

Relationship between self-efficacy, self-esteem, and attachment style among juvenile delinquency in Urmia – Iran

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Abstract:

Psychological factors, such as self-esteem and self-efficacy, have been shown to be equally as important in contributing to the cause of deviant behavior. The aim of the present study is to investigate the relationship between the self-efficacy, self-esteem, and attachment style in juvenile delinquency in Urmia City-West Azerbaijan, Iran. By simple random sampling, 60 adolescents in delinquent juvenile institution was selected. Three questionnaires: Parent and Peer Attachment (Armesden and Greenberg, 1987), Self-Esteem Scale of Rochester, and adolescent social self-efficacy were used. The findings indicate there is a positive significant correlation between self-esteem and attachment to friends ($p<0/05$). But correlation between the self-efficacy and attachment to mothers, self-efficacy and attachment to fathers and friends was not meaningful. By doing multiple regression analysis, attachment to the friends and self-efficacy have the most important role in predicting the self-esteem variable.

Keywords: *Attachment styles, self-esteem, self-efficacy, juvenile delinquency, Urmia, Iran*

Introduction

Adolescence is the stage of life when people experience continuous change mentally, physically, and psychologically (Santrock, 2004). Psychologically, adolescents are developing and attempting to demonstrate signs of maturity by building their self- image and learning appropriate social behavior.

Psychologists regard having a strong sense of self-esteem as a sign of self-understanding and self-acceptance, which allows individuals to view themselves and others equally, achieving one's self-integration and developing one's potential effectively, as well as having a higher expectation for self-efficacy (Tabassam & Grainger, 2002).

Sociologists and psychologists have long considered self-esteem to be an important cause and consequence of social behavior (Mason, 2001). If a sense of self-esteem and positive self-evaluation cannot be gained through socially acceptable methods, motivation for behaving in such a (positive) way will gradually decline. Instead, one may try to gain self-esteem and attention through other means that may include deviant behavior. Thus, having a low sense of self- esteem has often been regarded as a motivation for deviant behavior (T. Wing Lo *et al.*, 2011). It is not the deviant behavior itself, but rather the acceptance and recognition gained from deviant peers after committing an act of deviance that enhances adolescent's self-esteem (Goodnight *et al.*, 2006; Becker & Luthar, 2007). Delinquents' sense of self-enhancement and protection can ultimately be gained by strengthening the psychological bonding with other delinquents when they engage in similar behavior. Therefore, there is not necessarily a direct relationship between unruly behavior and self-esteem, which can be enhanced through "delinquent association" (Sung & Thornberry, 1998).

When there is a high expectation for a close and affectionate relationship from the parents to the adolescent it leads to a better adjusted adolescent in several different areas inclusive of self-esteem/image (Baumrind, 1991).

Parents who demonstrate trust, acceptance, encouragement with their teen, develop their self-esteem and social skills. When parents give forth effort to increase their knowledge of adolescents' behaviors, interests, and activities, it emphasizes parental caring and supports the adolescent-parent relationship (Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Adolescents' level of confidence in relationships and level of security are greatly affected by any instability present in parent-child relationships. This insecurity can be due to parent emotional unavailability or other behaviors expressed through parenting styles or negative life events.

Adolescents who perceive a strong attachment to their parents are more inclined than their peers who perceive a weak attachment, to adhere to their parents' limits, rules, and expectations, as well as considering their parents' reactions when tempted to engage in delinquent behavior (Marcus & Betzer, 1996).

Parental attachment positively or negatively affects adolescents' sense of psychological well-being, especially self-esteem, self-evaluation, and peer relationships. There is some research and studies that suggest attachment and connection as critical components of the family process in relation to delinquency. That is to say, adolescents who feel more connected to their parent(s) feel more supported and attended to thereby engaging in less delinquent and problem behavior. (Johnson , J. H. 2005). The formation of strong peer attachments and graduated independence from the family is a normal part of adolescent development. Unfortunately, youth whose peers engage in high-risk behavior are at high risk for the development of similar behaviors (Rai AA, Stanton B, Wu Y, et al, 2003).

In our society, adolescent delinquency has been reported as a dilemma, and increasingly is a topic of concern and much needed attention. Daily, the media reports problematic and socially unacceptable behaviors demonstrated by adolescents. These behaviors include such things as substance abuse, drug distribution, car thefts, rape, illegal border escape, scuffling.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between self-esteem, self-efficacy, and parent-adolescent attachment, parent-friends attachment, among delinquency adolescent males.

Methodology

Participants

The sample included 60 adolescents from delinquent juvenile institution center of Urmia, North West in Iran. Because of time limitation, available samples were studied. The majority of adolescent were 17 years old (36/7%), 18 years old (21/7%), and 16 years old (26/7%), and 15 years old (8/3%). Regarding educational levels of deviant adolescents: illiterate 10%, primary school 21/7%, guidance school 46/7%, high school 15%, and graduate high school 3/3%.

Measures

Rochester self-esteem scale: This test which evaluates the perception of adolescents proportional to self-esteem has been prepared to be used in Rochester longitudinal study on adolescent development according to Rosenberg (1965) self-esteem scale (1986). This scale consist 9 phrases and the applicant had to define his/her agreement or disagreement with each phrase in a 4-degree Likert scale. The scope of scores of this test range from 1 to 4 and higher scores indicate higher self-esteem of the individual. The coefficient of a Cronbach's Alpha for this research is 52%. Preparation and composition of this scale in Iran has been in the year 2010.

Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment Armsden & Greenberg (1987) was generated based on Bowlby attachment theory in order to evaluate the imagination of adolescents about negative and positive dimensions of emotional/cognition relation with family and their close friends. The part related to parental attachment consisted 28 phrases and the part related to friends' attachment had 25 phrases and the applicant had to define his/her agreement or disagreement with each phrase in a 5-degree Likert scale. In this study the coefficient of a Cronbach's Alpha for attachment to mother was 87%, for father 87% and for friends 88%.

