



PARENTAL CARE, PARENTAL OVERPROTECTION, AND DELINQUENCY AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between parental care, parental overprotection, and delinquency among adolescents. A sample of 200 adolescents was selected with an age range of 16 to 18 years from Gujranwala, Pakistan. The Parental Bonding Questionnaire and Self-Report Delinquency Scale were used in the study. The data was analysed by SPSS version 27, by using descriptive and inferential statistics that were computed. Results revealed that parental care was significantly negatively related to delinquency, whereas parental overprotection was significantly positively related to delinquency among adolescents. On investigating gender differences, it was found that male adolescents show a higher level of delinquency as compared to female adolescents.

I. INTRODUCTION

Parents have a lot of influence on their children, and they mould their children's behavior into adult' behavior. Parental control has a great impact on their children. According to the concept of Schaefer (1959), "parental demandingness and responsiveness" can be described as the three types of parenting styles. Parents set regulations for their children and expect them to obey in the way they want. In parenting, responsiveness is an essential aspect from the emotional perspective. Children reared in the three distinct parenting contexts have been found to have varying results. Adolescents who described their parents as authoritative, according to Steinberg, there were similarities between adolescents from authoritative and authoritarian households. But their "self-reliance and social competence" were lacking, whereas delinquency was common (Goering & Mrug, 2021). Similar findings were made by Sun et al. (2024). They enumerated the traits of parents linked to the development of antisocial personalities in kids, which are linked to problematic conduct. They found that the most important characteristics in predicting teenage delinquency were rejection, loss of emotional support, lack of supervision, and lack of discipline.

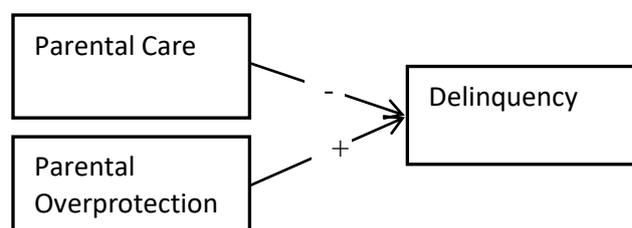
The results of a significant pair of studies published in the fields of developmental psychology (Kerr & Stattin, 2000) and child development (Stattin & Kerr, 2000) challenged several widely accepted beliefs about how to best operationalize several important parenting behaviours and whether or not they are associated with teenage problem behavior. Three of these publications' conclusions stand out in particular. Initially, investigations that highlight the connections between parental oversight and signs of problematic behaviour in teenagers have often muddled the degree to which parents participate in efforts to gather information regarding their children's

activities, locations, and social circles (i.e., parental monitoring as defined by Stattin and Kerr, 2000). Stattin and Kerr (2000) found that when examining adolescent disclosure, parental solicitation, and parental control as predictors of adolescent engagement in problem behaviour, disclosure had the most significant impact; specifically, an increase in disclosures correlated with a decrease in problem behaviour. While the parental request exhibited a positive correlation with increased involvement in problem behaviour, higher levels of parental control demonstrated a negative correlation with lower levels of problem behaviour among teenagers, indicating that parents encourage adolescents who misbehave to communicate more with them. The effects persisted even when accounting for the quality of parent-child relationships, showing slight variation based on whether the perspectives of adolescents or parents were taken into account. (Gurdal & Sorbring, 2024).

Men are prone to commit delinquent behavior as compared to women. This is because the males and females might not share the same etiology of their misbehaviour, hence explaining why the rate of delinquency in males is higher than in girls. Males might be generally vulnerable to delinquency risk factors such as ineffective parenting, as compared to girls. A different theory confirms that males tend to be more exposed to risk factors as compared to females, yet the risk factors of delinquency are similar in both sexes (Moffitt et al., 2011). The literature on the impact of sex differences on the relationship that exists between familial variables and delinquency is minimal and contradictory. Although certain studies endorse these boys as emphasizing more on the family, others find that there are not so many sex differences in family risk factors of delinquency (Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986), and others assert even greater effects of parenting characteristics in females (e.g., Nye, 1958). The existing meta-analysis makes comparisons between references on males and females to help explain theoretical and empirical differences.

The involvement of adolescents in problematic behaviours is likely intricately connected to the levels of parental supervision and overprotection they experience. Irrespective of how thoroughly these initiatives foster parental awareness, when parents endeavour to comprehend their children's locations and engagements, it is probable that children will exhibit a diminished propensity to engage in behaviours that their parents find objectionable. This expectation stands in opposition to the findings presented by Stattin and Kerr (2000). This is consistent with the current body of research that links monitoring to a decrease in misbehaviour (Laird et al., 2003); however, Kerr and Stattin (2000) discovered that increased levels of monitoring were necessary conditions for adolescents to engage in problematic behaviour. The augmentation of parental supervision regarding children's social engagements and activities is poised to have a direct negative impact on delinquency and substance misuse. The model depicted in Figure 1 elucidates the direct effects of supervision and management on delinquent behaviour in adolescents displaying problematic tendencies. The organisation of the research, as depicted in Figure 1, clarifies the connections among parental care, overprotection, and adolescent delinquency. This study's conceptual framework has been constructed upon the foundation of previous research findings.

Figure 1: The association between parental care, parental overprotection, and delinquency among adolescents



II. METHOD

Participants

The sample of the present study consisted of adolescents ($N = 200$). Both male adolescents ($n = 90$, 45%) and females ($n = 110$, 55%) were included in the sample. The purposive sampling technique was used. The age range of the sample was 15 to 17 years ($M = 16.00$, $SD = 4.23$). The education of the participants was from intermediate to graduation.

