

The Role of Family in Abnormality and Crime in Children with a Case Study

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Abstract

Introduction

Family is one of the most important grounds of crime and crime victimization development. The experts, welfare workers, lawyers and sociologists argue that the factor or factors should be identified that provide the kind of conditions under which the individuals abuse, tolerate or accept the crime in order to secure the society, reduce the social harms and finally propose the procedures to reform it. The aim of this study was to investigate the crime victimization of children in the city of Qom, Iran.

Methods and Materials

A questionnaire was distributed and completed through the interviews with the parents live in Gom city and who have a child or children. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was used to compare the family structure with the children's tendency towards criminal behaviors. The questionnaires were analyzed by the SPSS software, version 13. The sample size was 266 individuals.

Results

The findings of research showed that there is a meaningful inverse relationship among the children's control by their families, the rate of children belonging to their families, family cohesion and tendency towards criminal behavior. In other words, as the above mentioned variables increase, the children's tendency towards criminal behaviors decrease and vice versa ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion

The comparison of results showed that the children with separated parents were more inclined to criminal behaviors.

Keywords: Crime, Deviance, Family Cohesion, Sense of Belonging, Social Control.

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Introduction

Crime has been defined in various ways. It seems that the most complete definition that has been presented according to the views of experts in different fields is that the crime is an action which is contrary to the rules, regulations and laws of the society and leads to the legal proceeding and prosecution. So, those who commit such acts are called criminals(1).

Although the adolescents and youth's crime always has been a part of communities problem, but it never has been too cute as a social problem but the rise of adolescents and youth's crime after the nineteenth century especially the violent and atrocity crimes has been considered as one of the great social problems that has raised concerns of world public opinions. In this respect, the recent reports of United Nations indicate that the rate of crime is growing throughout the world and the crime rate increases more than the population growth. Hence, crime especially among the children and adolescents is one of the most complicated and important problems that threat the communities and draw attention of many sociologists, psychologists, criminologists and educational professionals. The consequences of crime among the children, in addition to the overall losses to these kind of individuals and communities, is the national capital loss and destruction of forces and talents of young individuals who are the most important asset of any nation. Also, the enormous cost of reparation has to be spent each year including capture, tracking, maintenance and rehabilitation of children and adolescents. The worst thing is that unfortunately the treatment of crime is not always enough and the evidence show that the most criminal children and adolescents continue this way in the adulthood. With regards to the above cases and the belief that the prevention is much easier and more effective than treatment, the opportunities should be seized, the emergence areas of such problems should be eliminated in the society

and the factor or factors of crime should be investigated in order to prevent the crime.

The recent studies show that the social harms are growing in the communities, so the factor or factors of crime should be identified to solve the problem completely.

Family is one of the most important grounds of crime and crime victimization development. The experts, welfare workers, lawyers and sociologists argue that the factor or factors should be identified that provide the kind of conditions under which the individuals abuse, tolerate or accept the crime in order to secure the society, reduce the social harms and finally propose the procedures to reform it.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the cause or causes and conditions of crime victimization of children where the most important conditions include education, job, income level, age, disputes, divorce, death, drug addiction and mental disorders of parents and so forth.

Factor or Factors of Crime in Children and Adolescents

Since the crime among the children and adolescents is a great social harm, there are various effective factors in crime. Otto Klineberg said that any factor alone is not enough to explain the complex behavior such as youth crime (2), thus, the effective factors in crime of youth are so varied that if it is impossible, it is very hard to enumerate all of them. However, this problem does not hinder us to examine the various factors, identify the effective ones in crime and analyze the quantitative and qualitative effect of each factor.

The scientific studies on the effective factors in the emergence of crime show that the crime is the result of personal and social characteristics of the criminal or the conditions under which she/he lives. However, it is hard to identify the effect of various factors in the emergence of crime, because of the fact that all internal and external factors in the emergence of crime are

like the interconnected chains so that each one is the starting point of the other one. These factors are so varies that it is not easy to say that which one of them is more effective in the emergence of crime. On the other hand, the effectiveness of each factor is not clear. That is why the respective experts believe that there is no absolute factor that always causes an individual to commit crime.

