

Research Paper

Role of Adolescent Egocentrism in Exposing Antisocial Personality Traits Among Children in Conflict with Law

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ABSTRACT

Elkind (1967) explained adolescent egocentrism as the root of self-focus and introduced the Imaginary audience and Personal fable (Vartanian, 2000). Adolescent egocentrism is linked to reckless actions, contributing to adolescents' involvement in conflict with law (Galanaki, 2012). The study explores the role of adolescent egocentrism in exposing antisocial personality traits among children in conflict with law. Children in conflict with the law (N=40), aged between 13 and 18 years, were selected from government observational homes in various parts of Tamil Nadu using a purposive sampling method. The DBD (Disruptive Behavior Disorders) rating scale (Pelhalm et al., 1992), is a screening process to recruit final participants (N=10). Those participants who have Disruptive Behavior Disorder underwent the semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview was conducted based on the study's objective by following the interview guide. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) will be used to determine the results of the participants' responses. Findings suggest that the participants' adolescent egocentrism directly influences them to expose their antisocial personality traits through distorted cognition, distorted self, and emotional aspects and indirectly through moral development, drug influence, and socialization. The present study gave more importance to the cognitive aspects of adolescents' risky behavior.

Keywords: *Adolescent Egocentrism, Imaginary Audience, Personal Fable, Antisocial Personality Traits*

Egocentrism is an essential concept of developmental psychology. Genetic epistemologist Piaget (1954) introduced the term egocentrism, which refers to the child's inability to see a situation from others' perspective that is present in the preoperational stage (2 to 7 years) of children's cognitive development. The fundamental element of the Piagetian conceptualization of egocentrism is that: it is a failure of self-and-world distinction, a negative by-product of any emerging cognitive system, from the sensorimotor to the formal operational stage. More precisely, the person makes an egocentric error at the beginning of each cognitive stage while growing. Also, yet-to-develop crystallized abilities cause them to assimilate the environment too much. During the formal operational stage (adolescence), the person usually acquires new cognitive abilities like self-reflection, high abstraction, hypothetical-deductive reasoning, conceptualizing

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potential outcomes, and future projection. Adolescents are fascinated with constructions about the self and the world and begin to form a life plan to accept adult responsibilities. Also, they encounter a relative inability to separate their personal constructs from the perspective of the society they intend to change with their structures. This aspect initiated the concept of adolescent egocentrism (Galanki, 2017).

Elkind (1967) elaborated further on adolescent egocentrism, which is the crucial theory of adolescent cognitive development; he explained that physiological metamorphosis (pubertal changes) is the root of self-focus when combined with the new ability to reflect on one's own thoughts and feelings as well as the thoughts and feelings of others. It becomes the cause of a differentiation failure: the adolescent assumes that others are as preoccupied with their appearance and behavior as they are, called self-absorption. Elkind (1967) also mentioned two significant assumptions about adolescent egocentrism, 1) Imaginary audience- the adolescent's predisposition to think that others are focused on their behavior and appearance and that they frequently act in front of an audience. The imaginary audience is hypothesized to explain a variety of adolescent behaviors, like increased self-consciousness, a desire for privacy and solitude, shyness, daydreaming, preoccupation with appearance, attention-seeking behavior, a willingness to conform to peer group norms, participation in illegal behavior motivated by the desire to impress an audience. 2) Personal fable - the belief that one is invincible, invulnerable, unique, and omnipotent (Vartanian, 2000). Adolescents frequently tend to believe that their issues and worries are special. The personal fable could also feature fantasies about having a unique destiny and a significant role in the lives of others or the world. These fantasies can include a sense of invincibility, or even immortality, known as the "invincibility fable," which may be a factor in why adolescents take more risks. These inner beliefs may explain common adolescent behaviors like maintaining a diary, having brief romantic relationships, and taking risks (e.g., use of substances, reckless driving, and sexual intercourse without contraception). The personal fable is the outcome of over-differentiation, as opposed to the imaginary audience, which is a failure of under-differentiation. These types of adolescent egocentrism may help to manage typical adolescent difficulties (Elkind, 1967; Galanki, 2017).

