

Influence of Personality Traits and Parenting Styles on Perceived Criminal Behaviour among Youths in Abuja, Nigeria

Ogazi Alphonsius Chukwudi¹, Abubakar Musa Tafida², Nalah Augustine Bala^{3*}

¹Postgraduate Student of the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, P.M.B. 1022, Keffi, Nigeria.

^{2,3} Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, P.M.B. 1022, Keffi, Nigeria

* Corresponding Author

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100500265>

Received: 30 April 2026; Accepted: 05 May 2026; Published: 29 May 2026

ABSTRACT

The involvement of youth in acts of criminality is without doubt a source of serious concern and worry among parents, would be parents, government, educational institutions, law enforcement agencies and indeed society at large who are the major victims of criminal attacks. The study aims to investigate the influence of personality traits and parenting styles on perceived criminal behaviour among youths in Abuja, Nigeria. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 384 youth aged 18–45 years selected through purposive sampling techniques. Three standardized instruments include the Big Five Personality Inventory (BFFI), Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), and Criminal Behaviour Scale (CBS) were used to measure personality traits, parenting styles and criminal behaviour among youth in Abuja, Nigeria. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the authoritarian ($r = .14$) and permissive parenting styles ($r = .22$) were positively significantly related to criminal behaviour ($r = .15$). However, the authoritative parenting style establishes no significant relationship with criminal behaviour ($r = -.12$). Also, neuroticism ($\beta = -.038$, $t = -2.523$) and agreeableness ($\beta = -.203$; $t = -4.052$) personality traits made significant positive contribution to the influence of criminal behaviour among youth in Abuja. However, openness ($\beta = .793$, $t = 14.822$), conscientiousness ($\beta = .276$, $t = 5.645$), and extraversion ($\beta = .285$, $t = 6.445$) personality traits have demonstrated statistically significant negative influence on criminal behaviour. It indicated that conscientiousness and extraversion personality trait had less chances of engaging in criminal behaviour. The study concludes that these insights are essential for developing targeted interventions and policies to mitigate the influence of personality traits and parenting styles on criminal behaviour among youth in Abuja, Nigeria. It recommends that the government should establish psychology departments and employ the services of trained and certified Psychologists across local, state and federal parastatals especially ministries of education, youth and development, and social welfare. They will provide psychological therapy and guidance to both parents, adults, and children.

Keywords: criminal behaviour, parenting styles, personality traits

INTRODUCTION

The participation of youngsters in criminal activities is undeniably a significant cause of concern for parents, prospective parents, government entities, educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, and society as a whole, all of whom are primary victims of such criminal acts (Adamu & Kawugana, 2025). It is frequently asserted that kids are the leaders of future; one ponders the fate of a society where young individuals, plagued by various sorts of criminal behavior and backgrounds, are destined to lead. Notwithstanding parental efforts to enhance child raising and various governmental reforms and interventions aimed at young, the situation appears to be worsening rather than improving on a large scale (Okoye & Mathias, 2024). For instance, a publication from This Day Newspaper dated 13th December 2025, with the headline “Examining Society’s Failure and

Teenagers' Propensity to Crime," reported a rise in incidents of rape, theft, kleptomania, burglary, homicide, and prostitution among teenagers in Nigeria (This Day Newspaper, 2025). No doubt, youths' propensity to commit crime for money is seldom discussed, it has nonetheless continued to thrive and a reality of modern-day society. The get-rich syndrome has compelled teenage youths in Abuja and, by extension, other regions of Nigeria to engage in criminal behaviors, including internet fraud (Yahoo Yahoo), ritualistic killings, abduction, armed robbery, burglary, and cultism (Obasohan & Akpata, 2025). The societal impacts of these cankerworms are unequivocally detrimental and cannot be dismissed lightly, as their consequences influence everyone in some capacity.

As per the 2024 statistical data from the World Health Organization (WHO), homicide and criminal involvement among youths is a significant cause of mortality for individuals aged 15 to 29, with over 193,000 incidents reported annually; however, the rates and levels of criminal involvement exhibit considerable variation across different countries (World Health Organization, 2024). A report by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in 2024 indicated that, worldwide, hundreds of thousands of adolescents are incarcerated in detention centers, with a significant percentage awaiting trial (Nam-Sonenstein & Sawyer, 2025). The International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISRD4), encompassing more than 50 nations, provides a comparative examination of juvenile delinquency, emphasizing gang participation in Nordic urban areas. Data indicates that Sweden has the highest youth gang involvement rate at 11%, followed by Finland at 9%, and Denmark, Iceland, and Norway, each at approximately 6%. Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, is notable for 16% of its youngsters reportedly participating in street gangs (Marshall et al. 2022).

Statistics indicate elevated levels of young participation in criminal activities in Nigeria, notably armed robbery, cybercrime, and drug trafficking, influenced by reasons such as youth unemployment, poverty, and a dearth of possibilities (Eze, 2025). The data revealed that a significant 85.23% of the apprehended robbery suspects were adolescents. Although comprehensive national statistics on the proportion of teenage kids engaged in criminal activity are scarce, research suggests that a considerable number of apprehended individuals and reported offenders are adolescents. The Nigerian Prisons Service recorded a twofold increase in prisoners aged 18-35 over two years, comprising almost 75% of the inmate population, including both males and girls. Elevated young unemployment rates, with more than 85% of graduates failing to secure employment each year, are recognized as a significant catalyst for crime (Olabamiji, 2025).

