



Factors Affecting Criminal Behavior of Afghan Youth: A Case Study of Kabul Province Afghanistan

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v10i12.5397>

Abstract

One of Afghanistan's primary challenges is its high rate of criminal activities. The alarming rise in the number of crimes committed across the country is becoming a matter of great concern. It is popular to relate criminal activities with the poor physical, psychological, social and economic situation of the impoverished part of the population. The most prominent factors contributing to youth criminal behavior in Afghanistan are the country's high levels of poverty, unemployment, and corruption. Keeping all of these facts in mind, the major objective of this study was to analyze the factors affecting youth criminal behavior in Kabul, Afghanistan. In this study quantitative research approach was used. Field surveys were the primary method for collecting the data. A multistage random sampling technique was used for collecting the data. Firstly, two districts were chosen at random from central Kabul. The Kabul Children's Reform and Education Center was a deliberate choice for the second stage. The third stage involved selecting a sample size of 300 responders in a way that was purposeful. A questionnaire was designed as a data collection instrument, and collected data was analyzed using version 25 of the SPSS program. According to the findings of the survey, the majority of the respondents who were involved in criminal activities were between the ages of 21 and 25, and they were married. Univariate analysis revealed that, the primary factors contributing to youth criminal behavior include poverty, unemployment, lack of socializing and peer pressure. Bivariate analysis revealed that youth unemployment and excessive use of social media were factors that contributed to criminal activities. Hence, this study suggested that government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should work together to raise awareness and foster youth empowerment in order to ensure that individuals have the skills and knowledge necessary to engage in the job market and become productive members of society.

Keywords: *Factors; Youth; Criminal Behavior; Frustration; Kabul*

Introduction

When the law defines a crime clearly, it is often punishable by a sentence of imprisonment or other punishments, depending on the situation. A crime is any act that is punishable by law. The most prevalent crimes were robbery, burglary, rape and driving while drunk. People who have participated in such unlawful activities are considered to be criminals (John, 2020). Recently, a number of prominent

criminologists have come to the conclusion that paying attention to the underlying traits of criminals, in addition crime specific behaviors Is essential to gaining an understanding of crime. According to Omogho (2016), different factors contribute to a person's aggressive behavior and mental strain, all of which are factors in criminal activity. Criminal behavior is prohibited by the state because it endangers the lives of innocent people. An exhaustive inquiry into anomalies has been initiated as an alternative to the imposition of a penalty by state officials, with the goal of ascertaining the scope of the problem as well as its legal implication.

More than half of the population in some Asian countries, such as Afghanistan, lives below poverty line, and as a result, a significant number of youths are out of work (Altindag, 2012). Youths are the most crucial component of every society and, if active, they can make significant contribution toward societal advancement. However, if youths participate in criminal activities or have abnormal attitudes, society could be damaged as a result. According to Goldstone (2001), youths are one of the most reliable indicators of how effectively a nation can reproduce and ensure its continued existence. It is commonly held that youth are both the basis of society and its most accurate portrayal. According to the United Nations (Nafziger & Auvinen, 2002), the term "youth" refers to those who are between the ages of 15 and 30 years old. In Afghanistan, immigration and exclusion are affected by criminal activities. Criminals in this country come from all different socioeconomic backgrounds, from the poorest to the wealthiest, and they all share a same goal: to grow their wealth through illegal methods. By the literature, the great majority of crimes are carried out by criminals, political parties, police and the Afghan government working on behalf of the judicial system. According to Anderson et al. (2003), Afghanistan lags far behind other countries in terms of its economic progress, cultural, and technological development. It is not uncommon for people to give up hope for the future, and this trend correlates with a spike in violent crime among the urban elite, unemployment, and a lack of political involvement among youths. According to Butcher et al. (2015), the goal appears to be the realization that youths are more sensitive to social isolation and a lack of social support, both of which enhance the risk that they would engage in violent behavior.

Criminal behavior is a systematic process that develops throughout our live and involve intricate interconnections between the person, society, and the natural environment, among other things. Because of how uniquely we are in terms of our mental, emotional, and physical traits, not only do we have a significant influence on our own behavior and the biological processes that occur within us, but also on our connections with the physical world and with other people, groups, or organizations (Jua, 2003). It is possible for youth individuals to have sentiments of discontent and shame when they are unemployed and have limited chances for advancement. According to the findings of a number of studies (Pratt et al., 2010), the engagement of youth people in illegal activities such as the distribution of illegal drugs, terrorist group, and other illegal activities that provide a source of income has exacerbated tensions between youth people and the jobless.

