

Social Reasons for Girls to Run Away

Alaa Faisal, M.D. Hamza Jawad

Department of Sociology, College of Arts, University of Baghdad
aalaa.ahmed2201m@coart.uobaghdad.edu.iq

Abstract

The problem of adolescent girls escaping from homes is one of the social problems and phenomena alien to all societies, Arabic in particular, the Iraqi society known for its ancient traditions and family cohesion, and according to the significant changes witnessed by those societies, including Iraqi society, these changes led to the emergence of many deviant phenomena among the most affected youth, resulting in high rates of deviation and the spread of new subcultures that did not exist before that reject conservative family values and create new values that try to adapt to These rapid changes and we find that adolescent girls are often affected by them, as we see a lot of teenage girls between the values of the conservative family and the values of the new subculture that calls for rebellion against parental authority and disobedience to their orders and escape from home, so escape has become a ghost that threatens many safe and stable homes and brings them sadness and shame, as it has become difficult for the family to forget, The fact that escape leads to immediate and long-term risks, the immediate risks of homelessness and social disintegration and long-term involvement in crime and drug addiction, especially those who are in their teens (10_18) as they aim at the unknown as a result of which it is necessary to study the social and psychological effects that can have a profound impact on the feet of adolescent girls to escape from homes and leave the family, which has profound effects not only on the family but on society as a whole.

Keywords: girls - runaways - reasons for running away – factors.

1. Introduction

The first requirement: Study elements

First / Study problem

Girls running away from home is one of the serious social problems that societies suffer from in their different environments, considering that running away is one of the types of deviant behaviors and that the degree of its spread within society is somewhat dependent on the degree of spread of deviant behaviors in various forms in society. Therefore, the emergence of girls running away and its spread among Iraqi families known for their family cohesion and respect

for customs and traditions is related to social change, as we find girls often affected by the surrounding circumstances in addition to the social problems resulting from family disintegration or the absence of one or both parents, in addition to the type of treatment that the girl receives from the family or the violence practiced against her by beating, cursing, or sexual assault by a family member or outside it. The current study seeks to raise some questions, perhaps the most important of which are- :

1. What causes and factors leave the problem of girls running away?
2. What scientific and practical solutions can contribute to reducing the problem?

Secondly/ Importance of the Study

The current study has particular importance derived from the chosen topic, as girls' escape is considered a strange phenomenon in Iraqi society, known for its authentic values and familiar customs. However, there are indications of its spread among teenage girls in society. In light of this, the theoretical importance revolves around the fact that it is a vital topic that threatens community security and requires attention from researchers and academics in light of the scarcity of local and Arab studies in order to intensify studies and research in the future in order to reach some recommendations and proposals to limit its spread in society. As for the practical importance, it lies in enhancing the awareness of specialists and community institutions of the dangers of girls' escape from home and limiting it, and because identifying the causes, factors, and influential effects through which girls' escape can be predicted lays the foundation stone for us in designing preventive awareness programs in order to avoid their effects on the family and society.

Thirdly/ Objectives of the Study

- 1- The study sheds light on the most important causes, factors, and effects leading to girls' escape.
- 2- They study the immediate and future dimensions of girls' escape and their suffering after escape.
- 3- Knowing the moral difference between the actual and expected answers of the respondents regarding the extent of the impact of social communication and facilitating their escape from home.

The second requirement: Basic concepts of the study

- **Escape:** is fleeing from something when you feel fear or danger and you act involuntarily when you find yourself unable to work and live with the reality surrounding you, which is socially acceptable, such as seeking refuge with family or a government institution, and socially unacceptable is running away from home without returning (1), a girl leaving the family home without her family's permission or their knowledge of the escape, i.e. a distinguished, sane person leaving her guardian's home by her own choice for lousy intent, then one of her family members informs the competent authorities to arrest her (2).

- **Social problem:** an undesirable social phenomenon or represents difficulties or obstacles that hinder the course of things in society and is the result of circumstances affecting a large number

of individuals that make them consider the result undesirable and challenging to treat individually, but instead requires their treatment through collective social action (3).

- Family: A biological, social group consisting of a man and a woman (there is a marital bond between them, and its most important function is to satisfy emotional needs and create a suitable and appropriate social and cultural climate for caring for, raising, educating and guiding their children in family life.
- Deviation: An intentional behavior that requires training and learning, but in reality, deviation results from certain compelling circumstances that push a person to commit deviant behavior without prior planning or training. Some define it as the result of contradictions and conflicts in the social structure, i.e., the conflict between legitimate goals and the means to achieve society's goals.

