



Vandalism among Students of Islamic Azad University Of Mashhad – Iran

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Abstract:

The present study was aimed to investigate the Vandalism at the Islamic Azad University of Mashhad. The study employed survey study design and Stratified random sampling technique was employed for sample selection. The population consisted of 328 students of Islamic Azad University of Mashhad in the second semester of Academic year 2012-13 which recruited by the Researcher made Inventory. To assess the reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used and validity was measured by the content validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of research questions was (0.80/0). Spearman's correlation coefficient, linear regression and Comparison of Means were used to test the hypotheses. All these statistical calculations were done through SPSS for windows (version 16.0). The results showed that: a) Over half of the respondents have never had Vandalistic behavior. b) There is a direct and significant relationship between the sense of anomie and Vandalistic behavior. c) There is a direct and significant relationship between the tendency to deviate groups and Vandalistic behavior. d) There is a direct and significant relationship between the membership of deviate groups and Vandalistic behavior. e) There is a direct and significant relationship between the bully behavior, intertainment and Vandalistic behavior. Results of regression analysis show that various aspects of independent variable alone can explain the 24% of the total variation of vandalistic behaviors, and the rest is the contribution of other variables. Bully behavior, intertainment and membership of deviate groups have the highest impact on vandalistic behavior respectively.

KEY WORDS:

Vandalism, Deviate groups, Abnormality, Islamic Azad University of Mashhad, Student.

INTRODUCTION

A problem that occurs in most countries is vandalism. It is a growing national problem in Iran, too. Vandalism is a problem that gets to everyone in some form or another. It can affect the family, friends, property and community. Over one half of all the crimes associated with vandalism occur in high schools and universities. There is no typical vandal. Vandals can be good or bad students, girls or boys, whites or blacks, rich or poor. Teenager with growing-up problems act destructively by destroying vehicles, spray-painting graffiti on public places, etc. Older youths often commit more serious acts such as damaging vehicles or machinery, burglary, arson or theft.

Although most vandals do not have a clear motive for their acts, studies show that basic social problems and attitudes are at the root of the vandalism. Among the many explanations for the crime are

anger against society, boredom, drug and alcohol abuse, disciplinary problems, personal problems and racial/political conflicts.

Police, fire and emergency services are affected by increased workloads and false alarms. Also, facilities and places such as parks, public rest rooms, schools, colleges and universities, become vandalized. People pay their taxes for a reason, to build a better community for the future generation. When the community is vandalized, the people are the ones who have to pay for someone else's damage.

Vandalism (or damaging public and private chattels) is one of the most anti social globalized behaviors and is prevalent in all of the societies regardless of their levels of development. In all of the countries the damage to all of the public chattels are high due to vandalistic behaviors. The prevalence of this behavior in the developed countries is to the extent that sometimes the estimation of value of these behaviors is not an easy task (Carrasco, et al.2006). Takahashi's (1995) study in Japan showed that delinquency and subversion is an important challenge in the schools of Japan. Researches in the most countries have shown that the vandalism has been raised in these countries and factors such as Family socio economic status, structure of the family and the lack of attention to the youth problems have been the most related factors to vandalism and delinquency and amongst the youth, the share of the boys in doing vandalistic behaviors have been higher than the girls (Meneagker, 1994; Altucker, Carrasco, et al, 2004; Oggins, 2007). The researches in Iran either the researches completely focused on vandalism (Nik Akhtar, 2000; Mohebbi, 2003; Bahrami Mahand, 2004; Mohammadi Bolbolan Abad, 2005) or the researches partially focused on vandalistic behavior (ex. Mohseni Tabrizi, 2003 in a research on destroying public chattels by spectators of football, Banifatemi & Maghsoodi, 2004 in a research on wall painting behaviors in classroom, Nooralivand, 2007 in a research on Vagrancy in football) all shows that different factors such as being immigrant or not, sex, satisfaction from family, family structure, relation with peer group, and the sense of injustice are the related factors to the vandalism.

