

An Investigation of the Impact of Poverty and Unemployment on Criminal Behaviour among Youths: An Empirical Approach

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Abstract

The present paper aims to investigate the impact of poverty and unemployment on criminal behavior among adults and youths in Pakistan. A conceptual framework as developed on the basis of dependent and independent variables. The descriptive method reasonably employed for collection of the cross-sectional data through a survey questionnaire. In total, 252 valid samples as applied for the conclusion. By using to SPSS and AMOS 26.00 version software, the overall results of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) resulted that poverty and unemployment have a positive and significant impact on criminal behavior among the youth/adults of Pakistan. Henceforth, these individuals are easily lured into criminal activities because of low socio-economic background. Furthermore, the study recommended that the government, non-government agencies and other general public organizations should embark on adults and adults empowerment programs that alleviate unemployment and poverty. Further, it boosts up the adolescent concentration and directing towards better and rewarding activities as well as strategies.

Keywords: criminal behavior, poverty, unemployment, frustration, youths, Pakistan

Introduction

Pakistan is currently passing through social problems including corruption, unemployment, social diseases, crime and other crisis that produce the unsteadiness and infirmity among youths and adults of the country. Thus, they resort to criminal acts and developing criminal behavior among these individuals of society. However,

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criminal behavior is a disliked and unwanted attitude which is highly hated to the other members of the community. There are the specific factors that lead these youths to adopt such type of behavior in society due to lack of resources including money and other social matters. Besides this, parental and societal negligence push to commit the crime in a society. Thus, criminal behavior is generally acquired due to insufficient requirement and resources for individuals of the poor class as compared to rich class people. In this way, they gain whatever they intend to have in their social lives. Irrespective to this, Poverty and unemployment as such the factors reason the youths to adopt criminal behavior in the societies. How, these components bring out disparities among the youths (Kawachi *et al.*, 1999). As the presence of the elements that tend the youths towards isolation and disintegration within social bond and cohesion and commit the criminal acts on the basis of criminal behavior (Crutchfield and Wadsworth, 2005). Poverty and unemployment interrelated with criminal behavior. Poverty stated such the slots among the individuals and reasons the lack of survival resources, other social assets.

Thus, insufficient incomes reason to develop criminal notion in mind and adopt criminal behavior in a society. Henceforth, poverty results the deprivation, frustration, and weakness among the youths (Lewontin, 2000; Laub and Sampson, 2003). Parting with this that unemployment gives birth to criminal activities among the youths through criminal behavior. Thus, jobless individuals resort to criminal activities. Unemployment interconnected with crime (Cantor and Land, 1985). Hence unemployment rate increases criminal acts (Raphael and Winter-Ebmer, 2001; Gould *et al.*, 2002; Lin, 2008; Phillips and Land, 2012). In a sequel, the overall consequence of the study resulted as the positive and significant co-relation poverty and unemployment with criminal behavior in the country-Pakistan.

Literature review and conceptualization

Crime found within human societies has resulted in inequality among the individuals of the communities (Kawachi *et al.*, 1999). Insufficient incomes and poverty-stricken figures of society as these individuals are easily aimed to suffer and remain insecure in a society (Stewart, 1986; Pantaziz, 2000). However, population rate affects the community and develops isolation and solidarity among the individuals the then, these persons resort to criminal acts (Sampson, 1995; Wilson, 1996; Lee and Holoviak, 2006). Lee, 2000). Additionally, disintegration within social bond and cohesion reasons to a higher level of criminal activities and others found as

more population and unemployment rate (Crutchfield and Wadsworth, 2005). Besides to this, crime is related with the notion of collective efficacy (Wikstrom *et al.*, 2012), crime cycle interrelated with an economic cycle on account of poverty (Arvanites and Defina, 2006).

