

EXAMINING THE EFFICACY OF INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR FIGHTING DROPPING OUT FROM SCHOOL

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***Abstract:** This article is drawn from a wider study. The main purpose of the study was to examine different perspectives for reasons to dropout as seen by students, teachers and managers in the Arab sector at Israel. Especially this study focused on personal familial, educational and organizational factors as potential factors for school dropout. In order to suggest a practical way to fight the dropout phenomena an intervention program was built by the reseachers and its effectiveness was examined by comparing a control group and a reseach group.*

***Key words:** school engagement, Pupils at Risk, learning motivation, learning self-efficacy ,sense of belonging , normative motivations , occupational aspirations*

Introduction:

Generally, **there** are two main programmatic approaches to dropout prevention. One approach is to provide supplemental services to students within an existing school program. The second approach is to provide an alternative school program either within an existing school [school within a school] or in a separate facility (alternative school). Both approaches do not attempt to change existing institutions serving most students, but rather create alternative programs or institutions to target students who are somehow identified as at-risk of dropping out.

Another programmatic approach to dropout prevention is to create alternative school programs that only target students at risk of dropping out. These programs can either operate within regular schools or as separate, alternative schools. They

generally provide a complete, but alternative educational program than the one found in regular, comprehensive schools. In addition, they typically provide many of the other support services that are found in supplemental programs.

Several meta-analyses were conducted in order to evaluate effectiveness of these programs. Stern, et al. (1989) evaluated 11 within-school academy programs in California high schools; Wehlage, et al. (1989) evaluated 12 alternative and 2 comprehensive schools; and Dynarski and Gleason (2002) evaluated 3 within-school and 6 alternative schools in their study. Although the programs differed in the types of students they enrolled, the curricula and services they provided, and the way they were structured, there appear to be several common features among effective programs:

- (1) A non-threatening environment for learning;
- (2) A caring and committed staff who accepted a personal responsibility for student success;
- (3) A school culture that encouraged staff risk-taking, self-governance, and professional collegiality;
- (4) A school structure that provided for a low student-teacher ratio and a small size to promote student engagement.

These reviews clearly illustrate that it is possible to create effective alternative programs to address the needs and promote the learning of students at risk of dropping out. Yet creating successful alternative programs presents a number of challenges. First, programs can have difficulty in attracting students because of negative perceptions by students, parents, and educators that such schools are a dumping group for negative students and that they symbolize the failure of the regular system (Dynarski & Gleason, 1998). Some programs have responded to this problem by restricting entry to more motivated at-risk students, which raises questions about the purpose of such schools. Second, because of their

low regard, such programs often have a hard time competing for resources with regular school programs.

Aims

The main goal of the current section is to build an intervention program which aims to:

1. Enhance student engagement to school.
2. Increase educational aspects of students in regard to school, such as learning motivation, learning self-efficacy and also sense of belonging to school.
3. Reduce risk factors such as discipline problems and involvement at violence.
4. Increase future normative motivations such as occupational aspirations.

In addition, this part will examine the efficacy of the program by conducting a quantitative study, which is appropriate to the subject of this study because it is based on assumptions that are based on theoretical literature and determine its contents. Quantitative research provides the researcher an opportunity to solidify or validate the questions and hypotheses he is investigating, as well as tools for generalization of the findings.

Intervention Meetings:

Intervention program included 10 lessons, while each lesson lasted for about 2.5 hours. The main goal of the intervention program was to reduce dropouts' rates of students and enhance their motivation to be more engaged with school while improving their future orientation towards work and life in general. During The intervention, several issues were addressed:

Meeting 1: Introduction

During the **first meeting** all students were introduced to one another, while every student shared with his/her friends the main reasons and motivations to participate in this program. Most students told they wish to reduce their

problems at school; In addition, they described how their parents insisted them to follow the instructions of the program since it is their last chance not to drop out of school. From a research point of view, during the introduction meeting the study staff gathered the questionnaire for the first measurement point.

Meeting 2-4:

In these meetings, the intervention mostly focused on engagement concept, while we described students the importance of engagement to school, as well as to other activities and especially to work. Engagement is considered the primary theoretical model for understanding dropout and is necessary to promote school completion, defined as graduation from high school with sufficient academic and social skills to partake in postsecondary enrollment options and/or the world of work, sufficient engagement with school, however, does not occur for far too many students in the program. Therefore, together we defined ways to promote engagement to school. Several students described their difficulties in this area and said: "For all of my life it has been hard for me to keep going to school. In fact, I do not remember finishing anything important. I always quit before that". The program succeeded in enhancing both cognitive and psychological engagement of students to school. In the end of the program students reported higher rated of showing to school and keeping up the educational assignments.

