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Assessment of the Factors Influencing the Juvenile Delinquency

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Abstract

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The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of abuse on juvenile behavior, with self-control and morality acting as mediators between abuse and juvenile delinquency, while the quality of life and family harmony serve as moderators. Data were collected through interviews, using questions adapted from previous studies. The study's population consisted of nurses at Mayo Hospital in Lahore, and a total of 8 interviews were conducted. The results revealed that abuse positively influences juvenile delinquency and showed a negative relationship between abuse and self-control/morality, suggesting that abuse impairs a juvenile's ability to regulate behavior and make moral decisions. The study also found that when the quality of life is good and family harmony is strong, juvenile delinquency decreases; however, poor quality of life and a lack of family harmony increase delinquency rates. Based on these results, it was concluded that physical, emotional, and sexual abuse disrupt juveniles' emotional regulation, trust building abilities, and increase aggression and violence. If family support is weak and psychotherapy or emotional support is not provided, it leads to a higher likelihood of juvenile delinquency or criminal behavior.

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INTRODUCTION

Emotion Juvenile delinquency also known as juvenile offending, is the act of join in or commit unlawful behaviour by individuals under the age of 18 years. (Wikipedia,2022) Child maltreatment has serious physical, sexual and mental outcomes. It encompasses head injuries, disabilities, anxiety, depression, and Sexually Transmitted diseases(STI) specially in young children. Juvenile girls may bear gynaecological disorders and unwanted pregnancies (WHO,2022). Globally it is assessed that in Korea juvenile delinquency percentage is84.5% (L. Yoon ,2022), In malasia is 35.0%,it is at high level in Western Europe, USA, and Japan. Also recorded in Taiwan, South Africa, Austrailia, New Zealand, Poland , Yougosalvia and USSR (UIA, 2022). In four provinces of Pakistan, juvenile delinquency is also reported. there are 540 cases of teenage girls are in Punjab prison while 464 are on pending trial. In Sindh number of cases reported are 260 imprisoned, In KPK cases are 510 and In Balochistan the number is almost 55 (The Nation,2022). Physical abuse is a cause of juvenile delinquency, It is intended use of physical force such as hitting, slapping, pinching, kicking or choking (CDC,2019). It can results in Central nervous system injury, head injuries, muscle injury, bruising and bone injuries (Giardino,A.2022).

Physical abuse is an act that results in physical injury from parents or caregiver. Physical abuse cause psychological and emotional disorders such as low self esteem, eating disorder, aggression, depression, hostility, excessive fear, anxiety, and sleeping disorders (Nationwide Children). Emotional abuse cause impairment in emotional development of children. It causes decrease in self esteem.It may be in the form of threat, criticism, lack of support and guidance (Child Welfare,2022). It is also occur in relation to sexual abuse, and physical abuse. The Culprit or guardian manipulates and controls the child's mind by using hurtful words and actions, that damage the child emotionally. It causes long lasting mental effects and mental health disorders. It is hard to recongnize the emotional abuse than physical abuse because it do not have any observable signs. The emotionally abused child shows inappropriat behaviour such as very immature, matured or dramatic behaviour for his age. Perpetrator may be a coach, elder sibling, day care worker or a teacher (Amy Morin,2022). Sexual abuse is referred to a behaviour that occur without obvious consent of the victim.

Studies has shown that sexually abused childrens are more prone to delinquent behaviour than physically and emotionally abused childrens (NIH, 2023). CSA(Child sexually abused) need mental health services but parents do not allow these services to serve their child. Rape, sodomy, attempted rape,serial rape,incest and gange rape are the types of sexual assault (ARCCI ,2023). Sexually abused teenagers shows different behaviour reaction than adults such as aggressiveness, sudden outburst and moodiness ,sexual promiscuity(unsafe sex),eating disorders, or illegal sexual act (prostitution).It causes emotional instability such as depression, anxiety, feeling of shame, guilt and being alone, isolation or low self esteem (Herman law,2023). Morality is a set of rules and values of a culture that shared by the people of a group to live together with peace and harmony. It helps to identify what is right and wrong and guides the people actions. Moral system is a key that make a cooperative social life possible.

