

CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS IN THE PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF CRIMINAL IN NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE OF PAKISTAN[#]

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The present study was designed to explore the contribution of various factors in personality development of criminals in North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan. A sample of 100 male subjects, 50 criminals and 50 non-criminals was taken from low socioeconomic group, of ages 18 to 60 years having the same other demographic characteristics. Two self-report questionnaires, the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaires (PARQ: Haque, 1981; Riaz, 1993) and Personality Assessment Questionnaires, (PAQ: Riaz, 1993, 1994) were administered to show that, parental illiteracy, neglect of children, low socioeconomic status, conflicts between parents and children, and bad influence of mass media may lead to criminal behaviour. Criminals scored high on aggression, hostility, neglect, indifference, and rejection on the PARQ, whereas, non-criminals scored high on warmth and affiliation, indicating significant differences among criminals and non-criminals. The results on the PAQ demonstrate that criminals are more hostile, dependent, have negative self-esteem, negative self-adequacy, emotionally unresponsive and unstable, and have negative world view. The non-criminals enjoy good, warm, and happy relation with other people and have a high concern for social approval.

The essential characteristic of crime is that it is a behaviour which is prohibited by the State as an injury to the State and against which the State may react at least as a last resort by punishment. The two abstract criteria generally regarded by legal scholars as necessary elements in a definition of crime are legal description of an act as socially harmful and legal provision of a penalty for the act.

Almost all individuals do commit offenses, which may be legally termed as criminal acts, but these are seldom officially recorded and are often ignored or unofficially settled. Murphy, Shirley, and Witmer (1946) concluded after observing two communities for more than one

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year, that individuals committed thousands of acts in violation of law but their community reported only a few of the offenses. Lombroso (as cited in Gibbons, 1987), who has often been identified as the father of modern criminology contended that there were three types of criminals: Born criminals, insane criminals, and criminaloids. The last group consisting of those persons who were "normal" physically and psychologically but happened to commit crimes because of stressful interpersonal situations and other life circumstances.

There is no single set of causative factor in the personality development of criminals, but there are variety of causal views, ranging from biological determinants to socio-cultural considerations to quasi-religious beliefs. Hutching and Mednick (1974) examined the relationship between criminality and biological relatives of the adopted, they found a higher rate of criminals than in general population.

The relationship between criminal behaviour and home environment during childhood is a matter of great importance and attention to the psychologists. During the early stage of life the home environment of the child, and the persons who inhabit and regularly visit this environment, shape the child's experiences. The dominant element of socialization at this stage is the family, nuclear or extended (joint), and in some cases a social unit that has guardianship responsibilities for the child. In some instances children are raised in collective or "communal" families", even though the family is still considered the primary socializing element. Hirschi (1969) found that more a person has been attached to his or her family, the less likely he or she is to commit a crime.

Neighborhood is another factor that may induce criminal behaviour. According to Hirschi (1969) an empty neighborhood and "nothing-to-do" syndrome might result in increased criminality in that community. Similarly, group adhesion in a neighborhood in the form of gangs, which becomes a reference point in urban areas, also leads to criminality.

Most sociologists suggests that the social structure, cultural values, and social processes determine all behaviour, deviant or non-deviant. To some of them "modern nations are 'criminogenic' that is, they contain forms of social structure that produce criminality" (Gibbons, 1987, p.226). There are various social structure factors known as Differential Social Organization which produce criminality or criminogenic influences, such as, unemployment, lack of education, over population, lack of opportunities for the attainment of those goals that are commonly held in a society, etc. There are some other

problems related to economic, social, and political disorganization that plays role in producing crime in a society. Rapid social change, stress on material gains, and movement of rural populations to cities are some other social problems which also induced-criminality.

Television and movies are the most effective public opinion formers. Their audio and visual effects have appreciable bearing on people. It has been observed that aggressive role models greatly increases aggressive behaviour. Bandura (1973) and Eron (1972) claim to have demonstrated that there is a possible causative influence of watching violent television program in early formative years on the later aggression.

Numerous research studies identify an association between exposure to violence in entertainment and violent behaviour, but do not prove that exposure causes violent behaviour rather that there is a risk that exposure to media violence will increase the likelihood of subsequent aggressive behaviour. The risk can be increased or decreased by a large number of other factors.

