

# Analytical Comparison of Personality Traits, Perceived Attachment and Self-efficacy of Delinquent and Normal Juveniles

**Mohammad Moshkani\***

\* Ph.D. in psychology of exceptional children, office of exceptional children, Gorgan, Iran

\*Corresponding Author Email: [moshkani.moh@gmail.com](mailto:moshkani.moh@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** The present study aims to analytically investigate and compare personality traits, perceived attachment and self-efficacy of delinquent and normal juveniles. The statistical population of present study consisted of 71 delinquent juveniles and 71 normal ones. To measure desired characteristics, NEO- Five Factor Personality Inventory, Attachment Inventory of Collins and Read and Self- Efficacy Scale of Sherer and Maddux were used. The results showed that there is a significant difference between personality traits delinquent and normal juveniles as through statistical methods such as variance analysis, Chi-square, and T test. Delinquent subjects had higher scores of neuroticism subscales compared with control group but in subscales of extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness, they had less scores compared with control group. In regard to perceived attachment style, delinquent juveniles had a higher rate of anxious attachment style while normal juveniles had secure attachment style. At last, delinquent juveniles have a significantly lower level of self-efficacy compared with control group.

**Keywords:** Juveniles, Delinquency, Personality Traits, Perceived Attachment, Self-efficacy

## Introduction

Delinquency and deviations of juveniles has long drawn the attention of scientists and humankind and currently, it is also one of the major subjects of discussion among scientists. A review of prevalence of crime in the world and our country vividly confirms this fact that delinquency is probably one of the major problems of our society. Different social reasons have been mentioned for this unfavorable social phenomenon. Personality has been regarded as one of the psychological factors of juvenile delinquency within different theoretical models and experimental studies (Amodio, Master, Yee and Tylor, 2008; Dam, Janssens and De Bruyn, 2005; Miller, Lynam and Leukefeld, 2003; Frick et.al, 2003, Romero, Luengo and Sobral, 2001; Clower and Bothwell, 2001, Haven, 1996). There has been significant emphasis upon mood as a basic biological factor (Clower et.al, 2001; Henry, Caspi, Moffett and Silva, 1996). Of the significant areas of personality, one can point to five major Neo factors. The connection of this factors with antisocial and delinquent behaviors (Miller, Lynam, Leukefeld, 2000) as well as drug abuse and negligence (Flory et.al, 2002) has been confirmed. Miller and Lynam (2003) in a study of Neo modified personality five factor inventory among anti-social individuals and delinquent behavior, studied Neo personality factors and their association with anti-social society. The research data in this report showed association among drug

abuse, delinquency, dangerous sexual relationship, anger and some laboratory activities. Noe inventory is still relevant and correlational despite of all problems of deviation, although it might have little level of significance.

Different studies (Lynam, 2010; Meier, Robinson, Wilkowski, 2006; Bechara, 2005; Lynam et.al, 2005; Vidger and Lyonefeld, 2003; Graziano and Tobin, 2002) showed that anti-social behavior is associated with low agreeableness (A) and Conscientiousness (C), high extraversion (E) and a mixture of high neuroticism (N) including anxiety, depression, stress, and vulnerability to stress and low self-awareness but high hostile aggression and impulsivity. In a study by Derefinko and Lynam (2006) by using NEO modified five-factor personality inventory and self-reporting psychopathic scale among 1000 participants, it was shown that psychopathy is associated with low agreeableness, especially subscales of being truthful and honest, altruism, compliance, modesty, humility and contentment. Psychopathic individuals got low scores of conscientiousness (dutifulness), especially regarding subscales of self-discipline and deliberation. Dam, Janssens and De Bruyn (2005) studied the difference of 5 NEO personality factor and items of Eysenck Personality Inventory between Dutch delinquent juveniles and normal students. In this study, those who has been officially identified and arrested as well as those who introduced themselves were studied. The results show that among studies investigated by Eysenck inventory, subscale of extraversion and among NEO five major personality factors, agreeableness and openness had the highest level of significance compared with other personality variables. In Eysenck inventory, subscale of extraversion was higher among delinquents who has repeated their crimes compared with those who didn't iterate illegal activities. Mental dissociation in Eysenck scale within individuals who had introduced themselves to legal authorities was higher compared with those who didn't. In mental pathology, attachment is one of the most significant issues in defining crime. Based on viewpoint of Bowlby (1973), emotional relationships always exist and they are active in lifecycle. This means that background of emotional relationship of children with his/her caretaker creates long-term consequences which are observed in later years. Attachment has a significant role to play in helping juveniles to face challenges so that unsafe attachment pattern creates behavioral problems during childhood and delinquency during adolescence (Cassidy and Shaver, 2008; Laible, 2007).

