



RESEARCH PAPER

Examining the Mediating Role of Parenting Styles and Personality Types between Psychological Well-Being and Delinquency among Juvenile Delinquents and Runaway Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Literature suggest parents as determinants of children's future life style. They are responsible to establish the moral values and certain behavioral attributes in their children (Chaffin et al., 2004). Many psychosocial issues arise throughout adolescence since it is a time of profound personal change. The present study aims to examine the role of parenting styles and personality types as mediators between the relationship of psychological well-being and delinquency among juvenile delinquents and runaway adolescents. Through correlational survey research design, 200 juvenile delinquents and runaway adolescents were approached from Lahore (N=69), Rawalpindi (N=76), Multan (N=30), and Gujranwala (N=25). Urdu-translated versions of the Parental Authority Questionnaire (developed by Buri, 1991; translated by Akhtar, 2012), Psychological Wellbeing Scale (developed by Ryff, 1989; translated by Aslam&Kausar, 2010), Big Five Inventory (developed by John et al., 1991; translated by Yousaf et al., 2014), and the indigenously developed Self-Reported Delinquency Scale (Naqvi & Kamal, 2008) were used for data collection. Analysis was performed through the Hayes process macro to check the mediating effect of parenting styles and personality types in the relationship between psychological well-being and delinquency. Results revealed permissive parenting style and authoritative parenting style as partial mediators. Moreover, among personality types, agreeableness and neuroticism evolved as partial mediators between psychological well-being and juvenile delinquency. Thus the study recommends proper counseling sessions for parents and juveniles to understand the root cause of delinquency and its counter measures.

KEYWORDS Juvenile Delinquents, Parenting Styles, Personality Types, Psychological Well-Being

Introduction

Every nation in this world has identified a certain list of behaviors that are listed as illegal and define punishments for violators with a fine or imprisonment, or in severe cases, the culprit has to face both (Wiesner et al., 2010). In the 17th century, children were treated as adults and considered responsible for their unlawful activities. At that time children were intentionally exposed to work-related hardships to make them responsible towards their families before times. It was considered that hard corporal (death penalty as noncompliance to religious deities) punishment will make them responsible and valuable beings of the society.

With the passage of time, societies realize the role of adults' guidance for the spiritual guidance of children and label such practices as laws. These laws stressed the active involvement of parents in supervising and disciplining the children (Du & Luyt, 2011). According to Rodriguez et al. (2009), parental aggression, lack of maternal love, parental conflicts, and parents' criminal backgrounds pose a threat or become opportunities for a child to get involved in criminal activities for future prospects.

Jorden and Sanders (2019) define personality traits as individual's distinctive patterns of feeling, thinking, and behaviour. Personality traits are stable constructs. It varies from person to person and remains consistent across different situations (Anusic & Schimmack, 2016). Gungea et al. (2017) explained delinquency in terms of behavioral disorder and marked it primarily propulsive towards the general public. A delinquent is involved in a number of criminal activities that harm the conventional norms of society and ethical values that, as a result, cause a discord or a clash between the delinquent and the community. By keeping in mind the important role of parenting styles as upbringing patterns to children's personality development, the present study is aimed at examining the parenting styles and personality types as mediators between the relationship of psychological well-being and delinquency among juvenile delinquents and runaway adolescents.

Literature Review

Studies have identified potential factors that contribute to the development of delinquent ways of behaving and adjustment-related issues in teenagers. These factors consist of no interaction or limited contact with parents, adjustment problems with custodial parents, constant conflicts between parents after divorce, the quality of the child's relationship with parents, and the pressure of underprivileged socioeconomic status (Burt et al., 2008; Esmaili et al., 2011).

Studies acknowledged parental divorce as a major determinant of externalizing behaviors, e.g., antisocial behaviour, delinquency, and aggression, as well as for internalizing problems such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem with poor grades, further posing a threat to a child's mental well-being, leading to emotional and behavioral difficulties (Breining et al., 2020; Esmaili & Yaacob, 2011). Moitra et al. (2018) explored the relationship between juvenile crimes and parenting styles with families of low socioeconomic status (SES) in India. Study revealed permissive parenting style as a risk factor for delinquent behavior. Study by Joshi et al. (2022) reported similar results.

