

## A Study on Personality Factors among Adolescents in Conflict-with-Law

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### ABSTRACT

The origins of delinquent behavior occur in childhood by many factors like parenting style, role model in the society, socio-economic status of the individual, peer pressure, personality, impulsive nature of the individual, childhood trauma and emotional instability. On focusing the major factor such as personality in the development of delinquency behavior, the present study was framed. The objectives of this study were to assess the personality aspects and to find the association between personality factors with delinquency behavior of adolescents in conflict with law. The study was conducted among the Adolescents in conflict-with-law population in IMH and Kelly's Juvenile home. First the adolescents were screened for Intellectual disability, 3 samples were rejected from the study since they come under the exclusion criteria. Then the samples were administered with 16 PF Questionnaires on a one-to-one basis. The data were collected and analyzed through descriptive statistics for frequency and percentage. Then one sample chi-square was used for statistical analysis. Results showed the significant association between the personality factors and delinquency behavior in adolescents in conflict with law.

**Keywords:** *Adolescents in conflict-with-law, Personality factors, Intellectual Disability, Delinquency behavior*

Children are the assets and wealth of any nation. A child is born innocent and how they were brought up/ mold makes sense in their adult life. A healthy environment, recognition from society and a better child rearing have an effect on the child's development of self-schema, physical fitness, mental well-being, social activeness and equip with adequate skills. Also, the child's biological and psychological characteristics, formed in the circumstances of his/her physical inferiority and existential dependence on the adults, have engendered the child's subordinate position in the society; the social circumstances and these characteristics remain unchanged (Kostic, 2010). In biological factors, the impact factor is the result of one's nervous system, endocrine system, physical constitution, genetic inheritance of criminal disposition, genetic anomaly in human chromosomes [Lombroso-Ferrero, 1972]. Also emphasizes that head trauma, epilepsy or any accidental falls leads to permanent or temporary harm to a child's physical and mental health. Biological factors have an effect on the temperament traits and development of other personality traits.

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Received: June 11, 2024; Revision Received: June 22, 2024; Accepted: June 26, 2024

## A Study on Personality Factors among Adolescents in Conflict-with-Law

The upbringing and education the child receives plays a major role in becoming children into criminal offenders. The bad or stringent upbringing and exposure to violence may trigger perverse instincts which are generally most distinctive in childhood which may be displayed in later periods of human development. These children are more likely to make mistakes and commit crimes than others (Lombroso, 1968). He also conducted separate studies observing orphaned children (foundlings) and illegitimate children (born out of wedlock) which reveals that unruly behavior and a lack of education could turn foundlings and adopted children into criminal offenders. The children's moral value helps to control one's anger and desire to take revenge. Also, they have difficulty in understanding abstract notions of justice or property rights.

The child who experiences abuse or neglect or threatening behavior may exhibit pathological disobedience. This disobedience develops into a pathological behavior which becomes destructive and manifests as child's delinquent behavior. Likewise, these delinquent adolescents have difficulty with authority figures which may be due to the consequence of a specific fear of father or substitute caregivers which is deeply rooted in childhood (Belle, 1969). The pathological behaviors have to be observed within the frame of social incentives and it implies proposing relevant actions that may lead to social reform and rehabilitation of the individual (Toch 1978).

Poverty, unemployment, poor housing conditions, overpopulation have a direct impact on children. Parental personality disorders and mother-child relationships also have the effect on structural development of a child's mind irrespective of the environment conditions. This shows not all individuals living in poor environment conditions are prone to delinquency [Friedlander, 1967]. In analyzing the family's disposition on the emergence of psychological illnesses in descendants, the parent's mental illness, lack of restraint and epilepsy has a negative impact on children. The child lives in a family of criminals through modeling and thinking like a criminal and in overtime they don't perceive crime as a punishable act and punishment is not regarded as a form of social denunciation of the perpetrator's act (Aschaffenburg, 1969).

### **Operational Definition:**

- **“Personality** is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristic behavior and thought” (1961) - Gardon Allport.
- **“Juvenile Delinquents:** A juvenile in conflict with law under the JJ (C & P) Act, 2000 is “a juvenile who is alleged to have committed an offense but has not completed 18 years of age on the date of commission of said offense”. And under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act 2015 Juvenile defined under section.2 (35), “juvenile means a child below the age of eighteen years”.