In order to facilitate the study, the effective factors in the emergence of crime are classified into five categories and will be discussed as follows:

A- Family Factors in the Emergence of Crime
Every major study on crime has shown the close relationship between the family instability, children's living conditions and crime. The research evidence indicated the fact the unhealthy and dismantled family is hidden behind many crimes in children and adolescents (3). The result of study showed that 47 individuals in the statistical population pointed out that their parents and their negligence, recklessness and lack of control are among the key factors in the emergence of their crime. In other words, they believed that their parents had involved in their crime (4). Undoubtedly, the personality of each individual is initially formed in the family. So the family has significant role in determining the fate and future life of the individual and his/her mental health depends to a great extent on the family. Because, an individual born under the influence of thoughts, beliefs and behaviors of the family members. Hence, the family is the first factor that affects the child's behavior.

In general, thoughts of parents and or other members of the family more or less have effect on the children.

What is the most interesting thing is that the family deficiencies and shortcomings have negative effect on the members of family which expose the children to the corruption under the certain circumstances and gradually push them into the crime.

Mothers have the most influential role in correcting or corrupting the children compared to other members of family. Because, the child's education begins in the

fetal period and before birth. In this regard, Prophet Mohammad PBUH said that prosperity and adversity of everyone starts in the mother's womb (5).

On the other hand, the mother is firstly responsible for meeting the needs of child. So feeding of child by the mother or her good or bad behavior has significant effect on the child. From the beginning, the child has a strong ability to mimic the movements and behaviors of those who are around him/her and gradually his/her character is formed under this condition. The effect of family on crime is not limited to the childhood and the training deficiencies and shortcomings are effective in the adolescence and adult life. With regards to the important role of family in crime and various stages of development in the children, it is referred to some family issues that can affect the children and adolescents and lead them to commit crime.

1- Father-Mother Conflict

Conflict between the father and mother is among the factors that lead to crime in children and adolescents which have effect on other members of the family or even relatives. Sometimes, the problems of family cause one of the parents leave the home.

It is evident that this kind of family problems disrupts the sense of security and mental health of children and they have direct and undesirable effect on them.

If the children do not experience the sense of tranquility, serenity and intimacy which are the basic needs of anyone, they will search to find it outside the home. So they are likely to fall into the trap of fraudulent and corrupt people who lead them to commit crime. Anyway, conflict and disputes between parents has negative mental effect on the members of family. Sometimes, the children lose their interest in education or job because of impaired mental relaxation, then they even run away from home and finally they are inclined to commit crime.

a study on 800 criminals showed that the 65% of their mothers were divorced or are separating at present. Another study showed that 88% of the criminals have divorced parents or the parents who live apart due to

their conflict (Sotoudeh, 2001: 41). Therefore, it can be said that the conflict between the parents cause deviance in children and adolescents.

2- Discrimination between Children

discrimination in the family where the parents pay more attention to a child than others or less attention to a child than others cause hatred and suspicion of the children. In this respect, Witreig Groberg Wolf argue that rivalry and competition within the family members has destructive effect on children's spirit that may make the child compare himself/herself with his/her siblings who loved more by his/her parents and feel the sense of inferiority (Ahadi and Mohseni, 1993: 187).

Discrimination at home is incompatible with the sensitive and self-esteem of children and hurt irreparably their spirit. so, it cause a series of psychological and emotional turmoil and frustration in the children which lead them to respond negatively to this stimulus such as theft, substance abuse (drug addiction) and running away from home (6). Hence, discrimination against the children may cause the children to tend to commit crime.

