



Education And Crime Nexus: Evidence From Incarcerated Inmates About Debilitating Role Of Education In Criminality; A Study Of Pakhtun Society

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Paper Submitted: September 8, 2020

Paper Reviewed: October 10, 2020

Paper Accepted: December 20, 2020

Abstract

Education plays a positive role to nourish human minds, construct experiences and build the society. Its has never been denied in any circumstances especially pertaining to situations of provocation, escalation, and extenuation. Alongside, criminality is another social pattern, which exists since human's existence. Both the everlasting patterns of society are simultaneously dependent over each other having a negative or inverse correlation. To understand the relationship between the two broader concepts, this study is qualitatively undertaken following by studying the conveniently selected respondents from Distract Jail Timergara and Malakand. Taking interviews of the sampled participants, the data is thematically analyzed following the Braun and Clarke (2006) TA Model. The study finds a strong association between education and crime with a negative correlation to a higher extent. On the contrary, in situations where "honor and valor (nang and ghairat) of Pakhtuns are at stake, the role of education abates and nullifies to harmonize the escalating condition of the situation. In addition, it is also highlighted that education tends to prevent the provoking circumstances to a higher degree.

Keywords: education, crime, violence, Pakhtun and Pakhtunwali, honor and valor, women and land

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Background of the Study

Education and criminality are inversely but interdependently connected phenomena since existence of both the concepts in human societies. Relationship of both is as old as the human's civilization. Crime has been a centuries old concept, which is universally prevalent throughout the globe since the human existed on the earth. Alongside, education in one way or the other has also been evident in all forms of primitive and contemporary societies. Intellectual scholarships most likely devise the negative or inverse correlation between education and criminality (Bell, Costa & Machin, 2022). It is believed that increase in educational wellbeing of the individual evidently decreases the criminal instincts (Fella & Gallipoli, 2014). School or educational institution's quality is also blatantly associated with reduction in criminality, where the poor system and discipline of the institution is regarded as scarcely controlling the criminal instinct of individuals (Lochner, 2020). Alongside, the education and crime nexus debate explore that attendance in school reduces property crimes but in turn may lead to or increase violent criminality (Steurer & Smith, 2003). Similarly, the contexts and practice of incarceration among adults has been differently associated with crime rates and instincts. In this context, the developing or underdeveloped countries, having less opportunities of rehabilitation in prisons, lack of separate "juvenile reformatories" and overcrowded prisons have reportedly been considered the nurseries for criminalizing the individuals. On the contrary, the developed countries are believed to be crime-discouraging because of proper patterns of rehabilitation and deradicalization inside prison environment, thus diminishing the crime patterns and discouraging criminality (Kar & Spanjers, 2017).

Policymakers are most likely found interested in combating crimes through sanctions and punishment, while the contemporary research recommends mechanisms other than punishment as more effective (Hjalmarsson & Lochner, 2012). The exploration of contemporary research in criminology emphasizes that improvement in educational quality and increase in attainment of education are effective forces and factors to reduce crime rates (García, Heckman & Ziff, 2019). The global crime statistics palpably exhibit that education has strongly been correlated with crime. During 1990s, 59 percent of inmates in federal prisons at United States had no high school certificate (Harlow 2003), while 75 percent convictions in Italy during 2001 had not attained high school education (Buonanno & Leonida, 2006). Similarly, the incarceration rates among men aging 21 to 25 with uneducated status were eight times higher than educated individuals in UK (Machin, Marie & Vujić, 2011). Research reports also reflect the case of Sweden where people at least with a single conviction had lesser educational attainment (Hjalmarsson, Holmlund & Lindquist, 2015). Considering the subject statistics and literary debate on education-crime nexus, the fact is evident that both the concepts are strongly associated, where the increase in one aspect is directly proportional to decrease in the other's.

The Study's Argument

Crime reduction is directly associated with and dependent on increase in education, that is why more emphasis on investment in education is drawn than combating and resisting crimes. There is a higher probability that crimes like vandalism, violence, assaults, murders, and shop lifting can be visibly reduced with more years spent in education (Groot & van den Brink, 2010). The proposition is opposite for fraudulent crimes like scams, tax fraud and rational choice criminalities, where the more years in education and training increases the intensity and frequency of such crimes (Kireenko, Nevzorova & Fedotov, 2019). The literary and scholarly debate argue that education is a preventive force of crime as it reduces its intensity and thus saves the earnings of victims and the state as well in the form of expenditures made on convicts in the prisons (Lochner, 2004). On the contrary, the rationality-based crimes, which earn for the criminals are mostly found in educated segment, where the crime with no return to skills are committed among the uneducated members of society.

