

## IMPACT OF PARENTING STYLE AND PEER PRESSURE ON CRIMINAL PROPENSITY AMONG MALE AND FEMALE YOUNG ADULTS

**Aquamsha Fahim<sup>1</sup> & Pragyan Dangwal<sup>2</sup>, Ph. D.**

<sup>1</sup>Research Trainee, M.Phil (Child and Adolescent), Amity University, Amity Institute of Behavioural and Allied Sciences, Lucknow, Amity University, Uttar-Pradesh.

Email – [fahim.aquamsha99@gmail.com](mailto:fahim.aquamsha99@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Amity University, Amity Institute of Behavioural and Allied Sciences, Lucknow, Amity University, Uttar-Pradesh. Email – [pdangwal@amity.edu](mailto:pdangwal@amity.edu)

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### Abstract

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*This paper attempts to study the effect of Parenting Style and Peer Pressure on Criminal Propensity of Young Adults and also attempts to explore whether there exists a gender difference. The research design used is Ex-Post Facto Research Design, Correlational in nature. The study consisted of 150 young adults, 83 males and 67 females, between the age ranges of 17 to 24 years belonging to Lucknow city. The results reveal that Authoritarian Parenting Style is significantly associated with high criminal propensity and Peer Pressure had no significant effect on criminal propensity of Young adults. However, none the variables predicted criminal propensity. The study found no significant gender difference on criminal propensity, parenting style or peer pressure.*

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### I. Introduction

Criminology, is the study of criminal and deviant behavior. It is a part of sociology that makes use of psychology, psychiatry, biology, economics, and anthropology amongst other disciplines to explain the causes of criminal behavior. Criminologists have been focused on determining the role of predisposing characteristics of the individual in the action of crime, over situational factors. There are two bases of explanation or approaches used to explain criminal behavior –

- Criminal Propensity
- Opportunity Approach

Criminal Propensity is the natural inclination towards criminal behavior. It argues that, criminals exhibit certain traits or qualities to commit a certain crime. This is concerned with the individual differences amongst the population that increase the likelihood of offending. Gottfredson and Hirschi in their General Theory of Crime realized that a crime can only take place when opportunity coincides with an opportunity; however the decisive factor is the criminality of the potential perpetrator. Scientist, across the world have studied criminal propensity in several different aspects with a combination of different variable, their impacts and relationships. In India, however, criminal propensity studies have focused or somehow being limited to convicts. These studies are mainly focused on the gender differences, personality factors and their impact on convicts. Over the years, gender differences have been found on various aspects of testing variables. Studies found that the severity of crime by female convicts was higher than male convicts. Females also exhibited more neurotic behavior than male, and were also found higher on aggression scale. (Juon et al, 2006; Ensminger, 1983; Lanctot & Blanc, 2002; Trembley et al., 2003; Eysenck, 1997). General population, especially young adults, have not been studied as much. Several studies have mentioned the case of youth crimes more severe than situational or adulthood, meaning, that a person who has started to commit crimes at a young age is tend to be more dangerous than someone who has begun in adulthood. The experiences a person has as a child or adolescent tends to affect the choices, reaction to a situation, thinking patterns, behaviors of adult life. Young adulthood acts a bridge between childhood and adulthood. The person at this age is experiencing freedom and self-dependence for the first time, being responsible for their own actions, problem solving. Taking care of themselves, their future, career, decision making and at times even basic necessities like food, rent and bills. Therefore the decision or choice that they make has an effect on them and only them in that situation. According to the social learning theory of crime and deviance given by Akers and Burgess in 1998, crime is more likely to be committed when the positive consequences of deviant behavior are more powerful than non-deviant behaviors. Going by this theory, there are several examples and incidence, where young adults make a decision because of more result and less effort, easy money making techniques, for example.

The Parenting Style theory was given by Diana Baumrind in 1960 at the University of California at Berkeley, also in 1980 Maccoby and Martin contributed to the model. Baumrind realized that children exhibited a specific type of behaviour and each type correlated to a specific kind of Parenting. The theory stated that there is a close relationship between the type of parenting style and children's behaviour. Basically the kind of parenting or guidance a child receives in early days of his/her life, contributes majorly to the personality formed, relationship made, decisions taken, etc.

