



Mindfulness and Its Relation to Social Anxiety among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at estimating the relationship between mindfulness and the social anxiety in a sample of adolescents. The analytic descriptive approach has been used in the study. The participants consist of 150 male and female students in the first and second years at the Faculties of Arts and Education in Port Said University, whose age ranges from 17 to 20 years. This is conducted using the mindfulness scale (Beer et al., 2006) translated by Muhammad Al-Sayed Abdel Rahman (2015), the social anxiety scale (Liebowitz, 2000) codified by Ibrahim Al-Shafei (2018). The results of the study show that there is a statistically significant negative correlation at the level of 0.05 between the scores of mindfulness and social anxiety among a sample of adolescents. They also show that there are statistically significant differences between males and females with regard to mindfulness and the differences are in favor of males, while the differences in social anxiety are in favor of females.

Keywords: Mindfulness, social anxiety, adolescents, adolescence stage, alienation.

Introduction

Adolescence is one of the dangerous stages that one lives through. It may even be the most dangerous of all the life stages that one goes through, as one moves from childhood to adulthood, within new changes related to various aspects of growth, and is exposed to many external and internal conflicts (Al-Zoghbi, 2010, p. 20).

Adolescence is also a stage of psychological disorders, in which the adolescent is exposed to

many factors of vulnerability and is expected to fulfill himself in accordance with the demands of society. In addition, this stage is characterized by many physiological, psychological, social and emotional changes, accompanied by mood swings, sudden changes in tendencies and opinions, and many disorders such as alienation and anxiety (Saeedi, 2016, p. 170).

It is known that anxiety is the common denominator in mental disorders and one of the most important psychological diseases that affect adolescents. Usually, the most anxiety disorders

appear at this stage, which is social anxiety, in the early to mid-adolescence period. It is noticed among school and university students during the exam period, or when they are exposed to frustrating situations. Hence, psychological and physical symptoms start to appear, and social anxiety is one of the most common anxiety disorders, whose rate of prevalence is estimated at about 13%, and those affected are afraid of various social situations or performing public activities (Al-Rowad & Hamdi, 2014, p. 444).

Social anxiety is considered one of the concepts that is related to interaction between the individual and others, and it is part of the communication process and a kind of disturbance that occurs to the individual when he is exposed to talking for the first time, or even after a period of meeting new people he does not know, so he feels excessive fear and tension. It also occurs in situations in which the person feels that he is under the microscope or in the focus circle, and everyone is looking at him. Accordingly, he is afraid that he will appear shy or afraid, or that he will make a mistake or stutter, which leads to trembling, palpitations, shortness of breath, dry throat and sweating. Hence, social anxiety is the fear of being noticed by others, which leads to avoidance of social situations. It is usually accompanied by low self-evaluation and fear of criticism, and it may appear in the form of complaints such as facial congestion, hand tremors, and nausea. The patient is also convinced that one of these secondary manifestations is his main problem, and symptoms may develop into panic attacks (Okasha, 1992, p. 15).

Due to the extreme effects of social anxiety (as one of the negative psychological aspects) on the adolescent group, it is necessary to identify the mindfulness (as one of the positive aspects) of this group and the extent of its reflection on their psychological states, personalities and behavior as one of the active elements in society. Some studies, such as Walaa Ezzat (2017), Advait (2011), and Harrison Bloom et al. (2019), indicates the effects of mindfulness and its role in behavioral changes among individuals, reducing psychological stress and raising students'

achievement levels. The concept of mindfulness also refers to the presence of individuals in the present moment, i.e. at the present time, regardless of the surrounding circumstances, and this is considered one of the basic elements for a person, which makes him conscious and attentive to all the things and situations that he goes through at the present moment without issuing positive or negative prejudgments.

Mindfulness is the careful examination of the continuous expectations and thinking of the individual's reliance on the things in the context and the identification of new aspects of the context including foresight and the individual's functional performance during his social interactions (Grow et al., & Marlatt, 2015, p. 17)

Hence, our justification for conducting this study is to reveal the nature of the relationship between mindfulness and social anxiety, particularly since social anxiety is one of the phenomena that has become more noticeable in our surroundings due to the increase in the social requirements of individuals, the expectations of roles and the need for the individual to possess social competencies in different areas of life. Social anxiety can hinder individuals from relative adjustment and progress in the various fields of life, and is reflected in their sense of mental health and their value as individuals in society (Radwan, 2001, p. 27).

