

IDENTIFICATION OF FACTORS OF VANDALISTIC BEHAVIORS AMONG THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF THE DISTRICTS OF SOUTH OF TEHRAN

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Statement of the problem: Vandalism is a psycho-social problem that harms public places drastically. In order to cope with this problem, the influential factors should be investigated. This study aims to investigate the effective factors in vandalistic behaviors committed by youngsters.

Methodology: This study is a correlational research. The population includes all the high school students of the districts of education system schools of south of Tehran. The selected sample was clusters of 400 male and female students. The instruments were researcher-made questionnaire with closed questions.

Findings: The statistical tests showed a significant relationship between the variables (family bonds, relationship with the vandals, being ignored, social detachment and observation of vandalistic behaviors) with committing vandalism.

Results: The influential factors in committing vandalism cover a wide range of factors including the variables of this study.

Keywords: vandalism, family bonds, relationship with vandals, being ignored, social detachment and observation of vandalistic behaviors

INTRODUCTION

On the verge of adolescence and youth there is a desire for independence and freedom. Physical, mental and moral developments in this period of life involve new wants and willing. For one thing the desire to follow the adolescence values, to be accepted in the peer groups, peer pressures and the desire to express oneself and for another lack of facilities, and inappropriate emotional relationship and overlooking the requirements of adolescents, lack of experience and recognition all expose adolescents to a mental and psychological crisis and confusion and follow adverse consequences. These problems lead to adolescents violent behaviors.

Adolescents violent behaviors may be manifested in different forms, the destructive behaviors of students at school and in society are all part of violent and aggressive behaviors committed by students with no material interest.

Moser considers vandalism as deliberate action to damage or destruct whatever is other people's property (Moser 1992, cited by Horowitz Tobaly, 2000:131). Goldstein considers vandalism as deliberate destruction of surrounding environment by people who have no material interest in what they commit, and the goal of this kind of people is to damage the public property with the intention of disagreement with the rules and orders passed by the government (Goldstein, 1996:19).

Statistics indicates that 67 percent of the vandals arrested are within the age range of 10 to 25 among which the number of male ones was more than that of female ones, so that 75 percent were male and 25 percent were female. From the point of education level, 35.4 percent were junior high school graduates and 22.9 percent were primary school graduates (Mohseni Tabrizi, 1374)..

There are numerous definitions concerning vandalism each of which puts emphasis on common elements in

defining vandalism; in other words, in most of the definitions there was an emphasis on the action to be deliberate and conscious as well as damage and destruction of private and public properties.

So having all the definitions, a comprehensive definition of vandalism can be presented as follow: vandalism is deliberately damage or destruct public and private properties without any material interest for the vandals, and it concerns more public phones, school chairs, buses, subways, post, telephone and telegraph booths and the like.

With regard to the importance of this subject, there have been lots of studies investigating the cause of this problem, and it seems that family as the smallest unit in society plays an important role in establishing society and in forming the kind of human relationship. Bonds in the family are a locus for the formation of adolescents' behavioral patterns which directs them through behavior decision making and social relationship. The behavioral patterns formed in the family include methods of behavior management and lifting behavior conflicts (Wright et al, 2006:1435).

There is a consensus of opinions among many scientists to the effect that delinquent adolescents are exposed to those kinds of social relationships characterized by absence of a sincere and close relationship between a father and son as well as a mother and daughter, and the quality of this relationship gradually affects their behavior towards other people and social community.

A remarkable number of researchers indicated that children who are raised inappropriately by parents are in danger of committing delinquent behaviors (Dusten et al, 2009:379). In fact, researches have consensus about the influence of children maltreatment on the decreased bond and dependency between adolescents and their parents as well as committing vandal and delinquent behaviors (Heck & Walsh, 2000:178-193; Widom, 1989: 3-283-28).

Another risk factor driving adolescents to commit vandal or delinquent behavior is the deviant peer group or friends and being influenced by them and this influence is more in boys than in girls (Mears et al, 1998). Moreover, committing such behaviors on the part of adolescents may lead to poor function of students at schools and rejection of their attitudes by others (Rosenbaum & Lesley, 1990).

