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# CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH EDUCATION

**K**eywords  
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## Abstract

*Education is part of our culture, shaping our society and our personalities. The degree and level of civilization and our values are reflected in the way in which education is achieved. Both crime and education are equally old. However, human history has proven that education can simultaneously be a criminogenic factor and an effective mechanism used in the prevention of and the fight against crime.*

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## INTRODUCTION

A retrospective view on the history of mankind reveals that much has been written on crime and education (some are exaggerated) viewed from different perspectives. The human mind has always been fascinated by the phenomenon of crime and by the way in which man, as a rational being, is educated by, and educates others.

Why would it be necessary to bring into question the actuality of all these writings about crime and education, taken together and not separately? What do crime and education have in common? Or rather, where do they meet and how important are they together?

It is noteworthy that education greatly influences crime by both its absence and presence in an incomplete manner or transmitted in a wrong way. Education, or rather its absence or deficiency, is included among the multitude and variety of criminogenic social factors.

In the distant past of our civilization, education was accessible only to a certain social class; however, nowadays, education has become practically a job requirement and people have to study and in this respect there is no discrimination on any criterion.

Education means nothing more than young people's training and preparation for their integration into the society. The more complex and accurate this preparation (this training) is, the more beneficial the result is for the individual and for the society as a whole. The human being is born with a number of qualities, instincts and senses, which manifest during his/her life within the society where he/she lives. Of course, all this native baggage, all this dowry is neither polished nor tailored to social standards and requirements. Therefore, since his/her birth man should undergo modeling and training according to social requirements and imperatives in order to resonate better with the other members of the society and with the society itself.

A connection has been found between lack of education and crime. Through education, we aim at achieving the bio-psychic human potential and at developing personality types required by the present conditions and demands of the society.

Education is characterized by the following features: it valorizes people by pursuing the discovery and development of several innate or acquired human qualities; it develops a resourceful, innovative sense of empathy and prepares the individual for life. Its aims at combining the short-term vision with the long term one. The entire educational activity is manifested by dynamism and flexibility. It has been demonstrated that education stimulates human ideals expressed by "being and becoming". Basically, at the moment, we cannot imagine society without education nor can we think of education as accessible only to a certain social class. Nowadays

education is a public good and not a private one. It is an obligation, a right and not a favor or a fad. In other words, education is a must!

## WHAT IS EDUCATION?

Etymologically, the word education comes from the Latin noun *educatio*, which means growth, feeding, cultivation (for more details, see "Education", in DEX, 2009). Throughout the time the concept of education has been given several definitions. We are going to present some of them, which are more or less plausible.

According to the great philosopher Plato, education is the art of forming good habits or developing the native skills of those who have them. Another scholar of Antiquity (Aristotel, 2001, p.38) said that education should be an object of public oversight and not a private one. Later (Comenius, 1970, p.56), considered that since his/her birth nature endowed the child only with the seed of science, morality and religiosity which would turn into invaluable asset only through education. Thus, in the author's view education should be an activity that stimulates these "seeds" and man can become human only if he/she is educated.

According to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, education manifests itself simultaneously by intervention and nonintervention: negative education involves the removal of any obstacle to normal development; everything should be allowed to happen naturally without any intervention. The famous French sociologist Émile Durkheim did not remain passive to giving a definition or assigning a feature to the concept of education. Thus, he believes that education is an action exercised by adult generations on those who are not ripe for social life. The author also stated that education appeared to be a deliberately provocative act that developed an indefinite number of physical, intellectual and moral states within the child.

The famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant could not miss from the group of those concerned about erudition mysteries. He said that education helps us in a decisive way to exploit human nature for the benefit of society: it is pleasant to think that the human nature will be better developed through education and that it can be shaped in a convenient way. This reveals the prospect of mankind's future happiness.

Moreover, the Romanian authors were also concerned with education and its definitions. Of these, Constantin Narly believes that education is a social and individual act. In 1970, Florin Georgescu said that education is the first creative activity that does not produce consumer goods.