### **Personality:**

Eysenck's view is that previous learning experiences and current situational stimuli plays a major role in the formation of personality. The common denominators for unhealthy personality and behavioral disorder are feelings of inadequacy and inferiority, emotional insecurity, affectional undernourishment, extreme submissive or aggressive responses to rigid domination. The child needs an adequate and wholesome outlet for the expression of his psychic drives and wishes [Thomas, 1937]. Frustration of these basic psychological demands or the impossibility of securing socialized satisfactions may channelize them into law-volatile activity. Overall, that may disrupt the entire functioning of the nation. The healthy

## A Study on Personality Factors among Adolescents in Conflict-with-Law

personality of the child is crucial because of the behavior pattern active within the social norms. The introversion is meant to direct attention inward upon one's own fantasies, feelings, and impulses. In exaggerated form it becomes morbid contemplation. Brooding over troubles and ills causes them to develop in the mind and to appear more serious than they really are. The physical handicap, the ignominy of poverty, the teacher's injustice and the like may gradually fill the whole of a child's attention, becoming more and more intolerable until a violent impulse is experienced to do something in compensation, to run away from school, to cheat, to steal or to become incorrigible in class.

Ferdinand presented two categories of juvenile offenders:

- **Neurotic offender** delinquency is due to influential unconscious impulses which often produces guilt and motivates them to indulge into delinquent activities in their society [to fulfill the wishes of their partner but they don't do it for personal gain].
- **Character Disorder offenders'** delinquency is due to lack of positive identification models in their surroundings, they fail to develop self-control and do what they want to do when they feel to do. These people feel very little guilt for their acts of delinquency. They are incapable of controlling their impulses in a socially acceptable manner. These delinquents belong to disorganized families and they had an inhospitable environment in their early days. These delinquents are self-centered and feel to be unapproachable and they also feel difficulty in making meaningful relationships.

The incidence and rate of crimes by adolescents registered during 2004-2005 under IPC is 1.0%. This increased to 1.2% in 2012 to 2014. According to NCRB, the number of juveniles in conflict with the law in 2013 is 31,725 and in 2014 it is 33,526. In case of recidivism 9.5 % in 2013 and 5.4% in 2014. The latest data shows the number of offenses in 2018 was 31,591 and in 2019 was 32,269.

### **METHODOLOGY**

**Aim:** To study the personality factors of juveniles which influences the delinquency behavior of adolescents in conflict with law.

#### **Objectives:**

1. To assess the personality aspects of adolescence in conflict with law.
2. To find the association between personality factors and delinquency behavior.

#### **Hypothesis:**

- There will be no significant association between delinquency behavior and personality among male adolescents in conflict with law.

#### **Research Design:**

This is a Cross-Sectional study. The observation of a defined population at a single point of time. Exposure and outcome are determined simultaneously. Here the exposure is the personality and the outcome is the juvenile delinquency.

- **A purposive sampling method** is used in which the researcher selects the sample subjectively. The researcher attempts to obtain the sample that appears to be the representative of the population.

## A Study on Personality Factors among Adolescents in Conflict-with-Law

- **Selection of the sample:** The samples were collected from the Government Observation Home for Boys and Institute of Mental Health. The sample size was 34 in the age group of 16 to 18 selected among adolescents in conflict with law based on inclusion and exclusion criteria.

### *Inclusion criteria:*

- Adolescent involved in conflict with law
- Age group between 16 to 18
- Literates and illiterates

### *Exclusion Criteria:*

- Adolescent who are not involved in delinquency behavior
- Adolescent with psychiatric illness
- Adolescent with sub-average intelligence (Below 70)

### *Description of Tools:*

- **Standard Progressive Matrices:** Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices [SPM] was developed by JC Raven, published in 1938. The Standard Progressive Matrices (SPM) is a group or individually administered test that nonverbally assesses intelligence in children and adults through abstract reasoning tasks. Appropriate for ages 8-65, the SPM consists of 60 problems (five sets of 12), all of which involve completing a pattern or figure with a part missing by choosing the correct missing piece from among six alternatives. Patterns are arranged in order of increasing difficulty. The test is untimed but generally takes 15-45 minutes and results in a raw score which is then converted to a percentile ranking.
- **16 PF:** The 16PF Questionnaire was a multi-level measure of personality based on Cattell's factor-analytic theory (Cattell, R.B., 1933, 1946). It is an objectively scorable test devised by basic research in psychology to give the most complete coverage of personality possible in a brief testing time. Form E measures the same as those included in Forms A, B, C and D. Eight items are provided for each of the 16 factors, making 128 items in Form E. The factors such as warmth, stability, dominant, conscientiousness, conservative, relaxed, undisciplined, etc. The raw score is to be obtained and converted into a sten score and plotted in the graph to identify the personality type in each factor.