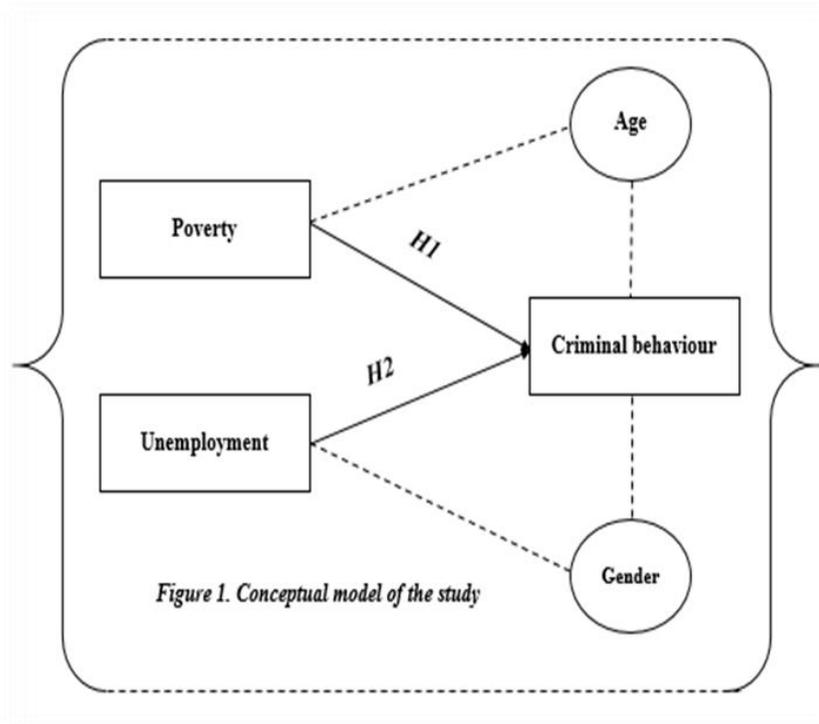
Poverty is a social issue of society at local and world level, representing a living condition in which individuals fail to achieve the minimum standard of living. Thus, the various practices of policies oriented to remove it from human society (Wenger, 2007). Haralambos and Holborn (2000) stated that poverty is a situation where a person is unable to acquire the minimum necessities that make for well-being. Poverty prevails among the people, families and groups due to the absence of the standard survival resources as approved by human society (Townsend, 1970). Thus, poverty represents the inability to gain a sound livelihood, assisting oneself without relying on the others, have a suitable house to reside in; and the failure to obtain good healthcare, proper educational training and so forth. According to Carr and Sloan (2003) poverty leads the individuals towards such the slot in social life that they become unable to gain the basic social needs including education, labor, employment and accessible treatment of common diseases and others. Poverty indicates the influence of crime that weakens the individuals and they commit a crime in society (Lewontin, 2000; Laub and Sampson, 2003). Unemployment as concerned with such a state in which a person who is at the working age to work but cannot find a job (Berglind, 1991).

Meanwhile, unemployment focuses on the measurement of economic health and economic situation of the regions (Collins, 1991). A crime considered as a severe problem and related to the illegal processes or activity which results in the drawbacks for the economy (Beker, 1965). However, a person engages in criminal activity; the expected utility of crime is higher than the efficiency of consuming time in lawful activities. Nagin and Waldfogel (1995) stated as the persons who have confronted with imprisonment or conviction and having the complexity to seek out a job thereby leading to an increase in the unemployment rate. Apart from this, the study indicated that the relationship as based on unemployment and crime (Freeman, 1996). Hence, unemployment causes crime in society (Fadaei-Tehrani and Green, 2002) further, a decrease in unemployment leads to a reduction in crime rate and so forth.

According to Tauchen *et al.* (1994), working individuals as involved in less crime than those who are not engaged in any job. Thus, jobless individuals resort to criminal activities. Unemployment causes illegal/criminal activities. Moreover, crime is related to unemployment (Cantor and Land, 1985). As it results in the weak adverse

effect of unemployment and crime (Danziger and Haveman, 2001). According to Mirjat *et al.* (2017), factors including crime, poverty and unemployment found as the significant causes of beggary in Hyderabad, Pakistan. Unemployment showed the involvement of crime in a specific way (Timbrell, 1990). Poverty develops a disparity among the individuals who resort to crime in society. Unemployment is connected with the crime as the real labor decreases the individuals have less chance of legal task; that is why they resort to illegal work in the shape of crime (Ehrlich, 1973).

