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Exploring Whether and How Domestic and School Violence Affects People's Delinquency

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Abstract: Nowadays, under the severe circumstance, the crime rate keeps increasing, some scientists and researchers put attention on figuring out what causes criminals to commit crimes, thinking it can be effective to control the overall situation, however, among all kinds of reasons, there are still some research gaps regarding the influence of childhood experiences on subsequent crimes. Therefore, this paper collects data on domestic violence and school bullying, analyze them with corresponding possible theories, and investigates whether childhood unfortunate experiences will affect crimes committed in adulthood is built up. The findings show that witnessing interparental violence, experiencing parental violence, and getting bullied by peers and teachers in schools can negatively impact students in shaping their values and behavior, which is more likely to commit crimes after they get older. The childhood experience plays an important role in people's further development, thus, parents need to update the education of their offspring in real-time and give both spiritual and operational support to their children; at the same time, schools need to make sure the character and academic ability of their teachers and staffs to ensure a good learning environment and proper value model for students.

Keywords: interparental domestic violence, parental experience, campus bullying, teacher bullying, crime

1. Introduction

Crime is always a hot topic that catches people's attention, especially nowadays, as the crime rate keeps increasing, therefore, to control the situation from getting worse, or to reduce the crime rate, it is important to know the reasons that might lead to crimes. Unfortunate childhood experience gradually becomes a great part of the reasons that cause crimes, and the problem can appear in family or schools. Several papers have already pointed out that domestic violence and abuse can lead to significant negative consequences to children, such as emotional damage, the overuse of alcohol and drugs, and extreme pressure on their mental health, however, there is still a gap between how these negative affect can cause crime [1]. None of the previous studies have broken down domestic violence into witnessing domestic violence occurring between parents and domestic violence generated by parents against their children to analyze in detail and respectively, as well as not divided school bullying into peer-to-peer bullying and faculty-to-student bullying. Beyond that, the mechanisms and empirical studies behind these four aspects and how they act to cause crime are

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still open to research. Therefore, learning more about the mechanisms behind unfortunate childhood and crimes is much more meaningful for both future society construction and human mental health.

2. Domestic Violence

Many studies found that family plays an important role in children's growth. While most of us are enjoying the care of our parents, many other kids are experiencing domestic violence of varying degrees. Some of them are questioned and beaten by their parents because of a small mistake, and others have to go through watching their fathers or mothers being beaten every day. Witnessing aggression and violence, or being caught up has a significant negative influence on child development [2].

2.1. Interparental Violence

Domestic violence between parents refers to the direct violence or mental threat of one parent to the other by the actual attack, injury, or abuse. The investigation shows that there are far more cases of parents arguing with one parent committing domestic violence than expected. A large group of children have experienced domestic violence or witnessing the violence happened between parents regularly and frequently, estimated by the the United Nations [3]. A report from Britain expressed that there is 90 percent of cases of domestic violence happen when the child is in the same or adjacent room with their parents [4]. Witnessing domestic violence between parents leads to both short and long-term harm to kids. Barraclough found that there are some emotional damages to young children who witness domestic violence happened between parents, including suddenly crying and screaming out loudly, being afraid of going to toilet during nights, and inadvertently bed-wetting sometimes [5]. Besides, their language functions, focusing ability, and regular behaviors may all be hugely impacted. There is also a great possibility for kids to develop the overuse of alcohol and drug or mental health problems, the increasing risks of behavioral problems, and difficulties in maintaining relationships with their peers in school and others, which has a great possibility of causing future crimes, especially violent crimes [2].

The mechanism behind the effect of witnessing domestic violence happens between parents is the intergenerational transmission. The concept of intergenerational transmission of family violence sets up Bandura's Social Learning Theory [6]. It states that children who experience domestic violence will regard violence as a justified existence in interpersonal relationships. As these kids become adults, they will imitate the violent actions they saw or endured as children to deal with problems. This theory better explains why intercouple violence in the family of origin continues can be transmitted to the family relationships of the individual's offspring in adulthood [7]. According to the research done by Ernst, adult intimate partner violence perpetrators are significantly more likely to have witnessed intimate partner violence as a child than nonperpetrators [8]. That is, after children witness multiple incidents of domestic violence between parents during childhood, based on the intergenerational transmission and social learning theory, these children have a higher probability of growing up to be known as a perpetrator of domestic violence, or they will solve most things in the form of violence, not only the family things. This is more likely to lead them to be involved in various degrees of delinquency as an adult because in their consciousness violence can solve almost everything.

