

The Effect Factor for Students' Deviant Behavior

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, instances of deviant student behavior have become more serious. Using attachment theory and social control theory, as well as the parent-child and teacher-student relationship, this research probed into deviant behavior. This research aimed to identify the more significant influence (teachers or parents) on students, in order to indicate the effect of teachers and parents on students' behavior. It compared the influences of the teacher-student relationship, the parent-child relationship and social control on students' deviant behavior. Results showed that parent-child relationships and teacher-student relationships negatively influence deviant behavior. However, in comparison to the parent-child relationship, the teacher-student relationship has a more significant influence on deviant behavior. Further examination of the influence of social control indicated that the main factors of students' deviant behavior are social control, the teacher-student relationship, and the parent-child relationship, in the given order.

Keywords: *Social control, Parent-Child relationship, Teacher-student relationship, Students' deviant behavior*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, incidences of deviant student behavior in Taiwan have become more serious. Past studies on deviant behavior have mostly referred to cutting classes, using filthy language, stealing, smoking and drinking (Sokol-Katz, Dunham, & Zimmerman, 1997); however, instances of students bullying others and threatening teachers in public have become common. It seems that schools are helpless regarding students with deviant behavior and the educational authority does not have effective measures in place to deal with these problems. Some teachers attribute the above problems to teachers lacking the right to use physical punishment, as it is forbidden in the current educational regulations. In addition, physical punishment violates students' human rights and only temporarily curbs students' surface behavior. Changing a student's core temperament is the effective measure to improve student behavior.

Past researches on students with deviant behavior have demonstrated that these students mostly come from families with low social and economic statuses (James, 2001:24). However, recent studies have indicated that family type is not significantly related to deviant behavior in schools (Jou, 2010:313). Therefore, it seems that low social and economic status cannot properly explain the deviant behavior of students in the present time. Therefore, using psychology, this research attempted to recognize an approach to influence students' deviant behavior. Attachment theory and parental attachment are usually adopted to explain students' deviant behavior. Attachment theory aims to probe into interpersonal relationships, such as the parent-child relationship and the teacher-student relationship; when children and parents or teachers and students develop an intimate relationship, it will lead to the children's psychological health (Bowlby, 1980; Steele, Hodges, Kaniuk, Steele, 2010:29). Therefore, if children and

parents develop positive parent-child relationships, or students and teachers develop good teacher-student relationships, deviant behavior can be significantly improved. There are a number of studies on the correlation between the parent-child relationship and deviant behavior (Sokol-Katz, Dunham, & Zimmerman, 1997); however, few researchers have probed into the correlation between the teacher-student relationship and deviant behavior. Sokol-Katz, Dunham, and Zimmerman (1997) cited the statement of Hirshi and suggested the connection between parental attachment and deviant behavior was that in family interactions, parents teach their children about forbidden behavior, so as to avoid deviant behavior. Therefore, the social control of laws in society is conveyed by parental attachment and by parental nurturing and interaction.

Based on literature review, Sokol-Katz, Dunham, and Zimmerman (1997) suggested that the parent-child relationship and social control are common in studies of deviant behavior. However, although the teacher-student relationship meets the definition of attachment theory, it has rarely been discussed in empirical studies. Therefore, this research included the teacher-student relationship, the parent-child relationship, and social control to compare and analyze their influences on students' deviant behavior. In educational practice, many teachers feel helpless, as family education is seen to counteract teachers' efforts to improve student behavior; many parents also complain that school educators do not responsibility for student behavior. Using empirical data analysis, this research aimed to find the more influential factor (teachers or parents) on deviant behavior. To accomplish this goal, this research probed into the influences of the teacher-student relationship, the parent-child relationship, and social control on deviant behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Deviant behavior refers to behavior that is not approved by the society. For students, this includes cutting classes or not following class and school regulations, etc. Some researchers have intended to find if schools are effective in modifying deviant behavior. They have probed into teenagers with deviant behavior in correction schools, demonstrating that their behavior significantly improves (Shirasa & Azuma, 1961:291). This shows that teacher discipline can improve deviant behavior. However, the findings only refer to the difference of means of deviant behaviors in self-reported questionnaires, and many other factors are not considered. Thus, it only indicates the meaning and value of school education on students' deviant behavior.

