

TENDENCY TO COMMIT A CRIME AMONG YOUTH WITH BROKEN FAMILY

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Abstract

The research delves into the inclination toward criminal activities among young individuals from broken families in Cateel, Davao Oriental. It examines behavioral, cognitive, and social factors contributing to this tendency. Participants, aged 15 to 29, were purposefully chosen from such families in Cateel, Davao Oriental, a total of 52 individuals. The study aimed to understand their upbringing and inclinations toward crime, utilizing a questionnaire adapted from a previous study. Most respondents are in the 21 to 25-year-old range, and the gender distribution is nearly balanced, with males making up 51.92% of the sample and females 48.08%. The data indicates a low level of criminal tendency for behavioral, cognitive, and social reasons, with an overall mean score of 3.53. Additionally, there is no significant difference in variances between and within age and gender groups across the factors of behavior, cognition, and social interactions, with a p-value of less than 0.05. The findings, which show no significant difference in the tendency to commit a crime among youths across different ages and genders, suggest that crime prevention programs can be designed to be universally inclusive.

Keywords: *tendency to commit crimes, broken family, behavioral factor, cognitive factor, and social factor*

1. INTRODUCTION

The incidence of crime among the youth in the Philippines, particularly those from broken families, presents a significant societal concern (Jacobsen & Zaatut, 2022). Extensive research has underscored the correlation between broken family structures and the propensity of adolescents to engage in delinquent behavior (Sillekens & Notten, 2020; Dallas et al., 2021). Disrupted familial relationships, diminished parental supervision, and exposure to familial conflict contribute to heightened delinquency rates among youth (Hoffmann et al., 2020; Onsando et al., 2021). Moreover, socioeconomic disadvantage further exacerbates the risk, pushing adolescents towards criminality as a coping mechanism (Lei & Beach, 2020; MacDonald et al., 2020).

Youth delinquency significantly impacts society by increasing crime rates, especially among adolescents from disrupted family environments, which leads to a range of criminal behaviors from minor infractions to serious crimes, thereby heightening community insecurity and straining relations (Childs et al., 2022; Jacobsen & Zaatut, 2022; Dallas et al., 2021; Buehler, 2020; Lee et al., 2020). The economic costs are substantial, with delinquency driving up expenditures on law enforcement, judicial processes, and correctional facilities, while economic strain from broken homes exacerbates delinquent behavior, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and crime (Lei & Beach, 2020; MacDonald et al., 2020). Delinquency can also be transmitted across generations, with adolescents who engage in criminal activities likely to face unstable employment, substance abuse, and continued criminal behavior in adulthood, thereby failing to provide stable environments for their children and perpetuating social disadvantage (Farrington, 2021; Saladino et al., 2021; Bezin et al., 2022).

Addressing the complex interplay of familial, social, economic, and psychological factors influencing youth delinquency requires comprehensive and multifaceted approaches. Efforts must focus on supporting at-risk families, enhancing parental relationships, and offering resources for youth to develop positive behaviors (Sumari et al., 2021; Rehman Ganie et al., 2022). Interventions should be tailored to address the specific needs of different age groups and genders, recognizing the unique challenges faced by adolescents from broken families (Greig & Flood, 2024; Pierce & Jones, 2022). Thus, The impact of youth delinquency on society underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions and support systems. By understanding and addressing the root causes of delinquent behavior, particularly in the context of broken families, society can work towards mitigating the adverse effects and promoting positive developmental outcomes for vulnerable youth.

The necessity to conduct a study on the tendency to commit crimes among youth from broken families in Cateel, Davao Oriental, arises from the pressing need to address the escalating rates of delinquency among adolescents in the region (Childs et al., 2022; Rehman & Ramzan, 2023). Thus, this study aimed to measure the tendency to commit crimes among youth with broken families in Cateel, Davao Oriental. The findings of this research will be invaluable to governmental

authorities, providing them with crucial insights to formulate targeted interventions aimed at deterring youth from engaging in criminal activities.

2.METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between the identified variables. By utilizing quantitative methods, this research aims to explore the intricate connections between broken family structures and youth delinquency. Through rigorous data analysis and statistical techniques, the study seeks to uncover patterns and associations between family dynamics and criminal tendencies among youth.

