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Dr. G Bhuvanewari

HOD, Department of
Community Health Nursing,
Saveetha College of Nursing,
Saveetha Institute of Medical
and Technical Sciences,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Bhupathy

P.B.B.Sc. (Nursing), Saveetha
College of Nursing, Saveetha
Institute of Medical and
Technical Sciences, Chennai,
Tamil Nadu, India

Amsalekha

P.B.B.Sc. (Nursing), Saveetha
College of Nursing, Saveetha
Institute of Medical and
Technical Sciences, Chennai,
Tamil Nadu, India

S Suganthi

Clinical Instructor, Saveetha
College of Nursing, Saveetha
Institute of Medical and
Technical Sciences, Chennai,
Tamil Nadu, India

Corresponding Author:

Dr. G Bhuvanewari

HOD, Department of
Community Health Nursing,
Saveetha College of Nursing,
Saveetha Institute of Medical
and Technical Sciences,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Study to assess the knowledge of cause of juvenile delinquency among school children

Dr. G Bhuvanewari, Bhupathy, Amsalekha and S Suganthi

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Abstract

Background: The present study aims to assess the knowledge of the cause of juvenile delinquency among school children selected at Government Schools. **Methods and materials:** A non-experimental descriptive research design was used for the present study. A total of 50 samples were collected using the nonprobability purposive sampling technique. **Results:** The results of the study revealed that there is a significant association between the level of knowledge with selected demographic variables at the level of $p < 0.05$. **Conclusion:** Thus, the present despite that the school children had adequate knowledge on the cause of juvenile delinquency.

Keywords: Juvenile, delinquency, school children

Introduction

Juvenile delinquency is a term commonly used in academic literature for referring to a young person who has committed a criminal offence, although its precise definition can vary according to the local jurisdiction. The specific reasons underlying these differences are unclear, but they may arise from the lack of an agreed international standard.

A 'juvenile' in this context refers to an individual who is legally able to commit a criminal offence owing to being over the minimum age of criminal responsibility, but who is under the age of criminal majority, when a person is legally considered an adult. The minimum age of criminal responsibility varies internationally between 6 and 18 years, but the age of criminal majority is usually 18 years. In some cases individuals older than 18 years may be heard in a juvenile court, and therefore will still be considered juveniles; indeed, the United Nations (UN) defines 'youth' as between 15 and 24 years of age. The term 'child delinquents' has been used in reference to children below the age of 13 who have committed a delinquent act, although elsewhere 'children' are often defined as being under 18 years of age. The term 'young offenders' is broad, and can refer to offenders aged under 18 years or include young adults up to their mid-20s.

A 'delinquent' is an individual who has committed a criminal offence. Delinquency therefore encompasses an enormous range of behaviours which are subject to legislation differing from one jurisdiction to another, and are subject to changes in law over time. Whereas acts of theft and serious interpersonal violence are commonly considered to constitute criminal offences, other acts including alcohol consumption and sexual behaviour in young people are tolerated to very differing degrees across the world. Sometimes these differences arise as a consequence of historical or cultural factors, and they may be underpinned by traditional religious laws, such as in some Middle Eastern countries.

Some offences may be shared between jurisdictions but be enforced to differing standards - for instance, 'unlawful assembly', often used to prevent riots, is applied in Singapore to young people meeting in public in groups of five or

Not all incarcerated juveniles are 'delinquent', since some may be detained pre-trial and may not be convicted of an offence. Even if convicted, it would be wrong to assume that every 'juvenile delinquent' meets criteria for a diagnosis of conduct disorder; offences vary considerably and may not be associated with a broad repertoire of offending behaviour. Also, most 'juvenile delinquents' do not pose an immediate risk of violence to others, and the vast majority of convicted juveniles serve their sentences in the community.

Rates of mental health problems among juvenile offenders are significantly higher than in their non-offender peers, with two-thirds of male juvenile offenders in the USA suggested as meeting criteria for at least one psychiatric disorder. One in five juvenile offenders is estimated to suffer severe functional impairment as a result of their mental health problems.³⁸ Paradoxically, these needs are often unmet, despite evidence of increased contact with mental health services, particularly among first-time juvenile offender. Of additional concern are the reported associations between mental health problems and mortality in incarcerated juveniles, including an elevated suicide rate for males.

Mental health problems must be a target in interventions for juvenile offenders; however, treatments which focus solely on clinical problems are unlikely to result in benefit for criminogenic outcomes. There is therefore a clear need for effective interventions which address both the clinical and criminogenic needs of these individuals

Relationships with family and peers are recognized as key factors in the criminogenic profile of juvenile offenders. Multisystemic therapy (MST) is a family-focused intervention targeting characteristics related to antisocial behavior, including family relationships and peer associations, with evidence from US and UK studies suggesting MST is a beneficial intervention for juvenile offenders. When compared with conventional services offered by juvenile offending services, MST was associated with a significant reduction in the likelihood of reoffending, maintained 2 and 4 years post-treatment.

