



Investigate the influence of multiple elements on the criminal behavior of young people in Pakistan

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Abstract

One of Pakistan's biggest issue is criminality. Increasing crime rates nationwide are starting to raise serious concerns. It's widely recognized that the underprivileged section of society experiences poor social, psychological, physical, and economic situations, which are linked to criminal behavior. The main causes of young offenders in Pakistan are hunger, joblessness, and bribery. The primary goal of the current study was to look into the elements influencing young people's criminal behavior in Pakistan particularly in two metropolitan cities, Rawalpindi and Lahore. The current study concluded that highest 27% of the individuals claimed unemployment and 24% considered poverty was the primary reason of crime. 19.2% of the participants said that social media, 15.4% peer pressure, 8.0% education deficiency, and 6.4% political insecurity contributes to crime. The elements unemployment (27%) and poverty (24%) highly related to crime. Alongside this, the bivariate analysis indicated that unemployment had a significant effect on the criminal behavior of the young people with the chi-square value of (143.031) and p-value (0.017), and poverty with the chi-square value of (125.021) and p-value (0.005). In addition, the multiple linear regression showed the strong correlation between crime and unemployment, poverty, peer pressure, and social media among young people with $p \leq 0.05$ and $R^2 = 0.735$. Therefore, the study recommended that the government and non-governmental organizations, and other groups serving the general public should start adult empowerment initiatives that lead to the reduction of crimes among young people.

1. Introduction

Whenever an offense is specifically stated in the law, it usually carries time in prison or other punishments, based on the situation. A crime is an action that is punishable by law. The most common crimes are driving under the influence of alcohol, sexual assault, vandalism, and robberies. Individuals who have participated in this type of unlawful activity are considered offenders (John, 2020). As a number of prominent researchers in criminology have recently acknowledged, observing both criminality-specific actions and the fundamental traits of criminals is crucial to comprehending crime. Violence and depression are caused by a number of reasons, all of whom are associated with criminal behavior (Omogho, 2016).

Since criminal activity harms other people, government forbids it. Rather than penalize, government officials have decided to conduct a thorough investigation into irregularities in order to ascertain the scope of the issue and its implications for the law. A majority of people in Asian countries like Pakistan live under the poverty limit, and as a result, a large number of youngsters are unemployed (Altindag, 2012). All societal young people serve as its most important constituents and, given the opportunity, can actively work for its betterment. On the other hand, society can be jeopardized if the children participate in criminal behavior or exhibit strange opinions. Children are, in particular, a reliable reflection of a country's capacity for self-



reproduction and self-maintenance (Goldstone, 2001). Young people are seen as equally the backbone and representative of society. Every person who comes under the age of fifteen to thirty is defined as "youth" by the United Nations (Nafziger & Auvinen, 2002).

Migration and exclusions in Pakistan are impacted by criminality. Offenders across all economic categories, including the poorest to the richest, may be found in Pakistan, and they all aim to get richer via illegal means. According to published research, criminals, political groups, law enforcement, and Pakistani government employees functioning as representatives of the judiciary committed a significant number of crimes. In comparison to other nations, Pakistan's levels of social, economic, and technological progress are terrible (Anderson et al., 2003). People frequently lose faith in the future, which is correlated with rising rates of criminal activity between city wealthy individuals, joblessness, and youth disengagement from politics. The understanding that young individuals are more susceptible to social exclusion and an absence of peer encouragement, which raises the possibility that they may act violently, seems to be the motivation for this (Butcher et al., 2015).

