

The Relationship between Recidivism, Labeling, Deviant Identity and Social Boycott among Tabriz's Prisoners

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Abstract. Crime and social deviants are dilemma in the world. Evidences showed that having a previous experience of imprisonment led to more involvement in legal problems. This study aimed to determine the relationship between labelling, deviant identity and social boycott with recidivism rate as the most objective index of being involved in crime committing. Sample included all prisoners in the Tabriz prisons, 180 people, to assess the indexes a self-construct questionnaire with three subscales and 30 items designed and the variables measured. Validity and reliability coefficients of the scale were reported as a part of test-making process. Recidivism was achieved from the judiciary system records which as a part of legal procedure saved in the system. The gathered data was analysed with Pearson correlation and other central tendency indexes. Results showed a robust relationship between recidivism and the other variables. These findings indicated the importance of labelling and cultural transmission theories in prediction of imprisonment consequences for people.

Keywords: prisoners, recidivism, labelling, deviant identity, social boycott, Tabriz

1. Introduction

Crime and delinquency have an increasing trend in the world and lead to many problems in the society. The problems that are made by delinquency are not limited to the person and family, but they will inject into the society, overtime. Delinquency imposes so many costs on the society. "The costs of delinquency are considerable, and can be classified as overt and covert. Security-judiciary and social services costs such as police, court, prison, rehabilitation and correction centers, foster homes, injury to victims, destruction of public properties due to vandalism and deliberate fire-setting, making physical and intelligent obstacles to protect public and private buildings are all parts of overt or direct costs. On the other hand, costs of a low-educated group due to truancy and dropping out, lack of profession, inconsistency with educational and professional standards of society, decrease in productivity, and most importantly the danger of rearing a new generation with positive attitudes towards delinquency and social deviation by the group can be categorised under the indirect or covert costs" [1].

Some researchers ascribe the problem to corruption and social and ethical breakdown in the society, [2,3]. Accordingly, deviant behavior as the first step to delinquency and crime is learned through interaction with unsuitable friends, a process which is called cultural transmission. The theory believes criminal behavior is learned from social interaction with deviant people.

Humankind has some needs such as belonging, communication, participation and support by others. There are a lot of people who their mentioned needs are not fulfilled due to neglect, boycott, prediction about minorities and labeling. Accordingly, deviant behaviour can be counted a developmental phenomenon and everybody more or less during his/her life commits the behaviours. In fact, a person with deviant label deprives from dignity, suitable position and job in the society and pulls toward marginal and informal jobs, a situation which is expected from the label [4]. Children who choose a deviant identity fall in a trap which is

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very difficult to be rescued from it. There is a sequence of arrestment, formal labeling, imprisonment which finally leads to a public labeling[5]. some researchers showed that involvement with the legal system and getting label of prisoner is related with more serious delinquency in later years[6]. In a study [7] a relationship between labeling at adolescents period as prisoner and committing more serious crime in adulthood was found. Another researcher [8] showed that offenders with suspended sentences showed a lower risk of rearrestment than a group with custodial sentences. Some researchers reported using sanctions such as community service led to less rate of recidivism than group who sentenced to imprisonment [9, 10,11], a labeling effect. However, not all studies end to the similar results. For example, in other studies [12, 13, 14] no difference was found between groups of with and without label in this regard. Thompson [15] indicated that imposing a deviant identity from society can make way smooth towards delinquency. Watson [16] reported that there is a strong relationship between deviant identity and committing delinquency. Wermink, Blokland, Nieuwbeerta , Nagin and Tollenaar [17] found that prevention of forming a deviant identity for delinquents by assigning them to other forms of sentences except imprisonment can decrease their rearrestment significantly in comparison to a group who had the imprisonment experience. Matsueda [18] showed a significant relationship between labeling and deviant identity, in the same line with the researcher, Adams [19] found a significant relationship between deviant identity and involvement in more serious delinquent behaviours. Uggen and Inderbitzin [20] found that withdrawn from society and pessimistic view of people toward previous delinquent is an effective agent to pull them towards gang group which in turn end to commit more crimes. In fact, the labeled juvenile is high risk of being excluded from culturally accepted social networks in the society, and pulling into deviant groups. For instance, Zhang [21] found a relationship between involvement in delinquency and peer rejection from conventional groups.

