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## Investigating the Effect of Social Capital on Delinquency

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of social capital on 15-to-19-year-old juveniles' delinquency. Regarding this objective, Yang internet addiction questionnaire (1996) was used to collect the data. This questionnaire contains 20 questions classified in some groups. Results of Multivariate Regression Analysis for explaining delinquency indicate that among the variables selected in the analytical model of this study, 5 factors (religious lifestyle, modern lifestyle (friends network), family control, communications (the relationship between social capital and the groups), the respondents' fathers' income) have had a significant effect on delinquency and have remained in the equation. After entering these five variables, the entry of new variables has been stopped. In fact, these five variables totally explain 36/1% changes of the dependent variable (delinquency).

Keywords: *delinquency; social capital;*

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## 1. Introduction

One current complicated and painful issue which has attracted the attention of many researchers, sociologists, criminologists and related specialists is that of young offenders or the so-called “delinquent juveniles” which is increasing every day (Shambiati, 2009).

Adolescence is a period of human life cycle during which the likelihood of abnormal behaviors such as delinquency increases. During this period, man faces major bio-mental changes and finds new capabilities. He also enjoys more freedom compared to his childhood and this is more than just getting involved in new social roles (such as job, marriage, etc.) and being controlled by social forces (Taleban, 2004).

Nowadays, different communities make a distinction between social deviances of adults and adolescents. Many communities relate social deviances to lack of knowledge and/or inappropriate social and economic conditions. Therefore, it is essential to separate adolescents who are below the legal age of the adults in order to study deviant behaviors. Deviance sociologists first paid attention to juvenile delinquency when a wide range of misconducts such as drug consumption, destruction of public and private properties and hooliganism after football matches, excessive consumption of alcoholic drinks, illicit sexual behaviors, and escaping from home and school became prevalent among the youth. These types of deviances are important not only because they are considered as new forms of deviants in societies but also because committing such acts can pave the way for committing more serious ones including armed robbery and murder and might change the today's offenders into guilty people in future (Ahmadi, 2005). Patterns of crime are usually transferred to the youth in peer groups, and the youth dependency to social relation networks in delinquent peer groups causes them to tend to criminal behaviors (Ahmadi, 2005). Different factors related to juvenile delinquency have been studied, but social networks, which are now considered as social capital, have rarely been referred to. Social capital can be considered as the result of relationships in societies and it may be referred to as the total resources which are created in the nature of social organization relations and make the social life more desirable (Alvani, 1999; quoted from Amiri Salehi). Any act that violates the law of a society and deserves penalty is called “crime”. In legal terms, crime is a type of breaking the law. Therefore, those who do not obey the law are considered as criminals although breaking the law might happen as a result of not knowing how legislation is done and disregarding its originality.

Sociologists define “crime” as an act against the standards, regulations, values and cultural norms of a society, and those committing these acts are called guilty or criminals (Setoudeh, 2005).

**Delinquency:** Delinquency refers to a set of crimes committed at a given time and place. Hence, whenever this phenomenon is investigated, in fact, all economic, cultural, health, religious, and family phenomena are included. In Iran, delinquency refers to a set of crimes that committing them might lead to getting punished based on terms of retaliation, atonement, limits and punishments. In Iranian penal system, delinquency includes all crimes, misdemeanors and offenses committed (Setoudeh, 2005).

**Social capital:** Social capital refers to a communication network that makes it possible to access human resources within the network. This capital is recognized through the relationship between the individuals who can connect to power resources in organizations and find an appropriate place in the network in order to achieve positive working relationships and career outcomes. From the perspective of social capital, before success is due to individuals' characteristics, it depends on their social status in the organization. Therefore, this is an individual's status in the social relations network that determines his/her social capital limit and causes differences in job outcomes (Karimi&Farajian, 2007).