Sidra et al. (2023) explored the relationship between juvenile delinquency and parental supervision in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The results of the thematic analysis highlighted social, environmental, and psychological factors. 'Family' dynamics were highlighted as a significant factor in juvenile delinquency. Insufficient parental supervision was revealed as a major reason for delinquency. Other factors included limited interaction with parents, absentees on parent's behalf due to working several jobs to make ends meet, parental aggression, employment issues, poverty, limited financial resources, strictness by parents, parent's inability to provide proper guidance to children, peer pressure, and unmonitored social media use.

Batool (2013) studied the impact of parents' education, earnings, and parenting styles on levels of aggression among adolescents. Results revealed income of parents, authoritarian parenting, and permissive parenting styles as risk factors to heightened levels of aggression. A qualitative study by Ahmed and Murtaza (2016) with 746 juveniles from prisons of Punjab acknowledged family as a critical factor behind

juvenile delinquency. Parent's harsh behaviour towards their children acts as a fuel and a significant predictor of juvenile crimes. The study also highlighted less parental involvement, a parent's history of crime, conflicts between parents, family size, parent's education, and financial status as potential risk factors for delinquency. Nisar et al. (2015) reported the same findings.

Kausar et al. (2012) examined the relationship between personality traits and juvenile delinquency among juvenile delinquents ($N=120$) and non-delinquents ($N=120$) (with ages between 16 and 18 years). Results reported higher scores on depression ($p < 0.001$), hypochondriasis ($p < 0.001$), schizophrenia ($p < 0.001$), and psychotic deviation ($p < 0.001$) among the delinquent group as compared to the non-delinquent group. Delcea & Enache (2021) hypothesized a significant association between crime and personality traits (extraversion, psychoticism, trait criminality, neuroticism, and addiction) in a sample of 492 adolescents ($M = 14.14$, $SD = 10.66$). Results highlighted a positive correlation between neuroticism and psychoticism ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$), trait criminality and psychoticism ($r = 0.46$, $p < 0.01$), and addiction and psychoticism ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.01$). Results further revealed a strong, significant correlation between addiction and neuroticism ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.01$) and neuroticism and criminality ($r = 0.70$, $p < 0.01$).

Hypotheses

- Psychological wellbeing is a significant predictor of delinquency.
- Parenting styles mediate in the relationship of psychological well being and delinquency.
- Personality types mediate in the relationship of psychological well being and delinquency.

Material and Methods

Research Design

Correlational survey research design was used to collect data from population.

Sampling

Through a non-probability purposive sampling technique, cases ($N=200$; age: 11-17) were identified from the population. The sample was taken from an institute working for the well-being of juveniles and abused children in Multan, Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Gujranwala.

Operational definitions

Parental Authority

Buri's (1991) parental authority questionnaire is based on Baumrind's parenting styles (1971). Baumrind (1971) operationally defined "authoritarian parent" as one who is controlling and less communicative and responsive towards children. "Authoritative parents" try to control children by setting and discussing rules in control. Whereas "permissive parents" lack control over children, share high communication patterns, and are responsive (as cited in Reitman et al., 2002).

Personality Traits

According to John et al. (2008), personality traits are a combination of extraversion (an active perspective towards material and social worlds), openness to experience (open-mindedness towards ideas and the world), agreeableness (acceptance and acknowledgement of other needs over self), conscientiousness (the ability of performing one's duty well), and neuroticism (feeling negative emotions).

Psychological Wellbeing

Ryff and Keyes (1989; 1995) explained PWB as a human's ability to meet his or her optimal levels of functioning (as cited in Sirigatti et al., 2009, p. 2). Ryff (1989) has defined PWB in terms of a multidimensional construct composed of six factors, e.g., autonomy (to be self-determined and independent), positive relations (sharing warm, trusting relationships with others), personal growth (an insight of constant development), environmental mastery (an ability to master and manage the environment), and self-acceptance (positive inclinations towards one's own self) (as cited in Moe, 2012 ;Ryff, 1989).

Delinquency

Naqvi and Kamal (2008, p. 63) operationalised delinquency by covering eight constructs of juvenile delinquency as "theft, drug abuse, lying, non-compliance, frequent engagement with police and escape, violence-related delinquency (extortion, vandalism, and aggression), cheating and gambling, and sex-related delinquency."

