
CITIZENSHIP, FAMILY, LOW SELF-CONTROL, RELIGIOUS ATTENDANCE AND DELINQUENCY

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Abstract

This study aims at examining the relationship between citizenship, family situation, low self-control, religious attendance and delinquency among Qatari high school students. A sample of 1733 students was selected from all 7 administrative areas. Schools were randomly selected. A questionnaire with several scales was developed and used as a research tool. A positive significant relationship was found between citizenship and family ties (0.149), family support (0.174), health (0.141), and family attachment (0.076). However, a negative significant relationship was found between citizenship and delinquency (-0.134), coercive parenting (-0.089), gender (-0.127). More importantly, a negative significant relationship was found between citizenship and general delinquency (-0.134) (imprudent behaviour -0.22, crime -0.092, public disturbance -0.126, school delinquency -0.079). Delinquency was significantly correlated with low self-control (0.22) and religious attendance (-0.229). All variables explained together around 25% of the variance on the general delinquency. A significant effect was found for all variables together on delinquency ($F = 13.732$, $\alpha = 0.000$). Moreover, citizenship, coercive parenting, family ties, low self-control, religious attendance, mother's work and health have a uniquely significant contribution to the variance on the delinquency.

Keywords: relations, strains, citizenship, delinquent behaviour, Qatar

1. Introduction

Citizenship and deviance are two distinctive domains in different disciplines. Citizenship is an area of educational research and conformity in education, social work and Social psychology. On the other hand, deviance is a domain of theory and research in Criminology, Sociology and Forensic psychology. Educational research in citizenship focuses on conformity to social order and norms to educate and socialize good and effective citizens. Criminological research focuses more on people who violate the law and social order. Both sides deal with the social order from different angles, one looks to the empty part of the glass and the other looks at the full part of it. Research in

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citizenship from both domains has a discipline boundary. Regardless of the theoretical closeness between the two domains, both work in isolation.

This research tries to connect the bridge between the two; theoretically and empirically. Another dialectic issue is children as citizens. Viewing children as full citizens means that they are competent and responsible for their acts and at the same time most criminal justice systems in the world have treated children as incompetent and in need of care and protection. The view of children as citizens and the limitations and exclusions placed on that citizenship by criminal justice systems raise questions about the legitimacy of holding children and young people responsible and criminally punishing those who engage in offending behaviour

As Raymond argued that the youth justice system is treating young people as citizens in the making in a way which ignores their incompetence, need for protection and the acute levels of socioeconomic disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by the majority of young people in conflict with the law [1]. Raymond described this view of young people as ‘citizens in development’. He emphasizes passivity and incompetence and limits the recognition of children as citizens. These children are among the most seriously in need of adult help and guidance and the least ready to assume the responsibilities associated with autonomous individuality. Thus in the context of youth justice, child citizenship is interpreted in a way which is detrimental to the child’s welfare.

Isin and Turner argued that citizenship not simply a legal right, but “as a social process through which individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding or losing rights”. This has led “to a sociological definition of citizenship in which the emphasis is less on legal rules and more on norms, practices, meanings and identities” [2]. In a similar way Werbner and Yuval-Davis argue that citizenship is no longer understood simply in terms of “the formal relationship between an individual and the state” but “as a more total relationship, inflected by identity, social positioning, cultural assumptions, institutional practices and a sense of belonging” [3]. These broader conceptualizations of citizenship lend themselves to the idea of “lived citizenship”: “the meaning that citizenship has in people’s lives and how people’s social and cultural backgrounds and material circumstances affect their lives as citizens” [4].

Lister has argued that children’s citizenship is seen as either as citizens in waiting or as citizens with full agency. The view of children as citizens with full agency depicts children as full citizens of the present who are autonomous from, and equivalent to, adults [5].

The view of children as citizens in waiting invokes a future-oriented image of the child as a potential citizen of the future. Children are not viewed as individuals fully equipped to participate in a complex adult world, but as underdeveloped or unfinished human beings or ‘human’ [6].

