

The level of depressive reaction and its relationship with mindfulness among students subjected to bullying in secondary school - A field study on a sample of secondary school students in the city of Sidi Bel Abbès (Algeria).

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Abstract:

The current study aims to determine the level of depressive reaction and its relationship with mindfulness among students who are subjected to bullying in secondary school. We used the descriptive method and to achieve the objectives of the study, we relied on the (Beck Depression Inventory, translated by “Abd al-Sattar Ibrahim”) and the (Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire “Baer et al.”, translated and Arabised by “Muhammad al-Sayyid Abdul Rahman”, 2015) to collect the data. After verifying the psychometric properties of the study instruments on a sample of 12 purposely selected bullied students, the study concluded the following findings:

- There is a low level of depressive reaction among students who are bullied in secondary education.
- There is a high level of mindfulness among secondary school bullied students.
- There is an inverse correlation between depressive reaction and mindfulness among students who have been bullied in secondary school.
- There are no statistically significant differences in the depressive response of bullied students due to the gender variable.

Keywords: Level of depressive response, mindfulness, bullied students.

1. Introduction:

Bullying behaviour is one of the serious behavioural problems that have emerged in schools among children and adolescents and in all communities, causing negative effects on students in all aspects. A large proportion of students, especially adolescents, are exposed to it worldwide. The phenomenon of bullying has spread under the neglect of parents and schools. Research on the phenomenon of bullying dates back to the 1970s in European countries, especially in

Scandinavia. Educational authorities discovered the phenomenon of bullying in schools through the suicide attempts of adolescents after being persecuted. The theory of depression also explains that the individual's view of himself, the world around him and the future is pessimistic. A study (Zandi: 2023) confirmed that bullying is associated with a wide range of negative outcomes, such as aggression leading to depression and even isolation and distancing from peers. In the face of these disorders and psychological problems, positive psychology has emerged, which seeks the positive aspects of the individual, which is called "mindfulness". A study (Mohamed El-Sayed Abdel-Rahman, Eman Mohamed El-Taie, 2017) highlighted the impact of mindfulness in reducing depressive symptoms, as it is a strong predictor of performance and adaptation, a barrier against psychological stress, and a preventive measure against mental illness, contributing to the treatment of many disorders.

2. Theoretical importance:

The current research addresses a concept from the field of positive psychology, namely mindfulness, which needs further study.

- The current research is interested in identifying the depressive response and its relationship to mindfulness in victims of bullying in the secondary stage, and thus it is interested in a specific group of the community, the victims of bullying.

3. The applied meaning:

- The research findings are useful for secondary school students, educational counsellors, and school and career counsellors, as well as a scientific addition to the psychological and educational heritage.

4. The problem:

Bullying behaviour is considered to be one of the serious behavioural problems prevalent among members of societies, as cases of bullying are increasing in type and style in our current era, especially with the increase in domestic violence. Bullying is defined as a form of aggression that occurs when an individual is subjected to negative behaviour that causes them pain, and is the result of a power imbalance where one is the bully and the other is the victim. Bullying can be physical, verbal or emotional. As in the study (Jaradat, 2008), which indicated that there were bullying behaviours among students whose ages ranged between (15-18) years, and these behaviours varied between physical harm, verbal attack, property damage and possession, and that males use physical bullying more than females, as the bully resorts to hitting and fighting, and this mostly occurs in school and its surroundings.

Bullying is one of the most prominent stressful situations that a person, especially a young person, can be exposed to, and it has a clear negative impact on their mental health, making them susceptible to various psychological disorders, the most common of which is depression. Depression refers to isolation and low self-esteem, as it is a mood state that indicates the individual's lack of worth, and it is also considered a disturbance of psychological balance, with feelings of sadness and mood swings, along with excessive thinking. Psychological depression increases negative thoughts that sometimes threaten the individual's life, and a sense of worthlessness and loss of hope for the future, as in the study (Al-Bakhsha, 2023) that examined

bullying and its relationship to symptoms of depression in a sample of children, where they found a statistically significant positive correlation between bullying and symptoms of depression in children who are victims of bullying, meaning that bullying has a negative impact on both the bully and the victim, as they suffer from low levels of mental health and self-concept, and the child's ability to see themselves positively is affected. (Al baskha 2023)