Amongst the subversive behaviors that are done by the youth is vandalism because, it is the most frequent subversive behavior in the youth. Subversion and financial damages are the most important crimes of the urbanite boys and rural youth and urbanite girls do these behaviors rarely (Shambiati, 1996) but the immigrant youth have a great share in the vandalism.

An individual's behavior varies depending on the group(s) they are a part of, a characteristic of society that allows to norms heavily impact society. Without social norms, human society would not function as it currently does; humans would have to be more abstract in their behaviour, as there would not be a pre-tested 'normal' standardised lifestyle, and individuals would have to make many more choices for themselves. The institutionalisation of norms is, however, inherent in human society perhaps as a direct result of the desire to be accepted by others, which leads humans to manipulate their own behaviour in order to 'fit in' with others.

Various forms of vandalism include salting lawns, cutting trees without permission, [egg throwing](#), breaking windows, [arson](#), spraying paint on others' properties, [tagging](#), placing glue into locks, tire slashing, keying (scratching) paint, ransacking a property, and flooding a house by clogging a sink and leaving the water running.

Investigating of vandalism in respect to its social and specially its financial lost outcomes is very crucial, for instance this senseless crime cost United States Citizens over one billion dollars in last year (Bristol township police department, 2012) Other study shows by 2005 the damage caused by graffiti vandalism had been increasing and graffiti was becoming more prevalent in the city of Oxnard, California. By 2007, the cost to the taxpayers of the city of Oxnard to remove graffiti was over \$985,000 (Hookstra, C. L. (2009).

Universities also spent much expense to repair damages caused by abnormal behaviors of some students each year. In such problems that seems there is no strong social prohibition, includes breaking or scratching on tables and chairs . . . which in brief called Vandalism.

Islamic Azad University of Mashhad as comprehensive universities in the country has the same conditions. Presence of students from different cities and various culture levels is probably prone to such behaviors.

Accordingly, this study intends to express a clear picture of the types of abnormalities in Mashhad Islamic Azad University, to identify its roots and to find practical solutions to reduce such abnormalities ultimately. The present study seeks to answer the main question of which types of anomalies is harmful to the services and facilities of the University? And also what are the factors affecting such behaviors?

In this regard the study would answer to questions as follow:

How much is the sense of anomie among students and how is its relationship with Vandalistic behavior?

How much is the sense of failure among students and how is its relationship with Vandalistic behavior?
How much is the sense of discrimination among students and how is its relationship with Vandalistic behavior?
How much is the sense of Social exclusion among students and how is its relationship with Vandalistic behavior?
How much is the student's tendency to deviate groups among students and how is its relationship with Vandalistic behavior?
How much is the student's relevance to deviate groups among students and how is its relationship with Vandalistic behavior?
How much is the commitment of students to the university equipment and facilities and how is its relationship with Vandalistic behavior?
How much is the rate of bully behavior and entertainment among students and how are their relationships with Vandalistic behavior?
What are the differences in the behavior of student's Vandalistic behavior and secondary variables (such as gender, age, marital status, place of residence, school, school year and grades)?

Major theoretical perspectives on the root causes of vandalism and crime

In the most general of terms, criminologists and other academics interested in crime tend to either start with a theory about a given condition (e. g., poor nutrition, a certain brain chemistry or certain family or social conditions) and then test whether it is a predictor of youth violence, or start with known offenders and seek to identify common characteristics in their backgrounds. Through this work, predictors and correlates can be and have been, found in many domains and have been collected into several distinct theoretical approaches or doctrines, many of which have their own sub-doctrines (McMurtry, & Curling, A. 2008).

Biosocial theory

This theory considers that certain biological anomalies or physical disabilities may make some individuals more prone to violence. These can stem from nutritional deficiencies, hormonal influences, allergies or exposure to environmental contaminants, or may arise from neuro-physical conditions, such as fetal alcohol syndrome, brain dysfunction, injury or chemistry, genetics or evolution.