Scales used in study

Parental Authority Questionnaire

The PAQ, developed by Buri (1991), is a 30-item measure ($\alpha = .56$ to $.77$) that aims to assess three parenting styles, e.g., permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian parenting styles (Raitman et al., 2002), where each subscale is based on 10 items. Response rate moves from 1 to 5, where 1 and 5 mean strongly disagreeing and strongly agreeing, respectively. For each parenting style, total scores range from 10 to 50 (Buri, 1991).

The Big Five Inventory

The Big Five inventory (John et al., 1991; $\alpha = .73$) is the commonly used, self-reported 5-point rating scale to measure different dimensions of personality traits (Gurven et al., 2013). A short Urdu version of this scale developed by Rammstedt and John (2007) and translated by Yousef et al. (2014) was used for data collection. It is based on five subscales, e.g., agreeableness, extraversion, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. Participants answer from '1' to '5, where '1' means 'strongly disagree' and '5' means 'strongly agree.'

Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being 84 item version (PWB)

RPWBS, developed by Ryff (1989), is a multifaceted, 84-item self-report measure that intends to assess the individual's positive functioning. It is based on six subscales: self-acceptance ($\alpha = .91$), positive relations with others ($\alpha = .88$), autonomy ($\alpha = .83$), environmental mastery ($\alpha = .86$), purpose in life ($\alpha = .88$), and personal growth ($\alpha = .85$) (Ryff, 1989; Ryff& Keyes, 1995; Moe, 2012). Each subscale consists of 14 items where

responses range from 1 to 7 (1 means strongly agree and 7' means strongly disagree) (Holgado et al., 2010). The total score is calculated by summing up scores from each subscale. Negatively worded items are reverse-scored items. Higher scores indicate higher levels of PWB (Ryff et al., 2010).

The Self-Reported Delinquency Scale.

SRDS ($\alpha = .92$ to $.94$), developed by Naqvi and Kamal (2008), is a self-administered, 27 items scale to assess delinquent acts among adolescents. 27 items measure eight constructs that are related to delinquency (Theft Measurement, Drug Abuse, Lying, Non-Compliance to Adults, Police Encounter and Escape, Violence-Related Delinquency Cheating and Gambling, and Sex-Related Delinquency) (Lakhani et al., 2022). Respondents rate their incidence of committing delinquent acts in terms of frequency on a 5-point rating scale, ranges from '0' to '4', where 0 means never, 1 means once, 2 means 2-5 times, 3 means 5-10 times, and 4 means more than 10 times, respectively. The total scale score ranges from 0-108, where high scores exhibit a high level of delinquency (Naqvi& Kamal, 2008).

Procedure

200 juvenile delinquents and runaway children were approached from organizations in service for the wellbeing of abused and homeless children based in Rawalpindi (N = 76), Multan (N = 30), Lahore (N = 69), and Gujranwala (N = 25) after meeting proper protocols from the authorities (DG, Punjab). The participant filled out the questionnaire after signing the informed consent. Participants were guided to fill the forms with authentic responses.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Demographics of Participants

Characteristics	N	%
City		
Rawalpindi	76	38
Lahore	69	34
Multan	30	15
Gujranwala	25	12
Gender		
Male	103	51.5
Female	97	48.5
Age		
11-13	63	31
14-16	107	53
17-19	30	15
Socioeconomic status		
0-20000	139	69.5
21000-40000	56	28
410000-80000	5	2.5

Table 1 shows that most of the participants were from Rawalpindi (38%), 51.5% were male, 53% were 14-16 years old, and 69.5% were underprivileged

Table 2
Regression Coefficient of PWB with Delinquency

Variables	B	SE	T	P	95%CI
Constant	126.02	14.71	8.57	0.000	97.02, 155.02
Autonomy subscale	-0.83	0.22	-3.81	0.000	-1.25, -0.40

Personal growth subscale	-0.53	0.19	-2.71	0.000	-0.91, -0.14
Positive relations subscale	-0.53	0.19	-2.71	0.01	-0.91, -0.14
Self acceptance subscale	0.10	0.25	0.39	0.70	-0.40, 0.60
Psychological wellbeing scale total score	-0.03	0.14	-0.24	0.000	-0.31, 0.24

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$

Study hypothesized that PWB is a significant predictor of delinquency among juvenile delinquents and runaway children. Table 2 shows the impact of the PWB on delinquency. The R^2 value of 0.33 revealed that predictors explained 33% of the variance in the outcome variable, with $F(5, 194) = 18.86, p < .001$. The findings suggested that the autonomy subscale ($\beta = -0.37, p < .001$), the personal growth subscale ($\beta = -0.37, p < .001$), the positive relations subscale ($\beta = 0.11, p < .001$), and the PWB scale total score ($\beta = -0.07, p < .001$) significantly predicted delinquency. Whereas the self-acceptance subscale has no significant effect on delinquency ($\beta = 0.06, p > .05$).

