

The Effects of Peer Pressure on Aggressive Actions and Self-Control in JuvenilesMaryam Khurshid^a, Mamoonah Ismail Loona^a, Mussarat Jabeen Khan^a, Amina Shahid^a, Ambreen Fatima^{b*}^a Department of Psychology, International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan^b Department of Professional Psychology, Bahria University Islamabad Campus, Islamabad, Pakistan**Abstract**

Peer aggression and self-control occur frequently in childhood and adolescence therefore it is also very common in juvenile delinquency. The current study looked at how aggressive adolescent offenders in Pakistan were related to their peers. Sample was selected from four different cities of Pakistan—Multan (n = 80), Faisalabad (n = 130), Rawalpindi (n = 140), and Bahawalpur (n = 150)—the sample of 500 juvenile offenders (age range: 13–18 years) having varying educational backgrounds. The primary goal of the study was to investigate how peers relationships affect young offenders. Further goals included examining the influence of peers' relationship on juvenile violence in addition to the juveniles' educational attainment. The study variables were measured using the Index of Peers Relations (IPR), Aggression Questionnaires (AQ), and Self-control. The relationship between peers has a significant impact on aggression and its subscales among juvenile offenders, according to the results of a co-relational analysis. The study also discovered that the sample's aggression and peers relationships are significantly impacted by poor educational attainment.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquency, Peers' relation, Aggression, Self-Control

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1. Introduction

One of the most extensively researched criminology subjects in recent decades has been the connection between the Peers system and criminal conduct, which feeds into and reinforces delinquent and criminal behavior. Remarkably, many of these researches discovered that children are more influenced by peers for substance use mainly due to imitation and modeling (Kandel, 2008).

Juvenile delinquency is defined as the offenses done by young people in the community who are under the age of eighteen. School failure, substance abuse, personal or environmental issues, and psychological disorders are some of the contributing elements that lead youth to engage in such illegal behavior. In particular, we evaluate the relative effects of delinquent peers' connection on self-control (Thornberry et al., 2003b). The importance of an empirical focus on relationship victimization has been acknowledged and emphasized (Crick et al., 2001), in addition to the overt form of peer victimization. Being the targets of peers' relational aggression, a behavior type intended to cause harm to others by purposefully destroying or manipulating their interpersonal relationships, or by threatening to do so, is a subtype of peer victimization.

Additionally, research has shown a high correlation between aggressive conduct and criminal activity (Tremblay and Craig, 1997). Aggression has been proven to be mostly preventable or significantly decreased. Physical punishment is a major contributing element to teenagers' elevated levels of rage, which may ultimately cause them to engage in antisocial and delinquent behavior. Similarly, if their peers treat them badly, younger kids could also start to exhibit tendencies toward criminality, rage, antisocial behavior, and delinquent behavior. Peers physically punishing children; is one of the factors that leading to the development of rage, criminal activity, antisocial behavior, and delinquent behavior in young children. Teens that are physically abused by their peers may grow up to be angry and engage in criminal activity, including delinquency.

The model suggests two possible connections between victimization and aggressiveness. First, victimization by peers might be a direct result of aggressiveness (Boivin et al., 2001). Numerous studies have shown empirical support for this component of the concept. Second, peer victimization mediated by negative peer status (i.e., rejection) may be indirectly caused by aggression. The various components of this paradigm have been found to be interconnected, despite the indirect pathway having, in comparison, not been sufficiently studied.