Relationships between students and adults in schools, and among students themselves, are a critical factor of student engagement. This is especially true among students considered to be at-risk and without other positive adult interaction. There are several strategies for developing these relationships, including acknowledging student voice, increasing intergenerational equity students and adults in schools, and sustaining student /adult partnerships throughout the learning environment

Therefore, in **the second meeting** we focused on **acknowledging student voice**, we did that by first inviting a social education coordinator and asked him to give a lecture on the role of student council. Then we asked each one of them to write a letter to the school administration or the local council or any other authorized factor in which he/ she complain or talk about any problem he/ she has in school. Moreover, we asked them to write their own suggestion for solutions. Finally, the students build a complains box, they decorated it and chose its motto “THE PUPILS HAVE A VOICE, LISTEN!!”. We agreed with the school’s administration to put this box next to the secretary office and one teacher volunteered to be responsible for this box.

In the **third meeting** we focused on increasing **intergenerational equity between students and adults in schools** which is based on the necessity of not only listening to students, not only engaging students, but actually giving students the platform to create, inform, and advocate for positive school transformation. We invited meaningful adults from school to this meeting, principals, home teachers, counselors, regular teachers, we made a trial role play in which students and adults exchanges roles and each one have to stand on front of a jury and defend his/ her contribution to the learning process in school. In this way both students and adults could see things in the others’ perspective.

In the **fourth meeting** we focused on **sustaining student/adult partnerships**; in this meeting we also invited meaningful adults to the meeting. We divided the participants into groups containing students and adults and they both working together with a common purpose. The purpose was to build an “improving pupils – teacher partnerships constitution”

Meeting 5-7:

In these meetings, the intervention mostly focused on educational aspects in school, and mainly taught learning skills that contribute to self-efficacy in

school. We gave students many activities, which gave them a feeling of academic success. As they engage in activities, students were affected by personal [e.g., goal setting, information processing] and situational influences [e.g., rewards, teacher feedback] that provide them with cues about how well they are learning. Therefore the program succeeds in enhancing self-efficacy when they perceived they are performing well or becoming more skillful concept. These meeting were aimed to deal with lack of success or slow progress that don't necessarily low self-efficacy if learners believe they can perform better by expending more effort or using more effective strategies.

In the **fifth meeting** we focused on **goals setting**. We started by explaining why “goals setting” is important, we explained for the students that:

The most important purposes of goal-setting:

1. Goals guide and direct behavior.
2. Goals provide clarity.
3. Goals provide challenges and standards.
4. Goals reflect what the goal setters consider important.
5. Goals help improve performance.
6. Goals increase the motivation to achieve.
7. Goals help increase mentees pride and satisfaction in his/her achievements.
8. Goals improve mentees self-confidence.
9. Goals help decrease negative attitude.
10. People who use goal-setting effectively suffer less from stress, are better able to concentrate, show more self-confidence, and seem to feel happier (Hellriegel, Slocum, & Woodman, 1992; Martens, 1987) .

We adapted the SMART model of goal setting and activities:

S-Specific	A goal of graduating from high school is too general. Specify how this will be accomplished. (Study more in order to receive better grades.)
M-Measurable	Establish criteria for how a goal is to be achieved. Measurable does not refer to a timeline; it means determining a way to measure the mentee's success in completing the long-range goal.
A-Action-oriented	Be proactive in taking action that will result in reaching the desired goal.
R-Realistic	Strive for attainable goals, considering the resources and constraints relative to the situation.
T-Timely	Allow reasonable time to complete each goal, but not so much time the mentee loses focus or motivation.

Accordingly we did a number of activities such as deciding / numbering/ discussing the most valuable decisions for the student (such as Going to college, Finding a job right out of high school , Finishing high school, Having a car is important, Living in a clean, safe area... etc.).

In the **sixth meeting** we focused on **information processing**. Until recently, memory has been compared to a computer and defined by an information-processing model in which information goes through three discrete stages: encoding, storage, and retrieval. Additionally, Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968) posited that information goes through three stages: sensory, short-term memory, and long-term memory.

We adapted activities from Memory (A Five-Day Unit Lesson Plan for High School Psychology Teachers) activities in this manual can be applicable to the academic and personal spheres of student's daily lives as the information in this unit

can enhance their abilities to study and learn in general. We used the materials to present research on the accuracy of memories, how memories can change, implications for eyewitness testimony, and more. We focused on the set of systems that allow students to encode, store, and retrieve information. We presented students with exercises and activities which provide a deeper understanding of specific topics and generate long-term retention of concepts, while directly applying the concepts in the activity. Examples of the activities we have chosen are “Pervasive Role of Memory in Everyday Life”, “How to Study Actively”, “Constructive Memory/Schemas: The Rumor Chain” and more (May & Einstein, 2013).

