

SELF-ESTEEM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG ASSISTED CHILDREN

- A FIELD STUDY IN EL-OUED CITY -



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Date of submission: 03/02/2024 Date of acceptance: 15/05/2024 Date of publication: 22/06/2024



Abstract:

This study is aiming at investigating the relationship between self-esteem and psychological adjustment among assisted children. The following research questions were raised: Is there a statistically significant correlational relationship between self-esteem and psychological adjustment, including its dimensions (personal, familial, and academic), among individuals in the study sample? This question is subdivided into more sub-questions: Is there a statistically significant relationship between self-esteem and psychological adjustment in the study sample? Are there statistically significant differences in self-esteem attributable to the gender variable? Are there statistically significant differences in psychological adjustment attributable to the gender variable? **The results were as follows:** There is a statistically significant relationship between self-esteem and overall psychological adjustment among individuals in the study sample. There are no statistically significant differences in self-esteem based on the gender variable. There are no statistically significant differences in psychological adjustment based on the gender variable.

key words: Self-esteem; Psychological Adjustment; Assisted Children; personal compatibility; school compatibility; Family compatibility.

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Introduction:

People are intricate beings made up of both soul and body, with the mind playing a vital role in maintaining their equilibrium and well-being. Each person holds a unique sense of self, influenced by their personality, life encounters, and the surroundings they inhabit. When individuals find inner harmony, they're more likely to extend that balance to their interactions with others. The idea of self revolves around how an individual perceives themselves, while self-esteem involves the personal evaluation one places on oneself, considering familiar behaviours and embracing one's own identity. Psychological adjustment stands as a key concept deeply connected to an individual's personality and mental health. People vary in their physical and mental capacities, along with their individual strengths in diverse aspects of life.

The individual's awareness of their abilities, potential, and interpretation of the positive factors influencing their actions are essential elements for achieving the desired performance level. Undoubtedly, psychological and social harmony, along with an individual's self-perception, are fundamental to social success. This success can be measured in terms of the individual's relationships with themselves, friends, family, neighbours, and adaptation to the social environment in which they live (Ali Abdulhassan, 2011).

THE FIRST TOPIC : The Theoretical Framework Of The Study

First requirement : Research Problem

In our study, we aim to shed light on an important and significant segment of society, specifically investigating the relationship between self-esteem and psychological adjustment in a crucial group—assisted children. Assisted children belong to a category of individuals whose parents are unable to care for them due to various reasons such as abandonment, life difficulties, single-parent situations, parental illness, unemployment, imprisonment, eviction from the family home, or the death of parents.

Additionally, assisted childhood manifests in various forms, including illegitimate children, children placed under the care of a judge, children entrusted to care by their parents, orphans, homeless children, and children of divorced couples. Therefore, our study aims to spotlight this group through an exploration that can serve as a starting point for further

research. Our goal is to understand the nature of the relationship between self-esteem and psychological adjustment in assisted children.

Second Requirement : Study Hypotheses

First Section : General Hypothesis

There is a statistically significant relationship between self-esteem and psychological adjustment in assisted children.

Second Section : Specific Hypotheses

There are statistically significant gender-related differences in self-esteem.

There are statistically significant gender-related differences in psychological adjustment.

Third Requirement : Study Importance

The significance of the present study can be condensed into the following key points:

- Attempting to shed light on a sample of assisted childhood and understanding the extent to which they achieve psychological adjustment.
- Providing insights into self-esteem and psychological adjustment through the theoretical framework of the research.
- Opening doors for new studies based on the results of this research.

Fourth Requirement : Study Objectives

The current study aimed to:

- Understand the relationship between self-esteem and psychological adjustment among individuals in the study sample.
- Explore the relationship between self-esteem and personal adjustment among individuals in the study sample.
- Investigate the relationship between self-esteem and family adjustment among individuals in the study sample.
- Examine the relationship between self-esteem and academic adjustment among individuals in the study sample.

Fifth Requirement : Procedural Definition of Study

Concepts :

- Self-esteem :

Self-esteem is the holistic assessment that an individual makes of themselves, considering their mental, social, emotional, ethical, and physical attributes. This evaluation is mirrored in one's confidence, sentiments about self-worth, thoughts regarding personal significance, and expectations in diverse life scenarios.