When an individual is exposed to a variety of stressors that lead to depression, it depletes their energy and adaptive capacity, exposes them to psychological and physical exhaustion, and negatively impacts their quality of life. In recent years, a new concept has emerged, mindfulness, which is considered a distinctive concept of positive psychology. Positive psychology looks at everything that can make an individual happy, positive and enjoyable, rather than focusing on the pathological or negative aspects of personality, such as anxiety and depression. Mindfulness works to expand vision and the ability to deal with environmental changes and life situations, to increase awareness and to realise the self, which reduces literal attachment to beliefs, habits and traditional ideas. The study by (Mohamed El-Sayed, Al-Tai 2017) on mindfulness and its relationship with depression among university students in Egypt and Iraq found a negative correlation between depression and mindfulness, meaning that individuals with high levels of mindfulness have low levels of depression and vice versa. They concluded that mindfulness plays a role in reducing the rumination of negative thoughts, thereby reducing depression and acting as a preventive factor against the development of disorders.

From this perspective, we addressed the following problem: Is there a relationship between the depressive response and mindfulness among those who are academically bullied in secondary school?

Accordingly, we pose the following sub-questions:

- What is the level of depressive response among those who are academically bullied in secondary school?
- What is the level of mindfulness among those who are academically bullied?
- Is there a statistically significant relationship between depressive reactivity and mindfulness among those who are academically bullied?
- Are there statistically significant differences in the depressive response among those who have been academically bullied that can be attributed to the gender variable?

The theoretical framework of the study:

1. Definition of the Depressive Reaction:

“Hafedh Yaakoub” defines it as “the depressive response is a reaction of the self to a shock or deprivation resulting from a sudden event such as loss, shock or disappointment, in other words, it is a concrete form of what happens to ordinary people when they are hit by an emergency disaster.” (Zawaoui, 2012, p.51).

As for Beck, he defines depression as “a cognitive and emotional experience manifested in symptoms of sadness, pessimism, self-hatred and self-criticism, suicidal ideation, irritability, agitation, loss of interest, hesitation, worthlessness, loss of energy, changes in sleep patterns, irritability, changes in appetite, difficulty concentrating, fatigue and exhaustion, and loss of interest in sex” (Gharib, 2004, p.25).

2. Symptoms of depression:

Psychological symptoms: - Mood changes. - Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy. - Anxiety. - Delusions. - Hallucinations. - Loss of emotions. - Gloomy thinking. - Problems with concentration and memory. - Suicidal thoughts.

Physical symptoms: - Sleep problems. - Difficulty falling asleep or waking up. - Loss or increase in appetite. - Weight gain or loss. - Loss of interest in sexual relations. - Constipation. - Irregular menstrual cycle. (McKenzie, 2016, p.6).

Types of depression: In a study conducted by “Lutter” and “Blatt”, there are distinct patterns of depression based on the experiences and issues that led individuals to become depressed. They distinguish between two types of depression:

The first: Acute or Dependent Depression: which focuses on issues of interpersonal relationships such as dependency, feelings of helplessness and abandonment.

The second: introjective or self-critical depression: which focuses on issues specific to the self. (Hammouda, 2020, p.149).

3. The concept of mindfulness:

The concept of mindfulness is based on the English word “mindful”, which means aware, attentive or vigilant, and its counterpart “mindless”, which means inattentive or unaware.

In the Arabic language, the meaning of mindfulness has been discussed in dictionaries and lexicons with somewhat similar meanings. In the dictionary “Lisan Al-Arab” by Ibn Manzur, a “vigilant” person is described as being highly alert, with knowledge and sharpness... and a person who “becomes vigilant” means that he has become attentive.

The Webster’s dictionary (1998) describes it as “the quality of being aware or conscious of something” and “being careful and attentive to a possible danger or problem”. (Al-Mashhadani, 2022, p. 295).

Langer (1992) defined it as “a state of perceptual awareness characterised by a difference in the nature and mode of cognitive functioning that leaves the individual open to novelty and sensitive to both context and perspective”. (Khaliq (n.d.), p. 239).