Similarly, the argument in this study resembles to that discussed in criminological and educational scholarships that education-crime nexus does exist in the area under study i.e., Pakhtun society. It is believed that Pakhtuns by their prime nature and nurture are masculinity-oriented thus declared as a patriarchic and male-dominant race. The educational wellbeing of most of the population is low, having rigidity in the cultural patterns expose them to criminalities especially violence. Along-side, adherence to Pakhtun's code of life i.e., Pakhtunwali is most likely considered as the binding and influencing force, which reduces the effects of education in terms of rationality and accommodative context. Following the rules of Pakhtunwali such as valor (ghairat), revenge (badal), Pakhto (adamancy) and protection of honor (nang) are most likely similarly found among the all the masses including educated and uneducated. In this context, the argument criticizes and challenges the existing body of knowledge that education reduces criminality. This study attempts to understand the viewpoint of convicts considering their educational wellbeing and the crime committed by them.

Research Questions

- How educational wellbeing rationalizes the criminal wellbeing of masses especially Pakhtuns?
- What are the factors influencing Pakhtun educated members to indulge in violent criminalities?

Methods and Procedures

The study opts qualitative research methods to undertake research and find the facts in empirical way. Samples were selected through convenient sampling technique in two

prisons i.e., District Jail Malakand (District Malakand) and District Jail Timergara (District Dir Lower) through a predetermined criterion such as (1) Pakhtun adult males convicted for violent crimes, and (2) having a minimum of graduation as educational qualification. Based on the subject criteria, five (05) convicts in each jail were identified from jail records and selected conveniently (those who were willing to become part of the study). The participants were interviewed through in interview guide with consent that their privacy must be ensured. The collected data was translated, edited, transcribed, and thematically analyzed following the Braun and Clarke (2006) Thematic Analysis Model.

Results, Analysis and Discussion

The collected data is thematically analyzed from codes extracted through data processing. Two major themes have been derived from the collected data, which are empirically discussed supported with illustrative quotes from interview data.

Educational Wellbeing vs. Criminal Wellbeing

Individuals with the intentions to indulge in criminality (of any form) make it a rational choice act, which they consider themselves being good at and thus leave schools, studies, and education at the early age (Lochner, 2004). Resultantly, arrests of such individuals or others who are convicted from crimes also face drop out, expulsion and rustication from schools, which convert them from abiding citizens to juvenile delinquents (Hjalmarsson, 2008). Similarly, the participants of this also endorsed the fact that most of the students involved in criminality were dropped out from schools at the early age, for instance,

“Yes, it’s true. Deviant students in our class used to be regularly absent in classes. They used to leave homes for school for did not attend schools and had to go somewhere else. Being caught and arrested in robberies, thefts, and burglaries, they were rusticated by school management and compulsorily they had to leave education. Some of them have become dangerous criminals, and to me, it is because of leaving their education. If they had continued education, they would have been normal citizens today”.

Lochner and Moretti (2004) identify that one year increase in educational levels or a year (more) spending in educational setup reduces the crime patterns and arrests by more than 11 eleven percent (“... the boys who indulged in crimes very early, I suppose that if they had spent one or more years in schools and got education, I think they might have been protected from arrests and further indulgence in crimes”). Such estimation in educational wellbeing multiplies the future opportunities in labor market, which is also positive gesture and effect of education on decreasing criminality among adults (Gould, Mustard & Weinberg, 2002). Earlier evidence in education and crime nexus report that increase in the minimum

schooling age in a state has visible results and effects on education-crime relation, which are pertinently reduced when in practice (Machin et al., 2011).

“I agree with this conception. If I look at myself, I would have not been a criminal today if attained one or two more years of education and could have completed my master’s degree. Quitting education was a turning point in my today’s status and sufferings”.

Similarly, the state’s policy of determining compulsory schooling during the early days has palpable results and indications in reducing criminality, as implemented in Sweden by extending compulsory education from seven to nine years (Meghir, Palme & Schnabel, 2012). In terms of property related crimes, it is believed that a slight increase in educational wellbeing produces positive results by decreasing criminality to a higher extent (Buonanno & Leonida, 2006). Similarly, the empirical data makes agreement with the literary data that educational attainment works as a controlling agent and supervisor of criminality in society. The more the people are educated, lesser would be the crime rates. This data is most often implied in property crimes while the context of violent crimes varies in terms of education (discussed in the next theme). The empirical excerpts pertaining the subject discussion exhibits as,

“... education is the best policy to combat criminal instinct of adults. I have seen people who are educated having rational and productive minds, vision and thinking. They plan for their future through a legitimate way, while the uneducated usually think about negative and illegal solutions for their future”.

“I’m witness of many cases in which individual with lower or no education have become criminals. They hadn’t any skills to earn their livelihood, thus intended to indulge in criminal ways of earning”.