Another vital milestone of the research on adolescent egocentrism is the cognitive model, also known as the psychodynamic "New Look" model of Lapsley and his colleagues (1985); according to this concept, the imaginary audience and the personal fable are not considered as negative and undesired expressions of cognitive egocentrism (i.e., the outcomes of a differentiation failure). The imaginary audience is conceptualized as interpersonal or object-relational fantasies (interconnectivity in imaginations); the adolescent's personal fable depicts the conviction that they are special (and so no one can understand them), omnipotent (possessing exceptional authority, power, or influence), and invulnerable (incapable of being harmed or injured, even immortal). Adolescent egocentrism demonstrates that the personal fable and the imagined audience are crucial adolescent experiences. These experiences are linked to developmental issues for this age group, including risk-taking, social cognition, separation-individuation, ego identity, and narcissistic worries. The idea of egocentrism as a faulty vision of oneself and others has given way to understanding the personal fable and the imagined audience as adaptive responses to normative developmental constraints (Blos, 1962; Goossens et al., 1992; Lapsley, 2003).

Earlier conceptualizations about adolescent egocentrism are connected with adolescents' risk-taking behaviors. This may lead adolescents to become juveniles. A child or young

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person who has committed an offense, engaged in antisocial behavior, or behaved out of their parents' control is considered a juvenile delinquent and may be summoned before a juvenile court (Nisar et al., 2015). Here the present study will be used an alternative term, 'children in conflict with law' instead of juvenile delinquents. According to Indian Penal Code, Section 2(13) of the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015, a child who is accused or found responsible for committing an offense and was under the age of 18 on the day of the offense is referred to as a "Child in Conflict with Law."

Children in conflict with law are highly connected with antisocial behaviors, a cluster of integrated actions, including disobedience, aggression, temper tantrums, lying, stealing, and violence. While some of these behaviors are typical for children at particular developmental stages, these behaviors, combined with those that occur during adolescence, are the best indicators of adjustment issues, including criminal behavior, during adulthood (Kohlberg et al., 1984). Between 40% to 75% of adolescents are arrested for delinquent behaviors and/or who fulfill psychiatric criteria for a conduct disorder. Conduct disorder (CD) during adolescence and childhood is the cause and most frequently linked to the emergence of Antisocial Personality Disorder (APD) in adulthood (Washburn et al., 2007) because both biological and environmental factors play an essential role in the development and manifestation of CD in adolescents which is the precursor of APD in early adulthood (Maciow et al., 2010). Other childhood disruptive behavioral disorders like Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) frequently serve as stepping stones to developing ASPD later. Conduct Disorder has a strong association with ASPD than ADHD and ODD (DeLisi et al., 2019). These disorders sometimes occur together as comorbid disorders (Azeredo et al., 2018).

According to Eddy and his colleagues (2007), 40% of such adolescents (juveniles) meet official psychiatric criteria for Antisocial personality disorder during adulthood.

Therefore, Adolescent egocentrism can be positive (ego syntonic) as a coping mechanism to protect themselves from anxiety or can be negative (ego-dystonic), maybe leading to involvement in antisocial behavior (Galanaki, 2012). Children in conflict with law as adolescents tend to have egocentrism.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Elkind (1967) introduced two constructs, the imaginary audience, and the personal fable—to describe the egocentric thinking used by the typical adolescent, building on Piaget's conceptualization of egocentrism from a cognitive-developmental perspective. According to that theory, a temporary state of erroneous thinking about oneself and others occurs along with the transition from concrete to abstract thinking (Piaget, 1962). Elkind (1967) created the imagined audience construct to highlight an adolescent's expectation that they are the center of attention in any social event and that the audience's viewpoints coincide with their own. Elkind (1967) claimed that an adolescent's personal fable is born out of this self-focus. The construct has provided a useful lens through which to understand the increases in problem behaviors (e.g., delinquency, unplanned teen pregnancy) that occur during adolescence (Elkind, 1985), even though the majority of research has not supported the original theoretical notion that adolescent egocentrism represents distorted social cognition (Vartanian, 2000, 2001).

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Adolescents and Risk-Taking Behaviors

Adolescents strive to form their identities, perspectives, and beliefs. Substance abuse, risky sexual conduct, reckless driving, suicidal behavior, eating disorders, and delinquency are the causes of life loss in adolescence while developing a sense of self (Saranya et al., 2017). Risky behaviors are a form of social behavior that enables entry into situations that give them a sense of importance and adult status (Moreno et al., 2012). According to Thompson et al. (2010), adolescents who engage in risky, maladaptive conduct early in adolescence are more likely to experience poorer health, lower educational achievement, and less economic success as adults than those who engage in such activity later in adolescence (Harris et al., 2002). Adolescents are also exposed to long-term negative consequences when risky behavior starts early. Addiction, reckless driving, unintended injury, and HIV infection are just a few examples of the negative consequences that may result from maladaptive risky behaviors (Reyna & Farley, 2006; Rudasill et al., 2010).

