

Self-harm Among Secondary School Students

By

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Abstract

The aims of the current study are: Identifying the concept of self-harm among secondary school students. Finding whether there is any statistically significant differences in terms of gender (males and females) and specialty (scientific, literary). In order to achieve the objectives of this research, the researcher translated the self-harm scale (Sanson, 2010). after confirming the validity of the tool by calculating the validity and reliability, the research tool were applied to a sample of (400) male and female students. The data, then, was collected and processed statistically, the results revealed the following: Self-harm among secondary school students was low. There are statistically significant differences in self-harm according to the gender variable in favor of males. There are statistically significant differences in self-harm in terms of speciality variable in favor of the literary branch. In light of the results that have been reached and to fulfil the research, the researcher has developed a number of recommendations and suggestions for future research

Introduction

General Framework for Research

First: - The problem of research

Self-harm occurs as a result of society going through severe disturbances or sudden crises as well when there is no strong bond that draws the individual to his or her community or family as a result of exposure to harsh factors, adversities or uncomfortable conditions in the family or social environment in which he is located (Denman, 2003: 2). Or divorce, continued conflict in the family, poverty, or a weak relationship with friends) (Schaefer, Melman, 2006: 329-330).

A person who hurts himself does not feel pain either during or immediately after practice, nor does he realize that the abuse has occurred, and then feels a sense of comfort or guilt and this feeling lasts for twenty-four hours (Crowe&Bunclark, 2000:48).

Adolescent self-harm threatens his life and safety and deprives him of the benefit of the educational and rehabilitation programs offered to him, so many therapists pay great attention to the development of effective therapeutic methods in an effort to reduce or even reduce it (Al-Khatib, 2009, :70). It also leads to the interruption of the adolescent's relationship with his family and friends where he sees them only at intervals and for specific times and may lead to its final interruption and this increases his sense of anxiety (Khalil, 180:2005) and from studies that dealt with the problem of self-harm such as the study (Tiger, 2007), the study (Student, 2009), the study (Al-Musawi and Baqer, 2006), the study of Mathew, 2002), the study of Rodham, et.al, 2004), and the study of (Oldershaw, et.al,2009).

Second: - The importance of research

The importance of this stage comes from the importance of adolescence, because of its importance in the psychosocial development of the individual, at this stage the individual is no longer a child and has not become an adult and in which he faces different social requirements, and fundamental changes through which he either achieves a positive identity or falls into a disorder of role i.e. negative identity Gerard, 1988:38). Just as abuse is a form of disturbed behavior and refers to various motor responses that end in the behaviors of abuse or physical damage to the individual, and the damage caused by this type of immediate response often ranges in degree, intensity and extent from simple to severe, which negatively affects the adolescent and those around him, in addition to the consequences of it in terms of not benefiting from rehabilitation and educational programs (discourse, 2004 :16).

The family also works to form a positive self-concept through the interaction of the individual with the rest of his family, as well as through his interaction with the society in which he lives, which leads to the acquisition of experiences that help him to form a positive self-concept about himself, because the concept of self is an educated psychological construction (Mouly, 1973:16) (Paul, 1980:2). Anne Saxon argues that there are two methodological perspectives that should be put before him by everyone who wishes to explain self-harm within the limits of the procedural requirement, one of which is that individuals who do self-harm are positively supported by paying attention to them and tend to repeat self-harm behaviors and the other perspective is that individuals self-harm in order to get rid of some severe or painful stimuli (psychological or emotional, i.e. escape from intolerable emotional pain) (Anne Saxon, 2004; Heiets & Prakittachakul, 2020; Kelleci & Taşkın, 2020).

Among the most important studies that have taken self-harm are the study of Stanley, 2001) and the study of Alexandrian (Skandrani, 2008), where the results of which indicate that repetitive self-dismemberment behaviors, are semi-suicidal behaviors, raise the risk to actual suicide, and their members are characterized by severe depression and severe anxiety, as they stand out in these aggressive individuals (Stanley, 2001: 427) (Sandrine, 2008: 473).