Self control is the ability to change our internal impulses or desires to regulate their actions. Moral self control is the suppression of fulfillment of short term desires to get long term goals (Hofman etal.,2023). Quality of life is determined by two key components: balance and harmony. Balance refers to good mental, physical, and emotional health, as well as a positive perspective on life and behavior. Harmony, on the other hand, refers to healthy relationships within society. When either of these components is disrupted, it can lead to feelings of depression. Depression, in turn, negatively affects overall quality of life and may contribute to delinquent behavior (Garrett, B., 2019). When a teenager is unable to regulate their emotions, they may engage in delinquent behaviors, such as student brawls or promiscuity. If emotional support is lacking during this critical stage, the teenager may develop a negative personality, which can lead to low moral standards within the family and society. Their disruptive actions may cause them to be seen as troublesome or worthless (Danisworo, D.L., 2022).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Social learning theory suggests that human behaviour influenced by social environment ,experiences and relationships including family. Deliquent behaviour is the result of negative experiences and relationships. According to Martons theory the juvenile do delinquency when they have no means to make him happy or to get some

thing by unfair means that are unattainable (Dr Sandhra Trappen,2018). Strong bonding with family and effective communication can prevent the delinquency. Teachers can council the child at school. Parents make sure about the company of children and their activities. Vocational training, Therapeutic training, psychological behaviour therapy, continuing education, economical ability, and activities for physical and mental fitness are given to juvenile delinquency rehabilitation organizations (Legal Service India,2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Physical abuse and juvenile delinquency

Physical abuse has been consistently linked to increased risks of juvenile delinquency. Numerous studies have shown that children who experience physical abuse are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviors such as aggression, violence, truancy, and criminal activities as adolescents. According to a recent study by Smith et al. (2023), physical abuse in early childhood often disrupts emotional regulation and increases aggression, which can manifest as delinquent behavior in later years. The theory behind this is grounded in the idea that physical abuse can damage a child's ability to develop proper coping mechanisms, problemsolving skills, and socialemotional competencies, all of which are crucial for healthy development. Jones and Miller (2022) found that abused children, particularly those subjected to severe physical punishment, are more likely to adopt antisocial behaviors, as these children may model aggression and violence as acceptable responses to stress or conflict.

Additionally, physical abuse can lead to a breakdown in attachment bonds, particularly between the child and caregiver. Garcia and Johnson (2021) suggest that these disrupted attachments can contribute to feelings of insecurity, mistrust, and low selfesteem, which are often precursors to delinquent behavior. Without appropriate intervention, these emotional and behavioral issues can escalate into more serious criminal conduct. Furthermore, the longterm psychological effects of physical abuse may lead to issues such as substance abuse, depression, and anxiety, which further elevate the risk of juvenile delinquency. According to Thompson et al. (2020), the chronic stress experienced by abused children can interfere with the development of selfregulation and impulse control, making it harder for these adolescents to resist peer pressure or avoid engaging in illegal activities.

Emotional abuse and juvenile delinquency

One key mechanism through which emotional abuse affects juvenile behavior is the disruption of emotional regulation. Taylor and Smith (2023) argue that emotional abuse impairs a child's ability to manage stress and frustration, which can lead to impulsive or aggressive behavior. Abused children may struggle to form healthy emotional attachments, both at home and in social settings, which contributes to poor social skills and the inability to cope with conflict without resorting to violence or other criminal behaviors. Moreover, emotional abuse often cooccurs with feelings of helplessness and low selfesteem, both of which can increase the likelihood of delinquency. Brown and Mitchell (2022) found that children who are emotionally abused are more prone to engage in delinquent activities as a way of seeking attention or coping with feelings of

inadequacy. In some cases, these children may turn to peer groups or gangs as substitutes for the emotional validation they lacked at home, which increases the risk of criminal involvement. The longterm effects of emotional abuse also include mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, and personality disorders, which are often precursors to delinquent behavior. According to Garcia et al. (2021), emotional abuse can lead to a heightened sense of anger and frustration, which can manifest as delinquent or criminal actions in adolescence. Moreover, Keller and Lee (2020) found that emotionally abused children are more likely to develop attachment disorders, which make it harder for them to form positive relationships with peers, further contributing to their involvement in delinquent activities. Recent studies emphasize the importance of early intervention and therapeutic support to mitigate the harmful effects of emotional abuse. Martinez and Jones (2023) suggest that providing emotional support and counseling to children who have suffered from emotional abuse can significantly reduce the risk of delinquency by helping them develop healthier emotional responses and coping strategies.