However, some studies have demonstrated that family is an important factor for students' deviant behavior. The loss of parental attachment will lead to deviant behavior. In addition, students from broken families tend to have anti-social behavior (Murray & Farrington, 2005:1269). Some research has indicated that family factors significantly influence the deviant behavior of teenagers (Cheng, 2001:246). In addition, research has demonstrated that deviant behavior is related to parental supervision (Laser, Luster, & Oshio, 2007:1463). A research conducted in Boston, U.S., supports the above finding. Weaker parental attachment and low parental supervision are related to deviant behavior (Sampson & Laub, 1994:523). Generally speaking, teacher discipline, and the parent-child relationship are all related to deviant behavior (Cauffman, Farruggia, & Goldweber, 2008:699).

Studies in Taiwan have demonstrated that family is the main factor of individual misdeeds. Negative parent-child relationships have an influence (Hsieh, 1996:139). Hsieh treated normal and criminal teenagers as subjects, and demonstrated that positive parental discipline and a positive parent-child relationship reduce deviant behavior, and that improper parental discipline is the most

important factor of deviant behavior (Hsieh, 1996:141). However, some research has suggested that school is a factor of deviant behavior (Jou, 2001). In educational practice in Taiwan, many teachers feel helpless about education, since family education often counteracts the teachers' efforts to improve students' behavior. Many parents also complain that school educators do not undertake responsibility for student behavior. The first question of this research was to find which factor was more significant, the school factor or the family factor?

Some experts have suggested that social control can change the deviant behavior of teenagers (Platt, 2007:771); however, there is no empirical data to support this. Ezinga, Weerman, Westenberg and Bijleveld (2008:340) investigated 800 teenagers aged 12-13, and demonstrated that the connection between low self-control and deviant behavior is significant, and that these students cannot resist temptation. However, through social control, they might be able to resist the attraction. Therefore, this research included social control in the same empirical research and compared and analyzed its influence on deviant behavior.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research framework

This research probed into the factors of deviant behavior in elementary school students in Taiwan, and included the influences of the parent-child relationship, the teacher-student relationship and social control on deviant behavior. This research attempted to identify the most significant factors of deviant behavior, as shown in Figure 1. Using data analysis, the influences of deviant behavior, the parent-child relationship and the teacher-student relationship on social control were examined.

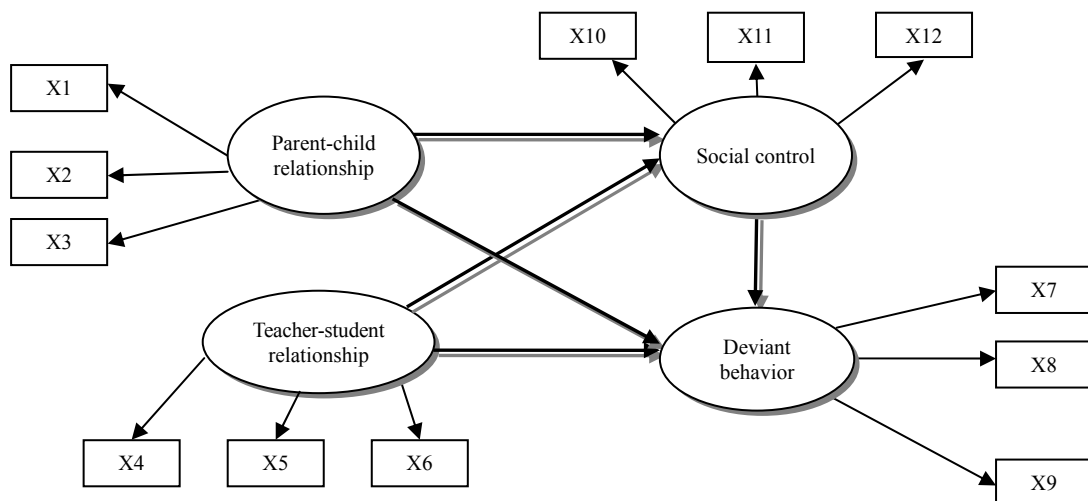


Figure 1: Research model of social control, parent-child relationships, teacher-student relationships and elementary school students' deviant behavior.