Bowlby (1973) found significant association between unsafe attachment and behavioral disorders such as delinquency and anti-social behavior among pre-school and elementary school students. Different studies showed that there is a significant association between juvenile attachment style and emergence of behavioral problems as well as delinquency during adolescence (Ghobari Bonab and Hadadi Kohsari, 2012; Mashhadi and Mohammadi, 2010; Allen et.al, 2005; Allen et.al, 2003; Allen et.al, 1996). These studies showed that unsafe attachment style is associated with uncompromising behavioral pattern and mental-emotional activity in later years of living (Zimmerman, 2004; Allen et.al, 2003; Marsh et.al, 2003; Cassidy, 2001; Rice and Mirzade, 2000; Allen et.al, 1998; Brownfield and Thompson, 1991; Rosenstein and Horowitz, 1996; Erickson, Egeland and Pianta, 1989). Lauritsen (1993) did another study to investigate the relationships between emotional relationship of family and delinquency of teens. The results showed that juveniles who were attached to their parents and those who spent more time with their parents showed lower levels of delinquent behaviors. On the other hand, juveniles that had low attachment to their parents and spent less time with their parents and families are more exposed to delinquency.

Among other significant issues in psychology, one can point to the concept of self-efficacy. It is one of the important areas of psychology which had a significant effect on mental health and prevention from disorders among children and teenagers. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as beliefs of individuals in their abilities to direct their motivations and cognitive resources as well as applying control over certain events. As Bandura believed, possessing or feeling of increase in self-efficacy can change a threatening situation into a secure one. Low self-efficacy is associated with a wide range of problems and disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, eating disorders, drug abuse, anxiety, panic and compatibility (Zade Mohammadi, Abedi and Khanjani, 2009). During dealing with unfavorable stressful situations, they can control their thoughts, show more stability and don't accept negative beliefs about themselves and their inabilities (Massodnia, 2008). Self-efficacy is also important in effective learning and progress. Individuals who have high self-efficacy experience more progress compared with weak individuals. A look at the history of delinquent juveniles shows that they face problems in their education and this shows that low self-efficacy (Najafi and Foolad Chang, 2008).

The results of a study by Bandura and a group of Italian researchers in Rome shows that self-efficacy is associated with educational progress, problematic behaviors, delinquency and depression (Schultz and Schultz, 2009) In a research by Cole, Chan and Leighton (1989) regarding educational qualifications, educational progress, general self-respect and social abilities of delinquent juveniles of correction and rehabilitation centers compared with three groups with low and high educational progress and students with behavioral problem, the results showed that delinquent juveniles had lower performance compared with other groups. In this regard and based on above studies, necessity of awareness of personality traits, perceived attachment styles and self-efficacy of delinquent juveniles is felt. Therefore, the present study aims to analytically study above characteristics among normal and

delinquent juveniles to find out what is the status of personality traits, attachment styles and self-efficacy of delinquent juveniles among delinquent juveniles and what are their differences with normal juveniles. In this regard, the questions of present study are:

- 1- Is there a significant difference between personality traits of delinquent and normal juveniles?
- 2- Is there a significant difference between perceived attachment styles of delinquent and normal juveniles?
- 3- Is there a significant difference between self-efficacy of delinquent and normal juveniles?

## **Materials and Methods**

The methodology of present study is descriptive and a causal-comparative study based on the method of data collection. In this regard, personality traits, perceived attachment styles and self-efficacy of normal and delinquent juveniles are compared and analyzed.

### **Statistical Population of Delinquent Juveniles**

It consists of all male delinquent juveniles of Rehabilitation and Training Center of Gorgan city in Golestan Province and Sari city of Mazandaran Province.