As the consequences, the different scholars suggested the various factors related to criminal behavior in different contexts. However, in Pakistan, a few studies were focused on the relationship between poverty, and unemployment towards criminal behavior (Mirjat *et al.*, 2017). On the basis of such limited evidence, we proposed the following model (Figure 1) to confirm among the adults and youth of Pakistan.



Relationship between poverty and criminal behaviour

In human society, crime stated as social problem taking place owing to high levels of poverty (Urdang, 2012). Besides this, the various factors including the high rate of unemployment; density and a minority of the population as concerned with

poverty reasoning a crime in a society. Less education develops poverty among individuals reasoning towards criminal behavior in society (Anasi, 2010). However, these individuals engage in the similar law-breaking behaviors, including violence, and theft that develops the criminal behavior of these individuals' in a society (Walklate, 2004; Ministry of Justice, 2012). According to Ludwig *et al.* (2001) crime that the individuals resort to committing in society as they conceive of the suitable profits and these persons involved in such the venous task in a community. Besides to this, legal patterns for fiscal acquisition does not assist the individuals in social life. Such individuals resort to sustain their social lives for survival strategies in society. In this way, crime supports to achieve such the means which they fail to gain through the legal approach in a community. Unemployment correlates with poverty, and the higher rate of unemployment increases poverty in society and brings out the depression among the individuals reasoning to criminal activities (Short, 2007). In the notion of Chukuezi (2009) and Oruh (2004) that poverty causes crime in the shape of rape, theft and alcohol substance.

Further, poverty produces the slot in which the individuals remain busy in criminal activity (Carlen, 1992). Crime takes place owing to poverty reasons to frustration and powerlessness in human society. Besides this, other factors including disruption, social failure, family stress, persistent tension and complexities of maintenance and sustenance in the society. Poverty numbered as the leading cause of criminality (Sampson and Laub, 1993). Poverty relates to crime in shape of assault, violence and murder (Parker, 1989; Martinez, 1996; Kelly, 2000). Besides this, crime covers assault and homicide (Lee and Holoviak, 2006; Hipp and Yates, 2011). Poverty is related to crime and given birth to the various types of criminal activities including burglary, assault and other unwanted activities in human society (Flango and Sherbenou, 1976). Poverty resorts to homicide rate among the individuals (Lee and Holoviak, 2006). On the basis of above discussion, we proposed the following hypothesis:

**H1: Poverty has a positive and significant association with criminal behaviour
Relationship between unemployment and criminal behavior**

Unemployment numbered as the social and economic issue that resort the individuals to crime in a society. According to Fadaei-Tehrani and Green (2002), the decrease in unemployment leads to a reduction in crime rate and so forth. Unemployment and crime give impact human society (Lin, 2008) as the study revealed that relationship between crime and poverty (Entorf and Spengler, 2000) the relationship between poverty and crime depends on the rate of them (Lee, 2009).

Apart from this, constant failure in gaining a job as per the loss of the previous ones, the then individual incline to commit a crime in society (Saridakis and Spengler, 2012). An apparent co-relation of crime and poverty impacted the social lives of individuals and resorting to committing more criminal acts in societies (Fergusson *et al.*, 2004). However, the relationship between unemployment and poverty reason to crime in human societies (DeKeseredy *et al.*, 2003). As a result, the above literature highlighted as a positive and significant association between unemployment and criminal behaviour. On the basis of such a relationship, we developed the following hypothesis for confirmation:

H2: Unemployment has a positive and significant association with criminal behaviour.