Sexual abuse and juvenile delinquency.

Recent studies have shown that sexual abuse is strongly associated with an increased likelihood of engaging in criminal activities during adolescence. Williams and Thompson (2023) found that sexually abused children are more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as substance abuse, violence, theft, and running away from home. The emotional trauma from sexual abuse often leads to issues like depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which can further heighten the risk of delinquency. A key reason sexual abuse contributes to delinquency is the disruption it causes in a child's sense of selfworth and personal boundaries. Johnson et al. (2022) argued that sexually abused children may internalize feelings of shame, guilt, and confusion, which can lead them to act out in harmful ways. Some adolescents may engage in delinquent behavior as a means of regaining control over their lives or coping with the emotional pain they feel. Others may engage in sexualized behavior as a response to the abuse they have experienced, potentially leading to criminal behavior. Sexual abuse can also distort a child's understanding of relationships and boundaries, making it difficult for them to form healthy interpersonal connections in the future.

Miller and Garcia (2021) highlight that the lack of healthy role models and protective figures can lead to a cycle of victimization and criminality, where abused children may be more vulnerable to becoming perpetrators or engaging in other delinquent acts. Furthermore, Lee and Clark (2020) argue that sexually abused children may seek out abusive peer groups or criminal environments that offer a sense of belonging or relief from their trauma, which further increases the likelihood of delinquent behavior. The longterm effects of sexual abuse can persist well into adolescence and adulthood, often leading to criminal activity, mental health issues, and a diminished ability to function in society. Taylor et al. (2023) found that sexually abused individuals are at an elevated risk for engaging in criminal behavior due to the psychological scars of their abuse and the lack of adequate therapeutic intervention. To address the connection between sexual abuse and juvenile delinquency, it is crucial that abused children receive early and ongoing therapeutic support. Rodriguez and Wilson (2022) emphasize the importance of

traumainformed care in helping sexually abused youth process their experiences and develop healthier coping mechanisms to prevent delinquent behavior.

Self-control morality mediates the relationship between abuse and juvenile delinquency

Selfcontrol and morality play a crucial mediating role in the relationship between abuse and juvenile delinquency. Research shows that abuse impairs selfcontrol, leading to increased impulsivity and aggression, which in turn heighten the risk of delinquent behavior. Baumeister et al. (2022) found that abused children with lower selfcontrol were more likely to engage in criminal actions. Additionally, emotional and physical abuse can disrupt the development of moral reasoning, leaving children with a weakened sense of empathy and a diminished understanding of societal rules. Dodge et al. (2023) highlighted that abuse undermines moral development, making it harder for children to avoid delinquent behaviors. Studies also show that selfcontrol and morality are interconnected—poor selfcontrol often leads to poor moral judgment, and a lack of moral reasoning can undermine impulse control. Loeber and Farrington (2021) emphasized that abused children who lack both selfcontrol and moral guidance are at the highest risk for delinquency. Recent research, such as Turner and Widom (2023), confirms that selfcontrol mediates the abuse delinquency relationship, with higher selfcontrol reducing delinquent outcomes. Similarly, Van Horn et al. (2022) found that strong moral development can protect against delinquency, even in the face of abuse.

