

## **Patterns of family communication and their relationship to criminal behavior among juvenile delinquents in Amman**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to discover the levels of family communication patterns and criminal behavior and elucidate their relationship in Jordan. This study adopted the descriptive correlational approach. The sample consisted of 189 juvenile delinquents in reform and rehabilitation centers in Jordan. To achieve the objectives of the study, measures of family communication patterns and criminal behavior were developed and applied after confirming the validity and reliability of the tools. Means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlation were used to analyze data. The results related to family communication patterns showed that the reproach and dispersed patterns were highly prevalent. The appeasement and verbal behavior patterns were moderately prevalent, and the nonverbal and ideal patterns scored were least common. The results also indicated that the level of criminal behavior among juvenile delinquents in Jordan was high. There was a direct relationship between criminal behavior and two types of communication (dispersed and reproachful) and an inverse relationship between criminal behavior and the other patterns (verbal, non-verbal, appeasement and ideal communication). The study concluded with several recommendations. The most important of these are conducting qualitative studies to identify the causes of criminal behavior and implementing treatment programs to reduce these behaviors.

**Keywords:** *Family communication patterns, criminal behavior, juvenile delinquents.*

### **Introduction**

The family is one of the strongest social institutions that influence the construction of the personality and behavior of the individual. A conscious family can play a positive role in influencing children through the patterns of communication among its members. It is a rich and compelling influence on the culture of children and their proper upbringing. The family can be considered a dynamic unit aimed at the social development of the child through interaction among its members, which plays a vital role in the formation of the child's personality and directs their behavior (Karima & Rawi, 2020). Studies by Altahynah (2021) and Al Zaidi (2020) indicated that positive dialogue patterns are prevalent in families with smaller sizes and better educated parents,

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while negative dialogue patterns are prevalent in large families with parents with low levels of education. The most common pattern of family communication among the participants was consensual communication, followed by preventive communication, neutral communication and multiple communication. Karima and Rawi (2020) also found that the levels of family communication and stability in their study sample were very high and identified the existence of a direct correlation between family communication and stability. Al-Osaimi and Issa (2017) and Mashalpoure (2020) also indicated a positive correlation between resilience and patterns of family communication.

Ragheb and Bader (2012) indicated that the relative weights of the patterns of POSITIVE dialogue among families of university youth were different from those of their research sample. The percentage of dialogue among the former families' patterns of discussion was 26.9%. In comparison, the percentage of negative dialogue patterns was 57.8% in the families in the research sample.

Family communication patterns involve more than just exchanging words between family members. They have components such as facial expressions, body language and tones of speech. Verbal and non-verbal information are exchanged between family members and listening is no less important than communication, as it allows the points of view of the family members to be understood (Al-Osaimi & Issa, 2017). Family communication patterns are divided into patterns of verbal communication, non-verbal communication and appeasement. The pattern of verbal communication refers to spoken words, i.e. verbal language that they perceive with their sense of hearing. Language is the function of communication between different parties. The pattern of non-verbal communication refers to gestures and physical expressions instead of words. It is divided into sign language and body language. The pattern of appeasement is one in which individuals strive to keep others from being upset or anxious, tend to conform to the wishes of others and externally show that things are okay; individuals using this pattern deny themselves and feel that they are not valuable and unable to change (Jabenaadi & Hainosi, 2019; National Council for Family Affairs, 2010).

This study also deals with the pattern of blame. Individuals using this pattern communicate with others in a way that makes them believe that others are wrong and that they are always right. They conceal their sense of failure and do not take responsibility for resolving conflicts. They are in control, and they make judgements about others. Ideally, these individual practices logical

communication. Their communication is free of feelings, rigid and frozen, and they prove their self-worth by winning and not thinking about others; they remain calm and control their emotions but use these methods to veil weakness and a sense of insecurity in life (Almahaireh et al., 2021; Bilbas, 2016; Fenell, 2012).

There is another pattern of communication called the dispersed pattern. In this pattern, individuals try to shift the focus of attention away from problematic issues to irrelevant issues and use themselves to distract attention from family problems. It is often characterized by recklessness and irresponsibility. However, internally, these individuals feel sadness and a lack of values, and they avoid problems and conflicts rather than solving them. They tend to change the subject during the dialogue and do not address the situation (Al-dhaleen & Abu Asaad, 2018).

