

The Research Proposal

Make sure you fill out completely *all* the information in the sections below. Failure to complete these sections fully and honestly may incur a loss of points. Responding to some questions with “no” or “n/a” or “I don’t know yet” *is* acceptable; however, leaving any responses blank is not. If you do not understand any questions you are encouraged to contact your instructor.

Section 1

Name: Neimat Elkarib

Your Major: Psychology

Section 2

On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident are you *now* feeling about writing for this course? Explain any change in your scoring from the first assignment.

9

Section 3

Final grade you received from your previous assignment (Research Plan). How do you feel about this grade? If you lost points on the first major assignments, then **where** and **why** did you lose points, and what have you done to address the issue? Write out your response in complete sentences below.

100/100. Felt really good, gave me the boost of motivation and confidence I needed!

Section 4

Based on your last assignment and the lessons you have received so far in ENG 204, what **three** things have you given extra care and attention towards for this assignment? Make sure your three points are updated and distinct from your previous submission

1/ My choice of wording

2/ Do not try to complicate things, just be direct with the point

3/ Remain informative

Section 5

Working Topic: (e.g., smoking)

1/ Criminality

Working Research Question: (e.g., Is smoking beneficial?)

1/ Is criminality caused by environmental factors alone?

Working Thesis: (e.g., Smoking is beneficial.)

1/ People become criminals as a result of environmental factors.

Working Secondary Questions

You may not have *all* your secondary questions yet – but have a go at writing what some may be. At least, you'll get some feedback from your instructor. Remember that secondary questions are W-questions that usually follow "if so ..." and/or "If not ..."

(Examples: What are the benefits of smoking?

1/ To what extent do environmental factors correlate with a person's chances in becoming a criminal?

2/ What are the biological factors that contribute to criminal behavior?

3/ Can there be both influences on becoming a criminal?

Working Counter Theses: (e.g., 1/ Smoking is not beneficial. 2/ Smoking may have some benefits, but it has more drawbacks. 3/ Smoking may be beneficial but only when combined with other practices. 4/ Smoking may be beneficial for some people but not for others. Etc.)

1/ People become criminals as a result of biological factors.

2/ People become criminals as a result of both environmental and biological factors.

Working Supporting Arguments: (e.g., [Smoking is beneficial because ...] 1/ smoking makes you look cool. 2/ smoking helps you lose weight.)

1/ People are taught correct behavior from a young age

2/ Experiencing traumatic instances, increases likelihood of becoming involved with criminality.

3/ Exposure to abuse can cause criminality.

Working Counter Arguments: (e.g., [Smoking is *not* beneficial because ...] because 1/ smoking causes serious diseases. 2/ cigarette smoke is very smelly. 3/ smoking not only harms the smoker, it also harms other people in the environment of the smoker.)

1/ Genetics play a significant role in becoming a criminal.

2/ Biological disorders, such as ADHD, contribute to the risk of criminality.

3/ Neural imbalances can cause criminality.

Working Refutations/Rebuttals/Acknowledgements of Counter Arguments:

(e.g., For “Cigarette smoke is very smelly,” I have found a study showing that most people like the smell of cigarette smoke on their clothes. I have also found an article describing a company that makes cigarette smoke room fresheners.)

1/ For ‘genetics play a significant role in becoming a criminal’, I will refute this argument by using research from Tabb et al that explains that this argument is invalid and does not have

2/ For ‘Biological disorders such ADHD, contribute to the risk of criminality’, I will refute this by using research from Cussen et al that explains that ADHD has environmental explanations.

3/ For ‘Neural imbalances can cause criminality’, I will rebuttal this argument by presenting limitations of the studies used in its counter evidence.

Write Your Paper Below

Begin your paper at the start of the next page. Note that APA Level 1 headers have been provided. Write appropriate paragraphs within these prescribed areas. Remember to leave the rubric at the end of the paper.

Introduction

In this paper, I argue that criminality is caused by environmental factors. Crime, as defined by Gottfredson and Hirschi, is the “acts of force or fraud undertaken in pursuit of self-interest.” (Akers, 1991, p. 202). Environmental factors include childhood and upbringing, traumatic experiences, abuse, and bullying whereas biological factors include genetics, hormonal imbalances, gender, and brain chemistry.

