

THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL EDUCATION LEVEL ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' DELIQUENCY

Miranda Gashi

European University of Tirana, Albania, E mail: miranda1gashi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Statistics show that delinquent behaviors among the youth, particularly among juveniles, are a growing concern. Moreover, it is argued that the youth incorporate multiple factors that exercise direct and indirect effects on their behavior. A number of studies have suggested that the main factors are those related to family, such as parenting style, family relations with juveniles, parents educational level, family structure, economic factors etc. The main purpose of this study was to find out the impact of parental education level on juveniles delinquent behaviors, and to see if there are significant differences among boys and girls. We hypothesized that parents education level do have an impact on secondary school delinquent behaviors. A total of 242 juveniles participated voluntarily in the research. The mean age of the participants was $M=16.2$ years ($SD=1.14$). 137 (56.6 %) of them are female and 103 (42.6%) of them are male. The study participants showed differences of statistical significance in the level of father's education level ($F(2, 8, N=242)=32.346, p=.000$); mother's education level ($F(2, 8, N=242)=49.424, p=.000$). The Delinquency Scale of Wave II questionnaire was, translated piloted and validated for our study. After the validation process the questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument. The Cronbach alpha coefficient (α), which was used to measure the internal consistency of the Albanian version of the questionnaire, showed the value of .612. A series of Two-way MANOVA were performed, to verify the impact of education level of parents on delinquency. The T-test for independent groups was used to verify potential differences across indicator variable. The findings showed that secondary school students, whose mother was with lower level of education, demonstrated higher levels of delinquent behaviors in comparison to juveniles whose mother was well educated. Father's education background showed no impact of statistical significance within delinquent behaviors. It has been also found that within the increase of juvenile age, the impact of educated mothers on delinquent behaviors, decrease in no significance. No significant difference has been found between boys and girls. The results reinforce the complex nature of the factors affecting the emergence of delinquent behaviors among juveniles, which should certainly be examined from their cultural perspective, as well.

Keywords: *parents, education level, juveniles, delinquent behavior, impact, differences.*

INTRODUCTION

According to Random House Webster's college dictionary, delinquency is defined as "wrongful, illegal or antisocial behaviors" (2005:327). Statistics show that delinquent behaviours among the youth, particularly among juveniles, are a growing concern. Moreover, it is argued that the youth incorporate multiple factors that exercise direct and indirect effects on their behavior (Hinton, Sheperis, and Sims 2003). Nowadays, the literature provides a considerable number of studies which increasingly focus on the role of the family, its impact on and its correlation with juvenile delinquent behaviours. According to Apel & Kaukinen, (2008) and Price & Kunz, (2003), one of the main factors affecting juvenile delinquency is the structure of the family of juveniles with delinquent behaviours. There are a lot of studies that have linked family dysfunction with the tendency for a criminal future, partly because of the failure to meet the responsibilities within the family, which could result with children being implicated in criminal activities (Murry et al., 2006). Knoll and Sickmund (2012) suggested in their study that delinquent behaviours are far more prevalent nowadays than they were in the past. Researchers have also devoted much attention to the study of potential correlation between the parental education status and delinquent behaviors of juveniles.

Although previous empirical studies consistently found weak correlations or lack of correlation between the socioeconomic status of individuals and their self-reported delinquent behaviors (Jensen, 1993; Tittle, 1995); other studies have consistently shown in the recent years that juveniles from lower income families where parents have a high rate of unemployment and a very low level of education, demonstrate higher levels of involvement in delinquent behaviors in comparison to individuals from higher income families; so, the poor are more likely to commit a crime (O'Donnell et al., 2006; Smith and Bohm, 2008).

Carney et al. (2013), Defoe, Farrington, and Loeber (2013); Le and Stockdale (2011); and Legleye et al. (2010), in their studies suggested that family structure and socioeconomic status of the family are significant factors to the occurrence of delinquent behavior. Recently some studies suggested in their results that there is no correlation between the low socioeconomic status of the family and delinquent behaviors among juveniles (Defoe et al. 2013). In addition, Legleye et al. (2010) argued that delinquent behaviors have shown correlation not only with the low socioeconomic status of the family, but also with the high socioeconomic status of the family. Derzon (2005) suggested that it is also likely that family factors interact with other factors in a complex relationship difficult for researchers to tease out