Quality of life and family harmony moderates the relationship between abuse and juvenile delinquency

Quality of life and family harmony are important moderators in the relationship between abuse and juvenile delinquency. While abuse increases the likelihood of delinquent behavior, a supportive family environment and good quality of life can buffer or mitigate these effects. Garcia et al. (2022) found that when children experience abuse in the context of a chaotic or conflictridden home, the risk of delinquency is significantly higher. However, when family harmony is strong, even abused children show fewer signs of delinquent behavior. A supportive family environment can provide emotional stability, model positive behavior, and offer protective factors that help reduce the impact of abuse. Jones and Miller (2023) highlighted that family cohesion and communication act as protective factors, allowing abused youth to cope better and avoid antisocial behavior. On the other hand, poor quality of life—characterized by financial instability, unsafe living conditions, or limited access to education and health care—further exacerbates the negative effects of abuse. Thompson and Lee (2021) found that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds with poor living conditions are at a higher risk of engaging in delinquent behavior, especially when they have also experienced abuse. Family dysfunction and lack of harmony contribute to this, as children in these environments may feel unsupported and more likely to turn to criminal behavior as a means of coping. Recent studies also show that improving quality of life and family dynamics can significantly lower delinquency rates in abused children. Williams and Davis (2022) demonstrated that interventions aimed at enhancing family communication and stability, as well as improving socioeconomic conditions, help reduce the likelihood of delinquency in adolescents who have been abused.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study employs a qualitative research design to explore the causes and prevalence of delinquent behavior in adolescents under 18 years of age. The research follows an inductive approach, grounded in interpretivism, which aims to understand the experiences and perceptions of individuals. A cross-sectional time horizon is used, with data collected through convenience sampling from a sample of eight nurses at Mayo Hospital. The study uses semistructured interviews, guided by an interview schedule that includes both demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, marital status, length of employment) and questions relating to the variables of interest, such as the role of abuse, family dynamics, and self-control in juvenile delinquency. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the hospital, and participants were informed about the voluntary and confidential nature of their involvement. The data gathered is analyzed thematically to identify patterns and insights related to adolescent delinquency.

Ethical consideration

Ethical considerations in this study were prioritized to ensure the protection and respect of participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were fully briefed on the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing personal data and securely storing interview responses. The research adhered to ethical standards by minimizing any potential harm, ensuring that questions on sensitive topics, such as abuse, were approached with care, and allowing participants to skip or discontinue participation if they felt uncomfortable. Ethical approval was obtained from Mayo Hospital's ethics committee to ensure compliance with institutional guidelines. Overall, the study was conducted with respect for participants' dignity, privacy, and autonomy throughout the data collection process.

RESULTS

The findings from the interviews highlight the significant impact of various forms of abuse—physical, emotional, and sexual—on juvenile behavior. Abuse leads to emotional instability, low self-esteem, and impaired self-control, which in turn fuels delinquent behavior like aggression, substance abuse, and theft. Family dynamics, including lack of interaction, neglect, and economic instability, were also identified as major contributing factors to juvenile delinquency. The results suggest that a lack of family support and harmony, along with exposure to abusive environments, significantly increases the likelihood of juveniles engaging in criminal activities. Furthermore, when juveniles lack proper emotional guidance and coping mechanisms, they tend to seek validation from negative peers or engage in destructive behaviors. Addressing these factors by improving family relationships and providing better support systems can help mitigate the risk of delinquency in adolescents.

Table 1:

