Development and Validation of Juvenile Social Alienation Scale

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Abstract

The current study aimed to develop a reliable and valid assessment scale on *juvenile social alienation*. Items for the measure were based on responses from 30 incarcerated juvenile delinquents obtained through semi-structured interviews, which resulted in an item pool of 40 statements. After expert validation, 23 items for the Juvenile Social Alienation Scale (JSAS) were finalized and administered to 211 juvenile delinquents, along with the Measure of Criminal Social Identity (MCSI, Boduszek et al., 2012) to assess convergent validity. Based on the principal component factor analysis three-factor solution was finalized for the scale. The three factors (subscales) were labeled as Disgruntlement, Disaffection, and Estrangement. The assessment scale had satisfactory internal consistency, and concurrent and convergent validities and could be utilized for assessment and correctional counseling services for juvenile delinquents.

Keywords: juveniles, social alienation, identity, criminal thinking, counseling, disgruntlement, disaffection, estrangement

Harré and Lamb (1983) defined alienation as, "a state 3o, or process in which something is lost by or estranged from the person who originally possessed it," which results in a pessimistic relationship between a child and their environment (Young, 1985; Irshad, 2017) like withdrawing from social interactions at school (Calabrese & Seldin, 1986; Irshad, 2017).

Alienation is a theoretical notion that defines the isolating, demeaning, and disapproving impacts experienced by the self (Marx, 2019). While, social alienation is defined as the experience of individuals who feel separated from societal values, rules, practices, and relationships due to a range of social structural factors (Crossman, 2020). Those who are socially alienated are socially estranged from the mainstream.

During turbulent adolescence life, social alienation becomes a problem, especially for juvenile delinquents with criminal thinking styles based on early distorted thinking patterns that dissociate them from family, peers, and community.

Reduced social connectedness thus results in isolation, which correlates with social alienation (Zavaleta, 2007). Biordi and Nicholson (2011; see also Dean, 1961; Seeman, 1959) suggest, that alienation results in several beliefs and thinking patterns that include, *powerlessness* (a belief that personal conduct or actions cannot bring about consequences one looks for or desires), *isolation* (inability to hold major beliefs or goals as valuable like others generally do), *normlessness* (a belief that socially unacceptable actions are essential to accomplish goals), *meaninglessness* (the belief that a few actions and behaviors predict significant outcomes), and *self-estrangement* (separation of oneself from work or creative potentials).

Bowlby (1973) suggested human beings have an instinctive need to socialize, to attach to others, and to build strong bonds with others to survive. Many human attributes, such as being rational, thinking critically, playing and working, learning a language, and helping and collaborating develop through interactions with others. However, for some individuals, relations with others are weak or nonexistent, resulting in isolation (Saleem et al., 2014). This can affect social relations, communications, and even psychological health.

Several studies (e.g., Dean, 1961; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Irshad, 2017; James & Johnson, 1983; Mackey & Ahlgren, 1977; Mau 1992; McDougall et al., 2004; Williamson & Cullingford, 1998) during the past 40 years have looked at alienation in adolescents and adults and have measured it in three dimensions i.e., powerlessness, normlessness, and

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social isolation (Dean, 1961; Irshad, 2017). These dimensions of alienation have determined that incarcerated adolescents significantly scored higher on powerlessness, isolation, and overall alienation than non-incarcerated adolescents (Calabrese & Adams, 1990) suggesting prisoned juveniles are more isolated and alienated than their counterparts. The broader questions are, could alienation during development result in juvenile criminal thinking and later behavior? The above studies suggested the answer to these questions is a resounding *yes*. We developed an instrument that would measure alienation in juveniles and test the efficacy of the instrument on violent and non-violent delinquents confirming the relationships between alienation and possible criminal thinking and behaviors.