Thus we can say that being in a fast-paced society that we have to keep up with, we rarely do anything with our full attention, for often part of our consciousness is always preoccupied with the past or the future. This requires that the individual be far from intellectual stereotypes, mentally alert, and able to sense the present moment so as not to fall victim to psychological disorders such as social anxiety during the various stages of growth in general and adolescence in particular. Accordingly, the role of mindfulness emerges as a kind of simple practices that can be practiced in our daily lives, helping us to liberate our minds from the past and the future and be aware of our present so that we can enjoy it and deal with it more effectively.

Thus, we can say that being in a fast-paced society that we have to keep up with, we rarely do any work using our full attention, often part of our consciousness remains always occupied with the past or the future, which requires that the individual be far from intellectual stereotypes, mentally alert, able to sense the present moment until He does not fall victim to psychological disorders such as social anxiety and during the various stages of development in general and adolescence in particular, and thus the role of mental alertness emerges as a kind of simple practices that can be practiced in our daily lives, helping us to liberate our minds from the past and the future and awareness of our present so that we can enjoy it and deal with it more effectiveness.

Significance of the Study

The variable of social anxiety is one of the variables in which research efforts must be pursued because of its negative effect on individuals, particularly since the category that suffers most from these disorders is the category of adolescents who are affected in all aspects of life. This is mainly since that the seriousness of these disorders lies in their great effect on individuals, starting from the effect on the rates of production, work, study and adaptation, and ending with suicides and vascular disorders, as well as multiple problems in achievement, academic adjustment and various aspects of life.

The importance of this study lies in its attempt to link the positive aspects such as mindfulness and the pathological aspects such as social anxiety along with the extent of interdependence between them and the effect of each on the other.

Based on the foregoing, the theoretical and practical importance of the current study can be stated as follows:

The Theoretical Importance of Study

1. If we look at the age group on which the study is being conducted, we find that it is an essential stage in the life of individuals. This is mainly because it includes ambition, the need for self-

acceptance and approval, optimism, hope and perseverance at a time when the adolescent is exposed to psychological and social pressures that affect his life in the present and future and push him to social anxiety.

2. Mindfulness, whether as a psychological concept or as a therapeutic training intervention, is one of the relatively recent concepts and methods in psychological studies. In more precise words, the concept of mindfulness is one of the relatively new concepts in clinical psychology and in the study of mental disorders.

3. This research is to provide the Arab library with a study in the field of mindfulness, which many studies in foreign environments unanimously agrees that it is one of the positive factors in personality, and it has a strong connection with mental health outcomes as well as being an effective treatment for many mental disorders.

The Applied Importance of Research

This study may contribute to conducting other studies in the field of mindfulness and the extent of its correlation, influence and results on some other psychological variables.

Statement of the Problem

In the light of the absence of Arab studies, within the limits of the researcher's knowledge, that were interested in examining the relationship between mindfulness and social anxiety, or that intervened to study mindfulness as a mediating variable between social anxiety and alienation among adolescents, it was possible to identify the problem of the current study in the possibility of exploring the relationship between mindfulness, social anxiety, and alienation in a sample of adolescents. This is owing to the fact that the nature of the relationship between social anxiety and alienation differs in the presence of mindfulness, as well as by isolating the effect of mindfulness. Accordingly, the current study raises a number of questions, which the current research seeks to answer, and these questions are

as follows:

1. Is there a correlation between mindfulness and social anxiety among adolescents?
2. Are there statistically significant differences between males and females with regard to mindfulness and social anxiety?

Objectives of the Study

The current research aims at the following:

1. Identifying the nature of the relationship between mindfulness and social anxiety among adolescents.
2. Identifying the differences between males and females with regard to mindfulness, social anxiety and alienation.

Scope of the Study

- **Objective scope:** This research deals with mindfulness and its relationship to social anxiety among adolescents.
- **Spatial scope:** This research is conducted in Port Said Governorate.
- **Temporal scope:** This research is conducted in the academic year 2020-2021.
- **Human and institutional scope:** This research is conducted on a sample of adolescent university students in Port Said Governorate.

Concepts of the Study

The Concept of Mindfulness

“Mindfulness is the state of awareness of internal cognitive events, namely: thoughts, beliefs, memories, and feelings associated with knowledge. Using the term mindfulness effectively means to refer to metacognitive awareness, i.e. what is beyond knowledge of thoughts and beliefs when attention is fluidly focused on internal experiences without being

confined within any one of them. (Abdel Rahman, 2014, p. 262)

The researcher defines mindfulness procedurally as the score obtained by the respondent on the mindfulness scale prepared for the purposes of the current study, so that the high score indicates high mindfulness and the low score indicates low mindfulness.

