or power. The basic behaviors are betrayal, breaching of trust, being dishonest, etc. White-collar crimes are seen in all types of occupations and they are more harmful than street crimes. Larsen and Buss (2009) described Personality is a collection of psychological traits that influence an individual's interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, as well as his or her adaptability to the social environment. According to Calvin, Gardener and John (2016) personality is a very fascinating psychological variable for the general public. The word is used in various senses, though the main area of personality is divided into two. The first one is of a person's social skills and the second one is of the impression a person creates in other people's opinions. A delinquent is a person who deviates from an obligation or engages in disorderly or illegal actions, usually committed by children or adolescents. Delinquency is behavior violating social rules and norms (Collins Dictionary of Law, 2006). According to the Indian Juvenile Justice Act 2015, a person who commits a delinquent action under 18 years of age is considered a juvenile. If the action is a heinous crime, the age will come down to 16.

Sinha (2016) behavior is the byproduct of one's thought process. Research could find that the decision to commit a crime comes from the abnormal thought process of a person. These abnormal thought processes include constant lying, no empathy, selfishness, black and white thinking, blaming others, being irresponsible, intolerant, and having no self-control.

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Research found that personality and delinquency relations among people showed different results according to the nation, gender, and race, etc. The personality of a criminal was found to have low self-esteem and social esteem, anxiety, insecurity, and irritability. They were all found in the criminal's personality. Rehabilitating juvenile delinquents is a huge burden to society as a whole, so preventing juvenile delinquency is better than rehabilitating them. Adolescents can grow up with a healthy mind if they get proper understanding and guidance from their care givers and self-awareness to modify them. The purpose of the research review is to study the personality traits of delinquents, and this study will be beneficial for adolescents to modify their personality to make it more adaptive by not getting into any delinquent behavior.

WHO defines an adolescent as any person who is aged between 10 to 19? About 21% of the Indian population consists of adolescents, and they are the future of the nation. The development of the nation depends upon the development of adolescents. Proper care for adolescent development reflects positively on the development of the nation (Sawyer, et al., 2018). Socioeconomic status of the delinquent prone adolescents played a key role in the structuring the metacognitive awareness of delinquent prone adolescents (Jain, Tiwari & Awasthi, 2018a). Adolescence is a very vulnerable phase of life. Proper awareness about the development and precaution to avoid dangerous situations in adolescence leads to a healthy society. Adolescents who get into serious delinquent behavior will be termed juvenile delinquents. This is a very difficult situation for the adolescent, as well as for the adolescent's family and for society. This research paper is the outcome of studying the personality traits of delinquents so that one can understand the relationship between personality and delinquency. Thus, the burden on society due to juvenile delinquents will be reduced. Adolescence is a life phase between childhood and adulthood. It is considered a crucial phase of life with many biological developments, social role transformations, many curiosities in life, and less knowledge and experience. Metacognition and locus of control significantly related in shaping the personality dimension (Jain, Tiwari & Awasthi, 2018b). Loeber (1982) says at the age between 6 to 16, overt anti-social behaviors like fighting and disobedience decline, but covert anti-social behaviors like substance abuse and stealing are found to increase during adolescence.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The main aim of this research review is to understand the personality dimensions of delinquents and use that knowledge to assist adolescents, psychological counselors, teachers, parents, and the community to understand the risky and protective personality traits of delinquency. The benefit of this research is that it provides a proper understanding of the personality traits of a delinquent adolescent, which is helpful to the adolescent and their care givers to take an appropriate step of remedial or preventive methods to modify the adolescent's personality.

#### *The Connection between Delinquency and Neurotic Behavior*

Bennett (2013), the author explains the need to study psychopath, neurotic, and other deviant characteristics of students which are related to antisocial conduct. Many criminals were found not responsible for their criminal activity because they were sick or needed reeducation. Delinquents were found to have childhood maladjustment and misbehavior. Delinquency is explained as a failure in proper interaction between the individual and society. Neurotic delinquents display trouble for others more than they suffers for themselves. Latent delinquency sometimes overlaps with neurotic development. There is a need for early detection of delinquency, which predicts crimes in society. The personality of

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an offender can predict delinquency. Most of the investigations could prove that neurotic behavior is related to delinquency. Neurotic symptoms like restlessness, aggression, truancy, stealing, etc., are related to delinquent behavior.