Methodology
Generation of Items
To explore and generate different thinking styles and expressions related to social alienation among juveniles, phenomenology was explored. For this purpose, 30 juvenile delinquents (imprisoned for almost 36 months) were selected through purposive sampling. The participants were asked a single open-ended question "Which thoughts cause you to feel separated and estranged from others (in Urdu)?" to investigate thought patterns associated with juvenile delinquents' social alienation. After exploration, the recurring items were excluded from the list and a final list of 40 thought patterns was given to six experts (four criminologists and two psychologists), who had experience of working with juveniles, for empirical validation. Experts found 23 distorted socially alienated thought patterns out of 40 as appropriate to put together 23 Urdu items as a tentative Juvenile Social Alienation Scale (JSAS) for further processing.

Pilot and Main Study
Sample
To establish alienation in delinquent juveniles and to find how good the items were in terms of readability, clarity, and grammar, 30 incarcerated juvenile delinquents (imprisoned for 1-36 months) were purposively sampled and given JSAS in a pilot study. It took them 10 minutes to complete the scale, and when asked about the above properties of the scale they all said the scale was highly readable, user-friendly, and understandable.

For the main study, authors conveniently sampled a group of 211 juvenile delinquents, imprisoned for 1-60 ($M = 9.86$, $SD = 11.92$) months that ranged in age from 10 to 17 ($M = 15.80$, $SD = 1.21$) years. This sample could be divided into three main educational categories, uneducated 78 (37%) uneducated, 54 (25%) from 1st-5th classes, and 79 (37%) from 6th-11th classes. Of the higher number of delinquents, 153 (72.5%) had committed violent crimes and 58 (27.5%) had committed nonviolent crimes. About the same number of delinquents came from urban areas 110 (52.1%) and from rural areas 101 (47.9%).

Instrument
Demographic Form. A demographic form comprised of subject variables such as age, education, geographic information (rural or urban), duration of imprisonment, recidivism, and type of crime (violent or non-violent).

Juvenile Social Alienation Scale (JSAS). The same scale that was used in the pilot study was used in the main study and comprised 23 items that depicted socially alienated criminal thinking styles of juvenile delinquents. Each item could be responded to on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The high score signified more social alienation in criminal thinking. See the

reliability and validity information established in this study in the results below.

Measure of Criminal Social Identity (MCSI). Boduszek et al. (2012) developed MCSI, translated and adapted into Urdu by Shagufta (2015). This scale was based on the Three-dimensional Strength of Group Identification Scale (Cameron, 2004) that measures criminal social identity in prisoners. The scale consists of eight items, where each item is rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale from *strongly agree* (5) to *strongly disagree* (1). It had three subscales, namely Cognitive Centrality (CC, which measures the psychological importance of delinquent group identity), In-group Affect (IA, which measures feelings, attitudes, or emotional attachment to in-group delinquents), and In-group Ties (IT, which measures the level of personal bonding to other delinquents). The reliability of subscale CC was low to moderate ($\alpha = .68$), for subscale IA high ($\alpha = .91$) and IT subscale moderately high ($\alpha = .81$), and overall MCSI, Shagufta (2015) found a moderate internal consistency ($\alpha = .72$).

Procedure
Permission to collect data from the Institute of Clinical Psychology, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan, and from the authors of MCSI were done in sequence. Data from juvenile delinquents was taken after permission was sought from the Inspector General of Prisons, Punjab, Pakistan. The measures were administered by researchers and prison assistant superintendents. The researcher instructed the superintendents about administering the measures. The participants were briefed and then debriefed about the research protocol. Since the parents of these juveniles could not be contacted, consent to administer the instruments was taken from the Inspector General of the Prisons. The authors assured participants that the information collected would remain confidential, anonymous, and private. After that, each participant was given a packet of research instruments including demographic form, JSAS, and MCSI, and was told to complete all instruments truthfully and to the best of their ability. In cases where participants were unable to complete the packet the author or the superintendent read the information from the packet and the participants simply responded to each piece of information. The packet took 15 to 20 minutes to complete when participants did them individually, and slightly longer in other settings when the authors or helpers had to verbalize the scales.