In addition to these, there's another possibility occurring in those kids who witness domestic violence between their parents, which is borderline personality disorder (BPD). BPD is a disorder characterized a chronic mental instability with occasional strong emotions and a failure to maintain long-term and stable interpersonal relationships with others. At the same time, the behavioral extremes and interactions also coexist, which are frequently repeated. One of the most obvious

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example is self-harm behavior. Kids who get BPD get a certain degree of social barriers. They are not good at controlling emotions and are very easy to be impulsive, once intense emotions arise, it is difficult to calm down in a short time, which is more likely to lead to passion crimes. Some victims will continue violent tendencies, and when they encounter some problems after they being adults, they will probably regard violence as a way to overcome the difficulties, thus intensifying the conflict, and ultimately hurting others and themselves [9].

2.2. Parental Violence

What's more, besides interspousal domestic violence, there's another type of violence that happens frequently in a family, that is parental violence.

Parental violence is aggression that occurs directly between parents and children in the family of origin and usually refers to direct parental aggression against the offspring.

The intergenerational flow of this violence is transmitted directly to the parent-child relationship in the adult family through the individual's exposure to physical assault by his or her parents. Especially in China, people recognize and accept the long-standing culture of filial piety. The most famous proverbs are "a filial son is born under a stick", and "a filial son is not born in a family with a loving father." Therefore, based on the recognition and generalization of traditional culture, children regard their parents' scolding as a sign which is good for their growth and regard overly harsh physical and emotional abuse as a sign of their parent's love for them, this is called Cultural theory [10]. At the same time, fathers also seem to have supreme authority and status in the family. Over time, as time passes and families change, the children who were taught with their parents' sticks and fists become parents, but things gradually deviate from the original track. Some people with radical personalities may believe that they are ought to be respected and can get the same respect from everyone because they are males, which helps them develop extremely strong but extremely fragile self-esteem, just like violence can bring everyone to their knees not only in the family but also in work and social relations with others. Thus, when other independent individuals in society do not follow their instructions, they will probably consider it an offense, and their strong self-esteem will not allow them to make a fool of themselves in front of outsiders, so they will choose violence to solve things, which eventually leads to crime.

3. School Violence

Besides domestic violence, school violence and bullying can also hugely affects children's physical and mental development.

The report published by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Violence against Children in 2012 pointed out that while one thousand million or more children worldwide attend school and being educated in the reliable and encouraging environment, there are also many students who cannot gain the same treatment and probably face sexual abuse, bullying by others in schools through verbal and physical ways, and gender-based discrimination or other types of violence [11]. Some students may also be involved in fighting, gangster, and even weapon attacking behavior. New forms of violence are also threatening children's lives, such as cyberbullying through cell phones, computers, websites, and social networks, which is of particular concern. Bullying that happens in schools can hugely affect children's both physical and mental health, which will probably lead to a worse situation after they get older, such as involving in crimes to different degrees.

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3.1. Peer-to-peer Bullying

One of the most common bullying and violent event in schools happen between peers. Bullying is a form of violence, a pattern of behavior rather than a single, isolated incident, and can have a negative impact on victims, bystanders, and perpetrators alike. Bullying is defined as a form of aggressive behavior against the will of others that occurs among school-age children or adolescents, and is general generated by an inequality in status, family backgrounds, or rights and power between bully and the bullied, which can happen repeatedly in a long time period [12].

"School violence and bullying exist around the world and affect many children and adolescents. Estimates show that approximately 246 million children and adolescents are exposed to some form of school violence and bullying each year [12]." "40.6% of students had been verbally bullied in elementary school, 34.1% had been socially bullied, 16.6% had been physically bullied, and 9.1% had been cyberbullied; 50.1% of students had been subjected to at least one form of school bullying, and 32.3% of students had been subjected to more than one form of bullying [12]."

