



Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Section - 2014

138 Crimes Against Persons' Integrity and Property Among Juveniles in Adana, Turkey

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After attending this presentation, attendees will gain an understanding about crimes committed by juveniles against property or persons, their perceptions of the crimes, articles of the relevant laws, and the impact of migration and profiles of the accused.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community in determining the underlying reasons behind juvenile delinquency, collecting the relevant records of crimes, creating reliable national and international databases, and developing national and international projects to set the ground for the appropriate preventive, supportive, and remedial measures.

A juvenile going through a period of tumult as a result of rapid biological and psychological changes during adolescence might not grasp the meaning and consequences of his or her acts.^{1,2} The Turkish Penal Code defines the types of crimes committed against property and persons along with punishments to be inflicted under its sub-sections. As per Article 31 of the new Penal Code No. 5237 of 2005, minors under the age of 12 years at the time of the criminal act do not bear criminal responsibility. Those who are above 12 but below 15 years of age at the time of the act do not bear criminal responsibility if they do not understand the legal meanings and consequences of the acts they commit or if they lack the ability to control their behaviors/acts. If minors between the ages of 12 and 15 comprehend the acts they commit or are able to control their behaviors associated with the criminal act, the penalty to be imposed will be reduced. Those between the ages of 15 and 18 years at the time of criminal act are, again, subject to reduced penalties.³

In the case of short jail sentences for juvenile offenders between the ages of 12 and 18 years or if there are reasons requiring arrest, it is stipulated that delinquents serve their sentences or probation within the community supported by counseling, re-integration, and rehabilitative actions taken whenever necessary.^{2,4,5}

This study intends to define the types and frequency of crimes committed against property and persons in Adana and brought to trial in the Juvenile Court, their perceptions of the crimes, periods of probation, the articles of the relevant legislation, and the profiles of the accused.

Data of children between three and 18 years of age who were 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 who were referred to/applied to the Provincial Directorate for National Education for measures taken by court decision were evaluated retrospectively. Six hundred and eighty children brought to court for alleged crimes and/or applying for protection orders, and the measures to be taken by court decision, were included in this study.⁶

Three hundred and ten (45.6%) cases involved crimes against property, 20.6% were crimes against persons' body integrity, and the rest were terror crimes. Protection orders were issued for 204 children (30%) due to their ages and the fact that they worked on the streets.

There is a positive relationship between the age at which children commit a crime and the type of crime. In other words, older children committed crimes against persons and terror crimes rather than property crimes, which tended to be committed at earlier ages. There is a positive relationship between the type of crime and the perception of crime.⁹ Offenders displayed higher levels of perception of crime as their offenses shifted from those against property to those against persons and terror. There is a relationship between being a migrant and the perception of crime: migrants had lower levels of perception of crime.⁷

While 318 juvenile delinquents (46.8%) were put on trial under penal code articles such as theft and minor injury, 202 (29.7%) were tried under the articles of the Child Protection Law governing the relevant measures and penalty reductions.⁸

This study aimed to define the types of crimes committed against property and persons in Adana, perceptions of crime, periods of probation, the articles of the relevant legislation, and the profiles of the accused.

The data from this study suggest that property crimes (theft) constituted the highest rate, suggesting a possible relationship between crime and migration.⁹ Thus, migrants should be supported by rehabilitation, re-integration, and counseling services along with vocational courses. They should not be driven into terrorist networks; instead, they should be encouraged to engage in pro-social activities.



Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Section - 2014

In conclusion, access to the records of crime poses a challenge in most countries. The creation of sound and reliable databases of juvenile criminal records will likely contribute to developing national and international projects.

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Juvenile Delinquency, Crime, Integral Migration