

EXAMINATION OF THE INHIBITING IMPACT OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION ON JUVENILE DELINQUENT CONDUCT

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ABSTRACT

The rising concern in China regarding juvenile delinquency necessitates an urgently required effective solution. Since it offers flexible learning opportunities outside of the traditional classroom, non-formal education has generated considerable anticipation as a potential solution to this issue. The relationship between non-formal schooling and juvenile criminal activity is examined in this study, with a focus on the role that cultural relevance plays in shaping adolescent behaviour. A total of 678 individuals from throughout China were polled as part of the mixed-method study. Non-formal education initiatives that include local cultural values and community-based participation have been shown to reduce juvenile delinquency. Through the provision of mentors, practical skills, and emotional support, programs such as these assist participants in developing traits like self-control, empathy, and responsibility. In informal environments, youth may learn at their own pace, and community-based initiatives ensure that everyone can take part and feel included. Through culturally relevant activities, children may internalise values like respect, teamwork, and responsibility, which amplifies the impact. Youth motivation and retention are both boosted by the adaptability of non-formal education, which lets students study at their own speed. Even at-risk youth are able to take part in the activities because of how easily they are accessible; this helps them feel like they belong and helps them integrate into society. The study shows that when community supports and non-formal education is in line with cultural norms, it may successfully reduce juvenile delinquency. Insights gained from these results may help educators, community leaders, and legislators create welcoming, supportive programs that foster healthy growth in juveniles and foster social cohesiveness.

KEYWORDS: Non-formal education; Juvenile delinquent conduct; Cultural relevance; Community involvement; Youth development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Juvenile crime is a concerning issue that impacts individuals from all socioeconomic levels. In the modern world, it is a part of everyday existence. A young criminal's chances of success diminish. Juvenile delinquent conduct has long been a top priority in the criminal policies of all developed countries. The offensive characteristics of juveniles are changing as the modern world develops in response to new dangers and contextual factors. The socialisation of minors is greatly impacted by the internet. This may include more serious problems than what traditional education can address. A growing body of research indicates that non-traditional methods could be more effective in assisting young animals in developing normally. One such tactic is offering educational opportunities outside of the conventional classroom. Unconventional classroom environments allow young people to study at their own pace. It provides programs that may be tailored to each participant's specific needs. Because of this flexibility, students may engage in activities that are pertinent to their interests and unique circumstances (Almeida & Morais, 2025). Accessibility is another important consideration. Community-based programs may be more accessible to young people who would struggle to access more traditional kinds of education. These programs use local resources and venues to provide a supportive and accepting environment for young people. The learning process is enhanced by community involvement. Practical skills and social awareness may be enhanced via the guidance of local mentors, volunteers, and organisations. Young people look up to adults who set an excellent example by acting positively. Collaborating with others and finding solutions to problems are skills that are developed via taking part in-group activities. Young individuals get an appreciation for personal responsibility and an awareness of the weight of their actions via these types of programs. Enhanced self-confidence and social integration may be attained via planned activities, skill development opportunities, and support systems. These programs help teenagers make positive choices by offering constructive substitutes for negative influences (Kiknanelidze, 2021).

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Juvenile crime is on the rise in China due to transformations in the youth culture associated with the current social and economic conditions. Fast-paced modernisation and migration to the cities have generated new opportunities but also new issues. Numerous young people lack all the necessary care, monitoring as families work long hours, and are constantly relocating. Some adolescents may have difficulties in life from the influence of societal expectations, rigorous school competition, and the lack of resources. All this may contribute to antisocial behaviour, low confidence, and frustration. In the school's Chinese education, performing well, particularly during test times, is extremely important. Although this emphasis assists students toward academic success, it frequently neglects the requirements of their emotions and their sociability. Numerous students experience feelings of apathy or loneliness when failing to achieve academic expectations. Non-formal school is an alternative perspective. It provides versatile and experiential learning outside the classroom (Zhong, 2025). Adolescence is an important period for the construction of one's personality, making key decisions for one's lifetime, as well as the foundation for the future. During this period, adolescents initiate the construction of their values, interests, hobbies, as well as spiritual needs. Present youths tend to disregard traditional manners as well as customs. Primary prevention activities have general aims; they intend to benefit the youth, including their families, their teachers, and their communities (Yin & Zhao, 2024). Through educating youths in how to cope with their feelings, how to grow personally, have the ability to solve problems during conflict, as well as to develop their skills, the activities make youths better prepared for success. Their frequent presence among the locals makes their approach even closer as well as brings them closer to one's reality. Schooling within the society promotes awareness as well as sociability. For adolescents, shared intentions, cooperation, and direction are good teachable strategies. This kind of environment makes one less alone and encourages good behaviour. This work explored the Chinese informal education's ability to limit ill behaviour among adolescents. It analyses the impact of adaptive, pragmatic, and communal learning on good behaviour.