Research methodology

The current study indicated statistical facts. According to Payne and Payne (2004, p. 180), “Quantitative methods (normally using deductive logic) traced out the regularities in human lives through separation of the social world into empirical components recognized as variables and can be represented numerically including frequencies or rate, whose associations with each other that explored through the statistical techniques, and accessed through researcher-introduced stimuli and systematic measurement.” Thus, the study resulted in an association between poverty and unemployment with criminal behavior.

Research design and study participants

This is a cross-sectional study. The self-administered questionnaire has been developed with the assistance of the field experts for data acquisition from the respondents. Thus, the participants of the current research as consisted of 252 adults and youths –male and female from the overall locales and provinces of Pakistan. The respondents have been assessed through personal visits in the various areas of Pakistan. We employed both clusters and the purposive- sampling strategies in the field due to an unspecified number of youths/adults. With regard to criteria of selection of the participants; the researchers mainly targeted such the adults/youths who were unemployed and acknowledged regarding the growing trends of unemployment, poverty and crime. At the first phase, 530 questionnaires distributed among the participants as to acquire the reasonable data, the then, 252, filled by the participants with 47.54 percent, the remaining surveys lacking some extent in case of

proper filling from the participants that is reason the actual figure of participants numbered as 252 for such the study.

Variables of the study

For the present study; we focus on independent and dependent variables whereas criminal behaviour is dependent and poverty and unemployment represent independent variables. Further, demographic variables only employed in this study to observe the respondents' trends and backgrounds, but could not measure out the weight of demographic variables towards criminal behaviour as per hypotheses structural framework.

Results

Demographic profile of the respondents

The data was analyzed through the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) and Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) version 26.0 for Windows. The demographic profile of the respondents suggested that there was the majority of male as 76.19 percent (n=192) than female (23.81 percent or n=60) (Table 1). Similarly, the age of the respondents showed as 41.27 percent (n=104) were 21-30 years of age. 36.50 percent (n=92) were in between 16-20 years. While only 6.35 percent (n=16) were 31 and above age (Table 1). Lastly, 38.10 percent (n=96) youths were from the Punjab province of Pakistan. Whereas, only 5.56 percent (n=14) were from other areas including FATA, FANA, and Gilgit Baltistan (Table 1).

Table 1. Demography of respondents (N=252)

<i>Demographic variables</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency (n)</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Male	192	76.19
	Female	60	23.81
	Total	252	100
Age	Less than 15 years	40	15.88
	16-20 years	92	36.50
	21-30 years	104	41.27
	31 and above years	16	6.35
	Total	252	100

Residential position	Sindh	58	23.01
	Punjab	96	38.10
	KPK	48	19.04
	Balochistan	36	14.39
	Other	14	5.56
	Total	252	100