### **Statistical Population of Normal Juveniles**

It consists of all juveniles currently studying in Gorgan and Sari cities within intermediate schools during 2013-2014.

The statistical sample of the first population (i.e. delinquent juveniles) consists of 71 individuals which were selected through accessibility sampling of applicants of Rehabilitation and Training Center of Golestan and Mazandaran Provinces who has been captured or imprisoned for different crimes. Of the second population, namely normal juveniles, random cluster sampling was done by visiting intermediate schools and 71 normal juveniles were chosen.

### **NEO Five-Factor Inventory**

The short form of this inventory called "NEO-FFI" consists of 60 questions and it is used to evaluate 5 main factors of personality namely extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness. Each item has 12 questions. The answer sheet of this inventory was formed based on Likert scale. Scoring items was done in direct manner in some cases while in others, it was done in reverse manner. Long-term reliability of this inventory was also analyzed. A six-year study of scales of neuroticism, extraversion and openness showed reliability coefficients of 0.68 to 0.83 in personal and paired reports. Reliability coefficient of the two factors of conscientiousness and adaptation were 0.79 and 0.63, respectively (McCrae and Costa, 1985)

### **Revised Attachment Scale of Collins and Read**

Attachment scale was first prepared by Collins and Read in 1990 and revised in 1996. The theoretical scale of this test is attachment theory. Attachment scale of adults is the way of personal evaluation of communicative skills and friendly relationship style. This scale consists of self-assessment of skills of relationship formation and self-description of formation of attachment bonds compared with patterns of close attachment. It consists of 18 items which are measured based on a five-point Likert scale. The results of these three subscales are provided in the following:

- 1- Attachment: This measures the level of trust and confidence of subjects.
- 2- Closeness: This measures the level of comfort in establishing emotional closeness.
- 3- Anxiety: This measures the concerns of an individual about exclusion.

Reliability coefficient of this inventory was reported as 0.97 based on retest of 105 girls and boys in Tehran City. The validity of present questionnaire was reported as sufficient, too (Pakdaman, 2002).

### **Self-Efficacy Scale of Sherer and Maddux**

This scale consists of 23 questions of which 17 measured the status of health and the remaining 6 questions were about self-efficacy experiences in different social conditions. This scale measures three aspects of behavior including inclination to start a behavior, willingness to expand efforts to complete a task and difference in facing barriers. Scoring of this scale was based on Likert scale. Each item has a score of 1 to 5. Reliability coefficient of this scale, as defined through Cronbach's alpha, was reported as 0.88 (Asghar Nejas, Khoda Panah and Haidari, 2005).

## **Results and Discussion**

First Question: Is there a significant difference between normal and delinquent juveniles in personality traits?

**Table.1** Summary of Descriptive Scales of Participants' Scores for Different Research Variables (N=142)

Variable	Group	Mean	SD	Skewedness	Elongation	Min Score	Max Score	Levin Test	Level of Significance
Neuroticism	Delinquent	31.6	6.77	-0.64	1.82	8	49	6.4	0.01
	Normal	20.13	4.66	-0.11	1.33	7	34		
Extraversion	Delinquent	28.14	5.68	0.01	0.35	13	43	7.1	0.009
	Normal	32.32	3.75	0.2	-0.17	25	42		
Openness	Delinquent	30.14	8.31	0.24	-0.34	12	49	24.57	0.000
	Normal	35.28	4.25	-0.02	0.04	25	45		
Agreeableness	Delinquent	27.74	7.53	0.16	-0.21	11	45	20.21	0.000
	Normal	34.58	4.18	0.24	1.27	23	46		
Conscientiousness	Delinquent	21.91	6.21	-0.25	0.002	7	36	16.65	0.000
	Normal	33.74	3.3	0.1	-0.35	26	41		

Table (1) shows descriptive indexes of delinquent and normal juveniles in five major properties. The results show that skewedness and elongation scales of this five factors ranges from +2 to -2 which implies normality of characteristics in both groups. The results of variance test showed that in none of the above characteristics, there is a verified hypothesis of variance homogeneity but due to identical size of different groups and resistance to accept the establishment of variance homogeneity hypothesis, one can use parametric analyses, too.