^{1,2} Al-Suhaim, Muhammad bin Abdullah and others, *Girls' Runaways, Its Causes and Treatment* (Research and Studies Center of the Presidency of the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice), p. 6.

³ Gharbi Sabah, *Social Problems*, Dar Al-Majd for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, Algeria, 2020, p. 16.

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Third requirement: The frame of reference

First/ The theory explaining the research problem

The theory explaining escape There are many theories explaining women's deviant behavior. However, most theories look in general, and those in charge of these social and psychological theories try to explain women's deviant behavior. Perhaps the most prominent of these models and theoretical concepts that provide an explanation for girls' escape from home is the anomie theory, as the anomie theory focuses on identifying the social sources of deviant behavior, those sources that are linked together to create disparity In the rates of deviation and the image variation in different groups that occupy certain positions in the social structure, this concept had apparent effects in the theories of sociology, where the scientist Durkheim, the founder of the theory, stated that deviant phenomena appear through individuals because they take them as tools to express themselves, and they depend on the extent of the cohesion and disintegration of the

units of this social structure, and the source of this deviant behavior lies in the social context that tries to formulate individuals according to its image and gain their identity, and emphasizes that human behavior is determined (1) by the collective conscience, and Durkheim explains that the collapse of the moral structure of society came as a result of the collapse of religious belief, For society, which led to a moral gap on the one hand, and on the other hand, the shaking and collapse of traditional morals with the failure to replace them with another moral system, so that moral rules no longer have their binding force, so that a state of anomie prevails, which has effects on the individual level, as the person enters into the connection with morality through benefit and pleasure. This means that the individual neglects his obligations towards society and weakens solidarity with society. Thus, the person does not feel safe and stable in the face of the behavior of others. In the absence of controlling morals, we find the person performing behavior without a clear awareness of the extent of its consistency with the actions of other individuals in society or its contradiction with them. Here, it means the dominance of a state of non-normativity. The spread of anomie and social disintegration in society generates pressures on individuals, especially when society fails to provide the opportunity for its individuals to achieve their goals, which leads to frustration and, consequently, deviation. Circumstances, with all their social, psychological, and economic implications, constitute stressful factors that push girls, in particular, to deviate when the relationship between social ambition and socially acceptable methods of achieving goals is broken, especially when girls go through experiences that conflict with their ambition and opportunities for success. By achievement (1).

Samia Muhammad Jabir, *Social Deviation between Sociological Theory and Social Reality*, Dar Al-Ma'rifah Al-Jami'iyah, 1998, p. 20.

Secondly/ Examples of previous studies

- The study of researcher Ali bin Saleh entitled *_Proselytizing efforts in dealing with girls' escape, the Medina region as a model)* 1433-1434

The study confirms that research on proselytizing efforts in dealing with girls' escape is done through clear frameworks, rules derived, and means of addressing people of different genders who want to convey goodness to them while adhering to the teachings of religion that must be preserved. The way of life has been that the educator of children is the father and mother, then society as a second educator, including the school and the street, then the media participated in educating generations, trying to determine behavior and live with it, as it sought through its exciting and enjoyable means to disintegrate the family and incite the spirit of rebellion against customs and traditions and even Sharia through what it presents of low-level programs that encourage escaping from the family bond (1)

The reasons for the study include:

- 1- The weakness of religious restraint with the educational role that the family plays.
- 2- The absence of the language of dialogue and understanding between the girl and the parents.

3- Family disintegration with the absence of one or both parents was one of the reasons for the escape.

While the objectives sought to identify the reasons and motives leading to escape, clarify how to escape and account for it, the study's results reached the weakness of the family's educational role, with the absence of a language of understanding and excessive cruelty in dealing with the girl.

- Researcher Farah Salman Hassan's study entitled: (The phenomenon of girls' escape: causes and treatments), 2021 (2)

The increase in girls' escape from homes is a social problem. Attention must be paid to it because it affects our Iraqi society as a Muslim country first and an Arab country second. It has its customs and traditions, so it is necessary to research the reasons and factors behind the escape, including demographic, social, and economic factors, family disintegration, and violence to which girls are exposed within their families, which makes the girl run away from home and leave her family. She runs away from an environment in which she is accustomed to another environment.

- Study objectives

- Identify the most critical social and economic factors that push girls to run away and leave home while studying the suffering after the escape by reaching out to the runaway girl and revealing the reasons.
- Identifying the role of socialization in the family and violence directed at girls and its effects on increasing escape.

