Family Social Capital, Family Social Bonds, and Juvenile Delinquency

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Juvenile Delinquency

**Introduction**

Juvenile Delinquency refers to the unlawful acts and offences that are committed by children under 18. Usually it covers the kids of age between 10 and 18, who have been charged for violating the laws. The crimes committed by these young children is denoted as delinquent acts. Penalty of these acts depend on severity of the offense conducted by the child. It may seem like a single action committed by a young person. However, there are multiple factors behind the illegal actions of Juvenile delinquents. The reasons of delinquency vary for a person to person. Likewise, most of the times there are life related issues that are directly linked to the type of crime a youth commits. Juvenile delinquency is very common all over the world and it is not unusual to hear about an individual who is committing a crime at very young age. However, once ta crime is committed, the Juvenile Delinquents have to face a lot of consequences onwards in the society.

Likewise, the article chosen for this paper is related to juvenile delinquency that further studies the causes of the criminal behavior among the young people. Using the social capital and social bond theories from the sociology, the authors have explained that how those social theories influence the behavior of juvenile delinquents. Under the social bond theory, the family social bonds are more focused in the article as family bonding is directly linked to the behavioral development of an individual. The home environment makes a child to act the way he or she acts. It is very essential to deeply understand the factors behind the violent and unlawful attitude of the young generation. At the same, it also assists in understanding the different social factors of delinquency that further guides in catering the problem with the help of the identified indicators. At the same time, the problem needs to be address in such a way that Juvenile Delinquents might change their behavior in future.

**Discussion**

 The relationship between social bond and delinquent or criminal behavior of person is already explained by Travis Hirschi (1969). Burrowing the concepts from Hirschi, the authors of the article are trying to make their argument stronger. As it is a brief and well-explained article that compares two social theories on the basis of their association with the delinquent behavior of children. At the same time, the article under discussion uses the data from different sources that help to measure the two social theories that how these theories make up the basis for delinquent behavior. Also, the article concludes the results on the basis of comparison of those theories. The data for the research mostly focuses the children who are enrolled between 7 to 12 Grades. On the basis of that data, researchers analyze the properties of two of the most applicable social theories. All the relevant variables of family social bond and social capital theory are used to give more valid results.

According to the Social bond theory, a person is free to get engaged in immoral behavior when he or she has weak bonds with his or her community. The common causes of the criminal behavior of young children also speak of the social bond theory. The belief, obligation, participation, and connection are the primary features of the social bond that prohibit a person getting deviated from the societal norms and values. Having a belief in the social rules and regulations positively influence the children regarding the society and its system. Likewise, the concepts related to criminology are better explained by social bond theory; the role of family and other relationships in eliminating the criminal behavior of a child. At the same time, strong connections with the family would never allow a child to go against the standards and principles of the society. In the article, Hoffmann and Dufur (2018) emphasize on the parent-child relationships that is based on love and care. This affectionate relationship discourages the unacceptable and odd behavior, as a result a child understands its importance. However, weak connections with parents can deteriorate the commitment to social norms. As a result the youth develop delinquent behavior. The influence of social bonds in case of delinquent or criminal behavior is not positive all the time. Demonstrating on social bonds tends to focus on finding the factors that could change the offending behavior of juveniles during the learning phase of their lives.

 The bonding between parents and children also depends on the responsibilities that are provided by the parents. It is the primary responsibility of the parents to take care of the children and try to keep the positive interactions with them. In addition, there are different ways available for the parents to get advantage, in order to keep their children away from destructive thoughts and bad company. In this regard, the article informs about the children’s education. Academic development is considered as the best method to prepare a child for the society. It is the parents’ responsibility to invest on a child’s academic development and keep the child engaged in activities that help him or her create bonds with the other people. Through these interactions a child will also learn about the norms and values that are considered standard in the society. The social bond with the family begins even before the birth of the child and it continues throughout the life that provides guidance, monitors and encourages the children’s social accomplishments.

 It is also agreeable that there are the modified results of social bonds in case of bad company. Sometimes, children get into a company of friends who are already into juvenile delinquency. In such cases, the effects of social bonds on a person is not the same. The social factors will now act in a different way. Social bond is connected to social control. The social bonds of a person keep him in controlling his or her behavior from causing any trouble to the society. At the same time, the social connections do not remain same throughout the life. The relationships with the family and other social members vary throughout the life, letting the person to modify his or her characteristics.

 Moreover, a child socializes under the supervision of his or her parents that helps him or her to get controlled over their emotions and actions. It further forbids them from showing any antisocial behavior at a very young age. Self-control needs to remain consistent throughout the life. Juvenile delinquency is one of the major problems of the society and studying it with the help of different social theories can help to under the issue in a better way. Likewise, social capital theory is another interesting concept of sociology. It highlights the factors that influence the relationships of individuals living in a society. The social needs like emotional support and societal benefits compel people to get into the different communities in order to fulfil their social needs.