I support my position with the following three arguments. First, I explain how behavioral psychology has revealed that children learn correct behavior from a young age through reinforcement and imitation (Mcleod, 2016). Second, I argue that traumatic experiences, cause an increased probability in the engagement of criminal behavior (Traynham et al., 2019). Third, I demonstrate how the exposure to abuse influences criminal behavior (Haapasalo & Tokela, 1999).

I also consider alternative arguments that my audience may have. I consider the argument that genes play a significant role in criminal behavior. I refute this argument using an article by Tabb et al (2018), which explains that there is no consistent research to support the argument of genetics being involved in criminal behavior. I also consider that biological disorders such as ADHD are attributed with criminal behavior. I refute this argument with research from Cussen et al. (2011), which shows an environmental basis for ADHD. The last argument I consider is that neural imbalances can cause criminality (Ward et al., 2018). I rebut this argument by explaining the limitations of the research presented in the counter evidence.

This paper is important because with the knowledge of why people become criminal’s criminality as a whole can be eradicated, quicker. My paper will help forensic psychologists and criminology experts understand why criminals commit such acts. This paper will also help mental health specialists who deal with inmates. With the knowledge of what caused criminal behavior, specialists can aid inmates in making better decisions for the future.

Discussion of Sources

Source 1

Haapasalo, J., & Pokela, E. (1999). Child-rearing and child abuse antecedents of criminality.

Aggression and Violent Behavior, 4(1), 107–127. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s1359-1789\(97\)00027-x](https://doi.org/10.1016/s1359-1789(97)00027-x)

The article was published in the *Aggression and Violent Behavior* journal, which is a peer reviewed scientific journal that focuses on the study of violent behavior. The authors of the article are, Haapasalo, who is a criminal psychologist, and Pokela, who is a researcher in the field of psychology. This article reviews studies which show a correlation between negative child rearing and upbringing and violent crime in adulthood. The source evaluates longitudinal studies, which have a strength of being consistent overtime, as well as international data from countries like New Zealand. I will use this source to support my argument that exposure to abuse can lead to an increased chance of being involved in crime. I will also use the data in the evaluated studies to show that this claim in on a wide spectrum across countries and there is evidence for that. I think this source is great because compiling many studies and reviewing them builds a strong support for the topic at hand. By compiling those supportive studies in one article, it helps me gain confidence in writing about this claim. The only thing that I did not like and would change is that there seems to be a repetition of ideas in the article which makes it unnecessarily long.

Source 2

Tabb, K., Lebowitz, M. S., & Appelbaum, P. S. (2018). Behavioral Genetics and Attributions of Moral Responsibility. *Behavior Genetics*, 49(2), 128–135.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10519-018-9916-0>

This article was published in the Behavior Genetics journal which is a leading journal involved in the analysis of genetics. The authors of the article are experts in the field with Matthew Lebowitz being a PHD holder in medical psychology and Paul Appelbaum being a leading expert on legal issues in medicine and psychiatry. This automatically gives the article great credibility. The topic discussed in the article is the effect of genetic explanations in blaming people for their moral responsibility. The article evaluates explanations of why this topic has been difficult to demonstrate in empirical studies. I think what makes the content of this source especially useful is that it includes a section of findings from existing studies which have helped me find useful studies that I will also use in this paper. This also sets a great background for the rest of the paper. I will use this article to refute the counter argument that genetics play a significant role in becoming a criminal as it explains the lack of clarity and inconsistencies in research involving genetics and criminal behavior. I think this source is good, it is informative and well structured. I would not change anything about this source.

Source 3

Lundström, S., Forsman, M., Larsson, H., Kerekes, N., Serlachius, E., Långström, N., & Lichtenstein, P. (2013). Childhood Neurodevelopmental Disorders and Violent Criminality: A Sibling Control Study. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 44(11), 2707–2716. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-013-1873-0>

This article was published in the Autism and Developmental Disorders journal, a peer reviewed and scholarly journal that focuses on developmental disorders. The authors of the article include Lundström and Kerkes, professors in the field of psychiatry and Larsson and Lichtenstein, professors in the field of epidemiology. The article examines the correlation between developmental disorders such as, Attention Deficit/Hypertension disorder (ADHD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and violent crime. What makes this article special in my opinion is that it uses data from Stockholm,

Sweden which allows me to address my topic on an international level. Since the article supports my audience's claim that biological disorders such as ADHD can cause criminality, I will use it as counter evidence for the argument. I like that this article uses a large sample in its study because this allows for better generalizability and is a strength of the study in the article. One thing that I did not like about the article was that it used a lot of jargon which makes it hard to understand.