Amongst other factors, criminal conduct is an organized procedure that emerges across our lifetimes and entails complex relationships among the individual, society, and the surroundings. Due to our distinct psychological, emotional, and physical characteristics, we have a significant influence on our actions and bodily functions, along with on our interactions with other individuals, organizations, and communities and our external surroundings (Jua, 2003). Unemployment and limited chances for advancement can lead to emotions of unhappiness and embarrassment among young individuals. Conflicts among youth and the unemployed have reportedly increased as a result of the involvement of young people in illegal activities like drug dealing, terrorist organizations, and various other crimes that might be profitable (Pratt et al., 2010). Previous studies, such as Effiom's (2021) observed the relationship between youth criminal behavior and poverty in Akpabuyo, Cross River State. However, Omogho (2020) investigated at the way criminal conduct in Abraka, Delta state, was impacted by influence from peers. These investigations, nevertheless, were conducted across a number of disciplines. Moreover, other research studies investigated the impacts of drug use and abuse between youth in Borno State, Nigeria (Herrenkohl, 2017; Abdullah et al. 2014). Family characteristics include insufficient parenting skills, large family units, marital discord, child maltreatment, and uncooperative parents are linked to an increased risk of young offenders. Mednick (2018) found that violent conduct was associated with difficulties during pregnancy and delivery, but not with nonviolent criminal behavior. Furthermore, research has indicated that children whose mothers were heavy smokers during their pregnancies were more probable to have behavioral issues, including behavioral disorders. However, all of these investigations had shortcomings that necessitate further research.

In addition to this, youth involvement in crime has always been an issue because of the many factors that encourage young people to act criminally. However, several have engaged in unlawful behavior in spite of efforts to direct their energies toward constructive and morally respectable activities. It has recently come to knowledge that certain crimes, but not all of them, involve youngsters. This may be a result of factors influencing Pakistani adolescent criminal behavior. Consequently, it is necessary to examine the elements influencing youth that led to criminal activity. Young people belong to a variety of social groupings, thus it's critical to investigate those who commit crimes. Youth engagement with unlawful activities is common in Punjab, Pakistan. Abuse of drugs and alcohol, vandalism and theft, sexual assault, prostitution, violent burglary, and illicit drug trade are among the most common crimes. The study was



conducted with this background in mind. Therefore, the primary goal of the current study was to look into the elements, particularly unemployment and poverty that are influencing young people's criminal behavior, in Rawalpindi and Lahore, Pakistan.

2. Methodology

A method of quantitative analysis was selected in this study. A survey that was cross-sectional in the form of interview was used to collect primary data. Data were gathered using a multiple-stage method of random sampling (Agresti & Finlay, 2008).

2.1. Participants collection

There are a total of 36 districts in the entire state of Punjab. The main area of the study was west Punjab and the population of the young people was selected from it. Two districts from west Punjab, Rawalpindi and Lahore, were chosen at random for the initial phase. District jails Adyala (Rawalpindi) and Kot lakhpat (Lahore) were specifically chosen for the second phase. A purposeful sample size of 500 people was selected in the third phase. The sample size was estimated using the Fitzgibbon table (Fitzgibbon & Morris, 1987).

2.2. Statistical analysis

A timeline for interviews was made in accordance with the research goals of the study, and SPSS 25 edition was employed to analyze the data that were gathered. In the present study, both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used. The socioeconomic attributes of the peoples who were took part in research was defined using descriptive statistics (percentage and frequency distribution). The effect of unemployment and poverty was analyzed by chi-square test. The multivariate regression analysis was used to check the correlation between the different variables that causes crime.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Socioeconomic elements of young people

According to **Table 1**, the majority of the young people 30% belonged to the 15–20 age group, and 55.0% to the 21–26 age group. The remaining 15.0% of youths belonged to the 27–32 age range. The survey calculated that 75.5 percent of participants were married, 15.5 percent were single, and 9% were divorced. Beside this, 27.24 percent of responders were primary pass and 39.14 percent were middle pass. Conversely, 7.50% of those surveyed illiteracy. In addition, 7.12% of respondents had matriculation, 4.0 % had intermediate education, and 15.0% had graduation or above. The participants' monthly income was also displayed in the results. Table 1 shows that 15.0% of participants have a family income of up to Rs. 20,000, 7.0% have a monthly income between Rs. 20,000 and Rs. 25,000, and 17.0% have a monthly income between Rs. 25,001 and Rs. 30,000. Other than this, 29% of participants reported that their household income ranged from Rs. 30,001 to Rs. 35,000 each month, and 20% of individuals reported that their household income ranged from Rs. 35,001 to Rs. 40,000 per month. Lastly, 12% of participants reported making more than Rs. 40,000 each month.