Previous studies, one of which was conducted by Effiom (2021), investigated the effects of poverty on the criminal behavior of youth people in Akpabuyo, Cross River State. Omogho (2020), on the other hand, looked into how peer pressure might lead to criminal activity in Abraka, Delta. Nevertheless, these investigations were carried out in a number of different scientific domains. Researchers Abdullah et al. (2014) investigated the impacts of drug use and abuse among youth people in Borno State, Nigeria. This research was carried out in the same study area as Herrenkohl (2017). Youth crime is risk-related to family characteristics such as insufficient parenting skills, large household sizes, domestic strife, children maltreatment, and disruptive parents. Mednick (2018) found a correlation between pregnancy and delivery complications to violent conduct, but not nonviolent criminal activity. In addition, a number of studies have demonstrated that children whose moms smoked cigarettes regularly while they were pregnant are at a greater risk of displaying conduct disorders and other types of behavioral issues. Each of these studies, on the other hand, has shortcomings that demand for further research to be conducted.

Due to the various factors that drive youth to participate in criminal activities, the influence of youth in crime has long been a problem. In spite of the fact that many youths make an attempt to channel their energy into constructive and socially acceptable activities, a significant number of them engage in criminal activities. Albeit obviously not all, it has come to light that youth are involved in a number of illegal activities. This might be due to the factors that influence youth people's propensity for criminal activity in Afghanistan. Because of this, it is extremely important to investigate the factors that have an effect on youths' criminal activities. researching the backgrounds of youth who engage in criminal activity is essential since youth come from a wide variety of social groupings. Youth involvement in criminal activity is widespread in Kabul, Afghanistan. the most prevalent examples include drug abuse alcoholism, as well as theft and vandalism, rape, prostitution, armed robbery, and drug trafficking. The research as carried out in light of this context. as a result, the primary purpose of this study was to analyze the factors affecting youth criminal behavior in Kabul, Afghanistan

Methodology

In this research quantitative research approach was used. A cross sectional survey was used to collect the primary data for this study. A multistage random sampling technique was used for data collection (Agresti & Finlay, 2008). There are fifteen districts within the province of Kabul.

The central district of Kabul served as the focus of the present investigation. The participants in the research were youth people from the central district of Kabul in Afghanistan. in the first stage, two district (known as the first and second district) were selected at random from the central of Kabul. In the second stage of the selection process, the Kabul Children's Reform and Education Center was a deliberate choice. The third stage involved selecting a sample size of 300 responders in a way that was purposeful. Estimating the number of people in the sample was done with the help of the Fitzgibbon table (Fitzgibbon & Morris, 1987). According to the study's research objectives, an interview schedule was created, and collected data were analyzed using SPSS 25 version. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were utilized in the current investigation. For the explanation of the socioeconomic characteristics of the participants descriptive techniques (frequency distribution and percentage) were frequently used. In order to evaluate how dependent and independent factors interact, an analysis of two variables was carried out. Chi-square and Gamma tests were applied to assess the strength and correlation of variables. The factors of criminal behavior were examined using multi-linear regression, focusing on youth criminal behavior.

Results and Discussion

According to Table 1, the majority of the respondents, i.e., 45.3 percent, fell into the age range of 15-20 years, while 32.7 percent of the respondents fell into the age range of 21-25 years. The remaining 22 percent of responders fell within the age range of 26 and 30 years old. According to the findings of the survey, i.e., 64.7 percent of the respondents were married, while 26.6 percent of them were unmarried and 8 percent were divorced. According to the findings of the survey the vast majority of respondents, i.e., 41.3 percent were middle pass while 26 percent were primary pass. On the other side, 6 percent of those who participated in the survey were illiterate. In addition, 6.66 percent of respondents were matric, 5.33 percent were intermediate, and 14.7 percent of respondents had graduated from high school or above. The findings revealed the average monthly income of the respondents. According to Table 1, 13.3 percent of respondents have a monthly family income of up to 15000 AF. And 9.3 percent of respondents have a monthly household income that falls between 15000 AF and 20000 AF. and 14.6 percent of respondents have a monthly household income that falls between 20001 AF and 25000 AF. In addition, 27.3 percent of respondents have a monthly household income that ranges from 25001 AF to 30000 AF. In addition, 20.6 percent of respondents have a monthly household income that ranges from 3001 AF to 35000 AF. Finally, 14.6 percent of respondents reported having a monthly income of more than 35,000 AF. In this

context, Jua (2003) argued that money was a significant factor, driving violent crime rates across nations. Since inequality increases crime rates, the correlation proves to be causal. Increases in income disparity had a significant impact on rising crime rates.