Theoretical perceptives on delinquency: Numerous psychological theories aim to investigate the potential reasons behind adolescent misbehavior. Although there isn't a single theory that explains how violence and parenting practices contribute to juvenile delinquency, there are a few viewpoints that do provide some insight into the subject. The phrase "behaviors that harm others through purposeful manipulation or damage (or the threat of damage) to their peer relationships" was originally used by Crick & Grotpeter (1995). More precisely, it encompasses behaviors like rumors, purposeful relationship withdrawal, and exclusion from the play group. Indirect aggression and social aggression (Xie et al., 2002) are two more terms used in the research literature to describe more subtle aggressive behaviors that are closely related to the concept of relational aggression mentioned above. One of the most crucial social development tasks in childhood is the establishment of meaningful peer relationships (Bohlin et al., 2000). There is some evidence in the

literature that insecure peer interactions are related. More precisely, negative interacting emotions and behaviors including violence, disengagement, and low self-confidence are characteristics of children's peer relationships (Coleman, 2003). The first to recognize a theoretical connection between attachment and aggressive behavior in subsequent peer interactions was Bowlby (1988). Pakistan is not an exception to the problem of juvenile delinquency. Numerous elements, such as peer influence, the jail atmosphere, and the degree of hostility, all play a part in these issues. The purpose of the current study is to evaluate the influence of peers that causes aggressive actions and self-control among juveniles. As a result, there is an urgent need to do advanced research on these issues in Pakistan. Furthermore, it is critical to examine the connection between juvenile offenders' levels of violence and the stress experienced by single Peers. It is anticipated that adolescent offenders will exhibit a high degree of hostility. Therefore, in addition to analyzing deviant/antisocial behaviors, the current study intends to conduct empirical research about the influence of peers on juveniles and the degree of hostility exhibited by the participants. Policymakers will find this study useful in addressing issues that juvenile offenders in Pakistan's various jails experience. Moreover, a variety of factors contribute to the emergence of delinquency among Pakistani youth and there is a strong need to explore those factors in relation with Peers issues (Altaf, 1988; Khurshid, 2003).

The present research aimed to examine the effects of peer pressure on aggressive actions and self-control in juveniles. The study explores the impact of peer relationships on aggression and self-control in young offenders and investigates how peer relations influence hostility and self-control among juvenile offenders.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design

Cross-sectional research design was used.

2.2 Sample

The sample consisted of 500 male juvenile offenders with prior convictions, drawn from prisons across four different cities in Pakistan: Multan (n = 80), Faisalabad (n = 130), Rawalpindi (n = 140), and Bahawalpur (n = 150). The participants, aged between 13 and 18 years (M = 16.63, SD = 1.33), represented diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

2.3 Instruments

2.3.1 Index of Peer Relations (IPR) is a standardized tool developed by Hudson (1982) to measure the severity of issues within peer relationships, particularly among children and adolescents. The scale consists of 25 items, with a scoring range from 25 to 125. A cutoff score of 30 is used to differentiate between problematic and non-problematic peer relations.

2.3.2 Aggression Questionnaire, developed by Buss and Perry (1992), is used to assess aggression levels in the sample. It comprises four subscales: physical aggression (items 1–9), verbal aggression (items 10–14), anger (items 15–21), and hostility (items 22–29). Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert scale, with scores for items 7 and 18 being reverse-coded.

2.3.3 Self-control is measured using a 10-item scale developed by Grasmick et al. (1993), which evaluates impulsivity, risk-

taking, self-centeredness, and preference for physical activity. To ensure clarity in interpretation, the scale scores were reverse-coded, meaning that higher scores indicate greater levels of self-control.

3. Results

Data was analyzed using SPSS version 20 bivariate correlations and ANOVA were carried out to check different hypothesis.

Table 1
Correlation Matrix of Scores of IPR (Index of Peers Relations), Self-Control and AQ (Aggression Questionnaire) and its Sub-Scale of juveniles (N=500)

Scales	Physical	Verbal	Anger	Hostility	Total Aggression	Self-Control	IPR
Physical		.77**	.83**	.79**	.78**	.68**	.77**
Verbal			.57**	.67**	.72**	.77**	.67**
Anger				.52**	.68**	.78**	.79**
Hostility					.70**	.78**	.89**
Self-control							.62**
IPR							

** $p > 0.05$

Table 2
One Way ANOVA for Crime Wise difference on Total IPR Self-Control and AQ (N=500)