Studies show that there is a high correlation between the vandals and their peer group (Wiehe). The results of the studies showed that the influential factors in vandalistic behavior are interactive, and one factor can intensify or moderate the effect of other factors. For instance, it was shown that formidable factors such as strong bond between adolescents and parents and efficient relation with school can decrease the influence from deviant friends (Vitaro, Brendgen & Tremblay, 1990). Therefore, differences in the types of reactions of adolescents against the deviant adolescent's behaviors may reflect the presence of the factors which protect some adolescents from the negative influences of the deviant peer groups.

.In summary, it can be said that the previous studies put emphasis on adverse conditions in the family, deviant friends and failure in the type of relation at school and society which are increasingly in connection with adolescents committing vandal behavior in both gender.

However, the contribution of other major factors such as maturity, the youngsters temper, economic and social status or even the culture in which they grew up cannot be overlooked. However, with regard to the fact that there were few studies on the identification of influential factors contributing to adolescents committing vandal behaviors in the schools across the country, and since the demographic variables are abundant regarding to this issue, this research proceeds to investigate the influential factors on adolescents committing vandal behaviors, by creating and validating a questionnaire thereby to find a solution for the problem.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Horowitz & Tobaly in a research titled "School vandalism: Individual and social context" which has been conducted on 689 students of Mediterranean schools using questionnaire in 1999 studied the individual and social contexts of vandalistic behaviors. They concluded that the variables of observing vandalistic behaviors at school, attitudes towards school and teachers and the level of anxiety at school are among the determining factors in vandalistic behaviors (Toblay & Horowitz).

Brown et al. in a research titled "Vandalism: Environmental and Social Factors" which has been conducted on 688 students residing in a dormitory in a small College of Free Arts located in Northeastern America using questionnaire technique in 2003 and

concluded that the size of the dormitory, the location of the dormitory, the level of success and achievement of students in their studies and their involvement in various activities, the amount of time spent on watching TV have all connection with vandalistic behaviors (Brown et al:2003).

Lowenstein in a research with the subject of "Vandalism in School" after choosing 475 students in England and the United States of America as a sample population and using a quantitative research method and questionnaire came to the conclusion that vandal behaviors in the students who were members of the delinquent groups have been more than those who were not in that group. There is also a significant relation between the structure of the family, from the point of view that whether the family members especially parents fulfilled their major roles appropriately in the family, or if the family is disintegrated or disorganized, and the level of committing vandal behavior (Lowenstein,1986:35).

Coslin in a study with the subject of "Adolescence and Vandalism" after selecting 1253 male and female students with the age range of 14-20 in France with a focus on family, school, social and cultural variables concluded that the attitude, conception and impression of youngsters and young adults of themselves is effective in the kind and level of committing vandalistic behaviors by this group. This research showed that, from the point of view of impression, the lower the social class is, the lower social class-related the delinquent and vandalistic behaviors are. On the other hand, the role of moral judgment of people about the vandal person is among the factors driving the person to vandalistic behaviors (Coslin, 1989:357).

Goldstein et al. in a study with the subject of "Violation, Vandalism and Adolescents Aggression" proceeded to present hypotheses and to formulate a questionnaire, and after choosing 85 youngsters and young adults with the age range of 12-18 in California as a sample population and using Quantitative research method concluded that if adolescents are made as acceptable to society by parents, they hardly commit antisocial and vandalistic behaviors, and families play an important role in preventing vandal behaviors committed by their children (Goldstein, 1996).

In a study titled "Destruction" after selecting 874 subjects among girls and boys with the age range of 13-19 in Paris and using the variables of social class,

level of education, adolescents' ambitions, family control, school, etc. it was concluded that street life is one of the important and remarkable factors in adolescents and juveniles vandalism. Destruction of green environments, sculptures in the parks, public places and squares, damaging public phones and parked cars in the streets, etc. are all manifestations of vandal behaviors committed by street adolescents (Moser, 1988).

Sadafi in a research with the subject of " a study on the influential factors in social deviations based on family, cultural and social factors effective on Juvenile delinquency" after selecting 164 male subjects lower than 18 in Tehran city in the Centers for Nurturing Children and using quantitative research method concluded that family factors (parents behavior) and group factors (friends, school and people) have influence on social deviations, also the motivation factors, requirements, expectations and emotions have direct and positive effect on social deviations (Sadafi, 1991).