### *Procedure:*

The study was conducted at Institute of Mental Health and Kelly's Juvenile home among the Juveniles delinquency population after the approval from the ethical committee. The samples were selected based on the Inclusion and Exclusion criteria. The informed consent was obtained from adolescents in conflict with the law. Adolescents in conflict with law were first screened out for Intellectual Disability using Raven's Progressive Matrices and then they were administered with 16 PF. The data were analyzed using statistical methods.

### *Statistical Analysis:*

The data are analyzed using descriptive statistics to find the frequency distribution and percentage. One sample Chi-square analysis was used to find the observed frequency and expected frequency and to find the Chi-square value to find the association between the respective variables.

## A Study on Personality Factors among Adolescents in Conflict-with-Law

### *Ethical considerations:*

- The study followed the APA format of Ethical consideration and was approved by the Institutional Ethics committee of the Institute of Mental Health, Madras Medical College.
- The participants were given a consent form which includes the details about the study before participating in the research.

## **RESULTS**

*Table1: Shows the mean age of the sample [N=34]*

| No of samples | Mean     | Standard Deviation |
|---------------|----------|--------------------|
| N= 34         | 17 years | 0.4                |

From the table it is inferred that the mean age of the sample is 17 years. Thus, the majority of the sample was at the age of 17 years and the Standard Deviation of the sample is 0.4.

*Table 2: Shows the frequency and Percentage for socio demographic data [N=34]*

| Socio-Demographic details              | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| <b>Age</b>                             |           |            |
| 16-17                                  | 9         | 26.5       |
| 17-18                                  | 25        | 73.5       |
| <b>Education</b>                       |           |            |
| Middle schooling                       | 10        | 29.4       |
| High schooling                         | 20        | 58.8       |
| Higher secondary schooling             | 4         | 11.8       |
| <b>Socio-economic status</b>           |           |            |
| High                                   | 0         | 0          |
| Upper middle class                     | 0         | 0          |
| Lower middle class                     | 5         | 14.7       |
| Poverty                                | 29        | 85.3       |
| <b>Type of crime</b>                   |           |            |
| Robbery                                | 20        | 58.8       |
| Assault                                | 4         | 11.8       |
| Co-offender                            | 4         | 11.8       |
| Murder                                 | 3         | 8.8        |
| Sexual Crime                           | 3         | 8.8        |
| <b>Number of times crime committed</b> |           |            |
| 1                                      | 21        | 61.8       |
| 2                                      | 4         | 11.8       |
| 3                                      | 4         | 11.8       |
| 4                                      | 4         | 11.8       |
| 5                                      | 1         | 2.9        |

In age, the frequency of the age group 16-17 is 9 and its percentage is 26.5 and for 17-18 is 25 and its percentage is 73.5. In education, it is observed that 20 persons studied till high school and their percentage is 58.8% whereas the number of people studied till middle and higher secondary school are 10 and 4 and their percentage is 29.4 and 11.8. In socio-economic status, it is seen that people are from lower middle class and poverty level their frequencies are 5 and 29 and their percentages are 14.7 and 85.3 which shows more people

### A Study on Personality Factors among Adolescents in Conflict-with-Law

are from the poverty background. The type of crime committed by the persons it is seen that most of the persons are involved in Robbery that is 58.8% and 4 are involved in assault and 4 persons as co-offender and their percentage is 11.8 and three persons were involved in murder and sexual crime and their percentage is 8.8%. Most of the persons in this group committed the crime for the first time that 21 persons and their percentage is 61.8% whereas persons committed crime for 2,3 and 4th time each has 4 persons and their percentage is 11.8 and the 1 person convicted for the fifth time.