Delinquency is not a psychiatric issue, but it is linked to different personality types. Neurotic personalities exhibit anti-social behavior, maladjustments, and aggression. Interventions are needed as reeducation to change them. Delinquency is explained as a byproduct of an individual's personality. A neurotic personality is the inability to stop negative impulsive actions. Antisocial behavior is very closely related to various neurotic characteristics. Understanding the neurotic and delinquent behavior of children along with their emotional development is very essential for proper planning for either remedial or preventive measures towards delinquency. The primary behavior disorder was related to delinquent and neurotic tendencies. Adolescent disturbance was also related to delinquent and neurotic tendencies. Neurotic symptoms like anxiety, inhibitions, irrational fear, obsessions, and fear are found to be related to delinquency.

Gungea, Jaunky, and Ramesh (2017) found that delinquency is a conduct disorder characterized by antisocial behavior in youth. Psychological theories describe juvenile delinquency as extroverts being more prone to being delinquents because they are more impulsive. Highly neurotic children and adolescents are described as anxious, vulnerable, tense, easily frightened, guilty, moody, intolerant, ill-secured, very much vulnerable to stress and maladaptive coping. The extremely low scores of neurotics show a lack of fear, anxiety, and emotional concern. Neurotics have been positively associated with delinquency. Delinquency is a state of conduct disorder and anti-social behavior in youth; behavioral sciences are primarily concerned with juvenile delinquency. The study of personality studies to understand the predictive factors of future crime. Studies have found poor self-control in childhood, late childhood, and adolescence predicts conduct disorder. Furthermore, impulsivity or disinhibition is positively related to antisocial delinquency rather than adolescence-limited delinquency. Neuroticism refers to anxiety and anger positively related to hostility and irritability in adolescence. Neuroticism has been associated positively with delinquency, such as conduct disorders and substance use disorders.

### ***The Connection between Delinquency and Narcissism***

Calhoun, et al. (2000) Narcissism is explained as the predictor of juvenile violence and the ego of youth, which may lead to delinquent behavior. The interpersonal relations of narcissists are always poor due to a lack of depth in their relationships. They have a tendency to devalue others, they envy others and they are always waiting for acclaim from others. Some adolescents are not ready to take their short comings and a strong desire for public acceptance and if they have to face any kind of external refusal by others, they get into a maladaptive form of narcissism. Narcissism has been associated with delinquency, but a deep study is essential in this area. Narcissist personality disorder describes the lack of empathetic ability, interpersonal exploitation of interpersonal relations, and exhibitionism. These are all found in delinquents also, but the exact element of narcissism in delinquency needs more empirical studies on the topic.

In adolescents, more severe fragmentation of self is reflected in delinquent behavior. Narcissism is the mediator of delinquent behavior. Narcissism demands excessive self-importance and recognition from others. The study found there is a possible relationship between narcissism and juvenile delinquency. Understanding the narcissist's vulnerability towards delinquency can be an important factor in planning interventions for preventive and

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remedial purposes of delinquency among adolescents. According to Pechorro et al. (2018), narcissism is a significant predictor of anti-social behavior, behavioral problems, low self-esteem, and pro-active aggression in youth, as well as psychopathic traits, aggression, social anxiety, conduct disorder, physical violence, and alcohol and drug abuse.

### ***The Connection between Delinquency and Psychopathology***

Different psychopathic facets were significantly and positively related to current and future delinquent behavior. Manipulative personality traits and impulsive irresponsibility are strong predictors of delinquent behavior. Adolescence is the developmental stage of cognitive skills (Salihovic and Stattin, 2017). Marsee et al. (2005) found that psychopathic traits are predictors of delinquency and aggression among boys and girls. Psychopathic adults are described as anti-social in interpersonal and behavioral traits with impulsive, irresponsible, arrogant, unemotional, unempathetic, and lack of guilt behavior. Psychopaths are found to be very violent in their behavior. Pechorro et al. (2014) research results say youth with psychotic traits were engaged in criminal activities from their earlier lives. Youth get involved in anti-social behavior because they are not ready to respect others' authority or rights and norms prevailing in society. Psychopath adults showed violent behavior to achieve material goals and for revenge, and they were deceitful and manipulative. This study also found that those people who were involved with criminal activities and psychopaths had earlier connections with illegal activities, the police, and courts.

