

Research on the Influence of Family Factors on Children's Psychological Health

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Abstract: The family environment plays a crucial role in an individual's development and growth. Factors within the family environment include parents' educational level, the way family members interact with each other, and the family's economic situation, among others. These factors collectively influence aspects such as an individual's personality, attitudes, values, and behaviors. Parents' educational background and parenting style have a decisive impact on a child's education. In dual-income families, parents often lack sufficient time and energy to focus on their child's growth, which can lead to emotional deficiencies in the child. Additionally, the family's economic situation also affects personal development. Economically disadvantaged families may be unable to provide good education and living conditions, limiting opportunities for individuals and potentially placing them at a disadvantage in social development. Therefore, the influence of the family environment on individuals cannot be ignored, and we should prioritize and improve it. There is a close relationship between family environment and children's mental health. Numerous studies have shown that family factors play an important role in the development of children's psychological well-being.

Keywords: psychological health, teenagers, crime, depression, family factors

1. Introduction

Firstly, the level of emotional support and care from the family directly affects children's mental health. A warm and harmonious family environment can provide children with a sense of security, enhance their self-esteem and confidence, and help them establish positive interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, a lack of emotional support and care in the family can lead to feelings of insecurity in children, making them more prone to negative emotions such as depression and anxiety. Family parenting styles also have an impact on children's mental health. Family parenting styles encompass parents' attitudes towards education, parenting methods, and family rules, among other things. Research has found that positive parenting styles can promote children's motivation and adaptability, making them more independent and capable of problem-solving and facing challenges. Conversely, overly strict, or permissive parenting styles can cause distress for children and may result in psychological and behavioral problems. Furthermore, conflicts among family members and the overall atmosphere within the family can also influence children's mental health. Family conflicts and a tense atmosphere can create stress for children, affecting their emotions and psychological well-being. Studies have shown that family conflicts are associated

with internalizing and externalizing problems in children, potentially leading to issues such as aggression, depression, and anxiety.

However, family factors have a significant impact on children's mental health. A warm and harmonious family environment, positive parenting styles, and a harmonious family atmosphere contribute to the development of children's psychological well-being. Therefore, families should focus on improving the family environment and parenting styles, promoting harmonious relationships among family members, to enhance children's mental health.

The significance of researching this topic is to observe that many parents around us do not use the right methods and approaches to properly guide their children's education, and there are many reports about juvenile delinquency. These parents do not understand their children's personalities, psychology, and thoughts. Most families have a laissez-faire parenting style and do not carefully observe what their children truly want. Because children are like blank slates, they need adults to slowly guide them and help them develop the right values. For example, when most parents see their children misbehaving or not listening, they unconsciously scold them, which is wrong and makes children feel uncomfortable regardless of their age. Educating children and ensuring they have a healthy body, and a sound mind is the most challenging task for parents. Most families still do not guide their children well, especially single-parent families, where children need more parental companionship. Many news reports show that children from single-parent families often exhibit negative behaviors. Therefore, parents should consider their children's suggestions and feelings before making decisions.

This paper examines the coverage of youth crime in the United Kingdom. Firstly, it will provide an overview of the topic, followed by an analysis of the primary factors contributing to youth crime. Subsequently, it will discuss potential strategies to improve this situation.

2. The Case of the James Bulger Murder

The James Bulger murder case is a homicide that occurred on February 12, 1993, in Merseyside, England. Two 10-year-old boys, Robert Thompson and Jon Venables, abducted and brutally murdered 2-year-old James Bulger [1]. This case involved the youngest killers in modern British history and the nature of the crime was particularly heinous, causing strong public outrage. As a result, the authorities were compelled to reveal the true identities of the perpetrators and extend their sentences due to societal pressure [2].

On February 12, 1993, Robert Thompson and Jon Venables, both habitual truants, met at school. They bonded over their shared delinquent behavior and decided to go out together [1]. Initially, they engaged in theft at the New Strand Shopping Centre in Bootle, stealing items such as desserts, a Troll doll, batteries, and a can of Humbrol blue paint. They then went to a McDonald's and caused a disturbance by dirtying the chairs until they were kicked out by staff [3]. Afterward, they discussed and decided to kidnap a child and play tricks on him using their stolen items.

The two boys first attempted to abduct a pair of toddlers, but when the alert mother called her children closer, they changed their target. While the mother turned away to pay at the checkout, they took one of the toddlers with them. Fortunately, the mother noticed immediately and chased after them, retrieving her child. They then thought of going to a candy store where there would be more children, but found it closed. However, they saw a 2-year-old toddler standing in front of AR Tym's butcher's shop, who happened to be James Patrick Bulger, born on March 16, 1990 [4]. James Bulger and his family lived in Kirkby, Merseyside. On that day, his mother, Denise Bulger, brought him to the New Strand Shopping Centre for shopping [5]. At around 3:40 PM, Denise left James at the butcher's shop while she went to the cashier to pay. According to CCTV footage, at around 3:42 PM, Jon approached James and started talking to him before leading him out of the shopping center [4].