Adolescent Social Self-Efficacy Scale: Adolescents social self-efficacy was presented by Connolly (1989) to evaluate the rate the Adolescent self-efficacy. This scale is a self-reporting 25-phrased tool in which the applicant has to define how much each phrase of the test clarifies his personality in a 7-degree Likert scale (impossible=1 to too easy=7). Overall score of the test is between 25 to 175 and higher scores indicate higher level of applicant's social self-efficacy. This scale is a self-reporting tool which has 25 phrases and has been composed in Iran on year 2012.

Results:

Pearson correlation coefficients between self-esteem, self-efficacy and attachment components are shown in table 1. According to this table, there was a significant relationship between self-esteem and attachment to friends ($P < 0.05$). There were not a significant relationship between adolescent's self-esteem and attachment to mother (0.12), and to father is (-0.04). Also, the results of Table(1) indicated that correlation coefficient among variables of self-efficacy and attachment to mother, attachment to father, and attachment to friends were not significant.

Table 1: Pearson correlation coefficient between self-esteem, self-efficacy and attachment components.

Variable	Attachment to mother	Attachment to father	Attachment to friends	
Self-esteem	0.12	-0.04	*0.33	r
	0.37	0.75	0.01	Sig.
Self-efficacy	0.24	0.14	0.23	r
	0.07	0.32	0.07	Sig.
	60	60	60	n

Furthermore, as shown in Table 2, there was a significance correlation between adolescents' self-esteem and self-efficacy. Results indicated that deviant adolescents' self-esteem positively correlated to their self-efficacy.

Table 2: Pearson correlation among deviant adolescent's self-efficacy and self-esteem

Variable	Self-efficacy	
Self-esteem	**0.39	r
	0.002	Sig.
	60	n

Self-esteem and self-efficacy were moderately related ($r=0.39$) $p < .01$), so we conducted multiple regression analyses to test whether they had independent effects on attachments to friends. For answering to this question: Will self-efficacy and dimensions of attachment to friends predict self-esteem in deviant adolescents, regression analysis was used.

Table 3: Regression analysis to predict deviant adolescent's self-esteem by their attachments to friends and self-efficacy.

model	Predicting Variables	change source	Sum of Square	df	mean Square	F ratio	Sig.
1	Attachment to friends	regression	65.76	1	65.76	6.73	0.01
		Residue	420.14	43	9.77		
		Total	485.91	44			
2	Self-efficacy	regression	128.52	2	64.26	7.55	0.002
		Residue	357.38	42	8.51		
		Total	485.91	44			

Our results (Table 3) by using regression analysis and backward method showed self-efficacy and attachments to friends as predictive variable has a significant role in deviant adolescent's self-esteem as criterion variable.

Findings illustrated that the F value achieved from regression analysis was significant at the level of 0.01 and can be concluded that there was a liner relation between predicting variables (attachment to friends and self-efficacy) and criterion Variable (self-esteem). Therefore, attachment to friends and self-efficacy were a positive and significant predictor of deviant adolescent's self-esteem so the main question of study accepted with %99 confidence.

Conclusion

Youth delinquency is a problem with multiple causes and effects, and the present study found that self esteem is a crucial factor. It seems that most participants in the present study not having a supportive family environment. It is likely that lack of warm and accepting parents impact on their self.

Deviant behavior can be viewed as another expression of pro-social behavior within the delinquent network where more peer acceptance is gained through committing more severe acts of deviance.

If adolescents fail to gain social acceptance through normal living experiences, an impaired self-image may develop. If this is combined with relatively low self-esteem and self-efficacy and high susceptibility to peer influence, adolescents may naturally try to gain acceptance in other social groups through engaging in deviant behavior (Wentzel, 1994; Allen *et al.*, 2005)

Deviant adolescents desire to gain acceptance from peers. Therefore, the deeper attachment to friends, the more self-esteem of young people engaged in deviant behavior. It is easier for delinquents to be noticed by their peers, delinquents' self-esteem and self-efficacy will gradually be enhanced. Once they are frequently engaged in unruly behavior in an open manner, their self-esteem and self-efficacy will become higher.

The selection of the sample from a juvenile center limits the generalization of the study. However, the present study suggests these adolescents have good attachment to friends, and this variable related to their self-esteem.

What can we do? The first step for pediatric clinicians should be encouraged to discuss evidence-based parenting practices with parents. Second, Adolescents who staying in this center, should be provided with the opportunity to participate in several activities, so channel their rebellious behavior in constructive ways. Active participation in activities could help to develop their potential and enhance self-confidence and self-esteem, thus serving as a protective factor of delinquency. Since adolescents often turn to their peers, including deviant ones, for support during times of them, they should be coached on how to resist undesirable peer pressure through proper social skills; helping them to rebuild their social circles is a necessary strategy. And finally, For changing the deviant identity of delinquents is central to social work for young people. Without a new identity, they would feel easy to mingle with their former deviant peers. Social work in this center (where these adolescents staying for months or years) should prepare

the delinquents for the new roles they are to play after any intervention programs. However, preoccupation with their previous deviant identity is a hurdle for positive change; they may seek to resolve the crises and frustrations they encountered by deviant means. To rebuild their self and identity, they need to look for someone or something that they have faith in. They have to experience success or achieve social status through conventional means, such as sports, talent programs, volunteer services, mentoring, and role modeling. The identity-rebuilding process would gradually strengthen their self-esteem and self-efficacy, remove their deviant self-concept, and prevent them from going astray.

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