Psychological theories

These theories look at how mental processes impact on propensities for violence. They look at the connections among learning, intelligence, personality and aggressive behavior. In general, these theories often look to early negative family circumstances as sources of damaged egos or to the way certain negative behaviors are learned in families where aggression is common. They consider the impact of mental illness, although many note that conditions such as parental neglect, child abuse, victimization, racism and poverty are associated with violence as well as being a cause of mental illness.

Rational choice theory

This theory holds that people freely choose their behavior and are motivated by the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure. This perspective assumes that crime is a personal choice, the result of individual decision-making processes. It posits that offenders weigh the potential benefits and consequences of committing an offence and then make a rational choice on the basis of this evaluation. The central premise of this theory is that people are rational beings, whose behavior can be controlled or modified by a fear of punishment.

Social disorganization theory

This theory postulates that crime is a function of neighborhood dynamics and not necessarily a function of individuals within high-crime neighborhoods. The core factor seems to be high population turnover, resulting from the undesirable status of certain communities. A number of studies have also supported the idea that economic deprivation may be an important influence on social disorganization. They propose that economic deprivation could lead to social disorganization, which in turn can lead to

violence and crime.

Economic deprivation

There are several elements to this theory. One is that capitalism encourages the criminality of the poor by the misery and the inequality that it foists on them. Another is that inequality can reduce self-esteem and foster the development of a negative self-image, which in turn can lead to crime.

Strain theories

Strain theory believes that the disjunction between culturally ascribed goals, such as economic success and the availability of legitimate means to attain such goals puts pressure on the cultural norms that dictate what means should be used to achieve the culturally prescribed goal.

Social learning theory

According to this theory, deviant and criminal conduct is learned and sustained through associations with family and peer networks.

Social control theory

This theory assumes a relationship between delinquency and lower levels of social control. The overall idea is that crime occurs when social bonds are weakened or are not well-established. A key element of this theory is an attachment to parents, schools and others, with those who feel a stronger connection to their parents or schools being less likely to commit violent offences.

Self-control theory

Self-control theory holds that people engage in crime because they lack self-control, require immediate gratification, cannot see the long-term consequences of their actions and have little empathy for others. In these ways, it is very similar to psychological theories of impulsivity. It essentially assumes that offenders cannot change and therefore should be incapacitated to avoid future criminality.

Integrated life course theories

This approach recognizes that crime is a complex multidimensional phenomenon with multiple causes. It integrates a variety of ecological, socialization, psychological, biological and economic factors into a coherent structure to explain the eventual behavior of individuals (McMurtry & Curling, A. 2008).

Review of literature

Masoudian (2004) in a study evaluated the rate of the people neglect to protect public properties and facilities in Mashhad. His results showed that 16/5 of respondents had lack of interest to protect public properties.

In other study Hassani (2000) conducted the study on the rate and roots of social abnormalities among the middle students of Mashhad. He found out that the rate of social abnormality among boys was significantly higher than girls.

By 2005 the damage caused by graffiti vandalism had been increasing and graffiti was becoming more prevalent in the city of Oxnard, California. By 2007, the cost to the taxpayers of the city of Oxnard to remove graffiti was over \$985,000. The city of Oxnard covers 25.3 square miles and with a population of 192,997 it is the largest city in Ventura County. Approximately 31 percent of the city's population is under the age of 18 years of age (2000 U.S. Census). Nationally, the at-risk age group for graffiti crimes is young males between the ages 15 to 23 (Weisel, 2002, pg.10). In 2008, there were 417 individuals arrested for graffiti vandalism in the city. It is estimated that 84% or 347 of these arrests are committed by juveniles less than 18 years of age (Bristol township police department, 2008).

Research indicates that adolescents are more likely to engage in delinquent and violent behavior as they become more involved in peer culture and associate in groups that use alcohol and illegal drugs and participate in delinquency activity, such as vandalism. Violence is learned and developed through peer

interaction in the same manner as other forms of delinquency (Daane, 2003).