Stylianou, et al. (2019) found that delinquency is directly related to psychopathic traits. Psychopathic personality is a disorder generally connected to the age of eight. It is partially characterized by antisocial behavior, being unempathetic, impulsive and low behavior control. Many researchers found that psychopathic traits were predictors of antisocial and delinquent behavior among youth and adults. Psychopathic traits are lack of care and guilt. They were discovered to be more aggressive and to have lower levels of anxiety and fear. Bullying is related to low social skills and lack of self-control. A few studies could find a connection between suicide and delinquency.

Flexon, & Meldrum (2013) describe being unemotional as the main characteristic of psychopathy, and this characteristic is closely related to violent delinquency. Studies have found that psychopathy is constant when it is present during childhood and adolescent years. Adult psychopathy is similar to young psychopathy. Psychopaths exhibit the callous-unemotional (CU) trait, and it includes a lack of guilt and empathy. Peer affiliation, when combined with a lack of self-control, leads to delinquent behavior in adolescents. When psychopathic traits are present in a person, they tend to become more delinquent than a non-psychopathic person. Violent behavior, poor school bonding, all these lead to delinquency.

### ***The Connection between Delinquency and Machiavellianism***

Lau & Marsee (2013) Machiavellianism is described as giving more importance to self-interest. Because of this, they manipulate, lie, deceive, and exploit interpersonal relations, and they are goal-oriented rather than person-oriented. Individuals high in Machiavellianism are described as untrustworthy and emotionally detached. Children who are raised with Machiavellianism are goal-oriented and become very aggressive for their own benefit. Machiavellianism is positively associated with neurotic and psychotic traits. Machiavellianism traits do not have faith in human nature and are found to be related to delinquent behavior. They are found to be aggressive due to their insecurity in life. Monaghan, Bizumic, & Sellbom (2018) described Machiavellianism as having no trust in society or environment. They have a world view that is very dangerous and one cannot

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believe in them. They have never experienced a good early life, emotional intelligence, or better management in life. This trait increases fear in the person. People with Machiavellianism traits are cold-hearted, unemphatic, and antisocial. They lacked communication with parents, had very low risk sensitivity, and followed very harsh discipline.

Peled-Laskov & Wolf (2021) described financial delinquency as a crime committed by a person who has a good social status and misuses the status for a criminal goal. Financial delinquency is the commitment to attain financial benefits in the wrong ways. White-collar crimes are described as sophisticated. There is a lack of research on personality traits that predict white-collar crimes. As personality disorders related to white collar financial delinquency, psychopathic, narcissistic, Machiavellianism, and pathological liars are very good at concealing their true attitude by showing the public they are very good people while planning on deceiving others for their personal benefits. The negative side of a personality includes narcissism, psychopathic tendencies, and Machiavellianism. Machiavellianism demonstrates these traits through stealing, lying, deceiving, and bullying. Psychopathy describes as interpersonal manipulations, antisocial behavior, and erratic life style as enjoying taking risks. Psychopathy is self-oriented; Machiavellianism tends to manipulate to get one's own way. A narcissist shows up as sociable and charming but gives less value to others' opinions. They show arrogance. Narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism are associated with low levels of positive traits such as truthfulness, sincerity, honesty, and faithfulness (Muris, et al., 2017).

### ***Research Gap***

Most of the studies focused on juvenile delinquents and on external factors of delinquent behavior. Personality dimensions are a significant psychological variable in predicting adolescent delinquent behavior. Determining the risky and protective personality factors of a delinquent adolescent leads to detecting the delinquent prone personality in an effective personality development program. This programme aims to prevent and protect adolescents from any illegal behavior by developing an adaptive personality so that they do not turn into juvenile delinquents. Personality dimensions assessment is focused on the psychological well-being aspects of delinquent prone adolescents and will be instrumental in uplifting their overall well-being in the future.

