

## A social work study on family related issues influencing juvenile delinquency

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### ABSTRACT

We present a study to investigate the impacts of various factors on juvenile delinquency. The study distributes 400 questionnaires among young people aged 19-26 who are involved with some sort of crime and analyzes their feedbacks. There are three hypotheses including family income, tendency to spirituality and religion and educational backgrounds of families and juvenile delinquency among these people. The results show that while family income and religious as well as spirituality characteristics play important role on juvenile delinquency, educational background of the parents do not statistically have any influence on juvenile delinquency. The study recommends that a better family condition could contribute society to reduce juvenile delinquency and people could guide their children through better consultations.

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## 1. Introduction

Juvenile delinquency is one of the most important issues in any society and there are tremendous efforts to reduce crimes and violence among young people who are supposed to be responsible for future development of country. For years, there have been enormous attempts for studying the motives behind the juvenile delinquency. Swift (1909), for instance, discussed juvenile delinquency and juvenile control. Durea (1933) presented a study on attitudes toward juvenile delinquency and reported murder as the most critical offense and truancy as the least serious. Peterson et al. (1959) studied personality and background factors in juvenile delinquency. Quay et al. (1960) presented three personality factors in juvenile delinquency. Kósa et al. (1993) investigated juvenile delinquency and drug dependence in Hungary. Ryan & Testa (2005) performed a comprehensive study on child

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maltreatment and juvenile delinquency by studying the effect of placement and placement instability. They stated that substantiated victims of maltreatment average 47% higher delinquency rates than children not indicated for abuse or neglect while 16% of children placed into substitute care experienced at least one delinquency petition. Ozen et al. (2005) investigated juvenile delinquency in Turkey and determined the effects of offence behavior, socio-demographic specifications and some issues on juvenile offenders' families in a selected region, and compared their results with developed countries. They stated that some items such as low income and low family educational levels, insufficient parental control, crowded family, migration, repetition of offences, and cigarette smoking were important risk factors for offensive behavior. van Dam et al. (2005) investigated which of the two personality models, PEN or Big Five, could differentiate best between Dutch juvenile offenders and college students, between Dutch self-reported recidivists and non-recidivists.

Chung and Steinberg (2006) studied the relationship between neighborhood factors, parenting behaviors, peer deviance, and delinquency among some juvenile offenders and explained that weak neighborhood social organization was indirectly related to delinquency through its relationship with parenting behavior and peer deviance. Ryan et al. (2008) implemented administrative data from a large urban county and propensity score matching to investigate the relationship between group home placements in child welfare and the risk of delinquency based on a sample size of 8226 people. They stated that the relative risk of delinquency was nearly two and one half times bigger for adolescents with at least one group home placement.

Ohtani et al. (2008) studied the relationship between the month of birth and juvenile delinquency and reported no substantial difference between observed and expected numbers of births in winter/summer or those in the first/last months of the sample size of investigation. Gardner et al. (2009) studied the effect of peer context among adolescent boys and girls with varied histories of problem behavior by looking into the relationship between sports participation and juvenile delinquency. They stated that the odds of nonviolent delinquency were higher among boys who took part in sports when compared with boys who took part in nonathletic activities.

Ryan et al. (2010) investigated the relationship between kinship foster care and the risk of juvenile delinquency and stated that the relative risk of delinquency was bigger for African American and white male adolescents served in kin homes. Chui & Chan (2011) executed an empirical study on social bonds and male juvenile delinquency while on probation in Hong Kong and stated that poor parental bonding and negative belief in the legal system could increase the propensity to commit theft and violent delinquency, respectively, including the probation period. They stated that the increase level of involvement in organizational activities could yield in the increase of propensity to commit violent crime. They reported the implications for social services, which target the juvenile offenders in terms of fostering a healthy parent-child bonding.

In this paper, we study three factors influencing juvenile delinquency among young people who live in city of Esfahan, Iran by gathering information from nearly 400 people. The organization of this paper first, presents the questions of our survey in section 2 and the results are given in section 3. Finally, concluding remarks are given in the last to summarize the contribution of the paper.

## **2. The proposed study**

The study distributes 400 questionnaires among young people aged 19-26 who are involved with some sort of crime and analyzes their feedbacks. There are three hypotheses including family income, tendency to spirituality and religion and educational backgrounds of families and juvenile delinquency among these people.

### 3. The results

#### 3.1. The relationship between family income and juvenile delinquency

The first hypothesis of this survey is associated with the relationship between family income and juvenile delinquency. Table 1 summarizes details of our survey.

**Table 1**

The relationship between family income and juvenile delinquency

	juvenile delinquency			
	High	Low	Sum	
Unsuitable family income	No	113	136	249
	Yes	46	93	139
Sum	259	229	388	

The Chi-square was calculated as  $\chi^2 = 5.569$  P-value=0.018 with df=1, which means we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that a sever family income could influence juvenile delinquency.

#### 3.2. The relationship between family religious as well as spirituality and juvenile delinquency

The second hypothesis of this survey is associated with the relationship between family religious as well as spirituality and juvenile delinquency. Table 2 summarizes details of our survey.

**Table 2**

The relationship between religious as well as spirituality and juvenile delinquency

	juvenile delinquency			
	High	Low	Sum	
Religious as well as spirituality	No	53	168	221
	Yes	22	145	167
Sum	75	313	388	

The Chi-square was calculated as  $\chi^2 = 7.126$  P-value=0.008 with df=1, which means we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that a low level of believes on religion as well as spirituality among families could significantly influence juvenile delinquency.

#### 3.3. The relationship between family's educational backgrounds and juvenile delinquency

The third hypothesis of this survey is associated with the relationship between educational backgrounds of families and juvenile delinquency. Table 3 summarizes details of our survey.

**Table 3**

The relationship between family's educational backgrounds and juvenile delinquency

	Juvenile delinquency			
	High	Low	Sum	
Family educational background	Low	119	172	291
	High	39	58	97
Sum	158	230	388	

The Chi-square was calculated as  $\chi^2 = 0.014$  P-value=0.905 with df=1, which means we cannot reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no relationship between family educational background and juvenile delinquency. In summary, we have found that family income as well as religious characteristics play important role on juvenile delinquency in Iranian society. However, there were no evidences to believe that family educational background had any impact on juvenile delinquency.

#### 4. Conclusion

We have presented a study to investigate the impacts of three factors on juvenile delinquency. The study distributed 388 questionnaires among people who were involved with crime and analyzed their feedbacks. There were three hypotheses in our survey and we were looking to detect whether family income, religion and educational backgrounds play important role on juvenile delinquency in Iranian society. The results of our survey indicated that while family income and their religious backgrounds were important on juvenile delinquency, family's educational background did not statistically influence juvenile delinquency. The study suggests that a better family condition could help reduce juvenile delinquency and people could guide their children through better consultations.

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