

# Investigating the relationship between the verbal and psychological violence with home escaping of the girls and women from Ahwaz in 2013

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** such a phenomenon as the house escape is realized as one of the social problems associated with numerous factors. Domestic violence is one of the factors related to this phenomenon known to feature various physical, psychological, verbal, sexual and other aspects. The present study aims at investigating the relationship between the psychological and verbal violence with house escaping of the women and girls from Ahwaz in 2013. **Materials and Methods:** the present study is a case-evidence research that was conducted in 2013 for investigating the relationship between the verbal and psychological violence with the house escaping of the women and girls in welfare centers and the affiliated institutions and clinics in Ahwaz. The data collection method and instrument were interview and a two-part questionnaire that included demographic information as well as a standardized violence scale. **Results:** in the present study, 80 runaway women and girls and 160 normal girls and women were examined. The average ages of the runaway women and girls were 26.4 and 21.2 years and the average ages of the normal women and girls were 26.5 and 23.1. The psychological violence in the runaway women and girls was found severe in 65% whereas it was of mild type for the normal women and girls in 82.5% of the cases. The verbal violence was also found severe in 36.6% of the cases for the runaway women and girls and it was only of a mild type for the normal women and girls in 75% of the cases. **Discussion and Conclusion:** the results of the present study are reflective of the existence of a significant relationship between the verbal and psychological violence with the house escaping of the women and girls from Ahwaz.

**Keywords:** verbal violence, behavioral violence, house escaping.

## Introduction

The phenomenon of house escaping is recognized as one of the social problems adversely affecting both the individual and familial life as well as the social life levels <sup>[1]</sup>. In fact, escaping is a sort of inconsistent behavior wherein the individual consciously leaves the house for getting rid of his or her problems at home or for the outside attractions without asking

permission from parents or the legal guardians and does not return within a short period of time or without it being intermediated by a third person <sup>[2]</sup>. The prevalence of this phenomenon amongst the adolescents is quite astounding and it is quite common amongst the adolescent girls according to the studies <sup>[3]</sup>. The report by the WHO in 2009 signifies that over one million 13- to 19-year-old adolescents run away from their homes every year and the girls and the boys' shares are 60-70% and 30-40% of these escapes, respectively <sup>[4]</sup>. In Iran, as well, the number of runaway adolescents is worrisomely increasing in such a way that the number of the runaway girls in 1999 was twenty times higher than in 1986; in the last quarter of the year 2001, 6165 runaway adolescents were arrested. On average, 49 cases of house escape to Tehran's Municipality-affiliated center for the accommodation of the runaway children and adolescents are reported every day <sup>[5]</sup>. The investigations know various factors involved in the girls' escape including the inconsistency with parents (19.5%),

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enticement (16%), lack of security in family (13%), economic status (15%), divorcement (12.5%), tendency towards deviational issues (7%), unsuccessful marriage (12.5%), addiction (23%) and psychological problems (5%)<sup>[6]</sup>. It can be stated, on the other hand, that house escaping is a reflection of domestic violence which is ponderable for its social effects. The use of psychological and physical violence by the family members is a very important factor giving rise to the escaping of the girls<sup>[7]</sup>. The phrase “domestic violence” can incorporate vast experiences that substantially occur inside the home and are somehow considered violent. Amongst the various kinds of violence, including familial and social, domestic violence is a serious social harm that is still showing off in the society even with the cultural and intellectual progresses<sup>[8]</sup>. Physical violence is not the only type of violence followed by damage and harm rather there is a more extensive type of cruelty that encompasses threat, psychological-affective violence, derision, humiliation and insult. The effect of such behaviors is not lesser if not higher than the physical violence. Although some consider the term “domestic” as only embracing the house space, the domestic violence may include parents and children’s violence against one another or the children’s violence against parents<sup>[9]</sup>. Physical and psychological violence existent in the house including physical punishment or insult and humiliation cause the individuals to run away from their homes<sup>[10]</sup>. Farley and Barkan (2003) believe that the victims of misbehavior inside the family are not only exposed to the increase in the risk of becoming the victim of violence during adolescence and adulthood but also they will be more at risk of escaping the house and becoming exposed to sexual exploitation and prostitution, as well<sup>[11]</sup>. Rotheram-Borus (2003) showed in their study that the high prevalence of sexual, physical and psychological violence is correlated with running away from the house. Over one fourth of the adolescents studied herein had been subjected to abuse and annoyance before escaping their houses<sup>[12]</sup>. The study by Malek Afzali et al (2004) which was conducted on the women in Isfahan indicated that the verbal-psychological violence is the most frequent type of cruelty (34% to 64%) exercised at homes. Sexual, economic and physical violence was reported in the next ranks (5% to 53%)<sup>[13]</sup>. Although the retrospective studies emphasize on the reasons of house escape, the prospective research expresses that the weak behavior with children and physical misuse increases the individuals’ likelihood of running away from their houses<sup>[14]</sup>. It has to be finally remarked due to the sensitivity and importance of such a subject as the runaway women and girls and the effect that domestic violence exerts on the physical and psychological health of them and considering the prevalence rate of the psychological-verbal violence as well as the overlooking of such a type of violence, the present study aims at investigating the relationship between psychological-verbal violence and the house escape.