4. Dimensions of mindfulness:

Langer (2000) identified four dimensions of mindfulness:

1/ Alert discrimination: Developing new and creative ideas rather than relying on preconceived ideas and judgements.

2/ Openness to novelty: individuals tend to be curious and willing to experiment with new solutions to unfamiliar stimuli.

3/ Present orientation: Focusing attention on a specific situation.

4/ Awareness of multiple perspectives: The ability to look at a situation from different angles without being limited to a single opinion. (Majdhub, 2022, p. 144).

5. Components of Mindfulness:

Langer (2000) has identified four components of mindfulness:

1. Novelty seeking: This refers to an individual's orientation to the environment in which they live and the way they perceive things in generating new or effective ideas. It is associated with innovation, whereas a lack of mindfulness implies a reliance on old things or the current idea.

2. Commitment: This refers to the individual's focus and immersion in a particular situation. Individuals who are mindful and sensitive to different situations will notice new events and maintain an understanding of their own development.

3. Producing novelty: This means creating things as the person explores and focuses on new stimuli. Mindfulness is characterised by an openness to new ideas, characterised by curiosity and experimentation.

4. Flexibility: This refers to the ability to change one's mental state with the situation rather than relying on a single perspective. (Hafedhi, 2021)

6. Theories explaining mindfulness: Many psychological theories have tried to explain the concept of mindfulness. Some have described it as a focus of attention in the present moment, while others have interpreted it as an open-minded state without prior judgement:

Langer's Theory (Langer, 1998):

It states that mindfulness is a cognitive awareness concerned with self-awareness and mental openness to more than one aspect, and is considered one of the most important elements of an individual's mental health, especially in the individual's ability to find innovative solutions to problems. It has been identified through four components, which are vigilant discrimination, commitment, openness to the positive and flexibility. (Al-Najjar, 2021, p. 553).

Langer and Beck's (1979, p. 64) findings have shown that we can improve long-term and short-term memory through contextual variables, and it can be a measure of information to be consciously processed, and mental alertness can advance in the individual who is intellectually preoccupied, as he does not have the ability to accept the other with his beliefs and ideas, which leads to a weakening of his mental abilities or his inability to look at his surroundings with a creative view, and this is called intellectual extremism or cognitive closure.

The theory of self-design, special treatment and preference:

This theory was formulated by researchers Deci and Rayan (2002) and hypothesises that open awareness can be of great value in facilitating the selection of behaviours that are consistent with the person's needs, values and interests, whereas automatic and controlled processing often

impedes the perception of choices that are more in line with needs and values. The self-design theory explains that mindfulness can manage memory through self-regulatory activity and the satisfaction of basic psychological needs for self-authentication and freely chosen activities, and the self-design theory sees that people who are mentally alert to sensory experiences have a greater memory than those who are engaged in distracted work. (Al-Atawneh, 2023, p. 22).

7. Previous studies:

7.1 Study by Asmaa Mohamed Ali Ahmed Al-Khabsha: (2023) entitled “Bullying and its Relationship with Symptoms of Depression in a Sample of Children”.

- The study aimed to investigate the nature of the relationship between bullying and symptoms of depression in a sample of children. The study sample consisted of 200 children in grades (fifth and sixth) in primary schools in the governorate of Port Said. The researcher used the analytical descriptive method and the study tools included the Bullying Behaviour Scale (Bully-Victim) by Mona El-Dahan et al, 2020 and the Depression Scale (D) for Young Children CDI by Gareeb Abdel Fattah 1995. The statistical programme SPSS was used and the following results were obtained:

- There are differences attributed to the gender variable for the victims of bullying scale in favour of males.
- There are differences between males and females in the depression scale in favour of males.
- There is a statistically significant positive correlation between bullying and symptoms of depression in children who are victims of bullying.

7.2 Study by Yamina Zendi: (2023) entitled “Bullying Behaviour and its Relationship with Psychological Depression among Schoolchildren”.