These findings are consistent with those of Jua (2003), who found that money had a significant influence on the prevalence of violent crime in various nations. The relationship is proven to be causative since poverty raises the rate of crime. Rising crime rates were significantly impacted by increases in wealth inequality. The current study also corresponds with the findings of Mednick (2018), who discovered that poor parenting and breakdowns in marriage were main causes of young people's increased risk of criminality.

Table 1: The socioeconomic attributes of the young people

Attributes	Percentage	Frequency
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Marital status		
Divorced	9.0	55
Married	75.5	335
Unmarried	15.5	110
Age		
15-20	30.0	170
21-26	55.0	210
27-32	15.0	120
Educational status		
Graduation or above	15.0	70
Intermediate	4.0	30
Matric	7.12	55
Middle	39.14	185
Primary	27.24	105
Illiterate	7.50	55
Income in rupees (PK)		
Up to 20,000	15.0	35
20,001 – 25,000	7.0	30
25,001 – 30,000	17.0	75
30,001 – 35,000	29.0	205
35,001 – 40,000	20.0	110
40,000 above	12.0	45
Total	100	500

3.2. Elements promoting criminal behavior between young people

The results of the various elements that influenced the criminal behavior of young people is shown in Table 2, it reveals that 27% of the participants indicated that unemployment was the primary cause of crimes, whereas 24.0% of individuals considered poverty, and 6.4% of participants believed that political insecurity was the cause of crimes. Additionally, 19.2% of the participants said that social media is the main factor contributing to crime. Ultimately, 8.0% of the participants cited a lack of education, and 15% said that peer pressure was the cause of crimes.

Table 2: Elements influencing criminal behavior between young people

Elements	Percentage	Frequency
Social media	19.2	96
Peer pressure	15.4	100
Poverty	24.0	110
Unemployment	27.0	125
Political Insecurity	6.4	45
Education deficiency	8.0	24
Total	100	500

These results correspond to the findings of Idrees et al. (2015) that showed a high correlation between criminal activity and unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy. Poverty rises in response to rising youth unemployment rates, which encourages criminality. Individuals who experience



social exclusion are more prone to commit crimes. The study found that Pakistan's residents' standards of living were uneven as a result of inequalities in politics and economy. When people were without resources, their moral limits were broken. Also, studies show that poverty has an effect on crime and the criminal justice organization. The lack of resources and money available to the poor makes it more difficult for them to achieve their objectives and realize their desires. The poverty levels in Pakistan are made even more severe by the widening economic inequality in the nation.

Furthermore, poor people find it more difficult to fulfill their goals and ambitions since they have less money and resources at their disposal. The rising economic inequality in Pakistan exacerbates the country's already high levels of poverty. In accordance with systematic reviews of the detrimental effects of media abuse, young people who frequently watch violent programs are more likely to engage in disruptive behaviors, such as criminal acts, mimicry violence with toys, embrace of violent conduct, elevated hatred, and desensitization to aggressive behavior. The study's conclusions indicated a strong correlation between violent media exposure and criminal behavior among teenagers (Idrees et al., 2015). Beside this, several studies revealed that negative use of social media impacted on the mental health of the individuals which lead towards the self-injurious thoughts and behavior like cyber-bullying, social rejection, and suicide (Franklin et al., 2017; Biernesser et al., 2020).

3.3. Relationship of unemployment among young people and criminal behavior

The result of bivariate analysis shown in **Table 3** reported that the unemployment had a significant effect on the criminal behavior of the young people. The correlation between the variables under examination is indicated by the chi-square value of 143.031 at a significance level of 0.017. Also, a substantial positive correlation between young people criminal behavior and unemployment is demonstrated by the gamma 0.376 value at a significance level of 0.023. Our findings are correlated to the findings of Pratt et al., (2010) who concluded that young people who were unemployed and have limited chances for advancement may experience feelings of embarrassment and unhappiness. Tensions between young people and the unemployed have reportedly increased as a result of young people's involvement in illegal activities that offer a financial source, such as drug dealing, terrorist organizations, and other crimes. Persistent joblessness due to the loss of prior employment, which makes the person more likely to commit crimes in society (Saridakis and Spengler, 2012). Mirjat et al. (2017) showed the strong association of unemployment with the young people that committed crimes. Fadaei-Tehrani and Green (2002) also claimed that a decline in unemployment subsequently results in a lower rate of crime, and so on. Consequently, unemployment and crime have an impact on human society (Lin, 2008).