Understanding the personality dimensions of delinquents: Understanding the personality dimensions like neurotic, narcissist, psychopathic, and Machiavellianism among delinquent adolescents will be helpful to prevent juvenile delinquency. External factors which may cause delinquency cannot be controlled by the individual alone. At the same time, knowledge about one's own risky and protective personality dimensions can be more helpful for the individual to control or improve their own personality with the help of effective interventions so that any external factors won't affect the person negatively and the occurrence of delinquency can be prevented.

Rehabilitating juvenile delinquents is a big burden. Prevention of juvenile delinquency is possible only through the knowledge of protective and risky factors of personality that predict delinquency. Certain personality traits may cause delinquency, and it is important to find out their correlation with delinquency to get a clear picture regarding this area. This study adds to the knowledge needed to prevent delinquency among adolescents.

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Through this, the wellbeing of adolescents, psychological counselors, teachers, school authorities, parents, and communities can be enhanced through the knowledge to help them assist adolescence with suitable interventions to enhance adolescents' overall development. Through this, the wellbeing of the whole society can be enhanced by preventing juvenile delinquency.

### *Objectives*

The main objectives of this research are:

- To study the personality dimensions of delinquents
- To analyse the social burden of rehabilitating juvenile delinquents.
- To provide awareness and suggestions about delinquent personality dimensions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology of the present study is a systematic review of secondary data (collected literature, information from scholarly articles, relevant online articles, and other relevant online publications). This paper is the outcome of a review of research articles on the personality dimensions of delinquents. Much research has happened on external factors of delinquency, but less focus has been given on the personality dimensions of delinquency. Accumulating knowledge on personality dimensions will be helpful to adolescents and their care givers to understand and assess the personality traits of adolescents to prevent them from becoming juvenile delinquents.

### *Objective-1*

The intrapersonal and interpersonal skills of a person make that person more adaptive to society (Larsen and Buss, 2009). Much research has happened on delinquents. Researchers found a few personality traits are positively and negatively related to delinquency. This study is an attempt to accumulate those personality dimensions to understand and contribute to the positive development of adolescents to a positive society. Curcio, Mak, and George (2017) found that impulsivity and sensation seeking were significantly related to delinquent offending behavior. Sensational seeking was more significantly related to delinquency than impulsivity. Low self-control has been linked to impulsivity. Those who have the habit of risk-taking behavior are more prone to delinquency.

Shoemaker (2018) found in their research that negative personality has been connected to delinquency. The core personality that is connected to delinquency is typically related to aggression, impulsivity, outgoing, suspicious, hostile, defiance, neurotic and uncooperativeness. A psychopath's personality is connected to delinquency and is characterized by selfishness and disregard for others' feelings. They engage in activities with the intention of harming others. Violence is closely related to psychopathic, sociopathic, or anti-social personalities. Psychopathic personality can emerge and remain dormant during adolescence, or it can persist for a longer period of time before becoming active in adulthood.

Previous researchers found that delinquency includes conduct disorder, anti-social behavior, and dark traits in personality. Personality types are described. Neurotic (oversensitive, irritable, complaining about minor issues, over anxiety, emotional instability), Machiavellianism (selfish, exploiting others for their own selfishness, personal safety, manipulation, over desire for power, money, status), narcissist (arrogance, jealousy, manipulation, hypersensitivity, shame, anxiety, depression), and psychopathic (disregard for

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others, selfish, aggressive, impulsive, Lack of agreeableness, self-control, self-esteem, social esteem, anxiety, empathy, respect to social norms, excessive as extroverts, sensational seeking, insecurity, irritability, risk taking behavior. Black or white thoughts, imbalanced ids, and super ego are examples of abnormal thought processes.