On the other hand, Soloff's study showed that there are those who consider that self-harm behavior is nothing but anti-suicide behavior, which emerges through the stages that the individual goes through from distress, or severity, and restriction, this is what emerged during Simpson's study, which highlighted that self-harm is an anti-suicide act that the individual highlights to protect against the disintegration that he was experiencing. Feeling dead, feeling alive again, relieving stress and tension, freeing negative emotions and maintaining emotional balance (Soloff, 1994: 151) (Simpson, 1980: 137). Because of the importance of self-harm, it has been addressed by several studies, including Hamad's study (2011), the Maghams study (2018), the blind study (2015), the O'connor, et.al, 2009 study, Jacobson's study, 2008, and Fortune, et.al, 2008.

Third: - Limitations of research.

This research is limited to human boundaries represented by students of the fifth preparatory grade in the sub-(scientific and literary) and of both sexes (males, females).The time limits are represented by the academic year (2021/2022) AD. The spatial boundaries are represented by the morning public schools located in the city of Amara, the center of Maysan Governorate .

Fourth: - Definition of terms***1-(Villabba& Harrington,2003)***

It is a self-directed behavior that causes serious harm to the individual in charge of it

and may be without the intention of the individual in charge of it to work to kill himself (Villabba& Harrington, 2003:22).

3. (Sanson& Sanson,2010)

as specific and self-destructive behaviors that are performed by the individual to inflict harm or self-harm (Sanson& Sanson, 2010: 16).

Chapter Two

Theory of frustration – aggression

Some of the most famous scholars of this theory include Teller (Miller, 1909), Robert Caesar (Sears, 1908), Maurer (Mawrer, 1906), Leonard Doob, 1884) John Dollard (1900). These scholars focused their attention on the social aspects of human behavior, working at the Bell Institute for Human Relations and the first picture of this theory has been presented on the assumption (that there is a correlation between frustration and aggression), where there is a correlation between frustration as a stimulus and aggression as a response, and the essence of the theory is frustration that increases the likelihood of an aggressive reaction. (Janis, 1971: 147-148) and if a person is prevented from achieving goals necessary for him, he feels frustrated (painful experience) and directly or indirectly attacks the source of frustration (Lindgren, 1963; Khalaf & Alajani, 2021).

Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Procedures

Research community

The research community includes students of the fifth preparatory grade with its scientific and literary branches in secondary and preparatory schools for morning study in the city of Maysan / the center of the governorate of architecture for the academic year (2021-2022) AD, and to determine the research community, the researcher visited the General Directorate of Education of the Governorate of Architecture under the letter of facilitation of the task issued by Wasit University - Faculty of Education for Humanities Appendix (1), in order to obtain statistical data for students of the fifth preparatory grade, Their total number reached (3143) students distributed among (11) schools, (1238) students from the literary and scientific disciplines and (1905) students from the literary and scientific disciplines, and Table (1) shows this.

Table (1): *The research community is distributed according to the variable of gender and academic specialization*

Total	Fifth grade literary	Fifth grade science	Gender
1690	309	1381	Male
1453	929	524	Female
3143	1238	1905	Total

Research sample

A sample means units of the total community, selected according to specific rules in order to properly represent the community, because it is difficult to study all members of the research community in some studies, so it is appropriate to choose a representative sample of the original community (Melhem, 2000: 251). As it is difficult to study all members of the total research community, so it is appropriate to choose a representative sample of this community, and the sample of this research was selected by the method (random class) and the researcher determined the size of the research sample to (400) students from the total research community

of (3143) distributed in (11) schools and by (200) students from the scientific and literary specialization, and (200) students from the scientific and literary specialization as well, as (Van Dalen) points out that this method is the most appropriate and preferred in obtaining On a more representative sample. (Van Dalen, 1985: 393).

Statistical indicators of the self-harm scale

Scientific literature has shown that one of the statistical indicators that should characterize any measure is to recognize the nature of the equinox distribution, which can be identified by two basic indicators: arithmetic mean and standard deviation (Bayati and Athanasius, 1977: 217). The mean is defined as the sum of the values of the degrees divided by the number of those values, and the standard deviation is expressed as the amount of the degree of deviation or distance of the values of the variable from the arithmetic mean, and the lower the degree of standard deviation and the closer it is to zero, the more this indicates a kind of homogeneity or convergence between the values of the degrees of distribution.

Skewness and Kurtosis are also characteristics of iterative distributions, but the torsion coefficient refers to the degree of concentration of iterations at different values of distribution, and the coefficient of overflow refers to the extent to which the repetitions in an area are concentrated for equinox distribution (Odeh and Hebron, 1988: 79-81).