Adolescent Egocentrism and Risk-Taking Behaviors

Egocentrism in adolescents sometimes overrides empathic responsiveness through personal fable and imaginary audience; these elements give rise to the idea that a human has the power, urges, and needs to act immorally or illegally (Zaitchik et al., 2011; Shek et al., 2022).

Aalsma et al. (2006) looked at the relationships between narcissism, mental health indicators, and three personal fables (omnipotence, invulnerability, and personal uniqueness) in a sizable cross-sectional sample of adolescents from Grades 6, 8, 10, and 12. In their research, risk behaviors were substantially correlated with invulnerability, a component of egocentrism. They added that the association between personal distinctiveness and despair, and suicidal ideation increased with age. Grant (2007) studied the relationship between female adolescent risk-taking and Elkind's theory of egocentrism. The research mainly focused on risk-taking and its relationships to the personal fable and the imaginary audience. She used a qualitative study approach to gain a thorough understanding of risk-taking among a sample group of ten female adolescents. The study's findings demonstrated that the Personal Fable and the Imaginary Audience, two components of Elkind's adolescent egocentrism theory, influence variables in female adolescents' risk-taking (Landicho et al., 2014).

Adolescents Egocentrism and Juvenile Delinquents

A study by Greene and his colleagues (2000) stated that participants who scored highly on sensation-seeking and personal fable exhibited the highest levels of delinquent behavior. In juvenile offenses, egocentrism would result from a personal fable, the conception of an invisible audience that leads to an amplified sense of invincibility; these traits influence an adolescent's inability to recognize their behavior as risky (Wyatt, 2010). The Personal Fable, particularly its invulnerability and risk-taking behavior aspects, notably contributed to the adolescent violence score and was identified as a significant predictor of being an offender (Saudi et al., 2022). Materialism also plays a significant role in influencing socially unacceptable behavior. The research findings indicated that the strong association between materialism and egocentrism suggests that materialistic views may cause one to exaggerate their own importance and narrow their attention to themselves. Also, materialism causes adolescent delinquency through the mediating effect of egocentrism (Shek et al., 2022). In female juvenile delinquents, optimistic self-attainment relates more to a personal fable than identity development in late adolescence (Goodson et al., 2016). In addition, they have a

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heightened level of public self-consciousness and imaginary audience (Brathwaite, 2013). The imaginary audience and personal fable rate is high in sexual offenders than in non-sexual offenders (Burke, 2001).

When adolescents encounter a difficulty or interpersonal conflict, they frequently try to project an image of strength and toughness in their interactions with others by becoming argumentative and impatient to punish. It instructs us to focus on the adolescent delinquent's egocentric personality structure, which forces him to show off his toughness and strength at all costs, turning him into an autocratic, argumentative person who is always eager to punish also. It leads them to involve in socially unacceptable activities (Nicolaescu, 2006).

Juvenile Delinquents and Conduct Disorder

Most recent studies stated that the behaviors of juvenile delinquents are mostly related to conduct disorder, which would be a risk factor for developing antisocial personality traits (Khuda, 2019; Olashore et al., 2016; Doria et al., 2015; Paulita, 2021). A significant difference in diagnosis was found in the violent and nonviolent categories. Conduct disorder (CD), the most prevalent diagnosis overall, was much more common in violent offenders (63%) than in the nonviolent category (22%). As was previously indicated, various researchers have noted similarities between adult antisocial personality disorder and juvenile CD (Loeber et al., 2000; Vloet et al., 2006). At least 10% of juveniles with CD are predicted to go on to acquire an antisocial personality disorder (Herpertz, 2000). In a previous study on adult offenders, Klopf and his colleagues (2007) highlighted the increased risk of violence for offenders who scored highly on Factor 2 (antisocial lifestyle) of the PCL-SV (Hare, 2003). When a juvenile offender is diagnosed with CD, their likelihood of committing violent crimes is undoubtedly higher than that of juvenile offenders without the diagnosis (Kofler-Westergren et al., 2010).