Baumrind defined three kinds of parenting style-

- I. Authoritative Parenting
- II. Authoritarian Parenting
- III. Permissive Parenting

**Authoritative Parents** have high expectations for achievement and maturity, but they are also warm and responsive. They set rules and boundaries by having open discussion, providing guidance and reasons. These Parents give appropriate reasons and explanations for their actions, this allows children to have a sense of awareness. The disciplinary method they used are confrontative, Meaning, reasoned, negotiable, outcome-oriented and are concerned with regulating behaviours. Authoritative Parents are supportive and affectionate. They encourage independence. This Parenting style is also known as democratic Parenting Style, since it uses bidirectional communication. Children of Authoritative Parents are happy and content, Independent, active, higher Academic success, higher Self-Esteem, better Mental health, secures

**Authoritarian Parents** exhibit high levels of control and low levels of responsiveness. Authoritarian parents demand blind obedience, i.e., they do not provide with reasons or logical explanations for their actions. The communication pattern in such a setup is one way, via, Orders and Rules. This Parenting style includes stern discipline and harsh punishments as a way to control children's behaviour. The disciplinary style used is coercive, meaning arbitrary, peremptory, dominating and are majorly concerned with marking status distinctions. Children of Authoritarian Parents are less independent, insecure, have low self-esteem, have more behaviour or conduct problems, they have poor social skills, are more prone to mental illness, they are likely to have drug problems and have poor coping skills.

**Permissive Parents** set very few rules and boundaries and are reluctant to enforce rules. These parents are indulgent in nature, i.e., they are warm and affectionate but set no rules. They fear disappointing their kids.

**Peer pressure** has been associated with substance use and risk behaviors earlier; however, does it contribute in criminal propensity of a person, that is a question to ask. The major concern of adolescents is to be accepted by their peers, and often to do this, they attempt to change their attributes, values or behaviours to conform to those of their peers, creating a great impact on the minds of adolescents. Often, this age associated with a lot of anger issues and intolerance, this, is due to this very fact. The pretentious personality that an adolescent is presenting in order to be accepted is not accepted by his/her own true self, creating a duality and confusion. Peer pressure one of the major contributing factor in Substance abuse and risk taking behaviours. Studies show that a person is torn between parental values and peer values in Adolescence, however, which one is a contributing factor towards criminal behaviour is a matter of further research.

Many researchers like Sigmund Freud, Erick Erikson, John Watson, Jean Piaget, John Bowlby, Albert Bandura and many more, have time and again tried to prove that experiences of childhood and adolescent have a huge impact on the personality, thinking pattern, reaction patterns and therefore, has impact on the decision making and perception of an individual. The development of thinking pattern may be responsible for the solutions to a problem. How the thinking pattern of an individual is developed, the environment, the atrocities, the experiences of childhood. Difference in environment causes the way of thinking to vary. Two people have two different solutions to a problem depending on the thinking pattern. This response, not only depends on individual, but gender plays a vital role. A number of studies reveal that female tend to be more aggressive and neurotic as compared to men. A study by Liu and Kaplan in 2004 on effect of adolescent aggression in young adulthood. It revealed that male who reported aggression during early adolescence, reported increase in aggression during young adulthood. While for females it was found that only those females who reported no aggression during early adolescence, reported increase in aggression during young adulthood.

Therefore, in the light of the above, the present study aims to study the relationship of criminal propensity and urban non-convict young adults, in an attempt contribute to the studies and to fill the gap in the studies. The study aims to establish the probable causes of

the relationship if any and the impact parenting style and peer pressure has on criminal propensity among young adults. The study also plans to contribute to the studies whether there exists a gender difference in the young adult urban population of Lucknow

## **II. Review Of Literature**

Family is the first source of human experience after birth and remains constant throughout life, therefore impacting a person throughout. Childhood neglecting has an impact on adulthood arrest, aggression and violence. The discord between parents, their rejection or defiance are some of the background traits of delinquent behaviour. [Tremblay et.al in 2003; Hee-Soon Juon, Elaine Eggleston Dohesty and Margret E. Ensminger; Lisa A. Marshall and David J. Cooke (1999) ; L. Rowell Huesmann, Leonard D. Eron (Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan, USA) and Eric F. Dubow (Department of Psychology, Bowling Green State University, USA) in 2002; Andrew Gorgan Kaylor (University of Michigan) and Melanie D. Otis (University of Kentucky) in 2003]. Dysfunctional factors such as spouse violence, child abuse and alcoholism results in child's criminality. Divorce and separation often leaves child feeling frustrated and they often display behaviour problems. Behavioural problems – anger, disruptive behaviour, aggression. Young people who take part in the group – based offending may have lived in households where family members are involved in criminal activity. Permissive parent often leads to behavioural problems and may lead to criminal behaviour, uninvolved parents are indifferent to their child's needs, whereabouts, experiences at school or with peers. A lack of parental interaction and involvement with children may increase children's future risk for crime.[Kopko in 2007; Worgo also in 2007]