**Table.2** Results of Testing Effects among Items

Sources of Change	Test	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F	P	Eta Square
Group	Neuroticism	4500.402	1	4500.402	132.003	0.000	0.494
	Extraversion	599.718	1	599.718	25.61	0.000	0.159
	Openness	904.693	1	904.693	20.478	0.000	0.132
	Agreeableness	1601.279	1	5071.67	42.624	0.000	0.24
	Conscientiousness	4792.558	1	3386.172	191.97	0.000	0.586
	Neuroticism	4602.591	135	34.093			
	Extraversion	3161.348	135	23.417			
	Openness	5964.183	135	44.179			
	Agreeableness	5071.67	135	37.568			
	Conscientiousness	3386.172	135	25.083			

The results of covariance matrix showed that M-box index is statistically significant ( $M\text{-Box}=98.29, F(73070.15/42)=6.29, P=0/000$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis of equality of co-variances isn't supported but because groups have the same size, one can accept the hypothesis of equal competency of statistical items (Tabachnik and Fidel, 2007). The results of table (2) show that group effect is significant ( $P=0.000, F_{(5,131)}=65.83, \text{Wilks' Lambda}=0.285$ ) and 71.5 percent of the variance ( $\eta^2=0.715$ ) is explained based on differences between the groups. Results of comparing the two groups in terms of five properties show that there is a significant difference between normal and juvenile group in neuroticism ( $P=0.000; F_{(1,135)}=132.00$ ). This characteristic is more seen in juvenile group. In regard to characteristics of extraversion ( $F_{(1,135)}=25.61, P=0.000$ ), openness ( $F_{(1,135)}=20.478, P=0.000$ ), Agreeableness ( $F_{(1,135)}=42.624, P=0.000$ ), and conscientiousness ( $F_{(1,135)}=191.07, P=0.000$ ), there is a significant difference between normal and delinquent group so that normal group has a higher degree of these characteristics.

Second Question: Is there a significant difference between attachment styles of normal and delinquent juveniles?

**Table 3.** A Summary of Descriptive Indexes of Participants' Scores for Research Variables (N=142)

Variable	Group	Mean	SD	Skewedness	Elongation	Min Score	Max Score	Levin Test	Level of Significance
Closeness	Delinquent	12.75	2.94	-00.06	-0.63	6	18	0.1	0.75
	Normal	22.75	2.97	-0.27	-0.11	15	25		
Attachment	Delinquent	10.34	2.25	0.8	0.86	7	18	13.09	0.000
	Normal	21.61	3.69	-0.67	0.48	11	29		
Stress	Delinquent	21.98	3.36	-0.14	-0.49	15	29	6.25	0.014
	Normal	11.34	2.31	0.52	-0.85	8	16		

Table (3) shows descriptive Indexes of normal and delinquent groups based on attachment styles of closeness, attachment and stress. The results show that indexes of skewedness and elongation for the three attachment style vary between  $\pm 2$  which implies normality of styles in both groups. The results of variance test between the two groups showed that there is homogeneity of variance but this is not the case for attachment style and anxiety. Despite the above fact, identical size of the groups and resistance against lack of existence of this hypothesis help one to use parametric analyses.

**Table.4** Results of Tests of Effects between Items (Dependent variables: Attachment Styles)

Sources of Change	Test	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F	P	Eta Square
Group	Closeness	3500	1	3500	399.258	0.000	0.743
	Dependence	4446.576	1	4446.576	473.348	0.000	0.774
	Anxiety	3964.464	1	3964.464	474.598	0.000	0.775
	Closeness	1209.743	138	8.766			
	Dependence	1296.357	138	9.394			
	Anxiety	1152.757	138	8.353			

The results of covariance matrix showed that M-Box index is statistically significant (M-Box=32.232,  $F(137979, 6.2)=5.408$ ,  $P=0.000$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis of equality of co-variances is not supported but because groups have the same size, one can accept the hypothesis of competency of statistical tests (Tabachnik and Fidel, 2007). The results of table 4.3 show that the effect of group (Wilk's Lambda=0.097,  $F_{(5,136)}=421.155$ ,  $P=0.000$ ) is significant and 90.3 percent of the variance can be explained by difference between groups. The result of comparison of the two groups show that in closeness ( $F_{(1,138)}=399.258$ ,  $P=0.000$ ) and dependence style ( $F_{(1,138)}=437.348$ ,  $P=0.000$ ) there is a significant difference between normal and delinquent groups as shown in the fact that normal group as higher levels of these characteristics. There is a significant difference between anxiety style between normal and delinquent groups ( $F_{(1,138)}= 474.598$ ,  $P=0.000$ ). The latter has higher level of this style.