Meanwhile according to Kosovo Police¹ 'juvenile delinquency is a psychological phenomenon which manifests itself through the violation of moral and legal norms. Delinquency is a form of behaviour that contradicts certain social norms. Whereas a delinquent is an individual who by his/her actions not only violates environmental norms, but also violates the rights and freedoms of others and falls directly in conflict with others'. The definition for delinquency, used by Halili (2011) refers that 'delinquency includes all deviant, antisocial behaviors of juveniles, regardless of whether they are incorporated in the positive legal provisions of a country as criminal offences'. The same author also gives a restrictive (narrow) definition of the term delinquency: delinquency includes only deviant behaviors of minors, explicitly defined in positive criminal law provisions of a country (2011).

¹http://www.kosovopolice.com/repository/docs/2._Dhuna_ne_mes_te_bashkemoshatave_dhe_delikuenca_e_te_miturve.pdf (Accessed, 05 June 2015)

Kosovo is situated in the heart of the Balkans, bordering Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Its population is 1,815,606 (Statistical Office, 2014:10), with 42% living in urban and 48% in rural areas. According to the Juvenile Justice Code of the Republic of Kosovo individuals of age 14-18 years old are considered juveniles, while according to 2011 Census, approximately 10.0 % of its population is aged 14-18 years old (174,983), which in comparison to the rest of the countries in the region is relatively high, making Kosovo the country with the youngest population. Various sources that referred to the presence and the distribution of delinquent behaviors in Kosovo contain considerable inconsistencies in their data. However, all those sources point to considerable increase in the number of delinquent behaviors among juveniles in the recent years, from 1,313 in 2005 to 2,059 in 2008 (UNICEF, 2010). Among the causes most frequently referred to in these reports is the difficult economic situation in Kosovo families, unemployment, child-parent relations, etc.

The prevalence of delinquent behaviour at our 14-17 years old juveniles is estimated to be 8.1 % (Gashi, 2015). This value is somewhat lower in comparison to other studies that evaluated the prevalence of delinquent behaviours among juveniles (Snyder, 2001). Gashi (2015), also found that girls showed higher values of delinquent behaviour in comparison to boys. This result contradicts a series of studies according to which boys show a higher percentage of manifesting numerous behaviours that are considered delinquent (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006; Stahl et al., 2007). However, the result is consistent with the findings of Stahl (2008), according to which the percentage of delinquent behaviours among girls is in increase more than among boys.

Our research covered only the town of Pristina and its main goal is to unveil the relations between the juvenile's parent education level and the degree of the occurrence of delinquent behaviors among them. The hypothesis of the study is:

H1 = Juveniles will show differences in the level of occurrence of delinquent behaviors across parental education level

H2 = Juveniles, whose parents have high education level, will show low level of occurrence of delinquent behaviors.

H3 = Parent's level of education and gender will show interaction with juvenile delinquency.

METHODOLOGY

Participants of the study

A total of 242 juveniles participated voluntarily in the research. The mean age of the participants was $M=16.2$ years ($SD=1.14$). 137 (56.6 %) of them are female and 105 (43.4%) of them are male. There were differences of statistical significance in parents gender ($F(1, N=242) = 5.355$, $p=.021$). The study participants showed also differences of statistical significance in the father's education level ($F(3, N=242) = 141.372$, $p=.000$); and mother's education level ($F(3, N=242) = 58.198$, $p=.000$). Regarding the place of residence, all participants live in Pristina city. The characteristics in number and percentages related to gender and parental education are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Characteristics of Study Participants*

		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	M	137	56.6
	F	105	43.4
Place of residence	Town	242	100
Father's education	Primary school	16	6.6
	Secondary school	100	41.3
	University	113	46.7
	Higher	13	5.4
Mother's education	Primary school	73	30.2
	Secondary school	92	38
	University	65	26.9
	Higher	12	5

Data collection instrument and method

Data related to delinquent behaviours of juveniles were collected through participants' self-reporting of delinquent behaviours in the study, using the questions Section 28: Delinquency Scale based on Wave II questions, adapted to and validated in our context. The questionnaire asks how often the adolescent engaged in the certain activities within the last 12 months. Responses range from 1 (never) to 4 (more than 5 times). The Cronbach Alpha is .612.