Offenders engaging in MST are reported to be significantly less likely to become involved in serious and violent offending. Significant improvements have also been observed in both self- and parent-reported delinquency, family relations and interactions, and home, school, community and emotional functioning. A cost offset analysis of MST among UK juvenile offenders suggested that combining MST and conventional services provides greater cost savings than conventional services alone, as a result of its positive effects on recidivism.

Materials and Methods: A descriptive research design was used to assess the knowledge of cause of juvenile delinquency among school children. The data were collected

using a purposive sampling technique from 50 samples. The inclusion criteria for the study, participants in the age group 10 years to 17 years, who are available during the study period and who are cooperative and who understand both Tamil and English. Exclusion criteria for the study are, samples who not willing to participate in the study. The purpose of the study was explained by the investigator to each of the study participants and a written informed consent was obtained from them. The demographic and the level of juvenile delinquency was collected from the samples using semi structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed by biostatistics. The sample characteristics were described using frequency and percentage. Chi- square was used to associate the level of juvenile delinquency with their selected demographic variables

Results and Discussion

The total number of participants were 50, The result shows that, most of the students were in age group 10- 12 years 27 (54%), 17 (34%) were in the age group of 13-14 years, some were under 4 (8%), 15-16 years and 2 (4%) were in the above 17 years, maximum of the population were males. while assessing about 29 (58%) were Hindu, 19(38%) were Christian and remaining 2 (4%) were Muslims. occupation status of the parents is clear through the data that about 24 (48%) were coolie workers, 14 (28%) were government employees, 12 (24%) were private employees. While assessing the income of the family, 22 (44%) were of 5,000 -10,000, 23 (46%) were 11, 000 -15,000 and about 4 (8%) were earning 16,000-20,000.

Assessment of level of knowledge on cause of Juvenile delinquency among school children

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of knowledge on cause of juvenile delinquency n = 50

Level of Knowledge	No.	%
Inadequate (0 - 10)	3	6.0
Moderate (11 – 15)	31	62.0
Adequate (16 – 20)	16	32.0

The above table 2 shows that 31(62%) had moderate knowledge, 16(32%) had adequate knowledge and 3(6%) had inadequate knowledge on cause of juvenile delinquency

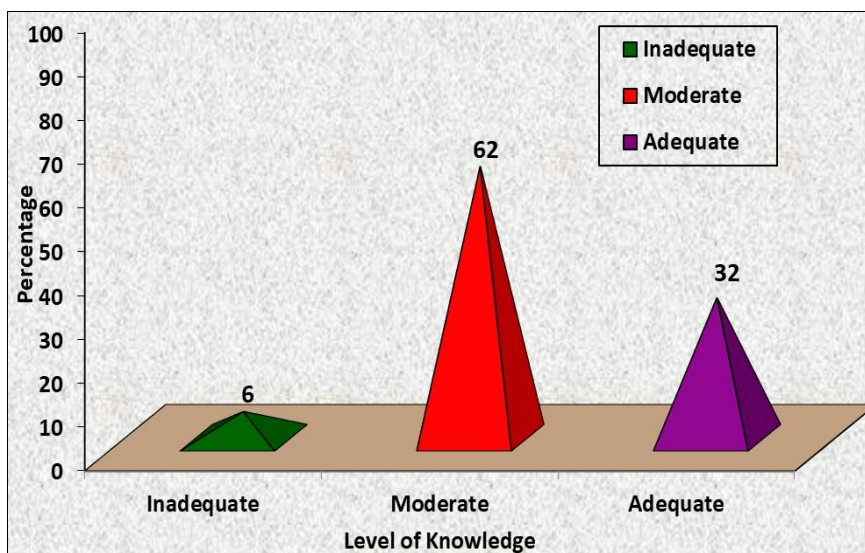


Fig 1: Percentage distribution of level of knowledge on cause of juvenile delinquency

Association of level of knowledge with selected demographic variables

The result shows that the demographic variable occupation of the parents had shown statistically significant association with level of knowledge on at $p < 0.05$ level and the other demographic variables had not shown statistically significant association with level of knowledge. Idris Salisu Rogo (2018) [2] *et al.*, conducted study on the causes of juvenile delinquency among secondary school student this study revealed juvenile delinquency is caused by poor parenting, peer group influence and lack of spiritual education in children, among others. Parents often neglect their responsibility of monitoring their children by themselves. They often leave their children under the care of nannies or house girls. Children learn delinquent behaviors also from criminal peers. Also, some parents give more priority to worldly affairs education, and neglect spiritual affairs education.

Conclusion

From the results of the present study shows significant improvement for researcher.

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Conflict of Interest

Not available

Financial Support

Not available

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