Then, Chi-square test was done based on the scores of three styles of attachment, the kind of perceived attachment style was defined for delinquent and normal juveniles.

**Table.5** A Summary of Chi Square

Group	Secure		Dependent		Anxious		Chi-Square	Degree of Freedom	Level of Significance	Degree of Association
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage				
Delinquent	1	0.7	4	2.8	66	46.5	128.78	2	0.000	0.952
Normal	68	47.9	2	1.4	1	0.7				

Table (5) shows that there is a significant association between styles of attachment and membership of individuals ( $X^2(2) =128.78$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). It also shows that there is a significant association between attachment styles and group membership (normal and delinquent,  $C=0.952$ ). These results also show that normal individuals have secure style while delinquent one have anxious style.

Third Question: Is there a significant association between self-efficacy of normal and delinquent juveniles?

**Table. 6** A Summary of Descriptive Indexes of Participants' Scores for Research Variables (N=142)

Variable	Group	Mean	SD	Skewedness	Elongation	Min Score	Max Score	Levin Test	Level of Significance	T	Degree of Freedom	Level of Significance
Self-efficacy	Delinquent	34.54	4.69	0.65	0.58	25	49	0.43	0.51	-37.61	138	0.000
	Normal	62,9	4.2	-0.33	-0.2	53	71					

Table (6) shows the descriptive indexes of delinquent and normal group for the variable of self-efficacy. The results showed that skewedness and elongation indexes of this variable ranges between  $\pm 2$  which shows normality for both groups. The variance test results also showed that the hypothesis of homogeneity of variances is supported and one can use parametrical analyses. Also, the results of t-test for independent groups showed that there is a significant difference between normal and delinquent groups regarding self-efficacy ( $t=-37.61$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). It was also confirmed that normal group has higher self-efficacy.

### Conclusion

Regarding the first question (i.e. is there a significant difference between personality traits of delinquent and normal juveniles?) one can say that values of possibilities and comparison between the two groups show that there is a significant difference between the two groups in neuroticism which has a higher level in delinquent group. Regarding characteristics of extraversion, openness, agreeableness and consciousness, the results showed significant difference between the two groups. The normal group had higher level of the above characteristics. The results of present study match those of Meier et al (2006), Lynam et.al (2005) and Derefinko et.al (2006). In these studies, researchers had found out that agreeableness and consciousness are low in delinquent juveniles. They get lower scores in characteristics such as openness and extraversion while the reverse is the case for neuroticism. Therefore, due attention to these items is necessary. Subscales of neuroticism are anger and hostility, pity-seeking, self-consciousness, anxiety, vulnerability and impulsivity. Individuals with high scores of neuroticism are liable to illogical beliefs. They can't properly control their impulses and are weaker than others in dealing with stress. Therefore, based on previous studies, delinquent juveniles have higher levels of stress. Eysenck (as quoted in Feist and Feist, 2009) found out that in monozygotic twins, neuroticism is significantly associated with anti-social behavior, behavioral disorders and drug abuse. McCrae and Costa (1992) believed that prevalence of neuroticism is low in criminals. Their conclusion might be true for adults but not for juveniles. Lynam (2010) found out that profile of anti-social behaviors among adults consists of negative association with neuroticism in all aspects especially anxiety, self-awareness and vulnerability. This means that anti-social adult is relatively secure from anxiety, shame and stress but this phenomenon is not observed among juveniles. This implies that adults can relatively reduce stress reactions. Agreeableness is associated with relationship between person and strategies. Peoples of high agreeableness tend towards characteristics such as trust, honesty and being honest and sympathetic while those who have lower scores in this subscale are manipulative, selfish and arrogant, cruel and heartless, opposition critics and irritable and temperamental. In regard to consciousness, lower scores imply Recklessness, laziness, lack of discipline, lack of regard for time and aimlessness. Therefore, based on the above facts, these studies collectively show that the two basic aspects of agreeableness and consciousness are significantly associated with delinquency (Lynam, 2010).

