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Parenting technique and deviant behaviour

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Abstract

Aim of this study was to examine the effect the family has on an adolescent's behaviour. It is believed that parents have direct and indirect control over their children. Previous investigations have indicated that parents directly influence their children's behaviour through the parenting techniques utilized. Parental support is the largest influence on creating preferable behaviour in adolescents. Along with the direct influence from parents, the parents have indirect control over their children where they live in and get socialized with the peers. Through these bonds, adolescents often get along with the juveniles where they succumb to the peer pressure that indeed causes deviant behaviour or juvenility. Adolescents learn greatly from their peers. The family has an indirect control over peers through community watch and their parenting techniques; teaching the child not to succumb to peer pressure. This information is vital due to the presence of juveniles in the criminal justice system.

Keywords: Parenting, adolescent, behaviour, deviant, socialization, peer and community

Introduction

Parent influences are seen in three areas of adolescent's life. These are the family and home life, a child's community, and their peers. Parents will directly affect deviant behaviour through parenting and the family structure, while indirectly affecting the behaviours through the adolescent's community, and their choice of peers.

It is very unfortunate that a vast majority of adolescents have developed deviant behaviours. Violation of family and social norms & standard has become fashion. Children want to become least accountable before their parents. They are not willing to inform their parents about their movements. They imitate criminality instead of sobriety and gentleness. Juvenile delinquency has become very common. So much so that the rate of arresting of youth went very high this ultimately led to creation of Remand Home & Juvenile wards in the Jail and outside Jail. According to Cross white and Kerpelman (2008) adolescents arresting is more than 65%. Now adolescents continue to engage in different types of criminal behaviours. These crimes range from violent crimes, such as murder, to simple assault, motor theft vandalism, and disorderly conduct.

The participation in delinquent crime continues to increase, unless we can identify the factors that have the potential to lower the rate (Barnes, Hoffman and Welte 2006)^[2]; understanding these factors can put into effect social changes that can help our society improve. These changes can include new policies for juveniles or education for those who are a part of a deviant adolescent's community.

Social control or self-control is an individual characteristic that is established early in life and can account for deviant behaviour (Teasdale and Silver 2009)^[6, 12]. This self-control is established through strong attachments to social foundations, such as school or a community. These social bonds can weaken and has ability to influence the level of deviance engaged in (Knoester and Hayne 2005)^[7]. Individuals who engage in such behaviours do so because it can provide an immediate way to receive gratification (i.e. stealing); it requires little thought process, and does not have a long-term goal (Crosswhite and Kerpelman 2008). These results are appealing to children with low self-control because they lack self-regulation. Self-regulation is the ability to set and attain goals, refrain from problematic behaviour, and focus on long term goals (Crosswhite and Kerpelman 2008).

The family

A parent is a model towards their children. Research on modelling has shown that when parents are held in high esteem and are the main sources for reinforcement, their child is

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more likely to model them (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger and Conger 1991) ^[11]. If a parent acts in a negative way, the child is more likely to follow their parent's negative attitude. They are also more likely to generalize this attitude to the rest of society. Thus, parents have much influence over their child's behaviour. From birth, a parent will mould and shape behaviours suitable to the norms of society through childrearing. However, there are certain parenting techniques that have a greater impact on a child's behaviours. The largest is parental support (Barnes *et al* 2006) ^[2]. Parental support is behaviours toward the child, such as praising, encouraging, and giving affection. They show the child that he or she is valued and loved. In multiple studies, it has been found that support from parents bonds the adolescent to institutions and builds their self-control (Barnes *et al* 2006) ^[2]. This building of self-control will hinder deviant behaviours from forming.