¹Ali bin Saleh, Advocacy efforts in addressing girls' escape from Medina, previous source, p. 52

² Farah Salman Hassan, The phenomenon of girls' escape: causes and treatments: a field social study in Baghdad, unpublished master's thesis, University of Baghdad, College of Education for Girls, Department of Social Service, 2021.

Study methodology and sample community

The social approach was used, and the sample chose the sample research method (sample survey) by representing the whole with the part and conducting an interview with the runaway girls in the shelter in Baghdad, numbering (220) who were chosen in batches to be verified and reach the correct information.

Study results

- Neglecting family care for girls is one reason that leads to escape; the percentage reached 99.4% of the sample's answers.

- The economic factor is the highest axis of aftercare and a reason for escape; the percentage reached 93.6% of the sample's answers.

Fourth requirement: Theoretical framework

First / Reasons for teenage girls to run away

Studies confirm that girls' runaways differ from boys' runaways because girls face standard challenges in adolescence due to their social and cultural reality. These challenges form a purposeful identity for their environment and form relationships outside the family framework. Girls, especially in male-dominated Arab societies, face social and psychological pressures and constant tensions as a result of the stereotypical reality imposed by society. When girls see their basic and personal needs not being met or neglected, and its members see them in their view within society as secondary, this pushes many girls to suffer and struggle with themselves. Many reasons are evident that pave the way for girls to run away from home, namely:-

1- Domestic violence: This is one of the types of verbal, physical, or sexual assault issued by the strongest in the family against a member of his family, who are (girls) who represent the weakest group within the family environment (1).

2- Weak religious culture and lack of religious awareness: Being far from religion is one of the causes of domestic violence. Weak faith is one of the main factors that lead to problems and conflicts within the family and, consequently, family disintegration because the protective barrier is weak among the parents, and they cannot confront family problems.

3- Violence and masculinity: As a result of incorrect upbringing, we find that the man does not feel that his masculinity is complete except when he hits and fights so that his surroundings say that he is a strong and tough man towards his wife and children, although masculinity certainly does not come from practicing violence against the weak, since the family is a trust in his neck.

4- Tribal fanaticism: We find that some tribes did not live in cities until recently, instilling beliefs and establishing in their men and children that women were created to serve and obey and have no right to practice violence, especially psychological violence.

5- Coercion and compulsion to marry: It is a form of domestic violence practiced on teenage girls, as forcing girls to marry by force pushes them to run away from home. Second: Factors that encourage girls to run away from home

A- Domestic violence: Violence is a negative phenomenon. It is a verbal, physical, or sexual assault committed by the stronger in the family against one or more individuals who represent the weaker group. Most girls are exposed to violence within their family environment.

B- Weak religious culture: If religious awareness is low and they are far from religion, it is a cause of domestic violence. When a person is not founded correctly, what he says or does will not be correct. The Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, forbade beating women and considered it a shortcoming for men (1). Weak faith is also one of the most critical factors that lead to problems and disputes within the family, which leads to the disintegration of family ties.

¹ Ghura Baydoun, *Masculinity and Changing Women's Origins*, a Field Study, Arab Cultural Center, Casablanca, Morocco, 2005, p. 55.

If the parents' faith is weak, they will make mistakes, as the guest of faith will lose an unparalleled protective barrier when facing life's problems.

T- Tribal culture: Some tribes that have not inhabited cities until recently or are still roaming the deserts instill beliefs that they teach and base their men and children on, which is an essential factor in causing psychological pressure and oppression towards women, as some Bedouin tribes view women as if they are creatures created to serve and obey without any right or mercy, so they practice all kinds of violence against them, mainly psychological, as there is no support, containment or tenderness, and the most significant disaster is that the woman, in light of all this, feels that what is happening is normal and that she was created for that purpose (1)

- The relationship between the parents and the girl: The girl's feelings depend on the treatment she receives from her parents. One of the manifestations of turmoil between the girl and her father is if the interaction between them is slow. The relationship is tense between them, especially if one of the parents refuses to marry her or forces her to marry someone she does not want, or the relationship is violent as a result of them practicing some violence against her (). C- Forced marriage: It is a form of domestic violence, as forcing a girl into a forced marriage pushes her to leave home and escape from a marriage she does not want (2) H- Family disintegration: The disintegration of the family means the cracking of its internal and external social relations, the dissolution of its cohesive unity and the destruction of its structural structure, making it difficult for its members, especially the parents, to fulfill their obligations and perform their roles towards the rest of the family members and society (2).