The frequency distribution is identical when the values of the arithmetic mean, median and mode converge, and the iterative distribution is negative or positive when the values of these three metrics do not apply to each other. (Ferxon, 1991: 78). This required the researcher to use the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) in the extraction of these statistical indicators, as shown in Table 2.

Table (2): Values of statistical indicators of the self-harm scale

Value	Statistical indicators
29,375	Arithmetic mean
29	Mediator
28	mode
3,31	standard deviation
10,96	variance
0,341	skewness
-0,443	kurtosis
22	lower degree
38	highest score
16	Term

This indicates that the form of the frequency distribution is close to the average distribution, and accordingly, the scale is accurate in measuring the psychological concept, and the sample is representative of the community, which allows generalizing the results of applying this scale (Awda, 1998, 86).

Chapter Four: Presentation, interpretation and discussion of the results

The first goal: to identify self-harm among secondary school students.

To verify this goal, the researcher applied the self-harm scale consisting of (22) items on the research sample consisting of (400) male and female students. The results of the research

showed that the arithmetic mean of the scores of this sample on the scale amounted to (29,375) degrees and a standard deviation of (3,311) degrees, and for the purpose of knowing the significance of the difference between the arithmetic mean and the hypothetical average, which amounted to (33) degrees, the researcher used the T-test for one sample, and it was found that The difference is statistically significant and in favor of the hypothetical average, as the calculated t-value reached (21,898), which is greater than the tabular t-value of (1.96), at a significance level (0.05), and at a degree of freedom (399), which means that the self-harm of the research sample is its degree Low as the hypothetical mean is greater than the arithmetic mean of the sample. It is clear from the result in the table above that most of the sample members do not suffer from the problem of self-harm, but on the contrary, they are self-accepting and reconciled with them, despite the frequent circumstances and frustrations they go through, but they found other ways to unload their negative emotions through the process of converting this negative energy into energy Positive, effective and constructive by setting goals and working to achieve them, or through the process of compensation, dropping or suppression, as the researcher believes that this group of society found its need in social media, as there are those who drop their aggression and repeated frustrations on others through these means (electronic violence, or who is compensated by it or reviewed by it).

The second objective: to identify the differences of statistical significance in self-harm in secondary school students according to the variables of gender (male, female) and specialization (scientific, literary).

- a) ***Gender:*** It was found that the value of the calculated alphabetical ratio (41,009) for the sex variable is greater than the value of the tabular alphabetical ratio of (3.84) at the level of significance (0.05) and two degrees of freedom (1 , 396), and upon observation of the mean sample by sex, it was found that the average scores of males amounted to (30,350), and the average scores of females amounted to (28,400), indicating that there are statistically significant differences in self-harm depending on the gender variable and in favor of males. This can be explained according to the theory of frustration – aggression when an individual is exposed to a painful experience resulting from the inability of the individual to achieve an important goal for him, this leads to the channeling of aggression towards the self as a result of frustration Males are usually more aggressive with themselves than females as a result of stressful life events and taking on life responsibilities leading to feelings of frustration and helplessness.
- b) ***Specialization:*** It was found that the value of the calculated alphabetical ratio (34,555) for the specialization variable is greater than the value of the tabular ratio of (3.84) at the level of significance (0.05) and two degrees of freedom (1, 396), and upon observing the average sample according to specialization, it was found that the average scores of students of scientific specialization amounted to (28,480), and the average grades of students of literary specialization (30,270), which indicates that there are statistically significant differences in self-harm depending on the variable of specialization and in favor of literary specialization. This is because students with a high level of education are less self-harming than the rest of the sample, and they are more mature in emotional and social terms, and this result can be attributed to the difference in the curriculum, which generates academic pressure and pushes them to self-harm.

Recommendations

Develop awareness and guidance programs for both parents and teachers to ensure a sound education that does not include demanding achievements for children beyond their

abilities and mental abilities and moving away from methods of blame, constant reprimand, threats and punishment for the simplest mistakes. The psychological counselor's interest in the psychological aspects of adolescents to try to help them build friendships with others.

suggestion

Conduct a similar study to identify the relationship of self-harm with other variables (family upbringing, mental health, religious commitment, stressful life events). Conduct a similar study to identify self-harm in other samples of Iraqi society such as prisoners, divorcees, widows and spinsters.

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