In 2002, Bahrami investigated the factors affecting adolescents and young adults (15-24) in the suburbs of Mashhad city -IRAN. The results showed that there is a direct and significant relationship between these two variables. Approximately 62% of the sample had the highest incidence of actual vandalism behavior.

Method

The research employed cross-sectional survey study design and the type of study is applied. Stratified random sampling technique was employed for sample selection. Mashhad Islamic Azad University currently has nine departments and 25,099 students. To determine the sample size, the Kuran formula is used. Data collection is done by questionnaire. The population consisted of 328 students of Islamic Azad University of Mashhad in the second semester of Academic year 2012-13 which recruited by the researcher-made questionnaire. In this study, the cross-sections of two-dimensional tables and statistics of mean, median, variance and standard deviation for the descriptive part were used. The Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis Test for the analysis part were used.

Research hypotheses

Hypotheses	Test name	Sig	Correlation coefficient
There is the relationship between sense of anomie and vandalistic behavior among students.	Spearman	0.116*	0.370
There is the relationship between sense of failure and vandalistic behavior among students.	Spearman	0.054**	0.3270
There is the relationship between sense of discrimination and vandalistic behavior among students.	Spearman	0.055**	0.3220
There is the relationship between Social exclusion and vandalistic behavior among students.	Spearman	0.038**	0.4990
There is the relationship between student's tendency to deviate groups and vandalistic behavior among students.	Spearman	0.186*	0.10
There is the relationship between student's relevance to deviate groups and vandalistic behavior among students.	Spearman	0.242*	0.000
There is the relationship between commitment of students to the university equipment and facilities and vandalistic behavior among students.	Spearman	0.030**	0.5870
There is the relationship between the rate of bully behavior and entertainment among students and vandalistic behavior among students.	Spearman	0.452*	0.000

*= sig **= Non sig

RESULTS

Vandalistic behaviors of students in the male and female groups did not differ significantly. However, the comparison of means shows that female scores are higher than male.

Vandalistic behaviors of students in the single and married groups did not differ significantly. However, the comparison of means shows that singles scores are higher than marrieds.

Vandalistic behaviors of and other cities did not differ significantly. However, the comparison of means shows that the other cities scores are higher than students living in the city of Mashhad.

Vandalistic behaviors of students in various age groups did not differ significantly. However, the comparison of means shows that the 18-22 group scores are higher than other age groups.

Vandalistic behaviors of students in various curriculums did not differ significantly. However, the comparison of means shows that the first year student's scores are higher than other grades.

Results of regression analysis show that various aspects of independent variable alone can explain the 24% of the total variation of vandalistic behaviors, and the rest is the contribution of other variables. Bully behavior, entertainment and membership of deviate groups have highest impact on vandalistic behavior respectively.

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the vandalism at the Islamic Azad University of Mashhad. We also tested the 8 hypothesis and investigated the relationship between factors such as “sense of anomie, sense of failure, sense of discrimination, Social exclusion, student's tendency to deviate groups, student's relevance to deviate groups, commitment of students to the university equipment and facilities, rate of bully behavior and entertainment” with vandalistic behaviors among students. Our findings have indicated that except for “anomie, student's tendency to deviate groups, student's relevance to deviate groups, and rate of bully behavior and entertainment”, the other variables did not show a significant relationship with Vandalists behavior.

The findings show that, overall, the rate of vandalistic behavior at Islamic Azad University of Mashhad is not high. These results are consistent with research findings Masoudian (2004). Another finding of this study is that the rate of vandalistic behaviors in girls is more than boys. These results are inconsistent with the findings of Hassani's study (2000). Perhaps one reason is the difference in the study population.

One important result of this study is the higher rate of vandalistic behavior in some departments than others, which is essential for further research to be explored.

Despite the results, it seems some efforts to further reduce vandalistic behavior would be useful such as “involving students in restoration and cleanup of objects and environments, providing the precise education and necessary information and Promotion of community supervision”.

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