The three of them walked along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal for about four kilometers. Along the way, Robert and Jon physically assaulted James, who was frightened and crying, and threatened to push him into the canal. There were 38 witnesses who saw them, but most people did not intervene as they assumed it was a family dispute [3]. Two individuals tried to stop Robert and Jon's assault, but they deceitfully told the bystanders that they were taking the lost James to the police station [2]. One bystander pointed them in the direction of the police station, but they walked in the opposite direction. Later, the two boys took James into a pet store, where the staff became suspicious and tried to prevent them from leaving. However, there was a fire on the street, and they took advantage of the chaos to escape with James [6].

They took James to Walton, Liverpool, where they noticed a police station across the street. After hesitating for a moment, they changed their route to a steep embankment near Anfield Cemetery and the abandoned Walton & Anfield railway station [6]. Robert and Jon began physically assaulting James, punching and kicking him, and using a fish tail board weighing around 10 kilograms to strike his head. They smeared paint on his left eye and face, made him eat batteries, and removed his shoes, socks, pants, and underwear [4]. They sexually assaulted his genitals and possibly inserted a battery into his anus. They subjected James to such brutal torture that it resulted in his death. After discovering that James was dead, they placed his body on the railway tracks and buried his head in gravel, attempting to create the appearance of an accident by having a train run over him [5].

After leaving the scene, a train ran over James' body, severing it into two pieces. It was not until February 14th that the police found James' body. On November 1, 1993, the trial for this case commenced at the Preston Crown Court [1]. Nearly 500 protesters gathered outside the court demanding harsh punishment for the perpetrators [1].

In the courtroom, the two individuals sat on elevated chairs and, apart from denying all charges of murder, kidnapping, and attempted kidnapping, remained mostly silent [3]. During the trial, Dr. Eileen Vizard conducted a series of cognitive assessments and confirmed that both individuals were "fully capable of distinguishing right from wrong." [2] Richard Henriques QC, the lead prosecutor, successfully refuted the assumption of "juvenile criminal incapacity" for Jon and Robert based on Dr. Vizard's conclusion [4]. Dr. Vizard also noted that Robert developed post-traumatic stress disorder after abusing James. Justice Morland, the presiding judge, declared the two individuals guilty of "unparalleled evil and barbarity" and described their actions as "cunning and very wicked" based on the presented evidence and the 20-hour interrogation recordings [6]. Thus, the charges of murder, kidnapping, and attempted kidnapping were proven. With this, Robert and Jon became the youngest murderers in modern British history [4]. Justice Morland recommended a minimum sentence of 8 years in prison and imposed specific post-release restrictions, such as a lifetime ban from returning to Merseyside, the prohibition of contact between the two individuals, and mandatory periodic checks [3]. Shortly after the verdict, Baron Taylor of Gosforth, the Lord Chief Justice of England, and Wales, stated that the sentences should be increased to at least 10 years. Thompson is one of seven children from a dysfunctional family that has experienced abuse, alcoholism, unemployment, and absenteeism of their father. He and Jon Venables are classmates who frequently skip school, with Liverpool city center being their playground. Both have fallen behind academically by a year [2]. Jon Venables as one of three children, comes from a divorced family with separated parents. Years later, a forensic adolescent psychiatrist examined Jon Venables and stated, "He has made remarkable progress in personal development, recognizing the severity of his own offenses, understanding his childhood behavior, and 'normal' development during adolescence given the exceptional circumstances" [6].

Both suspects may have psychological issues such as antisocial personality disorder and lack of empathy. These psychological problems could contribute to their harm and violent behavior

towards others. Coming from disadvantaged families, they may have been influenced by experiences of abuse, neglect, and violence. Experiences of abuse could lead to their malicious and violent tendencies.

3. The Influencing Factors of Juvenile Delinquency

One important factor that contributes to juvenile delinquency is domestic violence. Domestic violence refers to the physical or psychological mistreatment between family members [7]. This type of violent behavior can have long-term negative effects on children, causing them to feel insecure and fearful as they grow up. Adolescents who have experienced violence may learn to use violence to solve problems, increasing their likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior [7]. Furthermore, domestic violence can also lead to psychological issues such as depression and anxiety in adolescents, further increasing their propensity for criminal activities. Therefore, addressing the issue of domestic violence is crucial in preventing juvenile delinquency. The government and society should strengthen prevention and intervention measures for domestic violence and provide necessary help and support to adolescents who have been affected by it [8]. Additionally, domestic violence can also lead to a range of psychological and behavioral problems in adolescents, further increasing their risk of engaging in criminal activities [9]. Adolescents who have been victims of violence often feel insecure, angry, and helpless. They may lose control over their own behavior and become easily influenced and tempted by others, leading them down the path of crime [10]. Moreover, domestic violence can also result in adolescents developing a resistance to authority and rules, leading them to develop attitudes that lack respect for others and societal norms, which can further contribute to various illegal behaviors [9].