The researcher concludes by defining mindfulness as a process that includes focusing awareness and attention on current experiences without evaluating them, so that the individual is able to be free from the past and not related to the future, and able to coexist with painful experiences as well as dealing with them instead of withdrawing and surrendering to them.

The Concept of Social Anxiety

Social anxiety is the fear of being noticed by others, which leads to avoidance of social situations. It is usually accompanied by low self-evaluation and fear of criticism. It may appear in the form of complaints such as facial congestion, hand tremors, and nausea. The patient is convinced that one of these secondary manifestations is his problem, and symptoms may develop into panic attacks (Okasha, 1992, p. 15).

The researcher defines social anxiety procedurally as the score obtained by the individual when responding to the social anxiety scale. The high score indicates an increase in social anxiety symptoms, whereas the low score indicates a decrease in social anxiety symptoms.

The researcher concludes by defining social anxiety as a type of disorder that occurs to the individual as a result of irrational fear of situations in which the person expects an evaluation by others. The individual fears that the evaluation will be negative, and he fears that he will show symptoms of anxiety such as sweating, confusion, redness of the face, and tremors of the hands. Accordingly, this hinders the individual from responding appropriately to social situations, which may lead him to completely

withdraw from social situations in which social anxiety and its symptoms appear, fearing a negative evaluation of him.

The Concept of Adolescence

The word “adolescence” is derived from the Latin verb “adolescere”, which means a gradual progression towards physical, sexual, mental, social and emotional maturity.

Adolescence is defined as the stage of preparation for adulthood, which extends in the second decade of an individual’s life from the age of eleven to twenty-one (11:21). It is a stage between childhood and adulthood, as it is a transitional stage that combines the characteristics of childhood and the characteristics of mature masculinity and femininity. In this light, it is the stage in which maturity is completed, where the adolescent tries to get out of the past childhood life into the future life of adulthood (Zaki, 2019, p. 568).

Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

Mindfulness

The pressures of life and the multitasking that a person performs simultaneously have become things that create a kind of tension that a person feels. Therefore, individuals, while striving to carry out these tasks, often lose touch with the present moment. It may be easy to rush to notice a lot of things around us, but the most important thing that should arouse our attention and observation is to focus on the present moment of our thoughts, feelings and the world around us because this creates a kind of self-awareness, awareness of the surroundings, and a kind of contentment and inner peace. Paying attention to the present moment means paying attention to the sights, smells, and sounds around us, as well as paying attention to inner thoughts and feelings. This ability that helps us enjoy what is happening around us and sense and understand ourselves more deeply is called mindfulness. Mindfulness, in essence, is focusing on present experiences more than preoccupation with past experiences or

future events, acceptance of experiences and tolerance towards them, as well as facing events as they are without issuing evaluative judgments on them. The contemplator of the teachings of Islam finds that thinking is the basis of the Muslim’s faith, and that Allah Almighty has given great importance to rationality, contemplation, thinking and meditating (Zaki & Helmy, 2019, pp. 104-105).

Effects and Benefits of Mindfulness

Mindfulness has gained the appreciation of many researchers, and they have mentioned that it has multiple positive effects and included it in positive psychology as it increases the positive emotional state away from negative habits. This is done by sensing the present moment away from issuing positive or negative judgments, as the individual’s awareness of his inner feelings creates a state of inner peace that makes the individual more aware of himself and able to deal more deeply with others. In this regard, it can be said that mindfulness changes the relationship of the individual with his thoughts, and this change that occurs in the relationship of the individual with his thoughts is called lack of focus and lack of integration (Thompson, 2011).

Mindfulness has a positive effect on the organizational level, as it improves the ability of individuals to achieve reliable performance in changing environments, depending on their way of thinking and the extent of personal flexibility in different situations (Langer, 1989; Ndubisi, 2012, 2014; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

In fact, mindfulness is a balanced awareness of experiences that makes the individual avoid contradiction between self-identity, acceptance of psychological and emotional phenomena as they are, openness to thoughts, feelings, and painful experiences, and allows him to live the experience in the present moment in a balanced manner (Al-Audaini, 2019, p. 148).