Table 3: Association of unemployment between young people and criminal behavior

Unemployment among young people	Criminal behavior			
	High	Medium	Low	Total
To great extent	37 (9.7%)	42 (8.3%)	6 (1.0%)	85 (19.0%)
To some extent	38 (17.0%)	92 (11.0%)	5 (1.3%)	135 (29.3%)
Not at all	31 (2.9%)	9 (1.9%)	240 (46.9%)	280 (51.7%)
Total	106 (29.6%)	143 (21.2%)	251 (49.2%)	500 (100%)
Test	Value	DF	P value	
Chi-square	143.031	4	0.017*	
Gamma	0.376	-	0.023*	



In the meantime, the evaluation of the regions' economic conditions and state of health is the main emphasis of unemployment (Collins, 1991). A crime that is regarded as a serious issue that is associated with illegal activities or procedures that have a negative impact on the economy (Beker, 1965). Even so, someone commits a crime because they believe it will be more useful than spending their time on legal pursuits. According to Nagin and Waldfogel (1995), people who have experienced incarceration or punishment and find it difficult to find employment contribute to a rise in joblessness. Aside from this, the research showed that unemployment and crime were the bases of the association (Freeman, 1996). Furthermore, unemployment is a particular problem for middle-class and lower-class individuals. When these people are unable to find employment in society, they turn to criminal activity as a means of making money and resolving societal issues in order to survive. Youth unemployment promotes misbelief and influences youth's minds, making them more prone to commit crimes and behave criminally in their communities and across the nation. Therefore, the current study proved the effect of unemployment on criminal behavior of young people.

3.4. Connection of poverty among young people and criminal behavior

Table 4 illustrates how poverty affects young people's criminal behavior. It cleared that poverty had a major impact on young people's criminal behavior. The results indicated a substantial correlation between the criminal behavior and poverty under examination, with the chi-square value of 125.021 at a significance level of 0.005 and the gamma value of 0.216 at 0.016 significance level. It implies that criminal activity among young people is a function of the general state of poverty. These results correlate to the earlier findings of several researchers who reported that poverty is a sign of crime's influence, since individuals become weaker and commit crimes in society (Lewontin, 2000; Laub and Sampson, 2003). Assault, violence, and murder are among the crimes that are associated with poverty (Kelly, 2000). Another study reported by Mirjat et al. (2017) demonstrated the link between unemployment, poverty, and crime. They concluded that these factors are important contributors to beggary in the city of Hyderabad, Pakistan.

Table 4: Relationship of poverty between young people and criminal behavior

Poverty among young people	Criminal behavior			
	High	Medium	Low	Total
To great extent	30 (8.7%)	62 (9.3%)	3 (2.0%)	95 (20.0%)
To some extent	32 (13.0%)	99 (5.0%)	4 (1.5%)	175 (19.5%)
Not at all	28 (4.9%)	7 (1.9%)	195 (53.7%)	230 (60.5%)
Total	90 (26.6%)	168 (16.2%)	202 (57.2%)	500 (100%)
Test	Value	DF	P value	
Chi-square	125.021	4	0.005*	
Gamma	0.216	-	0.016*	

In addition to this, poverty, which is a state of existence in which people fall short of the bare minimum, is a socioeconomic problem that affects society both locally and globally. As a result, various strategies and procedures aim to eradicate it from human civilization (Wenger, 2007). According to Haralambos and Holborn (2000), poverty is the inability of an individual to get the bare needs for survival. Carr and Sloan (2003) claim that poverty pushes people into a social position where they are incapable to obtain necessities such as employment, schooling, and accessibility to healthcare for prevalent illnesses, among other things. Poverty is a major cause of dissatisfaction and helplessness in human civilization, which leads to crime. Also, there are other



elements including societal failure, family stress, upheaval, ongoing conflict, and the difficulties of sustaining and sustaining society. The main factor contributing to criminality was poverty (Sampson and Laub, 2003). Hence, the current study also reported the strong relation of poverty with crime.

