

## Psychological Condition of Students of Fatherless (Martyr) Families

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**Abstract:** The main goal of present study is to compare psychological condition of student from fatherless families (whose father has been martyred) and non- fatherless families. Statistical society consists of all male and female students (fatherless and non- fatherless) who were studying in middle and high school of Ardabil at 2001. They were studying in Schools for Martyr's children. One group consist of children whose father has been martyred (fatherless group as case group) that were selected through census method and another group, children whose father were alive (non- fatherless group as control) that were studying in the same school and selected through simple random sampling method. This is a causal-comparative study as father's condition (martyred or alive) is independent variable and psychological condition is dependent variable. Also, researcher edited questionnaire and Woodworth test were used to collect data. Results showed that feeling of self-worth were higher among non- fatherless children. There is significant difference between fatherless and non-fatherless groups for psychasthenia and obsession, withdrawal tendencies, depression and aggression ( $p < 0.05$ ) implying that non- fatherless students have better condition for above issues than fatherless students. There is significant difference between two groups of fatherless families whose members had desirable and undesirable relationships with each other, for emotional reactivity, psychasthenia and obsession, paranoid tendencies, depression and aggressive tendencies ( $p < 0.05$ ). Among fatherless children who were enjoying strong, moderate and weak family support differences significantly emerged in emotional reactivity, psychasthenia, obsession, withdrawal and paranoid and aggressive tendencies and depression. It means that students whose family support was strong had better condition in mentioned psychological issues.

**Key words:** Student, martyr, fatherless, non-martyr, psychological condition

### INTRODUCTION

Father is one of the important kingpins of family and this is a melancholy event to be martyred. Freud indicates that there is no other need as important as need for father in the childhood. And his absence can induce various problems (Shultz and Sultz, 2001). There are evidences that show effect of children deprivation of father on their personality formation and normal development and prove that personality can be the intervenient variable and explainer variable between father's death and emergence of diverse psychological disease in the next years and even in the childhood and adolescence (Mohammadian 1995). The most common behavioral problems among fatherless children are Hyperactivity disorder, dysthymia, embarrassment, aggression, contumacy and disruptive disorder. Also neurotic disorders were generally more common than persecution disorders among fatherless students (Narimani, 2000). Study of Najarian and Pooravaz (1991) under the title of "evaluation of psycho-behavioral disorders among fatherless (martyr)

and non- fatherless students of primary schools of Ahvaz City" showed that, persecution behaviors disorders are significantly more common than neurotic and also showed that fatherless students display more psycho-behavioral problems than non- fatherless students. Various studies have approved relation between father absent and affect disorders, behavioral misadjusting and mental disorders. One of these studies is of Abbaspour (2000) show that fatherless students are at lower level for all mental health issues. Parents absent in the childhood predispose children in the adolescence and youth depression, anxiety (Kendler *et al.*, 1992) drug abuse (Kendler *et al.*, 1996) schizophrenia, divorce and cigarette smoking (Agid *et al.*, 1999). Results of Leucken and Appelhans (2005) research show that father absent increase affect and behavioral disorders. Parents absent induce depression, behavioral disorders and low self-esteem in the children (Barefoot and School, 1995). Results of Sanchez, research (2001) show that divorce of parents and their absent affect confrontation skills, self-esteem, social adaptation and defense mechanisms of children and

