

## The Impact of Intervention Programs on Out-of-School Youth-At-Risk in the Arab Sector in Israel.

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**Abstract**-Out-of-school youth at risk in the Arab sector in Israel face continuous challenges as a result of early school dropout, engagement in crime, and poor transition into adulthood. Most of the risks these youth face can be addressed early in school days through the use of effective intervention programs. In Israel, students from the Arab sector are more likely to be at risk than students from the Jewish sector due to cultural background, ethnic differences, and historical issues. The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of intervention programs for youth at risk on Arab middle and high school students in Israel. A mixed method approach involving qualitative research, case study, and quantitative research was used to examine the research aim and objectives. Appropriate data was collected through survey questionnaires and interview questions to assess the effectiveness of the traditional intervention programs on Arab students. Results from the study reveal that generally intervention programs are fundamental to the success of students in terms of enhancing their engagement to school, promoting the students' educational aspects in regard to learning motivation, learning self-efficacy, and sense of belonging to the school. Also, the study found that intervention programs mitigate students against potential risk factors discipline problems and involvement in violence while promoting their future normative motivations such as occupational aspirations. However, the existing intervention programs are largely pro-Jewish centered and less effective on students from the Arab sector. In conclusion, new intervention program should be applied to at-risk Arab middle and high school students in Israel to better cultivate their academic potential and help inform better future career prospects.

**Keywords:** Intervention programs, school engagement, middle school Arab students, dropout, at-risk youth, Israeli educational system

### Introduction

According to Lansford and Banati (2018), intervention programs are central to mitigating potential negative impacts for youth at risk of dropout on Arab middle schoolers in Israel. Relevant to this study, an at-risk youth refers to teenagers less likely to transition into adulthood successfully. Success in this context is defined as the accomplishment of an aim or purpose and potential to attain academic success, circumvent crime, gain pertinent job expertise, join the employment industry, and become self-reliant (Barrett & Ollendick, 2019). This study intended to investigate the impact of intervention programs for youth at risk of dropout on Arab middle schoolers in Israel.

The development of intervention programs for youth at risk of dropout and the impact of the intervention programs on at-risk youth and their

families, according to Guralnick and Bruder (2019), are the key variables that could help mitigate the challenge of dropout, especially on Arab middle schoolers in Israel. It is widely acknowledged that parents only want the best for their children and want to ensure everything is done to support their students' total development. Regardless of the severity of the risk the child is exposed to, the family's location, or their financial situation, parents in Israel need to feel confident that every intervention program will be available and accessible to support children's options for leading fuller and better lives (Sinai-Gavrilov et al., 2020). Children and families from Israel's Arab community are served through intervention programs in Israel. Public and commercial organizations in Israel have created a variety of intervention strategies to address dropout rate among middle high schoolers in Israel, specifically

Arabs. In addition, the intervention programs are linked to family vulnerability (such as poverty, unemployment, and immigration) and children's developmental problems (Research, 2019).

Research by Ussif et al., (2020) suggests that youths at risk of poor academic performance and early school dropout are often exposed to a slow and gradual process that influences their decision to drop out of school. Studies further suggest that the risk of youth dropping out in Israel is mainly at the age of 15-17 when the student moves from middle school to the high school system (Allensworth et al., 2021). Lack of engagement is one of the primary variables that catalyzes long-term students' decisions to drop from school and engage in unproductive activities that make it difficult for them to transition into adulthood (Fall & Roberts, 2022). Munson and Narendorf (2021) associated intervention programs with positive behavior at school and as a robust predictor of achievement. Lansford and Banati (2018) have associated learner engagement at school with academic performance and triumphant transition into adulthood, and improved intervention programs.

According to Lo and Xu (2019), intervention programs are essential for fostering student engagement in the classroom, at home, and in society. Activities connected to intervention programs at school and home have evolved into crucial ideas concerning several educational outcomes for students. High levels of accomplishment, regular and consistent achievement, school completion, positive conduct, and low dropout rates are a few of the impacts of intervention programs mentioned in the thesis (Johnson & Johnson, 2020).

Intervention programs, according to World Health Organization (2019), the main approaches that may be utilized to comprehend student dropout rates, involvement in crime and violence, and academic accomplishment. However, a lack of youth-focused intervention programs has been linked to health-harming behaviors such as depression (Colizzi, Lasalvia, & Ruggeri, 2020), aggressive involvement in crime and early school drop outs. Contrarily, having access to effective intervention programs has been linked to engaging in health-promoting activities like good school

performance, non-involvement in crime (Bonell & Allen, 2018). At-risk youths can be recognized as early as middle school based on their conduct, academic performance, and attendance, according to (Evans, Borriello, & Field, 2018).