## Study Method:

The present study is a case-evidence research that was conducted with the objective of determining the relationship between the psychological violence and the house escaping of the girls and women in Ahwaz during 2013; after acquiring the permit from the ethics committee of Jondi Shapour Medical Sciences University (under the number IR.AJUMS.REC.2013.134), the study was implemented in welfare centers and its affiliated institutions like the center for intervention in crisis and the centers for the correction and upbringing as well as the other clinics. The study group included the girls and women who had escaped their houses. The control group was consisted of the normal women and girls who lived an ordinary life in their houses. The two groups were homogenized in terms of age, economic-social status and their own and their parents’ education level. A common questionnaire was prepared for both of the groups that assessed the demographic information (age, gender, education level and so forth); another standard questionnaire was also prepared to solely deal with violence. In the beginning of the study, perfect explanations were given regarding the study process and, after the establishment of an affective relationship and a mutual trust with the study participants, they were asked to fill in the questionnaires. The case group was selected from amongst the runaway girls who were kept in Welfare Centers (Rayhan House and correction and upbringing center). The evidence group included the girls who were studying at schools and the individuals who had referred to birth control clinics. In this regard and in order to ensure a 95% confidence and accuracy level, the study sample volume finally was comprised of 40 runaway girls, 40 runaway women, 80 runaway girls and 80 runaway women. The data collection method was interview and questionnaire. To this end, a two-part questionnaire composed of demographic information and a standardized violence questionnaire that was per se a combination of another questionnaire were utilized. The credibility of the questionnaire was confirmed by the psychiatry and psychology professors and experts of social medicine and the other experts and Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was employed for determining the validity of the questionnaire. After the interviews and questionnaires were completed, the results were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS Software, version 20.

## Results:

In the present study, 80 runaway girls and women and 160 normal girls and women were examined. As documented in table (1), the average ages of the runaway women and girls were 26.4 and 21.2 years, respectively; the average ages of the normal women and girls were 26.5 and 23.1, respectively. The t-test showed that there is no significant difference between the group of the runaway girls and women and the group of normal girls and women ( $P=0.18$ ) in terms of age.

Furthermore, based on this test and Liner test, there was not also found any significant difference between the two groups of runaway and normal girls and women in terms of age at marriage (P=0.008) and spouse's age (P=0.634).

**Table 1: frequency distribution, mean and standard deviation of some of the demographic characteristics of the study participants**

Variable	Runaway woman	Runaway girl	Normal girl	Normal woman	p-value
	Mean ± standard deviation Number (%)				
Age	26.4±5.4	21.2±4.9	23.1±5.3	26.5±4.3	0.18
Age at marriage (years)	17.6±3.7	-	-	19.4±3.3	0.008
Spouse's age (years)	31.8±19.3	-	-	33.5±21.6	0.634

Based on table (2), psychological violence was intermediate in the runaway women group in 12.5% of the cases and severe in 62.5% of the cases. In the group of the runaway girls, the psychological violence was mild in 5% of the cases, severe in 27.5% of the cases and very intensive in 67.5% of the cases. In the normal girls' group, the psychological violence was mild in 84.8% of the cases, intermediate in 14.8% of the cases and severe in 52.5% of the cases. In the normal women's group, the psychological violence was mild, intermediate and severe in 81.2%, 16.2% and 52.5% of the cases, respectively. The verbal violence rates were 5%, 35.1%, 53% and 25% indicating mild, intermediate, severe and very intensive in the group of the runaway women; in runaway girls' group, the verbal violence percentages were 0, 20, 37.5 and 42.5, respectively. In the normal girls' group, the verbal violence percentages were 72.5, 15, 11.2 and 1.2, respectively; and, in the normal women group, the percentages were 77.5, 8.8, 8.8 and 5 for mild, intermediate, severe and very intensive verbal violence, respectively.