Juvenile Delinquents and Other Disruptive Behavioral Disorders

Children with ADHD are more likely to exhibit behaviors typical of ODD and CD, such as the antisocial behavior that these children frequently exhibit (Azeredo et al., 2018).

Almost all delinquency measures showed that those with childhood ADHD with ODD had much worse delinquency outcomes than the other disorders. Boys with ADHD-only and ADHD with ODD in childhood had younger ages of delinquency onset, a more comprehensive range of offending, and a higher incidence of serious delinquency than other individuals. According to these results, boys with ADHD-only and ADHD with ODD also seem to be at a higher risk for future offending, even though childhood ADHD with CD presents the highest risk for delinquency. The link between ADHD, comorbidity, and delinquency is explored regarding the offending patterns that emerged from the Pittsburgh ADHD Longitudinal Study (Sibley et al., 2011).

The above previous studies collectively stated that adolescent egocentrism is related to risky behaviors, which would be the one trait to influence adolescents to become as children in conflict with law. Also, previous studies analyzed various dimensions of adolescent egocentrism—the concept of adult cognition used in empathy development intervention for juvenile delinquents (Zaitchik et al., 2011). More interventions developed and focused on delinquents' personality and cognitive development (Zhao et al., 2021).

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In the existing literature, traits of adolescent egocentrism and its association with juvenile delinquency have received minimal attention and have not been entirely studied. Even more, dimensions of adolescent egocentrism (object relational ideation, transient and abiding self, etc) need to be studied. However, most of the previous studies are based on Western culture, and Indian studies are comparatively insufficient. Those studies used a quantitative approach to measure egocentrism as a sub-trait or with multiple components (Zhao et al., 2021; Shek et al., 2022).

Moreover, they were primarily focused on the emotional and behavioral aspects of antisociality than the cognitive aspect of adolescents. The existence of these discrepancies in the literature leads to develop the present study in this area.

Research Paradigm

Interpretivism

This paradigm is used by the researcher to understand the phenomenon briefly from the interview (Myers, 1997). Brief contextual understanding of how adolescent egocentrism plays a role in exposing antisocial personality traits among children in conflict with law.

Social Constructivism

This paradigm applies to interpretive and naturalistic settings, and the researcher focuses on making and interpreting the meaning of the phenomena based on participants' responses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Statement of the problem

Based on existing literature, Adolescent egocentrism is linked to reckless actions, which is the one characteristic that could cause adolescents to end up as children in conflict with law. However, these studies have not entirely focused on adolescent egocentrism traits and their association with children in conflict with law. The present study will be based on the following problem statement,

- The role of adolescent egocentrism in exposing antisocial personality traits among children in conflict with law.

This present study will use a phenomenological approach to explore the research questions,

- How does adolescent egocentrism play a role in exposing antisocial personality traits among children in conflict with law?

Rationale

This present study will be helpful for researchers who are interested in this particular area of adolescent egocentrism. Also, it will contribute to the field of adolescent psychology and to Indian society, which has the highest adolescent population. The Juvenile justice system and correctional homes have many drawbacks (Snehil, 2020) when handling children in conflict with law; this present study will give insights into handling the irrational thoughts of children in conflict with law. This study's findings will promote wellness and reduce risky behaviors of children in conflict with law, and it will help to develop them as more responsible adults in the future.

Significance

The present study will give more importance to the cognitive aspects of adolescents' risky behavior than the behavioral aspects of adolescence. Significantly this study mainly focuses on children in conflict with the law, their way of exposing antisocial personality traits, and

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how their cognitive developmental aspect (adolescent egocentrism) is connected with these traits. In order to explore these factors, a qualitative approach will be used to study this population better.

Objectives

To explore the role of adolescent egocentrism in exposing antisocial personality traits among children in conflict with law.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A child who is accused or found responsible for committing an offense and was under the age of 18 on the day of the offense is referred to as a "Child in Conflict with Law." (JJ Act, 2015). The purposive sampling method does not require underlying theories or a predetermined number of participants. The researcher selects necessary information and then searches for those who can and are willing to share their expertise or experience. It is frequently used in a qualitative study to identify and select the instances with the most information so that the resources are used as effectively as possible (Etikan, 2016).