Research on personality traits examines the relationships between personality and behaviors, emphasizing the importance of these factors in forecasting mortality, substance misuse, and criminal activities (Bhatt & Vashist, 2023). Discussions regarding personality traits focus on various theories and frameworks, notably the prominent Big Five model, which delineates five overarching dimensions: Openness, defined by creativity and intellectual curiosity; Conscientiousness, indicative of organization and reliability; Extraversion, associated with sociability and assertiveness; Agreeableness, characterized by cooperation and warmth; and Neuroticism, connected to emotional instability and negative affect (Amoozegar et al. 2025; Costa & McCrae, 1992; Shum et al. 2025). Furthermore, Eriksson et al. (2017) did a study to identify the particular personality traits associated with a propensity for criminal behavior. This research indicates that characteristics such as low conscientiousness, low agreeableness, high neuroticism, and psychoticism are associated with heightened criminality. This study seeks to examine the impact of personality traits and parenting styles on the perception of criminal behavior among youths in Abuja, Nigeria, with the objective of analyzing intrinsic behavioral patterns that predispose individuals to criminal activities and identifying intervention strategies to reduce such behaviors among youths in Abuja, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers have identified that a combination of "bright" and "dark" personality qualities significantly influences why certain individuals engage in criminal behavior (Bueno-de la Fuente et al. 2025). Personality traits are consistent patterns of emotion, motivation, cognition, and behavior that arise from the dynamic interplay between individuals and their environments, hence influencing and molding future behavior (Buss & Craik, 1983). In stable and predictable situations, individuals typically cultivate "bright" features, including the drive to sustain positive connections and emotional stability (Hurezan et al., 2024; Jeong et al., 2021). In contrast,

in hostile and unsupportive circumstances, individuals may gradually cultivate "darker" traits such as dominance, deceitfulness, and a contempt for moral standards, hence heightening the likelihood of participating in criminal behavior (Muris et al. 2017).

Openness to experience is a prominent feature among the Big Five personality dimensions, extensively examined within personality psychology. Openness is directly correlated with increased creative accomplishment (Lee & Ashton, 2018), superior critical thinking and expedited problem-solving abilities (Hildenbrand et al., 2018; Iqbal et al., 2020), and greater adaptability, enabling individuals to maneuver through uncertain and complex scenarios with enhanced proficiency (Knaps, 2015). Nigerian authors have examined the personality trait of openness to experience across diverse contexts, including its correlation with teachers' job productivity in Adamawa State (Musa & Udoh, 2023), its potential effect on entrepreneurial innovation in South-Eastern Nigeria (Ogbogu et al., 2024), its influence on the academic performance of biology students in Niger State (Nkok & Obabori, 2025), and its significance in the career maturity of adolescents in Ibadan (Ottu, 2014).

Research on agreeableness indicates it is a fundamental personality attribute linked to collaboration, empathy, and a propensity to evade conflict (Bleckmann et al. 2024). Principal findings underscore its beneficial association with career stability and collaborative behavior. Nevertheless, poor Agreeableness is continuously correlated with a heightened propensity for illegal conduct, particularly antisocial and aggressive activity. Individuals exhibiting low agreeableness are generally characterized by less trust, altruism, cooperation, and compliance, alongside heightened self-interest and a diminished capacity for empathy and self-regulation, correlating with an increased propensity for criminal behavior (Walters, 2023). Their features predispose persons to activities that damage or exploit others, however the link may be intricate and affected by additional traits like as neuroticism and conscientiousness (Satheesh et al. 2024). Consequently, low agreeableness heightens risk, sometimes evaluated in conjunction with other dark traits such as low Honesty-Humility and high Neuroticism, which are robust predictors of criminal behavior; nonetheless, data regarding its direct predictive capacity are occasionally inconsistent or necessitate consideration of social desirability biases. (Yang & Koo, 2022).

Conscientiousness negatively impacts criminal conduct; individuals with high conscientiousness are less inclined to commit crimes due to their organization, self-discipline, and adherence to regulations (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2024). Research associates low conscientiousness with antisocial behaviors, including impulsivity and rule violation (Naragon-Gainey & Simms, 2017). Low conscientiousness correlates with a disdain for adhering to norms, a deficiency in self-discipline, and impulsive behavior without regard for potential repercussions (Melchers et al. 2016). Studies demonstrate that antisocial behavior correlates with diminished levels of all dimensions of agreeableness and conscientiousness (Miller et al. 2003). Low conscientiousness is consistently associated with criminal and antisocial behavior, as persons with low scores on this attribute exhibit greater tendencies towards self-indulgence and impulsivity, hence elevating their risk of engaging in criminal activities (Shekwolo et al. 2022). Numerous studies have examined this link in the Nigerian setting, yielding results consistent with international research (Amadi et al. 2024; Tharshini et al. 2021). Ahmed (2019) established a robust and consistent negative association between conscientiousness and criminal conduct, indicating that persons with diminished conscientiousness are more prone to engage in illegal behaviors.