In the **seventh meeting** we focused on **situational influences**. We know that teachers have very little control over individual interest. What teachers do have control over is situational interest since this type of interest is linked to the learning environment. If teachers understand what stimulates situational interest, then they can play a more active role in the development of students' academic interest. Situational interest can be enhanced through the modification of certain aspects of the learning environment and contextual factors such as teaching strategies, task presentation, and structuring of learning experiences. Moreover, students need to be actively engaged in the learning process in order to make meaning of their learning experiences.

To this meeting we invited teachers and curriculum developers. We distributed a survey to the participants. We used the Situational Motivation Scale (SIMS). Students have to rate the importance each statement relative to their motives to engage in any learning activity. We have changed the original question of the scale which was: “Why are you currently engaged in today’s activity?” to “Why are usually engaged in any school activity?”. The teachers and curriculum developers have to relate to the same statements but regarding “Why do you think, pupils are usually engaged in any school activity?”. They responded on 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Items

from the SIMS included: (a) because I think that this activity is interesting; (b) because I am doing it for my own good; (c) because I am supposed to do it; and (d) there may be a good reason to do this activity, but personally I don't see any. Then we held a discussion on the issue.

Meeting 8-9:

These meeting were aimed to increasing occupational aspirations of students and especially teach them ways to succeed in business development. We taught them how to think about innovations, how to build a business plan, how to recruit people to their idea, and how to get money and invest it in smart ways. Students felt much more capable to start a new business after these meeting. One of the even said: "I feel so inspire; I have never thought I could start a business of my own".

In the **eight meeting** we focused **on build a business plan and recruit people** to their idea. Students at any level of education can use the concept of preparing a business plan as a method of exploring all kinds of ideas for starting a business. It is merely a series of questions that lead them to think about the requirements and the possibilities of any kind of business. To this meeting we invited Dr. Roahn Obied the manager of the international educational center izieng, a lawyer, patentee, educator, journalist, intellectualist, computerist, coacher and more (the official cite of izing www.izieng.com). He has a long experience in patents and building a business plans we have invited him to give them new directions in life.

Dr. Rohan Obied has opened their eyes to new horizons which they can shatter and enter. He explored with them a new field for the Arab community in Israel, patents and inventions, his lecture has given them inspiration and new hope, they can think "out of the box" they don't have to worry that if they learned the available subject in collage or the university they may not find a job. We could see how interested they were in this subject. Then, he told the students his story

and explained to them the steps and importance of building a business plan. He explained to them that the business plan is a tool designed to help them find and explore opportunities. It also provides them with a way to analyze potential opportunities continuously. A business plan is personal and should never be "canned" or prepared professionally by others. No one knows them or their ideas better than they do. It is the process of seeking the answers to important questions about their enterprise that are important as they try to realize the dream of owning their own business.

Then we gave them a list of questions which they have to answer. We told them to use the questions to make decision about a business idea of their choice and to write answers. Examples of the questions were: (1) How can you describe the business...in only one paragraph please?, (2) What is your product, or service?, (3) Who will buy/ use it?, (4) Where should you locate the business?, (5) How can you attract customers?... and so on.

In the **ninth meeting** we focused on how to **get money and invest it in smart ways**. If pupils develop good financial skills from an early age they'll be ready for the financial challenges of adulthood. Giving them a good foundation and teaching them about money matters is critical for their personal development. Showing them the basics such as how to budget, spend and save will establish good money habits for life.

First we had discussions about the meaning and importance of budget to give them the big picture about costs and spending. Then we showed them some videos that explain the importance of having a budget. Then we had the "budget planner activity". Each one of them had to plan his life for a week using a certain amount of money. At the end we gave them some ideas that can help them managing their budget such as: Shopping lists, Research purchases, Shopping safe online, Needs vs. wants, critical look at ads and so on.

Meeting 10: Summary

In this meeting, we decided to give them more psychological support, we invited Dr. Rohan Obied again and this time he gave them a lecture about “How to be a leader?”. During this meeting, he gave them ways how to take their life into their hands. He also gave them communication skills such as how to express themselves, how to organize their thoughts, how to be assertive and the most important thing how to believe in themselves.