There is an increasing accumulation of study findings that show that physical punishment is significantly associated with psychological maladjustment in children. Physical punishment by Family, may produce an immediate results, but leads to defiance in the long run. Physical punishment is associated with official and self-reported delinquency (Glueck and Glueck, 1950; Bandura and Walter, 1959; McCord et al., 1961; Gold, 1963; Hirschi, 1969; Welch, 1978). Non homicidal crimes reported more severe punishments in childhood, then Violent Crimes (Karla S. Miller, John F. Knutson, 1997).Some researchers, hypothesised that psychological outcomes among children associated with physical punishment may vary across culture (Deater – Deckard et al 1996).

Studies conducted across the globe have found that children who are homeless or are from broken family tend to commit more crime, however, in case of India, children living with family commit more crimes. Poor economic status and lack of proper education are some of the identified factors. Growing Urbanisation leading to breakdown of extended family systems increasing the consumerism and influence of crime associated have also been associated with crime in young adults. (Ramakrishnan Biswal, Elsie Mishra, Saswati Jena 2016; Arvind Verma, Manish Kumar 2008)

People from all faces of life have recognised the affect and importance of peer pressure in the lives of young adults. Researchers have studied and proven the negative as well as positive effects of peer group. Peer pressure plays a major role in the development. Peer pressure to misconduct is associated with vigorous alcohol use, however, peer conformity and involvement is associated with less alcohol use (Joseph Studer et al, 2014). Some researchers believed that age is a describing factor in the intensity of Peer influence. Resistance to Peer influence increases between the ages 14 and 18, increases between the ages 10 and 14 or 18 and 30 (Laurence Steinberg, Kathryn C Monahan, 2007). Substance abuse is one of the major issues in young adults. Young population uses substance for various psychosocial reasons such as for socialisation or the ‘feel good’ factor. Peer Pressure and Curiosity were the major reasons for same (Poonam Gopiram, M. T. Kishore, 2014). Patterns of peer behaviour, different type of activities and peer structure have significant effect on child behaviour. Peer pressure is present majorly in young adults and it influences to non-conformity to societal norms and laws. Major Features of the peer pressure process are identified as group dynamics, delinquent peer subculture, peer approval of delinquent behaviour and sanctions for non-conformity (V. Reeta – Research Journal of Social Sciences, 2020; Riddhi Goel, Anjali Malik, 2017).

Males and females different of deviant behaviour with frequency and severity. Number of males convicts were higher as compared to female convicts. The severity, however, for females was more as compared to females. (Juon et al, 2006; ensminger, 1983; lanctot & blanc, 2002; trembley et al., 2003; hans J eysenck – 1997) females reported higher on extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism than male. (Weisberg et al., 2011). Women are often found to be more agreeable than men, that is they exhibit high agreeableness traits (feingold, 1994; costa et al., 2001)

Social learning theory is one of the dominant theories of criminal behaviour – Widely used. Criminal Propensity moderates the effect of Social Learning theory construct. Young offenders will cease offending by early adulthood. The key variable for Criminal Propensity were age of onset, criminal history, self-control along with antisocial attitudes in association with delinquent Peers. However, components of social learning theory were found to operate similarly across individuals regardless one's level of self-control (John K Cochran et al – 2016; Bruce Watt, Kevin Howells, Paul Delfabbro – 2004; Angela Yarbrough et. Al – 2012) A person's crime involvement or any changes are dependent on their Criminal Propensity and exposure. The extent to which young people show a violent response to a provocation depends on their morality and self-control. Criminal Propensity is measured as a composite construct of morality and capability to exercise self-control and criminogenic exposure of peer delinquency (Per-Olof H Wikstrom – 2009; Dirk Hinrich, Per-Olof H Wikstrom – 2010)

### **III. Method**

Objectives:

- To assess the criminal propensity among young adults.
- To identify the parenting style as perceived by young adults.
- To assess Peer pressure among young adults.
- To study the gender difference on the selected variables among young adults.
- To study the relationship between Criminal propensity, Parenting styles and Peer pressure.
- To identify the predictors of Criminal propensity among young adults.