Research subjects and sampling

The research subjects were 5th and 6th grade students in Taiwan elementary schools. Using stratified cluster sampling, a total of 2715 students in six counties and cities in Taiwan participated.

Research tool

The design of the questionnaire was based on items from the deviant behavior questionnaire by Harada et al.(2004) and on items from the social relationship questionnaire by Lee, Huang and Shen (2009), which were modified according to the variables in this research. Two professors were used to examine the validity of the questionnaire. Factor analysis was conducted for construct validity, and reliability was measured using Cronbach's α .

Data analysis and processing

Using LISREL, this research analyzed the model fit. The main findings are shown below.

RESEARCH RESULTS

After data analysis, the models of the parent-child relationship, the teacher-student relationship, social control and deviant behavior all revealed goodness of fit, with the Chi-Square (χ^2)=355.12. However, Marsh and Hocevar suggested that when the number of samples is large, χ^2 can be significant. Most models should therefore be rejected, and it is necessary to examine the fit measures. This research included 2715 samples and the Chi-Square (χ^2) was significant. Therefore, the fit measure needed to be examined.

The model fit measures of this research are shown in Table 1. The CFI was .98, GFI was .98, IFI was .98, NFI was .98, NNFI was .97 and AGFI was .97, which were all above .90 and with a good fit. The RMSEA was .049, which was below .08 and was acceptable (see Table 1).

Table 1: Model fit measures for social control, the parent-child relationship, the teacher-student relationship and elementary school students' deviant behavior

Fit indices	Index values	Fit indices	Index values
Chi square value	355.12	NFI	.98
Degree of freedom	48	NNFI	.97
GFI	.98	CFI	.98
AGFI	.97	RMSEA	.049
IFI	.98	SRMR	.044
		RMR	.049

Correlation analysis of the parent-child relationship, the teacher-student relationship, social control and deviant behavior is shown in Figure 2. The parent-child relationship was shown to negatively influence deviant behavior, with a λ of -.07. In other words, the better the parent-child relationship is, the lower the amount of deviant behavior will be. The teacher-student relationship was shown to negatively influence deviant behavior, with a λ of -.09. The better the teacher-student relationship is, the lower the amount of deviant behavior will be. However, regarding λ , in comparison to the parent-child relationship, it seems that the teacher-student relationship is more influential on deviant behavior. This research further examined the influence of social control. According to Figure 2, the λ of social control on deviant behavior was -.18, meaning that social control is the main factor of deviant behavior in 5th and 6th grade students. The second-most important factor is the teacher-student relationship, and the last is the parent-child relationship. Therefore, in comparison to parental attachment, teachers are more influential on elementary students' deviant behavior, and the influence of social control on students' deviant behavior is the most significant. School regulations, laws, teachers' punishments and better teacher-student

attachments can all reduce instances of deviant behavior. This finding met many teachers' idea that education is ineffective since family education counteracts their effort to improve student behavior. This research demonstrated that social control and the teacher-student relationship is more influential on deviant behavior, and that the parent-child relationship is less significant.

The teacher-student relationship and the parent-child relationship indirectly influence deviant behavior through the mediating effect of social control. According to Figure 2, the parent-child relationship positively influences social control, with a λ of -.15. In other words, the better the parent-child relationship is, the higher the level of social control will be. Secondly, according to Figure 2, the teacher-student relationship positively influences social control, with a λ of -.21. The better the teacher-student relationship is, the higher the level of social control will be. However, according to λ , the research finding demonstrated that in comparison to the parent-child relationship, the teacher-student relationship is more influential and significant for social control.

For 5th and 6th grade students, social control is more influential on deviant behavior; however, in comparison to the parent-child relationship, the teacher-student relationship is more influential on deviant behavior. The teacher-student relationship indirectly influences deviant behavior through social control, and the function coefficient of the said indirect effect is higher than the influence coefficient of the parent-child relationship on social control. In other words, the influence of teachers on students' behavior is still higher than the influence of parents. This demonstrates the teachers' function and value of improving student behavior. Therefore, for 5th and 6th grade students, social control can be more effective for improving deviant behavior. However, regarding the comparison between the teacher-student relationship and the parent-child relationship, the teacher-student relationship is more influential on deviant behavior. Therefore, this research found teachers to be positively influential on students' deviant behavior.

