

Psychological Reasons for Committing Crimes: A Case Study of Central Jail Peshawar

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The present study was conducted in District Central Jail, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan to assess the factors shaping the criminal attitude of adults. The study proceeded with the objectives to assess the relationship between psychological factors with criminal attitude among criminals. A sample size of N=196 was randomly drawn from the universe. Sampling covered all the adult criminal of the age group of 18-64 years from the total population of N=360 convicted criminals. Frequency distribution and bi-variate analysis between dependent variable i.e. criminal attitude and independent variables namely psychological aspects were ascertain through cross tabulation while indexing the dependent variable. At bi-variate level, parents sentence

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several time was found significant, relatives' involvement in criminal activities, large family was responsible for crimes, parents using intoxicants, joint family generating criminal attitude. Moreover, feeling of low social status, unhappy family life, commitment to family cause, broken family, low moral values, internalization of criminal values and vicious tendencies of crimes were found significant with criminal attitude.. The study concluded that poor family with large size had high interaction with criminals were some of the attributing factors for committing crimes.

Keywords: crime, criminal, broken family, family size and jail

Crime is an act which violates the law and considered to be dangerous to the society and community social fabrics, thus by taken as punishable by the state. The word crime stems out from Latin word "Crimen" (crimines), which indicates in meaning towards committing of guilt and accusation (Encarta Microsoft Corporation, 2003). It has been witnessed that crime significantly violates the existing law and traditions that is why negative sanctions are always prevalent for ensuring the smooth and congenial environment based on predictability in behavior with reference to crime. It is usually responsible for disorganization into the existing law of the land which resultantly sprouts anti-social behavior leading to a number of moral, social and criminal offences (Williams, 1997; Bogardus, 1993).

Spriggs (1952) has found that criminal attitudes usually emerged in the human personality is due to social environment. The origin of violence has a number of dimensions with a lot of mysteries associated to. Some of the people commit crimes irrespective of taking into considerations societal reflection. It has been found that in such cases imprisonment, drug treatment and other alternatives to imprisonment are worthless. Perhaps education could serve as a criminal deterrent if properly used as a tool for return to work. Moreover, the stigma of arrest has also been in some cases seem a workable unit of deterrence to crime (Wilson & Petersilia, 1995; Williams & Sickles, 2001; and Lochrien, 1999). Community intervention for the treatment of adolescents with criminal attitudes could be used as one of the yardstick to control the anti-social activities through adult arrest but it's very success is not yet conclusive and needs some more efforts to prove its vitality (Grisso,

2007). Youth is one of the important segment of society where future is associated to it because countries in particular and whole world at large looking towards them as future workforce and true custodian to the new era. Anywhere an attitude that may lead to crimes or involvement in such activities which are tantamount to deviating from the law is in all aspects expensive to individuals, families, societies and the world at large. For the last so many years attempts are being made to dig out the actual causes of delinquency which later on lead to the emergence into criminal attitude. The researchers so far have been succeeded in discovering some of the core factors which are responsible for the emergence into juvenile delinquency and later on the development of criminal attitude in adulthood. These are broken homes, space of association between parents and children and overcrowded families (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Derzon&Lipsey, 2000).

Objectives

- To assess the nature of crimes committed by these adults.
- To look into the past traits of juvenile record of the committed criminals.
- To measure the relationship between juvenile delinquency and adult criminal attitude.
- To map out the social and economic factors responsible for criminal attitude.
- To suggest policy recommendations in the light of the present study.

Method

Universe of the Study

For the purpose of conducting the present study which is concerned with ascertaining the behavioral tendencies of criminals towards committing offences, Central Jail Peshawar has been chosen as universe. The main purpose of choosing Peshawar was its central position where criminals from the whole province is shifted here and thus the study would be a representative of the whole province. All the adult male criminals with an age group of (21-64) constituted the population for this study. All those criminals who had been sent to jail during the year 2011-2012 in various crimes as punishment were the

potential respondents for this study. Efforts were made to discover the race, family size and income level etc. of these offenders along with other hidden traits responsible for committing crimes.

