



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**MEDIATING EFFECTS OF INTERNAL DYNAMICS BETWEEN  
PARENTAL ATTACHMENT AND DELINQUENCY AMONG  
ADOLESCENTS IN TEHRAN, IRAN**

**MAHSHID MANOUCHEHRI**

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**By**

**MAHSHID MANOUCHEHRI**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
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**July 2012**

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Delinquency among adolescent is becoming an increasing concern in the Iranian society. The Iranian government has taken various steps in combating further increment of delinquent behaviours among adolescents. Numerous studies have investigated the underlying factors of adolescent delinquency. Nonetheless, very few research have focused on the essential role of maternal and paternal attachments on delinquency, particularly among Iranian adolescents. Hence, the present study aimed to examine whether maternal and paternal attachment and internal dynamics (i.e., self-control and self-esteem) simultaneously predict adolescents' delinquent behaviour. Additionally, the study examined the role of self-control and self-esteem as mediators between the relationships of maternal and paternal attachment

and adolescent delinquency.

The study involved 528 adolescents (15 and 17 years old) from 10 government high schools in five selected districts in Tehran. The respondents were identified using multi-stage cluster sampling. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires distributed during school hours. The instruments used to assess the key study variables were: 1) Delinquency scale, adapted from study by Harris et al. (2006); 2) Mother and Father Attachment Subscales of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA)(Armsden and Greenberg, 1987); 3) Self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965); and 4) Self-control scale (Grasmick et al., 1993).

Findings from the study revealed that: 1) High parental attachment scores were significantly related to low scores in delinquent activities among the Iranian adolescents. Secure paternal and maternal attachments could therefore dissuade adolescents to be involved in delinquent activities; 2) High parental attachment scores were significantly related to high scores in internal dynamics. Secure paternal and maternal attachments thus promote self-control and self esteem among the adolescents; 3) Low level of delinquency was negatively associated with internal dynamics. This tends to show that adolescents with lower levels of internal dynamics are more at risk of developing delinquent behaviours compared to those with higher levels; 4) Adolescents' age, fathers' years of education, maternal attachment and self-control were found to be significant predictors of delinquency. The findings indicated that older adolescents with educated fathers, insecure maternal attachments and low level of self-control are more prone to engage in delinquency. Nonetheless, having low self-control tended to put adolescents at a higher risk of involving in delinquent activities; and, 5) The association between paternal attachment and delinquency was

mediated by adolescents' self-control, i.e., paternal attachment indirectly influenced delinquency via self-control. Additionally unlike paternal attachment, the relationship between maternal attachment and delinquency was mediated by adolescents' self-esteem. Maternal attachment therefore indirectly influenced delinquency via self-esteem.

The study highlights that in the Iranian society both maternal and paternal attachments are important for deterring adolescents involvement in delinquency. This strengthens past findings in which parents have a direct and indirect influence on the behavioural and social development of adolescents. Adolescents with insecure attachment relationships to both parents are more susceptible to poor development of internal dynamics and negative social behaviours. Therefore, parents are encouraged to be more attached to their adolescents in order to avert delinquent behaviours. Government and relevant agencies in Iran could develop programs that would educate parents to building and sustaining healthy relationships with their adolescents. The study emphasized the importance contribution of parents particularly, mothers in adolescent development. Future studies may wish to investigate the extent of paternal influence on adolescents' development, specifically with regards to internal dynamics and adolescent delinquency.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**KESAN MEDIATOR DINAMIK DALAMAN KE ATAS KERAPATAN  
KEIBUBAAPAN DAN DELINKUENSI DALAM KALANGAN  
REMAJA DI TEHRAN, IRAN**

Oleh

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Delinkuensi dalam kalangan remaja semakin membimbangkan dalam masyarakat Iran. Kerajaan Iran telah mengambil beberapa langkah untuk menangani peningkatan berterusan tingkah laku delinkuen dalam kalangan remaja. Banyak kajian telah dijalankan tentang faktor-faktor yang mendasari delinkuensi remaja. Walau bagaimanapun hanya sedikit penyelidikan telah menumpukan kepada kepentingan peranan kerapatan dengan ibu dan bapa ke atas delinkuensi, terutamanya dalam kalangan remaja Iran. Oleh, kajian ini bertujuan untuk memeriksa sama ada kerapatan ibu dan bapa serta dinamik dalaman (iaitu penghargaan sendiri dan konsep sendiri) secara serentak meramalkan tingkah laku delinkuensi remaja. Selain itu, kajian ini bertujuan memeriksa peranan penghargaan sendiri dan konsep sendiri sebagai pengantara perkaitan antara kerapatan ibu bapa dan delinkuensi remaja.

