



Acceptance Letter

01-04-2022

Mr./Mrs.: Alaa Jawad Kadim, Yosra Jawad Kaddim

Article Title: Witchcraft Practices and Their Effects on Familial Relationships

Dear Author (s),

It's our great pleasure to inform you that your above-mentioned manuscript has been viewed and accepted for publication in **Journal of Positive School Psychology** with ISSN 2717-7564. Please be advised that, send us the final copy of your manuscript. Would be obliged if you let me know in case of any further query. This letter of acceptance be considered as the official acceptance of your manuscript with no further amendments required.

Use below link to find article formatting instruction to format article according to journal format.

Author Instruction Link: <https://www.journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/authorinstructions>

Your article will be published in forthcoming Regular Issue.

With warm regards,

Editorial Board

Journal of Positive School Psychology

<https://www.journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp>



TURKIYE



Witchcraft

Practices and Their Effects on Familial Relationships

Alaa Jawad Kadim¹, Yosra Jawad Kaddim²

¹ Associate Professor, Sociology, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Al-Qadisiyah, Al-Diwaniyah, Qadisiyah, Iraq

ABSTRACT

This study is a thoughtful attempt to identify the social dimensions of witchcraft practices and their social effects on the familial relations of the Iraqi family. It is mainly centered on the community of the province of Diwaniyah, which represents the sample of this study. The paper traces witchcraft in this province especially after the wide spread of this phenomenon and the great belief in it among many segments of Iraqi society of various cultural backgrounds. This study essentially fathoms the role of witchcraft in directing social interaction within the family and the Iraqi society, on a large scale, which generates a number of witchcraft practices related to interaction and communication between individuals, as well as the familiarity with the types and forms of witchcraft, the thinking patterns of the members of society and the degree of the impact of social construction and the social system on the formation of witchcraft thoughts in the family and members of the family.

Keywords: witchcraft, effects, practice, familiar relationships, Iraqi society

Research Problem and Questions

The research investigates the witchcraft practices in the Iraqi province and tries to give reasonable answers to the following questions:

1. What drives the individuals to resort to magic and witchcraft?
2. What are the most important variations affecting the phenomenon of witchcraft in terms of practice and frequency?
3. What are the elements of the witchcraft process?
4. What are the tools used in it?
5. Who are the people participating in the witchcraft session?
6. What are the treatment steps and tools?
7. What are the social and psychological dimensions associated with the demand for witchcraft?
8. What is the impact of this on the family?

Objectives of the Research

The main objectives of the paper are:

- To learn about the common magical practices in the Iraqi society
- To recognize the extent of the effect of magical practice on social construction within the study sample covering the geographical, economic and cultural conditions in terms of continuity and resistance inside the concerned social community

- To be aware of the extent to which there is a relationship between individuals' belief in magic and their environmental and social conditions

Importance of Research

The importance of the research stems from these main points:

- It fathoms the most important factors of the spread of the witchcraft phenomenon. It elucidates the harmful effects of witchcraft on the individual, family and society.
- It elaborates on the aftermaths of witchcraft as it causes weakening and disintegration of family relationships, and the disintegration of the social fabric.
- It traces the significant spread of the witchcraft phenomenon and the great increase in the number of witches in the Iraqi society, Al-Qadisiyah as a sample, along with many other Iraqi cities.

The Scientific Concepts and Terms of the Research

I. The Concept of Magic:

Magic in the language is defined as “everything whose cause is hidden and imagined as different to its reality and it takes place by disguise and deception. (Daif, 2004, p. 419) In many cases, the individual believes that there are magical and supernatural things that are capable of fulfilling his/ her wishes. S/ He believes that invoking these wishes requires special rituals and practices.

The word magic is derived from the word “Mag” in the Persian language which means science and wisdom. It indicates great different meanings, beliefs and rituals that assume unscientific control by supernatural and latent powers in the world for the benefit of man. (Rivière, 2015, p. 207)

Edward Taylor defines magic as: pseudoscience, which as science, it explains the causal relationship between things and exploits them. But this is a corrupt science because its assumptions and primitive explanations about cause and effect have always been wrong. (Davis, 2014, p.21)

In this paper, the researcher argues that Taylor has adopted the idea of pseudoscience, which refers to beliefs and practices that appear to be scientific and real without having a scientific methodology which makes it subject to falsification, repetition and other features of the information in real science. The beginning of Taylor's philosophy on magic goes back to his philosophy of animism which means the presence of the soul in all assets such as trees, rocks, mountains, and even natural phenomena such as lightning and thunder, for example.