Researchers and professionals have argued for decades about whether or not the portrayal of violence in the various media causes violence in society. Laboratory experiments, field research, and correctional studies have all been used as investigative tools. Some studies have suggested that there is a direct causal relationship between violence in entertainment and violent behavior and others have concluded that there is no association, whatsoever. Most studies have shown that there is some sort of relationship. Most of these studies have focused on television violence and have concluded that there are some negative effects related to watching violent or aggressive behaviour on television.

Freedman (1994) has examined most of the studies undertaken on this subject and asserts that there is no evidence in the research to suggest that watching violent TV causes aggression. His argument is largely based on examining the research methods and experimental conditions, recognizing that many intervening variables are not taken into consideration or can not be easily controlled. Despite recognizing the shortcomings of some types of research, Paik and Comstock (1994) concluded from their meta-analysis of 217 studies, that there was sufficient evidence to suggest an association between watching violence on television and subsequent aggressive behaviour leading to criminality. The effects of watching violence are influenced by the ability of individuals to discriminate between fantasy and reality, between justified and unjustified violence, and the capacity to critically

evaluate the portrayal of violence within a social and moral framework. Researches have shown that there are a number of ways that on-screen violence can be portrayed which might influence viewers (Comstock & Paik, 1991; Murray, 1994).

The following hypotheses were formulated in the present study.

1. Children neglected by their parents are more likely to be criminals.
2. Children of illiterate parents are more likely to be criminals.
3. Child-parent conflicts may lead to criminal behaviour.
4. Violence and aggression through television may lead to criminal behaviour.

METHOD

Sample

The sample of 50 subjects were contacted at Central Jail, Peshawar. They belonged to different areas of North West Frontier Province, and had committed different offenses, including murder, attempt to murder, theft, drug-trafficking, kidnapping, smuggling, and sex crimes. 50 non-criminal were matched with criminals in terms of residential town, education, age, and socioeconomic status.

Instruments

A questionnaire was devised to collect the demographic data and information concerning motives of offence and mode of criminology. The Urdu version of the two self-report questionnaires, the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) and the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) originally developed by Rohner, Saaverda, and Granum (as cited in Haque, 1981) were used. The Urdu translation of the PARQ and PAQ were prepared using back translation technique by Haque (1981) and Riaz (1993). PARQ consists of two parts, each comprising of 60 items. Part-I measures attitude of mother/step-mother towards the child. Part-II measures attitudes of father/step-father towards the child. Each part consists of four subscales: Parental Warmth and Affection; Parental Hostility and Aggression; Parental Neglect and Indifference; and Parental Rejection. PAQ measures the way respondents perceive their own personalities/behavioural dispositions. It comprises 42 items divided into seven subscales: Hostility and Aggression; Dependency; Negative Self-esteem; Negative Self-adequacy; Emotional Unresponsiveness; Emotional Instability, and Negative World View.

Procedure

The convicts were contacted at Central Jail Peshawar. During initial meeting each subject was motivated to undergo the assessment process. After establishing rapport with each subject, the purpose of the study was explained to him individually, and the place was free of any disturbance inside the Jail. Non-criminals were contacted at their residences. On the first day of assessment process, each subject was given a questionnaire providing information about demographic characteristics. After an interval of 24 hours, PARQ was administered. During the process of testing the lady researcher explained and translated the test material in their mother language.

Instruction printed on the first page of the booklet were read out to the subjects. Each subject was given the booklet and asked to fill in the blanks to provide relevant demographic data. Before answering the questions given in the booklet, the subject was asked to solve examples before starting the test to ensure if he has properly understood the instructions and procedure to record his answer. The subject was asked to put a tick mark in the appropriate column following each statement expressing his opinion on a 4-point scale ranging between 'almost always true' to 'almost never true'. After the completion of the test, subject's answer sheet was thoroughly examined to check the number of items left unanswered by the subject. *t*-test was applied to the data to see the difference of the scores of criminals and non-criminals subjects.

RESULTS

According to the findings of present study, 46% of criminals belonged to urban area and 54% to the rural area. Out of 50 criminals 17 had indulged in murder, 15 in attempt to murder, 9 in theft and 19 in robbery. The maximum crime was committed by the criminals between the age group of 18-22 years and minimum at an age 53 years and above. Majority criminals belonged to low socioeconomic status with little schooling.

Table 1

Home Environment of criminals and non-criminals

Fight in home	Very often		Occasional		Too Much		None	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Criminals	19	38	3	06	26	52	02	4
Non-Criminals	20	40	12	24	0	0	18	36

The results in Tables 1 indicate that 52% of the criminals had a tense environment and there is too much fighting in their homes because of lack of understanding with parents and of authoritarian attitude of the father. Whereas, in 38% cases there is very often fighting scenes, while only 4% reported no fight at home. Table 2 further confirmed these findings, where 48% have reported their fathers behaviors to be very strict.