Young people taking the role of others and playing the roles of significant others assist in understanding citizenship. They recognize their rights and responsibilities and exercising responsibility is considered by them as a key to

being young including engaging in responsibilities in the family home, friends and the local community [7]. Young people actively seek acceptance, interaction, membership and inclusion within adult communities and wish to be incorporated in the social interaction of mutual trust and respect [8].

In developing countries like Qatar, knowledge of mothers about citizenship or other child socialization aspects is weak. Findings by Al-Maadadi & Ikhlef show that the level of maternal knowledge of child development and rearing in Qatar is relatively low [9]. On average, mothers correctly answered just over 51% of the questions. This is lower than what has been reported by some recent studies involving European American mothers, immigrant mothers, African American mothers and low-income mothers. The results of the current study stress the need for planning effective parent education programs to increase maternal knowledge of child development among mothers in Qatar. Given the country's great wealth and rapid economic growth, opportunities should be made available for parents, in general, and mothers, in particular, to be educated about typical child development and effective parenting practices [9].

Children and young people are subject to violence by their parents. As Al-Ghanim findings showed 57% of the 2787 female students surveyed reported having experienced violence in their childhood [10]. The most common type of violence reported was beating at 62%, followed by humiliation, degradation, verbal abuse and finally sexual harassment at 21%. The evidence that the family plays a critical role in juvenile delinquency is one of the strongest and most frequently replicated findings among studies of deviance [11].

Fewer studies have examined the importance of the citizenship, family life and processes' effects on crime, deviance [12, 13]. Findings by Vazsonyi and Bellston showed consistent support for associations among family processes, low self-control, and a variety of deviance measures across groups (Hungary, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United States). Additionally, family processes had both direct and indirect effects, through low self-control, on deviance [14].

2. Methodology

2.1. Sample

A sample of 1733 students (55% males and 45% of females) was selected from all 7 administrative areas. Schools were randomly selected.

2.2. Instrument

A questionnaire was developed based on a literature review and relevant scales as a research instrument. The questionnaire was composed of: (a) demographic data, (b) five major scales.

2.3. General delinquency scale (Cronbach alpha = 0.916)

It includes 5 subscales (impudent behaviour, crime, violence, public disturbance and school delinquency).

2.3.1. Imprudent behaviour subscale (Cronbach alpha = 0.825)

Respondents were asked whether they, in the last 12 months, have smoked tobacco products (Smoke), drank alcoholic beverages (Drink), ate without being concerned with how it affects their health (Eat), used the seat belt (Seatbelt) and gambled (Gamble). In addition to smoking (Sweka = cheap local type of drug), if they used illicit drugs or stimulators.

2.3.2. Crime subscale (Cronbach alpha = 0.65)

Students were asked if, in the last 12 months; they had used or threatened to use force against an adult to accomplish your goals (Force), distorted the truth or falsely represented something to get something you couldn't otherwise obtain (Fraud), taken something worth less than QR 100 that did not belong to them (Theft) and taken something worth at least QR 100 that did not belong to them (Grand Theft). The scale was adapted from [15].

2.3.3. Violence subscale (Cronbach alpha = 0.791)

Students were asked whether, if in the last 12 months, they had: used force on students, carried a knife, bat, etc., been involved in fist fighting, attacked someone and sexually harassed anyone.

2.3.4. Public disturbance subscale (Cronbach alpha = 0.797)

Students were asked whether, if in the last 12 months, they had: been unruly, rowdy, and loud in public places, hit other students, used force on teachers, thrown objects out of moving cars, purposely vandalized trees and lawns and been engaged in gang fights.

2.3.5. School delinquency subscale (Cronbach alpha = 0.727)

Respondents were asked whether, if in the last 12 months, they had: cheated in exams, run away from school, been late for school, and damaged school property. Scales were adopted from [16].

In all scales and subscales, variables are based on self-reported delinquent behaviours. For each type of delinquency, a binary variable was created and coded '1' if the respondent did not engage in the behaviour during the last year.

2.4. Low self-control (Cronbach alpha = 0.819)

The scale was adopted from [17].