2.2 Research Procedure

From the conception of the study. First, researcher sought ethical clearance from the relevant institutional review board or ethics committee to ensure the research adheres to established ethical guidelines and standards. Second, The Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) in Cateel granted permission to access the list of youth from broken families residing. Third, Seeking Permission to Conduct the Study upon identifying potential participants, the researchers approached the respondents to seek their informed consent and willingness to participate. Fourth, Administration and Distribution of the Questionnaires upon the approval from the relevant authorities, the researchers administered and distributed the questionnaires to the selected respondents. Lastly, Retrieval of the Questionnaires upon completing the data collection phase, the questionnaires were retrieved from the respondents. The collected data were subjected to rigorous analysis, tabulation, and interpretation with the assistance of a qualified statistician.

3.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 2 displays the breakdown and overview of the demographic composition of 52 youth with broken families as the study's respondents, categorized by age and gender.

Table 2. Profile of respondents

Age Interval	Frequency	Percentage
20 years old and below	11	21.15
21 to 25 years old	27	51.92
26 years old and above	14	26.92
Total	52	100.00
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	27	51.92
Female	25	48.08
Total	52	100.00

Table 2 shows that most respondents were 21 to 25 years old, with a percentage of 51.92. Also, there is a small gap between the total of female and male respondents, 51.92% for males and 48.08% for females. The age and gender distribution can impact the representativeness of the results. Given that over half of the respondents are in the 21-25 age brackets, the findings might be more reflective of the opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of this age group. The slight predominance of males could introduce a minor bias, although the nearly equal distribution mitigates significant concerns.

On the other hand, this suggests that this age group is mainly engaged or targeted in the study, possibly due to their transition into adulthood, which Kessler and Reinecke (2021) describe as "emerging adulthood," characterized by exploration and instability. The gender distribution in the survey is perfectly balanced, with male and female respondents constituting 50% of the sample each. Achieving this gender balance is crucial for minimizing gender bias and ensuring that the survey results reflect both genders equally (Weber et al., 2021). Gender-balanced samples help capture diverse perspectives and avoid gender-specific biases in data interpretation. This equal representation ensures that the findings can be generalized across both genders, which is essential for studies aiming at broad applicability (Jarosz et al., 2024).

3.2 Level of Tendency to Commit a Crime among Youth with Broken Family

Table 3 presents the level of a tendency to commit a crime due to behavioral reasons. A mean score of 3.75 indicates a low stance towards committing crimes based on behavioral reasons among the surveyed youth.

Table 3. Level of tendency to commit a crime due to behavioral reason

No.	Description	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1	Pleases when hurting someone	3.31	1.15	Neutral Tendency
2	Unhappy family life leads to committing crimes.	3.79	0.96	Low Tendency
3	Observe the inheritance of criminal tendencies from forefathers.	4.15	0.72	Low Tendency
	Average	3.75	0.70	Low Tendency

However, these contradicted the other points of view of different scholars. These findings align with existing literature, emphasizing family dynamics' significant influence on youth delinquency. Studies have shown that adverse family environments characterized by unhappiness, conflict, and broken familial relationships can contribute to heightened delinquent behaviors among adolescents (Onsando et al., 2021; Childs et al., 2022). Moreover, perceptions of inheriting criminal tendencies from forefathers may further exacerbate these inclinations, as suggested by behavioral genetic studies (Boisvert et al., 2012; Reingle et al., 2011).

This underscores the importance of understanding behavioral reasons underlying youth delinquency within the context of broken families. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive intervention strategies that support families, strengthen parental relationships, and provide resources for at-risk youth, as advocated by previous research (Sumari et al., 2021; Rehman Ganie et al., 2022; Mlay & Mpetta, 2023). Further research is needed to delve deeper into the nuanced mechanisms driving criminal tendencies among youth with broken family backgrounds, considering factors such as gender, age, and cultural context (Chiang et al., 2020; Pierce & Jones, 2022).

Table 4 emphasizes respondents' low tendency level, with an overall mean of 4.24. This indicates that respondents strongly adhere to legal and ethical standards, are highly principled, and are unlikely to engage in criminal activities.