**Table 3: Shows the frequency and percentage for each factor in 16 PF [N=34]**

| <b>16 PF Factors Interpretation</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>A</b>                            |                  |                   |
| Reserved                            | 18               | 52.9              |
| Average                             | 15               | 44.1              |
| Outgoing                            | 1                | 2.9               |
| <b>B</b>                            |                  |                   |
| Less Intelligence                   | 21               | 61.8              |
| Moderate                            | 9                | 26.5              |
| More intelligence                   | 4                | 11.8              |
| <b>C</b>                            |                  |                   |
| Affected by Feeling                 | 7                | 20.6              |
| Average                             | 17               | 50.0              |
| Emotionally Stable                  | 10               | 29.4              |
| <b>E</b>                            |                  |                   |
| Humble                              | 2                | 5.9               |
| Average                             | 18               | 52.9              |
| Assertive                           | 14               | 41.2              |
| <b>F</b>                            |                  |                   |
| Sober                               | 0                | 0                 |
| Average                             | 6                | 17.6              |
| Happy going lucky                   | 28               | 82.4              |
| <b>G</b>                            |                  |                   |
| Expedient                           | 21               | 61.8              |
| Average                             | 11               | 32.4              |
| Conscientiousness                   | 2                | 5.9               |
| <b>H</b>                            |                  |                   |
| Shy                                 | 11               | 32.4              |
| Average                             | 13               | 38.2              |
| Venturesome                         | 10               | 29.4              |
| <b>I</b>                            |                  |                   |
| Tough-minded                        | 0                | 0                 |
| Average                             | 10               | 29.4              |
| Tender- minded                      | 24               | 70.6              |
| <b>L</b>                            |                  |                   |
| Trusting                            | 5                | 14.7              |
| Average                             | 19               | 55.9              |
| Suspicious                          | 10               | 29.4              |
| <b>M</b>                            |                  |                   |
| Practical                           | 0                | 0                 |

## A Study on Personality Factors among Adolescents in Conflict-with-Law

| <b>16 PF Factors Interpretation</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Average                             | 25               | 73.5              |
| Imaginative                         | 9                | 26.5              |
| <b>N</b>                            |                  |                   |
| Forthright                          | 14               | 41.2              |
| Average                             | 9                | 26.5              |
| Shrewd                              | 11               | 32.4              |
| <b>O</b>                            |                  |                   |
| Placid                              | 16               | 47.1              |
| Average                             | 17               | 50.0              |
| Apprehensive                        | 1                | 2.9               |
| <b>Q1</b>                           |                  |                   |
| Conservative                        | 3                | 8.8               |
| Average                             | 18               | 52.9              |
| Experimenting                       | 13               | 38.2              |
| <b>Q2</b>                           |                  |                   |
| Group-Dependent                     | 14               | 41.2              |
| Average                             | 14               | 41.2              |
| Self-Sufficient                     | 6                | 17.6              |
| <b>Q3</b>                           |                  |                   |
| Undisciplined Self-concept          | 4                | 11.8              |
| Average                             | 15               | 44.1              |
| Controlled                          | 15               | 44.1              |
| <b>Q4</b>                           |                  |                   |
| Relaxed                             | 13               | 38.2              |
| Average                             | 13               | 38.2              |
| Tense                               | 8                | 23.5              |

In personality, factor A shows that majority of the persons are reserved and average that is 52.9% are reserved and 44.1% are average and only person was outgoing in nature. In Factor B, it is seen that majority of the persons are less intellectuals that is 61.8% and 26.5 % are moderate and 11.8% are high in intelligence. In factor C majority of the persons are average that is 50% and 29.4% are emotionally stable; 20.6 % are affected by feelings. In Factor E, it is inferred that only 2 persons are humble that is 5.9% whereas majority are average and assertive that is 52.9% and 41.2% respectively. In Factor F, it shows that most of the persons are Happy Going Lucky whereas 6 persons are average-17.6% and no person is sober in this group. In Factor G, most person are expedient that is 61.8% and 32.4 % are average and only 5.9% are conscientiousness in nature. In Factor H, it is seen that 32.4% are shy in nature whereas 38.2% are average and 29.4% are venture it is inferred there is no much variation in Factor H. in Factor I, the percentage of Tender- minded is 70.6% and 29.4% are average. It is inferred that majority of the persons are tender minded. In Factor L, it is seen that 60% are average whereas 29% are suspicious and only few that is 14.7% is Trusting. In Factor M, it is seen that 73.5% are average in nature and 26.5% are imaginative. It is inferred that no person is practical in nature. In Factor N, it is seen that 41.2% are forthright; 26.5 are average whereas 32.4% are shrewd. In Factor O, 50% of persons are average whereas 47% are placid and only 2.9% are apprehensive. In Factor Q1, 52.9% are average and 38.2% are experimenting whereas 8.8% are conservative. In Factor Q2, 41.2% of persons are average and group dependent; 17.8% are self-sufficient. In Factor Q3, 44% are average and controlled

## A Study on Personality Factors among Adolescents in Conflict-with-Law

whereas 11.8% are undisciplined self-concept. In Factor Q4, 38% are relaxed and average in nature whereas 23% are tensed.