Then, we summarized the program and asked them for future plans. Most students who participated described feelings of higher competence and strong will to participate in school, as well as starting a business right after school. From a research point of view, during the introduction meeting the study staff gathered the questionnaire for the second measurement point.

Methodology

Participants: 110 students who were defined as students at risk for dropout participated in this study.

Measures

In order to gather data for this study, students filled questionnaires with the following sections:

1. **The Student Engagement Instrument (SEI)** (Appleton & Christenson, 2006) was developed from a review of the relevant literatures using computerized databases (e.g., Education Full Text, ERIC, and PsycINFO) and hand searches from reference lists for selected articles. Terms including engagement, belonging, identification with school, self-regulation, academic engagement, behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement, and psychological engagement were used in the literature search. Scale construction involved creating a detailed scale blueprint that captured the broad conceptualizations of cognitive and psychological engagement discussed in the literature. These conceptualizations

were gathered from empirical studies as well as by reviewing existing scales that were closely related to engagement. Probes (broad queries) and items (specifically phrased questions) were subsequently created to construct a preliminary scale. Following the construction of the initial scale, the researchers continued to monitor the literature, refining or adding items as relevant research and theory suggested. The literature that was consulted when constructing items for the SEI is noted in the References section or listed in the Further Reading section (Betts, et al., 2010; Lovelace, et al., 2014).

2. Learning motivation – based on Harter's [1981a, 1981b] scale of intrinsic versus extrinsic orientation in the classroom provided the basis for our separate measures of students' reported intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The original scale seeks to assess the extent to which students see themselves as either more intrinsically or more extrinsically motivated in school by asking them to report on their usual motivations for a variety of diagnostic classroom behaviors. Specifically, this scale asks students to indicate whether they see the reasons behind a number of their everyday classroom actions as more like one group of students described to them as extrinsically motivated or another group of students described to them as intrinsically motivated.

3. Learning self-efficacy – based on 16 items used by Zimmerman et al. (1992). Sample items read: "I can finish homework assignments by deadlines," "I can study when there are other interesting things to do," "I can concentrate during class," and "I can arrange a place where I can study without distractions". Scores on this Self-Efficacy for Self-Regulated Learning scale have shown significant positive correlations with more specific forms of self-efficacy beliefs ranging from self efficacy for solving specific problems to self-efficacy for academic achievement (Bong, 2001; Zimmerman et al., 1992). A response scale ranged from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true). The Cronbach's reliability coefficient was .793

4. Sense of belonging to school – Goodenow (1993) originally developed the Psychological Sense of School Membership [PSSM] with middle school students as a measure of their subjective sense of school membership. It assesses the extent to which students feel like an accepted, respected, and valued part of their academic context. The PSSM has been used to assess students' sense of belonging at both the classroom level and at the whole school level. A response scale ranged from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true). (Goodenow, et al., 1993)

5. Discipline problems and involvement at violence – Participants were presented with 12 items which describe situations of discipline problems or violence such as "physical violence between students" or "disturbing to teacher while teaching". Students were asked to rate the frequency of their involvement in these situations between 1 (not at all) and 6 (usually) $\alpha = .894$.

6. Occupational aspirations - Participants were asked "What do you expect to be your first full-time-job?" The responses to the open ended question were coded according to different categories reflecting the social status of the occupational choice. They were given a choice of occupations with the following introduction: "Nearly everyone of your age has some sort of idea of what they will want to do in life. Here is a list of types of jobs/careers/professions for which various amounts of training are necessary. How about your choice? . . . Please tick a box to indicate your first choice for type of career." Afterwards all job categories were rated between 1 (skilled, semiskilled, or unskilled jobs) and 6 (professional or managerial occupations).

Procedure - the intervention

Participants were assigned into two groups, the first (N=55) went through the intervention while the other (N=55) was a control group which didn't experience any program.

The intervention that was examined was process of reviewing factors shown to be associated with high school students leaving school prematurely and, in part, from conceptualizing what students need in school to succeed personally and academically. The first important core construct of the intervention is locus of control. Locus of control represents a basic way that students come to view the world they live in. Depending on the orientation, locus of control taps whether the world is open to manipulation and change [internal control view] or is a closed shop that acts on them serendipitously from the outside [external control perspective]. As well as locus of control orientation, the intervention targets students' ability to relate with others. Engagement in school is reflected in the relationships among students themselves and with their teachers. Students who are at risk tend to have poorer relationships in school, and that fact, coupled with their tendency toward external control expectancies, could combine to produce an ever-increasing alienation from the school enterprise. The program seeks to change that set of circumstances by teaching students to become more aware that they have significant control over many important aspects of their life, especially relationships.

