

Delinquents to criminals



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Explain the concepts and principles behind the social learning theory. Using the social learning theory constructs, explain its link to why people engage in criminal behaviors.

Social learning theory explains that people may engage in a set of behaviors because it is what the environment teaches them to do. For example, a person from one country who exercises different eating habits and table manners may be able to learn new habits and manners when he eats in the company of people from of foreign descent or when he visits and dines in another country. This is the same with criminality. When a person is bred on an environment that promotes violence and criminality, that person is more likely to grow up in such behavior. (Family violence prevention services, nd)

Interestingly, the social learning theory also asserts that when learned violence has not been mediated with properly, aggressors may tend to feel superior over others and resort in violent behavior more often, and more seriously. (Family violence prevention services, nd) This explains why people who have been exposed to violence should be counseled properly; so that, they avoid resorting in more serious criminality. In turn, people who have been misguided or not guided at all towards proper behavior may experience inclination towards violence and criminality.

It is worth to give an example to further clarify the link between social learning theory and delinquency or criminality. Suppose that a person was born to a family who fosters love, care, and peace at home. This child will most likely grow up in this nature. In contrast, the child who grew up in a family whose values are opposite will also have the negative behavior the family exercises.

Not all in the family

Yet upbringing does not stop with the family. Even if a child was born of a family who fosters positive behavior, a child exposed to violence outside of the family influence will still learn these violent behaviors to which he has been exposed. A child may learn violence by watching television. He may likewise learn violence from the school and the neighborhood.

Considering this, it is helpful if parents can talk to their children openly about things that can influence them in terms of violence. Parents should take the Parental Guidance tag in television shows and internet sites seriously. They should also watch their children's behavior when the children go out of the house. This will help them gauge the capacity of their children to learn and to sieve out what is negative for them to imbibe. Over all, this eliminates the chances of these children on becoming delinquents.

Explain the paradoxical effects corporal punishment may have on children becoming involved in delinquent acts.

Corporal punishment refers to corrective discipline which uses physical discomfort to the subject, often aiming to hurt the subject to encourage stoppage of negative behavior. This is most especially true with parents. When a child does something that the parent(s) do not like, the parent(s) sometimes use the rod to discipline their children. The rod takes many forms. It can be a slapping in the face or in parts of the body, or spanking. Sometimes, it can become grievous physical injuries that leave the child battered and wounded.

All of these beating have been designed to stop the child from doing acts that the parent deems to be wrong. Oftentimes the child will not know whether it is really right or wrong—he just knows it is wrong because he has been beaten when he did it. He will never know why it is wrong—he will just say it is wrong because he was hurt when he did it.

What is the paradox?

It has been found that children who experienced or went through corporal punishment learns the violent behavior. Often, this gives them enough exposure to violence, making them prone to similar behavior towards other people or towards their own children. This is widely contrary to the aim of corporal punishment to stop the child from doing what is perceived to be wrong.

Children exposed to corporal punishment takes it that for people to stop doing their wrong doings should be hurt. Thus, when they feel depressed towards others, regardless if it is a member of his family or not, he may become violent just the same.

Proofs and Prevention

There are many proofs to these claims on the connection of corporal punishment to learning violence, delinquency, and later on criminality. Love Our Children USA (2005) gives the following figures: 68% of juvenile delinquents were abused as children. Some were neglected. Abuse increases the likelihood of delinquency by 40%. These shows that the more a child is hurt for his mistakes, the more chances we are giving this child to be delinquent, and at worse a criminal.

Yet nothing is too late. When a child was exposed to violence through corporal punishment, the parents or guardians who did the punishment can explain to the child why the beating has been made. This thorough follow-through can enlighten the child and give him an idea about the difference of beating and discipline. On the other hand, any beating should be reserved to body parts that are away from the face, preferably with minimal pain and no marks to leave.

Discuss the factors relating to the possibilities of the family structure being a major contribution to a juvenile becoming involved in delinquent behaviors.

Parents and family conditions always come on top of the list when criminality is discussed. This cannot be blamed. As parents and family environment creates the foundation for rock-hard values, the society relies on these units in bringing up good children.

Asher (2006) states that parents who exercise positive parenting shields their sons and daughters from delinquency. Thornberry and Hall (2005) seconds this by saying that it is the parents and not the conditions of the neighborhood that determines the conditions at home which in turn the child learns.

Two important factors to consider as leading to delinquency and the possibility of criminality are antisocial and aggressive behavior. Poor parenting causes anti-social behavior. (Eklund and Klinteberg, 2006) In turn, a family who does not interact properly brings up children who are aggressive and out of touch. (Huesmann, 2002) Both traits, alarmingly, lead to criminality.

Two parents

Quality over quantity. This is true with parenting. Having the parents together does not guarantee good child-rearing. According to Eklund and Klinteberg (2006), the mother and the father plays equally important roles as they should both strive to maintain agreeable relationship and agreeable family relations. Appealing relationship counts better rather than two parents who chooses to stay together in one roof but does not want to do anything together but fight. In an interesting note, parents who always fight also fosters this behavior to their children, especially when the fights are done in the presence of these children. When there are two parents who share good values and exhibits this to the child, the child is spared at a larger rate from criminality.

Parenting styles

Both parents also have to balance their parenting styles and make sure they complement in each aspect. Smith (2004) says that parenting styles spell big differences with a child's development of deviant behavior. Studies show that parents who are authoritarian (manages parenting one-way, with the child obedient to the parents all throughout without question or objection) have more chances of their children developing deviant behavior. (Asher, 2006) Yet, this is not surprising. Because authoritarian parents have a hard time communicating with their children and have difficulties with monitoring their children, they often end up with children who do not trust them and solicit support from other people. This increases the chance for imbibing criminal behavior.

Numbers

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According to McCord (1991), only 5% of boys raised in positive family backgrounds became inclined to delinquency later in life. However, 47% of those exposed in violent behavior became delinquent and expressed violence towards themselves and others. This can be explained fully in detail. The family is the first and foremost environment that a child gets. His parents are the first ones who will teach him the ways of life. This creates his foundation that he will carry on all through his adulthood.

Without this foundation, the child will find it hard to deal with others. To be able to belong, he will inquire what he is not used to doing with others who in turn may not be versed in the mechanics of proper behavior. Again, this is because there are foundations that only positive parenting can lay.

On the other hand, this foundation may be present but done in a wrong way. Thus, the foundation may be not too strong, or the behavior exemplified may be negative. This will greatly affect the child who will then believe that what he learned is right, and so he will be confident that it is the way to do things.

Conclusion

Parenting, family, social environment, and many other factors affect the development of violent or criminal behavior among children which they can carry on as adults. However, no one indicator can say that criminality can be surely prevented or instituted. Preventing criminality is an interplay among many things. It takes for a person, whether a parent or guardian, raising a child to ensure that all factors pertinent to raising a morally and ethically upright individual is given attention. This certainly breeds the best results.