Sample Size

A sample size is essential for reaching into conclusion through representation of the characteristics of a larger whole through a smaller unit. A sample size of 196 respondents out of the total 360 respondents punished and sent to central Jail Peshawar during the year 2011-2012 were randomly drawn out to thoroughly analyze the situational factors influencing the phenomena at hand. The sample size taken out was quite enough as it justified its size through the criteria adopted by Sekaran (2010), where a sample size of 196 was considered appropriate for a population size of 360. This determination of sample size helped the researcher in minimizing the biasness in the study while acquiring a high degree of precision which was necessary for making the sample size appropriate to the population size in nature and characteristics.

Data Collection

To gather information on the topic under consideration, a well thought out interview schedule was constructed for collecting the information pertaining to the study. Appropriated attitudinal scale was used known as LikertScale as the data was qualitative in nature and the study main domain was ascertaining the attitude of the respondents.

Data Analysis

Uni-Variate Analysis

The collected data were analyzed by using proper statistical technique (Frequency Distribution) through SPSS version 20. This section reflected the responses of the respondents in percentages. It covered both dependent and independent variables along with demographic variables.

Bi-Variate Analysis

It is the distribution of the data in the aftermath of cross-tabulation of the dependent and independent variables respectively. This

type of analysis helps in placing the data representation in percentages with relation to one another. Moreover, it also leads the researcher to predict the level of relationship between dependent and independent variable respectively. Different appropriate statistical tests are helpful in determining the level of association or the degree of correlation between the two variables (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992). In this study the relationship between independent and dependent variable were cross tabulated and presented into a 3/3 table as per requirement of the nature of the data. Moreover, to ascertain the degree of association Chi Square test was applied to determine the level of association.

This analysis was carried out through Chi-Square Test statistics designed as represented by the formula as below;

$$\chi_{obs}^2 = \sum_{j=1}^r \sum_{k=1}^c \frac{(O_{jk} - E_{jk})^2}{E_{jk}} \quad (I)$$

Where chi-square

O_{jk} = observed frequencies at jth row and kth column in the cross classified categories.

E_{jk} = Expected frequency, assuming no relationship among variables.

Degree of freedom is calculated as follow;

$df = (r-1)(c-1)$

df = degree of freedom.

r = number of rows

c = number of columns

(Mac Call, 1975).

Whenever the frequencies in the cells were less than 5 Fisher Exact Test was used instead of simple Chi-square, by adopting the procedures of Baily (1982). In addition, the sample size must fairly be large such that no expected frequency is less than 5, for r and $c > 2$, or < 10 if $r=c=2$. However, this assumption was violated several times in the data and therefore, Fisher Exact Test (also known as Exact Chi-square Test) was used instead of simple chi-square. The relationship developed by Fisher is given in equation-II (Baily, 1982);

$$\text{Fisher Exact Test Probability} = \frac{(a+b)!(c+d)!(a+c)!(b+d)!}{N!a!b!c!d!} \quad (II)$$

Where a, b, c and d were the observed numbers in four cells of contingency table and “n” the total number of observations.

Results

Table-1

Age Wise Distribution of Sampled Respondents

Categories	N	%	Total
18-28	67	33.83	67
29-38	90	45.45	90
39-48	22	11.11	22
49-58	16	8.08	16
59 and above	3	1.51	3
Total	198	100	198

Source: Survey 2012

Table-1 indicates that a major component of respondents i.e. 45.45 percent were between the ages of 29-38 years. Moreover, 33.83 percent respondents were between 18-28 years. In addition 11.11 percent respondents were between the 39-48 years. Furthermore, 8.08 percent respondents were from 49-58 years. It clearly indicates about the involvement of all age group in the criminal activities with slighter variation, which are not fully mature in thinking/decision making and easily trapped in unlawful activities.