The concept of education was not only subject to simple definitions but in time it became an object of

quips and aphorisms belonging to authors from all fields, i.e. philosophy, sociology, theology, law, politics etc. Of these, we will mention only the most eloquent ones, interested in the chosen theme, i.e. the connection between education and crime prevention. Education is what remains after what has been learned has been forgotten (Skinner, 1973, p.78). The roots of education are bitter but the fruit is sweet (Aristotel, 2001, p.40). An educated person differs from an uneducated person, as a living person differs from a dead person (Aristotel, 2001, p.44). We resemble by nature, but we are different by education (Confucius, 2003, p.124). The purpose of education is the transfer of flame (Ghica, 2012, p.90). Education has made us what we are (Helvétius, 1810, p.56). The education of the entire world is above all (Larousse, 1864, p.123). A nation's education is judged by the street outfit. If you see rudeness on the street, be sure that you will find it at home said Edmondo De Amicis cited by Marciano in 2004. Nobody has died because of long-term exposure to education (Hensel, 2016, p.89). These quips and aphorisms represent only a small part of what has been written in time about education. This demonstrates our fellows' concern about education and how important it is for the human being and for our society. Education is a particular type of human action, an intervention or targeting (Mitra, 2014a, p.93).

#### **THE HISTORICAL ELEMENTS OF EDUCATION. HOW AND WHY DID THEY OCCUR?**

Education or human education is not a privilege of the contemporary world; it also belongs to the mankind's distant past. Therefore, we can talk about the historical nature of education. Looking into the mists of time, we notice, with pleasure, human concerns regarding evolution and development. An obvious feature of education is that it varies from one historical stage to another and from one geographic region to another, according to the material and spiritual conditions of the respective society.

Education in Antiquity. Although Antiquity would seem slightly incompatible with this form of social activity, i.e. education, we found that, surprisingly, the germs of education emerged from this historical era. In ancient times, education had a class nature because it could be accessed only by those who had a certain social position, such as the elites. Therefore, at first, it was extremely selective and difficult to access due to the fact that there were few scholars who could benefit from education and who, in turn, could educate others, but also due to its high costs. At that time, there was no education culture. In Antiquity people benefitted from the advantages of education in the ancient East (Egypt, China,

India), but also in ancient Greece and Rome.

The Egyptian education aimed at preparing the future leaders of the state, especially priests, who had great powers at that time; it was also aimed at training those who were to hold certain positions in the state and who should know how to read and write. Therefore, education consisted in the transmission of data in order to help individuals in their evolution on the social ladder. Education had a private nature and typically it was achieved individually at home not in schools.

In China, schools had appeared long before the society split into classes. But, gradually, it became a real monopoly of the aristocracy. The Chinese School paid great attention to behavioral skills training. Moral education in the Chinese School was strongly influenced by religion.

In India, education in schools encouraged the study of astronomy and medicine by using magic, mathematics and the Sanskrit. Thus, we notice the combination of religious and profane knowledge.

In ancient Greece, we find something interesting, even spectacular, i.e. two types of education corresponding to the two great powers: i.e. Sparta and Athens. The educational system of Sparta was a domineering and military one, drastically based on severe, imposed discipline (hence the phrase "Spartan education") (Mitra, 2014b, p.190). On the other hand, Athens was governed by an educational system based on democracy and freedom.

In ancient Rome, the educational system had a different organization according to the main development stages of the state. Thus, in the kingship period education was carried out within the family (as in Egypt), in the republic period, education had a semipublic nature whereas in the empire period, the educational system acquired a public nature, which, however, was not accessible to all.

The factors contributing to the establishment and development of education were extremely diverse. They ranged from historical events such as the transition from the slave to the feudal society and the new requirements of economic and social life, which brought about significant changes in the mentality of the ruling classes, to social movements (wars, riots, crusades), new conquests and discoveries in art and technology or the interference of religion as a manipulating factor.

Education in the Middle Ages. During this period, education was monopolized by the clergy, both in Europe and in the Near and Far East. Educators transmitted to learners the importance of man's respect of the man and the confidence in his/her physical and intellectual skills. In the early Middle Ages, education advanced at a slower pace; however, towards the end of this historical era, the pace of social development became more alert and it also triggered changes in education. The great amount of knowledge acquired made this activity

increasingly more complex, cumbersome and lengthy. Also, during this period, with the evolution of this activity, we witness a period of stagnation triggered by economic crises and diseases. During this period, the idea of primary education and the necessity of teachers' training arose. The interest for the development of the younger generation intensified continuously materialized in the appearance of special education institutions (Marciano, 2004, p. 91).

### **HOW CAN WE PREVENT CRIME THROUGH PUBLIC EDUCATION?**

Our study reveals that education is, without doubt, a real and objective social phenomenon specific to humans born with the society from one of its particular needs – i.e. the development of the human being as a person, as labor force and as a social being. History shows us how education has gone through permanent changes in order to improve and perfect it. Under social pressure and its increasingly complex requirements and ideals, the objectives of education have improved and diversified, currently reaching a very high level. The evolution of society itself triggers the evolution of education.