Kajian ini melibatkan 528 remaja berumur antara 15 dan 17 tahun daripada 10 buah

sekolah menengah kerajaan dari lima daerah terpilih di Tehran. Responden-responden ini telah dikenalpasti menggunakan persampelan kluster pelbagai peringkat. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan soal selidik tadbir sendiri yang diedarkan pada waktu sekolah. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk menilai variabel-variabel utama kajian adalah: 1) Skala delinkuensi yang diadaptasi daripada Harris et al. (2006); 2) Sub skala kerapatan ibu dan bapa daripada Inventori Kerapatan Ibu Bapa dan Rakan Sebaya (IPPA) (Armsden and Greenberg, 1987); 3) Skala penghargaan sendiri (Rosenberg, 1965); dan 4) Skala konsep sendiri (Grasmick et al., 1993).

Dapatan daripada kajian ini mendedahkan bahawa: 1) Skor tinggi kerapatan keibubapaan berkait secara signifikan dengan skor rendah dalam aktiviti delinkuensi dalam kalangan remaja Iran. Keselamatan kerapatan keibubapaan bapa dan ibu itu boleh menghalang remaja untuk terlibat dalam aktiviti delinkuensi; 2) Skor tinggi kerapatan keibubapaan berkait secara signifikan dengan skor tinggi dalam dinamik dalaman remaja. Oleh itu keselamatan kerapatan keibubapaan bapa dan ibu boleh menggalakkan kawalan sendiri dan estim sendiri dalam kalangan remaja; 3) Rendah tahap delinkuensi berkait secara negatif dengan dinamik dalaman. Ini cenderung untuk menunjukkan bahawa remaja yang mempunyai tahap dinamik dalaman yang rendah adalah lebih berisiko membentuk tingkah laku delinkuen berbanding mereka dengan tahap dinamik dalaman yang tinggi; 4) Umur remaja, jumlah tahun pendidikan bapa, kerapatan dengan ibu dan kawalan sendiri telah ditemui sebagai peramal signifikan delinkuensi. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa remaja yang lebih tua, mempunyai bapa yang berpendidikan, kerapatan dengan ibu yang tidak selamat dan tahap kawalan diri yang rendah lebih cenderung untuk melibatkan diri

dalam delinkuensi. Walau bagaimanapun, mempunyai kawalan sendiri yang rendah cenderung untuk meletakkan remaja berisiko tinggi untuk terlibat dalam aktiviti delinkuensi; dan 5) Perkaitan antara kerapatan bapa dan delinkuensi telah didapati dimediasi oleh kawalan sendiri remaja, iaitu, kerapatan bapa secara tidak langsung mempengaruhi delinkuensi melalui kawalan sendiri. Selain itu tidak seperti kerapatan bapa, perkaitan antara kerapatan ibu dan delinkuensi telah dimediasi oleh estim sendiri remaja. Kerapatan ibu itu secara tidak langsung mempengaruhi delinkuensi melalui estim sendiri.

Kajian ini menengahkan bahawa dalam masyarakat Iran kerapatan dengan kedua-dua ibu dan bapa adalah penting untuk menghalang penglibatan dalam delinkuensi dalam kalangan remaja. Ini menguatkan penemuan lalu di mana ibu bapa mempunyai pengaruh langsung dan tidak langsung kepada pembangunan tingkah laku dan sosial remaja. Remaja yang mempunyai kerapatan tidak selamat dengan kedua-dua ibu bapa adalah lebih mudah terdedah kepada perkembangan dinamik dalaman yang lemah dan tingkah laku sosial yang negatif. Oleh itu, ibu bapa digalakkan untuk menjadi lebih rapat dengan anak remaja mereka dalam usaha untuk mengelakkan tingkah laku delinkuen. Kerajaan dan agensi-agensi yang berkaitan di Iran boleh membangunkan program-program yang akan mendidik ibu bapa untuk membina dan mengekalkan hubungan yang sihat dengan remaja mereka. Kajian ini menekankan kepentingan sumbangan ibu bapa terutamanya, ibu-ibu dalam pembangunan remaja. Kajian masa depan mungkin ingin untuk menyiasat tahap pengaruh bapa kepada pembangunan remaja, khususnya berkaitan dengan dinamik dalaman dan delinkuensi remaja.