**Table 2: distribution frequency of the respondents based on the various kinds of verbal and psychological violence in four groups of runaway women, runaway girls, normal women and normal girls**

Groups	Runaway women				Runaway girls				Normal women				Normal girls				p-value
	Number (%)				Number (%)				Number (%)				Number (%)				
Violence status	Mild	Intermediate	Severe	Very severe	Mild	Intermediate	Severe	Very severe	Mild	Intermediate	Severe	Very severe	Mild	Intermediate	Severe	Very severe	
Psychological	0%	5 (13.5%)	10 (25.5%)	25 (63.5%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	11 (27.5%)	27 (67.5%)	67 (83.8%)	11 (13.8%)	2 (3.5%)	0 (0%)	65 (81.2%)	13 (16.2%)	2 (3.5%)	0 (0%)	0.000
Verbal	2 (5%)	14 (35.1%)	14 (35%)	10 (25%)	0 (0%)	8 (20%)	15 (37.5%)	17 (43.5%)	58 (73.5%)	12 (15%)	9 (11.2%)	1 (1.2%)	62 (77.5%)	7 (8.8%)	7 (8.8%)	4 (5%)	0.000

According to table (3), the respondents' distribution in the two groups is in such a way that it indicates that the psychological violence is mild, intermediate, severe and intensively severe in the runaway group in 0%, 5%, 30% and 65% of the cases, respectively; it was also found mild, intermediate, severe and intensively severe in the normal group for 82.5%, 15%, 2.5% and 0% of the cases,

respectively. The verbal violence was mild, intermediate, severe and intensively severe in the runaway group in 5%, 27.5%, 36.2% and 31.2% of the cases, respectively; it was also found mild, intermediate, severe and intensively severe in the normal group for 75%, 11.9%, 10% and 3.1% of the cases, respectively.

**Table 3: the distribution of the respondents based on the various kinds of verbal and psychological violence in the two runaway and normal groups**

Groups	Runaway group				Normal girls				P-value
	Number (%)				Number (%)				
Violence status	Mild	Intermediate	Severe	Very severe	Mild	Intermediate	Severe	Very severe	
Psychological	0%	44 (5%)	24 (30%)	52 (65%)	132 (82.5%)	24 (15%)	4 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	0.000
Verbal	4 (5%)	22 (27.5%)	29 (36.2%)	25 (31.2%)	120 (75%)	19 (11.9%)	16 (10%)	5 (3.1%)	0.000

**Discussions:**

According to tables (1), the average ages in the runaway women group, runaway girls' group, normal girls' group and

normal women group were 26.4±5.4, 21.2±4.9, 23.1±5.3 and 26.5±4.3, respectively. No significant difference was found between the runaway and normal women groups and runaway and normal girls' groups in terms of this variable.

Zavvare'ei (2000) performed a study under the title of the factors influencing the girls' escape from their homes. The results of this study indicated that the majority of the runaway girls are in a range between 16 and 18 years of age. The girls who have escaped their houses in the age range between 14 and 20 years have been mostly from highly crowded families<sup>[15]</sup>. Mirzamani et al (2004) studied 75 runaway girls and women in order to gain information about the grounds related to the girls' escape from their houses. Based on the findings of the foresaid study, the first escape was found carried out at age 12 in these girls and the highest frequency of the escapes was found in the girls in an age range between 15 and 19<sup>[16]</sup>. This finding is not consistent with what was found in the current research paper but in compliance with the results obtained in the study by Shareh (2008) who explored the demographic variables associated with the house escaping risk in 500 girls from Mashhad<sup>[17]</sup>. It was also reported in the foresaid study that the more these girls get older the higher they are likely to escape. Possibly, it is due to the reason that they find themselves in need of the family's support to a lesser extent and seek more independence. This finding is in accordance with the findings of the studies by Yuder, Whiteback and Howit.

In addition, based on the findings of the table, the average marriage age of the runaway women group is  $17.6 \pm 3.7$  and the average marriage age of the normal women group is  $19.4 \pm 3.3$  and this is reflective of the idea that the women from the former group have married at a lower age that can per se be a reason for their trying to escape the family's inappropriate environment and the poverty resulting from the large number of the family members. It was mentioned in the study by Shareh that only 9.6% of the study sample volume had married with their own agreement and their family's consent.