According to Cantor and Osher (2021), intervention programs that support student engagement and attendance should be promoted by schools, teachers, parents, and education policymakers to increase the likelihood that students will complete their education and successfully transition into adulthood. Youth intervention programs, including early mentoring, outreach initiatives, and career counseling, according to Ivzori et al., (2020) are crucial to successful school attendance, graduation, and the transition into fulfilling careers as adults. Implementing intervention programs has mostly been linked to higher levels of student engagement in the classroom and a decline in absenteeism. Intervention programs are crucial to ensure that at-risk youth overcome underlying issues and effectively move into adulthood (World Health Organization, 2022).

For young people at risk in society, not finishing school or obtaining an equivalent credential has significant repercussions. Poorer labor market results and greater difficulties in establishing a successful profession are some drawbacks of a failed transition into adulthood (Sironi, 2018). According to United Nations (2020), early school dropouts are consistently linked to unemployment, joblessness, lower wages, and a diminished possibility of accumulating money over the course of a person's life. At-risk students frequently have poor mental and physical health, commit more crimes or act violently, participate in less active citizenship, and abuse drugs and other substances heavily, according to the World Health Organization (2020). In addition to personal expenditures and unfavorable outcomes affecting Arab youth at risk of dropout, there are enormous costs linked to rising welfare needs and social service demands.

At-risk Arab youth in Israel require higher levels of intervention programs and training than prior generations to successfully transition from school to employment, considering the potential hazards of a lack of intervention programs (Yonat et al.,

2020). For this to occur, the Arab sector schools in Israel must make a concerted effort to keep students enrolled in courses or other forms of instruction throughout middle and high school. In Israel, early dropout and disengagement from school tend to be concentrated among specific youth groups in the Arab sector who face social and economic difficulties (Usama & Theofild-Andrei, 2020). Students from minority backgrounds, those who reside in isolated neighborhoods or areas of extreme poverty, youngsters from stressed-out families, those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, underachievers, and those with significant integration needs are a few examples of these young people.

There needs to be more Israeli research on the intervention techniques Arab-sector schools can utilize to improve student engagement and boost at-risk youth involvement in middle and high school. For at-risk youths in the Arab sector, this thesis study project aimed to investigate the impacts of intervention programs and their likelihood to enhance student engagement, promote school completion, and guarantee a successful transition into adulthood (Kashti, 2022). In light of these problems, decision-makers in the field of education will be better able to adapt and encourage intervention programs to ensure the successful passage of at-risk Arab youth in Israel into adulthood. According to Kashti (2022), to achieve this goal, schools must create, improve, and put into practice intervention programs that successfully address the risk factors that lead to students losing interest in learning and eventually dropping out.

#### **Significance of the study (theoretical and practical contributions)**

The literature on school intervention programs in the Arab sector that help at-risk youths successfully transition from school to the job industry would greatly benefit from the findings of this research. To mentor at-risk youths to become more successful and responsible adults, the study will first evaluate the current impacts of intervention tactics utilized in schools and their

shortcomings and offer viable approaches to replace the outdated strategies. Secondly, the study will show how various intervention strategies affect at-risk students' academic performance, including their drive to learn more, their early dropout rate, their level of learning self-efficacy, and their sense of belonging at their institutions. Third, the research will show which intervention programs are most effective in reducing risk factors such as early school dropout, behavioral issues, poor health, and potential criminal and violent activity engagement. Last but not least, the study will contribute to understanding how various intervention programs affect future normative incentives such as occupational goals, skill development, career advancement, and labor market entry.

#### **Methods and Material:**

The research methodology used in this study involving a mixed research approach is discussed in this section. The specific methodologies will be limited to using a case study (at-risk students in middle and high school in the Arab sector). The case study will be further supplemented by empirical research where survey data will be collected and qualitative study, including interview sessions. Research strategies provide a starting point for answering the research questions, which categorizes into four approaches (Inductive, Deductive, Reproductive, and Abductive). The population of interest in this research was limited to out-of-school at-risk youth in the Arab sector. Through purposeful sampling, a total of 200 participants were selected.

#### **Results:**

##### **Hypothesis 1: The impact of the current intervention programs on the youth at-risk engagement to school.**

A Pearson correlation coefficient was performed to test the potential relationship between the current intervention programs and student engagement to school (Table 1).