Through the education of younger generations by adults, the latter demonstrate their concern for the former's future, but also for the society as a whole. Education enables a transfer of information or of behavior rules; moreover, the experience of adult generations is conveyed to the younger ones. Education actually means training and shaping individuals so that they better adapt to social rigors and live a better life.

Education is achieved through study and work in well established stages and steps. Changing this order can lead to imbalances in the achievement of its objective and even to failure.

One of the current functions of the fight against crime is represented by the educational function (I. Doltu & Draghici, 2000, p.78). This consists in the prevention of and the fight against crime through activities which raise young people's awareness about the need for social defense and for the defense of their material and spiritual values; they also understand their social objectives and the need for fairness and social justice. Before addressing the education of young generations, we must note the extent and the level of educators' training. The quality of young people's education, who will ensure the future of our society, depends on the correct training of educators.

Nowadays education is achieved in the following ways: within the family, at school, in the social environment (chosen or imposed) and through various state institutions: school, church, workplace. Education means socialization, i.e. assimilation and internalization of behavioral patterns, starting with

the family and ending with the working environment. The quality of education underpins individual performance. In one of the TV shows, Tudorel Butoi used the concept of "a child difficult to teach", referring to those young people who, for various reasons, refuse to comply with imposed behavioral patterns, displaying an antisocial behavior or a negative, reverse socialization.

Family education. Usually, children learn by imitation by copying their parents, because the family is the first instance of human socialization. If there is a negative pattern in the family, then the chances for young people to acquire the same pattern are very high. The same can be said about the entourage. The family and the entourage are key factors in shaping the individual's future (birds of a feather flock together). Undoubtedly, man is an impressionable being.

Moreover, the nature of education (i.e. hypo or hyper authoritative) can also influence the individual's tendency towards crime. Parents' indifferent attitude can lead to excessive freedom and to the acquisition of negative models by the young generation. The parents' absence from home or overwork can negatively affect their children's education through lack of supervision. In contrast, a hyper-authoritative education can lead to the same result, by the child's rebellion against the despotic, Spartan education. Multiple requirements may determine the trainees to oppose the imposed regime by committing reprehensible acts against family and society.

Family education is made by the individual's relationships with his/her mother, father, siblings (Amza & Amza, 2008, p.247), grandparents, and with others whom they coexists with (caregiver, babysitter, nanny etc.). Parents, who play the role of main educators, should agree on how to educate their child. An authoritarian parent and a less authoritarian one do nothing but confuse their child in adopting a certain type of behavior. The absence of a parent can instill within the individual some frustration or complexes that may impair the quality of his/her future behavior. The lack of dialogue, of communication with parents, the embarrassment in addressing certain taboo topics can also give rise to deviant behavior. Therefore, the best educational model is the mixed one, based on idea of shaping the individual in accordance with his/her personality.

School education. Educators should use education methods and techniques adapted to social rigors; they should not rely on outdated techniques, which are difficult or impossible to accept or bear. In turn, they must be well educated. Very often, educators are true role models worthy of imitation (see the great philosophers of antiquity and the great contemporary teachers).

In criminology, the question whether the degree of school instruction influences crime rates has often been asked (Nistoreanu & Păun, 1996, p.47). Studies

have shown that education, by the training/ school level does not influence crime quantitatively but rather qualitatively. The educated individuals that have delinquent tendencies commit other offenses in relation to those lacking high school education. In this case, we are talking about selective criminality.

## CONCLUSION

History has demonstrated the vital role of education in social development, culture and civilization. Education has contributed to the increase of social order and security; it has cultivated and promoted spiritual values and it has conferred an elevated status to the human being.

It is often said that nature made us all equal, but education distinguishes us. Education is an art, which transfers the conscious to the subconscious; it is a virtue that we carry with us at all times. Education is meant to lift us somewhere up, wherefrom we would be ashamed to descend!

Undoubtedly, education is part of the culture and the knowledge that we need (Mitra-Niță, 2016, p.22). Education is part of the continuous human adaptation to the environment. Through education, man turns into a being adaptable to new social stimuli. Thus, the prevention of and the fight against crime can be done through education, which trains and shapes the young generation's behavioral conduct. Education means discipline. Discipline means rigor, and rigor gives birth to evolution. Evolution means non-criminality (Mitra, 2015, p.222).

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