Source 4

Cussen, A., Sciberras, E., Ukoumunne, O. C., & Efron, D. (2011). Relationship between symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and family functioning: a community-based study. *European Journal of Pediatrics*, *171*(2), 271–280.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00431-011-1524-4>

This article was published in the *European Journal of Pediatrics*, a peer reviewed medical journal that is specialized in pediatrics. The authors of the article are specialized in pediatrics and medicine in general. The article seeks to examine the correlation between symptoms of ADHD and family dysfunction. The article reveals that there is a correlation between family dysfunction and ADHD symptoms. This information is important for my paper because it refutes my audience's claim that biological disorders can cause criminality. The article is reliable and allows me to confidently contradict my audience's perspective on this topic. I also think this article contributes significantly to the understanding of the factors that contribute to criminality. I like that the article is informative and addresses multiple measures such as ADHD symptoms, family dysfunction and parental psychopathy.

Source 5

Akers, R. L., Krohn, M. D., Lanza-Kaduce, L., & Radosevich, M. (1979). Social Learning and Deviant Behavior: A Specific Test of a General Theory. *American Sociological Review*, *44*(4), 636. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2094592>

This article was published in the American Sociological Review, the official peer reviewed journal that is part of the American Sociological Association journal. The authors of the article, Akers and Krohn are experts in criminology and Radosevich is an expert in sociology. The article explains the methodology and findings of primary research conducted by the authors to examine the effect of social learning on deviant behavior. Although the deviant behavior examined are Alcohol use and abuse, the article shows potential for more intense deviant behavior. I will use this article to support my claim that you are taught correct behavior from a young age through social learning and reinforcement. The article will help support my claim as it explains how learning through imitation and reinforcement an effect has on how you behave in the future. I think what makes this article special is that it includes a section which explains the strengths of the methodology used. This allows me to feel confident in using this article as a reliable source to support my claims. What I don't like about this article is that it doesn't use longitudinal studies which means that they have not been able to test their theory on a long-term basis.

Source 6

Hernandez-Avila, C. A., Burlison, J. A., Poling, J., Tennen, H., Rounsaville, B. J., &

Kranzler, H. R. (2000). Personality and substance use disorders as predictors of criminality. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 41(4), 276–283.

<https://doi.org/10.1053/comp.2000.7423>

This article is published in the Comprehensive Psychiatry, a peer reviewed medical journal that focuses on psychiatry and mental health. The authors of the article are professors of clinical psychology and psychiatry with Professor Rounsaville serving as a member of the school of Medicine at Yale university until his sudden death in 2011. The article evaluates the correlation between personality disorders and criminal behavior among drug abuse patients. As the previous article explains the way in which we learn deviant behavior through

examining the correlation between social learning and alcohol use, I will use this article as a further explanation of how substance abuse can eventually lead to criminal behavior. It helps me further support my claim. I like that this article is concise and gets straight to the relevant points.

Source 7

Traynham, Kelley, Long, & Britt. (2019). Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms and Criminal Behavior in U.S. Army Populations: The Mediating Role of Psychopathy and Suicidal Ideation. *The American Journal of Psychology*, 132(1), 85.

<https://doi.org/10.5406/amerjpsyc.132.1.0085>

This article is published in the American Journal of Psychology, the first journal of primary experimental research in psychology published in the English language. The authors of the article include Traynham, a lead researcher in army medical labs. The article acknowledges that there has been a correlation between posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and criminal behavior and attempts to investigate the underlying motives that lead to this correlation. The article shows that there is difference in criminality rates between those who show PTSD symptoms and those who do not. I will use this article to support my claim that experiences of trauma, which lead to PTSD, can influence criminality. The article is special because examining PTSD can be very difficult hence, it uses existing data bases from ex-soldiers in the army. I like that this article provides an explanation to the correlation as this helps me understand the correlation itself and therefore strengthens my claim. I did not like that the article does use excessive jargon and I think that using more simple terminology could have conveyed the same information in a more direct and easily understandable way.