During the intervention students were taught a “language” of relationships that they could use to help them discuss and understand how relationships work and how their behaviors contribute to the positive or negative outcomes of interactions with others. The interpersonal language and model of relating to others used in the intervention derives from the circumplex model.

According to the circumplex model (Kiesler, 1996), all interpersonal behavior is categorized by two orthogonal dimensions called status [anchored at one end by dominance and at the other by submission] and affiliation (anchored at one end by hostility and the other by friendliness). Complementary interactions occur when other individuals respond to offered interpersonal styles reciprocally on the status dimension (i.e., dominance “pulls for” submission; submission “pulls

for” dominance) and similarly on the affiliation dimension (friendliness “pulls for” friendliness; hostility “pulls for” hostility).

The status and affiliation dimensions are orthogonal to one another and can be crossed to form the four major interpersonal styles deriving from Carson’s [1969] interactional theory: friendly–dominant (FD), friendly–submissive (FS), hostile–dominant (HD), and hostile–submissive (HS). Interpersonal situations may be understood through the application of the circumplex model. For example, if Person A acts in a friendly–dominant style, that person is asking for Person B to respond similarly on the affiliation dimension and opposite on the status dimension or in a friendly–submissive manner. The FD–FS relationship is a congenial one that tends to keep the interpersonal process moving forward. In contrast, if Person A acts in a hostile–submissive style, the bid is for Person B to respond in a hostile–dominant style. This HS–HD relationship is usually characterized by negative affect and unpleasantness. These two examples because they represent the two styles that probably are seen most often in youth at risk classroom, with teachers usually presenting with friendly dominance and students most often showing hostile submissiveness. For teachers, the goal is to help students understand that interpersonal styles affect the teacher–student relationship.

In addition to learning a relationship language and a model for understanding relationships, students in the program were taught how to use nonverbal communication more skillfully. Nonverbal communication has been found to be significantly involved in the outcome of social interactions. Identification of emotion in facial expressions and tones of voice has been found to be associated with social competence in children and adults. Difficulty in processing nonverbal cues has been found to be related to degree of depressive mood (Carton, Kessler, & Pape, 1999) and external locus of control Deficits in

identifying emotion in facial expressions and tones of voice also have been found to be related to a number of psychological problems.

On the basis of these findings, in this study, I assumed that students who will undergo this intervention had deficits in reading the nonverbal indicators of others' feelings, a difficulty that may contribute to both their failed relationship attempts and higher external control expectancies.

Results

In this section data analysis procedures will be presented together with results by the goals order. Level of significance for all data analysis procedures was 5%.

Goal 1. Intervention will enhance student's engagement to school.

In order to examine this efficacy of the intervention to enhance student's engagement to school, a MANOVA test was conducted, as seen in the following table.

Table 1. MANOVA test for student's engagement

group		Mean	SD	N
Cognitive Engagement	control	2.637	0.568	55
	intervention	2.836	0.620	53
	Total	2.735	0.600	108
Psychological Engagement	control	2.606	0.514	55
	intervention	2.911	0.623	53
	Total	2.756	0.587	108

As seen in this table, it was found that students in intervention group had higher cognitive engagement (M=2.83, SD=0.62) in compare with students in control group (M=2.63, SD=0.56) (F(1,106)=3.010, p<.05). In addition, students in intervention group had higher psychological engagement (M=2.91, SD=0.62) in compare with students in control group (M=2.60, SD=0.51) (F(1,106)=7.702, p<.01).

The first goal was confirmed, as intervention program succeeded in enhancing engagement of students to school.