¹ Ali Al-Wardi, *A Study of the Nature of Iraqi Society*, Dijlah and Euphrates Library Publishing House 2009, p. 99.

² Ibrahim Abdul Mohsen Hajjaj, *Social Welfare, Its Legislation and Characteristics*, Dar Al-Taalim Al-Jami'i, Egypt. 1st ed. 2016, p. 77.

Fifth requirement: Field framework

- Presentation and analysis of the primary data of runaway girls to identify the characteristics and features of the study sample

1- The age of the respondents

Table (1) shows the age of the runaway girls

Phrase	Replicates	Percentage	Rank	Mean
12-10	4	% 3.1	Third	14.06
15-13	8	% 6.2	Second	Standard Deviation

18-16	118	% 90.7	First	3.13
Total	130	% 100		

From Table (1), it is clear to us that the distribution of percentages according to age, as (90.7%) of the sample studied, with (118) respondents, were in the girls' age group (16-18) years, and (6.2%), with (8) respondents, were in the girls' age group (13-15), and (3.1%) of the sample studied, with (4) respondents, were in the girls' age group (10-12) years, noting that the arithmetic mean of the respondents' ages was (14.06). The standard deviation was (3.13).

2- Social status of the runaway girl

Table (2) shows the social status of the runaway girl

Phrase	Replicates	Percentage	Rank
Single	101	%77.7	First
Married	16	%12.3	Second
Divorced	13	%10	Third
Total	130	%100	

From Table (2), it is clear that the distribution of percentages according to social status is represented by a percentage of (77.7%) for the first rank (single), a percentage of (12.3%) for the second rank (married), and so on for the rest of the paragraphs. The results show the dominance of the paragraph (single) in the sample under study.

3- The educational level of the runaway girl

Table (3) shows the educational level of the runaway girl

Phrase	Replicates	Percentage	Rank
Cannot read or write	22	%16.9	Fourth
Can read and write	32	%24.6	Second
Intermediate	45	%34.6	First
Preparatory	31	%23.9	Third
Total	130	%100	

The results related to the runaway's educational level variable varied, as shown in Table (3). The paragraph (intermediate) ranked first with a frequency of (45) and a percentage of (34.6%), while the paragraph (reads and writes) ranked second with a frequency of (32) and a percentage of (24.6%). The paragraph (preparatory) ranked third with a frequency of (31) and a percentage of (23.9%), and the paragraph (illiteracy) ranked fourth with a frequency of (22) and a percentage of (16.9%).

4- The nature of the relationship and its safety between the runaway girl and her parents

Table (4) shows the nature of the relationship and its safety between the runaway girl and her parents

Phrase	Replicates	Percentage	Rank
Yes	59	% 45.4	Second
No	71	% 54.6	First
Total	130	% 100	

The sample surveyed responded regarding the nature and safety of the relationship between the runaway girl and her parents. The phrase (no) occupied the first place with a frequency of (71) and a percentage of (54.6%), and the phrase (yes) occupied the second place with a frequency of (59) and a percentage of (45.4%).

5- The runaway girl witnessed manifestations of abuse and violence between the parents

Table (5) shows that the runaway girl witnessed manifestations of abuse and violence between the parents

Phrase	Replicates	Percentage	Rank
Yes	102	% 78.5	First
No	28	% 21.5	Second
Total	130	% 100	

The respondents answered with the phrase (yes), and it was ranked first with a frequency of (102) and a percentage of (78.5%), while the second place was for the phrase (no) with a frequency of (28) and a percentage of (21.5%).

6- The type of abuse and domestic violence that the girl witnessed between her parents before her escape

Table (6) shows the type of abuse and domestic violence that the girl witnessed between her parents before her escape

Phrase	Replicates	Percentage	Rank
Physical Violence	62	% 47.7	First
Verbal Violence	20	% 15.4	Second
Psychological Violence	10	% 7.7	Third
Economic Violence	10	% 7.7	Third
Total	102	% 78.5	

Based on the data in Table (6), the number of respondents who answered (yes) reached (102) respondents, and the answers of the sample surveyed in Table (7) regarding the type of abuse and domestic violence that the girl witnessed between her parents before her escape are shown in Table (), where the phrase (physical violence) got the first place with a frequency of (62) and a percentage of (47.7%). In contrast, the phrase (verbal violence) got the second place with a frequency of (20) and a percentage of (15.4%), and the two phrases (psychological violence, economic violence) got the third place with a frequency of (10) and a percentage of (7.7%).