Table 3
Parenting Styles as Mediator between PWB and Delinquency

Variable	(M1) Permissive Parenting Style			a_2	(M2) Authoritative Parenting Style			c	(Y) Delinquency			
	B	SE	P		B	SE	P		B	SE	P	
PWB (X)	a_1	-0.12	.02	.000		-0.07	.02	.000		-0.11	.03	.001
Permissive Parenting Style (M1)								b_1	1.4	.28	.000	
Authoritative Parenting Style (M2)								b_2	1.03	.17	.000	
	$R^2 = .24$				$R^2 = .06$				$R^2 = .44$			
	$F(1,198) = 61.79, P = .000$				$F(1,198) = 12.52, P = .000$				$F(4, 195) = 38.48, P = .000$			

** $P \leq .001$; *** $P < .000$

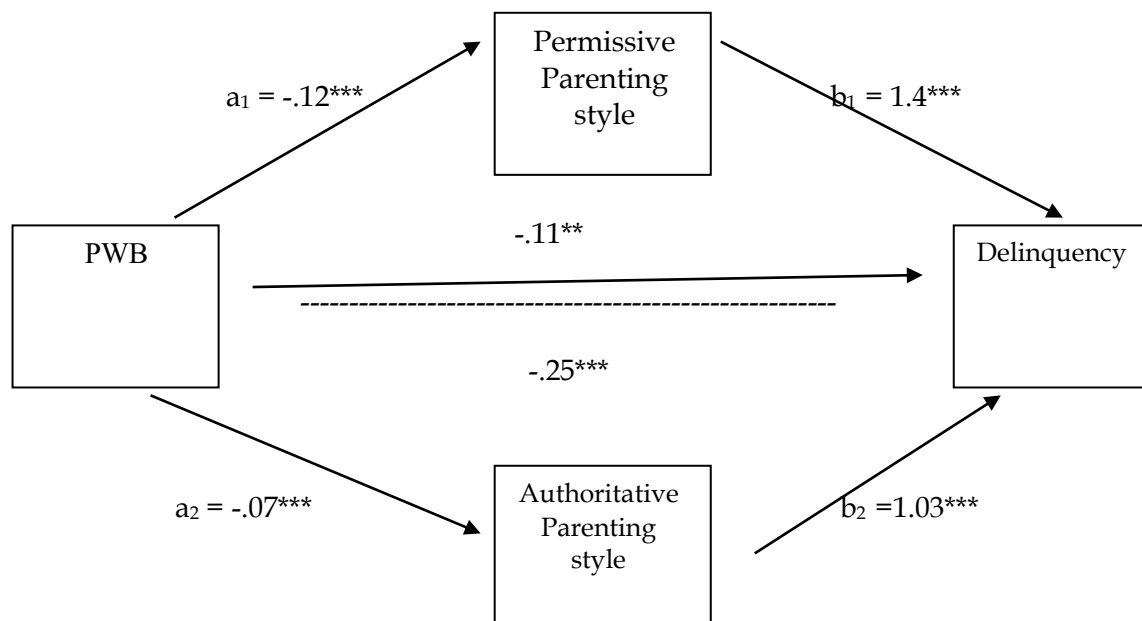


Figure 1: The mediation pathway of parenting Styles, PWB, and delinquency

Table 3 highlights the mediation effect of permissive parenting style and authoritative parenting style in the relationship between PWB and delinquency by

using model 4 of the Hayes Process Macro. The path a_1 is significant ($a_1 = -.12, p < .001$) as it shows that the independent variable (PWB) negatively predicted the mediator (permissive parenting style). Path b_1 is significant where the mediator (permissive parenting style) positively predicts the dependent variable (delinquency) ($b_1 = 1.4, p < .001$). The path a_2 is significant ($a_2 = -.07, p < .000$) as it shows that the independent variable (PWB) negatively predicted the mediator (authoritative parenting style). Path b_2 is also significant, where the mediator (authoritative parenting style) positively predicts the dependent variable (delinquency) ($b_2 = 1.03, p < .000$). The path c is also significant ($c = -.11, p < .001$), which indicates the partial mediating effect of parenting styles in relation to PWB and delinquency.