- Psychological Adjustment:

Psychological adjustment is the ability of a child or person to satisfy their internal needs and motivations, whether within the family, school or beyond. This leads to self-acceptance and a sense of satisfaction with oneself.

- Assisted Children:

Assisted children are those who lack parental care due to various reasons such as illegitimacy, parental abandonment, the intervention of a judge, orphanhood, homelessness, or being the child of divorced couples.

First Section : Definition of Self-esteem

Self-esteem is a concept that has been the focus of psychologists and researchers alike in various fields related to human identity. Its importance lies in shaping an individual's overall personality. The roots of the concept of self-esteem can be traced back to the writings of Francoise. G in 1989, considered one of the pioneers in establishing this concept. It is described as a sense of self-worth determined through the balance and correspondence between what the individual aspires to achieve and what they have actually accomplished – the balance between ambition and reality.

Self-esteem is one of the most crucial concepts associated with human personality, gaining widespread use in psychology books and articles. It has taken a significant place in the writings of researchers and scholars, alongside other self-related terms. Since the late 1960s and early 1970s, self-esteem has become one of the most widely studied aspects of the self-concept (Hasan Mohammad Ahmed, 2003, 165428). According to Ziller (1978), self-esteem is "the set of perceptions an individual has about their self-worth, which are linked and influenced by the

perceptions and reactions of other individuals who hold a specific status in the individual's life. Self-esteem evolves through a social comparison process that pertains to the behaviour and skills of oneself and others" (Robert, 1978:19).

Second Section : Definition of Psychological Adjustment

"Dawood" defines psychological adjustment as: "Human beings strive to organize their lives, resolve conflicts, and confront problems by achieving satisfaction and overcoming frustrations, ultimately leading to mental well-being" (Ramadan Mohamed Al-Gaddafi and Mohamed Al-Faloufi, 2003, p.2002).According to "Hamed Abdul Salam Zehran" (1980): "Psychological adjustment includes happiness with oneself, satisfaction with oneself, and the fulfilment of innate, organic, physiological, and acquired primary and secondary internal needs. It represents an internal scale and also involves alignment with the demands of growth in successive stages" (Zidan Abdul Baki, 1920, p. 29). Therefore, a person's ability to confront and work towards solving problems reflects an authentic image of sound psychological adjustment.

Section Three : Definition of Assisted Child

- **Psychological Definition:** According to the psychological encyclopedia: "An assisted child is part of a category of children whose parents are unable to care for them due to abandonment, life difficulties, the social context of a single mother, parental illness, unemployment, imprisonment, eviction from the family home, or the death of parents" (Abdul Hamid Al-Shazly, 2010, p. 1894).

Section Four : Categories of Assisted Children

Assisted childhood can be classified into the following sub-categories:

1- Illegitimate Child:

This refers to a child without identity or roots, born as a result of an illegitimate relationship. The father abandons responsibility, and the mother, fearing shame and disgrace, has no choice but to also abandon the child.

2- Child Directed by a Juvenile Court :

Children falling under this category are deemed to be at risk. It includes children from families facing challenges in providing

comprehensive care and lacking a suitable psychological environment for the child.

3- Child Placed by Parents :

This pertains to a child placed temporarily due to financial difficulties. They might remain for an extended period, after which they are abandoned. Placement could also result from parental discord.

4- Orphaned Child:

An orphan is a child who has lost both parents and has not yet reached the age of maturity. In Islam, there is a particular emphasis on providing support and care for orphans.

5- Street Child:

A street child may adopt a lifestyle involving begging, often stemming from economic hardships, pressure, and anxieties. The child may resort to escaping control imposed by guardians due to conflicts and problems, sometimes resulting from the death of a parent.

6- Child of Divorced Parents:

Children of divorced parents suffer significantly from the separation, becoming victims of various problems. Divorce deprives the child of the care and guidance of both parents, leading to issues such as homelessness, begging, and, in many cases, delinquency. (Fatima Shhata, 2002, p. 89).

THE SECOND TOPIC : Field study procedures

First requirement : Research Methodology

- Scientific Approach :

The scientific approach is a method of thinking and working that researchers rely on to organize their thoughts, analyze them, and present them, ultimately leading to reasonable results and facts about the phenomenon and subject of the study.