II. Social Effects:

The effect is defined in the language as the remnant of a thing; it is the sub-mark that indicates the origin of the thing and its reality, such as the footprint of a man in the clay (Al-maktaba.org). Al-Waseet Dictionary defines the Arabic words: Atharahu (traces it) as following its trace.(Daif, 20014, p. 5).

Hence, Social effects can be defined idiomatically as the results that are formed from the social phenomenon that occurs in society and individuals can sense and feel and sense such as magic, crime, poverty, unemployment, and disease. That is to say all these phenomena have social effects related to social behaviour, social relations, social construction, community problems and means of social control. Social effects are the consequences of a social action that a person or a group performs. They also reveal the consequences that man can find due to certain accidents and events that affect the society and the social life. These traces can be felt or even seen.

Moreover, the social effects are the outcomes of the social action done by the man or the

society. These outcomes might have implications as well as behavioural, human, and social dimensions as every social phenomenon or problem, regardless of its nature, has effects, and these effects might be positive or negative, or close or far. The target of these social effects is to affect the course of society and life as it transforms them from one form to another. So, when we say that a social phenomenon has positive or negative effects, these effects depend on the causes of the phenomenon or event.

III. Familial Relations:

Familial relations are defined as: a set of ties and interactions between family members, or it is a reciprocal interaction between family members through communication and the exchange of rights and duties. (Abu Salman, 2017, p. 22). Hence, each family member has rights and duties that s/ he must abide by in accordance with the laws followed in each family for each family may differ from others in the pedagogy and education of its children as the rules it follows in teaching them the roles, rights and duties allotted to them.

Familial relationships can also be defined as the relationships made by dividing the roles among the family members such as husband, wife and children, and the nature of communications and interactions that occur among family members who reside in one house, such as the relationship of the husband to the wife, the relationship of children with each other, and the relationship of the father to his children. (sociology.com)

The Pattern of Magical thinking among a Sample of Individuals in the Iraqi Society

There are many patterns of thinking, some of which are rational, others are superstitious and metaphysical, and many are religious. The mental thinking pattern is based on proven scientific facts that can be traced back to reason, science and experimental work; while the superstitious and metaphysical thinking pattern is based on things that do not exist in reality, such as belief in the existence of mythical creatures, mythical stories, and imaginary events such as magic, envy, etc. The reason for the superstitious thinking of some individuals in the Iraqi society can be ascribed to their belief in miracles and fear of nature, in

addition to immature thoughts about the ways of life they live in and their fear of harm as a result of their lack of faith in these mysterious and supernatural things.

Superstitious and metaphysical thinking is based on an important principle, which is called animism and refers to the vitality of nature. The principle of animism means that superstitious thinking provides a basis for endowing life to natural, non-living phenomena, so that these phenomena act as if they were living creatures that could feel, energize, sympathize, or come At odds with man. So, any myth or legend such as magic, ancient gods, and myths significantly depends on this principle. (Zakariya, 1988, p. 49).

The study sample, i.e., Al-Diwaniyah Province, witnessed superstitious ways of thinking, most of which were magical. These ways express people's culture as magic and witchcraft are social methods that people believe in. People often resort to the witches, charlatans or soothsayers in order to resolve problems, relieve their pains, or make them feel inner comfort. Thus, people come to the witches and charlatans when they feel that their livelihood has been scarce, so they ask these witches for some spells and amulets (hirz) to increase their livelihood. Some unmarried women also go to them to disclose their destiny and unravel the knot (maakoudah) which means to resolve the problem that cause the delay of these women's marriage. Likewise, when a woman is late in getting pregnant, she goes to the witches and charlatans to find out the reason for the delay in her pregnancy, and whether she is affected by an evil eye or magic, or it is a normal case. When a person also suffers from a mental illness, his/ her family usually resort to these witches to get rid of the genie who has caused it. Hence, they justify this irregular behaviour that the individual performs as the action of the genie that has entered his body. Then, the witches and charlatans remove that evil spirit by reading some incantations and practicing special rituals that may reach hitting the patient to get it out of his/ her body. Moreover, women used to resort to these witches upon the feelings of hatred and quarrels. Some of them even resort to them to do some magical actions in order to take revenge on the person concerned. People in the community of study resort to magic for medicine, treatment and therapy. It has been noticed that women form the largest sector of community that

resorts to magical works to fulfil their needs. This may be due to the authoritarian and patriarchal system that does not give women the opportunity to control reality. Therefore, women in the study find in superstitious and magical thinking a gateway to their psychological comfort, even if it is temporary.