Table 4. Level of tendency to commit a crime due to cognitive reason

No	Description	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1	Stress leads to committing crimes.	4.25	0.56	Very Low Tendency
2	Low moral values lead to criminal behavior.	4.33	0.62	Very Low Tendency
3	Revenge is the only way to settle disputes.	4.15	0.64	Low Tendency
4	Internalization of family criminal values leads to criminal tendencies.	4.21	0.72	Very Low Tendency
	Average	4.24	0.37	Very Low Tendency

The overall very low tendency level suggests that while cognitive factors play a role in influencing criminal behavior among youth from broken families, they may not be the primary drivers. As highlighted in the literature, it is crucial to interpret these findings in conjunction with other factors, such as family dynamics, social influences, and socioeconomic status. Understanding the complex interplay of these factors is essential for developing targeted intervention strategies to prevent delinquency and promote positive outcomes for vulnerable youth (Farrington, 2021; Saladino et al., 2021; Bezin et al., 2022). While the overall tendency level is low, it is essential to recognize the multifaceted nature of criminal behavior and address underlying societal challenges through evidence-based interventions and support systems (Sumari et al., 2021; Rehman Ganie et al., 2022; Mlay & Mpetta, 2023).

These findings are consistent with existing literature, underscoring the significance of cognitive processes in shaping individuals' decisions and attitudes toward criminal behavior. Rational Choice Theory, for example, posits that individuals weigh the costs and benefits of criminal acts based on their perceived rewards and risks (Zhao et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2022). Moreover, individuals' beliefs about the legitimacy of authority, moral values, and self-efficacy influence their likelihood of criminal behavior (Rottweiler & Gill, 2022; Schreurs et al., n.d.).

Table 5 provides insight into the criminal tendency among youth from broken families attributed to social factors. The data indicates a predominantly very low tendency level across various indicators, with mean scores ranging from 4.24.

Table 5. Level of tendency to commit a crime due to social reason

No	Description	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1	Inefficient and poor governance is responsible for criminal behavior.	4.15	0.64	Low Tendency
2	Family caused for commitment reason in criminal behavior.	4.35	0.68	Very Low Tendency
3	Any land disputes lead to criminal behavior.	4.27	0.66	Very Low Tendency
4	Broken family leads to criminal behavior.	4.19	0.63	Low Tendency
	Average	4.24	0.42	Very Low Tendency

These findings suggest that social influences exert a relatively minimal impact on criminal behavior among youth with broken family backgrounds (Farrington, 2021; Saladino et al., 2021; Bezin et al., 2022). Responses indicating the influence of peer relationships, community support, and family bonds consistently reflect low tendencies toward criminal activities (Farrington, 2021; Saladino et al., 2021; Bezin et al., 2022). This aligns with established theories such as Social Disorganization Theory and Differential Association Theory, which highlight the role of social ties and peer associations in shaping adolescent behavior (Trucco, 2020; Magidson & Kidd, 2021; Errol et al., 2021; Opoku-Ware et al., 2022). While social factors contribute to the overall understanding of youth delinquency, the data suggests that other factors, such as family dynamics and cognitive processes, may play more significant roles in influencing criminal behavior among youth from broken families (Farrington, 2021; Saladino et al., 2021; Bezin et al., 2022).

Understanding the multifaceted nature of youth delinquency within broken families is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems (Farrington, 2021; Saladino et al., 2021; Bezin et al., 2022). While the data indicates a low criminal tendency due to social reasons, addressing underlying societal challenges and bolstering social support systems remain essential (Farrington, 2021; Saladino et al., 2021; Bezin et al., 2022). Strengthening family bonds, providing positive role models, and fostering community cohesion can mitigate the risk factors associated with youth delinquency and promote positive developmental outcomes (Farrington, 2021; Saladino et al., 2021; Bezin et al., 2022). Further research is needed to explore the nuanced mechanisms underlying social influences on youth delinquency and tailor interventions accordingly, considering the complex interplay of familial, social, and psychological factors (Trucco, 2020; Magidson & Kidd, 2021; Errol et al., 2021; Opoku-Ware et al., 2022).

