

Anomie Theory And Juvenile Delinquency

Abstract

There has always been an increase in cases of crimes among children under the age of 18 years. This trend led to more discussions, which include the causes and impacts it has in society. Psychologists and other scholars were involved in the development of theories that described how children ended up breaking the law. One of them is Robert Merton; he introduced the Anomie theory in explaining that social differences make children develop behaviors that entail at breaking the law. The theory elaborates that things such as schools, inequalities, drug and substance use, and living standards bring about crimes. The best solution lies with the government, the general society and the families involved. Adequate measures are necessary for preventing consequences which include increased expenditure in both courts and hospitals, and morality in the society. In general, this theory enables us to understand measures need to take for us to deal with increasing crime rates among children and youths.

INTRODUCTION

Juvenile Delinquency is the act of children under the age of 18 participating in activities that are against the law (Hughes et al., 2018). The issue of juvenile delinquency has been of concern due to the increased cases of criminals under the age of 18. This situation has led to psychologists conducting research and developing explanations on why some students behave the way they do. Some of the cases of Juvenile Delinquency include murder. The society has always been the point of focus when it comes to Juvenile Delinquency; this is because children grow in society and adopt behaviors from people around them. If people who are around children are thieves, then they adopt that behavior. In some cases, children have taken up different attitudes towards some people in society. Attitudes are then bound to make them act unlawfully against one another because of what they think is bad. The increase in crime rates among children has raised concerns from the government; this led to the formation of a department to address the issue. In response to the problem of children turning into criminals, psychologists and other scholars have developed theories that help in understanding how it happens. The social disorganization theory, Anomie theory, Subcultural theory, Educational disabilities, Family influence, and Feminist theory are among the theories that scholars have introduced to help in understanding this kind of criminology (Walsh, 2017). This paper shall concentrate on the Anomie theory, the causes, and consequences in the population.

Anomie Theory

A psychologist introduced this theory by the name Robert Merton. We can also call it the Mertonian Anomie theory. The theory elaborates on the existence of crimes that come as a result of social

differences between people (Messner& Rosenfeld, 2017). The society is made up of different classes of people. Economically, we have the rich and the poor; this is the most discussed cause of crimes. Many children tend to steal or rob people because they want to shift to upper classes of people in society, who, in most cases, are the rich. The decision to steal or rob has a basis on the idea that other means of looking for money are so long. The teenagers are the groups of children who face this challenge; this is because they always want to have whatever they need, yet the parents sometimes do not have money (Messner& Rosenfeld, 2017). Teenagers are affected by the adolescent stage which makes them look for the best way of pretending to be richer and decent than others. The feeling of wanting to look beautiful or handsome always drives the decision of adolescent groups; this, therefore, makes them go out stealing or breaking the law as the best shortcut to achieving their demands.

Schools

Children in schools find it hard to cope with the requirements that need them to spend more. Requirement such as school fees is always a challenge to children who come from low-income families; this makes them drop out of school (GROßet al., 2018). As they drop out of school, it becomes even harder for them to get job opportunities. Lack of jobs among the dropouts has led to most of them choosing to force people to give them money. Some of them may end up killing people who do not give them what they want. Others have chosen to steal equipment such as home machinery and sell to raise money for their sustainability.

Living standards

Different people have different living standards; the decision on the use of money or finances depends on what you have (Eriksson &Broidy, 2017). Families that live in areas designated for the poor tend to live a simple life. They do not spend so much to have basic needs; hence, they do not welcome luxuries. On the other hand, rich families tend to spend so much on anything they need. This manner of spending on finances is due to their improved standards of living. The difference is what makes children wish they were on the other side. Those born in families with low living standards always feel like they should be in families with high standards of living. The difference that exists between livings standards of the rich and the poor sometimes lead to jealousy. Adolescents and other children under the age of 18 may feel jealous when the rich go out during weekends and eat in honorable places. This attitude is sometimes acquired from society, and it may lead to hatred. Hatred, therefore, is what drives the poor children into attacking those from rich families. The main intention, in this case, is not to satisfy their needs but to feel better seeing them suffer.