**Table 1: Person’s correlation coefficient analysis**

Factor	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Correlation (r)	p
1. Individualized learning	24.32	22.32	0.106	0.016
2. Personalized support	21.72	18.28	0.099	0.005
3. Educational network	21.92	18.99	0.182	0.027
4. Alternative Education	32.22	28.32	0.102	0.047
5. Technical Career skills	27.82	23.37	0.102	0.023
6. School dropout support	25.27	23.92	0.129	0.024

The results of the analysis revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between the intervention programs and the students’ engagement in school on the six factors. That is, for individualized learning (M = 24.32, SD = 22.32; r = .106; p = 0.016), personalized support (M = 21.71, SD = 18.28; r = 0.099; p = 0.005), Educational network (M = 21.92, SD = 18.99; r = .182; p = 0.027), Alternative Education (M = 32.22, SD = 28.32; r = 0.102; p = 0.047), Technical Career skills (M = 27.82; SD = 23.37; r = .102; p = .023), and School dropout support (M = 25.27; SD = 23.92; r = .129; p = 0.024).

The coefficient of determination for the analysis was 0.05, indicating that 5% of the variance of the four variables is explained by the relationship leaving 95% unexplained. Therefore, the results from this study are statistically significant and lack

importance and the null hypothesis was rejected. As such, these findings further confirm Hypothesis 1;

**Hypothesis 2. Intervention programs contribute to enhancing the educational aspects of students in regard to school, such as learning motivation, learning self-efficacy and also a sense of belonging to the school.**

Table 2 presents a summary of the results. The strength of the relationship between the intervention strategies and the student’s engagement in school with the three dependent variables as assessed by  $\eta^2$  (eta squared) was large (.23).

**Table 2: A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on learning motivation, learning efficiency, and sense of belonging**

One Way Anova

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Learning motivation	200	32392	43.556	188.27
Learning efficiency	200	22062	229.111	481.61
Sense of belonging	200	29879	497.667	388111

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	$\eta^2$
Between Groups	5699	2	28499	57.93871	0.0382	.2301
Within Groups	3140	24	13087			
Total	3715	26				

Since the overall F test was significant, a post hoc multiple comparisons were performed to assess pairwise difference among the means of the three groups. For multiple comparisons, a Turkey procedure was performed because equal variances were assumed. Results revealed a significant difference in the means between learning motivation and the other two groups (learning efficiency,  $p < 0.05$ ; a sense of belonging,  $p < 0.05$ ). Even so, there was no significant difference between learning motivation and sense of belonging (.673). Generally, students who achieve learning motivation (M = 47.28) and learning

efficiency (M = 36.93) grew significantly more compared to students who feel a sense of belonging (M = 12.37).

**Hypothesis 3. Intervention programs contribute to reducing the risk factors such as discipline problems and involvement in violence.**

Table 3 shows Anova done to examine the relationship between intervention programs and the possible risk of getting involved in discipline problems, involvement in crime, an early dropout from school and use of drugs and substance abuse in school.

**Table 3: A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on discipline problems, involvement in crime, early dropout from school and use of drugs and substance abuse.**

Anova: Single Factor

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Discipline Problems	200	1176	43.55556	173.7949
Involvement in Crime	200	6186	229.1111	41336.87
Early school dropout	200	29637	1097.667	3582628
Drug and substance abuse	200	14003	518.6296	1395857

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	$\eta^2$
Between Groups	17177198	3	5725733	4.56234	0.004814	0.7
Within Groups	1.31E+08	104	1254999			
Total	1.48E+08	107				

The factor variable received included discipline problems, involvement in crime, an early dropout from school, and possible use of drugs and substance abuse (dependent variables). Results revealed that ANOVA was significant,  $F(2,453) = 4.56, p = .004$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected confirming the alternative hypothesis;

The strength of the relationship between intervention and behavior outcomes as assessed by  $\eta^2$  was medium (.07). Considering that the F test was significant, post hoc multiple comparisons were undertaken to explore pairwise differences among the means of the three groups. A Tukey procedure was used for multiple comparisons because the researcher assumed equal variances. Results revealed that there was no significant difference in means between intervention strategies and discipline problems ( $p = 0.627$ ), involvement in crime ( $p = 0.938$ ), early dropout from school and use of drugs ( $p = 0.482$ ), and substance abuse ( $p = 0.292$ ), that is ( $p > 0.005$ ). Generally, as intervention programs were

introduced more to the students, the groups remained the same and did not grow significantly— discipline problems ( $M = 38.73$ ), involvement in crime ( $M = 35.29$ ), early dropout from school and use of drugs ( $M = 41.82$ ), and substance abuse ( $M = 39.21$ ), that is ( $p > 0.005$ ).

**Hypothesis 4: Intervention programs contribute to increasing the future normative motivations such as occupational aspirations.**

The researcher conducted one-way ANOVA to explore the relationship between intervention programs and future normative motivations. The factor variables included occupational aspirations and career selection. The ANOVA was significant,  $F(3,1559) = 2.128, p < 0.05$ . The results are presented in Table 20. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis confirmed.

The strength of the relationship between intervention programs and normative motivations was small as assessed by  $\eta^2$  was medium (.03).