adolescents. Deprivation of father endangers mental health of children and adolescents (Flinn *et al.*, 1996). More precise studies with differential view, reach newer findings that indicate relation between father absent and depression in children. Results of Mohammadion research (1995) show that fatherless students show more depression in the comparison with non-fatherless students. There is positive relation between deprivation of parents and depression and anxiety (Kendler *et al.*, 1992). Level of anxiety was significantly higher among fatherless students than non-fatherless students (Heydari and Farzadseyr, 1997). Some of studies have surveyed association between father absent and aggressive behaviors and have shown role of father in producing of aggressive reactions like violence, animosity and even antisocial behaviors in the children (Mohammadion, 1995). Separation of child and mother before 11 years old, influence children and adolescent depression more than father death (Tennant, 1988). Women who had major depression have noted her separation of mother before 17 years old (Hallstrom, 1987). Deprivation of both parents (father and mother) increase depression rate (Oakley Brown *et al.*, 1995). Also, losing parents before 10 years old effect other mental disorder, like acrophobia. Panic disorder and phobia are more common in parent deprived children (Woodall and Matthew, 1993). Results of Canetti *et al.* (2000) study show that there is significant difference between two children who have and who don't have father, for somatisation disorder, hysteria, anxiety, depression and self-worth feeling. Is there significant difference between students with and without father in the mental health? This is the title of research accomplished by Ahmadkhani (2001) and its results show that there is significant difference between these 2 groups. Research result of Masmas *et al.* (2004) show that there isn't significant difference between students with and without father while Luecken (2000) showed that father deprived children who enjoyed intimate familial relations had better psychological condition than who don't have father and intimate familial relationship. Deprivation of father in children of families with intimate relation has less negative effect (Nicoloson, 2004). There is negative relation between social support and mental disorder in the children that are deprived of father (Unichno *et al.*, 1996; House *et al.*, 1988). Most of studies that have showed that father deprived children in the families with intimate relations have shown more adaptive behavior (Saler and Skolnick, 1992; Samaniego, 1978). Results of Luecken's study (2000) showed that depression and anger in the children and adolescent has significant relationship with negative behaviors of parents like reject, negative

emotional relation and dogged control (Matthew *et al.*, 1996). Whereas other researcher's findings show having emotional relation and correct care of children inhibit depression prevalence in the adolescent and youth (Oliver and Paul, 1995).

According to study of main resource of topic the main hypotheses include, there is different between fatherless and non-fatherless students for the self-worth.

There is significant difference between fatherless and non-fatherless students in the different states of Woodworth test. There is significant difference between subgroup of fatherless students (with desirable and undesirable family relation) in the different states of Woodworth test. There is significant relation between family support and different states of Woodworth test.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method was causal-comparative. Statistical society consists of all male and female students (fatherless and non-fatherless) who were studying in middle and high school of Ardabil at 2001. To select fatherless students group with 226 numbers we use sensus method. Another group, non-fatherless students who were studying at Schools for Martyr (fatherless) Students, was selected through simple random sampling. After sampling, data collocating were executed at the place of students studying. At first, researcher edited questionnaire and then Woodworth personality questionnaire were completed. It is notable that in this study descriptive statistical tests like t test and also one way ANOVA and LSD test were been used to analyze data.

Also to collect data, Woodworth test was been used. This test has 8 items and has been designed by Woodworth and is used for 12-18 years old. Its items include emotional reactivity, psychasthenia and obsession, withdrawal tendencies, paranoid tendencies, depression tendencies, aggressive tendencies, restlessness tendencies and antisocial tendencies. And comprise 78 two options questions. In current study Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.90 for all samples and for male and female were 0.91 and 0.88, respectively. Also through evaluation of simultaneous validity of this criterion by SCL-90 ( $r = 0.57$ ) has obtained (Narimani, 2000).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of study show that 226 of fatherless family students (male and female) are studying at middle and high schools and range in age from 12-18. Almost 74% of

student's mothers were housewife and 6% were occupied. 43% of families had moderate economic class 35% of families had well economic class but 22% had low economic class. 42% of them didn't pleasure in their educational condition but rest did.

Evaluation of Psychological condition of students of fatherless families about Woodworth test items show that 25% in emotional reactivity, 17% in psychasthenia and obsession, 17% in withdrawal tendencies, 26% in paranoid tendencies, 24% in depression tendencies, 3% in aggression tendencies, 20% in restlessness tendencies and 35% in antisocial tendencies have mean score upper than norm.

Table 1: Distribution of students according to rate of self-worth

Self-worth feeling	Case		Control	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Nothing	11	4.9	6	2.7
A little	17	7.5	6	2.7
Half	57	25.2	32	14.2
Much	67	29.6	79	35
Very much	69	30.5	100	44.2
Missing	5	2.2	3	1.3
Total	226	100	226	100

Table 1 show that approximately 60% of fatherless students and 80% of non- fatherless students feel self-worth in the much and very much level that is reflecting significant difference between 2 groups in the feeling of self-worth.

