



Early Childhood Development's Correlation with Impulsive and Premeditated Crimes

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines how early childhood developmental problems especially Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) influence whether individuals commit impulsive or premeditated crimes.

Research shows that childhood trauma can disrupt emotional regulation, attachment, and decision making.

This project compares real criminal cases to identify patterns linking developmental background to psychological traits and types of crime.

Key Points:

- Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) impact behavior and decision-making
- High ACE scores are linked to criminal activity
- This study focuses on type of crime, not just likelihood
- Goal: Understand how trauma shapes different criminal behaviors

DATA AND FINDINGS

Main finding:

Early childhood trauma correlates with both impulsive and premeditated crimes, but in different ways. Individuals with higher ACEs scores were more likely to commit impulsive crimes often driven by emotional dysregulation and poor impulse control however, most if not every criminal I researched in this paper had an aces score other than 0. Childhood trauma was strongly linked to later criminal behavior as supported by the cycle of violence theory. Despite all of this my main finding was that not all children faced with childhood trauma will become criminals, resilience and community also play a large role.

Trends:

- High ACEs → poor emotional regulation → impulsive crimes (assault, theft)
- Trauma and long-term mistrust/planning → premeditated crimes (murder, fraud)

Examples:

- Elliot Rodger → Social isolation + resentment → planned mass murder
- Colton Simpson → unstable environment → repeated impulsive crimes
- Giselle Esteban → paranoia + emotional instability → planned homicide

Criminal	Crime	ACEs score	Resilience/Community
Elliot Rodger	Premeditated mass murder (Isla Vista, 2014)	Low - Moderate (divorce, social isolation)	Low resilience/moderate community -Stable background, poor social skills/connection
Colton Simpson	Premeditated robbery, burglary, grand theft	High (gang involvement, environment)	Low resilience/low positive community -Strong social presence through gang culture, but little prosocial support
Yasmin Charisse Millett	Premeditated bank robberies	Unknown	Unknown
Giselle Diwag Esteban	Premeditated murder (Michelle Le case)	Low - Moderate	Moderate resilience/moderate access- education and social background with poor emotional coping
Antoine Watson	Impulsive assault (manslaughter - Visha Ratanapakdee)	Moderate (limited information)	Moderate access
Jonathan Rinderknecht	Impulsive arson (Palisades fire)	Moderate (impulse-control issues)	Low resilience/moderate access- fixation and poor self-regulation
Jade Janks	Impulsive murder	Moderate (divorce, family changes)	Moderate resilience/high access- family support and resources but poor conflict response
Savannah Church	Impulsive assault during robbery	Unknown/moderate	Low-moderate resilience

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

Conclusion:

- ACES strongly influence criminal behavior
- Impulsive crimes are more linked to emotional dysregulation
- Premeditated crimes may stem from long-term psychological effects
- While someone who has a high aces score is more likely to commit a crime, access to resilience and community are what really dictate their future

Implications:

- Early intervention is critical
- Teach emotional regulation and coping skills
- Making sure kids have access to community and are taught resilience

Nest Steps:

- Study role of resilience more deeply
- Apply findings to prevention program aimed to help children

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

- Mixed-methods meta-study (qualitative and quantitative)
- No primary data collected (observational research)
- Data sources:
 - Case studies (8 criminals: 4 male, 4 female)
 - Police reports, court records, interviews
 - Public health and census data
- Quantitative analysis: correlations
- Qualitative analysis: thematic patterns in trauma and behavior

Why This Matters:

Combining both methods allows for deeper understanding of individual motivations while still identifying broader patterns across many cases. Psychology especially criminal psychology is a nuanced field that requires many types of data.

DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION

- Trauma disrupts brain development (decision-making and emotional control)
- Supports theories:
 - Cycle of Violence
 - Attachment Theory
 - Low self-control theory
- Not all individuals with trauma commit crimes → Resilience matters
- Study limitations: small sample size and reliance on secondary data

This supports:

- Attachment theory → early instability leads to poor emotional control
- Cycle of violence → trauma increases risk of later harmful behavior
- Resilience Theory → not all individuals with trauma become offenders

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