According to social learning theory, many people's behaviors are learned, especially those children who have not set up complete value systems, and violence is easily identified and imitated by viewers as role models. Middle school is the stage with the highest incidence of bullying in schools, with all forms of bullying occurring at essentially higher rates than in elementary and high school. Foreign studies have revealed the same pattern, mainly due to changes in psychological states and behavioral patterns as adolescents enter adolescence in middle school. Middle school students' minds are still in the developmental stage and have a strong ability to imitate and learn. Nowadays, no matter whether physical violence or cyber violence happens in schools, they can easily affect students' perceptions and attitudes toward violence, and they believe that violence is a means to solve problems and develop an indifferent attitude, unable to think of the victim's perspective. At the same time, bullying, especially cyberbullying, triggers middle school students' imitation of violence because things on the Internet can be regarded as the tendency of "fashion", people who do not follow the tendency will probably be laughed at in schools due to the "outdated." Therefore, it can be reasonable to believe that children who experience bullying, no matter committing violence or being bullied, will be more likely to engage in crimes in the future, for one reason, they learned the "good way" to apply to all problems during the period when their values are being shaped, which is definitely the "key" process to develop the crime; for the other reason, in order to chase "trend" or gain a higher "school status or social status", many perpetrators will bully others out of their own frustration, humiliation, anger, and commit crimes after they getting into society.

3.2. Teacher-to-student Bullying

Teachers and faculties are another important part of schools. What they believe and how they behave will directly give both other teachers and students a "model" to treat certain groups, such as disadvantaged students, and students from poor or unfortunate families of origin. Teachers tend to put their aims on those students who are in marginalized groups and those in a disadvantaged ethnic groups. For example, refugee or immigrant youth are more likely to be bullied or humiliated simply because their native language id not the local language of instruction. Also, according to the UN study, students or adolescents in the lower castes of the Indian caste system are easily to be looked down upon by teachers in school. Similarly, a 2014 report by Human Rights Watch cited discrimination and violence against lower caste, Muslim, and tribal children by authority figures in schools in four Indian states [13].

According to the same mechanism with bullying happens in peers and parental violence, which are social learning theory and cultural theory, students are more likely to learn the behavior of

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bullying from teachers and faculties in order to show respect to them not only protect themselves from being targeted but also to gain some opportunities to get extra great resources. Therefore, witnessing bullying happen in schools makes a strong opposite effect on the formation of students' values. After they get into society, what they learned in school can lead them to a totally wrong road, that is to deal with all kinds of problems using violent methods and also engage in crimes through the violent path. What's more, they may also become accomplices and begin to succumb to illegitimate.

4. Conclusion

Through data collection and theoretical support, this study found that domestic violence, including witnessing domestic violence between parents and domestic violence against children, and school violence, including peer bullying and staff bullying against students, have a strong bad impact on students' further development, not only on their emotional and mental well-being but also on their inappropriate behavior, which is more likely lead them to engage in crimes and violence. According to the social learning theory, children learn methods and behaviors from their parents and peers, believing violence can solve almost all kinds of difficulties by witnessing interparental domestic violence and school bullying. Therefore, when they enter society and encounter a series of problems or relationships between colleagues, they will probably choose to use violence to solve everything. At the same time, the unfortunate experience of childhood will cause trauma to their emotional and mental status, and when triggered the BPD, it is difficult for them to consider calmly and control emotions well, which is more likely to lead them to participate in crimes of passion. Besides, according to the cultural theory, kids and students perceive violengeneratedate by parents or teachers as a kind of authority and a symbol of love, they accept and follow the general tradition: " a filial son is born under a stick" and "a strict teacher makes good students," which lead to the situation of beating children, physically punish students or using verbal abuse, though the intention may be good, the excesses lead to the exact opposite result, ultimately causing mental harm and incorrect guidance to children and students, leading to a greater degree of crime in the future.

This research analyzes whether childhood experience will affect crimes and their corresponding working mechanisms, which is good for controlling the increasing crime rate and the construction of a peaceful society. what's more, it can help parents and school faculties to update their educational methods for the new generation and be in line with the new trend. It is important for children to grow up physically and mentally healthy, especially when they have not yet established fully independent and correct values. Teachers and parents have to take responsibility for the future "reserve army" because only if they are completely healthy will society move forward.

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