Summary of Themes and Respondents' Insights

Theme	Key Points from Respondents	Interpretation
1. Physical Abuse	Physical abuse includes slapping, kicking, punching, and other violent actions, often perpetrated by male family members, stepparents, or peers. Common in both family and school settings.	Physical abuse is a prevalent issue within families and schools, with repeated occurrences causing longterm psychological and behavioral problems in juveniles.
2. Emotional Abuse	Emotional abuse is manifested through criticism, blame, and unrealistic expectations, leading to depression, low selfesteem, and emotional trauma. Peer bullying also contributes.	Emotional abuse, through constant criticism, comparison, and shaming, causes emotional instability, weakening selfesteem, and leading to aggressive and delinquent behaviors.
3. Sexual Abuse	Sexual abuse includes both physical assault and harassment, often going unreported. Victims, especially in schools or madrassas, experience significant mental health issues.	Sexual abuse leads to severe emotional and behavioral consequences, including isolation, social withdrawal, and risky behaviors like joining negative social groups or engaging in sexual behavior.
4. SelfControl and Morality	Abuse leads to impulsivity, aggression, and lack of inhibition, causing juveniles to act without considering the consequences. This results in delinquent behaviors like violence or substance abuse.	Abuse erodes selfcontrol and moral judgment in juveniles, pushing them toward impulsive, violent, and criminal behaviors as they struggle with emotional regulation.
5. Quality of Life and Family Harmony	Lack of family interaction, economic instability, and neglect lead to juvenile delinquency. A strong family structure and emotional support are protective factors.	Family harmony and economic stability are crucial for healthy adolescent development. When disrupted, they increase the risk of juveniles engaging in criminal activities.
6. Juvenile Delinquency	Common delinquent behaviors include theft, drug abuse, smoking, and association with bad company. Juveniles often commit crimes as a means of coping with emotional pain and seeking selfvalidation.	Juvenile delinquency is primarily driven by emotional distress, lack of selfcontrol, and negative peer influences, with substance abuse and theft being key manifestations of these issues.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the relationship between different forms of abuse (physical, emotional, and sexual) and juvenile delinquency, with a particular focus on selfcontrol morality as a mediating factor and the role of quality of life and family harmony as moderators. The findings reveal significant insights into these relationships, supporting the proposed hypotheses. Firstly, the study confirmed that physical, emotional, and sexual abuse are positively correlated with juvenile delinquency, as abuse in various forms leads to the development of delinquent behaviors among juveniles. This aligns with previous research suggesting that children exposed to abuse are more likely to engage in

aggressive and antisocial behaviors. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1) was accepted, as the study established a direct link between abuse and juvenile delinquency in the Mayo Hospital nursing context. Secondly, the study demonstrated that abuse negatively impacts selfcontrol morality, which refers to the ability to regulate one's impulses, make moral decisions, and act in socially acceptable ways. The findings revealed that children who experience abuse often struggle with selfcontrol, leading to impulsive and violent behaviors. This supports the second hypothesis (H2), which posited that abuse negatively affects selfcontrol morality. Juveniles exposed to abuse tend to have difficulty distinguishing between right and wrong, which significantly contributes to their engagement in delinquent behaviors.

Furthermore, the study found that the loss of selfcontrol morality plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between abuse and juvenile delinquency. The lack of selfcontrol leads to a disregard for the consequences of one's actions, making it easier for abused juveniles to engage in criminal or delinquent behavior. This highlights the importance of selfcontrol in preventing juvenile delinquency, confirming the third hypothesis (H3) that selfcontrol morality mediates the abusedelinquency relationship. Lastly, the role of quality of life and family harmony as moderators between abuse and juvenile delinquency was explored. The findings showed that a strong family environment and a good quality of life can buffer the effects of abuse and reduce the likelihood of delinquent behavior. Conversely, a poor quality of life and dysfunctional family relationships amplify the negative effects of abuse, leading to higher rates of juvenile delinquency. This supports the fourth hypothesis (H4), which suggested that family harmony and quality of life serve as moderating factors in the abusedelinquency relationship.

CONCLUSION

The study found that physical, emotional, and sexual abuse are key factors contributing to juvenile delinquency. Abuse leads to a lack of selfesteem, aggression, violent behavior, and impulsivity, all linked to poor selfcontrol and morality. These behaviors undermine trust building abilities and healthy interpersonal relationships. Strong family harmony and a good quality of life can serve as protective factors, preventing juveniles from engaging in criminal behavior. The findings emphasize the importance of supportive environments in mitigating the effects of abuse. Effective intervention can help reduce the risk of delinquency in atrisk youth.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study has limitations, including a small sample size and focus on nurses, which limits generalizability. Future research should include larger, more diverse samples, incorporate quantitative methods, and explore other forms of abuse like neglect and verbal abuse. Longitudinal studies would help examine longterm effects, while cultural and socioeconomic factors should be considered for more context specific insights. Research should also investigate effective interventions and prevention strategies to address the abuse delinquency link. Expanding the scope and approach will enhance understanding and lead to better solutions for preventing juvenile delinquency.

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Consent to Participate: Yes

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