Results
Item Analysis
Eighteen item-total correlations from 23 items were screened that showed significant correlations. Item-total correlations less than .20 were excluded from the factor structure, because on average, the inter-item correlation of items should be between .20 and .40, indicating that while the items are generally homogeneous, they include enough distinctive variation to avoid being isomorphic with one another (Piedmont, 2014). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO = .83) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 (153) = 946.66$, $p < .001$) to carry out factor analysis was met; and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was run to determine the factor structure of JSAS (see Table 1).

Table 1
Factor Structure of JSAS with Varimax Rotation, Eigen Values, and Item-Total Correlations

No	Item	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	r
1	1	**.66**	.10	.04	.43*
2	15	**.65**	.14	.19	.54*
3	21	**.59**	.12	.08	.46*
4	2	**.57**	.51	-.05	.41*
5	13	**.56**	-.14	.20	.41*
6	16	**.53**	.15	.37	.49*
7	12	**.52**	.04	-.11	.36*
8	5	**.39**	.12	.37	.41*
9	8	**.38**	.13	.25	.28*
10	6	.08	**.70**	.29	.26*
11	4	.02	**.67**	.25	.33*
12	11	-.02	**.67**	-.01	.51*
13	3	.38	**.65**	-.12	.52*
14	9	.13	**.41**	.12	.39*
15	19	.09	.12	**.78**	.43*
16	18	.14	.06	**.71**	.27*
17	20	-.04	.12	**.64**	.41*
18	22	.33	.02	**.42**	.36*
Eigen Value		4.53	1.81	1.65	
Variance (%)		25.19	10.04	9.19	
Cum. Var. (%)		25.19	35.23	44.42	

Note. Cum. Var. = Cumulative Variance. Items with .30 or above loadings are boldfaced and constitute resultant factors.
r = Item-total correlation, .20 or above are significant at *$p < .01$*.

A factor loading criterion of .30 or above (Kline, 2013) was used to retain items in factors. To obtain the best-fit model, 3-6 factor solutions were tried, but a three-factor solution was found to be the best fit, with fewer dubious items (minimum of 4 items per factor), removing items that had factor loadings less than .30. Total cumulative variance (~44%) was explained by each factor.

Factors

Factor 1: Disgruntlement. Based on a close examination of the items, researchers assigned each factor with a label by common themes that emerged from each item. The first factor of the scale contained nine items that displayed discontent and unhappiness in the respondents for example, items included *Everyone hates me*, *no one cares about me*, *no one likes me*, *everyone calls me useless,* etc. The factor was synthesized as Disgruntlement (DG) and a high score on this subscale meant greater DG, i.e., believing that others have negative emotions of hate and dislike toward the individual.

Factor 2: Disaffection. The second factor consisted of five items and included items like *no one gives importance to me*, or *friends always fight with me*, or *no one likes to interact with me,* etc. The factor was named disaffection (DA) and a high score on this subscale meant greater DA or a belief that no one considers me a friend or a closely related associate.

Factor 3: Estrangement. The third factor contained four items that included items like, *parents do not give me much time*, *my parents do not give me much attention*, or *it seems like I am a burden to my parents,* etc., and was dubbed as Estrangement (ES). A high score on this subscale meant that a strong belief of separation would exist in a respondent towards authority figures (like parents when a child) or social

controllers (like institutions or agencies when adolescent or adult).

Psychometric Properties

Internal Consistency. Internal consistency of the JSAS was adequate (α = .82); its subscales consistency was moderate and satisfactory (α = .65 to .76). Moderate internal consistencies for DA and ES are most likely because of fewer number items (four and five) in these subscales, and a higher consistency for DG because a higher number (nine) of items were extracted for this subscale. The internal consistency of the overall scale is even higher because it contained the largest number of items (18), see Table 2.

Concurrent and Convergent Validities. Table 2 shows that JSAS positively and significantly correlated with its subscales signifying an inherent validity of the alienation construct; and though the correlation between JSAS and DA ($r = .67$) and ES ($r = .71$) was low to moderately strong, and its relationship with DG was much stronger ($r = .87$).