Extraversion seems to correlate with specific forms of criminal conduct, including violent acts and drug-related felonies. The interplay between extraversion and other qualities, such as neuroticism, also affects criminal behavior (Addad & Leslau, 1990). Research indicates a correlation between elevated extraversion and the commission of violent crimes and drug-related offenses (O'Connell & O'Riordan, 2014). Dina et al. (2025) established that elevated extraversion correlates with theft, smuggling, and illicit alcohol and drug consumption. Furthermore, Hurezan et al. (2024) demonstrated that elevated levels of extraversion may heighten the risk of conflict owing to aggressive social interactions. In conclusion, extraversion is not a conclusive predictor of criminal behavior; rather, its correlation is influenced by several circumstances, including age, the nature of the offense, and the existence of additional personality traits (Iruloh & Ukaegbu, 2015). The Big Five personality traits are typically linked to positive activities, with the exception of neuroticism, which includes characteristics like anxiety and emotional instability. Neuroticism is a largely hereditary characteristic encompassing tendencies to worry, experience guilt and loneliness, and exhibit heightened sensitivity, along with propensities for insecure and temperamental behavior (Tharshini et al., 2021). Elevated Neuroticism scores link positively with

heightened rates of criminal activity, suggesting that those who experience greater negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, and insecurity are more susceptible to offending and recidivism. Furthermore, Neuroticism frequently interacts with additional factors, including low Agreeableness and low Conscientiousness, which also forecast criminal behavior, indicating that personality is not the exclusive determinant but a substantial contributing factor in the intricate relationship between individual traits and criminal conduct.

Theoretical Framework

Numerous theoretical models have been suggested to elucidate the relationship between personality qualities and criminal behavior. Theoretical explanations for the formation of extraversion personality traits often fall into two primary categories: nature and nurture. Nature pertains to inherited traits, whereas nurture include environmental influences. Both are essential for comprehending and elucidating the impact of extraversion on the individual. According to Carl Jung's theories concerning personality traits and biological processes, an individual who scores low on the extraversion scale, known as an introvert, derives stimulation and energy internally, while an individual scoring high on the scale, termed an extravert, obtains stimulation and energy from their external environment (Roesler, 2025).

Eysenck proposed a theory positing that sympathetic nervous system responses are positively connected with extraversion, whereas parasympathetic nervous system responses are negatively correlated with extraversion, suggesting that social behaviors has genetic determinants (Eysenck, 1967). Eysenck asserted that extraversion possesses numerous hereditary factors, as seen by the greater similarity in extraversion levels among identical twins compared to fraternal twins (Valk et al. 2020). Jawarneh et al. (2025) utilized attachment theory to elucidate extraversion, particularly focusing on mother-child interactions that result in varying attachment styles, whereby children with secure attachment exhibited elevated levels of extraversion compared to those with insecure or non-attachment styles.

The correlation between neuroticism and criminal behavior is substantiated by multiple psychological theories, including Hans Eysenck's PEN model and the Five-Factor Model (FFM), which indicate that emotional instability, an essential element of neuroticism, predicts antisocial and aggressive behaviors (Miller et al. 2009). This characteristic can compromise judgment, resulting in more hazardous decisions, and fosters hostility and antisocial behaviors observed in offenders.

The Five-Factor Model (FFM) personality qualities, specifically low Agreeableness, low Conscientiousness, and high Neuroticism, have been linked to heightened aggression and antisocial conduct. Eysenck's (1977) personality theory, encompassing psychoticism (P), extraversion (E), and neuroticism (N), suggests that the N scale is a predictor of major crime, thereby establishing a substantial correlation between criminal behavior and personality factors.

The Cognitive-behavioural Theory of criminal behaviour posits that criminal actions stem from a confluence of acquired behaviours and maladaptive cognitive processes, or cognitive distortions (Saxena & Sahai, 2025). This theory emphasizes identifying and altering specific erroneous thoughts and beliefs that contribute to criminal behavior, rather than attributing it to inherent personality traits, employing cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques to enhance decision-making and self-regulation among offenders (Syasyila et al., 2024). The cognitive theory of crime posits that erroneous thought processes or beliefs may underlie criminal action. This concept posits that individuals with erroneous perceptions about themselves or others may engage in criminal behavior more frequently.

Cognitive-behavioral theory integrates the ideas of social and developmental psychology with those of experimental-clinical psychology. The hypothesis asserts that social behavior is acquired in the context of crime and delinquency. For instance, when children observe parents employing aggression as a disciplinary method, they start to perceive aggression as a means of dispute resolution.

This research based its findings on the following objectives:

To examine the influence of personality traits (Openness to experience, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Extraversion) on perceived criminal behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Abuja.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The research employs a cross-sectional survey methodology to evaluate the impact of personality factors on perceived criminal behavior among adolescents in Abuja. A cross-sectional study derives conclusions from the examination of single cross-sectional data collected by surveys administered to participants at successive points in time throughout data collection. The study design is employed to enable the researcher to illustrate associations between concepts and variables of interest within a study population at a specific moment, facilitating the examination of research questions and the testing of hypotheses through regression analysis, correlation, and independent t-test analysis, without establishing causation.

Population

The study's population comprises the youth demographic in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. According to the 2025 national estimate of the youth population, Macrotrends approximated the youth demographic (ages 18-45) in Abuja to be roughly 2.95 million, constituting around 70% of Nigeria's overall youth population of 4.21 million.