2.5. Family situation scale (Cronbach alpha = 0.856) with 5 subscales

2.5.1. Coercive parenting (Cronbach alpha = 0.60)

How often have your parents/guardians disagreed with you? When you have had disagreements, how often have your parents/guardians discussed them calmly with you? How often have your parents/guardians argued heatedly or shouted at you? How often have your parents/guardians ended up threatening you? How often have the arguments between you and your parents/guardians ended up being physical (e.g. hitting, shaking, shoving, etc.).

2.5.2. Family ties (Cronbach alpha = 0.81)

Items included, how often does your parent/guardian know who you are with when you are away from home? In a day, how often does/do your parent or parents (guardians) know where you are? My parents (guardians) care how late I stay out. My parents (guardians) care about how I do in school. My parents (guardians) help me with my homework.

2.5.3. Parental strain (Cronbach alpha = 0.64)

Items included Parents Nag: 'My parents nag me about little things', Parents Hit: 'My parents hit me or threaten to do so', Parents Rules: 'My parents keep rules when it suits them', Parents Rules By Mood: 'My parents enforce rule depending on their mood'.

2.5.4. Family support (Cronbach alpha = 0.906)

Parents Praise: 'My parents praise me', Parents Appreciation: 'My parents make sure I know I am appreciated', Parents Are Positive: 'My parents speak of good things I do', Parents Are Proud: 'My parents seem proud things I do'.

2.5.5. Family attachment (Cronbach alpha = 0.65)

'I can share my thoughts and feelings with my parents', 'My parents explain why they feel the way they do', 'My parents and I talk over my plans', 'My parents want to help me when I have problems', 'When my parents make a rule I don't understand, they will explain the reason', 'My parents know what is best for me' and 'I would like to be the kind of person my parents are'.

Scales (1-5) were adopted from Cullen et al [18] and Al-Badayneh et al [19].

2.5.6. Parental trust (Cronbach alpha = 0.67)

How easily you can talk to your father in your issues. How easily you can talk to your mother in your issues. Scale from 0 to 4 (0 = father died or did not try, 1 = very difficult, 2 = difficult and 3 = easy). Variables are based on self-reported delinquent behaviours. For each type of delinquency, a binary variable was created and coded '1' if the respondent did not engage in the behaviour during the last year and '0' otherwise.

2.5.7. Religious attendance

Measured on one question: do you pray? Answers ranged: 4 = always, 3 = most times, 2 = sometimes 1 = rare, 0 = not at all.

2.6. Citizenship (Cronbach alpha = 0.929)

Good citizen is a person who: (items included 'respect the rights of others', 'volunteer', 'believes in dialogue', 'performs his national duties', 'renounces violence and extremism', 'defends others', 'participates in the work of community institutions', 'democrat', 'works to adjust his lifestyle for the better', 'who cares about the affairs of the poor and the needy persons'. On a scale of 10 students were asked to rate each item from 1 = bad citizen to 10 = good citizen.

3. Findings

3.1. Citizenship, family and delinquency

Table 1 shows a positive significant relationship between citizenship and family ties (0.149**), family support (0.174**), family attachment (0.076**). However, a negative significant relationship was found between citizenship and coercive parenting (-0.089**), gender (-0.127**). More important a negative significant relationship is found between citizenship and general delinquency (-0.134**) (imprudent behaviour -0.22**, crime -0.092**, public disturbance -0.126**, school delinquency -0.079**). Moreover, religious attendance was significantly correlated with delinquency (-0.229).

3.2. Effects of citizenship, family variables, low self-control religious attendance on delinquency

Tables 2 and 3 show the regression analysis of the effect of citizenship, father, work, child order, family strains, religious attendance, parental trust, family relations, mother's work, family status, family attachments, father education, health, family ties, low self-control, coercive parenting, mother education, family support on general delinquency. All above-mentioned

variables explained together around 25% of the variance on the general delinquency scale.

Table 1. Relationship between citizenship, family variables, low self-control, religious attendance and delinquency.