A purposive sampling method was used to select the participants. Ten children in conflict with law chose from government observational homes in various parts of Tamilnadu (Coimbatore, Salem & Trichy). The Participants' age will range between 13 to 17 years old. Children in conflict with law who have Disruptive Behavior Disorders are included in this study; others will fall under the exclusion criteria.

Data Collection

A semi-structured interview was conducted by using the Disruptive Behavior Disorders (DBD) rating scale (Pelhalm et al., 1992) among Children in conflict with law. All three DBDs—Conduct Disorder (CD: 15 items), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD: 8 items), and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder—have symptoms that are covered by the DBD, which is based on the DSM-IV. Each item is assessed on a 4-point Likert scale (0 =not at all, 1= just a little, 2 =pretty much, and 3 = very much). There are 45 items on the DBD rating scale. Three items (items 5, 10, 14, and 21) are no longer coded in the score as a result of the DSM-III-R to DSM-IV modification. The internal consistency of the subscales of the DBD varied between .97 and .99, and this scale has good construct validity (Bjornsdotter et al., 2013). This scale is standardized for parents and teachers. This study modified items from the DBD rating scale into a self-report questionnaire; standardization will be done later. Based on the DBD rating scale results, the final list of participants with Disruptive Behavioral Disorder (CD, ODD, or ADHD) was chosen.

A semi-structured interview explores adolescent egocentrism's role in exposing antisocial personality traits among children in conflict with law based on the interview guide. This interview guide has nine final questions with probes. These questions are based on the sub-traits of a personal fable and imaginary audience. In the process of an interview guide, the researcher prepared a Google sheet, an interview guide (Appendix B) that helped create interview questions based on the research area and objectives. Questions are translated from English to Tamil. The questions were created based on a step-by-step procedure like dimensions, line of inquiry, initial, final, and additional questions.

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Ethical Considerations

1. Permission for data collection from the Department of Social Defence, Chennai, Tamilnadu.
2. Informed consent and voluntary participation - Potential participants received a clear explanation of their ability to withdraw from the research at any time, including after they had completed the informed consent form. It was also requested that they provide permission to videotape the interview.
3. Anonymity and Confidentiality - The participants' anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by withholding their names and identities during the data collection, analysis, and publishing of the study results. During telephone conversations, interview sessions, data processing, and distribution of the results, the interview environment's privacy and confidentiality were strictly protected.
4. To establish the trustworthiness of the qualitative research following steps are followed, to ensure the credibility prolonged engagement, peer briefing and theoretical triangulation were done, to ensure the transferability thick description about process of the research and purposive sampling method were followed, to ensure dependability data kept safe and triangulation (Inter rater reliability - kappa value=80). Data are thoroughly reviewed during both the collection and analysis phases to guarantee that the results can be replicated by other researchers. This process involves meticulous checking and validation procedures. One way to document this is by creating a transparent coding schema that outlines the codes and patterns identified during the analysis. This systematic approach ensures the reliability and reproducibility of the research findings.
5. The entire study followed the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA).

Process

First, permission was obtained for data collection from the Department of Social Defence, Chennai, Tamilnadu. Then, data were collected from Children in conflict with law in Government Observation Homes in various parts of Tamilnadu (Coimbatore & Salem). Data collection was initiated in July. Basic details about the children were collected from the superintendents of the observation homes. After that, consent was obtained in the form of audio and written from the children in conflict with law, and Confidentiality was outlined to the children and their parents or caretakers. Participants were selected by purposive sampling method. Those children underwent a semi-structured interview using the DBD rating scale (Pelhalm et al., 1992), which is a screening process to recruit final participants; this process was done until enough participants were recruited for the final interview. Those participants (around 10 participants) who have Disruptive Behavior Disorder - ADHD, CD, or ODD (comorbid) underwent the semi-structured interview. Finally, questions were asked based on the interview guide.

Responses were transcribed within 48 hours, and their responses were translated from Tamil to English. Debriefing and reflections were followed throughout data collection and analysis.