Social Anxiety

It is said that this age is the "age of anxiety", but

we cannot be certain of the correctness of this statement because there is no doubt that man suffered in previous times from many conflicts, such as hunger, disease, slavery and disasters, that made them vulnerable to anxiety as we are now. However, the difference in our age is that civilization has become more complex due to rapid social changes and the difficulty of adaptation associated with the speed of social changes and the civilizational form, as well as the accompanying difficulty in achieving self-desires, which creates a state of conflict and anxiety among many individuals (Okasha, 2020, p. 178).

Social Anxiety Disorder in Childhood and Adolescence

Social anxiety disorder often begins in adolescence and centers around the fear of others' view (Eid, 2000). It is characterized as a clear and permanent fear of one or more social situations that require performance in a group, and those situations that the individual fears or that always arouse anxiety in him are avoided. Above all, the concept of social anxiety is linked to the interaction between the individual and the other, which is part of the communication process (Maamaria, 2009, p. 136). . Social anxiety arises through social comparisons conducted by young people and adolescents among their peers or with strangers, which causes fluctuations in the social self-concept in a way that threatens the individual and increases his fear (Moussa & Alenezi, 2022).

Socially anxious people are afraid of making a mistake or behaving in a way that makes them ashamed when they are criticized by others. Concerning children, their anxiety response manifested in the form of crying, screaming, and clinging to familiar people. As for adolescents, they show panic-like symptoms when faced with social situations that cause anxiety manifested in the form of bowing shoulders, biting nails and trembling voice. These responses are more evident among adolescents because cases of social performance are more common among

adolescents, so socially anxious adolescents may show a lack of interest in social, academic, and athletic activities appropriate for their age. As a result, they seem to others negative and indifferent, or that they refuse to do what is asked of them; however, the fact of the matter is that this results from avoiding behavior of situations that worry them. For instance, some young people with social anxiety report that when faced with anxiety-provoking social situations, they are unable to think clearly, as their erroneous thoughts overcome them, hence they become incompetent and distracted in their social interactions. Moreover, social anxiety appears in the middle of adolescence, which coincides with normal exposure to social embarrassment witnessed by adolescents as a result of the physiological and psychological changes associated with adolescence. However, many researchers report that social anxiety may appear at the age of seven (JustinW.Weeks, 2014, pp.181-182).

Causes of Social Anxiety

It is noted that there are many factors responsible for the emergence of social anxiety. In essence, there are three possible ways for the occurrence of social anxiety as follows:

- a.** The individual can inherit a biological susceptibility to the development of anxiety, or inherit a biological tendency to have inhibition in social terms.
- b.** When the individual is under severe stress or tension, he has an unexpected fear or panic in a social situation, and then he becomes concerned about the occurrence of additional false alarms in the same social situations.
- c.** The individual may go through a social trauma that leads to a real alarm, anxiety grows after that in the same social situations, and the experiences related to social trauma return to difficult periods during development (Kouachi, 2015, p. 45).

Based on the foregoing, we find that patients with social anxiety seem to dedicate their attention

excessively to discovering possible social threat causes that indicate the possibilities of negatively evaluating their social behavior by other people. These reasons may be of a situational nature (such as a sharp comment by a teacher to a student during his answer to a specific question in front of the class), an interpersonal nature (such as a co-worker who fails to respond to a colleague's greeting), or an internal nature (such as an increased heart rate, or body temperature that indicates apparent concern to others or interferes with desired behavior). Besides, some of them may completely refuse to respond to situations that cause social anxiety, which leads to feelings of helplessness, social isolation, and a sense of alienation and psychological loneliness (Barlow, translated by Safwat Farag, 2002, pp. 247-249).

After presenting the theoretical framework related to the variables of the study separately, the following is indicated:

1- Mindfulness is a mental skill that works on managing thinking activities and full awareness of what is going on around the individual in terms of events. This reflects its prominent role in reducing the emergence of mental illnesses and the ability to reduce social anxiety, alienation, and other psychological diseases. This is due to the fact that it helps the person to focus on the present moment, enabling the individual to know and accept every thought, feeling, or sensation that appears in consciousness as it is without issuing any evaluative judgments, whether positive or negative.