Scales	Crimes	n	M	SD	95% CI LL	95% CI LL	F	p	η^2
IPR	murder	153	25.27	26.82	20.13	20.13	.592	.669	.003
	drug smuggling	271	28.12	30.41	24.48	24.48			
	terrorism	22	20.59	18.35	12.45	12.45			
	kidnapping	10	27.00	23.91	9.89	9.89			
	Theft	44	30.11	27.87	21.64	21.64			
Self-control	murder	153	60.30	28.28	54.88	54.88	.747	.560	.005
	drug smuggling	271	63.94	28.04	60.58	60.58			
	terrorism	22	57.23	28.07	44.78	44.78			
	kidnapping	10	54.60	23.46	37.81	37.81			
	Theft	44	62.89	26.30	54.89	54.89			
AQ	murder	153	17.93	3.44	17.27	17.27	1.194	.313	.002
	drug smuggling	271	17.29	3.46	16.88	16.88			
	terrorism	22	18.55	2.77	17.32	17.32			
	kidnapping	10	17.60	3.77	14.90	14.90			
	Theft	44	17.80	3.81	16.64	16.64			

The study's measurements show highly significant associations, according to the results. This supports our premise that there is a considerable correlation between aggressive behavior and troublesome Peers dynamics.

According to Table 3, the impact of aggression did not decrease substantially between the ages of 15 and 17, indicating that the magnitude of the effect remains constant from early to mid-adolescence. Additionally, although this varies over time, we discover a reciprocal relationship between social influences and delinquency. The link between delinquent aggressions at age 15 increased when self-reported delinquency is present from age 13. When a child is 15 years old, delinquency has no discernible impact on peers participation; nevertheless, between the ages of 15 and 17, involvement decreases ($\beta = 0.072, p < .001$). The study found no statistically significant difference in the impact of peers on self-control between the ages of 13 and 15 and 15 and 17 (χ^2 Wald test (1) = 0.057, $p = .728$).

4. Discussion

The goal of the current study was to investigate how juvenile offenders' relationships with their Peers affect their violence. More precisely, the information was gathered from young offenders who had been found guilty

by the courts and were incarcerated. The findings show that juvenile violence is significantly impacted by issues in Peers relationships.

The results, which are shown in Table 1, support our theory that, in comparison to educated juvenile offenders, uneducated juvenile offenders perceived more issues with their peer group and exhibited higher levels of aggressiveness. The notion that people with high levels of anger and a perception of Peers difficulties are more susceptible to serious crimes is further supported by the results of the ANOVA analysis. As was previously said in this study, illiteracy and dysfunctional Peers dynamics are the main factors contributing to the higher crime rate among individuals from lower socioeconomic classes. The current results provide empirical support for the study's assumptions, which are presented in Tables 2 show that the sample's illiterate group displayed a high level of violence among juvenile offenders. In many developing countries, the primary drivers of educational inequalities are poverty and illiteracy (Archer, 2004). Due to the need to assist their friends with household problems caused by financial troubles, many children and teenagers usually have to leave school.

Table 3
Wald chi-square tests of differences in cross-lagged and autoregressive effects during adolescence (N=500)

Autoregressive effects		Wald test (1)			
	Delinquency	.431*	514*	2.287	.001
	Aggression	.335*	.390*	0.674	.412
	Peers relation	.588*	.642*	0.193	.661
	Self-control	.460*	.543*	7.835	.005
Cross-lagged effects					
<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Outcome</i>				
Delinquency	Aggression	.182*	.142*	.444	.505
	Peers relations	0.003	0.072*	.891	.015
Aggression	Delinquency	.069*	0.041	.947	.163
	Self-control	0.032	0.067*	.526	.468
Peer relations	Delinquency	0.032	0.067*	.497	.481
	Self-control	.056*	0.070*	.057	.728
Self-control	Delinquency	0.128*	0.036	3.89	.049
	Aggression	0.071*	0.071*	.001	.98
	Peers relations	0.029	0.035	.805	.094

Therefore, in an attempt to make ends meet, people may decide to engage in voluntary criminal activity. Due to their lack of education, these young people are also greatly impacted by financial problems. Barton, Corteen, Scott, and Whyte (2011) found that poverty and illiteracy might serve as independent causes of delinquency and criminality.