**Table 1: A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on normative motivations like occupational aspirations and career selection**

Anova: Single Factor

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Occupational aspirations	200	6186	229.1111	41336.87
Career Selection	200	29637	1097.667	3582628

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	$\eta^2$
Between Groups	10561443	2	5280721	3.155921	0.035188	0.03
Within Groups	1.31E+08	78	1673274			
Total	1.41E+08	80				

Since the F-test was significant, post hoc multiple comparison analysis was performed to examine pairwise variations among the two groups using the Tukey procedure, assuming that the means of the two groups have equal variances. The analysis revealed a significant difference in the means between intervention programs and career selection ( $p = 0.023$ ), and occupational aspirations ( $p = 0.042$ ),  $p < 0.05$ ). Nonetheless, the difference was not significant ( $p = 0.783$ ). As such, as students receive more intervention processes their means remain the same between groups, 39.38 and 37.63), respectively.

#### **Discussion:**

The results of the analysis revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between the intervention programs and the students' engagement to school on the six factors. Similar findings have been reported in the literature where Artuch-Garde et al. (2017) revealed that intervention programs facilitate student engagement as they promote the concepts of individualized learning, personalized support, creates strong educational networks and also puts in place necessary support which prepares students at risk for future career (Bettinger, Eric, Jing Liu, and Susanna Loeb., 2016).

The obtained ANOVA results were significant, thereby supporting the claim that intervention programs contribute towards the enhancement of students at-risk in terms of improved learning motivation, learning self-efficacy and also a sense of belonging to the school. Similar observations have been made in the literature where Peleg and Zoabi (2014) observed that effective interventions facilitate student commitment and engagement in school.

The obtained results from ANOVA analysis indicated a significant relationship between the intervention programs and the impact on student behavior in terms of crime and discipline issues. As such, the Hypothesis 3 was confirmed where the intervention programs contribute to reducing the risk factors such as discipline problems and involvement in violence.

The strength of the relationship between intervention and behavior outcomes was medium.

However, there was no significant difference in means between intervention strategies and discipline problems, involvement in crime, early dropout from school and use of drugs, and substance abuse. Generally, as intervention programs are introduced more to the students, the groups remained the same and did not grow significantly— discipline problems, involvement in crime, early dropout from school and use of drugs, and substance abuse (Foster & Brooks-Gunn, 2015; Weisblay, 2012).

Results revealed that significant association between intervention programs and their impact on future normative motivations (Quiroga et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2017). Leshem, Haj-Yahia, and Guterman (2016) shared that, students who took part in the intervention posted positive development and changes compared to the control group.

#### **Conclusion**

Based on the formulated research questions and hypotheses, four main conclusions were drawn from this study. One, the existing intervention programs currently used in Arab schools such as individualized learning, personalized support, educational networks, alternative Education, technical career skills, and school dropout support are less effective in helping at risk students. Part of the reason why they are less effective can be attributed to the fact that they were designed by Jewish educators for Jewish students and, therefore, lack cultural and historical considerations needed to address the needs of minority students from the Arab sector. Second, the study also noted that the different intervention programs used in Arab schools are less effective in enhancing students' engagement to their school because they fail to address the specific socio-economic challenges and backgrounds of the minority students in the Arab sector in Israel.

Third, based on the current ESEA intervention program, the identified strategies were noted to address the shortcomings of the existing programs and in the process facilitate student integrating and connectedness to their schools with low rates of school drop outs. The proposed initiatives such

as mini-schools, are ways of reducing students' social isolation and strengthening relationships between students, parents, staff and the broader community. Participants commented that some of the most at-risk students have poor social skills and limited connections beyond their immediate family, and effective programs enabled students to increase both the number and quality of the connections they had with the school and the local community. In both this and other studies, schools with high retention had also worked hard to increase parents' involvement and connectedness with the school. Relevant strategies include mini-schools, smaller class sizes, mentoring, student case management, peer tutoring, community service and supplementary or out-of-school-time programs.

Fourth, these different intervention programs can substantially impact future normative motivations such as occupational aspirations especially when schools provide at-risk students with tasks that have immediate, tangible benefits. At-risk students, particularly those from poor family backgrounds, can find it very difficult to trust adults, and given their past experiences motivating them about the benefits of learning to future career growth may be a wise response. Yet the traditional abstract secondary school curriculum and examination structure requires students to place a lot of trust in teachers and schools – to believe that apparently irrelevant learning will have some application later, and that learning abstract skills and knowledge now will have a payoff year hence. Based on the current research findings, it was noted that offering project-based learning and vocationally-oriented coursework can allow at-risk students to participate in learning that is immediately relevant and provides students with concrete evidence of career growth and achievement.

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