2- Social anxiety is one of the most common psychological disorders in adolescence due to the psychological and physical changes that occur at this stage, which makes some adolescents with social anxiety avoid social events and situations. Such situations may expose them to humiliation or embarrassment resulting from the intensity of fear of non-acceptance or fear of evaluation by others, the feeling that they are less competent when being in a certain place, or the feeling that their speech is boring or their appearance is inappropriate. This happens without the adolescent being subjected to harassment or

reasons that lead to these fears. However, these fears are strong in a way that makes the adolescent avoid them, no matter how important they are. This, in turn, has negative effects on his social posts and some frightening situations; in some cases, it may interfere with normal life in general.

3- From the foregoing, the importance of the relationship between one of the positive variables (mindfulness) and the negative variables (social anxiety), and the extent to which these variables are related to each other becomes clear. This highlights the depth of the relationship between these variables that the individual who enjoys a high degree of mindfulness and bears its characteristics is characterized by the ability to observe the present moment without evaluation or classification, the confidence in himself and his group, and the ability to achieve psychological compatibility with himself as well as social adaptation with others away from social anxiety.

Hypothesis of the Study

The hypotheses of the current study are as follows:

1. There is a negative correlation between mindfulness and social anxiety in a sample of adolescents.
2. There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of males and females in mindfulness and social anxiety.

Methodology of the Study

Design

The methodology of the current study is based on the descriptive analytical approach that rests on the analysis of information and deduction. It is also concerned with analyzing and interpreting the phenomenon; anticipating its future effects; knowing the laws that govern it; showing the relationship between its components, the opinions that are presented about it and the processes that it includes; and reaching a conclusion that

contributes to the development and improvement of reality.

Participants

The field study sample consists of the first and second year students at the Faculties of Arts and Education at Port Said University, whether the exploratory sample for rationing study standards or the basic sample for the study. The rationing sample, on the one hand, consists of 50 male and female students, with 25 males and 25 females. The sample of the basic study, on the other hand, consists of 150 male and female students, with 75 male students and 75 female students, whose ages range between 17:20 years, and the sample is chosen in a simple random way.

Instruments

1. *The five-faceted mindfulness scale* (Beer et al., 2006) translated and Arabized by Abdel Rahman (2015), which consists of 39 items distributed over five dimensions. It aims to measure the mindfulness skill represented in five dimensions, which are as follows: Observation, description, conscious behavior, non-judgment, and non-reaction.

2. *The Social Anxiety Scale* (Liebowitz, M, 2000), translated and codified by Ibrahim (2018), which consists of 24 statements, including 13 statements that revolve around the individual's accomplishment of actions in a social environment, indicated by the symbol (P), and 11 statement that revolve around the social

interaction situations, indicated by the symbol (S). The phrases are distributed, not sequential, in order to measure the social anxiety that adolescents and adults experience in different social situations of a social nature and the social interaction situations.

Statistical Strategy and Data Analysis

1- T-test: It is used to show the statistical significance of the differences between the mean scores of males and females in the variables of the study, which are mindfulness, alienation and social anxiety.

2- Pearson's Simple Correlation Coefficient: It is used to show the correlation between the study variables (mindfulness and social anxiety).

3-Partial Correlation: It is used to show the extent of the relationship with a third variable or a mediator.

Results

Association between mindfulness and social anxiety subscales:

To test the validity of the first sub-hypothesis, which states that "**there is a negative correlation between mindfulness and social anxiety in a sample of adolescents**", the researcher uses Pearson's Correlation Coefficient by the by the IBM SPSS software version 23. Table 1 below indicates the results of this hypothesis as follows:

Table 1: The Value of the Correlation Coefficient between the Scores of Mindfulness and Social Anxiety Dimensions

		Social Anxiety		
		Accomplishment of Work in a Social Environment	Social Interaction Situations	Total Score
Mindfulness	Observation	.046	.071	.062
	Description	-.304**	-.316**	-.333**
	Conscious Behavior	-.349**	-.317**	-.359**
	Non-judgment	-.254**	-.193*	-.243**
	Non-reaction	-.039	.018	-.013
	Total Score	-.377**	-.317**	-.375**

(*) Significant at the Level of 0.05

(**) Significant at the Level of 0.01

Table 2: The Value of the Correlation Coefficient between the Scores of Mindfulness and Social Anxiety and Its Significance Level (n = 150)

Variables	Coefficient Value	Significance Level
Mindfulness Social Anxiety	-.375**	0.01

The following is evident from the previous tables:

It is evident that the some of the values of the correlation coefficients of the scores of the mindfulness dimensions and the scores of the social anxiety dimensions are statistically significant at the level of 0.01, some are statistically significant at the level of 0.05, and others are statistically insignificant. In addition, there is a significant correlation at the level of 0.01 between the scores of social anxiety and mindfulness, and this is clear in the following:

1. There is no correlation between the scores of mindfulness dimensions (represented in the first dimension "observation" and the fifth dimension "non-reaction"), and the scores of social anxiety dimensions (represented in the first dimension "accomplishing work in a social environment" and the second dimension "social interaction situations").