Sample

The sample size for this investigation was determined utilizing the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size estimation table for known or finite populations (Memon et al. 2020). The table demonstrates that for populations of 1,000,000 or more, the sample size is 384 (see to Appendix II). The sample size for this study comprised 384 youths in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. To reinforce the sample size data from Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table, their formula was utilized with a juvenile population of 384 in FCT Abuja. The formula is articulated as follows:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP(1 - P)}{d^2(N - 1) + X^2 P(1 - P)}$$

Where:

S = Required sample size

X = Z value (i.e. 1.96 for 95% confidence level)

N = Population size

P = Population proportion (expressed as a decimal; assumed to be 0.5 i.e. 50%)

d = Degree of accuracy (5%) expressed as a proportion (.05); i.e. the margin of error

The participants of the study were chosen using a purposive sample strategy (Ames et al. 2019). The purposive sampling strategy involves the deliberate distribution of questionnaires to conveniently accessible participants. This method is pertinent to the study as it enables the researcher to choose individuals with specific qualities important to the research, resulting in more comprehensive and significant data.

Data Collection

This research included three standardized tools for data gathering. The standardized instruments comprise the Big Five Personality Inventory (BFFI), created by John et al. (1991), to assess personality traits. It consists of 25 items utilizing a 5-point Likert scale, exhibiting internal consistency between 0.70 and 0.95. The psychometric coefficients for the sub-scales, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha, are as follows: conscientiousness .60, agreeableness .77, neuroticism .58, openness to experience .62, and extraversion .69 (John et al., 1991).

The Buri (1991) Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), which assesses parenting style from the child's perspective, comprises 30 items divided into three subscales. The reported Cronbach alpha reliability is .81 for permissive parenting in mothers and .71 for fathers, .78 for authoritative parenting in mothers and .92 for fathers, and .86 for authoritarian parenting in mothers and .81 for fathers. Furthermore, a 15-item, 5-point Likert-type questionnaire for the Criminal Behaviour Scale (CBS) was developed and validated by the researcher through pilot testing, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha reliability of 0.88.

Techniques for Data Analysis

The SPSS statistical software version 28 was employed to analyze the data by multiple regression analysis, assessing the impact of personality traits and the correlation between parenting styles and perceived criminal behavior among secondary school adolescents in Abuja.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the study's findings based on the test of hypotheses as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) are significantly associated with criminal behaviour. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to test the relationship between parenting styles and criminal behaviour among youths in Abuja.

Table 1 showing a correlation analysis of parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive) and criminal behaviour among youth in Abuja

Variables	M	SD	1	2	4	5	6
Authoritative	22.45	5.15	.05	-.12	-		
Authoritarian	26.78	5.56	.06	-.07	.14**	-	
Permissive	29.17	5.89	.05	-.06	-.04	.22**	.21*

**p < .001; *p < .01

As shown in Table 4.1, the authoritative parenting style ($r = -.13$) is not significantly related to criminal behaviour. However, the authoritarian ($r = .14$) and permissive parenting styles ($r = .22$) were positively related to criminal behaviour ($r = .15$). In addition, authoritative parenting style was significantly related to authoritarian ($r = .14$, $p < .001$) and permissive ($r = .22$, $p < .001$). Authoritarian parenting style was significantly related to permissive ($r = .21$, $p < .01$).

Hypothesis One: Personality traits have significant influence on criminal behaviour among youths in Abuja.

Table 4.2 Summary of multiple regression showing the influence of personality traits on youth's criminal behavior in Abuja

Predictor Variable	R	R ²	Df	F	β	T	Sig
(Constant)	-.793	.628	1300	219.689		1.256	
Openness					.793	14.822	.000
Neuroticism					-.038	-2.523	.012
Conscientiousness					.276	5.645	.000
Extraversion					.285	6.445	.000
Agreeableness					-.203	-4.052	.000

Table 4.2 illustrates that the results of the multiple regression analysis demonstrated a significant impact of openness personality traits on youth criminal behavior, indicating that for each unit increase in openness personality traits, criminal behavior decreased by 0.793 units ($\beta = 0.793$, $t = 14.822$). This indicates that qualities associated with openness significantly contribute to the mitigation of criminal behavior among youth in Abuja. Additionally, neuroticism ($\beta = -.038$, $t = -2.523$) and agreeableness ($\beta = -.203$, $t = -4.052$) significantly contributed to the influence of criminal behavior among youth in Abuja. Moreover, the personality qualities of conscientiousness ($\beta = .276$, $t = 5.645$) and extraversion ($\beta = .285$, $t = 6.445$) have exhibited a statistically significant negative impact on criminal behavior. It suggested that those exhibiting conscientiousness and extraversion are less likely to engage in criminal behavior.

Discussion

The initial hypothesis posits that parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) are highly correlated with criminal behavior. The findings indicate that authoritarian ($r = .15$) and permissive parenting styles ($r = .01$) have a positive and substantial correlation with criminal behavior ($r = .15$). Nevertheless, the authoritative parenting style is the sole parenting approach that has no significant correlation with criminal behavior. The results of this study correspond with earlier research by Terry (2004). The findings indicated a strong correlation between authoritarian parenting approaches and delinquent behavior. Likewise, Sarwar (2016) shown that an authoritarian parenting style results in children becoming rebellious and exhibiting negative conduct. Conversely, the authoritative parenting style is beneficial for children, as it promotes a balanced approach to parenting.