There are several influences on family communication patterns, such as cultural and social factors. The way parents treat their children differs according to experience, culture and how the parents were socialized (Meeusen, 2014). A small family size provides greater opportunities for communication among its members, while large families may have as many differences as they do children (Bel Abbas, 2016). Social relationships also emerge through family interactions with friends and attending internal and external family social visits and events (Jenaabadi & Hosaini, 2019). Studies have indicated the adverse effects of the lack of good family communication patterns. For instance, Dong (2005) indicated that families with no dialogue are drawn to risky or criminal behaviors, such as consumption of alcohol or drugs.

Crime is a concern for individuals, communities and nations. It has been one of the most prominent chronic problems of human society throughout its historical development. Therefore, it has received much attention by the law and by philosophers, thinkers, reformers and guardians seeking methods of treatment and discouragement. It has been considered a threat to safety, tranquility and the establishment of truth and justice. However, despite the strength and severity of the many laws throughout history, no efforts have succeeded in removing and erasing crime from human existence. A society free of crime remains unimaginable.

The phenomena of criminality and delinquency are some of the most critical problems suffered by societies in the world, with profound psychological and social effects on the individual's personality. Crime, theft, the spread of drugs, corruption and moral decay have adverse and severe effects on society. Social and religious institutions address these deviations, suppress them and take responsibility for identifying and eliminating their causes. Crime can be considered a

deviation from the rules of conduct that society sets for its members. Criminal conduct is any behavior that is directed against the public interest or violates the moral standards accepted by a particular society, and it is punishable by law. If the crime is the criminal act, the criminal behavior is the practice of this act (Dodo, 2020). In addition, Amrouch (2021) conducted a study to interpret criminal behavior within the scope of criminal psychology (which comprises theories of psychological interpretation and psychosocial interpretation). These explanations contribute to the analysis of the psychology of perpetrators of crime, and the researcher concluded that crime is a proven result of sets of factors, causes and circumstances that led the individual to take an illegal route to reach their goals.

Family disintegration plays a role in shaping criminal behavior. Family violence is the most influential factor in its formation because of its negative effects on the personalities and self-concepts of children. It also affects divorce and the absence of parents (Al-Bakhit, 2022). The results of studies by Mohammed and Fatiha (2021) and Risha (2022) indicated that worse mental health leads to more criminal behavior. They reported statistically significant differences between types of crime (theft, drugs) in the scale of criminal behavior. Perpetrators of drug using related crimes suffer from physical disorders, interactive sensitivity with the community, isolation and high rates of depression and anxiety. These challenges lead them to fall into criminal behavior. On the other hand, Inmates often exhibit obsessive-compulsive disorder or other mental disorders, doubts, frequent fears and internal or external aggression, which foster criminality.

El Genefawy (2020) pointed that the crime is due to emotional deprivation during the criminal's childhood; their parents may have rejected them, or they may have been subjected to unpredictable and unstable treatment. They do not feel anything towards others except for enmity and revenge, as they are deprived of love and compassion and cannot feel love or compassion for anyone else.

From a sociological perspective, crime violates social norms. Customs, traditions and laws are all social norms, and crimes are classified as either natural (Abdo, 2008). Criminality is one of the most complex and deeply rooted social problems. Although interest in studying it is relatively new, the specialized researcher finds themselves overwhelmed by a flood of studies and theories that diverge from and contradict each other. This is because the criminal act is a phenomenon that concerns both social scientists and the law. Psychologists suggest that crime is deliberate and illegal behavior motivated by psychological factors, such as suppression and internal disorders; the perpetrator is drawn towards deviant behavior and persistence in committing crimes to satisfy

certain needs (Kazim & Mutalak, 2018). Hence, Jaber (2006) indicated that a range of factors cause criminal behavior, including high population density, weak family control, a lack of awareness, widespread unemployment and bad companions. Khuthiri (2021) indicated that 81.1% of perpetrators were unemployed, and 80% of the criminals they do it because of the low economic status. The reason for criminal behavior was poor material conditions, and 71.1% of the perpetrators indicated that they were affected by the disintegration of family relations. In addition, 88.9% of the perpetrators believed that being affected by the wrong companions played a role in their criminal behavior, and 80% reported that the weakness of security services also played a part. Finally, 77.8% reported that abundant leisure time drove them to criminal behavior.