Table 2

Family Size of Sampled Respondents

Size	N	%	Total
1-4	16	8.08	16
5-8	44	22.2	44
9-12	65	32.8	65
13 and above	73	36.86	73
Total	198	100	198

Source: Survey 2012

Table-2 indicates that a large number of respondents i.e. 36.86 percent have 13 and above family size. Moreover, 32.8 percent respondents have 9-12 family members. In addition, 22.2 percent

respondents belong to 5-8 members' family. Furthermore, 8.08 percent respondents have 1-4 members' family. It is concluded from above data that large family size is the pushing factors in becoming a criminal in the society. The data clearly indicated the reasons for committing crime as big family size due to economic pressure or mismanagement of containing the behavior of a number of individuals with variations in role and statuses. These findings are in support to the conclusions by (Brownfield & Sorenson, 1994; Jones, Offord & Abrams, 1980) have found that criminality usually springs out from the larger families having a large number of siblings.

Table 3

Income Wise Distribution of Sampled Respondents

Groups	N	%
Less than 10000	96	48.48
10001-20000	59	29.79
20001-30000	16	8.08
30001-40000	7	3.53
40001-50000	11	5.55
50001 and above	9	4.54
Total	198	100

Source: Survey 2012

Table-3 depicts that a large number of respondents i.e. 48.48 percent had income up to 10000 rupees. Moreover, 29.79 percent respondents had income between the ranges of 10001 to 20000 rupees. In addition, a small portion 8.08 percent respondents' income was between 20001-30000 rupees. It is evident from the data that low income group people were more prone to deviant behaviors. It could be deduced from the data that majority of the criminals had a poor background with a subsistence standard of living. Malet Street Gazette (2001) has also

found a close relationship between income and criminality i.e. lower the income higher will be the probability of criminality.

Table 4

Reasons for Jail Replied by Sampled Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Murder	40	20.0
Drug	117	58.5
Human Trafficking	18	9.0
Rape	10	5.0
Theft	13	6.5
Total	198	99.0

Source: Survey 2012

Table-4 indicates that majority 58.5 percent respondents were jailed due to involvement in drug trafficking. Moreover, 20 percent were in jail due to murder cases. In addition, 9 percent respondents were involved in human trafficking. While 5-6.5 percent were jailed because of rape and theft crimes respectively. It is obvious from the data that diverse nature of offences was committed in the study area. The diversity could be attributed to the conducive environment for committing crimes of any nature without any fear of law. This could either be the poor writ of the law or widespread unemployment of the youth. These findings are in support to the Tommovic (1979) that a condition arising in the matrix of socio-personal disorganization twilit the behavioral intricacies. Broken families in the shape of home environment are also important in playing a significant role in shaping the behavior of individual (Sarwat, 2006).

Table 5

Psychological Reasons of Criminal Tendency

Statements	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Feelings of low social status leads to criminals behavior	145 (72.5)	19 (9.5)	34 (17)

Hurting someone please me	28 (14)	163 (81.5)	7 (3.5)
Revenge is the only way for settling disputes	28 (14)	159 (79.5)	11 (5.5)
Stress leads to commit crimes	145 (72.5)	30 (15)	23 (11.5)
Unhappy family life leads to commit crimes	146 (73)	29 (14.5)	23 (11.5)
The perception of criminals that money can purchase anything.	78 (39)	110 (55)	10 (5)
Inefficient and poor governance is responsible for increase in criminals' behavior.	180 (90)	15 (7.5)	3 (1.5)
Family cause commitment is a reason for criminal behavior.	159 (79.50)	24 (12)	15 (7.5)
Land dispute could lead to the adoption of criminal behavior.	179 (89.5)	12 (6)	7 (3.5)
Broken family could lead to criminal behavior.	180 (90)	17 (8.50)	1 (.5)
Low moral values leads to criminal behavior	169 (84.5)	12 (6)	17 (8.5)
internalization of criminal value at family lead to criminal tendency	181(90.5)	13 (6.5)	4 (2)
vicious circle of criminal tendencies received from for father continue to transmit to young generation	168 (84)	7 (3.5)	21 (10.50)

