

## CRIMINAL TENDENCIES IN ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR CORRELATION TO DEPRESSION

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**ABSTRACT****OBJECTIVES**

*The study aimed to investigate the correlation between criminal tendencies and depression among young adults and to find out the relationship between these variables. Gender differences in these variables were also studied.*

**METHODOLOGY**

*A cross-sectional study was conducted in the city of Faisalabad over the period of 6 Months from January 2022 to June 2022. Young adults aged 15-25 were included in the study. Sample 300 participants, including 150 males and 150 females, through a convenient sampling technique. A structured questionnaire consisting of sociodemographic, depression and criminal tendency questions was used to collect data. Correlation analysis was performed to measure the correlation between criminal tendency and depression among youth. An independent sample T-test was used to get gender differences.*

**RESULTS**

*The findings of the study also revealed some significant correlation between criminal tendencies and depression among young adults. However, gender differences exist between criminal tendencies and depression, as males got higher scores than females.*

**CONCLUSION**

*The results of the research show a strong correlation between juvenile depressive disorders and criminal tendencies. Finding the causes of adult depression is also necessary to prevent future crimes related to depression.*

**KEYWORDS:** Criminal Tendencies, Mental Health, Adolescents, Depression

**INTRODUCTION**

All across the world, depression among young adults has become a serious health issue. According to survey reports, young adults from age 15-28 have been reported serious mental health problems in the last decade. More than 15 million young adults aged from 15 to 22 have been diagnosed with mental health issues/disorders. People who have depression are more likely to commit crimes as compared to the general population. The mood is characterized by sustained emotional tone, which is happy or sad. An abnormal feeling of euphoria or depression is considered a mood disorder, which is sometimes associated with psychotic features in severe cases. Several social, economic, psychological, biological and geographical causes that turn an individual into a criminal. Most of the studies show that there is a positive relationship between criminal tendency and depression.<sup>1,2</sup> There has been a profound relationship found between depression and criminal activity among young adults in literature across European countries. Depression has been identified as a motivating factor for crime or criminal tendencies among adults. Higher levels of depression have been analyzed among young adults, both boys and

girls, in juvenile correctional and detention centres.<sup>3,4</sup> The data also estimated moderate criminal tendency among young males and females. Aggressive behaviour, which is linked to depression, particularly in boys, is often not regarded, undiagnosed and left untreated, which can exhibit criminal tendencies later.<sup>5</sup> There has been a strong relationship between depression and delinquency among young girls and boys. Depression is linked with antisocial behaviour among young adults, which can lead to psychological behaviour.<sup>6,7</sup> Depression rates in females and males are relatively low during childhood, but a sharp rise in depression has been seen as they mark adolescence for many reasons. This depression can be linked to changes in mental illness and lead to criminal thought if left untreated. A few previous studies have shown a strong relationship between depression and criminal tendencies among young adults, male and female. A study on depression and violence assessment in young adults has indicated a high level of depression linked with a higher rate of aggressive behaviour, risk of committing crimes and violence among adults, especially males.<sup>8</sup> In another study in Sweden, it was analyzed that criminal tendencies in adults diagnosed with depression were much higher than in normal adults of the population. It

was found that young adults having episodes of depression were more aggressive, irritable and temper tantrums in their behavior, which may be associated with violence and committing of crime.<sup>9</sup> If the relationship between adults' depression and criminal tendencies is identified at an early stage, adolescents can prevent further damage to their mental health, as in the developmental period of depression, the apparent effectiveness of treatment is observed.

## METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study was conducted in Faisalabad, Pakistan, over 6 months from January 2022 to June 2022. The range of the sample was from 15-25 years old adults. Total number of participants was 300 (N=300). The sample size was calculated through an online sample size calculator with Confidence Interval=95%, Margin of Error=5%, Population Proportion=50% and Population size=300. Data was collected through a convenient sampling technique using two separate questionnaires, BDI and SCTI. To measure the characteristics, attitudes and symptoms of depression among young adults, the Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI) scale was used.<sup>10</sup> It consists of 21 self-rated items. Internal consistency for BDI ranges from 0.73 to 0.92. The Sakoon Criminal Tendency Inventory (SCTI) was applied to assess possible criminal tendencies among young adults. SCTI consists of 36 items with 5 responses from strongly agree to disagree strongly. According to the scale, the 1-36 range interprets no criminal tendency at all, 37-72 has a mild criminal tendency, 73-144 has a moderate criminal tendency, and 145-180 has extreme criminal tendency.<sup>11</sup> A written consent form about the confidentiality of data was signed by the participants who were willing to participate in the research. The participants were briefly informed about the importance of research. It took 25-30 minutes to complete the questionnaires by everyone. Sociodemographic information, gender, age, occupation, current location and marital status, along with questions regarding depression symptoms and criminal tendencies, were asked of the participants. The given data was analyzed by using the statistical package SPSS version 20. BDI scores were correlated against SCTI scores to determine if any significant relationship exists. Frequencies and percentages of demographic variables were calculated. Correlational analysis and t-test was done to find the relationship between variables.