	Citizenship	General Delinquency	Imprudent	Crime	Public Disturbance	Violence	School Delinquency
<i>Family scales</i>							
Family relations	0.032	-0.075**	-0.066**	-0.087**	-0.067**	-0.069**	-0.048
Family status	0.047	0.057*	0.050*	0.114**	0.055*	0.035	0.026
Coercive parenting	0.089**	0.233**	0.198**	0.211**	0.203**	0.194**	0.166**
Family ties	0.149**	-0.198**	-0.148**	-0.135**	-0.163**	-0.205**	-0.100**
Family strains	0.018	0.162**	0.104**	0.135**	0.110**	0.129**	0.124**
Family Support	0.174**	-0.213**	-0.180**	-0.165**	-0.192**	-0.192**	-0.129**
Family attachment	0.076**	0.009	-0.022	0.021	-0.023	-0.003	0.011
Family trust	0.450	-0.100**	-0.088**	-0.103**	-0.092**	-0.063*	-0.081**
<i>Gender</i>	-0.127**	-0.163**	-0.132**	-0.094**	-0.150**	-0.230**	-0.060*
<i>Talking to father</i>	0.017	-0.057*	-0.053*	-0.082**	-0.051*	0.013	-0.061*
<i>Talking to mother</i>	0.05	0.116**	0.092**	0.104**	0.099**	0.095**	0.084**
<i>Father's education</i>	-0.007	-0.070*	0.050	-0.055*	0.049	0.047	0.028
<i>Mother's education</i>	0.029	0.045	0.039	0.031	0.049	-0.003	0.036
<i>Father's work</i>	-0.003	-0.011	0.000	0.005	0.001	-0.018	-0.017
<i>Mother's work</i>	-0.035	-0.098**	-0.080**	-0.072**	-0.081**	-0.100**	0.090**
<i>Health</i>	0.141**	-0.325**	-0.283**	-0.250**	-0.295**	-0.243**	-0.055*
<i>Decision maker</i>	0.084**	0.054*	0.041	0.020	0.036	0.046	0.202**
<i>Father's absence</i>	0.032	0.197**	0.162**	0.193**	0.164**	0.132**	0.127**
<i>Low self-control</i>	0.006	0.222**	0.165**	0.153**	0.157**	0.140**	0.217**
<i>Religious attendance</i>	-0.048	-0.229**	-0.136**	-0.155**	-0.141**	-0.194**	-0.217**
<i>Delinquency</i>	-0.134**	1	0.807**	0.795**	0.828**	0.857**	0.764**
Imprudent	-0.122**	0.807**	1	0.567**	0.991**	0.620**	0.479**
Crime	-0.092**	0.749**	0.567**	1	0.582**	0.572**	0.462**
Public Disturbance	-0.126**	0.828**	0.991**	0.562**	1	0.651**	0.487**
Violence	-0.128**	0.857**	0.620**	0.572**	0.651**	1	0.548**
School Delinquency	-0.079**	0.764*	0.479**	0.462**	0.487**	0.548**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Predictors: (Constant), citizenship, father's work, child order, family strains, religious attendance, parental trust, family relations, mother's work, family status, family attachments, father's education, health, family ties, low self-control, coercive parenting, mother's education and family support.

Table 2 presents ANOVA analysis of the effect of the (citizenship, father. work, child order, family strains, religious attendance, parental trust, family relations, mother's work, family status, family attachments, father's education,

health, family ties, low self-control, coercive parenting, mother's education family support) on general delinquency. A significant effect is found for all variables together on delinquency ($F = 13.732$, $\alpha = 0.000$).

Table 2. ANOVA analysis.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5214.242	17	306.720	13.732	0.000
Residual	15814.161	708	22.336	-	-
Total	21028.404	725	-	-	-