Data Analysis

Before the analysis, a transcript, memo-processing, and member check must be done. Data analysis was done by using Google sheet. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was done for this research. It followed the pattern of identifying patterns, coding (number

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and color), exploratory comments (meaning making based on evidence and interpretation of the researcher based on evidence), emerging themes, and superordinate themes.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is used to find out the results from the participant's responses. IPA is used to explore participants' experiences and how participants are making sense of their personal and social world. Here, the role of the researcher is to make meaning from participants' responses based on evidence. The logic behind the IPA is called hermeneutics, and it refers to the theory and practice of interpretation, where interpretation involves an understanding that can be justified (Smith & Osburn, 2007). Here, IPA was used to form the themes because data were collected from children who have less ability to express or articulate their words and sentences. So, IPA can help the researcher to make meaning from children's responses.

RESULTS

Table 1 Emergent Themes and Superordinate Themes

Superordinate Themes	Emergent Themes
Role of Drugs	1.1. Drug Influence
Distorted Cognition	2.1. Optimism Bias 2.2. Egocentric
Distorted Self	3.1. Negative Self-appraisal 3.2. Self-Image bias 3.3. Inflated Self-esteem
Moral Development	4.1. Lack of Morality 4.2. Fantasizing of Immorality
Emotional Aspects	5.1. Guilt 5.2. Instant Gratification
Forced Socialisation	6.1. Peer Influence 6.2. Means of Socialisation
Anticipatory Socialization	7.1. Behavioral Change 7.2. Fantasizing Material needs

Table 2 Excerpts from transcripts

S.No	Sub-theme	Excerpts from transcript
1	Drug Influence	<i>I am not afraid when I am under the influence of drugs. For example, He went to a shop intoxicated with drugs and broke into the shop there and I robbed all the things (cell phone, laptop, money) (P5, Personal communication, 2023).</i>
2	Alcohol influence	<i>I consumed alcohol and I stared at them</i>

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- angrily and the clash happened with them. I ended up stabbing the person and I left (P2, Personal Communication, 2023).*
- 3 Negative self-appraisal *When snatching the cell phone..... Then I was scared because they screamed. We will steal at night. If they come, we will beat them with stones. I have confidence like let's beat it and go (P4, Personal Communication, 2023).*
- 5 Self-image bias *If my friends are there, I will feel like fighting with someone in front of them. If there are any women, we will send them after a peaceful conversation (P6, Personal Communication, 2023).*
- 6 Inflated self-esteem *I imagine that I will become rich. Yes. often I have imagination like saving my friend from danger (P6, Personal Communication, 2023).*
- 7 Optimism bias *I robbed a vehicle some time ago. Usually, I could get caught up in one or two things. But, most of the times, I won't get caught (P2, Personal Communication, 2023).*
- 8 Egocentric *I get angry, I do whatever I want. I will speak bad words in anger. It often happens at the bar. Someone spilled the water at the bar. Then I beat him (P6, Personal Communication, 2023).*
- 9 Lack of morality *If I want something, I have to go to work for a long time. If I engage in these activities, I could get it in an easier way, right (P1, Personal Communication, 2023).*
- 10 Fantasizing of immorality *I used to fantasize about stealing jewellery from a jewelry store and leading a life of luxury (P2, Personal Communication, 2023).*
- 11 Guilt *Now I am feeling bad about why I did this (P5, Personal Communication, 2023).*
- 12 Instant Gratification *You can't buy a bike in one day if you go for it. Let's rob the jewel for that, and we will get caught (P4, Personal Communication, 2023).*

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13	Peer influence	<i>I will do it with my friends after drinking alcohol. I won't do it all by myself (P1, Personal Communication, 2023).</i>
14	Means of socialization	<i>I do it for fun with friends....beat someone up, and threaten them with a knife. Then he will ask me to do the same (P1, Personal Communication, 2023).</i>
15	Behavioral change	<i>I'd say I'm changed. But before I did mobile phone snatching, stabbing, and stealing things (P3, Personal Communication, 2023).</i>
16	Fantasizing material needs	<i>Imaginations are like, I have to go to work, I have to buy a cell phone, I have to buy clothes, I have to buy a bike (P5, Personal Communication, 2023).</i>

Role of Drugs

Drugs like marijuana, alcohol, and cigarettes are used by participants who are underage. They are using alcohol the most. Here drugs, especially alcohol, influence or heighten the feeling of being involved in illegal or socially unacceptable activities. To some extent, participants need to consume alcohol to initiate or involve themselves in illegal activities. Some participants consume alcohol to mingle with their peers and the peer group's norms. Also, some participants use alcohol to reduce their fear and increase their anger towards others. Alcohol consumption also makes them feel special among others. Also, they are deriving pleasure from alcohol consumption.