- The study aimed to investigate the relationship between bullying behaviour and psychological depression among schoolchildren. The study sample consisted of 80 students. The researcher used the analytical descriptive approach, and the study tools included the bullying behaviour scale by Magdy Mohamed El-Desouky (2016) and the Beck Depression Inventory (1979). The SPSS statistical programme was used and the results were as follows:

- There is a statistically significant relationship between bullying behaviour in school and the level of psychological depression.
- There are statistically significant differences in school bullying behaviour due to the gender variable in favour of males.
- There are statistically significant differences in the degree of psychological depression among schoolchildren attributed to the gender variable in favour of females.

7.3 Study by Yahya Mansouri and Nadia Boumejane: (2022) entitled “The Level of Mindfulness among Adolescents in the Middle Stage”.

The purpose of the study was to determine the level of mindfulness in middle school students. The study sample consisted of 400 students in the third and fourth grades. The study adopted

an analytical descriptive approach. The study instruments included the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) and the SPSS statistical programme was used. The results obtained were:

- There is a high level of mindfulness skills among adolescent students.
- There are no differences in mindfulness among adolescent students that can be attributed to the gender variable.

The study by Noura Daghnoosh (2022) entitled “Mindfulness and Psychological Stress for Academic Achievement of University Students”:

- Mindfulness and Psychological Stress for Academic Achievement of University Students,” aimed to determine the level of stress (low/high/moderate) among university students and the nature of the relationship between psychological stress. The researcher used the comparative correlational descriptive approach. The study sample consisted of 53 male and 240 female students. She used the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire and the Psychological Stress Scale and relied on the SPSS statistical package. The results obtained were:

- There is no relationship between mindfulness, psychological stress and academic performance.
- There are differences in levels of mindfulness attributable to the gender variable, in favour of males.
- There are no differences in the level of psychological stress attributable to the gender variable.

7.5 The study by Ahmed Ali Ahmed Asiri (2022) entitled “Cognitive Emotional Regulation Strategies as a Mediating Variable Between Mindfulness and Depression and Anxiety in a Sample of Patients”

- The study aimed to examine cognitive emotional regulation strategies as a mediating variable between mindfulness and depression and anxiety in a sample of patients. The sample consisted of 72 patients. The study used a correlational descriptive approach. It used the Cognitive Emotional Regulation Strategies Questionnaire, the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), and the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS), and the SPSS statistical program. The results obtained were:

- There is a negative (inverse) correlation between mindfulness and depression.
- There is an association between mindfulness and anxiety.
- Cognitive emotional regulation strategies have a negative effect on mindfulness.

7.6 A study by Mohamed El-Sayed Abdel-Rahman and Eman Mohamed El-Taie (2017) entitled “Mindfulness and its Relationship with Depression among University Students in Egypt and Iraq”.

The study aimed to determine the nature of the correlative relationship between mindfulness and depression and its effect on gender (male/female), as well as to identify the most important dimensions of mindfulness. The study sample consisted of 218 male and female students from

an Egyptian university and 208 male and female students from an Iraqi university. The researchers used a comparative descriptive approach. The study instruments included the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (Baer et al.) translated by (Mohamed El-Sayed Abdel-Rahman, 2015) and the Beck Depression Inventory, second edition translated by (Gharib Abdel-Fattah, 2000). The SPSS statistical programme was used and the following results were obtained:

- There is a statistically significant negative correlation between mindfulness and depression.
- There is a statistically significant effect of the gender factor (male/female).

4. Methodological framework of the study:

4.1. Methodology of the study: We used the descriptive approach as it is appropriate to the nature of the subject.

4.2. Study Sample:

The study population consists of bullied secondary school students, the students of Taybe Al-Arabi Secondary School and Hassani Hussein Secondary School.

4.3. Main study sample: The main study sample included 12 bullied students (male and female) who were purposively selected.