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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Mrs. Aghdas, a great teacher, mentor, my friend, and lifelong educator, I thank you for praying for and believing in me from the very beginning. God has truly blessed you in your years! I am proud to be your daughter. You, Mother, are the epitome of a Godly and virtuous woman and I love you very deeply.

Also, I dedicate this dissertation to my father, Sir, Yadollah, who is resting in the bosom of God. Daddy, even as I write this dedication to you, I feel your love surrounding me. I praise God for your life and legacy, and I thank God for allowing me to feel your presence in my dreams. You always believed that I could be what I wanted to be within God's will. Thank you for your guidance, your kindness, and your love. I love you, Daddy. To God be the glory for the things. He has done! Finally, my heartfelt gratitude also goes to my beloved brothers, sisters, and their families for their unconditional love, prayer, and enduring patience. Thank you for everything. May Allah bless all of you.

---

**MAHSHID MANOUCHEHRI**

Date: 19 July 2012

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on (date of viva voce) to conduct the final examination of Mahshid Manouchehri on her thesis entitled "parental attachment and adolescent's delinquency, controlling for the effect of internal dynamics in Tehran" in accordance with the Universities and University College Act 1971 and the Constitution of the University Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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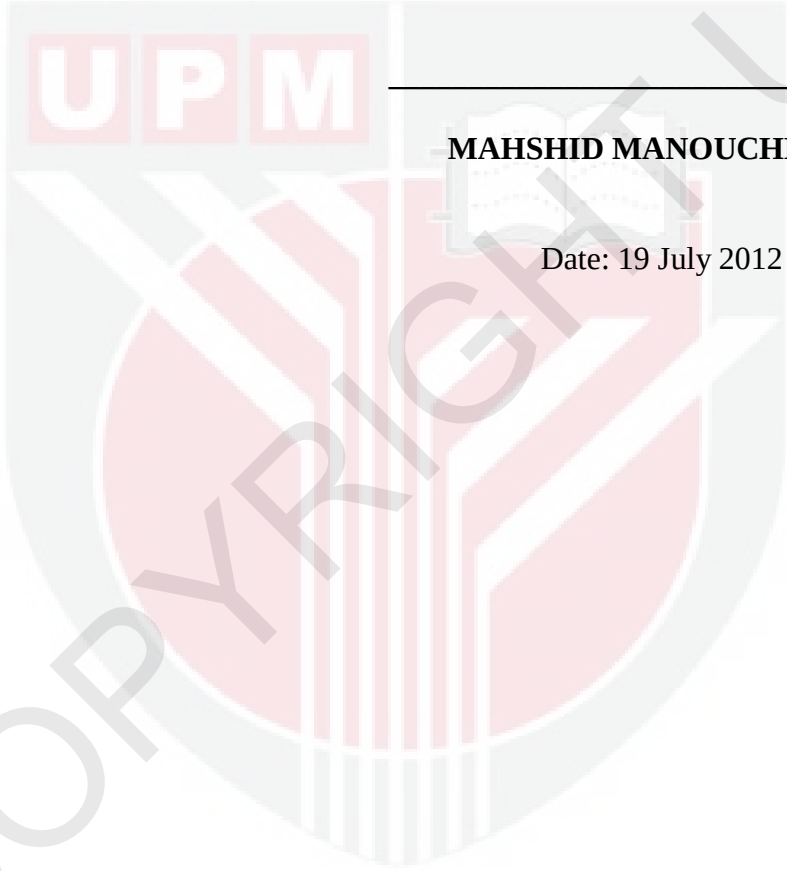
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## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at University Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.



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**MAHSHID MANOUCHEHRI**

Date: 19 July 2012

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