Source: Survey 2012

Table-5 depicted that majority 90.5 percent respondents viewed the internalization of criminal value at family leads to criminal tendency. Moreover, majority 90 percent respondents considered that broken family and Inefficient and poor governance is responsible for increase in criminal behavior. In addition, 89.5 percent respondents answered that land dispute could lead to the adoption of criminal behavior. Likewise, 84.5 percent respondents termed that low moral values leads to criminal behavior. Notwithstanding, 84 percent respondents replied that vicious

circle of criminal tendencies received from forefather continue to transmit to young generation. Moreover, 79.50 percent respondents believed that family cause commitment is a reason for criminal behavior, 78 percent respondents agreed with the attribute that money can purchase anything. Unhappy family life leads to commit crimes 73 percent. Moreover, majority 72.5 percent respondents thought that stress leads to commit crimes and feelings of low social status is also responsible for criminal behavior respectively. These findings are in line to the Brownfield and Sorenson (1994) that large families with more number of children had higher tendency towards committing crime. Social disorganization at the family level is another contributing dynamic to crimes (Tomovic, 1979). Distant positioning of parents for job could lead to the gap between parents and children and may lead to crime occurrence amongst the kids (Derzon & Lipsey, 2000). Material possession and low socio-economic profile badly affected by poverty is another factor of criminality (Glaser, 1979). Mental disorder and low moral values are some of the pushing factors for committing crimes (Teplin, 2003).

Table 6

Showing Relationship Between Psychological Aspect of Life and Criminal Attitude

Attribute	Response	Criminal Attitude			Statistics
		High	Medium	Low	
Feelings of low social status leads to criminals behavior	Agr	128(65.3)	7(3.6)	8(4.1)	$\chi^2=19.69$ ($p<0.001$)
	DA	12(6.1)	6(3.1)	1(0.5)	
	DK	24(12.2)	8(4.1)	2(1.0)	
Hurting someone pleases me	Agr	23(11.7)	4(2.0)	1(0.5)	$\chi^2=2.02$ ($p<0.73$)
	DA	134(68.4)	17(8.7)	10(5.1)	
	DK	7(3.6)	00.0)	0(0.0)	
Revenge is the only way for settling disputes	Agr	23(11.7)	5(2.6)	0(0.0)	$\chi^2=4.36$ ($p<0.35$)
	DA	131(66.8)	15(7.7)	11(5.6)	
	DK	10(5.1)	1(0.5)	0(0.0)	
Stress leads to committing crimes	Agr	124(63.3)	10(5.1)	9(4.6)	$\chi^2=16.37$ ($p<0.003$)
	DA	26(13.3)	3(1.5)	1(0.5)	
	DK	14(7.1)	8(4.1)	1(0.5)	
Unhappy family life leads to commit crimes	Agr	123(62.8)	11(5.6)	10(5.1)	$\chi^2=12.88$ ($p<0.01$)
	DA	26(13.3)	3(1.5)	0(0.0)	
	DK	15(7.7)	7(3.6)	1(0.5)	
Money can purchase	Agr	62(31.6)	13(6.6)	2(1.0)	$\chi^2=7.30$

anything.	DA	93(47.4)	8(4.1)	8(4.1)	(p<0.12)
	DK	9(4.6)	0(0.0)	1(0.5)	
Inefficient and poor governance is responsible for criminals' behavior.	Agr	151(77.0)	18(9.2)	9(4.6)	$\chi^2=6.786$ (p<0.14)
	DA	12(6.1)	2(1.0)	1(0.5)	
Family caused commitment is a reason for criminal behavior.	DK	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	$\chi^2=31.16$ (p<0.001)
	Agr	139(70.9)	11(5.6)	7(3.6)	
Land dispute lead to criminal behavior.	DA	20(10.2)	3(1.5)	1(0.5)	$\chi^2=69.91$ (p<0.001)
	DK	5(2.6)	7(3.6)	3(1.5)	
Broken family lead to criminal behavior	Agr	157(90.1)	10(5.1)	10(5.1)	$\chi^2=31.24$ (p<0.001)
	DA	7(3.6)	4(2.0)	1(0.5)	
Low moral values leads to criminal behavior	DK	0(0.0)	7(3.6)	0(0.0)	$\chi^2=25.97$ (p<0.001)
	Agr	156(79.6)	13(6.6)	11(5.6)	
Internalization of criminal values at family leads to criminal tendency	DA	7(3.6)	8(4.1)	0(0.0)	$\chi^2=12.78$ (p<0.012)
	DK	1(0.5)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	
Inheritance of criminal tendencies from forefathers	Agr	147(75.0)	11(5.6)	9(4.6)	$\chi^2=18.03$ (p<0.001)
	DA	5(2.6)	6(3.1)	1(0.5)	
	DK	12(6.1)	4(2.0)	1(0.5)	
	Agr	154(78.6)	15(7.7)	10(5.1)	
	DA	7(3.6)	5(2.6)	1(0.5)	
	DK	3(1.5)	1(0.5)	0(0.0)	
	Agr	148(76.3)	11(5.1)	9(4.6)	
	DA	4(2.1)	3(1.5)	0(0.0)	
	DK	12(6.2)	5(2.6)	2(1.0)	