(Layla Ahmed, 2016). Given the nature of our subject, we are compelled to follow a specific methodology. Since our study focuses on self-esteem and its relation to psychological compatibility among illegitimate children, the suitable methodology for this study is the descriptive-correlational approach.

Second Requirement : Study Sample

The study included a sample of 60 assisted children, both boys and girls, selected purposefully.

Third Requirement : Research Tools

First Section : Psychological Compatibility Scale

Designed by Russell N. Castle in 1961, and adapted by Mustafa Kamel.

This scale was developed to observe the behaviour of children, providing a psychological and objective assessment of psychological compatibility for children in kindergarten and elementary school. It is suitable for children who are not able to read. The use of this scale is limited to those who have observed the child's behaviour or know them closely (parents, teachers, relatives) to serve multiple purposes.

1- Description of the Tool :

This questionnaire consists of 52 items, with each item having six alternatives:

- ✓ Very often
- ✓ Often
- ✓ Occasionally
- ✓ Rarely
- ✓ Very rarely
- ✓ Never happens.

These statements are categorized into three domains of compatibility, each representing a set of statements:

1. Personal Compatibility (Self): Represented by items 1-20.
2. Family Compatibility: Represented by items 21-40.
3. School Compatibility: Represented by items 41-52.

Second Section : Self-Esteem Scale

The Self-Esteem Scale is a widely utilized instrument in both academic research and practical applications. It demonstrates essential psychometric properties, including validity, reliability, and discriminative capability.

Studies by Coopersmith and other foreign and Arab researchers have affirmed its reliability.

1- Development of the Scale :

The American researcher Coopersmith designed this scale in 1967 to measure the orientation towards oneself in social, academic, family, and personal life. It was later translated into Arabic by Dr. Leila Abdel Hamid Abdel Hafez. Initially, the measures were generic and did not specify behaviour in different situations according to age groups. There was a pressing need to build stable and valid measures for self-assessment. Three scales emerged from this need:

- ✓ Short Form Scale
- ✓ School-Related Scale
- ✓ Personal Scale
- ✓ Scale Description:

This scale consists of 25 statements, including both positive and negative statements. The respondent is required to mark (X) inside the box next to the word, indicating whether it applies or does not apply. There are no right or wrong answers; instead, the correct answer is the one that reflects the individual's perception.

2- Tool description :

The scale includes two alternatives for each item:

- ✓ Apply
- ✓ Does not apply

Fourth requirement: Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Hypotheses

In this section, we will present, analyze, and discuss the results of the hypotheses:

First Section : General Hypothesis

There is a statistically significant correlational relationship between self-esteem and psychological harmony among rescued children. Table (1): Illustrating the Correlation Values between Self-Esteem and Psychological Harmony.

1- Analysis and Discussion :

Before exploring the specific values in Table (1), it is crucial to underscore the importance of exploring the interplay between self-esteem and psychological harmony in the context of rescued children. The general hypothesis posits a significant connection, and the following

analysis will shed light on the statistical findings and their implications for understanding the well-being of rescued children.

Variables	Correlation coefficient	Significance level
Psychological Harmony	- 0.63	0.01
Self-esteem		

2- Interpretation of Results :

The results presented in the table show a correlation coefficient of - 0.63, which is a significant value at the 0.01 significance level. This indicates that the general hypothesis is confirmed.

Second Section : First Sub-Hypothesis

Stating that there are statistically significant differences in psychological harmony within the study sample attributed to the gender variable.

Table (2): Illustrating the Nature of Differences in Psychological Harmony among Rescued Children Based on the Gender Variable.

1- Analysis and Discussion :

The initial sub-hypothesis aims to investigate whether there are noteworthy gender-based variations in psychological harmony among the study participants. A detailed examination of Table (2) will be crucial to understanding the nuances and extent of these differences. The results will shed light on how gender may impact psychological well-being among rescued children.

