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FACTORS AFFECTING THE CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR AMONG PAKISTANI YOUTH: A CASE STUDY OF PUNJAB PROVINCE PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Crime is one of the major problems in Pakistan. Increased incidences of crime across the country are becoming a matter of great concern. It is popular to associate criminal behavior with the poor physical, psychological, social, and economic conditions of the impoverished segment of the population. Poverty, unemployment, and corruption are Pakistan's most significant drivers of youth crimes. Keeping in view all these facts, the main objective of this study was to investigate the factors affecting youth criminal behavior in Punjab, Pakistan. In this research quantitative research approach was used. Primary data was collected through field surveys. A multistage random sampling technique was used for data collection. In the first stage, two districts were selected randomly from central Punjab. In the second stage, district jail Faisalabad and district jail Pakpattan were selected purposively. In the third stage, a sample size of 300 respondents was chosen purposively. A questionnaire was designed as a data collection tool, and collected data were analyzed by using SPSS 25 version. The study's findings indicated that most of the respondents who were involved in crimes were married and between 21 to 25 years old. Univariate analysis revealed that poverty, unemployment, poor socialization, and peer pressure were major causes of crime among youth. Bivariate analysis showed that excessive social media usage and youth unemployment contributed to criminal behavior. So, the present study suggested that Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should collaborate to enhance awareness and youth empowerment to guarantee that individuals have the necessary skills and training to participate in the labor market and become productive members of society.

Keywords: Factors; Youth; Criminal behaviour; Frustration; Pakistan.

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INTRODUCTION

When a crime is explicitly defined by the law, it is typically punishable by imprisonment or penalties, depending on the circumstances. Crime is a deed that carries a legal penalty. Robbery, burglary, rape, and driving while drunk was the most prevalent crimes. Criminals are those who have engaged in such illegal behavior (John, 2020). As several well-known criminologists have recently recognized, the key to understanding crime is to pay attention to the underlying characteristics of offenders as well as crime-specific behaviors. A variety of factors contribute to a person's aggressive behavior and mental strain, all

of which are factors in criminal activity (Omogho, 2016). The state prohibits criminal action because it is detrimental to others. A detailed inquiry into anomalies has been launched as an alternative to imposing a penalty by state officials, with the goal of determining the breadth of the problem as well as its legal implications. In Asian nations such as Pakistan, more than half of the population lives below poverty line, and many young people are out of work due to this situation (Altindag, 2012). The youth of every society are among its most crucial elements and, if active, can contribute to its improvement. However, if the kids engage in illegal activity or have abnormal attitudes, society may be undermined. In part, youngsters serve as an accurate indicator of how successfully a nation can reproduce and maintain itself (Goldstone, 2001). Youth are viewed as both the foundation of society and its representation. According to the United Nations, "youth" refers to those between the ages of 15 and 30 years (Nafziger & Auvinen, 2002).

Criminality has an influence on immigration and exclusion in Pakistan. Pakistan contains criminals from all socioeconomic classes, from the lowest to the highest, who strive to increase their riches through illicit methods. By the literature, the vast majority of crimes are committed by criminals, political parties, police, and the government of Pakistan acting on behalf of the legal system. Pakistan's economic, cultural, and technical development are at atrocious levels compared to other countries (Anderson et al., 2003). It is usual for individuals to lose hope in the future, which coincides with an increase in violent crime among the urban elite, unemployment, and a lack of political involvement among young people. The purpose appears to be the recognition that young people are more sensitive to social isolation and a lack of social support, which increases their likelihood of engaging in violent behavior (Butcher et al., 2015).

Criminal behavior is a systematic process that develops throughout our lives and involves intricate interconnections between the person, society, and the natural environment, among other things. We have a major impact on our behavior and biological processes, as well as on our relationships with the physical environment and other individuals, groups, or organizations, because of our unique mental, emotional, and physical characteristics (Jua, 2003). When young people are unemployed and have few opportunities for progress, they may suffer feelings of dissatisfaction and humiliation. According to several studies, young people's participation in criminal activities such as drug peddling, terrorist groups, and other unlawful actions that provide a source of cash has exacerbated tensions between young people and the jobless (Pratt et al., 2010).