Distorted Self

Another common pattern among participants is having a distorted self. Since they are in the stage of adolescence, developing a sense of self is an essential aspect. Here the participants are developing a distorted self which is making them involved in illegal activities. Some participants are negatively evaluating or praising themselves while doing illegal activities this is called negative self-appraisal. The next component is self-image, they view themselves or project themselves differently based on situation/gender, like being violent in front of men to create a good image and being calm/patient in front of women because they do not want to spoil their image. Next, they perceive their abilities in an exaggerated way which can not be possible if they only have all the capabilities to do those particular illegal activities like snatching and stabbing and also, they overestimate their values and self in doing illegal activities. To some extent, they are degrading themselves based on circumstances.

Distorted Cognition

Children in conflict with law develop distorted thinking patterns and cognitive approaches toward illegal activities. First, they think dangerous or risky things will not happen to them, and they only will look at their expected way of outcome this is called optimism bias. Also, they are thinking only about themselves, focusing on their self-motivation, emotions, and feelings that are special and unique among others. They have thoughts that other people,

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even authority figures or the police, are not capable of capturing them for being involved in illegal activities. They are following their own thoughts, which are instincts. They are unconcerned about others' views of their thinking patterns.

Moral Development

Moral development in juveniles can be distorted by negative peer influences, exposure to violence in media, and inconsistent parenting. These factors can hinder the formation of empathetic and ethical decision-making skills, potentially leading to skewed perceptions of rights and wrong during critical stages of growth. Here, they did not develop any sort of morality, like harming others intentionally indicates their immoral behavior. Even they are fantasizing about their actions in an immoral manner, like robbing others' property to build their life. They accept their moral standards as the way they are.

Emotional Aspects

Emotional aspects in children in conflict with the law can be distorted due to their ongoing cognitive and emotional development. Hormonal changes and a developing prefrontal cortex can lead to impulsive behavior, poor emotional regulation, and heightened sensitivity to peer influences. Children in conflict with the law might struggle with understanding and managing complex emotions, leading to risky choices and conflicts. Participants expressed their emotional patterns, feeling guilt, sometimes getting others' belongings, and always having that anticipated fear of what will happen. They want to get positive emotions like happiness and pleasure immediately after illegal activities. They feel extremely afraid of some sort of things, like being caught in a dead end and when the victim caught them. Few participants are not even aware of their emotions. Sometimes they are involved in illegal activities, are concerned about others' negative evaluation, and are sensitive towards being negatively judged by others.

Forced Socialization

Forced socialization can significantly impact children in conflict with law behavior positively and negatively. However, forced socialization can also have negative consequences. They might feel pressured to conform to peer norms or engage in risky behaviors to gain acceptance. Peer pressure during forced socialization can lead to impulsive decisions, as young individuals strive to fit in or prove themselves. Additionally, exposure to negative influences in these settings might contribute to delinquency or the adoption of undesirable behaviors. Influence from peers and forced socialization can shape their identity, values, and behavior during a critical developmental period.

Anticipatory Socialization

Anticipatory socialization significantly shapes juvenile behavior by preparing them for future societal roles and expectations. This process involves learning and adopting behaviors, values, and norms that are associated with the roles they will assume as adults. When children in conflict with law internalize stereotypes or negative expectations associated with certain roles, it can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies. For instance, if they believe that society expects them to engage in delinquent behavior, they might conform to those expectations. This negative reinforcement can hinder their moral development, as they may prioritize conforming to negative stereotypes over ethical considerations. Additionally, peer pressure and seeking approval from peers who share these expectations can exacerbate these behaviors.

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IPA yielded superordinate themes— ‘role of drugs,’ ‘distorted self,’ ‘distorted cognition,’ ‘emotional aspects,’ ‘moral development,’ and ‘forced and anticipatory socialization.’

DISCUSSION

The current study proved that adolescent egocentrism plays a role in exposing antisocial personality traits among children in conflict with the law. A total of seven superordinate themes were derived from the data analysis.

The first superordinate theme is the role of drugs under that drug influence is an emerging theme. Here drugs, especially alcohol, influence or heighten the feeling of being involved in illegal or socially unacceptable activities. Alcohol consumption also makes them feel special among others. Also, they are deriving pleasure from alcohol consumption. According to Townsend et al. (2007) and Meier et al. (2015), substance use is linked to externalizing symptoms as well as deviant behaviors. Adolescents claimed to have engaged in illegal activity while under the influence of alcohol and other drugs. Also, it undermines a person's moral fiber, causing their character to degrade and their behaviors to become bad (Omboto et al., 2012).