In addition, lack of attention and support from parents is another major cause of family disharmony [11]. In some families, parents may be focused on their work or personal lives, neglecting communication and care with their children. They may fail to engage in their child's learning and activities, lacking guidance and support for their children [11]. This lack of attention and support can make children feel lonely and helpless, leading them to seek care and recognition elsewhere, including joining criminal gangs or engaging in illegal activities. Therefore, the lack of attention and support from parents plays a significant role in the development of family disharmony.

To reduce juvenile delinquency, parents should pay more attention to their children's needs and emotions, actively participate in their lives, and provide positive guidance and support [6]. Additionally, the lack of parental support can also contribute to an increase in juvenile delinquency [10]. When children face challenges and difficulties, they need support and encouragement from their parents to help them overcome obstacles and achieve success. However, if parents do not provide positive support and instead ignore their children's efforts, the children may feel frustrated and disappointed [11]. They may experience suppressed self-confidence and struggle to cope with the pressures and challenges of life. In such situations, they may seek alternative, negative paths to find happiness and fulfillment, such as engaging in criminal activities [9]. Therefore, parents' positive support and encouragement play a crucial role in preventing juvenile delinquency.

To address the impact of domestic violence on juvenile delinquency, we need to take proactive measures. Firstly, parents should enhance public awareness and education on domestic violence, increasing recognition and attention to this issue [12]. Through awareness campaigns and education, more parents can understand the dangers of domestic violence and learn appropriate parenting methods to prevent harm to their children. Secondly, it is important to establish a comprehensive family support system that provides psychological counseling and support services for young people affected by domestic violence [12]. This can help them overcome psychological trauma and strengthen their self-regulation and adaptability.

In addressing the issue of domestic violence, most parents need to prioritize the mental health and developmental needs of young people, assisting them in building positive interpersonal relationships and developing proper values. Only through collaborative efforts can rescue young people from the shadow of domestic violence, effectively prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency, and create a safe and healthy environment for their growth.

4. Suggestions

To address the impact of domestic violence on juvenile delinquency, we need to take proactive measures. Firstly, we should enhance public awareness and education about domestic violence to increase understanding and concern for this issue. Through awareness campaigns and education, more parents can learn about the dangers of domestic violence and understand proper parenting methods to prevent harm to their children. Secondly, it is crucial to establish a robust family support system that provides psychological counseling and support services to young people affected by domestic violence. This can help them overcome psychological trauma and enhance their self-regulation and adaptability.

In the process of addressing domestic violence, we need to focus on the mental health and developmental needs of young people, assisting them in building positive interpersonal relationships and developing correct values. Only through collaborative efforts can we rescue young people from the shadow of domestic violence, effectively prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency, and create a safe and healthy environment for their growth.

When children face challenges and difficulties, they need the support and encouragement of their parents to help them overcome obstacles and achieve success. However, if parents fail to provide positive support and instead neglect their child's efforts, the child may feel discouraged and disappointed. They may experience suppressed self-confidence and struggle to cope with the pressures and challenges of life. In such circumstances, they may seek alternative, negative avenues for happiness and fulfillment, such as engaging in criminal activities. Therefore, parents' positive support and encouragement play a crucial role in preventing juvenile delinquency.

5. Conclusion

In this article, it explores the impact of the family environment on children's psychology. Through a series of questions, it identifies the core factors that influence children's mental well-being. By reviewing and analyzing the case of juvenile crime in the UK, it can be concluded that the family environment plays a crucial role in shaping children's psychological development. Firstly, the stability and harmony of the family environment have a positive influence on children's emotional stability and sense of psychological security. A warm, intimate, loving, and supportive family environment helps children develop a healthy self-esteem and inner sense of security. Secondly, the parenting style and family values in the family environment have significant effects on children's attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral patterns. Parents' educational approaches and behavioral patterns can convey important messages to children about responsibility, respect, cooperation, and social values. Furthermore, the family environment directly or indirectly influences the development of children's interpersonal skills and emotional regulation abilities. In a harmonious family environment, children have more opportunities to learn and develop positive interpersonal communication skills, as well as effective coping mechanisms for stress and emotional distress. In conclusion, the family environment has a significant impact on children's psychological development. Therefore, it is important to prioritize and improve the family environment to provide children with a nurturing and conducive upbringing. One limitation of this research report is the

lack of specific data support and limited coverage of studies. In the future, it is hoped that further analysis can be conducted on children's mental health issues.

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