

ABSTRACT

Human Resource Development, Social Capital and Youth Problem Behaviour Prevention: A Case Study of an Urban Trinidad Community

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There is relatively little compelling evidence on a relationship between social capital and youth problem behaviour in the Caribbean context and even less studies that incorporate Human Resource Development, social capital and problem behaviour into a combined research model. Using a mixed methods approach, this study examines: (1) the possible associations between multiple sources of social capital and youth problem behaviour; and (2) the relationships between Human Resource Development, community social capital and youth problem behaviour. To examine the quantitative associations, data came from an in-school survey conducted in an urban Trinidad community (N=488) that asked youth about their involvement in delinquency and violent behaviour within the past 12 months. Binominal regression models show that family involvement and neighbourhood cohesion were significantly associated with delinquency, net of controls. Results for the violence model were more mixed. Family attachment and family involvement exerted a significant negative effect on violence, while neighbourhood cohesion was significantly associated with the counts of violence but did not reduce youth's overall frequency of involvement.

For the qualitative aspect, the study conducted a case study of the Citizen Security crime prevention program to understand the development of social capital through Human Resource Development driven interventions and how these resources shape their behaviours. Results from focus groups, in-depth interviews and document analysis suggest that Human Resource Development interventions help ignite structural and cognitive elements of community social capital. Learning-based interventions facilitate repeated social interactions and exchanges that foster strong and weak social ties (structural social capital) among participants and with individuals outside these groups' network. These connections generated trust, norms, cohesive ties and important material/non-material resources (cognitive social capital). However, youth's experiences suggest that the amount of resources created vary by network composition and the frequency of interactions among

participants. Although not initially hypothesized, these findings also identify that Human Resource Development strategies seem to generate significant sources of in-group peer social capital.

More importantly, these findings suggest that forming social ties with others create opportunities for social control and behavioural monitoring that appear to discourage adolescents from engaging in nefarious activities. Implications discussed highlight how aspects of varying social contexts, particularly parenting behaviour and community based associations can reduce non-serious and serious forms of crime. From a practical standpoint, the study offers an integrated dynamic model with Human Resource Development and social capital for policymakers to address youth problem behaviour in Trinidad.

Keywords: Social capital; human resource development; youth problem behaviour; crime prevention; Trinidad.