Amanat in a research with the subject of "a study of the social factors of juveniles delinquency in Tehran based on following the reasons for social delinquency" after selecting 120 subjects as experimental group from among male delinquents in the Centers for Nurturing Children with the age range of 12-17 and 120 subjects as control group in five districts in Tehran city concluded that making the most of emotional bond and rapport, moral stability and family support lead to decrease in delinquency. Also there is a direct relation between the level of inclination towards means in the family and family disintegration and the intensity of delinquency (including vandalism)(Amanat, 1992).

A research has been conducted by Aliasghar Naghdi in 1995, titled "a study of family factors effective in juvenile delinquency" after selecting 1400 delinquent students studying in schools in Kermanshah City, Iran, and using non-probability sampling and quantitative research method the researcher came to the conclusion that lower social status of the family, high deprivation, living in skid rows and suburbs, having parents with lower education and family dispute are all connected to adolescents committing delinquency (Naghdi, 1995).

Nick Akhtar in a research titled "an investigation on the social and economic factors effective on vandalism as a delinquent behavior among high school students in Shiraz" after selecting a sample

population of 527 subjects through multiple cluster-sampling and quantitative research method concluded that the young people who were in contact with delinquent friends have been more involved in vandalistic behaviors. There was a significant difference between the variables of attachment and family bonds and obligations and the vandalistic behavior (Nich Akhtar, 1999).

A research with the subject of "a comparative study of delinquent behaviors between the new and old educational system schools in Shiraz" has been conducted by Ahmadi et al in 2001. After selecting 650 students and using stratified sampling method and applying quantitative research method concluded that the proportion of delinquency of students in the new educational system is more than that of old educational system. Also the variables of place of birth, gender, educational condition, using cultural products of western countries and the way they spend their free time have all significant relation with delinquent behaviors of students (Ahmadi et al, 2001)

Jamshidi in a research titled "a study of socio-economic factors effective on public property vandalism by the students of Tehran in 2000-2001". After choosing a sample population of 600 subjects from districts of Tehran city using stratified sampling and applying quantitative research method concluded that gender, GPA (Grand Point Average) and the family attitude have relation to delinquent behavior. But the variables of place of living of students, place of birth, education level, socio-economic status of the family and age have no significant relation with delinquency variable. Also the variables of attachment to family and school are related to vandalistic behaviors, and in the end the researcher came to the conclusion that cooperation and contribution of children in the school leads to a decrease in vandalistic behaviors (Jamshidi. 2001).

"a study of influential motives on vandalism between the students 9-16 residing around the edge of railroad in Tehran city" is a research conducted by Mohammad Effati in 2002. After selecting 574 students as a sample group, the researcher concluded that the conditions of family factors (populated family, great age differences in family members, parents maltreatments with children) and adverse environmental conditions (interruptions by the passing trains, collision with passing trains, absence of sufficient entertaining facilities, lack of guardrail on the edge of railroad) as well as the individual qualities of children and juveniles (aggression, hyper

activeness and the desire to venture activities) are among the variables relevant to committing vandalistic behaviors (stoning the passing trains) (Effati, 2002).

Sekhavat (2002) in a research with the subject of "a study of the influential factors in violent behaviors in Lorestan Province" after selecting 975 students from three cities of Noor Abad, KHorram Abad and Brojerd through multiple cluster sampling conducted this study. The findings of this research indicate that having desirable relation in family and in school, self-conception of students, conception of family income, father's job, conception of the order in school, achievement in school tasks and gender are considered as effective factors in violent behaviors of students in school, and the variables of schooling achievement, gender, attachment and bond with mother are considered as effective factors in out-of-school violent behaviors (Sekhavat, 2002).

METHODOLOGY

This study is a correlational research. The population includes all the high school students of the districts of education system schools of south of Tehran, including districts 19 and 20. The sample was clusters of 400 male and female students from the male and female high schools of these districts which were selected randomly from first, second and third grades out of four male schools and four female schools with a total of eight schools .

two female schools from district 19 and two other female schools from district 20 were randomly selected. Two male schools from each of the districts of 19 and 20 were randomly selected accordingly. The sample population includes 400 subjects. The instrument in this research is a researcher-made questionnaire.

In order to measure each of the independent variables (family bond, relationship with the vandals, being ignored, social detachment and observation of vandalistic behaviors) items were considered.