Educated Pakhtuns and Violent Criminalities

Most of the literary debate has emphasized over the negative correlation between education and crimes except few instances where the educated and trained members of the society are supposed to indulge in property crimes through their acquired skills. The modern world’s scams committed digitally in the form of cyber crimes are mostly training-based and educationally-oriented crimes. The focus of this research does not entail property crime under this theme, rather intends to pinpoint violent crimes among educated segment of the society. The literary data also supports the fact that attendance in educational institution decreases property crimes but has an ingredient to increase violent crimes. The motive behind this conception is that the more the interaction between people, higher are the chances of clash of ideas turning into violence.

Still the debate here is not based on interaction as a source of getting violent and committing heinous crimes. The attempt was made to address the excess of violent crimes among Pakhtuns which was believed to be irrespectively prevalent among the entire masses (including educated and uneducated). Education is a source of constructing human personalities and experiences for smoother, peaceful, and successful life patterns (Danesh, 2008). On the contrary, the Pakhtun social structure entails the principles of Pakhtunwali, which are considered to be creating violence in the society. The attributes of Pakhtunwali such as valor (Ghairat), revenge (badal) etc. are the sources of violence creation. None of the segment including educated members are protected from malevolence of these attributes. The study finds that even the educated people (highly educated) become insane in circumstances pertaining to ghairat and badal, for instance,

“Well, I’m educated having master’s degree from a university. I was an abiding citizen, living a peaceful life, but I got compelled to become a criminal (murderer). It is our Pakhto (identity for being a pakhtun) to take revenge of my father’s killing. It has nothing with my education, because “da plar badal pa bachy faraz dy, aw pukhto pa zay kawal pa Pakhtun; ma khpal farz ada ko (taking revenge is obligatory for a Pakhtun, and enduring Pakhto is a prerequisite to be a Pakhtun; so, I fulfilled my obligation)”.

Education instills understanding and coping with the changing situations and dealing productively in passivity and challenging circumstances (Kester & Cremin, 2017). In most of the situations, education has played role and still plays a role to milder the provocation and protect the situation from being criminalized (Read, 2012). Similarly, the same role of education is endorsed by the research participants that in situations where normally killings occur, their educational wellbeing has protected them to be criminals. There are usually situations which are beyond the human’s control and instigation reaches to a level where human’s mind does not remain sane, such as,

“... My educational background has protected me several times from a bloodshed and heinous acts. Being a rational and educated person, I attempted several times to convince that man to avoid connection (affair) with my sister, but in vain. Although educated, but he wasn’t rational and his irrationality made me irrational, and I committed the crime”.

Pakhtuns are considered more violent and irrational in matters pertaining property (land) and women. Land’s sanctity and women’s modesty are kept above all. It is never tolerated that these two possessions of Pakhtuns are challenged, exploited, or disrespected. Most of the enmities and killings are based on these issues. As explained in the above extract, the woman’s (in the form of sister) honor was threatened which converted an educated person to commit the most heinous crime of murder. Alongside, issue of land distribution,

embezzlement of lands or aggression in the matters of land also not tolerated. Any act (against the wills of owner) against the land is considered a threat to the entire wellbeing of family, which usually turn in catastrophic consequences. A participant expressed as,

“Land is our identity, our honor, a sign of our existence in the village. We are called Khans just because of this land, so, it’s like our mother which feeds us and gives us a name and identity. How can I spare my mother (the land) to be exploited by others? It’s never tolerated, and we would never tolerate it. My education teaches me to be safe and peaceful, but when my identity is threatened, I forget that education has taught me something like peace.”

Conclusion

Education is among the best gifts given to humans during their lifespans, which creates humanity and humanitarian thinking leading peace and serenity in the world. On the contrary, crime and violence are patterns which tend to devastate the peace of the said human and humanity. We conclude that both are equally prevalent phenomenon across the globe having an interdependent relationship. Increase in educational wellbeing in a society is an indicator of decrease in crime, is a dominant and most discussed hypothesis in educational and criminological scholarships. On the contrary, this study validates the hypothesis to an extent not in its entirety. It is true that many of the extenuating circumstances and provocations are normalized when any of the party had some educational backgrounds, but in other many circumstances, education did not work, and the situation has escalated. In terms of the first theme, the literary data is holistically endorsed and authenticated that educational wellbeing wins the race from criminal wellbeing, because increase of education directly means the decrease in crimes. The second pertaining the Pakhtun’s violence and education petrifies the knowledge that education does not work or abates the provocation when the matters relate to land and women or the “honor”. Honor is kept above all, while any threat to it is subjected to harsh and indefinite retaliation. Both the educated and uneducated Pakhtuns get instigated, become violent and forget their rational and educational backgrounds when their honor is at stake. It is thus concluded that the triggering point among Pakhtun males is similar to both the educated and uneducated.

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