Table 2

Parental support: Fathers' and Mothers' behaviors

		Father's Behavior			Mother's Behavior		
		Very Strict	About Right	Very Lenient	Very Strict	About Right	Very Lenient
<i>n</i>	20	18	12	20	12	18	
%	48	36	24	40	24	36	

Table 3

Means, standard deviations, and t-values of criminal and non-criminals on PARQ scale

PARQ	Criminals (<i>n</i> = 50)		Non-criminals (<i>n</i> = 50)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Warmth & Affection	23.16	10.87	41.72	12.75	10.24	.002
Hostile & Aggression	37.96	15.99	28.92	9.50	17.34	.000
Neglect & Indifference	32.28	16.53	23.88	8.31	30.43	.000
Rejection & Indifference	27.36	9.78	22.58	8.13	.32	.571

Table 3 shows the results obtained on PARQ scale. The criminals are significantly more aggressive and more neglected as compared to non-criminals. The difference between criminals and non-criminals on the variable of rejection/indifference is not significant.

Table 4

Mean, standard deviations, and t-values of criminals and non-criminals on PAQ scale

PAQ	Criminals (n = 50)		Non-criminals (n = 50)		t	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
Hostility and Aggression	16.14	4.88	15.46	7.57	2.26	.135
Depression	19.14	3.86	18.80	5.19	2.43	.122
Negative Self-esteem	15.62	6.17	12.36	5.57	2.02	.158
Negative Self-adequacy	15.98	6.03	11.72	3.49	15.41	.000
Emotional Unresponsiveness	16.92	5.43	13.36	4.01	7.24	.008
Emotional Instability	17.42	3.82	16.14	4.10	3.55	.062
Negative World View	14.28	5.68	13.54	4.24	4.38	.039

In Table 4 scores on PAQ shows that criminals are more hostile, more depressed, and emotionally unstable than the non-criminals but the difference between the two was not found significant. The only significant difference was found on negative self-adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness, and negative world view.

Table 5 shows that 68% criminals watched blue prints, 48% watched action movies, and 42% of them read crime news. Paik and

Comstock (1994) concluded from their meta-analysis of 217 studies that there was sufficient evidence to suggest an association between watching violence on television and subsequent aggressive behavior leading towards crime. They asserted that the viewer is predisposed to aggression. The violent images can act as a trigger to release these existing feelings leaving the viewer feeling aroused.

Table 5

Types of movies the criminals and non-criminals watch

Type of Movies	Criminals		Non-criminals	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Action	24	48	16	32
Romantic	23	46	14	28
No movies in cinema	3	6	20	40
Vulgar (Blue Prints)	34	68	1	2
Detective	10	20	24	48
Comedy	4	8	24	48
No movies on VCR	2	4	1	2

DISCUSSION

Findings of the present study demonstrate significant differences in children's perception of parental attitudes and family structure. Non-criminals who come from well adjusted both-parent families perceive their parents as being more warm and accepting. These people who themselves are less hostile, more independent, have higher self-esteem and feelings of self-adequacy, are emotionally responsive and stable and have positive world view. On the seven scales of PAQ, they rate themselves as hostile, dependent, emotionally unresponsive and unstable. The results are supported by different researches (e.g., Byran, Coleman, Ganong, & Byran, 1986) who found that step-families and

step-family members are usually perceived as less positive than other family structures. The results on PARQ indicates that the parents attitude towards criminals was hostile, aggressive, neglecting and negative, whereas, the attitude of parents towards the non-criminals was not so negative. These results are supported by other studies who found that, children in warmth and loving families are more securely attached (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978); have higher self-esteem, are more emphatic, altruistic, and responsive to others.

The results on PAQ indicates a clear significant difference between the criminals and non-criminals. Criminals are hostile and aggressive. They are dependent and emotionally unresponsive. These findings on PAQ shows that behavior and personality disposition of subjects are positively associated with parental warmth. Criminals from step-parent or single families perceive themselves as more hostile, dependent, emotionally unresponsive, emotionally unstable, having greater sense of negative world view.

Low socioeconomic status (48%) of criminals proved the hypothesis about the relationship with crime. The results are supported by the findings of Taft and England (1964), who proved that crime does appear concentrated in areas of low income, low social status.

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