Table 4
Personality Types as Mediator between PWB and Delinquency

Variable	(M1) Agreeableness			(M2) Neuroticism			(Y) Delinquency					
	B	SE	P	B	SE	P	B	SE	P			
PWB (X)	a_1	.01	.00	.01	a_2	-.01	.00	.02	c	-.25	.03	.000
(M1) Agreeableness									b_1	-2.49	.61	.00
(M2) Neuroticism									b_2	3.24	.56	.00
	$R^2 = .03$ $F(1,198) = 6.09, P = .01$			$R^2 = .11$ $F(1,198) = 5.24, P = .02$			$R^2 = .25$ $F(1, 198) = 64.58, P = .000$					

*** $P < .001$; ** $P < .01$; * $P < .05$

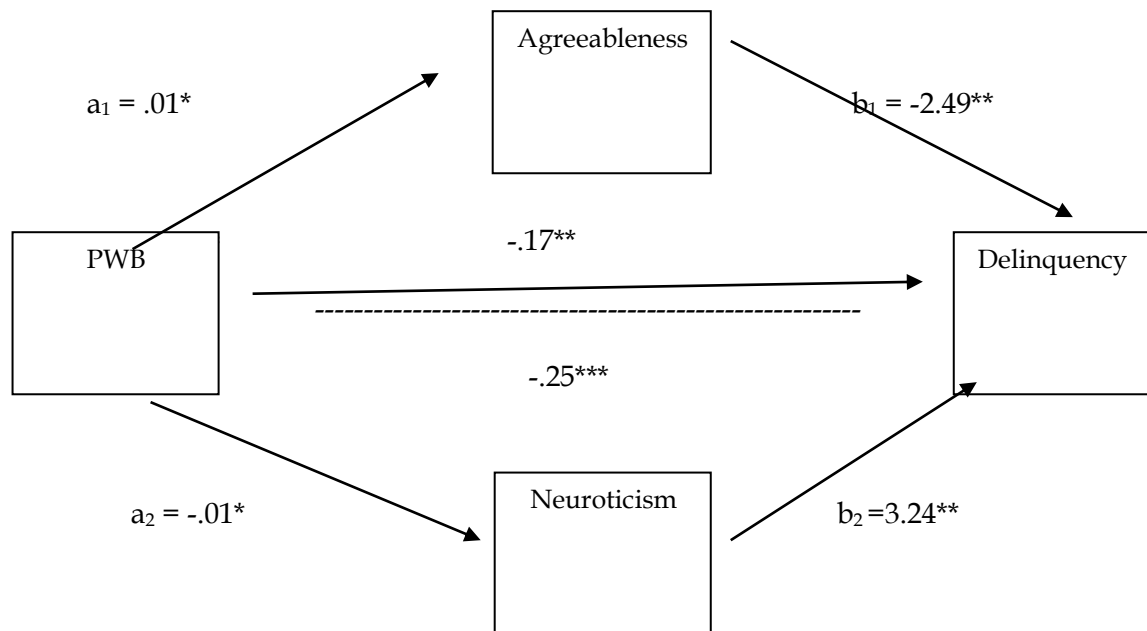


Figure 2: The mediation pathway of Personality Type, PWB and Delinquency

Table 4 highlights the mediation effect of personality types in the relationship between PWB and delinquency by using model 4 of the Hayes Process Macro. Agreeableness and neuroticism were found to be significant mediators between PWB and delinquency. The path a_1 is significant ($a_1 = .01, p < .05$) as it shows that the independent variable (PWB) predicted the mediator (agreeableness). Path b_1 is

significant where the mediator (agreeableness) negatively predicts the dependent variable (delinquency) ($b_1 = -2.49, p < .001$).