According to Table 2, 26 percent of respondents believe that the primary cause of crime is poverty, whereas 23.3 percent of respondents believe that unemployment is the cause of crime, and 15.33 percent of respondents believe that political instability is the cause of crime. In addition, 23.33 percent of respondents said they believe that the most significant factor contributing to an increase in crime is a recession in the economy. In the end, 6.66 percent of respondents stated that a lack of education was the reason for crimes, whereas 5.33 percent stated that the reason for crimes was social isolation. Idrees et al. (2015) also revealed data that were quite similar to those presented above, namely that criminal behavior was substantially connected with unemployment, poverty, and a lack of education. Poverty levels rise alongside rising rates of youth unemployment, which in turn encourages criminal activity. Criminal behavior is more likely to be engaged in by those who have been marginalized socially. According to the findings of the study, a disparity in the residents of Afghanistan's living standards was brought by the country's political and economic inequality. When people lacked access to resources, it destroyed their moral limits and led to immoral behavior. According to the findings of several studies, being poor has an effect not only on crime but also on the criminal justice system. The little quantity of money and resources that are available to those who are impoverished makes it difficult for them to achieve the objectives and ambitions that they have set for themselves. The growing economic gap in Afghanistan makes the country's poverty figures even more dire, which in turn presents a picture that is even more grim. According to the findings, 35.3 percent of respondents believed that a lack of primary socialization or a problem with it is the primary factor that pushes youth people toward crime. Additionally, 32.7 percent of respondents believed that peer groups are to blame for youth people becoming criminals, and 32.0 percent of respondents believed that the media was to blame for youth people becoming criminals.

Table 1. socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents

Age (in years)	Frequency	Percentage
15-20	98	32.7
21-25	136	45.3
26-30	66	22.0
Marital status		
Un married	80	26.66
Married	194	64.7
Divorced	24	8.0
Educational status		
Illiterate	18	6.0
Primary	78	26.0
Middle	124	41.3
Matric	20	6.66
Intermediate	16	5.33
Graduation or above	44	14.7
Income (afghani)		
Up to 15000	40	13.3
15000-20000	28	9.3
20001-25000	44	14.6
25001-30000	82	27.3
30001-35000	62	20.6
35001 or above	44	14.9
Total	300	100.0

Peer pressure may have both positive and negative impacts on youths. Youths may experience either positive or negative consequences. It shows that there was motive to participate in criminal activity rather than comply to social norms. As a consequence, this leads to the formation of persons who are socially dissatisfied or criminally inclined. There is growing evidence that the use of social media, which plays a big role in day-to-day living, contributes directly and indirectly to the rise in violent behavior among youths. When youths are subjected to violence on a frequent basis, it is possible that they may experience detrimental repercussions. According to meta-analyses of the harmful effects of media violence, youths who watch violent media on a regular basis are more likely to engage in antisocial behavior, such as criminal violence, imitative violence with toys, acceptance of violent behavior, increased hostility, and desensitization to violent behavior. According to the findings of the study (Idrees et al., 2015), a tight connection exists between the criminal behavior of youth and their exposure to media depictions of violence.

Table 2. factors affecting criminal behavior among youth

Factors affecting criminal behavior among youth	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	78	26
Unemployment	70	23.33
Political instability	46	15.33
Economic Recession	70	23.33
Lack of Education	20	6.66
Social Exclusion	16	5.33
Poor Socialization	106	35.3
Peer Group	98	32.7
Media	96	32.0
Total	300.0	100.0

Table 3 shows that the above bivariate analysis was to test the hypothesis "unemployment leads toward youth criminal behavior." In this investigation, the dependent variable was "Youth criminal behavior," while the independent variable was "unemployment." The chi-square 173.057 value at a level of significance 0.011 demonstrate the association between the variables under consideration. In addition, the gamma 0.467 value at a 0.044 significance level demonstrates that there is a significant positive connection between youth criminal behavior and unemployment. It indicates that youth criminal behavior depends upon the employment status of the youth. Therefore, the hypothesis that states there is an "association between unemployment among youth and criminal behavior" may be accepted.

In this regard, Pratt et al. (2010) shown that when youth individuals lacked possibilities for advancement and employment, they were more likely to experience sentiments of discontent and humiliation. According to the findings of several studies, youth participation in criminal activities such as the distribution of illegal drugs, terrorist groups, and other unlawful activities that provide a source of revenue had exacerbated tension between youths and the jobless

Table 3. association between unemployment among youth and criminal behavior

Unemployment among youth	Low 122	Medium 1	High 5	Total 128
Not at all	40.7% 4	.3% 81	1.7% 33	42.7% 118
To some extent	1.3%	27.0%	11.0%	39.3%
To great extent	3	28	23	54
	1.0% 129	9.3% 110	7.7% 61	18.0% 300
Total	43.0%	36.7%	20.3%	100.0%