Amran and Basri (2020) demonstrate a substantial correlation between authoritarian parenting style and juvenile delinquent behavior. Nonetheless, authoritative and permissive parenting styles exhibit no substantial correlation. Parents who want to regulate and limit their children's freedom affect the behavior of adolescent students. Moreover, numerous pertinent studies have demonstrated the significant role of parenting styles in the development of criminal behaviors among adolescents (Baglivio & Epps, 2016; Igbo & Ihejiene, 2014).

The second hypothesis posits that personality factors significantly influence criminal behavior among youngsters in Abuja. The study indicates that openness personality traits significantly positively ($\beta = .793$, $t = 14.822$) affect criminal conduct among youths in Abuja. This finding is corroborated by Viet et al. (2024), who investigate the correlation between the likelihood of criminal behavior and various personality traits, including Agreeableness, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Openness, Neuroticism, as well as demographic factors relevant to criminology. The results indicate a distinct association between each personality trait and the likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior. The personality trait of openness shown no significant difference between law-abiding individuals and those with criminal backgrounds, indicating that those with openness traits are less prone to criminal behavior. Conversely, other research suggests that persons with diminished levels of openness and agreeableness are more prone to engage in criminal behavior, encompassing delinquency, recidivism, workplace deviance, and the endorsement of criminal views (Stanković et al., 2019; Tharshini et al., 2021).

Dolan (2024) presents an additional significant discovery about the influence of openness to experience on predicting first-time offending. This study found that those exhibiting elevated levels of openness were more prone to become first-time offenders. This may indicate that those who exhibit greater openness to new experiences may also possess a heightened propensity for risk-taking, perhaps resulting in criminal conduct. The findings of the current study align with those of Tharshini et al. (2021), who performed a systematic review to establish a connection between individual personality traits and criminality utilizing the Sage, Web of Science, APA PsycNet, Wiley Online Library, and PubMed databases. The findings suggest that individuals exhibiting a combination of low and high neuroticism traits—such as sadness, low anxiety, self-consciousness, susceptibility to stress, heightened impulsiveness, and hostility—are associated with criminal behavior, particularly psychopathy. Cunha et al. (2018) asserted that persons exhibiting psychopathic personality traits are unable of establishing profound emotional connections with others and experience difficulty in anger regulation, rendering them susceptible to criminal behavior.

Moreover, a finding from the current study aligns with Maryum et al. (2025), which investigated the correlation between Eysenck's personality traits (Psychoticism, Extraversion, Neuroticism), malicious creativity, and criminal inclinations among adolescents and young adults. The study's findings indicated that the personality trait of neuroticism had a minor yet significant correlation with delinquency, implying that emotional instability may foster impulsive behaviors, particularly under stressful situations. Similarly, the findings of Hurezan et al. (2024) indicated that neuroticism serves as a stronger predictor of first-time offending, suggesting a correlation with criminal recidivism. In contrast, Shekwolo et al. (2022) shown that the personality trait of neuroticism exerts a minimal influence on criminal behavior. Additional research have also demonstrated a correlation between neuroticism and criminal behavior (Freeman, 2022; Mahmood & Taha, 2025).

This study's key findings reveal that the personality qualities of conscientiousness and extraversion exert a statistically significant negative influence on criminal behavior, suggesting a reduced likelihood of engaging in such conduct. This nuance aligns with the findings of Ahmed (2019), which indicate that conscientiousness mediates the relationship between prison experience and criminal recidivism among ex-prisoners. Likewise, the study by Palomäki et al. (2021) demonstrated that persons with elevated scores in Conscientiousness (or Extraversion) had decreased (or increased) likelihood of engaging in betting and were less (or more) intensive gamblers, hence heightening gambling behavior and susceptibility to criminal conduct. Furthermore, a study by Maryum et al. (2025) demonstrated that Extraversion exhibited a minor yet significant link with delinquency ($r = .12, p < .05$). Hurezan et al. (2024) indicated that elevated levels of Extraversion were inversely associated with criminal activity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study's findings highlight the significant impact of personality traits and parenting styles on criminal behaviors among youth in Abuja metropolis. The substantial positive impact of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness, along with authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, indicates that these personality traits and parenting approaches have contributed to an increased likelihood of criminal behavior among youth in Abuja. The negligible and statistically insignificant impact of the neuroticism personality trait, along with the tenuous correlation between authoritative parenting style and criminal behavior, suggests that although both factors may independently affect and relate to criminal behavior to a degree, their influence and association are less pronounced compared to other personality traits and parenting styles. These insights are crucial for formulating targeted treatments and policies to alleviate the impact of personality traits and parenting styles on juvenile criminal behavior in Abuja, Nigeria. This study investigated the following recommendations:

- (i) The federal, state, and local governments' ministries of education and educational authorities should incorporate personality traits and parenting styles into the primary and secondary curricula as compulsory subjects, and as a mandatory elective course for tertiary students. An understanding of personality traits and parenting styles across all academic levels will inform adults and prospective parents at the primary and secondary levels about the advantages and disadvantages of various parenting styles and personality features, as well as their consequences for criminal behavior.

- (ii) The local government authorities ought to engage with the ministries of youth and social development at both state and federal levels to arrange educational summits, talks, and symposiums for adults and parents on subjects pertaining to parenting styles, personality traits, and adolescent delinquency.
- (iii) The government should create psychology departments and hire qualified and certified psychologists within local, state, and federal agencies, particularly in the ministries of education, youth and development, and social welfare. They will offer psychiatric therapy and counseling to parents, adults, and children.