2. There are some correlations as follows: (1) there is a statistically significant correlation at the level of 0.01 between the scores of mindfulness dimensions (represented in the second dimension "description" and the third dimension "conscious behavior"), and the scores of social anxiety dimensions (represented in the first dimension "accomplishing work in a social environment" and the second dimension "social interaction situations"), (2) there is a statistically significant correlation at the level of 0.01 between the scores of mindfulness dimensions (represented in the fourth dimension "non-judgment") and the scores of social anxiety dimensions (represented in the first dimension "accomplishing work in a social environment"), and (3) there is a statistically significant correlation at the level of 0.05 between the scores of mindfulness dimensions (represented in the fourth dimension "non-

judgment") and the degrees of social anxiety dimensions (represented in the second dimension "social interaction situations").

3. There is a statistically significant negative correlation at the level of 0.01 between the scores of mindfulness and social anxiety among a sample of adolescents.

Interpretation of the Results

The fact that there is no correlation between each of the scores of mindfulness dimensions (represented in the first dimension "observation" and the fifth dimension "non-reaction"), and the scores of social anxiety dimensions (represented in the first dimension "accomplishing work in a social environment" and the second dimension "social interaction situations") can be interpreted that the adolescent who has the ability to accurately observe and sense the immediate moment without issuing positive or negative judgments will not suffer from social anxiety. Furthermore, he will be active in various social situations and work in the social environment, and therefore if one of these dimensions related to mindfulness exists, the dimensions of social anxiety vanishes. This, in turn, supports the lack of a relationship between these dimensions.

It is also possible to explain the following: (1) the existence of a statistically significant correlation at the level of 0.01 between the scores of mindfulness dimensions (represented in the second dimension "description" and the third dimension "conscious behavior"), and the scores of social anxiety dimensions (represented in the first dimension "accomplishing work in a social environment" and the second dimension "social interaction situations"), (2) the existence of a statistically significant correlation at the level of

0.01 between the scores of mindfulness dimensions (represented in the fourth dimension "non-judgment") and the scores of social anxiety dimensions (represented in the first dimension "accomplishing work in a social environment"), and (3) the existence of a statistically significant correlation at the level of 0.05 between the scores of mindfulness dimensions (represented in the fourth dimension "non-judgment") and the degrees of social anxiety dimensions (represented in the second dimension "social interaction situations"). These correlations can be interpreted that mindfulness work to help the individual accurately describe the current moment in which the individual is consciously present, which helps him to avoid issuing negative judgments about himself. This is reflected positively on the level of anxiety, which is less severe by increasing the degree of mindfulness because it works to expand the individual's vision of the situation he is experiencing. It increases his awareness and mental focus on the impact of the experiences he goes through on his body and his inner feelings, and thus he can control them, so he can participate in social situations and accomplish various actions.

Accordingly, the result of this hypothesis is consistent with what is indicated by the studies of Yeung (2013), Al-Sayed (2018), Al-Harthy (2019), and Tan Lo GE and Che (2016), which agree that there is a negative correlation between mindfulness and social anxiety. These studies also emphasize the active role of mindfulness in

avoiding negative thoughts and feelings. Therefore, these studies recommend the necessity of training on mindfulness for patients with social anxiety because of its positive role in making the person more realistic, away from prejudgments and negative evaluations. It relieves symptoms of social anxiety by being fully aware of the present moment, free from prejudgments or worries about the past or future.

This is also in agreement with what is indicated by Schwartz (2018, p. 100) that mindfulness has a direct link with increasing awareness and mental flexibility and showing the capabilities and potentialities of individuals that enable them to adapt to stressful situations and circumstances. Mindfulness makes the individual fully aware of what is taking place in the present moment, and thus enables the individual to be freed from intellectual stereotypes and distorted ideas, and to form cognitive schemes and logical indications based on the conscious mind and realistic evidence, away from prejudgments.