3.5. Relationship of crime with other elements by multiple linear regression

The multiple linear regression **Table 5** showed strong correlation between crime and unemployment, poverty, peer pressure, and social media among young people. All variables significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) impacted on the criminal behavior of the young people with $R^2 = 0.735$. This study correlates with the observation of earlier researchers who found that young men's financial and social standing had an impact on their likelihood to take part in a crime. The study concluded that there has a direct correlation between the rise in youth dissatisfaction and the decline in frustration. Beside this, Moser & Rodgers (2005), observed a clear link between criminal activity and a person's inability to access basic amenities, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Younger men more likely to committed different kinds of crimes due to pervasive and severe inequality. Humphreys & Weinstein (2008) and Flynn & Rudolph (2011) showed peer pressure significantly influenced on the criminal behavior of young people who had more inclined by social and electronic media. The study reported by Arshad, (2018) also concluded the strong relationship of peer pressure and crimes. Other than this, Esiri (2016) discovered that aspects of peer pressure had an impact on criminal behavior in teenagers during his investigation into how peer pressure affects criminal behavior.

To elaborate further, there are various crimes that are related to social media including cyberbullying, identify theft, email phishing, obscene content, malware, and others. Social media, one of the most effective and potent instruments, has all of a sudden turned into a shelter for criminals. Over the past ten years, as the number of people using the internet has increased, so too have cybercrimes. Stated differently, a cybercrime is any illegal activity that involves a computer or computer network. Malware and unauthorized access to our personal data on social networking and retail websites are just two of the many ways hackers could harm our online identities. In order to disseminate false information about someone or to get our credit card information, which is easily accessible on e-commerce sites, and you could also create a fake social media profile. Two further forms of violence are assaults on minors and violence motivated by gender (Thukral, & Kainya, 2022). Also, social media had created the self-injurious thoughts that lead to suicide and other criminal behavior (Marciano, Schulz, & Camerini, 2020).

Table 5: Analysis of multiple linear regression

Independent variable	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients (β_i)	$t_{cal.}$	P-Value
	b_i	Std. error			
(Constant)	0.631	0.302	-	1.062	0.031*
Unemployment X_1	0.242	0.042	0.233	4.520	0.001**
Peer pressure X_2	0.217	0.087	0.141	3.198	0.000**
Social media X_3	0.228	0.091	0.261	3.217	0.004**
Poverty X_4	0.265	0.052	0.220	4.432	0.007*
$R^2 = 0.735$, $F = 121.502$, $P\text{-value} \leq 0.05$, ** = Highly significant, * = significant					



Moreover, according to Urdang (2012), crime is a societal issue in human civilization that arises from extreme poverty. Youths living in poverty experience annoyance, anxiety, and loneliness. Other factors, such as neglect by parents, also contribute to the development of criminal behavior in their offspring. If the person in question continues to live in poverty, there's a chance that they will consider committing a crime because they have no other means of support. Nonetheless, there is a strong positive correlation between poverty and criminal activity (Danziger & Haveman 2001). One social and economic problem that contributes to people turning to crime in a community is unemployment. Nonetheless, the connection between poverty and unemployment contributes to crime in human communities (Dekeseredy et al., 2003). Therefore, from the above discussion it is cleared that the unemployment, poverty, social media, and peer pressure considerably affected the criminal behavior of the young people.

Conclusion

The current study found that crime was increasing over time, especially among young people, and that this tendency was likely to continue. There are variety of risk factors interfere with the lives of young people, rather than a single factor being the cause of youth criminality. According to the results of this study it had confirmed that unemployment and poverty are the major factors other than social media, peer pressure, that contribute to crime. This research suggests that if inequality is eradicated and the government gives young people access to employment opportunities, the rate of youth crime would go down.

Conflict of Interest

The authors claim no conflict of interest.

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