Ghaben (2017) and Nadeem (2019) indicated that males' propensity for criminal behavior is higher than that of females. There were no statistically significant differences between the personality patterns of the perpetrators of criminal behavior in terms of social status, educational level or duration of imprisonment, although there were significant differences related to the type of crime.

### **Research problem**

The problem of the current study stems from the criminal behaviors practiced by young people. Juvenile delinquents committed a large percentage of criminal behaviors. This affects their psychological states and threatens the security and stability of society. There is no doubt that the security of the community is desired by everyone. Safety is the foundation for building and developing a life in any society. Al-Arabi et al. (2022) indicated that at birth, human beings are good and do not know what criminality is. However, the environment in which they are raised may affect them and instill destructive behaviors. These bad behaviors make them deviate from the right path and are not limited to environmental factors. There is a prominent role played by the family in shaping the behaviors of its children through patterns of communication and modes of family upbringing. Positive interactions and effective communication within a family contribute to the development of strong self-perceptions among family members because they communicate how they feel about themselves. Individuals with high self-esteem communicate directly, clearly, openly and authentically. Those who have negative feelings towards themselves, or low self-esteem tend to use non-functional methods of communication that are unclear, isolating, distorted, indirect and inappropriate. This was confirmed by Bin Hayat (2020), who pointed out that parents are the sources of safety, compassion and confidence for children and can also be a cause of

disappointment, depending on the method of upbringing and the pattern of family communication. In addition, Dodo (2020) pointed out that the rate of crime and delinquency at the global level has increased by an average of 5% each year, which reflects negatively on the psychological and social lives of juveniles and calls for attention to this group, especially since childhood implies activity, vitality and a high ability to achieve. This stage is full of optimism, physical strength and psychological rigidity, which leads juveniles to practice criminal behaviors due to their sense of strength (Shawaqfeh & Almahaireh, 2019). Patterns of family communication may have an impact on juveniles falling into criminal behaviors. Thus, this study attempts to identify the relationship between patterns of family communication and criminal behavior among juvenile delinquents in Jordan. More precisely, the goal of the study is to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the most prevalent patterns of family communication among juvenile delinquents in Jordan?
- 2- What is the level of criminal behavior among juvenile delinquents in Jordan?
- 3- Is there a statistically significant relationship (at the level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between family communication patterns and criminal behavior among juvenile delinquents in Jordan?

### **Hypothesis**

1. Ha1: there a statistically significant relationship at the statistical significance level of ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between family communication patterns and criminal behavior among juvenile delinquents in Jordan.

### **Method**

#### **Research Design**

This study adopted the descriptive correlational approach as the most appropriate method for its objectives. This approach describes family communication patterns and their relationship to criminal behavior among juvenile delinquents.

#### **Participants**

The study sample consisted of 189 juvenile delinquents in reform and rehabilitation centers. They were selected depending on availability to provide data measured by this study, all of them were males, aged between 12-17 years old.

## **Data Collection Tools**

### *The scale of patterns of family communication*

A scale of family communication patterns was developed after reviewing previous studies and theoretical literature (Al-Akayishi et al., 2020; Al-dhaleen & Abu Asaad, 2018; Alfirhat, 2018; Al-Zayedi, 2020; Bel Abbas, 2016). It consisted of 46 items, and the response scale for these items consisted of a 5-point Likert scale: ‘strongly agree’ was assigned the number 5 and ‘strongly disagree’ was assigned 1. A high score meant that there was a higher level of the communication pattern. The validity coefficients ranged from 0.444–0.856, and the internal consistency constancy coefficients ranged from 0.74–0.88.