Hypothesis: The researcher formulated the following hypothesis-

- The common criminal propensity level is moderate for young adults.
- The common parenting trend among Indian young adults is authoritarian parenting style.
- There will be a significant gender difference in criminal propensity.
- There will be gender difference in peer pressure among young adults.
- There will be gender difference in perceived parenting style among young adults.
- Authoritarian Parenting Styles and Permissive Parenting Style will significantly be associated with High Criminal Propensity.
- Peer Pressure will significantly be associated with High Criminal Propensity.

Type of Research: Quantitative Research

Research Design: Ex-Post Facto Correlational Design.

Sample: 150 young adults, 83 males and 67 females, between the age ranges of 17 to 24, those who are not convicted or have any known criminal past or background, were selected using Purposive sampling technique. The sample selected was from senior secondary

to Graduation. The data was collected online using Google form, abiding by the restrictions imposed by the government due to Coronavirus Pandemic.

Tools:

- Perceived Peer Pressure Scale by V. Palani (Research Scholar) and S. Mani (Professor and head of Department), Tamil Nadu Teacher’s Education University, Chennai (2016). The scale contains 30 items. The tool measures using a five point Likert-type scale from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. The Reliability of the scale is defined using Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient, and the value was 0.942. The intrinsic validity of the tools was found to be 0.971. Therefore, the tool was established as Valid and reliable. The high scores represent higher levels of peer pressure.
- Perceived Parenting Style Scale by Prof. (Dr.) K. Manikandan, University of Calcutta (2013). It measures perceived parenting style of the subject with regard to three dimensions – Authoritative, Authoritarian and permissive. It contains 30 items with 5 point Likert Scale. Each parenting style is dedicated 10 questions each. The Alpha Coefficient for Authoritative parenting style was 0.79, for Authoritarian was 0.81 and for permissive was 0.86. The Scale has Face validity. The items was written in Malayalam and English languages (Bilingual).
- Criminal Propensity Scale (2018) by Dr. (Mrs.) Shubra Sanyal. Criminal Propensity scale consists of 39 ‘Yes- No’ questions. The scoring is done using a scoring stencil. The stencil consists of 4 domains – Psychoticism, Neuroticism, Extraversion and Lie scale. The total of these scores give a CP score. The items scores are reliable at .01 significant levels. The scale was assumed to be valid since it is based on Eysenk’s Personality Questionnaire.

<i>Levels (Based on total Criminal Propensity score)</i>	
Scores 0 to 15	LCRP
Scores 6 – 10	LCRP
Scores 11 – 15	LCRP
Scores 16 – 20	MCRP
Scores 20 – 24	MCRP
Scores 24+	HCRP



Procedure: Through purposive sampling, the subjects were selected. The consent was taken and the purpose of the research was explained to them. The questionnaire was administered using Google form. After data collection, data was compiled and using excel sheet. Means, correlations and Regression were calculated using SPSS. Using these tables and values, results were formulated and conclusions were made.

**IV. Results**

**Table 1: Means**

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Means</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Criminal propensity</b>	female	70	19.828	5.700	.986
	male	80	18.920	5.506	
<b>Peer pressure</b>	female	70	34.114	6.042	-.493
	male	80	34.612	6.283	
<b>Authoritative</b>	female	70	32.328	9.377	-.848
	male	80	33.662	9.803	
<b>Authoritarian</b>	Female	70	31.885	9.515	1.602
	male	80	29.512	8.624	
<b>Permissive</b>	Female	70	28.957	8.640	-1.596
	male	80	31.325	9.415	

**Table 2: Correlations (Pearson's Correlation)**

	<b>PP</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Authoritative</b>	<b>Authoritarian</b>	<b>Permissive</b>
<b>PP</b>	1	0.75	.006	.100	-.035
<b>CP</b>		1	-.314**	.284**	.037
<b>Authoritative</b>			1		
<b>Authoritarian</b>				1	
<b>Permissive</b>					1

\*\* significant at 0.05 level.