Prior research, including that by Effiom (2021), examined how poverty affected young people's criminal conduct in Akpabuyo, Cross River State. On the other hand, Omogho (2020) investigated how peer pressure affected criminal behavior in Abraka, Delta state. However, these studies were carried out in several research fields. Abdullah et al. (2014) examined the effects of drug use and abuse among youth in Borno State, Nigeria, and it was done in the same study area as Herrenkohl (2017). Youth crime is risk-related to family features such as inadequate parenting abilities, household size, domestic strife, child abuse, and disruptive parents. Mednick (2018) linked pregnancy and delivery complications to violent behavior but not nonviolent criminal behavior. In addition, some studies have shown that children whose mothers smoked cigarettes frequently during pregnancy were more likely to display conduct disorders and other behaviour problems. Each of these studies, meanwhile, suffers from flaws that call for additional investigation.

Due to the numerous variables that drive youth to engage in criminal behavior, the influence of youth in crime has long been a problem. However, despite efforts to focus their energy on positive and socially acceptable pursuits, many have turned to illegal behavior. Though not all, it has become apparent that youth are involved in some crimes. This can be because of the things that Influence youth criminal behavior

in Pakistan. Therefore, it is crucial to look at the influences on young people that result in criminal behavior. Youth come from various social groups, and it is important to research those who act criminally. In Punjab, Pakistan, youth involvement in criminal activity is widespread. The more prevalent examples include drug and alcohol misuse, theft and vandalism, rape, prostitution, armed robbery, and drug trafficking. The research was undertaken in light of this context. Hence the major objective of the present study was to investigate the factors affecting criminal behavior among youth in Punjab Pakistan

METHODOLOGY

In this research quantitative research approach was used. Primary data was gathered through a cross-sectional survey. A multistage random sampling technique was used for data collection (Agresti & Finlay, 2008). The province of Punjab comprises of thirty-six districts. The universe of the present study was central Punjab. The population of the study covered the youth of central Punjab, Pakistan. In the first stage, two districts (Faisalabad, Pakpattan) were selected randomly from central Punjab. In the second stage, district jail Faisalabad and district jail Pakpattan were selected purposively. In the third stage, a selected sample size of 300 respondents was chosen purposively. The Fitzgibbon table was used to estimate the sample size (Fitzgibbon & Morris, 1987). According to the study's research objectives, an interview schedule was created, and collected data were analyzed using SPSS 25 version. Together, descriptive and inferential statistical approaches were applied in the current investigation. Descriptive techniques (frequency distribution and percentage) were frequently used to describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the participants. An analysis of two variables was done to investigate how dependent and independent factors interact. Chi-square and Gamma tests were applied to assess the strength and correlation of variables. The factors of criminal behavior were examined using multi-linear regression, focusing on youth criminal conduct.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 reveals that the majority of the respondents, i.e., 45.3 percent, were from the age group between 15-20 years, and 32.7 percent were from the age group 21-25 years. The rest of the 22 percent of respondents were from 26-30 years old. The study depicts that the majority of the respondents, i.e., 64.7 percent, were married; 26.66 percent were unmarried, while 8 percent were divorced. The study highlights that the majority of the respondents, i.e., 41.3 percent were middle pass while 26 percent were primary pass. On the other hand, 6 percent of respondents were illiterate. Furthermore, 6.66 percent of respondents were matric, 5.33 percent were intermediate, and 14.7 percent of respondents had graduated or above education. Results showed the monthly income of the respondents. According to Table 1, 13.3 percent of respondents have a household income up to Rs. 15000, and 9.3 percent of respondents have a monthly household income between Rs. 15000 to Rs. 20000, while 14.6 percent of respondents have a monthly household income between Rs. 20001 to Rs. 25000. Furthermore, 27.3 percent respondents having monthly household income between Rs. 25001 to Rs. 30000. Moreover, 20.6 percent respondents having monthly household income between Rs. 30001 to Rs. 35000. Finally, 14.6 percent respondents having more than Rs. 35000 monthly income. In this regard, Jua (2003) argued that income was an important factor driving violent crime rates across countries. Since inequality increases crime rates, the association proves to be causal. Increases in income disparity had a significant impact on rising crime rates.