### *The scale of criminal behavior*

After reviewing previous studies in education and some of the previous measures related to the subject of the study (Al-Arabi et al., 2022; Bin Hayat, 2020; Dodo, 2020; Short et al., 2008), a scale was developed. This scale was used in the data collection to measure levels of criminal behavior. It consists of 22 items graded on the Likert scale. A high score means that there is a higher level of the communication pattern. The validity coefficients ranged from 0.409–0.830, and the internal consistency stability coefficient of the Cronbach equation reached 0.89.

## **Data Collection**

The researchers obtained approval for this study from the Institutional Review Board in the Al-Ahliyya Amman University. The questionnaires collected data from two measures: family communication types and criminal behavior. The questionnaires were applied in the rehabilitation centers with the help of the social supervisor.

## **Data Analysis**

To answer the first and second research questions, means and standard deviations were calculated. To answer the third question and the hypothesis, Pearson correlation factors were extracted.

## **Findings**

### **Normality test & Homogeneity test**

The normality test and homogeneity test using Levene’s test were made for the Patterns of family communication and the criminal behaviours, the results shows that there is a normality distribution

(Ghozali, 2018) and there was a homogeneity according to Hair et. al. (2018), the Skewness for the meaning of life were 0.478, while the Kurtosis was 0.317, and the Homogeneity test where not significant at the level of (0.05). while the Skewness for unhealthy behaviours was 0.629, while the Kurtosis was 0.557, and the Homogeneity test where not significant at the level of (0.05).

### **Descriptive statistics test**

*Results for the first question: What family communication patterns are prevalent among juvenile delinquents in Jordan?*

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations of the responses of juvenile delinquents in Jordan were calculated on the scale of family communication patterns. The results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Means and standard deviations of family communication patterns*

Patterns	Rank	Mean	standard deviation	Level
Reproach	1	4.54	.391	High
Dispersed	2	4.37	.505	High
Satisfied	3	3.26	.630	Moderate
Verbal Communication	4	2.45	.956	Moderate
Non-Verbal Communication	5	2.25	.515	Low
Idealist	6	1.50	.648	Low

It is clear from Table 1 that the means of the responses of juvenile delinquents in Jordan on the scale of family communication patterns ranged from 1.50–4.54. The highest mean obtained was for reproach, which had a mean of 4.54 and a high level. This was followed by the dispersed pattern, with a mean of 4.37 and a high level. The satisfied pattern obtained a mean of 3.26 and a moderate level, while verbal communication obtained a mean of 2.45 and a moderate level. The non-verbal communication pattern achieved a mean of 2.25 and a low level. Finally, the idealist pattern obtained a mean of 1.50 and a low level.

The results of the study showed that the pattern of reproach came first and had a high level among the individuals in the sample examined. This can be explained by the fact that family members were critical during communications and discussions with these children. It is not easy to maintain calm when communicating with such individuals. The family members go out of their way to find fault in discussions with the children, and the children feel upset when the tones of the rest of the family's voices grow more severe. The family members do not understand the reason for the anger



of the children. They call their children bad names when they make mistakes, no matter how simple. The family is not ready to speak to their children in many cases. The pattern of dispersion earned the second rank, also showing a high level. This is because the families of these children use inappropriate words while talking to the children. They deliberately interrupt conversations with the children, and some topics are postponed, which is a source of pressure on the rest of the family. This causes difficulty when expressing themselves to the children, and sometimes, the family loses focus. The point of disagreement is lost during the discussion, which makes it difficult for children to understand the feelings of their family.

The dispersed pattern received the third rank, with a moderate level. With this pattern, the family has little difficulty engaging in dialogue with the children. They try not to keep their eyes on their children during the discussion. They do not respond to their children because they lack understanding in some situations. They do not welcome the views of their children. There is little dialogue before any decision, and they do not talk about financial matters. The children rarely experience expressions of love and appreciation in these families, whether verbal or nonverbal.

The pattern of verbal communication came in the fourth rank, with a moderate level. This is because families talk very little with their children about their problems. Moreover, some children are taught religious and moral values in these family conversations. The family is keen to instill confidence in the children, but not always, and they teach the children to consider the feelings of others in their conversations. Linguistic communication is not Always positive in the verbal talk, as insults especially when it used in front of the children.