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between juvenile antisocial conduct and a lack of formal education. It is essential to do research on how community-based learning initiatives affect young people's social and behavioural development, particularly in those who are at risk of delinquency. Finding out if and how engaging in culturally relevant activities, mentoring relationships and other non-formal education may reduce anti-social behaviour and promote pro-social behaviour was the main goal of this study. The purpose of this study is to determine if and how the involvement of local communities and support networks might increase the positive effects of these activities. In contrast to past research, which mostly focused on formal education and disciplinary measures, this research offers fresh insights into workable solutions that include accessibility, community involvement, and flexibility. The findings are meant to assist community leaders, educators, and politicians in developing youth programs that are inclusive, supportive, and helpful in lowering the number of juvenile offenders while promoting social cohesion and personal growth.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The lack of sex education in public schools and early exposure to sexually explicit content have been cited by several experts as the causes of this rise. During this year's "two sessions," which are the most important meetings of China's leading legislative and political advisory groups, proposals for stricter internet regulations for young children were widely reported. Additionally, a proposed amendment to China's laws protecting minors now includes wording intended to lessen children's addiction to the internet. According to data on juvenile offences released by legal courts, the incidence of juvenile delinquency in China has surged once again after 2020, following a period of reduction before 2010. It is defined by a wide range of crimes and more sophisticated criminal strategies. There has been a decline in the average age of criminals, and the majority of criminal activity is carried out by gangs. Academic success, social acceptance, healthy

parent-teacher connections, and other facets of adolescence are all enhanced throughout this challenging period. The high rate of juvenile delinquency is caused by several factors, such as people's mental instability, parental neglect, irrational teaching methods, and the negative effects of the internet (Yin & Zhao, 2024). Moreover, cultural relevance has a major impact on the effectiveness of China's non-formal education programs. When educational possibilities reflect local cultures, beliefs, and social standards, juveniles feel more connected to the community and a sense of belonging. In addition to teaching important life skills, culturally focused programs emphasise the need to respect one's heritage. They also promote social harmony by bridging the gap between traditional ethics and modern citizenship (Zhang, 2021). By teaching families about legal concerns that juveniles may not recognise via short videos or lectures, social workers with legal education training may be able to lower the risk of juvenile delinquency. Compliance to the principles of equality, respect, and acceptance should be mandatory for juvenile offenders' rehab facilities in order to safeguard their mental health. Families dealing with these situations should also get legal support (Ghosh, 2021).

5. RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the role of non-formal education on juvenile delinquent conduct considering cultural relevant?

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

A mixed-method of analysis was used in the study. The researcher utilised SPSS version 25 to evaluate the quantitative data. The 95% confidence interval and odds ratio were used to quantify the direction and degree of the statistical link. When the p-value is less than 0.05, the result is statistically significant. To better comprehend the data's fundamental character, descriptive analysis was useful. The researcher additionally employed in-depth interviews to get the qualitative data.

6.2 SAMPLING

The researcher used a convenience sampling method. The researcher utilised the Rao-soft program to verify that 624 individuals formed the sample. The researcher conducted a study that required the distribution of 770 questionnaires to the participants. 715 questionnaire sets were collected; 37 sets were excluded because of incompleteness. Therefore, the ultimate sample size was established at 678.

6.3 DATA AND MEASUREMENT:

The research project relied on both qualitative and quantitative analysis to get its primary data. The respondents were asked to rate their thoughts in the surveys using a 5-point Likert scale for measuring quantitative data. Additionally, in-depth interviews were utilised as a measure of assessing qualitative data. For the collection of secondary data, the researcher mainly focused on the internet resources.

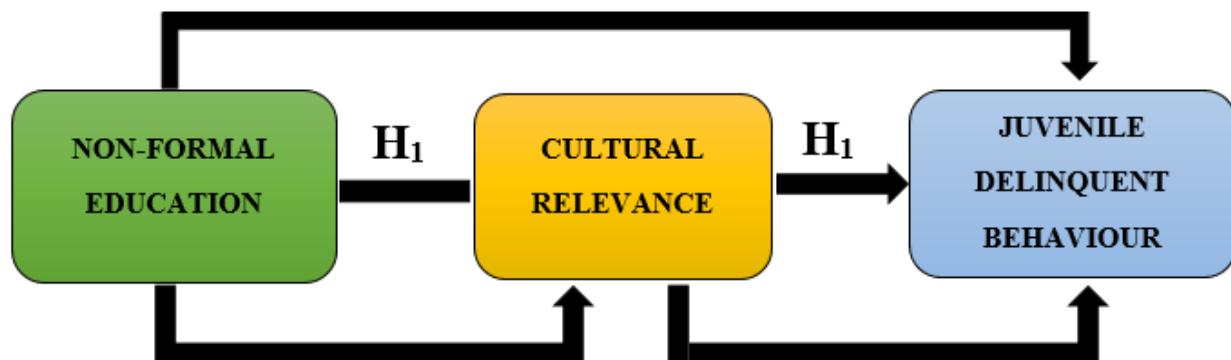
6.4 STATISTICAL SOFTWARE

The researcher conducted statistical analysis for the research using SPSS 25 and Microsoft Excel.