Table 2 show that obtained t in the psychasthenia and obsession, withdrawal tendencies, depression, aggressive and antisocial tendencies of Woodworth test in the level 5% is significant. videlicet non- fatherless students had better condition in the psychasthenia and obsession, withdrawal tendencies, depression, aggressive and antisocial tendencies.

Table 3 shows that mean of scores of martyr student that their family members have desirable relation with each other are significantly ( $p = 0.05$ ) higher than students of martyr family with undesirable relations.

As is seen in the above Table 4, rate of family support has significant relation with emotional reactivity, psychasthenia and obsession, withdrawal tendencies, paranoid tendencies, depression and aggression, because the obtained f is significant ( $p = 0.05$ ).

Table 2: Comparison between scores of fatherless and non- fatherless students in different states of Woodworth test

Dependent variables	Groups	Mean	Standard deviation	t	Level of significance
Emotional reactivity	Case	2.48	1.91	0.29	0.77
	Control	2.36	1.77		
Psychasthenia and obsession	Case	3.62	2.40	2.8	0.03
	Control	2.56	1.84		
Withdrawal tendencies	Case	4.47	3.08	2	0.05
	Control	3.38	2.53		
Paranoid tendencies	Case	5.38	3.50	1.31	0.26
	Control	4.53	3.41		
Depression tendencies	Case	6.11	2.78	2	0.04
	Control	4.87	2.84		
Aggressive tendencies	Case	3.29	1.94	2.59	0.01
	Control	2.26	1.60		
Restlessness tendencies	Case	2.69	1.76	1.43	0.15
	Control	2.15	1.66		
Antisocial tendencies	Case	1.86	1.07	2.67	0.009
	Control	1.27	0.96		

Table 3: Comparison between two groups of fatherless students (Undesirable and desirable relation between family members) in different states of Woodworth test

Dependent variables	Levels of independent variables	Mean	Standard deviation	t	Level of significance
emotional reactivity	1-Undesirable relation between family members	4.94	2.52	2.52	0.01
	2- Desirable relation between family members	3.50	2.31		
Psychasthenia and obsession	1-Undesirable relation between family members	4.21	1.96	2.03	0.04
	2- Desirable relation between family members	3.69	2.45		
withdrawal tendencies	1-Undesirable relation between family members	5.26	2.13	1.57	0.08
	2- Desirable relation between family members	4.06	2.86		
paranoid tendencies	1-Undesirable relation between family members	6.57	3.50	2.03	0.04
	2- Desirable relation between family members	4.89	3.38		
depression tendencies	1-Undesirable relation between family members	7	2.53	2.25	0.02
	2- Desirable relation between family members	5.38	2.99		
aggressive tendencies	1-Undesirable relation between family members	3.94	1.30	2.23	0.02
	2- Desirable relation between family members	2.89	1.93		
restlessness tendencies	1-Undesirable relation between family members	3.05	1.95	1.02	0.30
	2- Desirable relation between family members	2.64	1.55		
antisocial tendencies	1-Undesirable relation between family members	1.64	1.21	1.24	0.21
	2- Desirable relation between family members	1.25	1.07		

Table 4: Relationship between family support in fatherless students and different states of Woodworth test

Dependent variables	Resources	Sum of means	Mean of sums	F	Level of significance
Emotional reactivity	Inter groups	43.29	21.64	3.92	0.021
	Intra groups	1069.8	5.51		
	Total	1113.09			
Psychasthenia and obsession	Inter groups	34.31	17.15	3.19	0.043
	Intra groups	1036.09	5.36		
	Total	1070.40			
Withdrawal tendencies	Inter groups	93.62	46.81	6.82	0.001
	Intra groups	351.86	6.86		
	Total	1479.99			
Paranoid tendencies	Inter groups	108.207	54.10	5.04	0.007
	Intra groups	2263.53	10.72		
	Total	2371.73			
Depression tendencies	Inter groups	90.94	45.47	5.82	0.003
	Intra groups	1669.25	7.8		
	Total	1760.19			
Aggressive tendencies	Inter groups	22.27	11.13	3.25	0.041
	Intra groups	657.85	3.42		
	Total	680.13			
Restlessness tendencies	Inter groups	7.21	3.60	1.53	0.226
	Intra groups	469.14	2.40		
	Total	476.36			
Antisocial tendencies	Inter groups	5.36	2.68	2.5	0.085
	Intra groups	166.9	1.07		
	Total	172.26			