Table 3. Regression coefficients.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	180.172	10.700		100.687	0.000
Coercive parenting	-0.138	0.050	-0.114	-20.763	0.006
Family ties	0.087	0.037	0.108	20.387	0.017
Family strains	-0.046	0.050	-0.036	-0.914	0.361
Family support	0.081	0.043	0.088	10.885	0.060
Family attachments	-0.054	0.050	-0.041	-10.093	0.275
Parental Trust	0.103	0.075	0.048	10.377	0.169
Family relations	-0.182	0.127	-0.049	-10.436	0.152
Family status	-0.079	0.470	-0.006	-0.168	0.867
Low self-control	-0.113	0.026	-0.169	-40.338	0.000
Religious attendance	0.458	0.181	0.087	20.528	0.012
Child order	-0.068	0.218	-0.010	-0.313	0.755
Father's education	0.079	0.170	0.018	0.464	0.643
Mother's education	0.109	0.173	0.026	0.631	0.528
Father's work	-0.129	0.205	-0.022	-0.629	0.530
Mother's work	-0.544	0.145	-0.140	-30.760	0.000
Health	10.465	0.273	0.192	50.365	0.000
Citizenship	0.018	0.009	0.068	20.040	0.042

Table 3 shows the regression coefficients for the independent variables. Seven variables showed a uniquely significant contribution to delinquency. These variables are: coercive parenting ($\alpha = 0.006$), family ties ($\alpha = 0.017$), low self-control ($\alpha = 0.000$), religious attendance ($\alpha = 0.012$), mother's work ($\alpha = 0.000$), health ($\alpha = 0.000$) and citizenship ($\alpha = 0.04$).

4. Discussion and conclusions

This study aims at examining the relationship between citizenship, family situation, low self-control, religious attendance and delinquency among Qatari high school students. A sample of 1733 students was selected from all 7 administrative areas. Schools were randomly selected. A questionnaire with several scales was developed and used as a research tool. Correlation coefficients and regression analysis were used to verify the data.

The data analysis revealed that a negative significant relationship was found between citizenship and general delinquency ($r = -0.134$). Also, other types of delinquent behaviours (imprudent behaviour, crime, public disorder, violence and school delinquency) were found negatively significant too. Citizenship in this regard works as a protective factor against crime and delinquency. It is expected that a good citizen is a law-abiding citizen; therefore he/she will oppose violating laws and social order. Lastly, strengthening citizenship will weaken crime involvement and protect the good citizen from crime engagement.

Moreover, on one hand, findings showed a positive significant relationship between coercive parenting, family strain and delinquency. Coercive parenting and family strain are pushing young people to get engage in crime and delinquency. In such a situation, young people face strains and develop negative emotions towards others and take a mal-adjustment strategy in dealing with strains created by such an unpleasant situation. On the other hand, findings showed a negative significant relationship between family ties, family attachment, family support and delinquency. Findings can be interpreted in two directions in terms of their relationship with delinquency. First, a positive direction, where family structure and process (family life) works as an immune system against crime and delinquency. Strong family ties, family support, family attachment all operate as a wall against crime and delinquency involvement. The variable 'Talking to mother when encountering problems' has a negative significant relationship with delinquency. 'Talking to mothers' was playing a point of reference for young people. Needless to say that young people talk to their mothers also get mother social support too. As a result young people who talk to mothers when facing strains are less likely to become involved in delinquent acts. Findings showed a negative significant relationship between gender and delinquency; males are more likely to commit crime and delinquency than females. Females' socialization tend to stress conformity and have a high negative stigma for those who might commit delinquent acts, whereas males can be punished and still be accepted in society for their delinquent acts. The social-cultural belief is a man can do anything and stay a man whereas it is shameful for the female to commit a crime.

Religious attendance and self-control act as a mediating factor in the relationship between citizenship and delinquency. In Qatari society, religious attendance is a core principle of the social culture and a cornerstone in the citizenship formation. In Qatari society being a good Muslim means good citizen. Religious attendance strengthens self-control and reinforces law-abiding. By the same token low self-control weakens citizenship and therefore pushes towards law violations and committing delinquent acts.

Findings showed the importance of citizenship education in protecting young people from coming into conflict with the law and social order. A good citizen can work as an immune factor against crime and delinquency and at the same time as a law-abiding agent. However, the strengthening of the family structure and function, the avoidance of family strains and coercive parenting,

work as enhancing factors to pull away from crime and delinquency. Needless to say, that low self-control and religious attendance work as a vital process in family administration and being a pillar in citizenship education and practice.

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