Table 2 shows that 26 percent of respondents replied that poverty was the main cause of crimes, while 23.3 percent of respondents think that the reason for crime is unemployment, and 15.33 percent of respondents think that political instability is the cause of crimes. Moreover, 23.33 percent of respondents replied that the leading cause of crime is economic recession. In the end, 6.66 percent of respondents claimed a lack of

education, and 5.33 percent claimed that the reason for crimes was social exclusion. Similar findings were also presented by Idrees et al. (2015) that Criminal behavior was strongly correlated with unemployment, poverty, and lack of education. When young unemployment rates increases, poverty increases, which feeds into crime. People who are socially excluded are more likely to engage in criminal activity. According to the study, Pakistan's political and economic inequality caused an imbalance in the living standards of its citizens. People's moral boundaries were shattered when they lacked access to resources. According to research, poverty impacts both crime and the criminal justice system. The low amount of money and resources accessible to the impoverished makes it harder for them to attain their goals and fulfill their ambitions. In Pakistan, rising economic disparity exacerbates the country's poverty statistics, which paints an even bleaker image. Results indicate that 35.3 percent of respondents believed that a lack of primary socialization or a problem with it is the primary factor that pushes young people toward crime, 32.7 percent believed that peer groups are to blame for young people becoming criminals, and 32.0 percent believed that the media was to blame for young people becoming criminals.

Table 1. Socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents.

Age (in Years)	Frequency	Percentage
15-20	98	32.7
21-25	136	45.3
26-30	66	22.0
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Un married	80	26.66
Married	194	64.7
Divorced	24	8.0
<i>Educational Status</i>		
Illiterate	18	6.0
Primary	78	26.0
Middle	124	41.3
Matric	20	6.66
Intermediate	16	5.33
Graduation or above	44	14.7
<i>Income (Pk Rs)</i>		
Up to 15000	40	13.3
15000-20000	28	9.3
20001-25000	44	14.6
25001-30000	82	27.3
30001-35000	62	20.6
35001 or above	44	14.6
Total	300	100.0

Adolescents may experience either positive or negative effects from peer pressure. When it yields undesirable outcomes, it suggests that there was motivation to engage in criminal activity rather than conform to social norms. This results in the emergence of socially disaffected or criminally inclined people. Social media plays a significant role in everyday life, and there is mounting evidence that it contributes directly and indirectly to youth violence. Youths may suffer negative consequences if they are exposed to violence regularly. Youth who regularly watch violent media were more likely to engage in antisocial

behavior, including criminal violence, imitative violence with toys, acceptance of violent behavior, increased hostility, and desensitization to violent behavior, according to meta-analyses of the harmful effects of media violence. According to the study's findings, teenage criminal conduct and media exposure to violence were closely related (Idrees et al., 2015).

Table 2. Factors affecting criminal behavior among youth.

Factors affecting criminal behavior	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	78	26
Unemployment	70	23.33
Political Instability	46	15.33
Economic Recession	70	23.33
Lack of Education	20	6.66
Social Exclusion	16	5.33
Poor Socialization	106	35.3
Peer Group	98	32.7
Media	96	32.0
Total	300.0	100.0

Table 3 shows that the above bivariate analysis was to test the hypothesis "Unemployment leads toward youth criminal behavior." In this analysis, the dependent variable was "Youth criminal behavior," and the independent variable was "unemployment." The chi-square 173.057 value at a level of significance 0.011 shows the association between the variables under consideration. Also, the gamma 0.467 value at a 0.044 significance level shows a strong positive relationship between unemployment and youth criminal behavior. It means that youth criminal behavior depends upon the employment status of the youth. So, the hypothesis "Association between unemployment among youth and criminal behavior" is accepted. In this regard, (Pratt et al., 2010) presented that when young people were unemployed and had few opportunities for progress, they may suffer feelings of dissatisfaction and humiliation. According to several studies, young people's participation in criminal activities such as drug peddling, terrorist groups, and other unlawful activities that provide a source of cash had exacerbated tensions between young people and the jobless.

Table 3. Association between unemployment among youth and criminal behavior.

Unemployment among youth	Low	Medium	High	Total
Not at all	122	1	5	128
	40.7%	.3%	1.7%	42.7%
To some extent	4	81	33	118
	1.3%	27.0%	11.0%	39.3%
To great extent	3	28	23	54
	1.0%	9.3%	7.7%	18.0%
Total	129	110	61	300
	43.0%	36.7%	20.3%	100.0%
Test	Value	D.F.	P -Value (Significance)	
Chi-Square	173.057	4	0.011**	
Gamma	0.467	-	0.044*	

** = Significant

Table 4. Association between the use of social media among youth and criminal behavior.