4.4. Research instrument:

-Depression scale:

The Beck Depression Inventory was developed by the American psychiatrist "Aaron Beck" and first published in 1979. It was translated and adapted to the Arabic environment by Dr Abdel-Sattar Ibrahim. This scale is characterised by a high degree of validity in measuring the level of depression in the client, as it consists of 21 items, and each item has 04 answers, arranged according to their severity, representing symptoms of depression, scored from (0-3) to indicate the severity of the symptoms. The scale is corrected by the respondent choosing the most appropriate alternative for their current situation by marking the answer with an (X). The scale is administered in a group form and consists of a series of statements, in each group there are 04 statements arranged from (0-3) describing the depressive symptom in a gradual manner from the least to the most severe. The respondent is asked to read the statements in each group carefully and put an (X) around the statement that describes his or her psychological state. The examinee's raw scores are then summed to give his or her score on the scale.

-Mindfulness Scale:

The five-dimensional mindfulness scale was developed by (Bear, et al., 2009) and standardised and translated into Arabic by (El-Behary et al., 2014). The scale was standardised for the Egyptian, Saudi and Jordanian environments. The initial version of the scale consisted of (112) items, then it was administered to a sample of (613) university students, with (70%) of the sample being female, as follows:

1. Using exploratory factor analysis, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted and the results revealed a model consisting of 5 factors of mindfulness. The results also revealed that there are 8 statements that load on each of the four factors, which are: (observing, describing, acting with awareness, not judging inner experiences) and 7 statements on the fifth factor which is (not reacting to inner experiences). In light of the above, the scale factor included 39 statements distributed over five dimensions, which are:

1. Attention: Consists of 8 statements measuring attention, perception and observation of internal phenomena such as (bodily sensations, cognitions and emotions) and observation of external phenomena such as (sounds and smells) and attention to other elements such as (location, intensity of sensation and its continuity and tone of sounds).

2. Describing: Consists of 8 statements that mean using words to describe, label and refer to the observed phenomena.

3. Acting with awareness: Consists of 8 statements that mean fully engaging in the activity with conscious attention and focusing on one thing at a time.

4. Non-judgement of inner experiences: Consists of 8 statements that mean accepting the present experience without judgement or evaluation and representing reality without trying to avoid, escape or change it.

5. Non-reactivity to inner experiences: Consists of 7 statements that measure the tendency to allow thoughts and emotions to come and go without distracting or preoccupying the individual's thoughts or causing them to lose focus in the present moment.

Scoring key: The scale statements are answered using a five-point Likert-type response format ranging from (strongly agree to strongly disagree). The response 'strongly agree' is worth 5 points, while the response 'strongly disagree' is worth 1 point if the statement is positively worded. The reverse is true for negatively worded statements. The higher the score, the higher the level of mindfulness or the trait measured by the subscale.

5. Psychometric properties of the depression scale:

5.1 Internal consistency validity of the scale:

The results show that the majority of items on the Beck Depression Inventory were significant at the 0.01 level, except for items (1-5-6-7-8-9-11-14) which were not statistically significant. This indicates that the scale has good internal consistency validity.

5.2 Reliability:

-Cronbach's alpha:

The overall Cronbach's alpha value for the scale was estimated to be (0.84), which is a strongly positive value among the scale items. This allows us to say that the scale has a high degree of reliability.

-Split-half method:

The results show that the correlation coefficient value is (0.66) and we note that the Spearman correlation coefficient is (0.79) and the Guttman coefficient is (0.78), which are good values indicating that the scale is reliable.

6. Psychometric properties of the mindfulness scale:

1. Internal consistency validity of the mindfulness scale:

The results show that the majority of the items on the Mindfulness Scale were significant at the 0.01 level, except for items (34-37-39) which were not statistically significant. This indicates that the scale has an acceptable level of internal consistency validity.

2. Reliability:

-Cronbach's alpha:

Based on the results, we find that the Cronbach's alpha values for the subscales of the scale, represented by the Observation dimension (0.70), the Description dimension (0.68), the Conscious Action dimension (0.52), the Non-judgement of Inner Experiences dimension (0.60) and the Non-reactivity to Inner Experiences dimension (0.72), have strong correlational relationships, indicating a strong consistency among the items.

This is also confirmed by the overall Cronbach's alpha value of the scale, which was estimated to be (0.68), indicating that the scale has a high degree of reliability.

-Split-half method:

The results show that the correlation coefficient value is (0.62), and the corrected value using the Spearman-Brown coefficient is (0.69), as well as the Guttman coefficient, which is (0.65). These are good values and indicate that the scale is reliable.