## 2. Method

The statistical population of this study included adolescents of 15 to 19 years old from different districts of Shiraz and sample of this study consisted of 128 (51 females and 77 males) of behzisty. Regarding this objective, a self-made questionnaire was used to collect the data. This questionnaire contains 175 questions classified in some groups.

## 3. Findings

To study the degree of the relationship between spiritual well-being and loneliness, the Pearson Correlation coefficient was used and the results have been demonstrated in the following table.

**Table 1. The regression of Social Capital on delinquency**

Sig.	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	19615.230	5	3923.046	11.643	<b>000(e)</b>
Residual	34704.330	103	336.935		
Total	54319.560	108			

Considering the results observed in the above table, it can be concluded that in order to study the predictability of Social Capital on delinquency, regression analysis was used. The data analysis is presented in the following table and shows Social Capital is a significant predictor of delinquency.

**Table 2. Predictability of Social Capital on delinquency by step by step regression**

variable	Unstandardized coefficient		standardized coefficient		sig	Step
	B	Std.Error	Beta	t		
constant	32.991	4.366		7.556	.000	<b>1</b>
religious lifestyle	-.665	.169	-.355	-3.924	.000	
constant	20.309	5.784		3.511	.001	
religious lifestyle	-.624	.163	-.333	-3.822	.000	<b>2</b>
modern lifestyle (friends network),	.732	.230	.277	3.182	.002	

constant	35.774	7.749		4.617	.000	
religious lifestyle	-.414	.174	-.221	-2.381	.019	<b>3</b>
modern lifestyle	.785	.223	.297	3.519	.001	
(friends network),						
family control	-.752	.261	-.267	-2.884	.005	
constant	29.596	7.628		3.880	.000	
religious lifestyle	-.478	.167	-.255	-2.859	.005	
modern lifestyle	.662	.216	.251	3.060	.003	<b>4</b>
(friends network),						
family control	-.902	.253	-.320	-3.563	.001	
communications	1.163	.349	.281	3.335	.001	
constant	32.194	7.592		4.240	.000	
religious lifestyle	-.469	.164	-.250	-2.856	.005	
modern lifestyle	.759	.217	.287	3.493	.001	<b>5</b>
(friends network),						
family control	-.838	.251	-.297	-3.344	.001	
communications	1.288	.347	.311	3.706	.000	
fathers' income	-2.287	1.056	-.181	-2.166	.033	

Results of Multivariate Regression Analysis for explaining delinquency indicate that among the variables selected in the analytical model of this study, 5 factors have had a significant effect on delinquency and have remained in the equation. After entering these five variables, the entry of new variables has been stopped. In fact, these five variables totally explain 36/1% changes of the dependent variable (delinquency).

#### 4. Conclusion

According to table 2, among different variables entered the regression analysis, the followings affect the total rate of delinquency: religious lifestyle, modern lifestyle (friends network), family control, communications (the relationship between social capital and the groups), the respondents' fathers' income. Totally, these variables explain 36/1% effective factors on delinquency. Regarding

Beta values, the most effective variables influencing delinquency are communications (the relationship between social capital and the groups) (beta = 0.311) and modern lifestyle (friends network) (beta = 0.287), respectively. The relationship between delinquent behavior and modern lifestyle (friends network) (0/00), sex (0/05), family control (0/01), and the relationship between social capital (0/001), communications (the relationship between social capital and the groups) (0/000) and lack of religious lifestyle (0/033) at 95% is significant. The decrease of adherence to religious beliefs of families affects adolescents' tendency towards delinquency (Nouri, 2010), and this is consistent with the present study.

Behaviors and relationships in families cause the children to do delinquent and abnormal behaviors (OlumiYazdi, 2001). In their research, Chalpi and Mobaraki (2005) concluded that there is a negative, significant relationship between social capital and crime both in micro and macro levels. Moreover, Aliverdinia et al. (2008) and Rite et al (2001) found that there is a significant relationship between social capital and delinquency, and this is consistent with the present research.

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