Note: Agr = agree, DA= disagree, DK= don't know

Table 6 shows cross tab of the determinants of criminal attitude of youth

Discussion

Psychology pertaining to study individual behavior is one of the most important branches of knowledge which focuses on deviance also. Criminologists with the help of social psychology have been able to produce a number of reasons for the occurrence of crimes and development of criminal tendencies.

In the early ages the crime committing was attributed to the genetic factor of human being with little relation to social environment. However, with the passage of time and application of some latest tools into discovering the various dimensions of behavior human being got

capabilities of exploring the very root of crime existence. Since its discovery the theory of criminal attitude development with the social learning is still on. It has been succeeded in exploring the linkages of crimes with psycho-social aspects of life mostly coming out due to psychological abnormalities.

Personality traits with high level of influence by depression, anxiety and other social aspects like poverty disputes at families were so far found the most attributing factor to the internalization of criminal tendencies. While focusing on the aspect of psychological dimensions it was found that feelings of low social status leads to criminal behavior was highly significant ($p < 0.001$) with criminal attitude. Veracity associated to this relationship is very much obvious where social environment is incapable of giving opportunity to a capable person to acquire a sound status in society. It has been associated to the devoid of merit, unemployment and the prevalent poverty along with regent system of social stratification where little go is around for the capable person to go upward in the process of social mobility due to their ascribed status. This situation of restricted social environment is always being responsible for denial to role performance as outlined by Cordilia, (1985). However, Thornberry & Farnworth, (1982) have come up with no effect of the social system with relation to crime.

Furthermore, while acquiring about hurting someone for the sake of pleasure was found non-significant with criminal attitude along with revenge as the only way of settling disputes. It is obvious here that people in the area had a high sense of understanding the nature of crime along its repercussions to follow it i.e. instead of hurting someone and taking revenge for dispute settlement to be avoided by the respondents. It is perhaps the leading of incidents to un-ended enmities between the disputing parties. It could also be contributed to a sound judicial system where justice could be achieved if any antisocial activity takes place.

The stigma of arrest is one of the reason deter the offenders to commit crimes. Involvement in crimes and deviating from the law is the most expensive business for the persons, their business and society so there is a little chance of committing crime committing crimes if strong system based on reward and punishment exists (Lochrien, 1999; Demouth & Brown, 2004; Derzon & Lipsey 2000). On the other hand stress leads to commit crimes was found significant ($p < 0.003$) with criminal attitude. Social environment is playing a meaningful role for the participants to display different roles. Role containment either by

suppression or non-existence of situation where a person could express himself regarding his rights could lead to the committing of crimes.

Stressful social environment is found to be a harbinger to the rise of abnormal traits in personality such as anxiety, tension and depression. These trends once emerged in personality and not rounded up well in time could lead to the occurrence of crime. Intelligence, learning disabilities and mental retardation are some of the great concerns for the researchers working on exploring the abnormal tendencies which could lead to the occurrence of criminal acts (Hollin, 1989). However, these contributing factors were not supported to be true (Barnes et al 1984; and Craft, 1984). Moreover, unhappy life leads to commit crimes was found significantly ($p < 0.01$) related with criminal attitude. It indicates again towards a stressful social environment either due to breakup between parents, divorce or separation. Moreover, big family size could also be attributable factor as unequal and un-justifying division of labor along with manifestation of such proportion with equality and treatment were also prevalent whenever a family is big in size to sustain itself.