Drug Abuse

Children who live in areas that many families are poor tend to gain access to alcohol and other drugs. The accessibility of drugs and substances makes them drop out of school because of lack of understanding of why they are in school (Bernburg, 2019). Addiction is a common contributor to cases of school dropouts. Constant use of drugs such as tobacco and Marijuana leads to addiction that may end up making children steal. Since victims of drug abuse are unable to buy drugs, they end up robbing people to get money for buying drugs. This situation comes about because many children under the age of 18 are unable to get jobs. Drug and substance use is another example of juvenile delinquency (Bernburg, 2019). Prohibition of drugs such as tobacco and Marijuana for normal use is done by anonymous people. If caught either processing or producing any product of these drugs, one is liable to the consequences that the law permits. In many cases, users of these drugs end up

undergoing the rehabilitation processes as a way to correct their addiction. The use of drugs and other substances may lead to sexual abuse. An example of sexual abuse is rape; both women and men may become victims under different circumstances. The use of drugs may make addicts develop dominance over other sex, hence making them command them into forceful sex. The female gender is the most vulnerable when it comes to sexual abuse between teenagers.

Inequality

Among the problems that many poor people face is inequality in terms of allocation of resources (Eriksson & Brody, 2017). People who live in shanties tend to struggle on different ends as they satisfy their needs. In some cases, there is no accomplishment of public needs such as health care. The government tends to consider the rich and middle-class individuals when it comes to public service. Many people who are poor struggle to live in the regions that are polluted. In some cases, there are no good roads, which make the places inaccessible. When children who live in low-class families experience the kind of environment other citizens go through, they develop attitudes towards them. The attitude is later bound to become hatred, which may lead them into crimes. The feeling that public funds are only utilized by the rich makes them angry at them. Some adolescents end up moving to the regions to rob what they feel belongs to their class. This difference in terms of development is an issue that affects progress even in terms of security.

Consequences

Government

Juvenile delinquency affects many parties, which include the government, families, society and other involved parties. The government always spends so much on the development of correctional centers (Koval, 2019). The increased number of young criminals makes the government spend more funds on the handling of juvenile court cases. Increased expenditure may make the government stretch further by diverting some funds intended for some developments. Prevention of this consequence can be if children are made aware of the problems some behaviors may cause in the operations of the government.

Family

When a child turns into being a criminal, the parent and siblings are among the people affected both psychologically and physically. The absence of their family members makes them feel low and incomplete (Koval, 2019). Criminal behavior sometimes makes the family spend a lot of money on correctional measures. In some cases, the parent may end up losing parenting roles because the child is taken away from him or her by the government. The decision to take a child from the family is an intention of correcting him or her.

Victims of Crime

The victims of crime are among the people whose psychology is affected; some crimes such as rape may make them develop self-denial (Koval, 2019). Low self-esteem is a result of self-denial, and this may cause depression; this condition causes suicidal thoughts in the minds of victims. In some situations, victims are left very sick and require medical care; this makes the families struggle funding medical care. There is a delay in compensation when a person faces crime against him or her.

The Society

The society is another party that faces consequences of juvenile delinquency; the removal of children from society to rehabilitation centers or even jail leads to lesser numbers of people in the society. Societal norms also face a threat when there are more cases of juvenile delinquency (Koval, 2019). Morality is always important in ensuring harmony and the peaceful stay of people in an area. When children adopt crime-related behaviors, it affects morals; hence, things such as insecurity may arise.

Unemployment

In some cases, juvenile delinquency may result in more cases of unemployment; this is because more children who commit crimes may not get an opportunity to work with a company or organization in the future (Koval, 2019). Many people tend to believe that children who have a criminal record may become criminals at any point in life. However, some families may have a chance to solve the problem of criminal history in the juvenile courts without the issue becoming a public matter.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, we need to consider the fact that some groups of people are different from others. The difference that exists between the rich and poor should not be used to make children indulge in robbery and criminal activities. There should be an understanding between the rich and the poor. These requirements call for government involvement; they need to accomplish some roles such as universal development. Health care is among the services that every citizen should get regardless of their social status. The theory helps us understand that the things we do in society affect what children will grow to become. Negativity and attitudes towards one another may create a difference that may result in crimes such as murder and rape. Living standards should not be an excuse for people to develop attitudes against each other. The use of drugs and other substances is a practice that requires interventions from every parent. The government should also enforce all the laws to ensure there is no use of drugs such as Marijuana in regions that the poor people live. The same case should be in the regions that the rich stay. There is a need to understand the consequences that crimes have on the life of victims; they are forced to change their lifestyle because of one or a group of individuals. The effects that crime rates have on society should be considered in developing the best measures to handle juvenile delinquency. We should also ensure children understand the repercussions their behaviors may have on future activities such as working. All parties should always minimize the costs of handling juvenile crime cases by promoting preventive measures even if it costs us more than what we spend in solving cases in courts and treating victims.

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