



137 Juvenile Delinquencies in Adana, Turkey

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After attending this presentation, attendees will gain an understanding about the general characteristics of juvenile delinquents, the types of crimes they commit, their familial characteristics, other factors that affect juvenile delinquency, and the relationship between crime and criminal etiology.

This presentation will impact the forensic sciences community by: (1) suggesting some reasons underlying juvenile delinquency; (2) identifying individual, environmental, and circumstantial factors associated with criminal behaviors; (3) recommending general policies and strategies which would form a basis for the necessary preventive, protective, and remedial measures; and, (4) recommending building programs for preventing juvenile delinquency.

Juvenile delinquency poses a significant problem in Turkey, as in the rest of the world, prompting consideration of preventive actions and re-integration of juvenile delinquents back into society.¹

Juvenile offenders are at risk of chronically perpetuating cruel violence in the future. Preventive and supportive measures can be considered and implemented for juvenile delinquents in Turkey under the Child Protection Law. First, the protection of children's best interests, including measures of counseling, care, health care, and housing, delineates factors considered individually or together with views to ensure protection of the juvenile's family environment, providing means of education appropriate to the juvenile's age group and level of development, and leading them to develop their personality and sense of social responsibility.²⁻⁵

Data of children aged between 0 and 18 years brought to trial for allegedly committing crimes in Juvenile Courts 1, 2, and 3 of the Adana Courthouse between January 2004 and June 2013 and/or referred to/applying to the Provincial Directorate for National Education for measures taken by the court decision have been evaluated on a retrospective basis. Data were gathered from court decisions and from file archives of the Provincial Directorate for National Education, Directorate of Special Education and Counseling, Counseling Research Centers. Two hundred fifty-eight children, with full data on their socio-demographic characteristics, who were brought to court for alleged crimes and/or were applying for protective orders and measures to be taken by court decision, were also included in this study.

This study analyzes the relationship between the types of crimes juveniles commit, at what age and how they commit them, whether they came from migrant families, measures to be taken by court order, and the available socio-demographic data.

The majority of the children (45%) committed property crimes. There is a positive relationship between the general age at which juveniles committed crime, the types of crime, and the ways they committed crime. As the subjects aged, they shifted from property crimes toward crimes against persons' integrity and terror offenses, and they committed crimes more frequently in groups rather than individually ($p < 0.05$).

There is a significant relationship between the age and the general type of offense; in other words, the general type of offense changes significantly depending on the age. As the subjects got older, they more frequently committed crimes against persons and terror offenses ($p < 0.05$).

There is a relationship between being a migrant and the general type of crime. Among migrants, property crimes prevailed, and younger children worked on the streets and were taken by the courts under protection.

There is a significant relationship between measures taken by court decision (counseling, education, care, health care, and housing) and educational background among juvenile delinquents. As they reached higher levels of education, they were subjected to fewer measures taken by court decision ($p < 0.05$).

There is also a significant relationship between measures taken by court decision (counseling, education, care, health care, and housing) and their familial status as well as monthly income among juvenile delinquents ($p < 0.05$).

This study proposed to identify socio-demographic features which may exert direct or indirect effects on juvenile delinquency.⁶ Among those conditions which were associated with juvenile delinquency as a social problem, the economic and circumstantial parameters (e.g., living conditions) were striking.

Violence is more prevalent among children from suburban neighborhoods and who come from the lowest income group.⁷ Circumstances under which juveniles were raised and the neighborhoods where they lived were found to be associated with the criminal act committed. The current findings suggest that the



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conditions of the neighborhoods and housing, and lower income levels, are risk factors for juvenile delinquency.^{2,7,8}

In conclusion, risk factors associated with family, school, community, and children should be well-defined to prevent juvenile delinquency. Interventions set into law, including the collection of data points, should be effective in order to offer practical solutions and to reintegrate juvenile delinquents back into society.

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