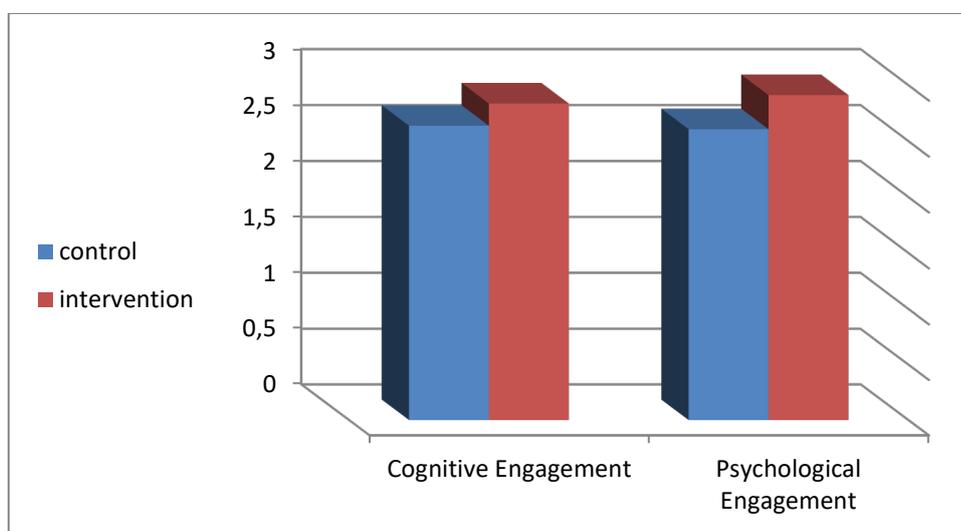


Figure 1: Comparison between intervention and control groups in engagement to school

Goal 2. , goal 3 and goal 4 : Intervention will increase educational aspects of students in regard to school, such as learning motivation, learning self efficacy and also sense of belonging to school.

In order to examine the efficacy of the intervention to enhance student's educational aspects, a MANOVA test was conducted, as seen in the following table.

Table 2: MANOVA test for student's educational aspects

group		Mean	SD	N
Internal motivation	control	2.173	0.598	53
	intervention	2.660	0.659	52
	Total	2.616	0.627	105
External Motivation	control	3.166	0.475	53
	intervention	3.817	0.531	52
	Total	3.741	0.507	105
Self Efficacy	control	3.084	0.465	53
	intervention	4.895	0.467	52
	Total	4.090	0.464	105

Class Belong	control	3.942	0.439	53
	intervention	4.891	0.576	52
	Total	4.016	0.514	105
School Belong	control	3.608	0.554	53
	intervention	3.119	0.836	52
	Total	3.563	0.705	105

Goal 2: In regard to **internal motivation**, it was found that students in intervention group had higher internal motivation ($M=2.66$, $SD=0.65$) in compare with students in control group ($M=2.17$, $SD=0.59$) ($F(1,103)=3.498$, $p<.05$). In addition, in regard to external motivation, students in intervention group had higher external motivation ($M=3.81$, $SD=0.53$) in compare with students in control group ($M=3.16$, $SD=0.47$) ($F(1,193)=5.235$, $p<.05$).

Goal 3: In regard to **learning self efficacy**, students in intervention group had higher self efficacy ($M=4.89$, $SD=0.46$) in compare with students in control group ($M=3.08$, $SD=0.46$) ($F(1,103)=4.112$, $p<.05$).

Goal 4: In regard to **school belong**, students in intervention group felt more belong to school ($M=3.56$, $SD=0.70$) in compare with students in control group ($M=3.11$, $SD=0.83$) ($F(1,103)=4.72$, $p<.05$).

In regard to *class belong*, students in intervention group felt more belong to class ($M=4.89$, $SD=0.57$) in compare with students in control group ($M=3.94$, $SD=0.43$) ($F(1,103)=7.13$, $p<.05$).

The goals were confirmed, as intervention program succeeded in increasing educational aspects of students in regard to school, such as learning motivation, learning self -efficacy and also sense of belonging to school.

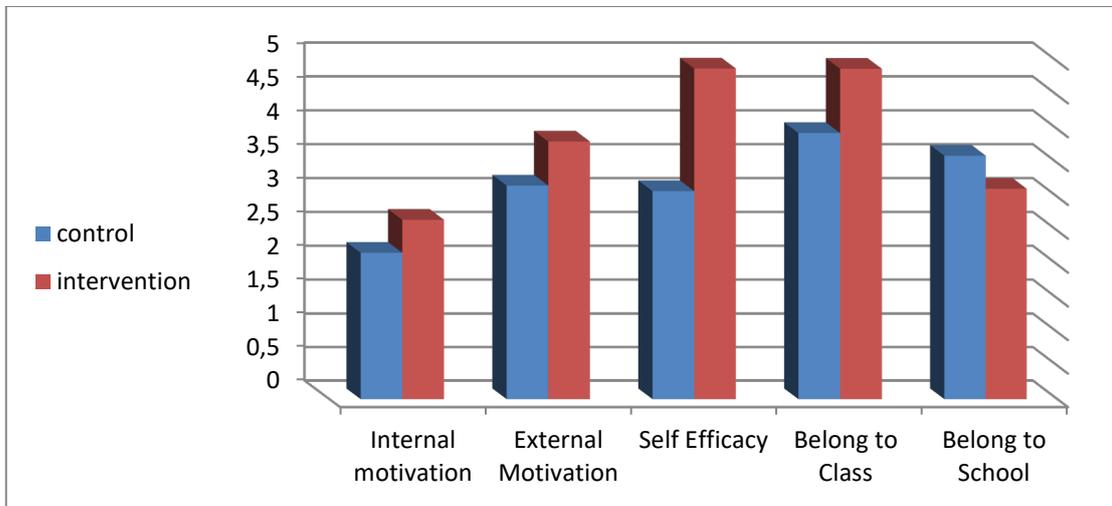


Figure 2: Comparison between intervention and control groups in learning motivation, learning self-efficacy and also sense of belonging to school.