The core factors associated with the predictability in criminal tendencies was identified as broken home, absence of close relationship amongst parents and children and big family size (Demouth & Brown, 2004; Hoffmann and Johnson, 1998; Derzon & Lipsey, 2004; and Brownfield and Sorenson 1994). Conversely, the perception of criminals that money can purchase anything was found non-significant with criminal attitude. In addition, inefficient and poor governance is responsible for increase in criminal behavior was found non-significant with criminal attitude. It could be attributed to the minimum level of economy and role of governance in the study area. People are committing crimes no matter what the society thinks. Moreover, imprisonment and punishment through governance is also taken into little consideration (Wilson & Petersilia, 1995). On the other hand family cause is found to be possessing anchor position in highly significant relation ($p < 0.001$) to criminal attitude. Likewise land dispute could lead to the adoption of criminal behavior was also found highly significant ($p < 0.001$) with criminal attitude. It could be deduced from the above findings that relationship with the study area was blood based and people had a high respect for family based relationship.

Moreover, land was found the major attributing factor to the committing of crimes due to the sole purpose of economic strength. It could also be detected from the data that agriculture was the land

profession where most of the economic activities were revolving around the production from the land. Failure to submit conformity to social control on part of the individuals in the process of social dynamics as a resultant factor of social person disorganization is mainly attributed to emergence of crimes. Moreover, violation of norms of a social group and institution like family is also found to be responsible for criminal acts (Calhoun et al, 1989; Tommovic, 1979).

Broken families were found to be responsible for the occurrence of criminal acts. It was found that broken family could lead to the criminal behavior had highly significant association ($p < 0.001$) to criminal attitude. It is meant over here that lack of social control from the head of the family due to the breakup in association like marriage is responsible for creation of deviance and antisocial attitude amongst the young members of the family. It could be due to non-provision of basic services like education, health etc.

A highly significant ($p < 0.001$) association was discovered between low moral values lead to criminal behavior with criminal attitude. Social values are playing a major role in the process of socialization. Deviance and non-acceptance to values always leads to the social anarchy where probabilities for committing crimes and rise in deviance could be felt high. These findings are in support to the earlier findings extended by Dermouth & Brown (2004) that big family size with broken status is responsible for emergence of crimes in the society. Moreover, problems in owning the social dynamics transmitted by the insisters to the offspring are also the main attributable factors towards the criminal tendencies (Kalb & Williams, 2003; Grougger, 1998). Moreover, internalization of criminal values at families leads to criminal tendencies was found highly significant ($p < 0.01$) with criminal attitude. It is due to the availability of social patterns in the shape of criminals who have committed any type of crimes at the family by the role models for the members to follow.

These findings of the present study are in consonance to the basic assumptions of Sutherland (1940) where he has concluded that crime is a learned behavior instead of inherited. Likewise vicious circles of criminal tendencies continued from forefathers and transmitted to young generation was found highly significant ($p < 0.001$) with criminal attitude. It is again attributable to the fact that social environment is responsible for transmitting different role allocations and expecting these from committers to perform according to the desires of the social

situation. Such like social situation mostly stem out from the families where family owner is considered supreme and above every dimension of social life, the individual is participated. It is again in line to the findings of Sutherland (1940) $p < 0.001$ that committing crimes is social in nature and dependent upon the prevalent social situation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that low social status along with stress full environment at the family level were the main causes of criminal tendencies amongst the adults in the study area. Unhappy family life, commitment to family cause, land disputes, broken families, low moral values, internalization of criminal values at the family, and vicious circles of the criminality were some of the factors leading towards the existence and harbinger to the existence of antisocial and deviant behavior.

It was mostly misunderstood that low economic status was the real cause of criminal attitude. However, family cause was one of the contributing factors of criminality disclosed from the inferences. It was due family feuds over property, honor etc. moreover broken families were some other pushing factors for the criminal tendencies in the study area. Social justice, merit and speedy trial will help reduce criminal tendencies are some of the suggestions on the basis of study findings.

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