Differences between the males and females in mindfulness:

To test the validity of the second hypothesis, which states that "there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of males and females in mindfulness and social anxiety", the researcher uses the "t" test for independent samples of equal number as Table 3 indicates:

Table 3: The Statistical Significance of the Differences between the Mean Scores of Males and the Mean Scores of Females, and the Effect Size on the Mindfulness Scale (n = 150)

Sample Mindfulness	Gender						“t” Value	Significance Level	Effect Size
	Males			Females					
	No.	Mean	standard deviation	No.	Mean	standard deviation			
Observation	75	22.1	5.6	75	24.7	5.8	2.9	0.01	0.47
Description	75	24.9	6	75	22.3	6.2	2.5	0.05	0.41
Conscious Behavior	75	27.8	4.9	75	24.8	5.4	3.5	0.01	0.57
Non- judgment on Experiences	75	23.4	4.5	75	21.3	5.2	2.6	0.05	0.42
Non- reaction to Inner Experiences	75	18.9	4.2	75	19.3	4.9	0.67	insignificant	0.11
Total Score of Mindfulness	75	117.9	10.8	75	112.5	14.6	2.6	0.05	0.42

The following is evident from the previous table:

1. The value of "T" is statistically significant at the level of 0.01 for the first dimension of mindfulness, which is "observation". This indicates that there are differences between males and females in observation and the differences are in favor of females.
2. The value of "T" is statistically significant at the level of 0.05 for the second dimension of mindfulness, which is the "description". This indicates that there are differences between males and females in the description, and the differences are in favor of males.
3. The value of "T" is statistically significant at the level of 0.01 for the third dimension of mindfulness, which is "conscious behavior", which indicates that there are differences between males and females in conscious behavior, and the differences are in favor of males.
4. The value of "T" is statistically significant at the level of 0.05 for the fourth dimension of mindfulness, which is "non-judgment", which

indicates that there are differences between males and females in non-judgment, and the differences are in favor of males.

5. The value of "T" is statistically insignificant for the fifth dimension of mindfulness, which is "non-reaction". This indicates that there are no differences between males and females in the non-reaction dimension.

6. It is evident from the previous table that the value of "T" is statistically significant at the level of 0.05 for mindfulness, which indicates that there are differences between males and females in mindfulness, and the differences are in favor of males.

The study reveals that they are statistical differences across gender in the mindfulness subscales. On the one hand, this result is consistent with the findings of the studies of Al-Maliki (2019) and Bulbul (2019) that there are differences between males and females in mindfulness in favor of males. On the other hand, this result differs with the findings of the studies of Al-Qaraish (2017) and Jabr (2018), as these

studies found differences between males and females in mindfulness in favor of females.

The differences between males and females in favor of males in mindfulness and its following dimensions (description, conscious behavior, non-judgment) may be due to the difference in the physiological nature between the two and the difference between both in terms of psychology, social upbringing and culture of the society that looks at males in a more responsible and obligatory view, and demands them to bear and be tough facing the various conditions of life

and interacting with them more positively than females. This, in turn, makes males more able than females to describe and express their inner experiences and feelings. They also have a higher ability to pay conscious attention when performing a task and they are not easily distracted, which enables them to focus on current experiences without going back to the past or feel anxious about the future. This is mainly due to their ability not to issue any judgments about their inner feelings or thoughts, and therefore their inner feelings do not affect their performance in different situations, which makes them more aware of the present moment.

Table 4: The Statistical Significance of the Differences between the Mean Scores of Males and the Mean Scores of Females, and the Effect Size on the Social Anxiety Scale (n = 150)

Sample Social Anxiety	Gender						“t” Value	Significance Level	Effect Size
	Males			Females					
	No.	Mean	standard deviation	No.	Mean	standard deviation			
Individual's Accomplishment of Work in a Social Environment	75	31.9	9.3	75	38.2	8.7	4.2	0.01	0.69
Social Interaction Situations	75	22.7	7.6	75	28.5	8.5	4.4	0.01	0.72
Total Score of Social Anxiety	75	54.7	15.5	75	66.7	15.9	4.7	0.01	0.77

It is evident from the previous table that the value of "T" is statistically significant at the level of 0.01 for the first dimension of social anxiety dimensions, which is "the individual's accomplishment of work in a social environment". This indicates that there are differences between males and females in the achievement of work in a social environment, and the differences are in favor of females. In addition, the value of "T" is statistically significant at the level of 0.01 for the second

dimension of social anxiety dimensions, which is the "social interaction situations". This indicates that there are differences between males and females in social interaction situations, and the differences are in favor of females. Finally, the value of "t" is statistically significant at the level of 0.01 for social anxiety, which indicates that there are differences between males and females in social anxiety, and the differences are in favor of females. Using the following effect significance equation:

$$ES = d = \frac{2t}{\sqrt{df}} = \frac{2 \times "t"value}{\sqrt{148}}$$

-Note that $df = (n1 + n2) - 2 = 75 + 75 - 2 = 148$.