Implications to Psychology

The study's findings indicated that the authoritative parenting style did not significantly correlate with teenage criminal behavior, suggesting that this style of parenting diminishes the possibility of youth criminality in society. This would contribute to clinical psychoeducation and psychotherapy therapies provided to parents and guardians at every opportunity to enhance the sense of capacity among kids. This would establish a foundation for developing effective clinical and psychotherapy interventions aimed at enhancing the quality of clinical and health-related care for kids exhibiting indications of disruptive and criminal behavior.

REFERENCES

1. Adamu, Y., & Kawugana, A. (2025). Assessment of the Impact of Youth Empowerment in Reducing Crimes in Bauchi State. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Research*, 11(4), 1-16. doi: 10.56201/ijssmr.vol.11no4.2025. pg.38.53
2. Addad, M., & Leslau, A. (1990). Immoral judgement, extraversion, neuroticism, and criminal behaviour. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 34(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X9003400102>
3. Ahmed, A. M. (2019). Big Five Personality Traits and Criminal Recidivism: Mediating Effect Framework. *Ife Social Sciences Review*, 27(1) 2019, 105-113.
4. Amadi, K.U., Nduanya, U.C., Iyidobi, T.O., Okoye, J.O, Muomah, C.R., Odinka, P.C., Ndukuba, A.C., Odinka, J.I., & Igwe, M.N. (2024). Relationship between personality traits and recidivism among inmates of the Nigerian correctional service, Enugu custodial centre. *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (AJHSSR)*, 08(08), 157-163. <https://www.ajhssr.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/S24808157163.pdf>
5. Amoozegar, A., Elsiddig, B.M.H., Falahat, M., Ikram, M., Ismaeil, A.A.R.M., & Krishnasamy, H.N. (2025). An examination of the role of Big Five personality traits on employee creativity in Sudanese public universities: a gender-based approach. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, 1-15. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1556637.
6. Amran, M. S., & Basri, N. A. (2020). Investigating the Relationship between Parenting Styles and Juvenile Delinquent Behaviour. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(11A), 25 – 32. doi: 10.13189/ujer.2020.082104
7. Baglivio, M. T., & Epps, N. (2016). The Interrelatedness of Adverse Childhood Experiences among High-risk Juvenile Offenders. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 14(3), 179-198.
8. Bhatt, N., & Vashist, S. (2023). To investigate the characteristics of individuals that lead to criminal behaviour, *Criminology*, 14(8), 304-320.
9. Bleckmann, E., Wiczorek, L. L., & Wagner, J. (2024). The Role of Agreeableness, Neuroticism, and Relationship-Specific Features in Self- and Other-Perceptions of Conflict Frequency in Adolescent Relationships with Parents and Peers. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 53(7), 1630-1645. doi: 10.1007/s10964-024-01951-6.
10. Bueno-de la Fuente, C., Núñez-Rodríguez, S., de la Fuente-Anuncibay, R., & González-Bernal, J. J. (2025). Relationship between Leadership, Personality, and the Dark Triad in Workplace: A Systematic Review. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(3), 297-323. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15030297>
11. Buri, J. R. (1991). Parental Authority Questionnaire. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 57(1), 110–119. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa5701_13