3- Lack of Affection in the Family

the need for affection is one of the primary basic needs of every human especially children. As the children need to eat food to grow physically, also they need affection and love to become emotionally and socially mature. The children need their parent's affection more than good food, warm clothes, toys and amusement. Lack of affection is one of the strong factors that lead the children and adolescents to commit crime. The adolescents who are not loved enough by their parents are ready to accept a variety of behavioral disorders and ethical deviances. If the children receive affection in their families, they get the mental repose which hinder them to tend to many ethical lapses. An adolescent girl who suffers from affection deficit disorder may be interested in whoever express his love and begin a friendship with him who may make her corrupt in this way. actually, the type of love is different depending on the

age of children. However, the children should be loved by their parents and their natural need to love and affection to be satisfied by this way (7).

Many commentators of criminal issues argue that the affection deficit and emotional weakness is the origin of crime and deviance. In this regard, a study show that 915 of criminals have suffered from the emotional problems (8). Hence, it must be said that the lack of affection underlie the emergence of educational failures in adulthood.

4- Absence of Father in the Home

Since the father has important role in the development of child's personality, hence, his presence in the home has a great effect on his mood that its consequences usually are characterized during the puberty and adolescence periods. The family need to strength, decisiveness, tact and management of father as well as feelings and emotions of mother. So, if the father is absent in the home for any reason or he simply he is just present physically, then the disintegrated and inconsistent family lead the members to tend to commit crime.

5- Crime in a Family Member

The criminality of parents or one of the family members and their ethical deviances may be effective in tendency of children to commit crime. For example, the families which are corrupt because of alcoholism or drug addiction not only can not nurture the healthy children but also their behavioral characteristics can be a role model for bringing their children into various distortions. The children learn the social attitudes from their families and if one parent is criminal, then their children will be more exposed to the risk of corruption than others. The mother who is not adherent of ethical issues and who has intimacy problems cause their children to come along with "acts incompatible with chastity" and given the appropriate conditions, the same acts are more easily done and repeated by the children.

The results of research show that many addicted individuals have addicted father, mother, grandfather or etc in their families (9).

6- Lack of Understanding of Children

The static families and the families which do not change over the time and expect that their children to live the old ways or the families which move back cause the tendency of children to commit crime. These kinds of families do not meet the legitimate needs of children and adolescents, so they can not properly understand and support their children's aspirations. As a result, this leads to psychological maladjustment of children with community (10).

Methods and Materials

In this study, the statistical population includes parents who have a girl or boy child or children and live in the city of Qom. We have attempted to investigate most families with different social classes, parental education, residential area and job. The sample size was determined using Cochran approach to collect the necessary data.

The approximate size of sample based on the following formula is illustrated below:

d: desirable probable accuracy= 6%

t: safety factor 95% =96/1

p: the desired trait

By substituting these numbers in the estimation formula n, the sample size of 266 people is obtained.

Results

Most respondents (66.4%) were male and (33.6%) were female. (40.6%) were between ages 41 to 50 and 9.8% were above the age of 50, 37.2% between ages 31 to 40 and the 12.4% were between ages of 20 to 30.

In this study, most respondents (43.6 %) were undergraduates. (31.6 %) and (7.5 %) had high school degree or diploma and associate degree respectively. (5.3 %) were graduate and higher, (4.9 %) illiterate and (4.5 %) were in secondary school.

Most respondents (68.4 %) were employed, (13.4 %) housekeeper, (10.3 %) retired and (5.5 %) were student. The family communication of about 78% of respondents were high and very high, 14.3% average and about 7.5% were low and very low. Distribution of respondents in terms of consultation, disputes, intimacy with family, showed at (Table.1).

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents in Terms of Communication, consultation, disputes, intimacy with Family

Cases	Frequency	Percent
Communication		
very low	6	2.3
Low	14	5.3
average	38	14.3
High	77	28.9
very high	131	49.2
Total	266	100.0
Consultation		
very low	13	4.9
low	13	4.9
average	63	23.7
high	123	46.2
very high	54	20.3
Total	266	100.0
Disputes		
very low	80	30.1
low	96	36.1
average	51	19.2
high	25	9.4
very high	14	5.3
Total	266	100.0
Intimacy		
very low	6	2.3
low	19	7.1
average	38	14.3
high	129	48.5
very high	74	27.8
Total	266	100.0

Attention to the Children's Education and Job

More than half of the respondents (71.1%) were agreed or strongly agreed with this saying that "the family always pay attention to their children's education and job".

