

The Role of Life Satisfaction and Parenting Styles in Predicting Delinquent Behaviors among High School Students*

Fulya CENKSEVEN ÖNDER

Cukurova University

Yasin YILMAZ^a

Ministry of National Education

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the parenting styles and life satisfaction predict delinquent behaviors frequently or not. Firstly the data were collected from 471 girls and 410 boys, a total of 881 high school students. Then the research was carried out with 502 students showing low (n=262, 52.2%) and high level of delinquent behaviors (n=240, 47.8%). The data were collected by means of "Delinquency Scale", "The Parenting Style Inventory" and "Multidimensional Student' Life Satisfaction Scale". The data were analyzed using Logistic Regression statistical method. The results of Logistic Regression Analysis show that the variables of "strictness/supervision" perceived from family and satisfaction perceived from "school", "family" and "self" have had meaningful contributions to indicating frequent delinquent behaviors. The results are discussed related to previous research, and study limitations and further research directions are also outlined.

Key Words

Delinquent Behaviors, Parenting Styles, Life Satisfaction, Adolescence.

Adolescence is the period during that biological (sexual maturation), psychological, cognitive and social changes are experienced (Yazgan-İnanç, Bilgin, & Kılıç-Atıcı, 2004) and in this period the adolescent should accommodate himself effectively to these changes (Tamar, 2005). Apart from many developmental changes, it is known that delinquent behaviors increase in this period (Aras, Günay, Özkan, & Orçın, 2007; Bulut, 2010; Jessor, 1991; Siyez, 2007; Ögel, Tarı, & Eke-Yılmazçetin, 2006).

Delinquent behaviors which are regarded as delinquency in this study can be defined as behaviors which threaten well-being of adolescent and prevent them to be grown as responsible individuals (Lindberg, Boggess, Porter, & Williams, 2000). Delinquent behaviors among humans can be listed as behaviors which cause unintentional injuries and violence; risky sexual behaviors which cause usage of alcohol and drugs, sexually transmitted diseases, anti-social behaviors such as unhealthy nutrition habits, physical immobility, skipping school or home, lying, theft, depression, suicide (Adams & Berzonsky, 2003; Haugaard, 2001; Peterson et al., 2003; Sprinthall & Collins, 1995).

The delinquent behaviors observed in the transition period from childhood to adolescence mediate to the acceptance of adolescent by his peers, gain his independence from parents, protest against traditional values and norms, deal with the expectation of failure, drawbacks and worries, personality development and maturation (Peterson et al., 2003). While

* This research was based on the Master Thesis study directed by Assist. Prof. Fulya CENKSEVEN ÖNDER

a **Psychological Counselor Yasin Yılmaz**, is currently a psychological counselor in MEB Cengiz Topel Primary School. His research interests include delinquent behaviors among adolescence, anger management and abuses against children. Correspondence: Cengiz Topel Primary School Yüreğir 01230 Adana. E-mail: ysnylmzpdrr@hotmail.com Phone: +90 322 344 13 69

evaluating these behaviors it is necessary to separate them as seldom behaviors and permanent-problem behaviors (Siegel & Scovill, 2000) and not to forget the fact that most of the time these problematic behaviors intertwine with each other (Jessor, 1998).

Relationship of the adolescent with the family is important determinants of delinquency. Adolescent's relationship with his parents is effective in accommodation to this period (Robin & Foster, 1989; Yavuzer, 2002; T. Yilmaz, 2000). Parent's being model for risk by behavior or accepting these behaviors (T. Yilmaz, 2000), inefficiency of supervision and direction of parents and inter-family problems increase adolescent's tendency to delinquent behavior (Peterson et al., 2003). It was stated in related literature that adolescent who feels himself close to his family has more confidence, independence, psychological circumstance and stability compared to other adolescents; alcohol and drug habits and tendency towards crime are observed less (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Hill & Holmbeck, 1986; Peterson, Bush, & Supple, 1999; Smollar & Younnis, 1989; Steinberg, 2007).

Another point that should be regarded while evaluating problem behaviors during adolescence is the life satisfaction of adolescent. Life satisfaction is one of the cognitive components of subjective well-being (Diener, 2000) which is the indicator of positive mental health and reflects evaluations of individual's life satisfaction in different fields (Myers & Deiner, 1995). In other words, it is the positive evaluation of individual's whole life according to his own criteria (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Veenhoven, 1996). Huebner (1991) considered life satisfaction as a multi-dimensional concept as the satisfaction from family, friends, school, environment and self. In this study life-satisfaction has been observed as multi-dimensional concept. Life-satisfaction has critical importance in the emergence of important behavioral output (Rigby & Huebner, 2005). Gilman and Huebner (2006) have stated that adolescent with high life-satisfaction have more positive relations with their peers and parents, more positive attitude towards school and teachers. Moreover, Valois, Zullig, Huebner and Drane (2001) have stated that there is significant relationship between bearing gun, bringing gun to school, getting in a fight, drunk driving, committing theft at school, vandalizing and low life-satisfaction.