Higher self-control, as predicted, dramatically reduced the chance of being involved in delinquency; however, effects were substantial only between the ages of 13 and 15. Self-control remains constant throughout childhood, our findings point to a more flexible concept that is changed during adolescence by relationships with troublesome peers and parental participation. Furthermore, discover some evidence in favor of the theory that self-control and aggression are correlated. Self-control is further weakened in later adolescence when individuals with low self-control associate with delinquent friends (Chapple et al., 2004). The present study sustains three theoretical propositions: (1) the impact of socializing institutions, apart from peers, on the development of self-control; (2) the lasting influence of these social influences on self-control beyond childhood; and (3) the possibility of a reciprocal, cumulative effect of these influences over an extended period of time.

The magnitude of the effect is consistent with earlier longitudinal models that take autoregressive effects into account, despite the seeming tiny cross-lagged effects. Furthermore, it is crucial to remember that little cross-lagged effects still have significance since they show the cumulative effects of time on the results. Furthermore, as self-control is unable to fully account for the correlation between aggression delinquency and delinquent behavior in the early stages of adolescence, our findings implies that self-control is insufficient to explain heterogeneity in adolescents' delinquency. This is consistent with current on the relationship between delinquent behavior and self-control.

It is important to note that most psychologists consider "adolescence" to be one of the most important stages of a person's life. Youth are particularly prone at this sensitive stage to unfavorable effects. At this point, Peers' roles are crucial in regulating their teenagers' behavior. Hagan and Foster (2001) emphasized the value of

a positive peer's interaction. This kind of interaction does lessen the likelihood that teenagers will engage in bad behavior. According to Sobolewski (2001), there was a notable decline in parental control among peers who were less supportive. This, in turn, led to a high frequency of delinquent behaviors being seen, highlighting the strong correlation between dysfunctional peers connection and delinquent acts among teenagers.

The study's findings also demonstrate that young people exhibit high levels of anger and perceive more issues in their Peers relationships. Maybe as a result, individuals have trouble adjusting to their new surroundings. They deal with more issues within their own environment.

It is a known truth that high levels of aggression amplify a modest sense of powerlessness or incapacity to respond constructively to external pressures. The group's feelings regarding their behavior and attitude are very combative, which implies that they struggle to keep up stronger relationships with their Peers.

The results of our study are consistent with other research in this area, which claims that teenagers are more vulnerable to engaging in deviant behavior due to experiences of abuse and victimization throughout their formative years. Additionally, poor relationships, harsh treatment from Peers and maltreatment may cause them to acquire an aggressive disposition. According to Heltberg, Hossa and Reroo (2012), there was a significant degree of consistency in the group's hostility and aggression, indicating that violence was a consistent trait of their personalities.

Limitations

The study has few limitations: Juvenile delinquency is a significant societal problem in Pakistani society; yet, because the sample was limited to a small number of jails in Punjab Province, the researchers were unable to draw broad conclusions about the country's juvenile population as a whole. Furthermore, the study lacks a comparison group; it is proposed that similar studies be undertaken in the future to obtain a clearer view of the phenomenon as a whole. Semi-structured questionnaires should also be used to supplement this data in order to obtain more precise information on Peers issues and the reasons behind violence.

Suggestions

Following are the suggestion: Firstly, a sizable representative sample that includes both boys and girls detained in Pakistani jails across all provinces is required. Secondly, to get a clear image, a comparison sample of non-delinquents may be provided. Lastly, in order to gather information from young people who lack literacy, semi-structured interviews are also advised

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