The pattern of non-verbal communication was reported as fifth most common, with a low level. This is because delinquents did not learn from their families to smile when meeting others and their families rarely used body language in communicating with them, and they do not care about their background in front of others, and their personality strengths are not reinforced, even by gestures and facial expressions. Such families rarely communicate with their children visually while speaking. Finally, the ideal pattern earned the last rank, with a low level. This can be attributed to the fact that the delinquents' families talk about problems in front of the children and do not listen to their contributions. Their families use the pronoun 'I' when discussing family relations, which suggests inappropriate ideas to the delinquents during the discussion, while if the used the pronoun "we" that will indicates that they are care about the family and there are warm in it.

*Results for the second question: What is the level of criminal behaviour among juvenile delinquents in Jordan?*

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations of the responses of the juvenile delinquents recruited were calculated on the scale of criminal behaviour. Table 2 shows the results.

**Table 2**

*Means and standard deviations of criminal behaviour*

N.	Statement	Rank	Mean	Std.	Level
3	I have much free time.	1	4.50	.714	High
2	I feel hate towards society.	2	4.37	.915	High
6	The poverty of my family saddens me.	3	4.30	.808	High
7	I pay attention to religious worship.	4	4.25	.817	High
11	I talk a lot.	5	4.25	.739	High
18	I quarrel with others.	6	4.23	.744	High
17	I hate studying.	7	4.18	.852	High
10	I like to control others.	8	4.15	.848	High
4	I don't have a specific goal in life.	9	4.05	.927	High
9	Thinking about the future bothers me.	10	4.02	.891	High
5	I care about community values.	11	3.99	.937	High
22	I desire to be hated.	12	3.96	.855	High
16	I have bad friends.	13	3.88	.938	High
21	I need a place to stay permanently.	14	3.81	1.208	High
15	I suffer from tantrums.	15	3.78	.866	High
12	I hate rich people.	16	3.76	.848	High
8	I don't have a specific profession.	17	3.73	.939	High
19	I like to be afraid of others.	18	3.57	1.137	Moderate
1	I can control my aggressive actions.	19	3.52	1.213	Moderate
14	I could not complete my education because of my poverty.	20	3.45	.997	Moderate
23	I love carrying weapons.	21	3.42	.839	Moderate
25	I use prohibited substances.	22	3.40	1.077	Moderate
24	I like to disagree with people.	23	3.34	.818	Moderate
20	I feel constantly frustrated.	24	3.18	1.326	Moderate
13	My family suffers from many problems.	25	3.13	1.132	Moderate
28	I tend to talk about hate.	26	3.11	1.170	Moderate
26	I achieve my goals illegally.	27	3.08	1.319	Moderate
30	I hate myself.	28	3.06	1.292	Moderate
27	I love to see who's around me in pain.	29	3.05	1.299	Moderate
29	I love watching wrestling and horror movies.	30	3.01	1.126	Moderate
<b>Level of criminal conduct</b>			<b>3.72</b>	<b>.310</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 2 shows that the means of the responses of the participants on the scale of criminal behaviour ranged from 3.01–4.50. The highest mean was obtained by Statement 3, ‘I have much free time’, with a mean of 4.50 and a high level. The lowest was statement 29, ‘I love watching wrestling and horror movies’, with a mean of 3.01 and a moderate level. The total mean of the level of criminal behaviour among juvenile delinquents in Jordan is 3.72, with a high level. The results show that the level of criminal behaviour among juvenile delinquents in Jordan is high, which indicates the danger among Jordanian families. These children have abundant leisure time, and they feel hatred towards society. Their family’s poverty pains them, they talk a lot, and they start fights with others. They also hate studying, want to control others and do not have a specific goal in life. Thinking about the future bothers them, and they want to be hated. They have bad friends and search for a place that will permanently shelter them. They suffer from fits of agitation and hate rich people. They do not have a specific profession, and they tend to be afraid of others. They can control their aggressive actions and love to carry weapons, use illegal substances and contradict people. They feel frustrated constantly. These reasons may be caused by the presence of many problems in their families, and they are full of hate and achieve illegal goals; they hate themselves and watch wrestling and horror films (Al-Bakhit, 2022; Mohammed & Fatiha, 2021; Al-Jeddi, 2021).