12. Buss, D. M., & Craik, K. H. (1983). The act frequency approach to personality. *Psychological Review*, 90(2), 105–126.
13. Costa, P.T., Jr., & McCrae, R.R. (1992). The five-factor model of personality and its relevance to personality disorders. *Journal of Personality Disorder*, 6, 343–359.
14. Cunha, O., Braga, T., & Goncalves, R.A. (2018). Psychopathy and intimate partner violence. *J. Interpers. Violence*, 11, 1–19.
15. Dina, M.M., Ciurbea, F.E., Lungu, R. A., & Rada, C. (2025). Specific personality traits of inmates who have committed violent and sexual offenses. *Anthropological Researches and Studies*, 15, 174-187. <https://doi.org/10.26758/15.1.11>
16. Dolan, E. W. (September 23, 2024). Study reveals how both bright and dark personality traits predict criminality. Retrieved from <https://www.psypost.org/study-reveals-how-both-bright-and-dark-personality-traits-predict-criminality/>
17. Eriksson, T. G., Masche-No, J. G., & Dåderman, A. M. (2017). Personality traits of prisoners as compared to general populations: Signs of adjustment to the situation? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 107, 237–245. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2016.11.030
18. Eysenck, H. J. (1967). *The biological basis of personality*. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C Thomas.
19. Eysenck, H. J. (1977). *Crime and Personality*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
20. Eze, T. C. (2025). Youth empowerment as a strategy for crime reduction in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. *IRASS Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(9), 25-34. <https://www.irasspublisher.com/assets/articles/1758189506.pdf>
21. Freeman, G. (2022). Big-5 Personality Traits as They Relate to Risk Behaviors: Comparisons of Traits with Participation in and Consideration of Risk Behaviors. *ALETHEIA: The Alpha Chi Journal of Undergraduate Scholarship*, 7(2), 1-13. doi: 10.21081/ax0340
22. Hildenbrand, K., Sacramento, C. A., & Binnewies, C. (2018). Transformational leadership and burnout: The role of thriving and followers' openness to experience. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 23(1), 31-43. doi: 10.1037/ocp0000051.
23. Hurezan, L., Turi, A., Ion, A., & Visu-Petra (2024). Dark and bright personality dimensions as predictors of criminal behavior and recidivism. *Scientific Reports*.
24. Igbo, J. N., & Ihejiene, M. A. (2014). Influence of Parenting Styles on Deviant Behaviors and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Garoua, Northern Cameroun. *International Journal of Educational Science and Research*, 4(5), 19–34.
25. Iqbal, Z., Abid, G., Contreras, F., Hassan, Q., & Zafar, R. (2020). Ethical Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior: The Mediating Role of Individual Attributes. *Journal of Open Innovation Technology Market and Complexity*, 6(3), 1-15. doi:10.3390/joitmc6030068.
26. Iruloh, B.-R. N., & Ukaegbu, H. M. (2015). Big five personality traits as predictors of emotional intelligence of secondary school teachers in Rivers State of Nigeria. *European Journal of Psychological Research*, 2(2), 52-59.
27. Jawarneh, E., Jawarneh, R., Maberah, S., & Al-Zoubi, N. (2025). Family Environment as A Predictor of Neuroticism and Extraversion Among Students of Jadara University. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 16, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.16.294>
28. Jeong, S. S., Koraqaard, M. A., & Morrell, D. (2021). The dark side of bright traits: How context cues misdirect facets of conscientiousness. *Personnel Review*, 50(3), 900-917. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-10-2019-0542>.
29. John, O. P., Donahue, E. M., & Kentle, R. L. (1991). *The Big Five Inventory – Versions 4a and 54*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley, Institute of Personality and Social Research.
30. Jolliffe, D., & Farrington, D. P. (2024). The promotive relationship between personality and self-reported offending. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 30(4), 319-337. doi: 10.1080/1068316X.2022.2092620.
31. Knaps, A. (2015). Creativity and conflict resolution. *Alternative pathways to peace, Defence Studies*, 15, 385–386. doi: 10.1080/14702436.2015.1093379
32. Lee, K., & Ashton, M. C. (2018). Psychometric properties of the HEXACO-100. *Assessment*, 25(5), 543–56. doi: 10.1177/1073191116659134.
33. Mahmood, B. A. & Taha, A. A. (2025). A Study of The Neurotic Personality Traits and Criminal Behavior in Patricia Highsmith's *Deep Water*. *Journal of the College of Languages*, 1(51), 59-98. doi: <https://doi.org/10.36586/jcl.2.2025.0.51.0059>.

34. Marshall, I. H., Birkbeck, C., Enzmann, D., Kivivuori, J., Markina, A., & Steketee, M. (2022). International Self-Report Delinquency (ISRD4) Study Protocol: Background, Methodology and Mandatory Items for the 2021/2022 Survey. Boston, MA: Northeastern University. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-78879-1>
35. Maryum, K., Naseem, A., & Arshad, S. (2025). Creativity Turns Malevolent: Personality Pathways to Criminal Behavior in Adolescents and Young Adults. *International Research Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (IRJAHSS)*, 3(1), 137-147.
36. Melchers, M. C., Li, M., Haas, B. W., Reuter, M., Bischoff, L., & Montag, C. (2016). Similar Personality Patterns Are Associated with Empathy in Four Different Countries. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7(290), 1-12. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00290
37. Memon, M. A., Ting, H., Cheah, J-H., Thurasamy, R., Chuah, F., & Cham, T. H. (2020). Sample Size for Survey Research: Review and Recommendations. *Journal of Applied Structural Equation Modeling*, 4(2), 1-21. doi:10.47263/JASEM.4(2)01.
38. Miller, D. J., Vachon, D. D., & Lynam, D. R. (2009). Neuroticism, Negative Affect, and Negative Affect Instability: Establishing Convergent and Discriminant Validity Using Ecological Momentary Assessment. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 47(8), 873-877. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2009.07.007.
39. Miller, J. D., Lynam, D., & Leukefeld, C. (2003). Examining antisocial behavior through the lens of the Five Factor Model of personality. *Aggressive Behavior*, 29(6), 497-514. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.10064>
40. Muris, P., Merckelbach, H., Otgaar, H., & Meijer, E. (2017). The malevolent side of human nature: A meta-analysis and critical review of the literature on the dark triad (narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy). *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12(2), 183-204. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691616666070>
41. Musa, U., & Udoh, C. (2023). Relationship between Big Five Personality Trait of Openness to Experience and Teachers' Job Productivity in Senior Secondary Schools in Adamawa State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, 7(10), 1-7. doi: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.701003>
42. Nam-Sonenstein, B., & Sawyer, W. (2025). Youth Confinement: The Whole Pie 2025. Retrieved from <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/youth2025.html>
43. Naragon-Gainey, K., & Simms, L. J. (2017). Clarifying the Links of Conscientiousness with Internalizing and Externalizing Psychopathology. *Journal of Personality*, 85(6), 880-892. doi: 10.1111/jopy.12295.
44. Nkok, E.A.E., & Obabori, H.F. (2025). Influence of agreeableness and openness to experience personality traits on biology students' Achievement in Bosso Local Government Area, Niger State, Nigeria. *FNAS Journal of Mathematics and Science Education*, 6(2), 72-78. <https://fnasjournals.com/index.php/fnas-jmse/article/view/691>
45. O'Connell, M. F., & O'Riordan, C. (2014). Predicting adult involvement in crime: Personality measures are significant, socio-economic measures are not. *Personality and Individual Difference*, 68, 98-101. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2014.04.010
46. Obasohan, J. O., & Akpata, R. (2025). Cybercrime and Ritualism: An Analysis under the Criminal Code. *International Journal of Law and Society*, 8(3), 249-260. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijls.20250803.22>.
47. Ogbogu, U. C., Igo, J., & Okenyi, O. S. (2024). The Predictive Assertion of Big-Five Personality Traits (All Factors) on Developing Young and Adults Entrepreneurial Concept Formation/Innovation. *Madonna Journal of Administration and Management Sciences (MJAMS)*, 1(1&2), 1-20.
48. Okoye, A. E., & Mathias, B. A. (2024). Youth involvement in criminal activities in Oyi Local Government Area OF Anambra State. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Education, Social Sciences and Arts (JIRESSA)*, 1(2), 28-36. <https://nigeriareposit.nln.gov.ng/server/api/core/bitstreams/1c889ff0-e2bf-4902-b497-aaa7ae27aa79/content>.
49. Olabamiji, A.A. (2025) Prison Overcrowding in the Nigerian Correctional System: Implications for Offender Rehabilitation at the Ado-Ekiti Correctional Center. *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 13(2), 14-34. doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/gjahss.2013/vol13n21434>.
50. Ottu, I. F. A. (2014). Openness to experience, conscientiousness and gender as personality indicators of career maturity of in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Nigeria. *European Journal of Educational Studies*, 6(1), 1-12.