In recent it has been observed that delinquency has increased among adolescents. When recent studies on this issue are observed in our country, it was seen that the most of these studies are intended to detect the frequency (Aras et al., 2007; Bulut, 2010;

Ögel et al., 2006; Siyez, 2007) and socio-demographic (age, gender, number of siblings, educational status of parents etc.) features of these behaviors (Akduman, Akduman, & Cantürk, 2007; Balkaya & Ceyhan, 2007; Bulut, 2010; T. Yilmaz, 2000). It was seen that studies towards family relations are quite rare (Bulut, 2010; Kaner, 2002). In our country there is no study which is in the aim of detecting the relationship between delinquency among adolescents and life satisfaction. In this study, the answer for "Do family styles and satisfaction with various life domains predict delinquency of secondary school students?"

Method

Participants

The sample of the study was determined in two phases. At first, the study was conducted with 881 students from 9-12 grades attending twelve public high schools in Adana central province. Their ages ranged from 14 to 19 years ($M=16.3$, $Sd=.49$). In the second phase, a total of 502 students (48.2% female) determined to show low level of delinquent behaviors ($n=262$, 52.2%) and high level of delinquent behaviors ($n=240$, 47.8%). 243 of students were from 9th grade (48.4%), 87 from 10th grade (17.3%), 91 from 11th grade (18.1%), and 81 from 12th grade (16.1). When the parents were examined, 82 of the mothers (16.3 %) and 7 of the fathers (1.4 %) were illiterate, 240 of the mothers (47.8 %) and 233 of the fathers (46.4 %) were primary school graduates, 73 of the mothers (14.5%) and 98 of the fathers (19.5%) were middle school graduates, 72 of the mothers (14.3%) and 107 of the fathers were high school graduates (21.3%), and 24 of the mothers (4.8%) and 48 of the fathers (9.6%) were university graduates.

Delinquency Scale (DS): This scale which was developed by Kaner (2002) determines behaviors which do not reflect to public enterprises but would be regarded as crime if they reflected and bring adolescent face to face with laws. The scale is composed of 9 sub-scales and 38 items. Sub-scales of DS are "Status Crime and Offend against School Rules", "Theft", "Inability to control anger and Fight", "Petty Crime", "Remarkable Devastation", "Status Crime and Deceiving Others", "Crime of Drug and Violence", "Vandalism" and "Cheating". The scale explore how frequently (never (1 points), 1 or 2 times (2 points), 3 or 4 times (3 points), 5 or more (4 points) the behavior has been performed. The high scores taken from the scale indicate us the students' high tendency to crime (Delikara, 2000). In this study,

internal consistency coefficient is .81 for total points, .81, .88, .86, .73, .73, .72, .79, .67 and .85 respectively for the sub-scales.

The Parenting Style Inventory (PSI): The Parenting Style Inventory (PSI), adapted into Turkish by A. Yılmaz (2000), developed by Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg and Darnbush (1991), was a 26 item multidimensional scale. The scale has three factors: acceptance/involvement, strictness/supervision, and psychological autonomy. Coefficients calculated for each subscale were .72 for acceptance/involvement, .76 for strictness/supervision, .82 for psychological autonomy subscales. For the present study, the reliability of the internal consistency coefficients of the PSI dimensions were .87, .82 and .74 respectively.

Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS): MSLSS (Huebner, 1994) is a 40 item self report instrument that assesses satisfaction across five specific life domains (family, school, friends, self and living environment). In addition the MSLSS allows for an overall assessment of a adolescent's satisfaction with their life. All questions on the MSLSS are responded to on a 4-point Likert scale format. MSLSS was adapted into Turkish by Çivitçi (2007). The internal consistency coeffi-

cients calculated for each subscale were .82 for "family", .85 for "school", .85 for "friends", .82 for "self", .83 for "living environment" subscales and .92 for "total". For the present study, the reliability of the coefficients of the MSLSS dimensions were .73, .75, .74, .76, .76 and .75 respectively.

Analysis of Data

In order to detect how far family types and life satisfaction estimate their expressing delinquency in low or high degree; Binary Logistic Regression analysis was used. Grouping delinquency as low or high was possible with determining upper and lower 27% parts of groups (Erkuş, 2003). In this way, of all 881 adolescents; 262 of them were determined to show low level, 240 of them were found to show high level of delinquent behaviors.

Results

Mean and standard deviation values of the variables in the Table 1, logistic regression analysis results are given in the Table 2. As shown as Table 2, as a result of logistic regression analysis, it was detected that

Table 1.
Means and Standard Deviations for PSI and MSLSS Subscales

	Students with low level of delinquent behaviors (n=262)		Students with high level of delinquent behaviors (n=240)		Whole sample (n=502)	
	\bar{x}	Ss	\bar{x}	Ss	\bar{x}	Ss
Acceptance/Involvement	26.94	6.66	25.03	6.52	26.03	6.66
Psychological autonomy	20.99	5.09	21.06	5.15	21.02	5.11
Strictness/supervision	29.49	3.02	24.96	5.17	27.32	4.76
Friends satisfaction	27.23	4.06	25.21	4.94	26.26	4.61
School satisfaction	23.99	4.36	19.88	5.26	22.03	5.23
Living environment satisfaction	21.38	4.59	19.05	4.64	20.27	4.75
Family satisfaction	23.36	4.28	19.99	5.51	21.75	5.19
Self satisfaction	19.62	3.11	18.35	3.84	19.01	3.53