7- The runaway girl is exposed to any form of abuse on an ongoing basis

Table (7) shows the extent to which the runaway girl is exposed to any form of abuse on an ongoing basis

Phrase	Replicates	Percentage	Rank
Yes	111	% 85.4	First
No	19	% 14.6	Second
Total	130	% 100	

Table (7) shows that the respondents answered with the phrase (yes), which was ranked first with a frequency of (111) and a percentage of (85.4%), while the second place was for the phrase (no) with a frequency of (19) and a percentage of (14.6%).

8- The type of abuse that the girl was exposed to from her parents before running away

Table (8) shows the type of abuse that the girl was exposed to from her parents before running away

Phrase	Replicates	Percentage	Rank
Hitting or physical violence	72	% 55.4	First
Insults and cursing	26	% 20	Second
Calling you with annoying nicknames	6	% 4.6	Fourth
Grabbing you in forbidden places under the pretext of joking	7	% 5.4	Third
Total	111	% 85.4	

Based on the data in Table (7), the number of respondents who answered (yes) reached (111) respondents, and the answers of the sample surveyed in Table (9) regarding the type of abuse that the girl was exposed to from her parents before running away, it became clear from Table (7) that the phrase (beating or physical violence) obtained first place with a frequency of (72) and a percentage of (55.4%), while the phrase (insults and cursing) obtained second place with a frequency of (26) and a percentage of (20%), and the phrase (touching you in forbidden places under the pretext of joking) came in third place with a frequency of (7) and a percentage of (5.4%), and the phrase (calling you with nicknames that cause disturbance) obtained fourth place with a frequency of (6) and a percentage of (4.6%).

2. Study results

1. The results of the study showed that most of the individuals in the study sample of runaway girls ranged in age from (16-18) years, with (118) and a percentage of (90.7%).
 2. Most of the study sample members of runaway girls have a social status of (single), i.e., not married, with a rate of (101) and a rate of (77.7%).
 3. Nearly half of the study sample members of runaway girls have an educational attainment of (intermediate), with a rate of (45) and a rate of (34.6%).
 4. Most of the study sample members of runaway girls had parents alive, with a rate of (86) and a rate of (66.1%).
 5. More than half of the study sample members had parents living together, with a rate of (73) and a rate of (56.2%).
- The aggressor on the girl before running away was (one of the relatives or a stranger), as they appeared with the same frequency, with a rate of (12) and a rate of (9.2%).
6. Half of the girls answered that the deviation of the family or one of its members encouraged the girl to run away, with a rate of (68) and a rate of (52.3%).

7. Most sample members indicated that the absence of one or both parents encouraged the girl to run away, with (81) and a percentage of (62.3%).
8. The sample responses indicated that the reasons that prompted the girls to run away were marital disputes, with (39) and a percentage of (30%).
9. Most sample members indicated the central role of social media in facilitating the process of girls running away, with (94) and a percentage of (72.3%).
10. Most of the girls indicated that the reason for creating a page on social media sites was to enter into emotional relationships, with (72) and a percentage of (55.4%).
11. A quarter of the sample members resorted to social institutions after running away, with (40) and a percentage of (30.7%).

3. Recommendations

- A- Providing support and assistance to girls who run away from home and reintegrating them into society to avoid their deviation.
- B- Trying to research and uncover all the conflicts and psychological and social diseases that girls who run away from their families suffer from and working to strengthen the relationship between the family and the girl.
- C- The necessity of educating parents about proper upbringing and social upbringing to achieve social and psychological balance for teenage girls.
- D- Linking institutions concerned with combating domestic violence and children's problems with research and study centers to obtain correct data and necessary treatments for such cases.
- E- Expanding the provision of awareness guidance programs in order to empower and support families, especially groups at risk.
- F- Issuing special deterrent penalties for anyone who practices luring, seduction, blackmail, or indecent assault.

4. Proposals

- 1- Work on increasing the number of shelters in Baghdad and the governorates, as they are few, as there is only one shelter in Baghdad that includes all categories of runaway and homeless girls, those who have lost their families and have no one to support them, with the necessity of the girl remaining in the shelter even if she has reached adulthood so that the street does not drag her into places and places of vice.
- 2- Conduct more social studies on the social problems that affect the family, especially girls.
- 3- Conduct a study on trafficking in girls and its repercussions on society.

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