Table 5: A brief of LSD test results for comparing mean of emotional reactivity, psychasthenia and obsession, withdrawal tendencies, paranoid tendencies depression

Variables	Groups	Good	Moderate	Bad
Emotional reactivity	Good	—	- 0.94	0.031
	Moderate	—	—	
	Bad	—	—	
Withdrawal tendencies	Good	—	-1.38	0.002
	Moderate	—	—	
	Bad	—	—	
Depressive tendencies	Good	—	- 0.34	0.004
	Moderate	—	—	
	Bad	—	—	
Psychasthenia and obsession	Good	—	-0.877	0.045
	Moderate	—	—	
	Bad	—	—	
Paranoid tendencies	Good	—	-1.326	0.022
	Moderate	—	—	
	Bad	—	—	

Table 5 shows that mean of scores of students who have high family support is lower than students with moderate family support in the emotional reactivity, psychasthenia and obsession, withdrawal tendencies, paranoid tendencies and depression.

The first hypothesis was predicting that there is significant difference between fatherless and non-fatherless students in the self-worth. Results showed

that there is significant difference between two groups of students in the feeling of self-worth. Obtained results accord with research findings of Barfot and School (1995) Canetti *et al.* (2000) and Sanchez *et al.* (2001). To explain findings can say that absent of father is regarded as a great failure. That is caused low self-esteem and self-worth in the fatherless students.

Second hypothesis was saying that there is difference between fatherless and non- fatherless students in the 8 states of Woodworth test. Obtained findings show that there is significant difference between fatherless and non- fatherless students in the psychasthenia and obsession, withdrawal tendencies, depression, aggressive and antisocial tendencies. videlicet non- fatherless students have better condition in mentioned items. These findings accord with findings of, (Mohammadion, 1995) Narimani (2000), Najjarian and Pooravaz (1991), Abbaspour (2000), Kendler *et al.* (1992 and 1996), Agid *et al.* (1999), Luecken and Appelhans (2005), Barfot and School (1975), Sanchez *et al.* (2001), Flinn *et al.* (1996), Heydari and Farzad (1997), Tennant (1998), Hallstrom (1987), Okley Brown (1995), Woodall and Matthew (1996) and Canetti (2001). Obtained result indicate that students who smart under father absent, show their unenviable feelings and affects, through abnormal reactions like somatic signs, anxiety, insomnia and depression videlicet parents loss disrupt the feeling of safety and this is effective in their social reaction failure. We can say that absent of father on the one hand affect the basic personality of child and on the other hand affect child relation with out world that may cause inconsistence of child personality, child's disability in decision, conflict and fear, that is resulting in mental and behavioral disorder in the childhood and adolescence in the fatherless students.

Next hypothesis compare scores of 2 groups of fatherless students with different familial relation (desirable and undesirable relation between family members). Obtained findings show that mean of scores in martyr students with undesirable relation is significantly higher than students with undesirable relation in the emotional reactivity, psychasthenia and depression, paranoid and aggressive tendencies. Obtained results accord with research results of Luecken (2000), Nicoloson (2004), Saler and Skolnick (1992), Samaniego (1978) and Oliver and Paul (1995). It is notable that being martyred of father isn't the only predictor factor of mental and behavioral disorder and beside this quality of emotional atmosphere of family and relations between members of family are from most important predictors.

The last hypothesis, there is relation between family support and different states of Woodworth test. Obtained findings show that there is relation between level of family support (strong, Moderate and weak) and emotional reactivity, psychasthenia, withdrawal tendencies, paranoid thoughts, depression and aggressive tendencies in the fatherless students. Mean of scores of students with strong family support, in the emotional reactivity, psychasthenia, withdrawal tendencies; paranoid thoughts

and depression were lower than students with moderate family support. These results accord with research results of Unichno *et al.* (1996), House *et al.* (1988), Luecken (2000), Matthews (1996) and Oliver and Paul (1995). To explain this can say, separating from father disrupt the emotional balance and inhibit satisfaction of its emotional needs. However with supportive atmosphere in the family help student in difficulties and cause balanced mental growth of fatherless students.

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