7. Interpretation of hypothesis results:

7.1 Discussion and interpretation of the results of the first question

The first question reads What is the level of depressive reaction among victims of bullying in secondary schools?

The results obtained show that the students who are victims of bullying have a low level of depression and the validity of the first question was confirmed. The statistical analysis of the data showed that the mean score of the current study sample on the depression scale was (20.5), while the hypothetical mean was (31.5), indicating that the students who are victims of bullying have a low level of depression.

Our study contradicted the studies of "Bositalo" and "Lepto", which found that depression rates were higher among victims of bullying, and that depression was higher among middle school students who were victims of bullying (Zandi, 2023, p.60). It also contradicted the study by (Bahar Abdel Ghani, 2022) which found that university students had high levels of depression.

In interpreting these results based on behavioural theory, depression is the loss of behavioural reinforcement process. "Ferishter" believes that pathological behaviour is a direct result of the

individual's interaction with the environment, and that depression gradually decreases through positive reinforcement of behaviour. Supporters of this theory also believe that depression is a painful negative psychological experience that is nothing more than the repetition of learned experiences or encounters that the individual has been unable to resolve or remove from his or her mind (Mortadha, 2020).

In terms of psychoanalytic theory, the scholar "Bibring" believes that the main characteristic that distinguishes depression is the inability to achieve needs and aspirations, and he believes that the need for love and appreciation is one of the three main needs, while the other needs include the need for power and security, and depression occurs as a result of the failure to satisfy any of the three previous needs and the conflict that occurs in the self associated with the failure to satisfy any of them (Zawawi, 2011: p. 35).

Learning theory also explains that depression is a form of cognitive disorder or lack of mental ability, and studies of depressed people show cognitive difficulties such as distractibility of attention, lack of concentration, and difficulty in making decisions, and depression manifests itself in the form of behavioural disorders, including violence, shouting, and aggression.

The decrease in the level of depression among students who are bullied in secondary education can be explained by personal factors, namely the strong personality that has a solid foundation from childhood, or the safe environmental factors that help to overcome the conflicts that the victims of bullying face. This explains that the victims of bullying have a quick ability to adapt to their negative experiences, overcome difficulties and not be affected by the harmful causes, as well as a high level of awareness.

2. Discussion and interpretation of the results of the second question:

The second question reads What is the level of mindfulness among those who are bullied?

The results of the statistical analysis of the data showed that the mean score of the current study sample on the mindfulness scale was high, estimated at (127), while the hypothetical mean was estimated at (117). This indicates that students who are bullied have a high level of mindfulness, which is consistent with the study of (Belaarbi Kauther, 2019) on cognitive flexibility and mindfulness in a sample of university students, where they had a high level of mindfulness, as well as the study of (Omayar, Berkats, 2022) on the level of mindfulness in a sample of secondary school students, where it reached a high level. Similarly, the study by (Mamun Abdel Karim, 2023) on mindfulness and its relationship with brain dominance found a high level of mindfulness among third year experimental science students.

Interpreting these results in the context of Langer's theory shows that secondary school students do not follow an automatic thought process and their reactions and behaviours to events are not standardised, as they have a degree of awareness that enables them to adopt different thinking skills. In addition, self-design theory explains that mindfulness manages memory through self-activity and the fulfilment of basic psychological needs for self-validation. People who are mentally alert to sensory experience have better memory than those who are engaged in distracting work. Awareness facilitates alertness to the signs and symbols that arise in basic needs, making it more likely that individuals will organise their behaviour in a way that helps

them to meet their needs. This result can also be interpreted as secondary school students having a high level of awareness of the experiences they are going through moment by moment, reflecting a good level of self-regulation of their attention and openness to anything new, which is referred to as self-insight.

From the above, it can be said that the high level of mindfulness among students who are victims of bullying in secondary education is due to the fact that the mentally alert are more aware and attentive to stimuli without making evaluative judgements, and their attention and perception are not influenced by past experiences or future expectations. The victim of bullying faces problems and has the ability to accept difficulties and how to live with them without being affected or influenced by them. At this stage, students are more flexible and open to others, which puts their mindfulness in an active state.