Table 6 offers an insight into the criminal tendency among youth from broken families, covering behavioral, cognitive, and social reasons. The data portrays a low criminal tendency across behavioral, cognitive, and social reasons, with an overall mean score of 4.08. This finding suggests that youth with broken family backgrounds exhibit minimal inclination towards criminal behavior, irrespective of the underlying reasons.

Table 6. Summary on the level of tendency to commit a crime

No.	Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
A	Behavioral Reason	3.75	0.70	Low Tendency
B	Cognitive Reason	4.24	0.37	Very Low Tendency
C	Social Reason	4.24	0.42	Very Low Tendency
	Overall	4.08	0.32	Low Tendency

Behavioral, cognitive, and social factors each play a role in shaping individuals' propensity towards criminal activities (Shoemaker, 2018; Costello & Laub, 2020; Walters, 2022; Zhao et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2022; Rottweiler & Gill, 2022; Schreurs et al., n.d.; Trucco, 2020; Magidson & Kidd, 2021; Errol et al., 2021; Opoku-Ware et al., 2022). However, the data suggests that these influences collectively contribute to a low overall criminal tendency among youth with broken family backgrounds. This aligns with previous research emphasizing the multifaceted nature of youth

delinquency and the complex interplay of familial, social, and psychological factors (Farrington, 2021; Saladino et al., 2021; Bezin et al., 2022).

While the data indicates a low overall tendency towards criminal behavior, addressing underlying societal challenges and bolstering support systems remains essential (Farrington, 2021; Saladino et al., 2021; Bezin et al., 2022). Strengthening family relationships, providing positive influences, and fostering community support can further mitigate the risk factors associated with youth delinquency (Farrington, 2021; Saladino et al., 2021; Bezin et al., 2022). Further research is warranted to delve deeper into the specific mechanisms underlying criminal tendency among youth with broken family backgrounds, considering the intricate interactions between various contributing factors.

3.3 Comparison of Tendency to Commit a Crime

Table 7 presents the ANOVA results comparing respondents' mean tendency to commit a crime across different age levels, considering behavioral, cognitive, and social reasons.

Table 7. ANOVA result on the mean comparison of a tendency to commit a crime in terms of the age level of respondents

Factors		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
A. Behavioral Reason	Between Groups	0.389	2	0.194	0.386	0.682	Do not differ significantly
	Within Groups	24.694	49	0.504			
	Total	25.083	51				
B. Cognitive Reason	Between Groups	0.004	2	0.002	0.015	0.985	Do not differ significantly
	Within Groups	6.798	49	0.139			
	Total	6.802	51				
C. Social Reason	Between Groups	0.004	2	0.002	0.012	0.988	Do not differ significantly
	Within Groups	8.991	49	0.183			
	Total	8.995	51				
Overall Tendency to Commit Crime	Between Groups	0.052	2	0.026	0.245	0.784	Do not differ significantly
	Within Groups	5.202	49	0.106			
	Total	5.254	51				

The analysis shows no significant differences in variances between and within age groups for any of these factors, with p-values exceeding the 0.05 threshold. Specifically, the p-values for behavioral (0.682), cognitive (0.985), and social (0.988) reasons, as well as the overall tendency to commit crime (0.784), indicated that age was not a significant factor in criminal tendencies among youth from broken families. These findings suggested that interventions should focus on other factors beyond age to address criminal behaviors effectively in this demographic.

These findings suggest that age does not significantly influence the likelihood of criminal behavior among individuals from broken families when considering behavioral, cognitive, and social aspects (Abhishek & Balamurugan,

2024). This lack of age-related variance indicates that interventions aimed at reducing criminal tendencies in youth from broken families may need to focus more on other underlying factors rather than age-specific approaches (Park, 2019).

Moreover, these results underscore the importance of a holistic approach in preventive and remedial programs (Block et al., 2015). Given that the propensity to commit crime is not significantly affected by age, social welfare programs should emphasize consistent support across all age groups, tailoring interventions to individual needs rather than age categories (Ng & Weisz, 2016). This might include comprehensive counseling, community support initiatives, and educational programs to enhance social and cognitive skills (Lewallen et al., 2015).