The items were written as questions. To assess the validity of the questionnaire 30 subjects answered the questionnaires, and to assess the stability of variables the test and retest have been applied in order to identify the stability of the results for three stages of testing of 30 subjects as a result of which the correlation between the first stage with the second stage, the first stage with the third stage and the

second stage with the third stage for the family bond variables has been 0.92, 0.92 and 0.89; for social detachment variables 0.91, 0.90 and 0.89; for the variables of being ignored 0.92, 0.88 and 0.89; for the variables of relation with vandals 0.82, 0.86 and 0.90 and for the variables of observation of vandalistic behaviors 0.81, 0.83 and 0.82 respectively.

FINDINGS

Demographic specifications

The average age of the male and female subjects have been 16.75 and 16.50 respectively. The test of comparison of average age between male and female subjects indicated that there is no significant difference between them, and the two groups are homogeneous in this respect. The subjects of this research have been homogenized in the variables of gender and education. In this research the Chi-square has been used the results of which (with the p-value=0.745, =0.106) indicated that there is no significant difference between the subjects with regard to the mentioned variables.

The variables for the students in this research

Table 1. The descriptive findings concerning the students

percentage	frequency	variables	
93.2	370	Live together	Parents status
5.3	21	Divorced	
1.5	6	Separated	
82.4	327	No problem	Parents problems
5.0	20	Parent addiction	
2.0	8	Psychosis	
3.5	14	Imprisonment	
7.1	28	Family dispute	Parents methods of treatment
44.6	177	Punishment and tight control	
21.7	86	Affection	
30.0	119	Dialogue, cooperative decision	

		making
3.8	15	Indifferent and lenient

As shown in table1, the parents of 93.2 of students live together. Most of the students (82.4) reported no problem on the part of their parents, and most of the parents (44.6) use tight control and punishment.

The correlation coefficient if the variables of the study with vandalism

Table 2. The correlation coefficient if the variables of the study with vandalism

Observation of vandalistic behavior	Social detachment	Being ignored	Relation with vandals	Family bond	variable
0.48**	0.27**	** 0.15	** 0.31	** 0.48	Vandalistic behaviors

Table 2 shows the correlation coefficient between the variables of the study and vandalistic behaviors

The step by step regression coefficient of the scales of researcher-made questionnaire for the evaluation of vandalistic behaviors to predict vandal behaviors among students

Table 3: step by step regression coefficients

ΔR^2	coefficient R ²	Multiple correlation R	correlation r	variables
0.237				Family bond
0.370	0.240	0.49	-0.489	Observation of vandalistic behaviors
0.369	0.373	0.61	0.485	Being ignored
0.367	0.373	0.61	0.319	Relation
0.366	0.374	0.61	0.27	

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have the strongest predicting power to predict committing vandalistic behaviors, which predict 0.373 of vandalistic behaviors variance.

The results of the step by step regression showed that from among the predictor variable, the variables of family bond and observation of vandalistic behaviors

Comparing the mean values of vandalistic behaviors in male and female students

Table 4: the independent T-test of comparing vandalistic behaviors in male and female students

p-value	-value t	total	male		female		variable	
			Standard deviation	mean	Standard deviation	mean		
0.003	-2.933	4.69	6.96	5.22	7.69	4.04	6.28	Committing vandalistic behavior

The results of table 4 show that the mean value of vandalism among the male students is more than that of female students, and the significance level (p-value) is to be 0.003, and this difference, among the means, with the reliability of %95 is significant.

(1996) and Shiri (1997) and confirm their results and findings.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained indicate that these results are consistent with the mental perspective of social control. In other words, the more the level of family bond is, the lower the vandalistic behavior would be. These results are similar to the researches of Golstein (1996), Moser (1988), Ahmadi and Sahami (1999), Mohseni Tabrizi (2000), Nick Akhtar (1999), Shiri (1376) and Jamshidi (2001) and confirm their results.

