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Cybercrime Assignment

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The topic I have chosen is whether juveniles should be punished the same as adults for cybercrimes. Children should be punished less than adults for cybercrimes; however, the punishment should be more severe for offenses involving theft, extortion, and hate speech such as racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.

Minors differ from adults in terms of brain development, decision-making capabilities, and susceptibility to peer pressure. The Supreme Court has acknowledged this through their interpretation of the 8th amendment; this is why juveniles are tried and sentenced differently than adults. Children are less mature and aware of the consequences of their actions than adults, so they do not understand the effects of the crimes they could be committing.

Compared to the standard justice system which prioritizes punishment, the juvenile justice system should focus on rehabilitation. This is better suited for minors as their wrong behaviors can be corrected and prevented in the future. Juveniles who are tried in adult courts often face harsher environments and increased risk of recidivism, undermining the goal of reducing future offenses (Wisevoter, 2023).

For cybercrimes involving severe harm to a person mentally such as racism, sexism, and other forms of bigotry but also crimes involving theft and blackmail, stricter penalties are necessary to emphasize accountability and deter repeat offenses. These are crimes that occur outside of technology and should be handled the same way online as they would offline. With the era of technology only expanding, data theft is only becoming more prevalent. Stealing someone’s credit card information via the web should be taken just as seriously as if someone physically stole a person’s credit card from their wallet.

Opponents argue that juveniles should face adult penalties to provide justice for victims and deter serious crimes. They claim that harsher punishments reflect the severity of the offense and offer longer opportunities for rehabilitation within the system (Wisevoter, 2023). However, research shows that punishment often increases recidivism rather than reform the behavior; this is especially true in younger people who are placed in adult facilities as they have their future still to be molded. Rather than using punishment, society should use positive reinforcement through rehabilitate to lower the rates of repeated offenses (Cornell, 2023).

In conclusion, juveniles should not face the same punishments as adults for cybercrimes, given the differences in mental ability and potential for rehabilitation. Punishment akin to those served to adults should be used in severe cases of harm, but for minor offenses, rehabilitation and education should be the primary response.

Works Cited

Cornell Undergraduate Law & Society Review. (2023). The juvenile justice system: Should minors be tried as adults? <https://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/research/undergraduate-law-and-society-review/>

Wisevoter. (2023). Should juveniles be tried as adults? https://wisevoter.com/issue/should-juveniles-be-tried-as-adults/