Community

Durkheim argued that deviance is more likely to increase after societies undergo changes that disrupt the community's social bonds (Knoester and Haynie 2005) ^[7]. When these community bonds weaken, disorganization sets in. The social disorganization theory states that when traditional or effective community social bonds that prevent crime and delinquency are absent, delinquent behaviours will increase (Knoester and Haynie 2005) ^[7]. These social bonds can be found in neighbourhoods. An adolescent has bonds with their parents and their neighbours in the community. There are three necessary conditions in which a neighbourhood must provide for children: monitoring, recognizing deviant behaviours, and punishing the behaviours. These can be achieved through intergenerational closure occurs when adults and children in a community have a strong bond to each other. The conditions can also be attained through "reciprocated exchange," the strength of interfamily and adult interaction when it comes to parenting techniques for the community (Teasdale and Silver 2009) ^[6, 12]. When parents do not provide these conditions than an up-rise in juvenile crime overtakes the neighbourhood.

Peers

Research shows that adolescents with positive feelings toward their school are less likely to be deviant (Dornbusch, Erickson, Laird, and Wong 2001) ^[4]. When parents do not have a strong bond with their child and do not teach them pro-social values, the adolescent has difficulties in school. These difficulties lead to rejection by conventional peers and they drift in to association with deviant peers. This form of participation in deviance is a direct affect from deviant peers (Simons *et al* 1991) ^[11]. Now that the adolescent is relatively unrestrained from the opinions of parents, teachers, and conventional peers, their new deviant friends encourage and reinforce them to participate in deviant behaviours. Deviant friends are accepting of each other and their deviant actions.

The age at which an adolescent begins associating with deviant peers influences the level of delinquency the child will participate in. Some children begin to affiliate with delinquent friends during adolescence because it can be deemed as normal (Buehler 2006) ^[3]. In 2005, Vitaro *et al*'s study analyzed three different group of deviant affiliations. The first is the early group, which begins their relationship during childhood and throughout adolescence. The second is

the late affiliation group starting during early adolescence only. The third is a never group who never friend's deviant peers are *Disruptiveness, social acceptance, academic performance, parent-child relationship, and delinquency were measured. The early group showed the highest overall amount of delinquency throughout adolescence. They also had the highest level of disruptiveness, lowest level of academic performance and the weakest bond with their parents. The late group's deviant behaviour steadily increased, until age 13 where it peaked and began to level off at age 15. This group overall had the lowest levels of disruptiveness and the strongest bond with their parents. The never group maintained the lowest amount of deviance, but increased slightly. This increase could be due to the rapid decrease in academic performance (Vitaro, Brendgen, and Wanner 2005) ^[13]. The never affiliated group illustrates how deviant peers are not the only factors contributing to deviant behaviour. The conclusion of this study shows how important it is for parents to monitor their child's friends and academic performances. Effective monitoring is critical in the reduction of deviant behaviours influenced through peers.

Conclusions

Parents directly and indirectly affect their adolescent's deviant behaviours. From the enlarging crime rates to the rise in secure detention facilities, juvenile crime is increasing. Three factors have been found that have the ability to aid in decreasing these rates. These factors are the adolescent family, community, and peers, with an overall factor of parenting. Parents directly influence deviant behaviour in their children through their parenting techniques and the family structure.

Effective monitoring and support, as well as consistent punishments are vital to raising a child. When these areas are lacking an adolescent is more likely to turn to deviant behaviour. Parents directly affect family structure. Divorces are a large transition and they cause adolescents to experience a low level of parental attachment and supervision, thus leading toward deviant behaviours. Once a divorce is finalized, a child will then move to living in a single-parent home. Single-parent living environments reduce social control and lead to an increase in delinquency. A parent indirectly influences deviant behaviour through a community. A single parent community holds a greater number of opportunities to take part in deviant behaviours. Part of child's community is their school. A parent will teach value to their children that are accepted in school. When these values are not taught, an adolescent's school bond is broken, causing their academic performance to suffer. Without a strong bond to school, an adolescent will begin to associate with deviant peers. Deviant friends pressure the adolescent to begin or continue partaking in deviant actions. The underlying theme of social control theory and social disorganization theory further explains parents and juvenile deviant behaviours. When a child has a weak bond with their parents or the community, their self-control is decreased and social disorganization results.

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