 The authors have wisely selected two of the theories to reflect on the factors of juvenile delinquency that leads to creation of dangerous criminals in the society when not dealt properly. The social capital theory explained in the article refers to the linking resources that unites a family with its society. The bonding social capital also clarifies the connections within the family and also focuses the connections of that family with the actors outside the family. These actors can be neighbors, classmates and workplace friends. Therefore, the social capital theory as important as the social bond theory is. Both of the theories primarily focus the role of family in developing delinquent behavior in youth. Meanwhile, the article also informs about the literature that has proved the relationship between social capital theory with the juvenile delinquency and criminal behavior among the adults.

 Using the comparison mechanism, the researchers are trying to validate one of the theory on the basis of empirical concepts. The social capital theory is equally significant in understanding the role of family on the delinquency and other associated problematic behaviors. Moreover, the affectionate bonding with the family reliefs the children with delinquent behavior to overcome the problem in future. It is natural that humans are more towards selfish actions, but the weak bonds with the family make the children to get totally free from morally executed resistances on their behavior. Therefore, the street children are more into juvenile delinquency and other violent activities. These kids are free from any type of restriction so they are free to do whatever they wish to do. Having a supportive in life can compel the children to behave nicely in order to do not jeopardize their bonds through their behaviors. Also, it is due to the supervision of the parents that they have taught their children about the importance of relationships in their lives.

 After briefly explaining the significance of social bond theory, the article also highlights the weaknesses of the theory in the same context. Being neutral on the point, Hoffmann & Dufur (2018) informs about the drawbacks of social bond theory. As the strengths of interactions with the parents are widely described, in terms of adopting the certain rules and principles of the society through socialization. However, the theory has ignored the role of communication between family members and a child. Sometimes, the bonds are very strong but the weak communication between them influences the behavior of a kid. A strong communication keeps the child aware about the conventional society and informs about the role of a child as a part of society. Communication between parent and child, pursuits the child to show commitment to conventional roles and concepts that are according to the societal laws. When social bond theory fails to answer the questions, the social capital theory is able to deal with the problem of communication. Social capital theory notes that the change in love and obligation needs a proper time from the parents and the never disconnecting interactions that communicate about the norms and social responsibilities. The article uses the direct quotes and evidence from the theory to make a valid point.

 Without any doubts, social bond theory has somehow failed to address the role of communication and it has only articulated about the expectations and desires of the society. On the other side, the social capital bond theory is able to explain the drawbacks of strong relationships that promote an antisocial behavior and severe outcomes. It is the same example that a child with strong bonds with his or her delinquent friends or criminal peers will influence their criminal behavior. At the same, it also informs about the financial capital that when a child is without any financial support, a social capital cannot help him or her. In this case, social capital plays a negative role in developing the personality of a child. Although the antisocial rules and connections are harmful, they transfer easily through social interactions within the society. These behaviors develop the same way, as the other positive social capital elements enhance through the investments and communication. On the other side, the social bond theory has failed to prove that the strong relationships among the youth gang members can promote a negative and anti-social norm behavior.

 As a result, it was found that social capital theory better explains the mechanisms related to delinquent behavior of the children. It is more clear and advanced theory that includes all the relevant elements to better explain the parent-child interaction that is based on affectionate connections and communication forms. On the basis of discussions from the gathered data, it is found that Family social capital theory better explains all the elements of family social bond theory by adding the role of love and communication. Both affection and communication are useful in transferring the social norms from the parents to the children. Hence, it is more likeable theory that can better elaborate factors of juvenile delinquency. Social capital theory is able to cover the incomplete concepts of social bond theory.

**Conclusion**

 In conclusion, Juvenile delinquency is a social problem that is interlinked to multiple factors. The delinquent behavior of kids at very young age is not based on an individual behavior but related to other elements. Likewise, the article by Hoffmann & Dufur (2018) is able to inform about the factors relevant to juvenile delinquency based on the social theories. It has better explained the part of social bond theory and social capital theory by focusing on the role of the family relative to delinquent behavior among the children. Likewise, the article is able to find out the importance of communication between the parents and children. The stronger family bond would be, when there are strong interactions and communication between the family members with their children. It would also control over the development of delinquent behavior among the youth. It is a well-informed article that helps the reader to understand the role of two of the most essential theories that are relevant in studying the criminality.

**References**

Hoffmann, J. P., & Dufur, M. J. (2018). Family Social Capital, Family Social Bonds, and Juvenile Delinquency. American Behavioral Scientist, 62(11), 1525-1544.