Source 8

Ward, T., Wilshire, C., & Jackson, L. (2018). The contribution of neuroscience to forensic explanation. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 24(3), 195–209.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316x.2018.1427746>

This article was published in *Psychology, Crime & Law*, a peer reviewed, official academic journal for the European Association of Psychology and Law. The authors of the article include Tony Ward, a Professor of Forensic Clinical Psychology in New Zealand. The thesis of the article is that neuroscience methodologies are useful in explaining criminal behavior. I will use the supporting arguments in this article to explain my counter argument that neural imbalances can cause criminality. I will also use this source to rebuttal the argument as I can depict some limitations presented in the article that help undermine the counter argument in my paper. I think the structure and organization of this article makes it easy to read and navigate through. My favorite part of the article is that it explains the challenges and limitations of neuroscience methods, this helps form my rebuttal. I think the article would have been better if the authors had conducted some primary research to support their claims.

Additional Sources - Books

Haney, C. (1920). *Criminality in Context (The Psychological Foundations of Criminal Justice Reform)* (1st ed.). American Psychological Association.

Huertas, L. E., Lucero, B., & Swedberg, G. J. (2016). *Voices of Crime: Constructing and Contesting Social Control in Modern Latin America* (Illustrated ed.). University of Arizona Press.

Outline

1. Introduction
 - a) Thesis, Research Question and Definitions
 - b) Introduce the supporting arguments
 - i) People are taught correct behavior from a young age
 - ii) Experiencing traumatic instances, increases likelihood of becoming involved with criminality.
 - iii) Exposure to abuse can cause criminality
 - c) Introduce the counter arguments
 - i) Genetics play a significant role in becoming a criminal.
 - ii) Biological disorders, such as ADHD, contribute to the risk of criminality.
 - iii) Neural imbalances can cause criminality.
 - iv) Refutation/ rebuttal/ acknowledgements of counterarguments
 - d) Why this paper is important
 - i) Purpose of the paper
 - ii) What implications this paper may have
2. Supporting Arguments
 - a) Introduce and explain the thesis
 - b) State supporting arguments
 - i) People are taught correct behavior from a young age
 - 1) Explain argument
 - 2) Use research evidence from B.F Skinner
 - 3) Use research evidence from Social Learning Theory
 - ii) Experiencing traumatic instances, increases likelihood of becoming involved with criminality.
 - 1) Explain argument

- 2) Use evidence from Trayham et al.
 - iii) Exposure to abuse can cause criminality
 - 1) Explain argument
 - 2) Use evidence from Haapasalo et al's article.
3. Counter arguments
 - a) Introduce and explain the counter thesis
 - b) State counter arguments
 - i) Genetics play a significant role in becoming a criminal
 - 1) Explain counter argument
 - 2) Refute argument using article by Tabb et al.
 - ii) Biological disorders, such as ADHD, contribute to the risk of criminality.
 - 1) Explain counter argument using counter evidence from Lundstrom
 - 2) Refute argument using evidence from Cussen et al.
 - iii) Neural imbalances can cause criminality.
 - 1) Explain counter argument using counter evidence from Ward et al.
 - 2) Rebuttal this by explaining the limitations of its counter evidence
4. Conclusion
 - a) State long thesis
 - b) Summary
 - c) Implications
 - d) Suggestions
 - e) Urge for more support in research regarding this area

References

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<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00431-011-1524-4>
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Checklist

Before submitting, write “YES” for each of the items below. If this section has not been completed in full then your paper will need to be resubmitted as LATE (incurring the usual 10% late penalties).

1/ I have carefully read *aloud* my entire paper and corrected issues where appropriate. **YES**

2/ I have named the file for submission as follows: Research Proposal [my name]

For example: Research Proposal Philip Michael McCarthy **YES**

3/ I have read the rubric and guide and included all the information required in the pages above. **YES**

4/ I have pressed spellcheck/grammar check and corrected any text as appropriate. **YES**

5/ I have set my WORD document to all the specified proofing requirements, and I have corrected my text accordingly. If not, I have contacted my instructor for assistance. **YES**

6/ The file I am submitting is a Microsoft Word document. **YES**

7/ I have carefully checked my paper to ensure there are *no* examples of any form of plagiarism. I fully understand what these forms of plagiarism are, and I realize fully that any examples of plagiarism will have severe consequences (including *but not limited to* a zero grade, an F for the course, a formal report to administration, and/or having to write a completely new research paper on a different topic). I further confirm that I have had ample opportunity to discuss issues of plagiarism with my instructor and that all my questions have been addressed. **YES**

8/ All work submitted in this paper is my own. No other person was involved in any of the actual writing of this paper. If I received ANY help from ANY other source, I have emailed my instructor to detail ALL the support that I received. **YES**