Test	Value	D.F.	P-value (significance)
Chi-square	173.057	4	0.011**
Gamma	0.467	-	0.044*

**= significant

Table 4. Association between the use of social media among youth and criminal behavior

Use of social media among youth	Youth criminal behavior			Total
	Low	Medium	Hight	
Strongly Agree	8	29	101	138
	2.7%	9.7%	33.7%	46.0%
Agree	56	48	3	107
	18.7%	16.0%	1.0%	35.7%
Disagree	37	13	5	55
	12.35	4.3%	1.7%	18.3%
Total	101	90	109	300
	33.7%	30.0%	36.3%	100.0%
Test	Value	D.F.	P-Value (significance)	
Chi-Square	128.213	4	0.003**	
Gamma	0.470	-	0.012*	

**=significant

Table 5. Multiple linear regression analysis

Independent variable	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	tcal	Significance (p-Value)
	β_i	Std. Error	β_i		
(constant)	0.841	0.408	-	2.061	0.040*
Low-income generation Opportunities (x1)	0.296	0.068	0.230	4.341	0.000**
Frustration (x2)	0.280	0.054	0.263	5.176	0.000**
Unemployment (X3)	0.236	.051	0.213	4.629	0.000**
Inequalities in the society (x4)	0.136	0.047	0.127	2.891	0.004**
Peer pressure 9X6)	0.228	0.096	0.140	-2.368	0.019*
Social Media (x6)	0.264	0.082	0.252	-3.230	0.001**
Adjusted R2 = 0.638 F=112.648 P-value (significance) =0.000**					
**=highly significant, *=significant					

Table 4 demonstrates the purpose of the above bivariate analysis was to test the hypothesis “use of social media leads toward youth criminal behavior.” the dependent variable in this investigation was “youth criminal behavior,” while the independent variable was “the use of social media.” The chi-square 128.213 value at a level of significance 0.003 shows the association between the variables under consideration. Additionally, the gamma 0.470 value at 0.012 significance level shows a strong positive relationship between the use of social media and youth criminal behavior. This indicates that the usage of social media is a contributing factor in the criminal behavior of youth people. Therefore, the hypothesis “Association between use of social media among youth and criminal behavior” is accepted. in a study that was conducted by Farooq et al. (2014), Youth individuals were shown to be more susceptible to the harmful impacts of social and electronic media. The limited choices that were open to youths led to feelings of hopelessness and depression among these individuals. In addition, youth people have the potential to learn about new forms of criminality as well as aggressive and unlawful behavior via the media and other sources of information.

Table 5 show the determinants of criminal behavior and its effect on youth According to the findings of the researchers, there is a substantial link between criminal behavior and a dearth of economic possibilities, unemployment, dissatisfaction, inequality, peer pressure, and social media. According to Collier (2000), Ortiz and Cummins (2012), and Marcus and Gavrilovic (2010), the researchers stated that the youth men's inclination to join in a revolt was impacted by their sources of money and their social position. Youth people who were struggling economically and could not find work were more inclined to take part in a revolt. The study concluded that there was a significant connection between the worsening level of frustration and the rising tide of sadness experienced by youth people. The present study was in line with the findings that Pratt et al. (2010) gave, which said that the association between growing rates of property crime and poverty was well established, whereas the relationship between inequality and more violent crimes such as assault and homicide was more fragile. Moser and Rodgers (2005) stated that an absence of access to jobs, education, healthcare, and basic infrastructure was substantially associated to criminal activities. Younger guys were more likely to participate in a variety of criminal activities as a direct result of the widespread and severe inequality that existed at the time. In this regard, Humphreys and Weinstein (2008) and Flynn and Rudolph (2011) offered evidence that youths were more impacted by social and electronic media, and that peer pressure had a significant impact on the criminal behavior of youths.

Conclusion

The current study came to the conclusion that the number of crimes committed was steadily increasing, particularly among youth, and that this upward trend is anticipated to continue. The investigation led the researcher to the conclusion that there is no one reason why youth turn to criminal behavior; rather, the lives of youth people are negatively impacted by a number of different risk factors. The context in which a person lives has a direct bearing on the circumstances that lead to criminal behavior. Some examples of these contexts are the family, other forms of socialization, peer groups, social media, and inequalities. It was also observed that the elements that contribute to youth criminality in Kabul, Afghanistan are slightly different from those in the west, such as unemployment, inequality, and poverty. According to the findings of the study, there would be a reduction in the number of crimes committed by youth people if inequality were eradicated and the state provided work opportunities to youths. The rate of criminal activity among youth people is shown to be much lower if proper remedial actions are taken into consideration.

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