

How delinquent behavior is associated with children's crime: the theory of charac...

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Trait theory and choice theory are popular theories used to describe the reasoning behind delinquent behavior. Trait theory is said to be the genetic makeup of the juvenile, such as the DNA, physical, or psychological traits that make up the reasoning behind their delinquent behavior. It is said that these juveniles act on impulse and that there is no reasoning, no rational thinking that happens before the delinquent acts are acted upon. An example of this theory can be easily seen through research on mental disorders and how mental disorders affect the mental reasoning of the juvenile. Bringing back up the Keaira Brown story, she suffered with depression, and that depression, because not addressed, could have led to an affected mental reasoning that affected the choices she made that day when she car jacked that teenager. Learning disabilities are other mental disorders that should definitely be researched considerably about juveniles. It has already been researched that there is a high correlation between juveniles that commit delinquent acts and learning disabilities. The studies show that those juveniles with delinquent tendencies tend to have learning disabilities more than those children without those tendencies. It is also proven that because the learning disabilities affect the juveniles' schoolwork, the failure to perform well academically is used in court against these juveniles. An argument that correlates to this theory is that of nature in the nature versus nurture issue. Nature basically states that you inherit certain traits at birth and those traits are with you your entire life, unaffected by how you were raised or the social/environmental factors that affect your life. That is a prime example of how the trait theory influences delinquency. However, the other side of the argument is that it's choice theory.

Choice theory is basically the rationale that the juvenile goes through the mental process of weighing the consequences of their actions and then proceeds to commit the act of delinquency. This theory states that there is no DNA or physiological factors influencing the juvenile when the act is committed. It is entirely the individual's fault and therefore, they knew full well what they were doing when they committed the act. Basically this theory is added to the nurture argument, meaning that you can be biological prone to be a certain way, but how you were raised and your environmental/situational factors will make it so that you turn out a certain way. Your genetics have nothing to do with the choices that you make. Relating this to juvenile delinquency, the juvenile has the mental capacity to think through their actions, and their DNA and their physiological makeup have nothing to do with the decision made to commit a delinquent act. An example of this is the Zantop Killings. They had no biological factors that could have been of any negative influence in their decision to commit those brutal stabbings. They made those decisions themselves. In court, Parker, the 16 year old, admitted that he was sorry, he showed extreme remorse and he spoke about how he was against harming animals and how he only committed the acts because he wanted the money. Tulloch on the other hand showed no remorse and refused to make a public statement. These two boys committed the same act, had similar upbringings and responded differently when sentenced and punished. This adds to this theory's validation, claiming that people make their choices, it doesn't matter their biological standing, they make their choices and are therefore, mental capable of making decisions to commit delinquent acts.

My viewpoint on all of this is that there is not just one way to look at this.

There is not just one theory that is correct. I think both are at play. I think we need to look at an individual and look at an individual's past to decide whether they were a victim of choice or trait theory.