PP- Peer pressure

CP – Criminal Propensity

## **V. Discussion And Conclusion**

There was no significant gender difference found for the present sample. There are a lot of factors that could have contributed to this. The decreasing effect of gender defined roles, could be a reason, that is, males and females today have mixed roles to play in every field. In early days when there were defined female and male roles, female would cook, clean and take care of the house and males would go out to earn. The growing children and the youth were also trained and taught accordingly, today this has changed, not completely though but, there has been a drastic change in gender roles. Nurturing and homemaking are not the only qualities that females need to have, and are not the only ones that need to have. A career oriented training and teaching is being imparted in major urban area households today, that has decreased the parenting styles difference to a major level.

However, when Parenting styles were analyzed in correspondence with the Criminal Propensity, some interesting results were drawn. Authoritative parenting style represented a large amount of Low Criminal Propensity population, i.e., children with authoritative parenting style tend to have lower criminal interest or exhibit less risky behaviour . Whereas, Authoritarian parenting style amounted for 50% of young adults with High Criminal Propensity, i.e., Children with authoritarian parents, tend to have more inclination towards criminal and risk taking behaviours.

There was significant difference in Criminal Propensity of young adults from different Parenting background. According to the correlations table, Criminal Propensity and Authoritative parenting Style have significant Negative Correlation, whereas, Authoritarian Parenting style and Criminal Propensity have significant Positive Correlation.

Authoritarian style contributed most to High Criminal Propensity. Authoritarian Parenting style has been said to have a negative side effect. These children are either shy with low self-esteem due to the lack of decision-making powers all their life, or turn angry and rebellious, due to the same reason. Children in the latter category become aggressive, are poor judge of character and often rebel against authority. The research believes that these children's future activities really depends on the environment they are exposed to, since these children are disciplined without reason and have a habit of modeling the behaviour, of

parents, peers, and society. They are unable to have their own thought or personality, the personality they possess is often a mixture of personalities in its environment. The environment they are exposed to will determine whether they become rebels or extreme introverts. With Globalization and open parenting styles, today, schools and colleges are adapting teaching styles that make children independent and build their self-esteem and encourage them to take their own decisions. However, there contradicting home environment where punishment or discipline does not get supported with reasons or logic, leave the children angry and confused.

The child feels helpless as a growing adult due to the lack of confidence, thus frustration and anger, since they grew up modeling their parent's ideal image and did not get space to explore the chances of developing their own personality. These children, often as young adults, are a mix of personalities in the environment.

Permissive parenting still has contributes moderate level of criminal inclination. This Parenting style is a complete opposite to Authoritarian, yet the participants in this category have criminal inclination.

Child development experts have recognised permissive style to be the worst of all styles. There is no monitoring or regulation of behaviour. These children have worst self-control and have a habit of getting what they want and how they want. They are impulsive and aggressive, since they have never been trained to control their urges. They operate by "pleasure principle", they work with instant gratification of their needs. These children are impulsive and short tempered and tend to throw tantrum as an adult as well, since their tantrum is always answered for as a child. When their tantrum is not answered for, hence disappointment, but the problem arises since they do not have experience in disappointment, they don't understand 'no' or how to handle 'disappointment' and it is met with 'surprise' or 'shock'.

Researchers all across the world have agreed in various findings that Authoritative parenting style is the best out of the other styles. Children in this category have proved to be more empathetic, kind and warm. They are more resistant to peer pressure and have respect for people. They form secure attachments and have better relationships. They are confident and indulge in self-regulation or self-control. They have better impulse, and tend to make more rational decisions. They do not take impulsive decisions due to environment pressure.

They view the problem, study the situation, plan on possible solutions, choose the best one applicable and then take action.

The effect of Peers in a young adult's life is not a new field of interest for researchers. The impact and effect of peers on each other have proven to contribute from minor to major life choices and decisions. From career to drugs, substance abuse, relationships, peers have impacted the decisions of a young adult.

However the present study finds no significant contribution of peer pressure on Criminal Propensity of a person. Since Criminal Propensity is not define by a particular act or situation, but traits of personality, this means that a person may commit a deviant activity in a particular situation on influence of peers, but that does not become a part of their personality. This becomes an interesting finding, since researchers and Parents, scientifically and not-scientifically have blamed 'Peers' as the responsible Party for child's deviant behaviour.

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