Measures

Parental Bonding Instruments (Parker et al., 1979) were used to measure the parental influence on adolescents. It has two scales, including a parental care subscale and a parental control or overprotection subscale. These subscales measure basic parental styles as perceived by the participant. It is completed separately for both mothers and fathers. The scale consists of 25 items, including parental care and parental overprotection. It is a four-point Likert-type scale. The Self-Reported Delinquency Scale (Naqvi, 2007) was used to measure delinquency among adolescents. This is a five-point Likert scale with 27 items.

Procedure

Data were collected from different colleges of Gujranwala. Participants were approached during working hours; that is why dual informed consent, both from the head of the institutions and from participants, was obtained by the researcher. They were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the research. They were also assured that information given by them would be used only for research purposes. The questionnaires were handed over to the participants. After filling out the questionnaires, the researcher collected the questionnaires and thanked the participants.

III. RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation among all Study Variables

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|------------------------------------|------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1. Mother care | - | .38*** | .78*** | -.32*** | -.29*** | -.34*** | -.23** |
| 2. Father care | | - | .87*** | -.40*** | -.43*** | -.45*** | -.15 |
| 3. Parental care | | | - | -.43*** | -.43*** | -.49*** | -.18* |
| 4. Mother overprotection/control | | | | - | .58*** | .87*** | .17 |
| 5. Father overprotection/control | | | | | - | .90*** | .03 |
| 6. Parental overprotection/control | | | | | | - | .09 |
| 7. Delinquency | | | | | | | - |
| <i>M</i> | 9.93 | 10.43 | 19.94 | 23.40 | 23.83 | 47.18 | 11.55 |
| <i>SD</i> | 4.90 | 6.15 | 9.09 | 5.75 | 6.27 | 10.93 | 10.76 |
| α | .86 | .72 | .75 | .71 | .76 | .81 | .74 |

Table 1 shows that the alpha reliability of the scales and subscales ranged from 0.70 to 0.86, indicating that all the scales and their subscales have satisfactory alpha reliability, and they were reliable for use. Results revealed that mother care has a significant positive relationship with father care, parental care, and a significant negative relationship with mother control, father control, parental control, and delinquency. Father care has a significant positive relationship with parental care and a significant negative relationship with mother control, father control, and parental control. Father care has a non-significant relationship with delinquency. Parental care has a significant negative relationship with mother control, father control, parental control, and delinquency. Mother control has a significant positive relationship with father control and parental control, whereas a non-significant relationship with delinquency. Father control has a significant positive relationship with parental control, whereas a non-significant relationship with delinquency.

Table 2: Gender Differences in Study Variables

| Variables | Males | | Females | | <i>t</i> (198) | Cohen's <i>d</i> |
|----------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------------|------------------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | | |
| Mother care | 10.35 | 5.01 | 9.39 | 4.76 | .94 | -- |
| Father care | 11.90 | 6.31 | 8.46 | 5.39 | 2.81* | .59 |
| Parental care | 21.70 | 9.12 | 22.40 | 5.39 | 2.13* | .09 |
| Mother control | 24.81 | 6.01 | 23.17 | 6.27 | 1.97* | .27 |
| Father control | 23.17 | 6.27 | 24.70 | 6.23 | 1.16 | -- |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|------|
| Parental control | 45.62 | 10.77 | 49.38 | 10.92 | 1.54 | -- |
| Delinquency | 15.74 | 11.93 | 6.04 | 5.39 | 4.83** | 1.02 |

Table 2 shows significant mean differences on father care, parental care, mother control, and delinquency. Findings are non-significant on mother care, father control, and parental control.

IV. DISCUSSION

It was supported by the results that parental care has a negative relationship with delinquency among adolescents with behavioral problems. The positive parental behavior results in good mental health and low delinquency. Negative behavior, such as neglect, rejection, and hostility, is associated with delinquency. Adolescents who experience rejection and poor support from their parents are at high risk of mental health problems, and that is why they exhibit more delinquent behavior (Zhao et al., 2023; Rohner, 2004). Factors such as parental discipline, inconsistent and harsh parental attitude, poor supervision, and weak parent-child relationships are contributing elements to enhanced delinquency among juveniles and adults (Mak, 1994; Barnes & Farrell, 1992). Parental control and overprotection were also relatively linked to delinquency in the past research (Sun et al., 2024; Suarez-Morales & Torres, 2021). Parental control and surveillance are characterised by three primary indicators: the level of parental comprehension regarding childcare, the proactive tracking of the child's whereabouts, and the correlation with delinquent behaviour. But in the present research, it was seen that most of the parents were illiterate or had a lack of parental knowledge and tracing of children and adolescents' behavior; that is why no relationship was found between parental control and delinquency.

The relationship between parental awareness and delinquency can be clarified by examining the degree of the child's self-disclosure. Parental oversight appears to be limited by the diminished duration of interaction between teenagers and their parents, coupled with the adolescents' growing independence (Donker et al., 2021; Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Therefore, the link between parental control and delinquency is weaker. As data was collected from an urban area, i.e., Gujranwala city, where parents do not provide strict control to their children, but in the context of a collectivistic culture, some other factors like poverty, unemployment, demerits, injustices, etc., are more strongly associated with delinquency. Therefore, the second hypothesis was not proved by the results. Gender also plays an important role in delinquency. The present study investigated gender differences with respect to delinquency. This higher level of delinquency in males is also due to some etiological differences between males and females. Boys were doing violent offenses more than boys (Chesney-Lind & Paramore, 2001), whereas female-reported sexual assault accounted for 68%. These are consistent with the prior research evidence that males reported a high level of self-reported delinquency, and females were more likely to sexually assault (McDaniel & Rodriguez, 2021).

V. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that mother care and parental care were negatively related to delinquency. Father care and overprotection were not related to delinquency. Gender differences indicated that males were higher on delinquency than female participants.

Disclosure Statement

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