### *Objective-2*

The shocking rape case happened in India; the juvenile was involved in the crime, and the other four criminals who were party to the rape were in their twenties. Rehabilitating juvenile delinquents is a big burden to society. The growth of the country depends upon the development of adolescents. Delinquent behavior among adolescents is a big concern because their heinous behavior creates juvenile delinquents in the country and it is a big curse on the overall development of the nation. Eaton & Korach (2016) found that white collar crimes are so notorious in society that the researchers are warning about the importance of the criminological and behavioral factors that can be present in the offender. Positive personality profile elements such as misusing authority, narcissist personality, low self-control, and cultural hedonism were positively related to white collar crimes. When an adolescent becomes a juvenile delinquent, it becomes a big burden to society as a whole. Identifying delinquent adolescents at an early development stage is of paramount importance because they tend to transfer delinquency across generations (Moore, 2001).

### *Objective-3*

The personality of adolescents has an important concern in society as it is the crucial developmental stage for the adolescent and for society also. Understanding the personality dimensions is a guiding force for adolescents to prevent themselves from ending up in juvenile delinquency. Supporting the growth of an adolescent is a team effort of many groups of people, such as parents, teachers, psychological counselors, school administrations, the community, etc. The personality development of an adolescent plays an important part in the healthy growth of an adolescent and it reflects on family, school, and the whole society. Mostly, not much concern about the personality development of adolescents along with academic developments is observed in society. Adolescents and all caregivers can give due concern to the personality development of the adolescent.

DeLisi et al. (2010) found that self-control itself is a personality construct and it is a strong predictor of aggression, theft, drug use, and sensation seeking. Self-control is closely connected with psychopathology and narcissism, which are strong predictors of anti-social conduct. Self-control plays an important place in the construction of personality, and it correlates with agreeableness and conscientiousness. Prisoners with low self-control were involved in maladaptive behaviors such as risk-taking, fighting, and self-centeredness. The Id is the individual element of personality and the super ego is the social element of personality. When the Id becomes too strong, the super ego becomes very weak. When self-control and social control are weak, it may result in delinquency. A study among Bangladeshi female juveniles found most of them had psychiatric disorders (Agarwal, 2017). Many mental health factors are contributing to juvenile delinquency. A common one is conduct disorder. It is described as a lack of empathy and disrespect for social norms (Haveripet, 2013).

## **DISCUSSION**

Various dimensions of personality traits associated with delinquent behavior are helpful to understand to assist adolescents, caregivers, and the community in developing the healthy personality of an adolescent for a better result. Accumulated knowledge on delinquents'



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personality dimensions can be used to guide adolescents in improving their personality traits in order to prevent juvenile delinquency in the country. Delinquent prone behavior among adolescents will be detected in the budding along with personality traits and their level, which causes delinquency. This will strengthen the individual internally to fight against any personality issues.

After gaining clear knowledge, interventions to modify the adolescent's personality traits will enhance the adolescent as well as society. Adolescents will be able to enhance their inner wellbeing, which will create an enhanced society. Early detection of delinquent proneness among adolescents, which detects personality traits related to that, will reduce juvenile delinquency and crime in society, and the burden on society will also be reduced. Appropriate intervention to prevent delinquency is possible only after proper detection of personality traits of delinquents and development of the adolescent personality to prevent delinquent behavior among adolescents.

### *Suggestions*

- It is suggested to utilize the information to identify and assess the personality traits of adolescent delinquent prone behavior to understand which kinds of personality traits are more likely to be delinquent prone behavior.
- It is suggested to utilize the outcome of the assessment to implement specific counseling interventions to prevent or modify those personality traits that are prone to delinquency.
- It is suggested to assess the personality traits of all adolescents as self-understanding and implement the required modifications for a better life as part of their academic curriculum.
- It is suggested that counselors, adolescents, teachers, school officials, parents, and the community use the results of the personality traits assessment for the betterment of adolescents.

### *Directions for Future Researchers*

In society, white-collar crimes are very much in style. Those people who are in authority or those people who show a good rapport in society get into crime by misusing their social relationships or their polished personalities to hide their real attitude. Understanding these personalities of delinquency is going to be helpful in being conscious of this cheating and escape from many dangers. This knowledge will be helpful in teaching adolescents to develop a better personality and lead a sincere and fair life, which is helpful for themselves and helpful for others also.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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