On the other hand, Table 8 reveals no significant difference in the tendency to commit a crime between the genders of respondents, with a p-value above 0.05.

Table 8. T-test results on the mean comparison of a tendency to commit a crime in terms of the gender of respondents

Factors	t-test for Equality of Means			Interpretation
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
A. Behavioral Reason	-1.433	50	0.158	Do not differ significantly
B. Cognitive Reason	-1.630	50	0.109	Do not differ significantly
C. Social Reason	-0.651	50	0.518	Do not differ significantly
Overall Tendency to Commit Crime	-1.981	50	0.053	Do not differ significantly

This finding aligns with existing literature suggesting that gender may not be a critical determinant of criminal behavior among youth (Caruso, 2017; Papalia et al., 2018). Studies have shown that while there are differences in the types and contexts of crimes committed by different genders, the underlying factors contributing to criminal behavior are often similar across genders (Kruttschnitt, 2016).

Factors such as socioeconomic status, family environment, peer influence, and educational opportunities tend to be more influential in shaping criminal tendencies than gender alone (Cicerali & Cicerali, 2018). Consequently, these results support the notion that interventions to prevent youth crime should focus on these broader, more impactful factors rather than solely on gender-based approaches (Casey et al., 2018; Crooks et al., 2019). This holistic perspective can help develop more effective crime prevention and rehabilitation strategies that cater to youth's individual needs, irrespective of gender.

3.4 Implication to Social Justice among Youths

The study results indicate a low tendency to commit a crime across cognitive and social factors among youths with a low stance on behavioral factors, which have significant implications for social justice. These findings suggest that preventive measures and educational programs to reduce youth crime can be effective when enhancing cognitive understanding and social skills. By fostering a solid moral foundation and positive social interactions, youths are less likely to engage in criminal activities. This aligns with the principles of social justice, which emphasize the importance of creating equitable opportunities for all individuals to thrive within their communities (Catalano et al., 2015; Gottfredson et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the low tendency in the behavioral factor highlights an area that requires more targeted interventions. Social justice initiatives must address the underlying behavioral tendencies that could lead to criminal behavior. This could involve implementing programs that promote positive behavior reinforcement, conflict resolution skills, and emotional regulation (Gottfredson et al., 2015). Addressing these behavioral aspects, social justice efforts can help youths develop the resilience and self-control needed to avoid criminal activities, thereby contributing to safer and more inclusive communities (Lipsey et al., 2016).

The study found no significant difference in the tendency to commit a crime when respondents were grouped by gender and age, underscoring the importance of universal approaches to crime prevention. Social justice demands that all youths, regardless of their demographic characteristics, have access to the same resources and support systems. This means that crime prevention programs should not be gender or age-specific but rather inclusive and comprehensive, ensuring that every youth has an equal opportunity to benefit from these initiatives (Sherman et al., 2017).

Moreover, the very low tendency to commit a crime due to cognitive and social factors suggests that current educational and social policies might be somewhat effective. However, social justice advocates should push for continuous improvement and expansion of these policies to cover broader aspects of youth development (Farrington et al., 2016). This includes investing in quality education, mentorship programs, and community engagement activities that strengthen youths' cognitive and social capabilities. By doing so, society can ensure that all young individuals have the knowledge and social skills necessary to lead law-abiding lives (Catalano et al., 2015).

Lastly, these findings reinforce the need for a multifaceted approach to crime prevention that integrates cognitive, social, and behavioral strategies. Social justice is not just about addressing immediate needs but also about creating sustainable systems that support long-term positive outcomes for youths. By developing comprehensive programs that address all three factors, policymakers, and social justice, advocates can create a more just and equitable society where youths are empowered to make positive choices and contribute meaningfully to their communities (Hawkins et al., 2016).

4.CONCLUSION

This study arrived at the following conclusions that the largest group of respondents falls within the 21- to 25-year-old range, and the gender distribution in the survey is almost balanced, with male respondents constituting 51.92% of the sample while female respondents had 48.08%. The data portrays a low criminal tendency across behavioral, cognitive, and social reasons, with an overall mean score of 3.53. There is no significant difference in variances between and within age and gender groups across the mentioned factors: behavioral, cognitive, and social, with a p-value of less than 0.05.

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