

ABSTRACT

Juvenile Delinquency in Trinidad and Tobago:
A social-psychological study of deprivation
and compensation

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Much of the theoretical literature on delinquency suggests that certain psychological, socio-economic and educational factors influence juvenile delinquency. Recent studies have emphasised the role of psychological factors. This research adopts a socio-psychological approach to clarify the explanation. It proposes that juvenile delinquency is significantly related to the juvenile's perception of personal and environmental deprivation and his desire to compensate for such deprivation.

The sample comprised one hundred and sixty-six (166) convicted male delinquents of the Youth Training Centre, Trinidad. The instruments used were a pre-coded questionnaire, two problem-solving vignettes and Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices Test. The researcher probed ambiguous responses.

The analysis indicated that most of the factors studied were related to the delinquent's perception of

personal and environmental deprivation. The most significant relationship, however, existed between the juvenile's lack of self esteem, wealth, affection or love and a sense of well being. The levels of correlation with well being were self esteem = 0.45; wealth = 0.44; affection or love = 0.43. The level of significance for each was 0.001.

The factors related to the delinquent's desire for compensation were: the desire for (i) a sense of well-being ($r = 0.6$; $p < 0.001$) and (ii) affection or love ($r = 0.3$; $p < 0.001$).

The major findings (using Chi-square and Kendall's Tau) indicate that juvenile delinquency is significantly related to the juvenile's perception of personal and environmental deprivation. The degree of compensation desired was also found to be significantly related (0.01) to the level of deprivation perceived. The data did not indicate a significant relationship between the level of offence committed (level of delinquency) and the level of compensation desired.