### **Hypotheses testing**

*Ha1: there a statistically significant relationship at the statistical significance level of ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between family communication patterns and criminal behaviour among juvenile delinquents in Jordan.*

To test the first Hypotheses, Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between patterns of family communication and criminal behaviour. Table 3 shows the results.

**Table 3**

*Pearson correlation coefficient values between family communication patterns and criminal behaviour*

Comparisons		Criminal conduct	
		Correlation coefficient	Sig.
Family communication styles	Verbal Communication	.236-	.000
	Non-Verbal Communication	.341-	.000
	Satisfied	.260-	.000
	Dispersed	.213	.000
	Idealist	.416-	.000
	Reproach	.606	.000

Table 3 shows that there is a positive relationship with a statistical function at the level of significance (0.05) between criminal behaviour and the dispersed and reproach modes of communication, as the correlation coefficients are 0.213 and 0.606, respectively. Meanwhile, there is an negative relationship between criminal behaviour and the other modes of communication (verbal, non-verbal, Satisfied and Idealist), as the correlation coefficients ranged between -0.236 and -0.416. The results show a direct relationship between the dispersed and reproach patterns of family communication and criminal behaviour among juvenile delinquents in Jordan. Since the results of the dispersal and reproach patterns are high, criminal behaviour among juvenile delinquents is also high, and the relationship between them is direct. The reason for the high level of criminal behaviour among juvenile delinquents in Jordan is the patterns of dispersion, and reproach can be attributed to many reasons. The most important of them may be parents' neglect of their children and the use of methods such as dispersion and reproach in abundance. These methods make children lose their sense of importance and become passive, which leads them to prove themselves by practicing criminal behaviours. In addition, parents practice such patterns because the nature of family life is affected by the pressure of working and securing children's basic needs. Parents forget their role in upbringing their children, which forces young delinquents to live outside the home. These behaviours also motivate them to practice criminal behaviour.

On the other hand, the results showed an inverse relationship between criminal behaviour and the other communication patterns (verbal, non-verbal, satisfied and Idealist) among juvenile delinquents, meaning that the increased prevalence of patterns of verbal, non-verbal, satisfied and Idealist lead to less criminal behaviour and vice versa (Aladwan et al., 2021). The medium to low

levels of verbal, non-verbal, satisfied and Idealist among juvenile delinquents in Jordan contribute to their propensity for criminal behaviour.

### **Conclusion**

This study aimed to measure levels of patterns of family communication and criminal behavior and reveal the relationship between them. It targeted juvenile delinquents in reform and rehabilitation centers in Jordan. The patterns studied were dispersed, reproachful, verbal, non-verbal, satisfied and Idealist. The results showed that most of the participants has a pattern of reproach. While The pattern of dispersion came in the second rank and at a high level, followed by the pattern of appeasers, at a medium level. The pattern of verbal communication earned the fourth rank, with a medium level, and non-verbal communication reached the fifth rank, with a low level. The ideal pattern level earned a low level and the lowest rank among the patterns. The results also reveal that the level of criminal behavior among juvenile delinquents in Jordan was high. The results showed that there is a positive relationship between the dispersed and reproach patterns of family communication and criminal behavior, which mean that the dispersed and reproach patterns of family communication raised the criminal behavior. Also, there is a negative relationship between criminal behavior and the other patterns (verbal, non-verbal, appeased and ideal communication) among juvenile delinquents in Jordan, which mean that the (verbal, non-verbal, appeased and ideal communication) patterns of family communication lower the criminal behavior.

### **Limitations and future directions**

This study was conducted with a sample of juvenile delinquents enrolled in the rehabilitation centers in Amman of the 2022. Accordingly, this study recommends the following steps:

1. Conducting studies to identify the other causes of criminal behaviour.
2. Providing parent awareness counselling sessions on family communication patterns by the counsellor in the rehabilitation centers.
3. Directing researchers to studying the relationship between criminal behaviour and other variables.
4. Ministry of Social Development should coordinate between institutions concerned with juveniles to reduce criminal behaviour and the relapse into such behaviour.

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