We supplemented the questionnaire with the first part of questions related with data on the parent's education background. Individual meetings were held with all students, wherein the purpose of the study was explained to them. The teachers organized the meetings where they obtained the consent for voluntary participation in the research. The questionnaire was completed individually by each student and was returned to the author on the same day.

The procedure of data analysis

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient () was used to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test was administered in order to identify the differences among the responses. The differences across the variables used in the study were identified through the t-test for independent groups and a series of two way MANOVA. The data were analysed through the SPSS Ver. 19.0 statistical package.

RESULTS

In order to identify differences between the occurrences of delinquent behaviours across father's education level, Table 2 shows the values of mean and standard deviation of father's level of education.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for Father's Education Level.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Primary school	2.25	.931	.233	1.75	2.75
Secondary school	2.47	.660	.066	2.34	2.61
University	2.53	.552	.052	2.43	2.63
Higher	2.23	.439	.122	1.97	2.50

Table 3. *One way ANOVA – Differences on Delinquency by Father's Level of Education*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.939	3	.646	1.662	.176
Within Groups	92.136	237	.389		
Total	94.075	240			

One way ANOVA was carried out to identify potential differences across father's education background. The results showed that there were no differences of statistical significance in the occurrence of delinquent behaviours among the juveniles, regardless of their father's education background ($F(3,237) = 1.662, p = .176$).

Table 4 shows the values of mean and standard deviation of mother's level of education.

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics for Mother's Education Level.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Primary school	2.68	.762	.089	2.51	2.86
Secondary school	2.46	.735	.077	2.31	2.61
University	2.15	.775	.096	1.96	2.35
Higher	2.58	.900	.260	2.01	3.16

Table 5. *One way ANOVA – Differences on Delinquency by Mother’s Level of Education*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.954	3	3.318	5.709	.001
Within Groups	137.747	237	.581		
Total	147.701	240			

We used also the one way ANOVA to identify potential differences across mother’s education background. The results showed that there were differences of statistical significance in the occurrence of delinquent behaviours among the juveniles, ($F(3,237) = 5.709, p = .001$). The Bonferroni was carried out as a post hoc analyse. According to results obtained juveniles whose mothers were with primary education showed delinquency behaviours then juveniles whose mothers were with higher education level. The rest of the education categories showed no statistically significant differences amongst them.

To identify the interaction effect of parent’s education and gender, we used the two way Manova analyses. The results are show in the table below.

Table 6. *Two way MANOVA - Interaction Effect of Parent’s Education and Gender.*

	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	REGR factor score	19.938 ^a	14	1.424	2.519	.002
	Gender	1.784 ^b	14	.127	.502	.931
Intercept	REGR factor score	247.137	1	247.137	437.160	.000
	Gender	82.855	1	82.855	326.587	.000
Father’s education	REGR factor score	3.737	3	1.246	2.204	.088
	Gender	.390	3	.130	.513	.674
Mothers education	REGR factor score	6.897	3	2.299	4.066	.008
	Gender	.778	3	.259	1.023	.383
Fathers ED	REGR factor score	5.732	8	.716	1.267	.262
Mothers ED	Gender	1.395	8	.174	.688	.702

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this research was to assess whether the parental education level, affects the occurrence of delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Pristina, who are considered juveniles by age.

Our results proved the first hypothesis, according to which juveniles will show differences in the level of occurrence of delinquent behaviors across parental education level. No differences of statistical significance were proved in relation to the education background of fathers. Parental education has often been addressed in the literature as part of variables such as socioeconomic status, family behaviours, parenting style, etc., for which various studies obtained various findings. Interestingly, in our study there were statistically significant differences only between the levels of education in mothers. These results also confirmed our second hypothesis, according to which juveniles, whose parents have high education level, will show low level of occurrence of delinquent behaviors. Our results are consistent with the findings of other studies, reinforcing the fact that juveniles from families with high education level have a lower rate of delinquent behaviours (Defoe, Farrington, and Loeber, 2013; Le and Stockdale (2011).

The results approved the third hypothesis: parent's level of education and gender will show interaction with juvenile delinquency. These findings are consistent with the findings of

These results have significant implications on understanding more clearly the correlation between family related variables and delinquent behaviours of juveniles of this age. The results have reinforced the need for further research on other factors family related, since such variables are closely connected with school age and preadolescence delinquency. Our results emphasize even more the importance of designing and implementing prevention strategies for such behaviours at the earliest possible age.

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