Despite the fact that most of the members of the community in this study that believe in superstitious and magical thinking are women, there is a large number of men who resort to magic and superstitions in order to fulfil their needs such as getting a wife or offspring, quite as some women.

Through the thorough investigation of the study community, i.e., Al-Diwaniyah Province regarding a number of traditional behaviours of some individuals, we find that if someone is exposed to theft and does not know the thief, people resort to what they are called fortune-tellers (Lord of Mirror), and the method of fortune-tellers is done by giving people symbolic specifications that indicate the thief. For example, they say the thief has sunken eyes, or he is dark-skinned, short and has a skinny body and so on, to convince people of the illusory description. The witch might have prior information in interrogating the family, so they give a description of the thief they become convinced of, without mentioning the name of the thief. So, these individuals go to search for the thief according to the descriptions given to them by the foreseer.

There are also other superstitious ways of thinking, such as envy (the envious eye), where people go to the witch and fortune-tellers and obtain immunization from it a (hirz). This amulet (hirz) is hung in front of the house or shop. They are also put around the necks of people, animals, etc. When a baby is born, women put a gold coin and a pin on the breast of the infant in order to keep evil away from him / her, especially envious eyes of women who have not given birth to a child.

Furthermore, optimism and pessimism form a way of superstitious thinking, where some individuals are pessimistic about a black cat or a black dog, as they think that it carries the genie. Even some of them become pessimistic about the sound of a crow, an owl, a butterfly or a broken mirror and broken glass in general. According to these individuals, the broken glass brings them bad luck and loss of livelihood. Besides, some

people get bad omens by hearing the sound of wailing over the dead and so on.

On the other hand, people become optimistic when they see rain, or a feather falling on the head or shoulder, as they think it brings luck and wealth. They also get optimistic about the new born baby, etc. These patterns affect the nature of human thinking. This can justify the reason for adopting this type of thinking by the residents of Al-Diwaniyah Province as they have an ultimate goal to feel psychological reassurance on the one hand, and the lack of cognitive awareness of these phenomena on the other hand. Their dependence on the traditions and customs, that were previously followed and inherited from the ancestors to the parents, is a primitive pattern that does not depend on reason and logic, but rather on the unseen, myths and illogical ways in their interpretation and understanding of things.

The Pattern of Religious thinking and Its Impact on the Formation of the Mentality of Magic

The Religious thinking depends on the interpretation of events and causes and their ascription to God the Almighty, the supreme power that exceeds the human ability. Since the population of community under the study are Muslims, they have faith in God the Almighty, and they offer obedience to Him through the performance of the five prayers, charity (zakat) and fasting in Ramadan, as well as some religious practices that give psychological comfort. The month of Ramadan is considered one of the distinguished months. It includes a distinctive

faith and religious style, during which prayers are held, Quranic Verses are recited in the councils, the blessed Night of Power (Lailat Al-Qadr) is celebrated in mosques or homes, and other religious rituals are followed in this holy month.

Furthermore, the month of Muharram is considered by this community as one of the most prominent months that have abundant religious methods and practices, including the memorization of the misfortunes of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him). People should adhere to certain rules in this month such as abstaining from listening to music or songs as they express joy whereas it is the month of grief. Besides, some religious rituals are held in this month, such as distributing spiritual rewards for example, and other methods adopted by the study community in this month. There are other religious patterns that characterize this community, including their belief in the powers of healing for “Alak”, which is mostly a green piece of cloth that symbolizes the saints and the family of prophecy.

The effects that the religious thinking pattern have on the community of the study sample community stems from their fear of God the Almighty's wrath if they do not perform these religious rituals, in addition to their fear for their societal image. For example, the person who prays has a different social status from the one who does not pray. This social view prevails among the older people more than the young as it becomes less common among the youth.

Edition. Cairo: Al-Shuruq International Library.

Davis, Owen. (2014). *Magic: A Very Short Introduction*. Trans. Rihab Salah Addin. Cairo: Hindawi Institute for Science and Culture.

Rivière, Claude. (2015). *Social Anthropology of Religions*. Trans. Usama Nabeel. Cairo: National Centre for Translation.

www.b-sociology.com

Zakariya, Fuaad. (1988). *Scientific Thinking*. Kuwait: Alam Almaarifa.

References

Abu Salman, Maen M. (2017). *The Effects of Social Media on the Familial and Social Relationships among the Students of Yarmouk University: Field Study*. Irbid: Yarmouk University.

Al-maktaba.org

Daif, Shawqi. (2004). *Al-Waseet Dictionary*. 4th