## RESULTS

The Cronbach's alpha (Table 1) reliability analysis of SCTI and BDI are 0.77 and 0.82, respectively, indicating the reliability of the research data. According

to Table 2, the total number of participants is 300, including 50% male and 50% female. Age categories have also been separated, with young adults representing individuals aged 18-40, and the study also shows that 75% of the individuals are single. As per the table, 25% of the participants are married, 80% are students, and 20% work in different fields.

**Table 1: Range of Reliability and Its Coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha**

No	Coefficients of Cronbach's alpha	Reliability level
1	More than 90	Highly reliable
2	0.80-0.89	Good
3	0.70-0.79	Acceptable
4	0.6-0.69	Questionable
5	0.5-0.59	Poor
6	Less than 0.59	Unacceptable

**Table 2: Sample Characteristics, Frequency and Percentage (N=300)**

Demographic Variable	Frequency (F)	Age (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	150	50%
Female	150	50%
<b>Age</b>		
Young adults	210	63%
Middle age adults	60	27%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	230	75%
Married	70	25%
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	250	80%
Worker	50	20%

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis of Data (N=300)**

Variables	N	M	SD	Range	BDI	SCTI
Age of participant	300	40.09	11.41	21-72	-	-
Gender of participant	300	1.45	0.50	1-2	-	-
Marital status	300	1.26	0.44	1-2	-	-
BDI	300	50.97	6.79	36-65	01	0.135
SCTI	300	62.02	8.69	42-95	0.41**	01

Note. N= Total number of observations; M=mean; SD=standard deviation BDI= Beck's Depression Inventory; SCTI= Sakoon Criminal Tendency Inventory; correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of all scales and subscales used in this study. The range for the SCTI scale consists of 42-95, with the greater value indicating moderate criminal tendencies among young adults. The average level of depression among young adults is M=50.97, SD=6.79 and Sakoon Criminal Tendency Inventory scale has M=62.02, SD=8.69. According to data statistics, there is a significant positive relationship/correlation between BDI and SCTI

scales.

**Table 4: Independent group Sakoon Criminal Tendency and Beck's Depression Inventory (N=300)**

Variables	Male		Female		t	p	Cohen'sd
	M	SD	M	SD			
BDI	62.1	10.2	61.9	6.4	0.90	0.92	0.01
SCTI	51.3	6.3	50.5	7.3	0.57	0.54	0.11

Note: M=Mean; SD=standard deviation; BDI= Beck's Depression Inventory; SCTI= Sakoon Criminal tendency Inventory Table 4 shows the prediction of gender differences with its sub-scales BDI and SCTI. The data explained that there is a significant relationship between Sakoon's Criminal Tendency and Beck's Depression Inventory among adults. The t and p values showed that there is a gender difference in criminal tendency as males got higher scores than females.

## DISCUSSION

There is a complex, enduring, and paradoxical relationship between gender and crime. One of the most crucial elements that is acknowledged as having a significant impact on how criminal justice systems handle various types of crimes is gender. It has long been believed that the rates, patterns, and victimization experiences of men and women vary.<sup>12</sup> The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between criminal tendencies and depression among young adults. Statistical data analysis showed that both variables (SCTI and BDI) were positively correlated. This study also revealed that a significant age and gender difference existed. Currently, in the United States and Europe, mood and behavioural disorders (depression, stress, and anxiety) are the main focus of health practitioners and scientific researchers. 19% of adolescents have been diagnosed with disruptive behavioral disorders, according to a recent study.<sup>13</sup> According to a study in Pakistan, 20% of adults in prisons are experiencing depression and other mental health issues with an increase in criminal tendencies in their behaviors.<sup>14</sup> Delinquent behavior of individuals and its association with depression has been examined in the literature that persons with mental disorders have a higher tendency to criminal behavior. According to previous cross-sectional studies data, there is a strong relationship between crime and depression of an individual. According to previous data reports, incarceration and criminality of an individual can be strongly connected with their suffering from depression/mental health issues.<sup>15,16</sup> Another aspect of this study was that gender differences and age affect the depression and criminal tendency relationship. The result was in line with previous results where there

were gender and age differences in both experiences of depression and offending or committing a crime.<sup>17,18</sup> During an examination of personality characteristics, there has been a manifestation of both externalizing (conduct disorder and aggression among young males) and internalizing (passivity among young females) behavioral patterns that have been identified among young adults who were diagnosed with symptoms of depression and criminal tendencies. So, it can be included that gender and age interaction can be related to depression and crime tendency status to our most comprehensive specification. According to another study, 4% of depressed men and 0.5% of depressed women committed a violent crime after their depression diagnosis.<sup>19</sup> In another study, there was a significant correlation found between the depression variable scores and criminal and antisocial behavior.<sup>20</sup>

## LIMITATIONS

There is a further need for the identification of causes of depression among adults to avoid depression-related crime in future. However, because of less time duration and privacy factors, the data was collected from fewer individuals, so research data cannot represent the general population. Large-scale qualitative and quantitative research analyses are needed to discover the hidden aspects of crimes linked with mental disorders such as depression.

## CONCLUSIONS

According to data findings, a significant relationship occurs between youth depression and crime. With the current findings, youth mental health services and initiatives that engage the partnership of youth contexts, such as the family, schools, neighbourhoods, and the wider community, should create more inclusive and sustainable support for developing and protecting youth well-being.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** None

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