

Males and females



Much research studies had focused on the behavior of male delinquency. However, there has been a steady rise of juvenile female offenders as well as on the criminal justice system. Media has sensationalized the account of female violence. The rise in number of arrests however, can also be attributed to changes in policies in police practices, rather than a drastic change in women's behavior. Most of these arrests were assault-related. While former juvenile offenses were once labeled as non-criminal offenses such as a girl being hit by a mother shoves her in self-defense and runs away from home. Whereas such an offense would be labeled before as "runaway" offense, today this might cause her to be charged of assault, which is a criminal offense.

However, in criminal offenses such as robbery, female youths had been seen as becoming more involved in what used to be a predominantly male offense. Youth status, especially among urban girls is a causal factor for most of such crime. Pop culture among adolescents places great importance on high-end branded clothes, latest electronic gadgets, 'looks' that try to imitate Hollywood celebrities and fashion models, which had placed greater pressure on growing adolescents for peer acceptance.

Youth pop culture has greatly caused an obvious division among differences in economic status, and the desire to "keep up the Joneses'" breeds the environment for some youths to victimize their own peers in order to buy the "desirable" goods which they would not have been able to afford otherwise. Other studies had also attributed thrill and excitement as robbery-causing factors among youths who were inclined to 'show-off'. Although there are less occurrences of female robberies than among males, both has

expressed the same motivation for committing the crime, and that is to acquire more money in order to have goods that bestow high status among peers.

Female youth offenders were less likely to use weapons compared to males, and is much more characterized by harassing and hijacking youths of lesser age for petty amounts of cash and in some cases, jewelry. It has also been found that there is also a high correlation between poor relationships with mother-daughter which causes an increase among female adolescents to seek peer reputation which in turn becomes a contributing factor for female delinquency (Kerperlman & Smith-Adcock. “ Female Adolescents’ Delinquent Activity”)

A comparative study between male and female offenses however has shown that there is a significant difference between their criminal activities. Young men were more likely to resort to use weapons (guns) than girls. Knives were more of girls’ choice of weapon if they do resort to using one. Female offenders were more likely to commit murder because of conflict rather than during the act of other crime such as robbery. Assaults done by girls are more frequently done against one’s own family members. Males are more often arrested for more serious crimes such as rape, homicide, or burglary than young females. While there is a growing belief that female behavior has greatly changed among offenders today, suggesting that girls are taking over more masculine-related crimes, the offenses of male and female youth delinquency had both risen; therefore change of behavior cannot solely be blamed on changes of female youth behavior but changes on the over-all young population in general. There is also no evidence that female offenders

gained an increase of status among male peers since such offenses were done mostly among female younger victims (J. Weiler. "Girls and Violence").

Reference:

1. Kerpelman, J & Smith-Adcock S. "Female Adolescents' Delinquent Activity". Vol. 37, No. 2, 176-200. 2005
2. Chesney-Lind M, Paramore V. "Are Girls Getting More Violent?: Exploring Juvenile Robbery Trends". 1998
3. Cited by Weiler, J. "Girls and Violence". ERIC Digest, No. 143.
<http://www.ericdigests.org/1999-4/girls.htm>