To carry out convergent validity we used MCSI which measures criminal social identity in prisoners, an apt instrument to test the similarity of constructs between JSAS and MCSI. Results revealed a significant positive correlation ($r = .38$, $p < .01$) between total JSAS and MCSI shows that juvenile delinquents are associated with delinquent peer groups and have an influence on them as measured by MCSI. Juvenile delinquents who have high criminal thinking tend to be associated more closely with delinquent peers.

Table 2
Correlations and Internal Consistencies of JSAS, MCSI, and Subscales

Scale & Subscale	DG	DA	ES	JSAS	MCSI
Disgruntlement (DG)	—	.42**	.40**	.87**	.47**
Disaffection (DA)		—	.28**	.71**	.12
Estrangement (ES)			—	.67**	.20**
JSAS				—	.38**
M	35.14	18.95	14.70	72.63	32.58
SD	6.51	4.27	3.70	11.94	4.86
A	.76	.74	.65	.82	.72

Note. MCSI = Measure of Criminal Social Identity, JSAS = Juvenile Social Alienation Scale
**$p < .01$.

Type of Crime

Sample data allowed us to compare alienation between juveniles with violent and non-violent crimes. Table 3 shows, that delinquents with violent ($M = 34.40$, $SD = 6.83$) crimes were significantly ($p < .05$, $d = .44$) less on the DG subscale than delinquents with non-violent ($M = 37.09$, $SD = 5.16$) crimes. Similarly, delinquents with violent ($M = 67.74$, $SD = 11.48$) crimes were significantly ($p < .05$, $d = .39$) less alienated overall (JSAS overall score) than delinquents with non-violent ($M = 71.57$, $SD = 10.01$) crimes. However, the two groups did not significantly ($p > .05$) differ in DA or ES (see Table 3).

Table 3
Comparison between Delinquents with Violent and Non-violent Crimes

Scale and Subscale	Violent (n= 153) M(SD)	Nonviolent (n = 58) M(SD)	t	95% CI LL	UL	d
Disgruntlement (DG)	34.40 (6.83)	37.09 (5.16)	2.72*	-4.64	-.74	.44
Disaffection (DA)	18.88 (4.16)	19.14 (4.57)	.39	-1.56	1.04	.06
Estrangement (ES)	14.46 (3.65)	15.34 (3.79)	1.56	-2.01	.23	.24
JSAS	67.74 (11.48)	71.57 (10.01)	2.24*	-7.20	-.46	.39

Note. JSAS = Juvenile Social Alienation Scale. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit, *d* = Cohen'*d*
*$p < .05$.

Discussion

Delinquency and alienation play a crucial role in the understanding of criminal thinking styles, especially, juvenile delinquents. The current study focused on developing a psychometric instrument that would assess social alienation (O'Donnell et al., 1995; Sankey & Huon, 1999; Scholte, 1992) and measure the thinking, beliefs, and behaviors of juvenile delinquents. Alienation is an emergent topic in juvenile delinquency and relates to the isolation of the young from their society; this usually results in negative cognitions and thoughts that affect their social behaviors and health (Rayce et al., 2008). The current study established JSAS and three subscales DG, DA, and ES to measure sullen thoughts (DG), unfriendliness (DA), and separation (ES) from others in juvenile delinquents. The pool of items for the scale was carefully developed to capture the overall construct of *alienation* and sifting the items, running the factor analysis reduced them to three related sub constructs for use. These three subscales, we believe, measure facets of alienation in the sampled juvenile delinquents. Sullen thoughts comprise feelings that are projected or displaced as aggression, hostility, and frustrations, which the subscale DG calls disgruntled thought patterns. Disgruntlement means being annoyed, angry, and disappointed; observed in children (would-be delinquents) as tantrums to get attention from their unresponsive parents (Evans et al., 2002), which in turn, angers parents. Anger serves as punishment that does not abate tantrums and leads to negative emotions that transform into reactions and behaviors of discontent (Evans et al., 2002; Felsten & Hill, 1999). Disaffection means unfriendly or uncaring, a loss of association that was valued at some point in childhood; separation from affectionate relationships from parents, siblings, peers, and society, threatening future associations of care and propelling actions of disengagement that blotch initiative, capitulation, and submissiveness (Connell, 1991). For a lifelong and pleasing relationship, it is necessary to show reciprocal respect for individualism, support, a mutual approach to adjustment, and enough freedom for personal development (Frei & Shaver, 2002; Saleem et al., 2014; Segrin & Taylor, 2007). However, estrangement or distancing causes adolescents to move away from their parents. Parental discomfort is a consequence of un-sharing communication and interactions that alienate adolescents (Pickhardt, 2013).