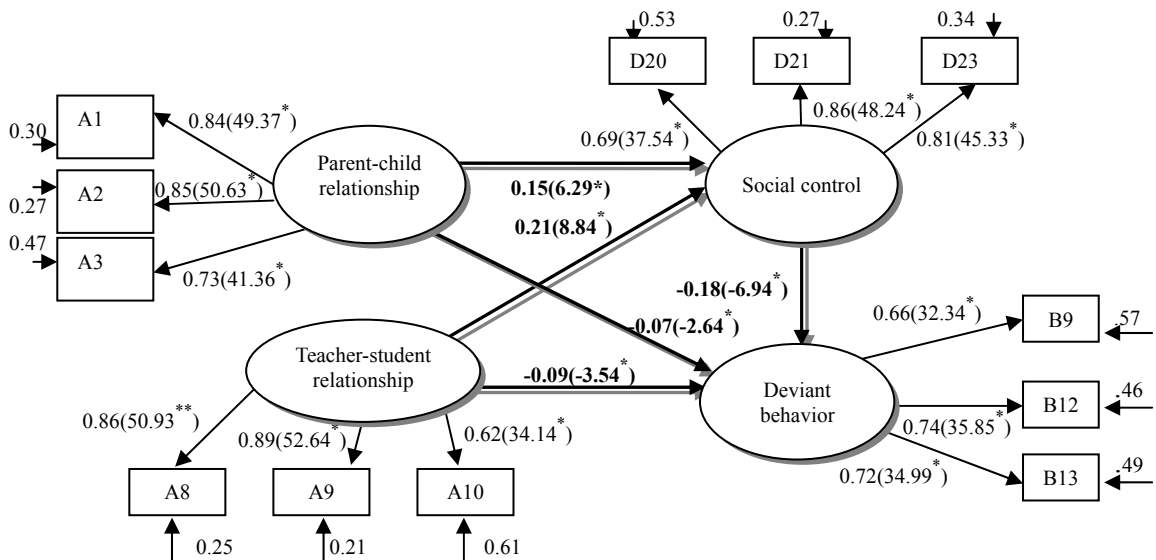


Figure 2: Final model of social control, the parent-child relationship, the teacher-student relationship and elementary school students' deviant behavior

Note: coefficient = $\lambda(t)$ * $t > 1.96$, Chi square = 355.12 df = 48 $p = .000$ CFI = .98 NFI = .98 GFI = .98 RMSEA = 0.049

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This research analyzed the relationships among the parent-child relationship, the teacher-student relationship, social control and students' deviant behavior. Results showed that in the past, many teachers suggested that their influence on students was less significant than that of the parents, and that teachers' instruction was usually less significant than parents' negative education. Thus, teachers would question the meaning and value of school education. This research was validated theoretically, and used attachment theory and parental attachment as a base from which to probe the influence of the parent-child relationship (parental attachment) and the teacher-student relationship (teacher-student attachment) on deviant behavior. The teacher-student relationship and social control were found to be slightly more influential than the parent-child relationship and social control; in other words, in comparison to the parent-child relationship, the teacher-student relationship is more influential on social control. Therefore, the result was different from the teachers' expectation. The influence of the teacher-student relationship, in comparison to the parent-child relationship, is more significant for deviant behavior. In other words, teacher-student attachment is more likely to influence students' deviant behavior. Teachers, in comparison to parents, are more influential on students' deviant behavior. The research findings can serve as references for research on deviant behavior, and can reveal positive value for school education.

When exploring the influences of the parent-child relationship, the teacher-student relationship and social control on students' deviant behavior, this research found that social control is more significant on deviant behavior. For 5th and 6th grade students, although both the teacher-student relationship (teacher-student attachment) and the parent-child relationship (parental attachment) can constrain deviant behavior, social control is still the more significant factor. In other words, students' deviant behavior should be controlled by school regulations, and it should rely on teacher-student attachment and the enhancement of parental attachment. However, school regulations and control, as well as social control among peers, are more important.

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