Conclusion

Concerning the differences between males and females in social anxiety with regard to the completion of work in the social environment and attitudes of social interaction in favor of females, it is found that this result is consistent with the findings of the study of Abdel-Khaleq and Al-Banna (2006), which indicates that there are significant differences between males and females in social anxiety at a rate of 1.3% for males and 5% for females; the study of Matthews (2016), which confirms that females are more susceptible to stress and anxiety than males, even when exposed to similar pressures; and the studies of Talibi (2007), Mitchell and Abbott (1988), Hijazi (2013), Al-Ani (2014), Sisman et al (2013), and Al-Ramadi (2012). These studies indicates that there are differences between males and females in social anxiety in favor of females.

In this regard, the researcher suggests putting forward the behavioral theory, which indicates that the main cause of social anxiety disorder is due to wrongly learned behavior. Hence, social anxiety is acquired as abnormal behavior when the seeds of anxiety are available towards a specific topic or situation, so the person's response appears by avoiding the situation or matter of concern. If the person finds that this behavior has led to the reduction of fears of the situation or the matter itself, this means that the individual has obtained a reward, which is to reduce the intensity of feeling anxious about this situation. As a result, the avoidance behavior appears as a reinforcement for the person, pushing him to more avoidance in order to obtain more anxiety reduction. He thus rotates in a closed loop from which he can hardly get out. (Belhossini, 2011, pp. 42-47)

This can be explained in the light of the methods of socialization and the culture of our Arab societies, which are keen to give a measure of

freedom to males and impose special restrictions on females limiting their freedom. The female in Eastern Arab societies is besieged by her family with various restrictions and taboos that demand that she be more sensitive towards others, maintain a positive view of others, and not be impulsive spontaneously. This is why social and cultural upbringing affects the female in a way that makes her more anxious, sensitive, and shy than the male. Accordingly, we find that in our eastern Arab societies, what is permitted for a male is not permitted for a female. That is, the female must be shy at school or home, taciturn in front of others, low-voiced and calm in her behavior, unlike the male who, if he does so, he is described as being a female. As a result of the restrictions imposed by socialization on the female that make her avoid communicating with others in different social situations, symptoms of social anxiety appear in those situations including the cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of females more than males.

Mindfulness has a positive effect on various aspects of life as it improves the ability of individuals to achieve reliable performance in changing environments, depending on their way of thinking and the extent of personal flexibility in different situations (Langer, 1989; Ndubisi, 2012, 2014; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). This is due to its significant effect in reducing levels of stress, developing awareness of habits of mind, and increasing the motivation of individuals towards life and learning. In addition, it helps the individual generate positive emotions and designate a method of response instead of the automatic reaction (positive control), which moves from self-regulation to self-exploration, including focusing attention and observing the processes that occur in the individual from one moment to another with a kind of curiosity and acceptance that helps the individual protect himself from excessive anxiety mindfulness towards the physiological states associated with

emotions. (Shapiro et al., & Freedman, 2006, p. 81)

Based on the foregoing, the researcher indicates that the result of this hypothesis is a logical result, as the more mindfulness increases, the social anxiety decreases. Therefore, the joint effect between mindfulness and social anxiety on adolescents can be explained on the basis that mindfulness facilitates cognitive, emotional, and behavioral flexibility that makes individuals more capable of connecting more deeply with themselves and others and thus allow them to better understand themselves. Besides, it allows more consensual responses to situations of concern instead of the usual or hasty responses as it makes the individual more realistic away from prejudgments about negative evaluation by others or self-evaluation. Subsequently, the individual becomes more positive and more compatible with reality, being away from the cognitive distortions of the social self.

Recommendations

1. Directing more attention to studying the variables and positive aspects of personality because of their positive effects on adolescents in particular and all age groups in general.
2. Preparing counseling and preventive programs to develop mindfulness because of its positive effects, as explained earlier.
3. Training psychologists and counsellors in universities and psychological counseling centers in order to provide psychological services that provide solutions to the problems of adolescents, and help them to effectively confront various psychological disorders and negative life conditions.

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