

The Effect Of Psychological Factors On Truancy Among Intermediate Schools In Karbala City/Iraq

Nada Abd Ali Mohammed Ali¹, Ali Kareem Khudhair Al-juboori²

^{1,2}:College of Nursing/ University of Karbala/Iraq
E_mail co_authors: nada.abdali1105a@conursing.uobaghdad.edu.iq
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Abstract

A descriptive analytical study was carried out at Karbala intermediate schools students from February 12/02/2014 to October-2/10/2014 in order to assess the effect of psychological factors on truancy among intermediate schools, to find out the relationship between truancy and demographic characteristics, and to identify the relationship between truancy psychological factors. The present investigation was undertaken to study the psychological factors that cause truancy among adolescent students. A total of 217 students within the age of 12 – 17 years from eight government school in Karbala city. The factors took under consideration personal factors, depression, anxiety, the nature of the curricula, school problems relationship with the teacher, the school atmosphere, family problems, relationship with peers and other, factors that are relevant to work. Reliability of the questionnaire was determined based on the internal consistency of the questionnaire by calculating split-half technique and cronbachs' alpha coefficient, and the validity determined through a panel of (12) experts. The data were described statistical, and analyzed through use of descriptive and inferential statistical analysis procedures. The results revealed that the sample had low-moderate level of self concept, and that the students had moderate level of depressive symptoms. The result also showed that the students had moderate to high level of anxiety, there were significant differences in wishing to go to school with regard to effect of psychological factors related to textbooks (curriculum) and related to the teachers and the ways of teaching. The study recommended to follow the method of mutual school respect between the students and educational staff, avoid insult the students whatever the case was, and when it is necessity for punishment there are many other effective non-insulting ways, and continual renewal and development of educational curriculum with educational means to be more accepted instead of daily boring routine

Introduction:

The word truancy means “Run away from the classes” and the students who always tend to keep themselves away from studies and avoid attending classes are called truants. Truant Students develop a sort of Schools-Phobia. School phobia is a fear which may approach panic, of leaving home and going to schools. It should not be confused with the occasional mild reluctance for school seen in normal children and adolescents, or with realistic fears of going to school. Truancy is the main cause of wastage and stagnation (1,2). Students' personal and psychological traits have a significant influence on their daily decisions to attend school. Many truant students share several of the same personal and psychological problems. Truant students tend to have lower self-esteem, fewer social skills, and may lack friends. In addition, a student's perceptions of school and how they feel in the classroom environment are significant determinants for children deciding whether to attend school (3,4).

Methodology:

A descriptive analytical study was carried out to identify the effect of psychological factors on truancy among intermediate school students, in order to achieve the objectives of the study, using the assessment technique on the effect of psychological factors on truancy among intermediate schools in Karbala city during the period February 12/2/2014 until October 2/10/ 2014. In addition to the covering letter to obtain the respondents agreements to participate in the study, the questionnaire was prepared to include 2 parts: Part 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the students include age, gender, parents' level of education, parents' occupation, parents' marital status, number of family members, student's sequence in the family, and family income, Part 2: Twelve questions to students are about wishing to go to school, when the student playing truancy, where he spends his time? Did he/she share his/her friends the truancy from school? Part 3: This part is concerned with self-concept factors. The scores were 3 for always, 2 for sometimes, and 1 for never. A pilot study was conducted on a purposive sample of 10 male students from Alhamza

intermediate school for boys in hay- Algadeer, and 10 female students from Amoriya intermediate school for girls in Karbala city-center for the period of 2 of March until 15 of March. The result of split-half was $r=0.70$ and of cronbachs' alpha was $r=0.74$ which mean that the questionnaire have adequate level of internal consistency, and equivalence measurability .To obtain the data, the study was conducted at Karbala intermediate schools (8th schools). non-probability(purposive) sample of 217 truant students was selected from 8th intermediate schools was selected of randomly from different areas of Karbala city after classifying the city schools to 2 categories: the first was 4 schools from the city center and the second category was 4 schools round the city from the selection was done by putting the name of the center schools in separate container and the city around schools in another container then the researcher selected 4 schools from each container to be in involved the in present study before selecting the respondent purposively .The time sampling was between .The investigation lasts approximately 15 minutes, and more than 40 minutes sometimes for each subject interview. The school manager in each school collected 20-25 students in one class in each visit ,and explained the questionnaire for the students ,in order to answer the questionnaire .The researcher visited 8th intermediate schools in various places in Karbala city , and collecting of data took approximately 3 months. Statistical Analysis: the researcher applied the appropriate statistical methods in the data analysis by using SPSS version 17 ,which include the following statistical methods: Descriptive data analysis: this approach was performed through the determination of frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, figures, and tables. All these means were used to describe the study variables. Inferential data analysis: this approach was performed through the determination of: it was used to find out the relationship among the study variables especially between the self-concept and wishing to go to school(5-20).

Results:

Table 1 : Parents' socio- demographic characteristics

Parents' variables		N	%	Total N.	%
Parent marital status	live together	176	81.1	217	100
	separated	7	3.2		
	divorce	18	8.3		
	widow	16	7.4		
Father job	daily gob	112	51.6	217	100
	not working	10	4.6		
	employee	71	32.7		
	free work	11	5.1		
	dead	13	6.0		
Mother job	housewife	183	84.3	217	100
	employee	8	3.7		
	teacher	21	9.6		
	dead	3	1.4		
	not read and write	14	6.5	217	100

Father educational status	read and write	44	20.3		
	primary school	45	20.7		
	secondary school	58	26.7		
	above	56	25.8		
Mother educational status	not read and write	12	5.5	217	100
	read and write	45	20.7		
	primary school	55	25.3		
	secondary school	70	32.3		
	above	35	16.1		
Family income	Sufficient	88	40.6	217	100
	Barely Sufficient	80	36.9		
	Insufficient	49	22.6		

The result in (table 1) indicates that the majority of the parents (81.1%) were living together, and more than half of their fathers (51.6%) have daily job working status and the majority (84.3%) of students' mothers were housewives, the highest percentages of their fathers and mothers (26.7% and 32.3%) respectively have secondary school educational level, whereas only 22.6% have insufficient family income.