Table 2.
Logistic Regression Analysis for Delinquent Behaviors

Variables	B	S.H.	Wald	Exp(B)	
Parenting Styles	Acceptance/Involvement	-.010	.019	.289	.990
	Psychological autonomy	-.028	.023	1.462	.972
	Strictness/supervision	-.252	.032	61.950**	.778
Life satisfaction	Friends satisfaction	-.032	.032	1.027	.968
	School satisfaction	-.132	.026	24.945**	.876
	Living environment satisfaction	-.024	.026	.819	.976
	Family satisfaction	-.068	.029	5.491*	.934
	Self satisfaction	.090	.044	4.221*	1.094
Constant	11.747	1.387	71.761**	126432.320	

* p <.05, **p<.001

the model which includes all the independent variables is meaningful in explaining the highness of delinquency [$\chi^2 = 195.25$, $sd=8$, $N=502$, $p < .001$], (Nagelkerke $R^2=.43$). When Wald test results are considered, satisfaction variables perceived from “strictness/supervision”, “school”, “family” and “self” have meaningful contributions in explaining the highness of delinquency. Logistic regression analysis which is applied on data of 502 people has positive results and grouped data successfully in the rate of 76.3%.

Discussion

In the research it was detected that “strictness/supervision” perceived from family and life-satisfaction variables “school”, “family” and “self” are meaningful in explaining high delinquency. When the results are observed, it is seen that the increase in the dimension of “strictness/supervision” causes decrease in performing delinquency. Siyez (2006) have stated that there is a negative relationship between *supervision level of family* and smoking, using alcohol, using drugs, having early sexual relation and anti-social behaviors. Bulut (2010) have stated that adolescents who have unhealthy function in the sense of behavior supervision have more delinquency compared to those who have healthy functioning families. In their studies Cenkseven Önder and Yurtal (2008) have stated that families of bullying and subject students are unhealthy in the sense of behavior control. According to these results, it can be said that adolescents who have lower dimension of strictness/supervision perform more delinquency. Slicker and Kim (1996) have stated that drug habit is more common among adolescents who grow under the attitude of indulgent parents compared with those who grow under the attitude of authoritarian parents. Maxson (1998) have stated that children who grow in an authoritarian family react more respectful and understanding towards authority; for example, while trying to improve his success at school, avoid performing behaviors such as cheating, stealing others’ homework and lying. Indulgent parents provide too much freedom for their children, do not supervise them and sometimes behave with tolerance which tends to negligence (Yılmaz, 1999). In this situation it can be said that the possibility of adolescent’s performing delinquency can increase.

In the study it was detected that increase of life-satisfaction perceived from school cause decrease in delinquency. Students, who are satisfied, participate in school activities, find school meaningful, and

feel the support of their teachers tend to perform less delinquency (Hiloloğlu & Cenkseven Önder, 2010; Smith & Sandhu, 2004). Olweus (2005) stated that sense of belonging to school and positive peer relations are important factors for students to have terminal and positive behavior, positive peer relation have meaningful relation with student’s social, emotional and mental well-being and sustaining it. According to this, it can be said that students who have enough satisfaction from school life perform less delinquency.

According to research findings, it is seen that increase in the life-satisfaction observed from family causes adolescents to perform less delinquency. The support of adolescent is very important for creating the identity of adolescent, in the process of feeling himself valuable and efficient (Çuhadaroğlu-Çetin et al., 2004; Tamar, 2005). Bulut (2010) have stated that adolescents who have low family life satisfaction perform more delinquency compared to those who have high family life satisfaction. It can be expected that life-satisfaction of adolescents who have satisfaction in family relations, meet with positive models, have effective communication and feel himself supported mentally and socially would increase and perform less delinquency.

According to analysis results, increase in the life-satisfaction perceived from self causes increase in performing high delinquency. Delinquent behaviors observed in the adolescence may help student to be accepted by his peers, gain independence, protest against traditional values and norms, cope with the expectation of failure and preventions, and develop identity and maturation (Peterson et al., 2003). Emler (1984) states in his theory of developing respect that people make respectable efforts to exist in the society, improve and protect his image. For example, some of the adolescents obey the rules and gain prestige because they are supported and appreciated by their friends (cited in Siyez, 2009). On the other hand, disobeying the rules can be regarded as a way of earning esteem. For example, if the adolescent regard smoking, using alcohol and having early sexual relationship as an indicator of reputability, it can be thought that probability of performing these behaviors may increase. Additionally, some of adolescents can try coping by showing risky behaviors (aggressive behaviour, bullying and etc.) for the purpose of increasing their life satisfaction (Valois, Paxton, Zulling, & Huebner, 2006). In this situations while the life satisfaction of adolescent increasing; also he can show delinquent behavior.

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