

Adolescents with unpopular names more prone to committing crime

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A new study in the journal *Social Science Quarterly* examined the relationship between first name popularity in adolescents and tendency to commit crime. Results show that, regardless of race, juveniles with unpopular names are more likely to engage in criminal activity.

David E. Kalist and Daniel Y. Lee of Shippensburg University analyzed state data by comparing the first names of male juvenile delinquents to the first names of male juveniles in the population.

Researchers constructed a popularity-name index (PNI) for each name. For example, the PNI for Michael is 100, the most frequently given name during the period. The PNI for David is 50, a name given half as frequently as Michael. The PNI is approximately 1 for names such as Alec, Ernest, Ivan, Kareem, and Malcolm.

The least popular names were associated with juvenile delinquency among both blacks and whites. While the names are likely not the cause of crime, they are connected to factors that increase the tendency to commit crime, such as a disadvantaged home environment, residence in a county with low socioeconomic status, and households run by one parent.

Also, adolescents with unpopular names may be more prone to crime because they are treated differently by their peers, making it more difficult for them to form relationships. Juveniles with unpopular names may also act out because they consciously or unconsciously dislike their

names.

Source: Wiley

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