Use of Social media among youth	Youth criminal behavior			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Strongly Agree	8	29	101	138
	2.7%	9.7%	33.7%	46.0%
Agree	56	48	3	107
	18.7%	16.0%	1.0%	35.7%
Disagree	37	13	5	55
	12.3%	4.3%	1.7%	18.3%
Total	101	90	109	300
	33.7%	30.0%	36.3%	100.0%
Test	Value	D.F.	P -Value (Significance)	
Chi-Square	128.213	4	0.003**	
Gamma	0.470	-	0.012*	

** =Significant

Table 5. Multiple linear regression analysis.

Independent variable	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t _{cal.}	Significance (P-Value)
	b _i	Std. Error	β _i		
(Constant)	0.841	0.408	-	2.061	0.040*
Low Income Generation Opportunities (X ₁)	0.296	0.068	0.230	4.341	0.000**
Frustration (X ₂)	0.280	0.054	0.263	5.176	0.000**
Unemployment (X ₃)	0.236	.051	0.213	4.629	0.000**
Inequalities in the Society (X ₄)	0.136	0.047	0.127	2.891	0.004**
Peer Pressure (X ₅)	0.228	0.096	0.140	-2.368	0.019*
Social Media (X ₆)	0.264	0.082	0.252	-3.230	0.001**
Adjusted R ² = 0.635 F = 112. 648 P-Value (Significance) = 0.000**					
** = Highly Significant, * = Significant					

Table 4 shows the purpose of the above bivariate analysis was to test the hypothesis “use of social media leads towards youth criminal behavior.” In this analysis, the dependent variable was “Youth criminal behavior,” and the independent variable was the use of social media.” The chi-square 128.213 value at a level of significance 0.003 shows the association between the variables under consideration. Also, the gamma 0.470 value at 0.012 significance level shows a strong positive relationship between the use of social media and youth criminal behavior. It means that youth criminal behavior depends upon the use of social media. So, the hypothesis “Association between use of social media among youth and criminal behavior” is accepted. According to Farooq et al. (2014), young people were more vulnerable to the negative effects of social and electronic media. Young people were dejected and pessimistic as a result of the shortage of options available to them. Additionally, through the media and information, youngsters may learn about new types of criminality and violent and unlawful behavior.

Table 5 shows the determinants of criminal behavior and its effects on youth. According to the study's findings, research shows that crime is significantly associated with a lack of economic opportunities, unemployment, frustration, inequalities, peer pressure, and social media. According to Collier (2000), Ortiz

& Cummins (2012), and Marcus & Gavrilovic (2010) argued that young men's desire to participate in a revolt was influenced by their sources of money and social status. Unemployed and impoverished young people were more likely to take part in a revolt. The study concluded that there was a strong relationship between the deterioration in frustration and the growing wave of unhappiness among young people. The present study was consistent with the findings of Pratt et al. (2010) presented that the relationship between increasing rates of property crime and poverty was well established, while the relationship between inequality and more violent crimes such as assault and homicide was more tenuous. Moser & Rodgers (2005) argued that lack of access to jobs, education, healthcare, and basic infrastructure was strongly correlated to criminal activities. As a result of widespread and severe inequality, younger males were more prone to participate in various types of crimes. In this regard, Humphreys & Weinstein (2008) and Flynn & Rudolph (2011) presented that young people were more affected by social and electronic media and peer pressure had a considerable impact on youth criminal behavior.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study concluded that crimes were progressively growing, particularly among youth, and this trend is expected to continue. The analysis led to the conclusion that there was no single reason that causes young people to become criminals; rather, numerous risk factors disrupt young people's lives. The environment of one's surroundings has a direct impact on the causes of crimes. Family, socialization, peer groups, social media, and inequalities were examples of these environments. It was also noted that the factors contributing to youth criminality in Punjab, Pakistan differ slightly from those in the west, such as unemployment, inequality, and poverty. The research concluded that youth crime rates would decrease if inequality is eliminated and the state offers job possibilities to young people. If appropriate corrective measures are considered, the rate of youth criminality can be found to decline significantly.

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