In regard to subscale of openness to experience, lower levels show being realist, lack of innovation, interest in routine activities, conservatism. For the subscale of extraversion, lower scores imply self-discipline, loneliness, quietness, passive comfort and lack of feeling. As observed for subscales and verified in different studies, delinquent juveniles experience different personality styles due to their temerity, courage and great boldness, impulsivity, deception and fraud, anxiety, lower levels of socialization, avoidant personality disorder (Jensen et.al, 1991) disciplinary problem in school (Wang, Bloomberg and Lee, 2005), school dropout (Maniadakis, 2011), unsafe attachment (Allen et.al, 2002), superficial interpersonal interaction (Salekin, 2005), authoritative teaching style (Rezaiian, 2007), low social and valuable skills (Cole et.al, 1989), little love and affection from parents (Research and Studies Center of Western Azerbaijan, 1999). This leads to difference in personality traits which interact with mood, heredity and familial nurturing.

In regard to the second question (i.e. is there a significant difference in style of attachment between normal and delinquent juveniles?), probability values of Chi test show that there is a significant association between styles of

attachment and group membership. In other words, normal individuals have safe style and delinquent ones have anxious style of attachment. This result matches those of Allen et.al (2005), Zimmerman (2004), Allen et.al (2003) and Marsh et.al (2003).

Based on the viewpoints of these researchers, delinquency is a disorder the pathology of which leads to many factors. Most of researcher's point to factors such as mental disorder of parents (Salekin and Lynam, 2010; Farrington, Ulrich and Salinkin, 2010), age of parents (Farrington et.al, 2010), divorce, marriage, re-marriage of parents, step mother and step father (McCord, 1977, 1983; Farrington, 2000 and Salekin, 2005), age of children during divorce (Nye, 1958), authoritative nurturing style (Newson, 1989). All of the above factors have significant association with attachment. Bowlby believed that those who had been deprived of their maternal relationship due to divorce face apathy. This means that close emotional relationship is not feasible for them. Occurring earlier during childhood, problems of attachment become stronger and unsafe and they lead to disruptive social behaviors. A study of young males in Newcastle of Britain showed that those whose parents divorces in the first five years of marriage or separated permanently are three times more exposed to delinquent behaviors, especially in the early adolescence (Salekin and Lochman, 2008).

In regard to the third question (i.e. is there a significant different between level of self-efficacy of delinquent and normal juveniles?), the obtained results showed that there is a significant difference between self-efficacy of these two groups. On other words, the comparison between mean level of self-efficacy between the two groups of normal and delinquent juveniles showed that normal juveniles have more self-efficacy. The results of this analysis matches those of Cole et.al (1989), Bandura et.al (as quote by Najaf and Folad Chang, 2008) and Ahadi (1991).

The above results show that there is a significant association between personality traits and self-efficacy. Neuroticism is a good predictor of lack of self-efficacy (Nauta, 2004) while extraversion and conscientiousness are good predictors of self-efficiency (Rottinghaus, 2002). Regarding the first question of present study, the results showed that delinquent juveniles obtain higher scores of neuroticism while in aspects of conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness and openness to experience, they had low scores. Therefore, based on previous studies, the level of self-efficacy in delinquent juveniles is low. It was also confirmed that belief in self-efficacy affects the way of thinking, dealing with problems, emotional health, decision-making, dealing with stress and oppression and selection of objectives (Bandura and Locke, 2003). Individuals who have low self-efficacy abstain from dealing with problems; they stop trying and show low resistance. In dealing with problems, they don't show much realism. Those who select unrealistic objectives for themselves and have expectations which goes beyond their capabilities face consequent failure and these failures result in depression and loss significance of living (Najafi and Folad Chang, 2008). Low self-efficacy is associated with high levels of anxiety, neuroticism and depression. Those who had obtained higher scores of self-efficacy had also higher scores of socialization, willingness to endeavor for superiority and attachment (Feist and Feist, 2009). This fact is also an evidence for lower scores of self-efficacy in delinquent group because as previous studies suggest, these individuals experience a high level of educational failure (Hogan, 1999), anxiety and depression (Ahadi, 1991).

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