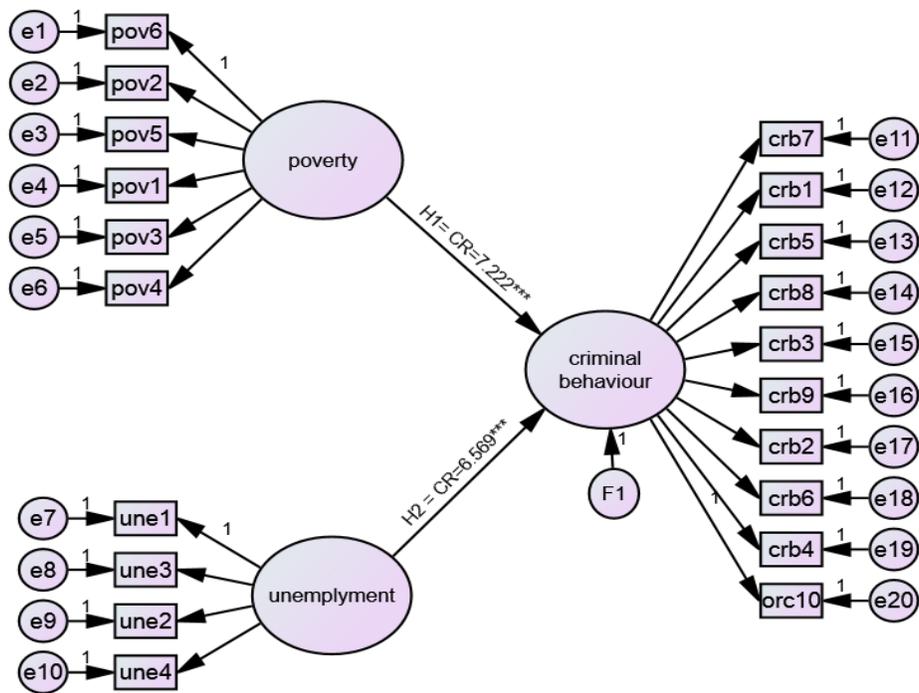


Figure 2. Structural Equation Model

Hypotheses estimations

We employed to SPSS and AMOS version 26.0 for windows to confirm the proposed relationships. The results of the structural equation model (SEM) highlighted as an association between poverty and criminal behaviour as

(H1=S.E=0.0380; C.R=7.222; $p < 0.01$) (Figure 2 and Table 2). Henceforth, H1 as accepted. Similarly, the weights of SEM for H2 suggested (H2=S.E=0.0427; C.R=6.569; $p < 0.01$) (Figure 2 and Table 2). As a result, H2 also accepted with the support of the data.

Table 2. Hypotheses assessment

H.No.	Dependent variables	Path	Independent variables	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
1	Criminal behaviour	<---	Poverty	0.1889	0.0380	7.222	***
2	Criminal behaviour	<---	Unemployment	0.2830	0.0427	6.569	***

Discussion

The purpose of the present study focused on the investigation of the impact of socio-economic factors including poverty and unemployment towards criminal behavior among the youths of Pakistan. To assess such the purpose; we developed the conceptual framework on the basis of the prevalent literature. The conceptual model formed the paths of hypotheses that correctly discussed. We formulated the survey questionnaire to attain the responses from the respondents (youths) throughout the contextual study.

The results of SEM for H1 highlighted as a positive and significant impact of poverty on criminal behavior. Henceforth, H1 accepted. Such positive associations are in line with the various earlier studies including Danziger and Haveman (2001); Walklate (2004); Ministry of Justice (2012). Henceforth, the relevant studies discussed that poverty is the main reason resorting individuals to commit a crime in societies. Poverty develops frustration, depression and isolation among the youths and the other reasons as well as the parental negligence reasoning towards criminal acts for the individuals become criminal in society. Additionally, if the individual remains poorer in society, the then, notion of doing something which rises in mind and due to lack of survival sources that resorts such a person to commit a crime in a society. However, poverty has a significant positive approach to criminal behavior.

With regard to H2 (the relationship between unemployment and criminal behavior), our results suggested as a positive and significant between unemployment and criminal behavior. Thus, H2 also supported. These positive associations are accorded with earlier studies including Fadaei-Tehrani and Green (2002); Winter-Ebmer (2001); Gould *et al.* (2002); Lin (2008); Phillips and Land (2012). In addition to this, Jobless is the specific issue among the middle class and lower class people. These people fail to obtain jobs in societies, the then, they resort to criminal acts to gain money and solve social matters for survival sources of the social lives. Unemployment develops the misconception and corrupts thoughts within the youths in societies, so they are easily likely to develop criminal acts and behavior in neighbors and regions of the country.

Conclusion

The present paper investigated the impact of poverty and unemployment on criminal behavior among adults and youths of Pakistan. As based on this purpose, the conceptual framework was developed properly. In a sequel, the overall consequence of the study resulted in a positive and significant co-relation of poverty and unemployment with criminal behavior among the youths/adults in Pakistan. Hence, this study would earnestly be beneficial to the country, political figures, policy-makers, research scholars, the state-based institutions and so others in this way.

Recommendations

The study concluded as a positive and significant relationship between poverty and unemployment with criminal behavior. Therefore, the study recommended that the government as non-government agencies should launch the programs that may uplift the people from the trap of poverty. The government should also make the policies and to run the development projects in order to engage and provide employment opportunities to the youths of the country.

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