However, 18.8% intermediate and 10.2% were disagreed and strongly disagreed (Table.2).

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents in Terms of Family Attention to the Children's Education and Job, Children's Friends and Clothing Style of Children

Cases	Frequency	Percent
Attention to the Children's Education and Job		
strongly disagree	14	5.3
disagree	13	4.9
intermediate	50	18.8
agree	64	24.1
strongly agree	125	47.0
Total	266	100.0
Importance of children's friends		
strongly disagree	7	2.6
disagree	6	2.3
intermediate	18	6.8
agree	50	18.8
strongly agree	184	69.5
Total	266	100.0
Clothing Style's of Child		
strongly disagree	7	2.6
disagree	12	4.5
intermediate	49	18.4
agree	80	20.1
strongly agree	118	44.4
Total	266	100.0
Accountability of Child		
strongly disagree	14	5.3
disagree	18	6.8
intermediate	12	4.5
agree	69	25.9
strongly agree	153	57.5
Total	266	100.0

Most respondents (88.3%) were agreed or strongly agreed with this statement that "it is important for my family that who is the friend of their child (Table.2). Results showed that most respondents (74.5%) were agreed or strongly agreed with this saying that "the family is involved in the clothing style of children" (Table.2).

83.4% of respondents were agreed or strongly agreed with this statement that "if they come home at night later than a certain time, they be hold accountable to their families" (Table.2). Drug use and distribution among the children of 95.4% of respondents was low or very low (Table.3). Listening to vulgar music among the most of respondents (78.6%) was low or very low (Table.3).

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents in Terms of Drug use (Drug addiction) and Distribution

Cases	Frequency	Percent
Drug addiction		
very low	235	88.3
low	13	4.9
average	6	2.3
high	6	2.3
no answer	6	2.3
Total	266	100.0
Listening to the Vulgar Music		
very low	171	64.3
low	38	14.3
average	32	12.0
high	12	4.5
very high	13	4.9
Total	266	100.0

Pearson correlation test showed that there is meaningful inverse relationship between the children's control by the families and the tendency of children towards criminal behaviors ($P=0.001$) and Pearson Correlation (-0.582). The result of test also showed there was a relationship between two variables of children's belonging to family and tendency of children towards criminal behaviors ($P=0.003$) and Pearson Correlation (-0.186). So the children's belonging to family is meaningful inversely related to the tendency of children towards criminal behaviors, i.e. as the children's belonging to family increases, tendency of children to criminal behaviors decreases and vice versa.

Results also showed that there is meaningful inverse relationship between the family cohesion and the tendency of children towards criminal behaviors, i.e. where the family cohesion is high, the tendency of children towards criminal behaviors is low and vice versa ($P=0.000$) and Pearson correlation (-0.458).

ANOVA test was used to compare the family cohesion and the tendency of children towards criminal behaviors. The result of test showed that there is meaningful different between the two variables. On the other hand, the comparison of means indicate that the children of separated parents tend more to criminal behaviors ($P=0.000$) (Table.4).

Table 4: Comparing the Family Structure with the Tendency of Children towards Criminal Behaviors

Family structure	Mean	df	F	P value
we live together	15.74	2	49.815	0.001
We are separated	30.80	251		
She/he is dead	25.80	253		

Conclusion

The scientific studies on the effective factors in the emergence of crime show that the crime is the result of personal and social characteristics of the criminal or the conditions under which she/he lives. However, it is hard to identify the effect of various factors in the emergence of crime, because of the fact that all internal and external factors in the emergence of crime are like the interconnected chains so that each one is the starting point of the other one. These factors are so varies that it is not easy to say that which one of them is more effective in the emergence of crime. On the other hand, the effectiveness of each factor is not clear. That is why the respective experts believe that there is no absolute factor that always causes an individual to commit crime.

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Conflict of interest: None

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