Melvin Seaman (1985) having conducted several researches on social alienation (detachment) suggested that the structure of modern bureaucracy created conditions in which people are not able to learn control the consequences of their behaviors. Describing and interpreting various kinds of alienation or detachment mentions two major concepts in alienation (detachment): the expectation of a person towards the reinforcements (rewards) and the method of social management and control on social reinforcement system, which he believes, is in such a way that the person cannot establish a relation between his behavior and the reinforcement (reward) from society, thus in this condition the person is overcome by alienation or detachment and it drives him to a passive and normless reaction against society. There are different manifestations of sickly behaviors in various dimensions (meaninglessness, formlessness, isolation, self-estrangement, normlessness)

Based on collective interaction perspective, in many cases vandalism is a behavior emanating from group reactions, and the interactive response of every participant is dependent on the actions of the other participant and results in collective or group vandalism. In this respect, the results of this study are consistent with this mental perspective, and it can be said that the above-mentioned premise is applicable in the research population of this study. Also one of the findings of this study to the effect that involvement in vandal group has relation with vandalistic behaviors is consistent with the research findings of Coslin (1989), Lowenstein (1986), Nick Akhtar (1999), Mohsen Tabrizi (2000), Ramzani

The results show that this perspective is consistent with the research findings of the present research and it can be said that the above-mentioned theory is applicable in the present research statistical population. The relation between the social detachment and vandalistic behaviors which is one of the findings of the present research is similar to the research findings of Mohseni Tabrizi (2000).

Clark using an integrative model in eight groups including a series of social and psychological variables explains the variables effective on the process of committing vandalistic behaviors. In the fourth group of the model he puts emphasis on role of demographic, social and economic factors such as age, gender and socio-economic status. The results of this study show the significance of the difference in vandalistic behaviors among the male and female students, which is similar to the research findings of Brown (2003), Wilson & Healy (1986), Demore (1987) and Ahmadi and Sahami (1999).

Flex considers vandalistic behaviors as a reflection of the strong desire of the young people to express anger and dissatisfaction against being ignored, discrimination, inequality and injustice (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004); based on the obtained results of this study being ignored is one of the effective factors in the process of committing vandalistic behavior which is similar to the research finding of Mohseni Tabrizi (2000).

Finally, the results obtained from the correlation and statistical analyses indicated that a wide range of social, cultural, family, personal and psychological factors are involved in vandalistic behaviors, and in this research the issue of vandalism and the relation of which as a criterion variable with some personal and social variables has been investigated.

According to the results and with regard to the theoretical pattern of the research and based on correlation between predictor and criterion and the type and manner of influences within them in multivariate analysis it can be argued that for one thing, disorder in the family and educational environment of adolescents in the social relation causes the person gets out of the social control which affects person's desire to vandalistic behaviors; in other words, disorder and dysfunction of the variables and the factors effective on the process of sociability increase the desire to commit vandalistic behaviors and actions. Students' commitments obligations towards the formal normality and activities of family, school and the like can play an important role in decreasing vandalistic behaviors.

For another, family and school are the first social environments in which the person can be exposed to injustice and being ignored and experience such feelings thus paves the way for dissatisfaction with life condition for adolescents, and this reinforces the

person's desire to join vandal group and to commit vandalistic behaviors.

Low degree of attachment of adolescent to family and dispute with family and rejection of their wants (righteous or unrighteous rejection) all grow a rage and spiteful feeling against parents, and this feeling may aim school staff and have student believe that by damaging school properties is taking his revenge from the adults. And of course the undesirable experiences of that person in the school create a negative attitude by which the person bears grudge on people and so proceeds to damage the public and school properties.

Therefore, discrimination and being ignored which emanated from family conditions and social and educational environment of an individual paves the way for objectionable behaviors and angry cry of being ignored which follows the desire to vandalism. And the social, family and educational structures and personal experiences thereto in social environments provide the conditions for disorder and vandalism, which is one of the manifestations of it.

Also another important factor in this study is the social detachment of people which paved the way for losing the track of life, powerlessness against problems, ambiguity in the future career of people and students schooling or graduated people which are as intensifying factors leading to alienation or detachment of people and pave the way for vandalistic behaviors.

In sum, vandalism can be said to be a complicated phenomenon which increasingly dependent on different relative weights. In other words, whatever pattern we use these various variables with, we can argue that individuals are surrounded within social forces; differences in characters cause individuals to be different in responding to social stimuli. That to what extent the social and psychological preconditions affect social behaviors and activities are increasingly dependent on social environments including institutions and social structures, beliefs and political-cultural values. These three branches of variables are strongly intertwined and each variable in them affects the behavioral actions of people.

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