The JSAS has shown satisfactory internal consistency and an acceptable level of concurrent and convergent validities. The relationship between criminal thinking styles, social alienation, and criminal social identity in juvenile adolescents is aligned with the literature (Boduszek et al., 2012; Shagufta, 2015) suggesting that delinquents are socially alienated from their families and peers. During our psychometric test, we had the opportunity to compare juvenile delinquents with violent and nonviolent crimes. Juvenile delinquents with nonviolent crimes were more socially alienated on DG but not DA and ES, more delinquent data is needed to tease the differences among other subscales.

Conclusions and Implications

The findings of the current study suggested that JSAS can screen juvenile delinquents for alienation, and since they are incarcerated for their crimes an association between alienation and crime can be easily ascertained. This could provide correctional counseling services to employ cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) or a 10-week prison-based psycho-educational program etc., typically used in prisons. These interventions can help these adolescents change their thinking and behavioral styles. The scale can also be to assess counseling effectiveness in pre-post intervention programs. Since limited work is available on screening juvenile delinquents for risk assessment and counseling the current study and the scale is pioneering work that measures social alienation in juveniles and assists researchers and law-bound personnel to understand the multifaceted nature of social alienation and help those in need with their challenges.

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⑤	④	③	②	①	وجہ جانے بغیر لوگ برا بھلا کہتے ہیں۔	1.
					People blame without knowing the reason. (DG)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	والدین میری پسندیدہ چیز نہیں خریدتے۔	2.
					Parents do not buy my favorite thing. (DG)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	والدین میرے بہن بھائیوں کو زیادہ پیار کرتے ہیں۔	3.
					My parents love my siblings more. (DA)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	والدین میرا مشکل وقت میں ساتھ نہیں دیتے۔	4.
					My parents do not stand with me in difficult times. (DA)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	سب مجھ سے نفرت کرتے ہیں۔	5.
					Everyone hates me. (DG)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	والدین مجھے بالکل وقت نہیں دیتے۔	6.
					My parents do not give me any time. (DA)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	میں کسی کو اچھا نہیں لگتا۔	7.
					No one likes me. (DG)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	میرے والدین کو میں ایک بوجھ لگتا ہوں۔	8.
					Parents believe I am a weight on them. (DA)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	میرے والدین مجھے توجہ نہیں دیتے۔	9.
					My parents do not give me attention. (DA)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	میری کسی کو فکر نہیں۔	10.
					No one is worried about me. (DG)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	مجھے سب نکما کہتے ہیں۔	11.
					Everyone calls me lazy. (DG)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	گھر والے بے رخی سے پیش آتے ہیں۔	12.
					My family treats me with insensitivity. (DG)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	کوئی مجھے دوست نہیں بناتا۔	13.
					No one befriends me. (DG)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	کوئی مجھ سے بات کرنا پسند نہیں کرتا۔	14.
					No one wants to talk to me. (ES)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	کوئی شخص مجھے اہمیت نہیں دیتا۔	15.
					No one takes me seriously. (ES)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	والدین روک ٹوک کرتے ہیں۔	16.
					My parents put restrictions on me. (ES)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	دوسرے میرا مذاق اڑاتے ہیں۔	17.
					Others make fun of me. (DG)	
⑤	④	③	②	①	دوست ہمیشہ مجھ سے لڑتے جھگڑتے ہیں۔	18.
					Friends always fight with me. (ES)	

نو عمر سماجی اجنبیت کا پیمانہ

Juvenile Social Alienation Scale (JSAS)