Distorted self was derived from analysis. Here the participants are developing a distorted self which is making them involved in illegal activities. In order to fit in with the peer environment and lessen anxiety, a person may modify his or her concept of self (Adams, 2007). Even at the risk of breaking the law, impressing friends with acts of vandalism, stealing, or drug usage can lead to high self-worth. This unstable and subjective sense of self-worth leaves it open to peer pressure and poor decision-making (Brezina, 2000).

According to their parents, those with poor self-esteem were more prone to act in antisocial behaviors (Baumeister et al., 2003). When those who have self-serving bias fall short of their goals and engage in behavior that violates the law, Antisocial behavior and self-serving cognitive distortion are positively correlated (Barriga et al., 2001). Self-described socially unacceptable masculine traits were linked to antisocial behaviors like drug use (Athenstaedt et al., 2008).

Children in conflict with law develop distorted thinking patterns and cognitive approaches toward illegal activities. Although they may be aware of certain negative effects of delinquency, they can believe these effects don't apply to them. This notion determines an adolescent group's belief that delinquent behavior has adjustable or nonexistent consequences (Adams, 2007). Cognitive distortions were strongly connected with attitudes towards criminal behavior and substantially adversely correlated with social skills. Social abilities also have a favorable relationship with social attractiveness and a negative relationship with attitudes toward criminal activity (Nas et al., 2005).

Moral development in children in conflict with law can be distorted by negative peer influences, exposure to violence in media, and inconsistent parenting. Here, they did not develop any sort of morality, like harming others intentionally indicates their immoral behavior. Even they are fantasizing about their actions in an immoral manner, like robbing others' property to build their life. According to Hyde and his colleagues (2010), children who develop immoral standards are exposed to attitudes and beliefs that support antisocial behavior, especially when it deviates from accepted societal norms. Children should

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ultimately become morally alienated from conventional norms and more inclined to participate in antisocial behavior if they are repeatedly exposed to such behavior and attitudes. Previous studies have shown that children who commit crimes mostly fantasize about sexual activity and gambling in the way of immortality (Bartel et al., 2017).

Emotional aspects in children in conflict with the law can be distorted due to their ongoing cognitive and emotional development. Children with a high tendency towards guilt exhibit less antisocial behavior overall, regardless of their empathy levels. Nevertheless, the greatest antisocial behavior ratings were linked to the combination of poor empathy and low guilt levels. Regarding shame, this feeling had a moderate relationship with antisocial behavior (Baron et al., 2018). Individuals with poor self-control have a higher tendency to be involved in antisocial behavior. Self-control can be interpreted as the desire to seek out instant gratification (Armenta et al., 2010).

Forced socialization can significantly impact children in conflict with law behavior positively and negatively. However, forced socialization can also have negative consequences. They might feel pressured to conform to peer norms or engage in risky behaviors to gain acceptance. Anticipatory socialization significantly shapes juvenile behavior by preparing them for future societal roles and expectations. This process involves learning and adopting behaviors, values, and norms that are associated with the roles they will assume as adults. Male delinquents' themes suggested that peer interactions had a significant impact on their behavior (Galbavy, 2008). In order to establish their own group and personal identities, peer groups that engage in delinquency are interested in exceeding the limits of society and the regulations (Adams, 2007). Delinquency can be viewed as a means of achieving things like fame and admiration and fitting into a certain social group (Muuss, 1988).

CONCLUSION

Findings suggest that the participants' adolescent egocentrism directly influences them to expose their antisocial personality traits through distorted cognition, distorted self, and emotional aspects and indirectly through moral development, drug influence, and socialization. The study's limitations, including the small sample size and uneven gender representation, cast doubt on the broad applicability of its results. These constraints underscore the necessity for caution when interpreting and applying the study's findings, emphasizing the need for further research with more extensive and representative samples to ensure accurate and reliable conclusions about the broader population.

Implications

The present study will give more importance to the cognitive aspects of adolescents' risky behavior. It can be developed as a cognitive-based intervention for children in conflict with law to improve the functioning of the juvenile justice system.

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Conflict of Interest

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