2. Methodology

2.1. Sampling

Statistical community and sample in this study was the same, thus all 180 prisoners in Tabriz prison in 2010 were included in this research.

2.2. Instrumentation

Totally four variables of recidivism, labeling, social boycott, and deviant identity were assessed. The first variable was measured from judiciary system records which stored in the system as a part of judicial procedure. The rest variables were measured via a self-construct questionnaire which covered the categories according to the related theories. Accordingly, the labeling was assessed by items which encompassed nick name, humiliation, scolding, accusation and mocking The deviant identity was assessed by items which covered indexes such as knowledge of consequences of the behaviour, lack of penitence, and interesting to the deviant behavior. The third component, social boycott, was measured by questions which covered fear of social communication, incongruence with social issues, limitations in daily functions, lack of suitable social position, social rejection, and deprivation form job opportunities. Each index was assessed by 10 items which divided to two parts, the first five items of each sub scale put in the first half and the rest in the second one. Concurrent validity coefficients of the questionnaire were as: .832, .812, .725 and .819 for whole, labeling, social boycott, and deviant identity respectively. The counted coefficients of reliability with Chronbach's alpha were as: .922, .874. .952 and .935 with the above mentioned order.

The applied research method was survey and Pearson correlation coefficient beside frequency, mean and percentage were used to analyses data.

3. Results

Ages of the subjects were in range of 15-29 with a mean of 19.5, the mean of literacy level was 7 with 12% illiteracy in the group. The mean of family household was 5.8 which is comparable with Iran's norm, 5.4, [1], parents' education was as 805 and 4 for mothers and fathers respectively. Parents' job was for mothers mostly unprofessional and low paid jobs, however mothers almost all were housewife. Type of crimes was 62%, 31 %, 24% and 18% for thieving, addiction, physical aggression and others respectively (more than 100% is counted as some subjects committed more than one crime). Mode of recidivism was as:

36.7 (two records), then 21/7 (three times), 10.6 (five times), 8.7 (4 times). The range of recidivism was between 1-28 times (6.1 just one time and less than .01, 28 times). The indexes of mean, standard deviation and variance for the variable were 4.06, 3.76 and 14.2 respectively. The Pearson correlation coefficients which achieved between recidivism and variables of labeling, social boycott, and deviant identity in this study were as: $r=.69(178)$, $p=.009$; $r=.7(177)$, $p=.031$ and $r=.74(178)$, $p<.001$ respectively. The results showed a significant relationship between the recidivism and the other mentioned variables.

4. Discussion

According to theories of labeling and cultural transmission, being involved in the situation can lead to more crimes/or deviant behaviors. Finding of this study confirmed the efficacy of the theories in prediction of labeling from society and hostility of people towards the group can make the situation worse. The findings are in line with some studies [8, 6, 7] about relationship between labeling and rearrestment. However, Muiluvuori [14] reported no relationship among the variables. Probably there are some intervening variables such as race, socio economic status and social class which intervene in the results. While the results of this study are in line with Thompson [15], Watson [16] and Wermink et al. [17] who showed relationship between rearrestment and deviant identity, Matsueda [18] and Adams [19] insisted on the preventive role of social networks in this regard. Finding of this study about relationship between deviant identity and committing more crimes is in line with Uggen and Inderbitzin [20] and Zhang [21] who showed exclusion from society can lead to involvement with deviant peer groups and committing more delinquent behaviours.

5. Conclusion

According to the findings in this study which are in line with the labeling and cultural transmission theory, the experience of imprisonment can lead to being involved in more crimes. The process can be exaggerated, if it not recognize and control by the judiciary system. However, practitioners in this field can stop the trend just by using maximum of sanctions which are based on probation, community service and other methods except imprisonment.

6. References

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