Goal 5. Reduce risk factors such as discipline problems and involvement at violence.

In order to examine the efficacy of the intervention to reduce student's discipline problems and involvement at violence, an ANOVA test was conducted. In this analysis, no difference was indicated in violence involvement between control group (M=2.99, SD=0.44) and intervention group (M=2.89, S D=0.35) (F(1,107)=1.768, p=.186).

It seems at both groups moderate levels of violence were indicated with no difference between them. The conclusion from this analysis is that the intervention doesn't influence reduction at violence or discipline problems. The goal was not confirmed.

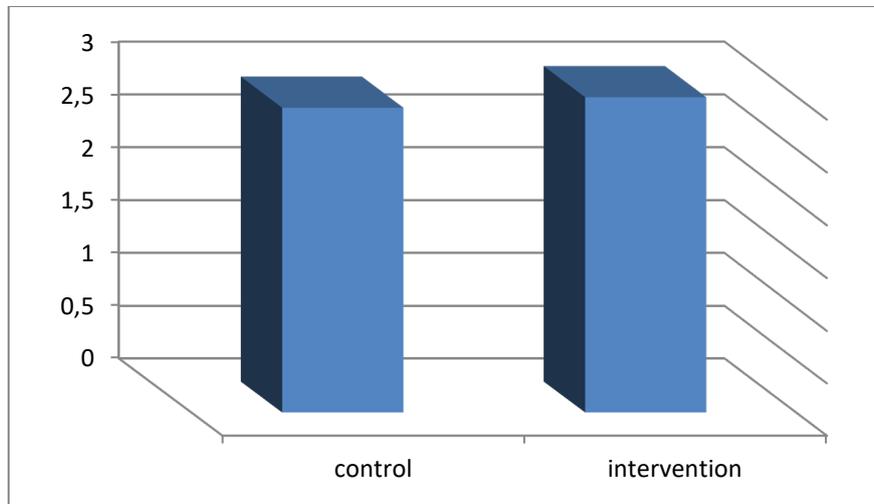


Figure 3: Comparison between intervention and control groups in violence or discipline problems

Goal 6. Increase future normative motivations such as occupational aspirations.

In order to examine the efficacy of the intervention to increase student's occupational aspirations, an ANOVA test was conducted. In this analysis, it was found that students at intervention group had higher occupational aspirations (M=5.64, SD=1.04) in compare with control group (M=4.85, S D=0.90) (F(1,101)=6.179, p<.01)

The goal was confirmed, as intervention program succeeded in increasing occupational aspirations of students.

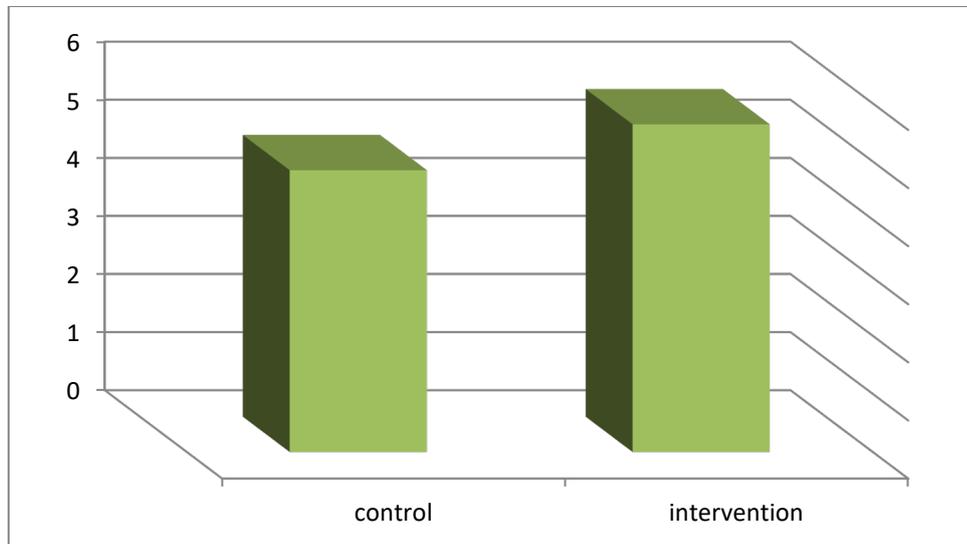


Figure 4: Comparison between intervention and control groups in occupational aspirations

Conclusions for intervention examination

1. The intervention program succeeded in enhancing both cognitive and psychological engagement of students to school.
2. The intervention program succeeded in increasing educational aspects of students in regard to school - learning motivation, learning self-efficacy and also sense of belonging to school.
3. The intervention program didn't succeed in reducing violence or discipline problems.
4. The intervention program succeeded in increasing occupational aspirations of students.