	Males			Females			"T" value	Significance Level
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Self-esteem	30	167.32	19.22	30	173.17	18.11	-0.61	Non-significant

2- Interpretation of Results :

From the results presented in the table above, it is observed that the mean for males is 167.32 with a standard deviation of 18.24. As for females, the mean is 173.17 with a standard deviation of 20.15. The calculated "T" value is 0.61, which is statistically non-significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that the sub-hypothesis is not supported. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which posits no differences in self-esteem among rescued children attributed to gender, is accepted.

Section Three : Second Sub-Hypothesis

Stating that there are statistically significant differences in self-esteem within the study sample attributed to the gender variable.

Table (3): Illustrating the Nature of Differences in Self-Esteem among Rescued Children Based on the Gender Variable.

1- Analysis and Discussion :

The second sub-hypothesis aims to explore whether there are noteworthy gender-based variations in self-esteem among the study participants. A comprehensive examination of Table (3) is necessary to understand the specific aspects and magnitude of these differences. The results will contribute to insights into how gender may influence self-esteem among rescued children.

	Males			Females			"T" value	Significance Level
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Self-esteem	30	14.83	2.79	30	12.50	4.03	0.29	Non-significant

2- Interpretation of Results :

From the results presented in the table above, it is observed that the mean for males is 167.32 with a standard deviation of 18.24. As for females, the mean is 173.17 with a standard deviation of 20.15. The calculated "T" value is 0.61, which is statistically non-significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that the sub-hypothesis is not supported. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which posits no differences in self-esteem among rescued children attributed to gender, is accepted.

Section Four : Interpretation and Discussion of General Hypothesis

Based on the results of the general hypothesis, which posits a statistically significant correlation between self-esteem and psychological well-being in its dimensions among the study sample, the calculated "T" value of (- 0.63) at a significance level of (0.01) indicates a relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being in all three dimensions. Therefore, based on the results obtained, we can accept our research hypothesis, which states that there is a statistically significant correlation between the study variables.

The family and its role in achieving harmony and subsequently self-esteem can be considered a fundamental element in this context. Additionally, the role of the teacher in achieving psychological well-being and harmony for rescued children is crucial, especially if they can understand the personality of the rescued child. The school itself, as a social environment, plays a role in overcoming psychological and emotional disturbances. Furthermore, the individuality of the rescued child is significant; not every rescued child is emotionally disabled. The efforts of those around the child contribute to making them a well-adjusted individual. This aligns with Ripple's 1944 study, which focused

on the "formation of the primary relationship between mother and child and its importance for the growth of their social, emotional, and physical lives later on.

Section Five : Interpretation and Discussion of the First Sub-Hypothesis

Based on the results of the first sub-hypothesis, which asserts no statistically significant differences in psychological well-being within the study sample attributed to the gender variable, this implies that the conditions experienced by males are similar to those experienced by females. The results of our sub-hypothesis are consistent with Iman Fawzi's 1985 study on the impact of deprivation on the psychological well-being of children after the death of the mother. The study showed that both females and males experience a great deal of loneliness and sadness due to the loss of the subject of love, alongside feelings of abandonment and rejection.

Section Six : Interpretation and Discussion of the Second Sub-Hypothesis

Based on the results of the second sub-hypothesis, which asserts no statistically significant differences in self-esteem within the study sample attributed to the gender variable, it is evident once again that the conditions experienced by males are the same as those experienced by females. The results of our sub-hypothesis align with a study conducted by Soheir Kamel Ahmed, which delves into the subject of "Deprivation of Parents in Childhood and its Relationship with the Concept of Self and Behavioral Disorders in Children." In her study, the researcher emphasizes the importance of the family's role and the necessity of attachment to parents in a child's life, regardless of their gender. These findings underscore the universal impact of familial conditions on both male and female children. It reinforces the idea that the absence or presence of certain family dynamics and relationships plays a pivotal role in shaping a child's self-esteem, irrespective of gender. Understanding the commonalities in the experiences of both genders highlights the need for comprehensive approaches to support the psychological well-being and self-esteem of all rescued children. Strategies that consider the broader family context and emphasize attachment to caregivers could prove beneficial for the overall development of children who have experienced various forms of deprivation.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Establish legal frameworks to mitigate the phenomenon of the spread of rescued children.
- ✓ It is necessary for society to respect this category (rescued children). This helps them form their identity and be in harmony with themselves for a life of stability and tranquillity.

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