**Table 4: Shows the chi square value of the Personality of Adolescence in conflict with law.**

| Factors          | Chi-square | Degrees of Freedom | Significance value |
|------------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Factor A</i>  | 14.529     | 2                  | 0.001*             |
| <i>Factor B</i>  | 13.471     | 2                  | 0.001*             |
| <i>Factor C</i>  | 4.647      | 2                  | 0.098*             |
| <i>Factor E</i>  | 12.235     | 2                  | 0.002*             |
| <i>Factor F</i>  | 14.235     | 1                  | 0.000*             |
| <i>Factor G</i>  | 15.941     | 2                  | 0.000*             |
| Factor H         | 0.412      | 2                  | 0.814              |
| <i>Factor I</i>  | 5.765      | 1                  | 0.016*             |
| <i>Factor L</i>  | 8.882      | 2                  | 0.012*             |
| <i>Factor M</i>  | 7.529      | 1                  | 0.006*             |
| Factor N         | 1.118      | 2                  | 0.572              |
| <i>Factor O</i>  | 14.176     | 2                  | 0.001*             |
| <i>Factor Q1</i> | 10.294     | 2                  | 0.006*             |
| Factor Q2        | 3.765      | 2                  | 0.152              |
| <i>Factor Q3</i> | 7.118      | 2                  | 0.028*             |
| Factor Q4        | 1.471      | 2                  | 0.479              |

From the table it is inferred that the Factor A, Factor B, Factor C, Factor E, Factor F, Factor G, Factor I, Factor L, Factor M, Factor O, Factor Q1 and Factor Q3 have a significant value in chi-square which indicates these factors have an association with delinquency behavior among adolescents.

Results clearly indicates that, Factor A [Reserved/ Outgoing]; Factor B [Less Intelligence/More Intelligence], Factor C [Affected by Feeling/ Emotionally Stable]; Factor E [Humble/Assertive], Factor F [Sober/Happy-Going Lucky], Factor G [Expedient/Conscientiousness], Factor I [Tough Minded/ Tender Minded], Factor L [Trusting/Suspicious], Factor M [Practical/Imaginative], Factor O [Placid/Apprehensive], Factor Q1 [Conservative/Experimenting], Factor Q4 [Relaxed/Tense] in personality, the above mentioned factors reject the null hypothesis because larger the value of chi-square, less the data fit. The null hypothesis which indicates these factors are not equally distributed among juvenile delinquents which shows significant impact on developing delinquency behavior among adolescents.

## DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this study is to analyze the personality factors and its association with the delinquent behaviors. The results show that there is a significant association between the delinquency behaviors and personality factors among male adolescents in conflict with law. Hence the study rejects the null hypothesis. The previous literature in 2017, Meera Gungea, et.al, conducted a study on "Personality Traits and Juvenile Delinquency -A Critical Analysis' ". They critically analyzed the role of personality traits through OCEAN and PEN Models and their criminal behavior and their influence in predicting future recidivism. The study reveals the significance of early risk factors along with the personality traits on later violent juvenile offending. The study also explains that focusing on the risk factors at a young age helps in preventing the child from involving in delinquency behavior and in 2012, Nidhi Jani



## A Study on Personality Factors among Adolescents in Conflict-with-Law

conducted a study on "Comparative study of Personality of Juvenile Delinquent and Normal Children". In this study, they compare various personality factors of Juvenile Delinquent and normal children. The 't' test was used for statistical analysis. Results reveals that delinquent children found to be less-intelligent, emotionally unstable, Inactive, Sober, Disregards rules, Zestful, self-assured and uncontrolled by getting low scores as compared to normal children. The delinquent children showed lower mental capacity, lower ego strength, took group action, careless of social rules. It is concluded that the findings of the current study reiterated the previous literature that personality plays a major role in development of delinquent behavior which may lead them to commit major crimes during their adulthood. Personality makes them vulnerable to develop such violence and delinquent behavior.

### **Implications**

The present study has proven to be that there is a significant association between the personality factors and delinquency behavior of the adolescence. This shows directions for the further study and helps in framing the preventive model for adolescents at risk for developing delinquency behavior and to prevent recidivism.

### **Limitations**

The sample size in the present study is small and the samples were collected from specific geographic locations due to time constraint and legal procedure to obtain permissions from concerned officials. The tool assessing the delinquency behavior of the adolescent can be used. Only male adolescents in conflict with law are involved in the study.

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## **A Study on Personality Factors among Adolescents in Conflict-with-Law**

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### ***Acknowledgment***

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

***How to cite this article:*** Agalya, S. & Ruckmani, V.S. (2024). A Study on Personality Factors among Adolescents in Conflict-with-Law. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(2), 3829-3839. DIP:18.01.340.20241202, DOI:10.25215/1202.340