Discussion:

After examining the main factors which influence dropout from school by an intervention program which aims to reduce proportions of dropout, I found that the intervention program succeeded not only in enhancing both cognitive and psychological engagement of students to school, and in increasing educational

aspects of students in regard to school - learning motivation, learning self-efficacy, but also the sense of belonging to school. Nevertheless, the intervention program didn't succeed in reducing violence or discipline problems, but the intervention program succeeded in increasing occupational aspirations of students.

Another factor which could also depend on financial resources of school in reducing dropouts is school structure (Bryk et al., 1993). For example, school size also appears to influence dropout rates both directly, although the largest direct effect appears to be in low SES schools (Rumberger & Thomas, 2000). This latter finding is consistent with case studies of effective dropout prevention schools that suggest small schools are more likely to promote the engagement of both students and staff. These results are consistent with tenth hypothesis, which found negative relationships between the schools (and municipal) dropout measures and between the educational and organizational dropout factors. Schools which are well budgeted by their municipalities have more resources to invest in programs which aim to reduce dropouts rates. On the other hand, schools with low budget from their municipalities can find it much more difficult to do so.

The preceding analysis of why students drop out suggests several things about what can be done to design effective dropout intervention strategies.

First, because dropping out is influenced by both individual and institutional factors, intervention strategies can focus on either or both sets of factors. That is, intervention strategies can focus on addressing the individual values, attitudes, and behaviors that are associated with dropping out without attempting to alter the characteristics of families, schools, and communities that may contribute to those individual factors. Many dropout prevention programs pursue such programmatic strategies by providing would-be dropouts with additional resources and supports to help them stay in school.

Alternatively, intervention strategies can focus on attempting to improve the environmental contexts of potential dropouts by providing resources and supports to strengthen or restructure their families, schools, and communities. Such *systemic strategies* are often part of larger efforts to improve the educational and social outcomes of at-risk students more generally.

Second, because dropping out is associated with both academic and social problems, effective prevention strategies must focus on both arenas. That is, if dropout prevention strategies are going to be effective they must be *comprehensive* by providing resources and supports in all areas of students' lives. And because dropouts leave school for a variety of reasons, services provided them must be flexible and tailored to their individual needs.

Since the problematic attitudes and behaviors of students at risk of dropping out appear as early as elementary school, dropout prevention strategies can and should begin early in a child's educational career. Dropout prevention programs often target high school or middle school students who may have already experienced years of educational failure or unsolved problems. Similarly, dropout recovery programs must attempt to overcome longstanding problems in order to get dropouts to complete school. Consequently, such programs may be costly and ineffective. Conversely, early intervention may be the most powerful and cost-effective approach to dropout prevention.

Conclusion

Several important conclusions are drawn from this study. First, dropping out is not simply a result of academic failure, but rather often results from both social and academic problems in school. Second, these problems often appear early in students' school careers, suggesting the need for early intervention. Third, these problems are influenced by a lack of support and resources in families, schools, and communities. These findings suggest that in order to reduce dropout

rates one should take comprehensive approaches both to help at-risk students address the social and academic problems that they face in their lives and to improve the at-risk settings that contribute to these problems. These solutions have prominent importance in the Arab sector which is at risk for high rates of dropouts.

Still, it seems that Israel has the potential to develop national programs which could enhance students and therefore reduce dropouts /Capacity requires technical expertise to develop and implement effective dropout prevention and recovery programs. A number of proven program models have been developed, implemented, and evaluated to demonstrate this expertise. These program models range from early intervention programs serving pre-school students to supplemental yet comprehensive middle school programs to alternative middle and high school programs.

Without eliminating disparities in the resources of families, schools, and communities, it is also unlikely that the Israel will ever eliminate disparities in dropout rates among racial and ethnic groups, such as Arab sector. And those disparities may be more difficult to eliminate in the face of increasing racial and ethnic segregation in Israel which need to be taking care of in the political level.

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