51. Palomäki, J., Laakasuo, M., Castrén, S., Saastamoinen, J., Kainulainen, T., & Suhonen, N. (2021). Online betting intensity is linked with Extraversion and Conscientiousness. *Journal of Personality*, 89, 1081–1094. doi: 10.1111/jopy.12637
52. Roesler, C. (2025). The Process of Transformation–The core of analytical psychology and how it can be investigated. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 70(3), 355–373. doi: 10.1111/1468-5922.13095.
53. Sarwar, S. (2016). Influence of Parenting Style on Children’s Behaviour. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 3(2), 222-249.
54. Satheesh, A., Prem, A., Devananda, K. P., & Sahay, M. (2024). Prediction of Criminal Tendencies by Social Media Usage and Personality Characteristics. *International Journal of Advanced Research (IJAR)*, 12(10), 1653-1671. doi:10.21474/IJAR01/19798
55. Saxena, K., & Sahai, A. (2025). Understanding the Effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: A Study on Offenders. *Annals of Neurosciences* 32(4) 309–314. doi: 10.1177/09727531241288609.
56. Shekwolo, D. M., Kwanyigabwa, F. S., Ochimana, U. G., & Akise, O. (2022). Assessment of personality dynamics, self-esteem as predictors of criminal behaviour among undergraduate students of Nasarawa State University, Keffi. *International Journal of Management, Social Sciences, Peace and Conflict Studies (IJMSSPCS)*, 5(2), 145- 156.
57. Shum, K.-M., Ptaszynski, M., & Masui, F. (2025). Big Five Personality Trait Prediction Based on User Comments. *Information*, 16(418), 1-19. [https:// doi.org/10.3390/info16050418](https://doi.org/10.3390/info16050418)
58. Stanković, M., Simonovic, N., Bulatovic, J., Stojiljković, J., Hadži-Pešić, M., & Nesic, M. (2019). The prediction of criminal recidivism in male juvenile delinquents. *Psihologija*, 1, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.2298/PSI181002005S>
59. Syasyila, K., Gin, L. L., Mohd. Nor, H. A., & Kamaluddin, M. R. (2024). The role of cognitive distortion in criminal behavior: a systematic literature review. *BMC Psychology*, 12(741), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-02228-0>
60. Terry, D. J. (2004). "Investigating the Relationship between Parenting Styles and Delinquent Behavior." *McNair Scholars Journal*, 8(1), 1–11. <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/mcnair/vol8/iss1/11>
61. Tharshini, N. K., Ibrahim, F., Kamaluddin, M. R., Rathakrishnan, B., & Nasir, N. (2021). The Link between Individual Personality Traits and Criminality: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18,
62. This Day Newspaper (December 31, 2025). Examining Society’s Failure and Teenagers’ Propensity to Crime. Retrieved from <https://www.thisdaylive.com/2022/05/03/examining-societys-failure-and-teenagers-propensity-to-crime/>
63. Valk, S. L., Hoffstaedter, F., Camilleria, J. A., Kochunov, P., Yeo, B.T., Eickhoff, S. B. (2020). Personality and local brain structure: Their shared genetic basis and reproducibility. *Neuroimage*, 220, 1-33. doi:10.1016/j.neuroimage.2020.117067
64. Walters, G. D. (2023). Punishment and Personality: Low agreeableness and low conscientiousness as mediators of the inconsistent/angry parenting–delinquency relationships. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 25(3), 1-11. doi:10.1177/17488958231159367
65. World Health Organization (October 31, 2024). Youth Violence. Retrieved from [who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/youth-violence](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/youth-violence).
66. Yang, S.-W., & Koo, M. (2022). The Big Five Personality Traits as Predictors of Negative Emotional States in University Students in Taiwan. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19, 1-10. [https:// doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192416468](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192416468)