Table 2: The level of self-concept among students

	Personal factors concerning with student	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Ego notion		
1	When I start to reading I feel weariness, boredom and sleepiness	2.01	.979
2	I am slow for achievement my school homework	2.10	.693
3	I am clever, and my intelligent is suitable to continuing of the study	2.33	.706
4	I feel need encouragement to continue my study	1.92	.821
5	I feel my companions make fun of me	2.34	.759
6	I feel I am person who not desired	2.39	.686
7	My abilities cannot prepare me to study.	2.35	.697
8	I have not ability to overcome any difficulty that face me at my study.	2.13	.761
9	When a problem facing me I feel that my abilities of thinking are limited	1.93	.673

10	I feel unrest because of blame and reproach	1.94	.780
11	I can't study because of the boredom , and change of my disposition.	1.95	.728
12	I feel the bored, and there is no free time during the school hour.	1.84	.792
Total mean of self-concept		25.2350	4.25409

The results reveal that the sample has low- moderate level of self- concept the total mean is 25.235, S d =4.254) .This level appears clearly in item 6 " I feel I am person was not desired" ; item4 " I feel I need encouragement to continue my study"; item 9 " When a problem occurs to me I feel that my abilities of thinking are limited "; item 10 " I feel the unrest because of blame and reproach"; and item 11" I cannot study because of the boredom ,and change of mu disposition" (the means: 1.84, 1.92, 1.93, 1.94, and 1.95 respectively) .

Table 3: The level of depression among students

	Depression items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I feel I am lonely	1.58	.723
2	I feel I haven't aim in my life	1.57	.736
3	I feel very tired, and exhausted during the school hours	2.11	.669
4	I feel it is better to stop going to school	1.57	.691
5	There is no chance to a person like me to successes in his life	1.58	.717
6	I have no friends	1.43	.691
Total mean of depression		9.8387	2.61880

The result reveals that the students have moderate level of depressive symptoms (the total mean = 9.8387, S d= 2.6188).

Table 4 The level of anxiety among students

	Anxiety items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I feel bored of the long study day .	2.10	.719
2	I feel tension and worry and strain in the muscles	2.46	.652
3	I feel tension and worry and strain in the muscles	2.05	.719
4	I, feel unstable I can't sit for a long time in the same place	2.05	.765

5	I feel scared from special things, such as to be alone, with crowds and from elevators	1.76	.788
6	I feel tension and disappointed	1.77	.722
	Total mean of anxiety	12.1797	2.80706

The table show that the students have moderate to high level of anxiety (the total mean =12.1797, sd= 2.80706) .

Discussion:

Concerning to the level of self-concept, the results reveal that the sample has low- moderate level of self- concept, the total mean is 25.235as shown in table(2), this level is appear clearly in item 6 " I feel I am person was not desired", item4 " I feel I need for encouragement to continuing with my study", item 9 " When a problem facing me, I feel that my abilities of thinking are limiting, that's mean student personal and psychological traits have significant influence on their daily decisions to attend school .Many truant's students share several of the same personal and psychological problems (21).In addition, (22,23) reported that although the results showed the student trust in his abilities and him/herself ,but he/she still feels that his abilities are weak during recalling and capability to face problems,this is natural matter ,and this feeling is regarded results from falling level not because of the student him/herself .The results reveal that there were no significant relationships between the wishing to go to school and parents'socio-demographic characteristics at $p \leq 0.05$ (Table 3). Consistently, (24) presented the prevalence of self-reported recent truancy among the 8th and 10th grade students who participated in the Monitoring the Future national survey. They explored associations between recent truant behavior, demographic characteristics, other school related risk factors among adolescents. several researchers found a relationship between truancy and poor socio-economic circumstances of the family, additionally, (25) warns that truants should not be seen as coming from a particular social class. South African research conducted by (26) also suggests that truancy is one of the behavioral problems found amongst adolescents in higher socio-economic communities. Another family variable that has been found to contribute to truancy is unstable family relationships, which include, divorce, parental separation and marital conflicts (27,28). When the relationship between parents breaks down, there is a likelihood that children will live with one parent or in an extended family structure (29). Found that few truants are living with at least one biological parent.(30) agree with current findings also, they reported that the recent increasing trend towards one-parent families also manifests as the result of other factors, such as death, teenage pregnancy or single parenthood by choice.The results of table(4) reveal that there is a significant relationship between the wishing to go to school and self -concept ($r=0.297$) at $p \leq 0.01$.this results was supported by (31)who stated that the reasons why students skip school are complex and diverse. (32) also reported that truancy serves a functional purpose for many students, enabling them to avoid anxiety producing situations at school or to gain social acceptance among peer. Consistently, Felix, E.(2009) revealed that Individual risk factors predictive of truancy and absenteeism include lower academic self-concepts, lower self-esteem

Conclusion:

Intermediate school students are suffering from self concept problems affecting their compliance in school attendance.Parent marital status, family income, fathers' educational level, and father job have a significant effect on the truancy psychological factors related to family and Self-concept, depression, psychological factors related to teachers, environment, friends, and work have a significant effect of students wishing to go to school.

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