3. Discussion and interpretation of the results of the first hypothesis:

The first hypothesis states that “there is no statistically significant correlation between depressive reaction and mindfulness among victims of bullying”. After statistical processing, it was found that the value of Pearson’s correlation coefficient was estimated at (-0.02), which is a non-significant value at the statistical significance level of (0.01) and (0.05). Therefore, there is an inverse relationship between depressive response and mindfulness, meaning that as mindfulness increases, depressive response decreases and vice versa. In this regard, the results of our study concurred with the study of (Iman Muhammad Al-Tai, 2011) who found that there was no correlation between mindfulness and depressive response in the study sample. It was also consistent with the study by (Ahmed Ali, Ahmed Asiri, 2021) which found that there was a negative correlation between mindfulness and depression among a sample of patients.

In this regard, Langer’s theory emphasises that mindfulness is a form of thinking in which the individual focuses and finds a sense of comfort, anxiety, tension and depression, and the individual feels psychological comfort. Langer’s theory also affirmed that mindfulness is a cognitive awareness that is concerned with self-awareness and mental openness, and it is considered one of the most important elements of the individual’s mental health, especially in the individual’s ability to find innovative solutions to problems, which are identified by four components: vigilant discrimination, engagement, openness to the positive, and flexibility (Al-Najjar, 2021, p. 553). The cognitive theory of depression according to “Aaron Beck” also confirmed that depression occurs as a result of negative cognitive beliefs, as the depressed person has a negative outlook on the self and the outside world (Mokrani, 2015, p. 21).

The reason for this is that as the level of mindfulness increases, the depressive response decreases and vice versa.

This is because students’ awareness increases through their ability to interact with their environment, and mindfulness helps students to face pressure with flexibility and positivity, and the ability to solve their problems through awareness, and to face the phenomenon of bullying so that it does not affect their concentration.

4. Discussion and interpretation of the results of the second hypothesis:

Which states that “there are no statistically significant differences in the depressive response among the bullied individuals attributed to the gender variable” The results of the statistical analysis revealed that the Mann-Whitney U value is estimated at 13, which is significant at the 0.86 level of significance. The results also showed that the mean rank for the male sample is 5.86 and the sum of the ranks is 41, while the mean rank for the female sample is 8.17 and the sum of the ranks is 37. Accordingly, the hypothesis that ‘there are no statistically significant differences in the depressive response attributed to the gender variable’ was confirmed. This contradicts the study (Asmaa Mohamed Ali and Ahmed El-Khabsha, 2022) which found differences between males and females in the depressive response in favour of males regarding bullying and its relationship to depression symptoms in a sample of children. It also contradicted the study (Zendi Yamina, 2023) which found statistically significant differences in the level of depression among students attributed to the gender variable in favour of females regarding bullying behaviour and its relationship to depression among students.

Therefore, the absence of differences in depression for both sexes is due to the same age group, as well as the personal structure and environment in which the individual lives, as well as the similar school pressures experienced by both males and females, or the nature of the similar social reality experienced by both sexes.

Conclusion:

In the end, we can say that bullying is a negative behaviour and can be an aggressive behaviour that the bully issues with the intention of harming the victim, whether it is verbal, physical, psychological or social. This can lead to psychological disorders, the most common of which is depression, which causes psychological damage to the victim and affects their psychological and personal structure. Mindfulness has reached interesting dimensions today and has a great importance in reducing the level of depression. We can also say that students who are bullied in secondary school have a high level of mindfulness and a low level of depression, which varies according to gender. This is confirmed by the results of the statistical analysis of the study, which showed “an inverse correlation between the depressive response and mindfulness among students who are bullied” and that “there are no statistically significant differences in the depressive response among the bullied due to the gender variable”. In conclusion, we believe that the problem of the study and its variables still need more research, investigation and study, as we did not use some variables that would have supported the research topic, such as the variable of the level of self-esteem among the bullied. It would be preferable to add a case study method to the research design in order to go deeper and get more accurate results with the help of the research tools such as interviews and observations.

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