6.5 STATISTICAL TOOLS

Several demographic and level-specific aspects of multiple programs have been illuminated by a descriptive study. Use of analysis of variance (ANOVA), 95% confidence intervals for odds ratios, factor analysis for testing validity and theoretical reliability, and other statistical methods are used in inductive statistical investigations.

7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



8. RESULT

- **FACTOR ANALYSIS**

Factor Analysis (FA) may be used using publicly accessible data to reveal hidden variables. Evaluations sometimes make use of regression findings when there are no easily discernible psychological or visual signs. Potential weak spots, evident

linkages, and gaps may be uncovered via the use of simulations. Researchers evaluate the results of several regression experiments using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) tests. The statistical model and its dependent variables provide estimates of the dependent variable with a high degree of accuracy. There may be observable instances of duplicate data. Lessening proportions makes data easier to read. One can rely on KMO to provide investigators with any integer between zero and one. With a KMO score between 0.8 and 1, the sample population is deemed big enough. According to Kaiser, to become certified, it has to meet these criteria: Compared to the typical range of 0.60 to 0.69, this one is very low, hovering at 0.050 to 0.059. A score in the middle school range of 0.70 to 0.79 is considered typical. Its extraordinary range is between 0.90 and 1.00.

Table1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Testing for KMO and Bartlett's

Sampling Adequacy Measured by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin .926

The results of Bartlett's test of Sphericity are as follows:

Approx. chi-square = 3252.968

df = 190

sig =.000

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.926
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

This enables statements about sampling to be made. To check whether the correlation matrices were statistically significant, the researcher used Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic indicated that the sample size is acceptable with a value of 0.926. When Bartlett's Sphericity test was performed, the p-value came out to be 0.00. If the correlation matrix comes up positive in Bartlett's Sphericity test, it means it is not an identity matrix.

❖ INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

• NON-FORMAL EDUCATION:

Non-formal education may be seen as a complement to or an alternative to formal education in the context of people's ongoing learning processes. It is often distributed to ensure that everyone has the chance to get an education. It does not strictly adhere to any one system or route in an attempt to accommodate people of different ages. The fact that the credential it grants is not officially recognised or accredited is one of the characteristics of an unauthorised education (Souto-Otero, 2021). Non-formal education depends on the idea that learning may occur outside of traditional classroom environments. According to this viewpoint, the rise in activities that occur outside of the classroom is a sort of non-formal education, which emphasises the individual and is a social learning process. Apart from formal education, informal learning occurs outside of the classroom and takes the shape of social programs and private or governmental initiatives aimed at addressing social marginalisation (Kohler et al, 2022).

❖ MEDIATING VARIABLE

• CULTURAL RELEVANCE:

Cultural relevance emerges when a brand successfully aligns with the values, interests and conversational subjects that are most significant to its target audience. Depending on the brand, people may or may not pay attention to it. The idea of culturally relevant or responsive curriculum is based on a teacher's capacity to evaluate the multicultural advantages and disadvantages of curriculum designs and instructional resources (Arar & Oplatka, 2022). The teaching materials contextualise topics of race, gender, class, ethnicity and language rather than minimising or ignoring them. It is expected that cultural variables are important in the classroom since education is essentially about passing on a society's cultural norms to future generations for creating individuals with a variety of skill sets that can benefit society as a whole (Kotluk & Kocakaya, 2020). Culturally relevant pedagogy is based on the core belief that all students, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background, possess innate skills that may help them achieve academic success. This method of teaching views

students' identities and life experiences as crucial components. Recognising and incorporating students' cultural origins into their classes may make the learning environment more engaging and beneficial for them.