The path a_2 is significant ($a_2 = -.01, p < .05$) as it shows that the independent variable (PWB) predicted the mediator (Neuroticism). Path b_2 is significant where the mediator (neuroticism) positively predicts the dependent variable (delinquency) ($b_2 = 3.24, p < .001$). The path c is also significant ($c = -.17, p < .01$), which indicates the partial mediating effect of personality styles in relation to PWB and delinquency.

Results of the regression analysis for the present study showed autonomy, positive relations, personal growth, and psychological well-being (total score) as significant predictors of delinquency. Similar findings were reported by Fitriana et al. (2022) and Huppert (2009), where psychological well-being came out as a significant predictor of juvenile delinquency. Findings of another study (Huebner & Suldo, 2004) highlighted the defensive role of life satisfaction in unfavorable life conditions. Results revealed that adolescents with traumatic pasts showed high scores on life satisfaction with fewer scores on aggression and delinquent behavior. Moreover, results of a study conducted by Shek & Lin (2016) reported significant inverse correlations between higher levels of LS with less reporting of conduct issues in youth.

Through Hayes process macro mediation analysis was performed to check the parenting styles as mediators between PWB and delinquency. Results revealed permissive and authoritative parenting as partial mediators between PWB and delinquency. A study by Jagers et al. (2021) endorsed the results by stressing the role of parental monitoring in their interaction with antisocial peers, which can be a potential risk factor for psychological distress among children and may become a reason to engage in antisocial activities. Parental monitoring serves as both a protective factor and a risk factor for an individual's problematic behavior. However, parental monitoring put a stop to forming links with antisocial peers, rooting out to violence, and psychological distress, in short preventing the occurrence of delinquent activities (Peguero, 2020). Kauser and Pinquart (2019) suggested that children who maintain healthy relationship with their parents and are under proper parental supervision are lucky enough to not engage in delinquent activities. Children with less supervision are more likely to become a part of delinquent activities.

Personality types were accessed as mediators through the Hayes process. Results revealed neuroticism and agreeableness personality types as a partial mediator between PWB and juvenile delinquency. Concurrent findings were reported by a study conducted by Komulainen (2015), suggesting low conscientiousness and low agreeableness predicted higher levels of delinquent behavior among adolescents. The study further discussed that juvenile delinquents are careless, nonconforming, undisciplined, hostile, and resentful. Results by meta-analysis (Jones et al., 2011) explained delinquent behavior as a product of conscientiousness instead of agreeableness (Jones et al., 2011). According to self-control theory, individuals comprised of low conscientiousness are irresponsible, disorganized, restless, and impulsive (Hogan & Ones, 1997). Komulainen (2015) proposed that individuals with less conscientious and disagreeable attributes are more prone to criminogenic tendencies, thus lacking in the development of interpersonal skills, facing problems to make friendships, and receiving social rejection.

Brown (2016) suggested that low conscientiousness, low agreeableness, and high neuroticism result in high levels of antisocial behavior, aggression, and

psychological distress among individuals. According to Eysenck's theory of personality, delinquents exhibit more psychoticism than extraversion and neuroticism personality traits. A study by Bo et al. (2019) strengthens the conclusion that psychoticism is related to criminal activities. However, extraversion and neuroticism were associated with juvenile offending and adult offending, respectively. In addition, the Big Five Personality Model highlights that the psychopathic aspects of personality are combinations of high extraversion, conscientiousness, low agreeableness, and high/low neuroticism (Tharshini et al., 2021).

Conclusion

In the present study, personality types and parenting styles were examined as mediators between the relationship of PWB and delinquency. Mediation analysis through the Hayes process macro points out permissive parenting style and authoritative parenting style as significant partial mediators between PWB and delinquency. Further personality types were accessed as mediators between PWB and delinquency. Results revealed agreeableness and neuroticism as significant partial mediators to the said relationship.

Recommendations

The study lacks interaction with juvenile delinquents imprisoned in jails. A separate study is needed to draw inferences between juveniles incarcerated in jails and rehabilitating centers, as both facilities run on different dynamics. The study also suggests the proper counseling sessions for imprisoned youth to keep improvement in their psychological well-being and to have a clear self-concept. Awareness about juvenile crimes and their inhibition through parental involvement can be introduced through social media platforms where parents can get insight about conduct issues and their tackling techniques.

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