According to the information in this table, the average and standard deviation of the spouses' age do not significantly differ for the two runaway and normal women groups.

Based on the findings of tables (2), the psychological violence has been very severe in runaway women and girls' groups for 62.5% and 67.5% of the cases, respectively; as for the normal women, the psychological violence was reported to be mild in 83.8% and 81.2% of the cases, respectively ( $P=0.000$ ).

In regard of the verbal violence, it was found intermediate and very severe in the runaway women and girls' groups in 35.1% and 42.5% of the cases, respectively; it was reported to be mild in the normal girls and women groups in 72.5% and 77.5% of the cases, respectively ( $P=0.000$ ).

The verbal violence was severe in 36.2% of the cases in the runaway group; it was mild in 75% of the cases for the normal group for which also the highest frequency rate was documented ( $P=0.000$ ). Resultantly, the runaway girls and women had been subjected to more domestic violence than the normal girls and women. This finding is consistent with the results obtained in the studies by Tehranizadeh (2004), Haifel et al (2005), Kiopi and Tierson (2003), Oto et al (2003), Roberts and Gamble (2001), Fathi (2008), Kamrani Fakour

(2006), Raheb (2001), Martin, Langley and Miley (2006) and Irland and Smith (2007)<sup>[18-28]</sup>. Moreover, the majority of the girls who had escaped their houses were also found having been verbally and psychologically annoyed and teased (Malek Afzali et al, 2004) and these differences were also properly highlighted in the current research paper<sup>[29]</sup>.

It was made clear in the study that had been conducted by Fathi (2008) that the runaway girls have been subjected to more physical, psychological and/or even sexual annoyance by their families' guardians or members than their normal counterparts and this is consistent with the results obtained herein<sup>[30]</sup>. The study by Malek Afzali, Mahdizadeh and Farajzadegan (2004) who studied the women in Isfahan showed that the highest frequency of violence types goes to verbal-psychological violence (34% to 64%). Sexual, economic and physical violence were reported in the next ranks (5% to 53%)<sup>[29]</sup>. Furthermore, Hati, Davis and Bruke reported that the majority of the adolescents and youngsters who escape their homes and prefer to live in the streets have asserted that their families subjected them to physical (65%) and psychological (80%) annoyance<sup>[31]</sup>. The results of the study by Narimani et al (2005) in Ardabil showed that the men usually treat their women violent in psychological (55.5%), social (32%), physical (28.5%) and sexual (12.5%) terms; amongst these four types of violence, the highest frequency was found belonging to psychological violence<sup>[32]</sup>. The results of the study by Balali Maibodi et al (2006) showed that 46% of the studied runaway women had been subjected to various types of physical, sexual, economic, social and psychological violence by their spouses. The most prevalent type of violence was psychological (78.6%) followed by physical (55.6%) and economic (34.7%) and the least prevalent violence was sexual<sup>[33]</sup>. The present study showed in a final summing of the findings that the runaway girls and women have been far increasingly subjected by their parents and/or their other family members or spouses to physical, psychological, sexual, verbal, economic and social violence than the normal groups' participants and, since these individuals (the runaway women and girls) do not make use of proper behavioral and cognitive solutions for coping with the stressing conditions, they are found more resorting to escape. In fact, these individuals have not escaped for void reasons rather their escape marks a shout for help and release of their families' improper conditions. Therefore, the violence against the women and girls plays a considerable role in their escaping of their houses. The violent behavior in the family will be followed by inappropriate outcomes for the children, adolescents and women. The weaker the bond and attachment between these individuals and the society, particularly the family members, the higher they are likely to become deviant. In fact, an individual's feeling towards the others with whom s/he is closely related causes him or her to be careful and sensitive about what s/he thinks of his or her behavior. Therefore, controlling of the misbehavior, including house escape, is interwoven with the adolescents and youths' attachment to their parents and family members<sup>[34]</sup>. This causes these individuals to prefer street to the highly

turbulent environment of their houses and their return to the family might even render their status at home tougher and this sets the ground for their frequent future escapes and engagement in criminality<sup>[35]</sup>.

Amongst the constraints of the present study, the differences in the individual statuses and the psychological-mental states of the women during their completion of the questionnaires can be pointed out.

## Conclusion

The results of the present study indicated that there is a significant relationship between verbal and psychological violence and the girls and women's escape from their houses.

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