❖ DEPENDENT VARIABLE

• JUVENILE DELINQUENT CONDUCT:

While all forms of criminal behaviour have commonalities, the unique characteristics of juvenile delinquent conduct stem from the fact that the perpetrator is a juvenile. Furthermore, it is distinct when combined with other forms of criminality, especially those involving females, carelessness, purpose, imprisonment, freelancers and violence. Due to its capacity to serve as a significant recruiting ground for organised and professional crime, juvenile delinquency is marked by a high level of public hazard. The stability of society is also threatened by juvenile delinquency, which hampers the development of young people (Chen, 2021). Because of stronger laws protecting children and increasing efforts to fight crime, China has seen a decrease in the rate of juvenile crimes in recent years. The high frequency of juvenile delinquency and crime, which is typified by gang participation and violent conduct among young people, is an ongoing problem even if China's general crime rate is dropping. The high prevalence of mental illness among juvenile offenders is concerning since it raises the likelihood of recurrence and other unfavourable outcomes (Wang et al., 2022).

• RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND JUVENILE DELINQUENT CONDUCT CONSIDERING CULTURAL RELEVANCE:

In non-formal educational settings, young people who encounter discriminatory conduct at school could discover a supportive atmosphere. Loss of confidence often causes struggling or failing students to act dangerously. They get support and a feeling of belonging from community-based programs. Mentors and youth leaders help kids regain trust by coaching them and setting an example. Non-formal education is closely linked to juvenile delinquency because it provides alternative learning options. Outside of the rigorous boundaries of conventional schooling, real-world skills, mentorship, and emotional support are provided to assist youth in developing self-control, self-assurance, and a sense of purpose. The accessibility of non-formal education makes it an effective approach for supporting vulnerable young people. Unlike other formal institutions, many programs are housed in local communities, making them more accessible and welcoming (Farrington et al., 2022). Because of its adaptable design, students may study in ways that work best for them, at their own speed. Confidence, self-control, and drive are all strengthened by this. Community engagement is another crucial element. Teachers, mentors, parents, and community leaders are all involved in non-formal education. They provide emotional support as well as moral advice. Traditional ideals like harmony, discipline, and respect have a big impact on Chinese standards of behaviour. Programs that include traditional arts, cultural rituals or community involvement teach participants moral awareness and responsibility. Juveniles are encouraged to be honest, work together, and show respect for their family (Navarro, 2024).

After examining the above discussion, the researcher arrived at the following hypothesis to examine the impact of non-formal education and juvenile delinquent conduct considering cultural relevance.

- *"H₀: There is no significant relationship between non-formal education and juvenile delinquent conduct considering cultural relevance."*
- *"H₁: There is a significant relationship between non-formal education and juvenile delinquent conduct considering cultural relevance."*

Table 2: H₁ ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	51265.231	209	3152.587	820.772	.000
Within Groups	998.263	468	3.841		
Total	52263.494	677			

The study has produced some important findings. In the absence of a p-value of 0.05, an F-value of 820.772 is considered statistically significant. This denotes that the "*H₁: There is a significant relationship between non-formal education and juvenile delinquent conduct considering cultural relevance*" is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

9. DISCUSSION

The results of the research indicate a significant link between informal education and juvenile delinquency, highlighting the ability of culturally aware programs to influence positive behavioural changes in adolescents. By taking place outside of traditional classroom settings, non-formal education may help young people acquire essential personal abilities and ethical guidance. According to the study, when these kinds of activities align with the community's cultural values, they have a stronger effect on encouraging responsible conduct. Through culturally relevant education, Chinese youth are assisted in internalising the deeply rooted values of respect, harmony, and community responsibility. This tie enhances

their sense of self and community, which is linked to a decreased tendency for disobedience and misbehaviour. According to the findings, problematic children benefit from an environment that is more flexible and supportive. Unlike in a typical classroom, students are allowed to learn at their own pace and form deep relationships with other people. Dropout is decreased and engagement is increased because of this flexibility. Respect and responsibility are taught via activities that include traditional values, ethics, and community involvement. Young adults and adolescents gain self-awareness and are more inclined to take on constructive societal tasks as a consequence.

10. CONCLUSION

Considering the strong correlation between juvenile criminal behaviour and non-formal education, culturally relevant programs may influence teenagers' good behaviour. Non-formal education beyond the traditional classroom offers chances for moral guidance, social development, and the acquisition of practical skills. Programs become more relevant and relatable when local cultural values are included, allowing young people to internalise qualities like cooperation, respect, and responsibility. Improved social connection and a sense of belonging, which are promoted by participation in community-based activities, mentorship programs, and skill-building exercises, are linked to a decreased likelihood of delinquency. Through non-formal learning, which integrates cultural relevance into educational processes; youth acquire social and practical skills as well as ethical awareness and personal growth. Hence, the future research relevant to this subject may focus on the long-term influence of non-formal education on juveniles as well as their mindset. Through comparison studies across regions and socioeconomic groups, disparities in program effectiveness may become apparent. Finally, to optimise non-formal education initiatives to avoid juvenile delinquency, it is important to analyse the effect of community engagement and evaluate government policies.

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