



## Research Article

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## Alexithymia and its Relationship to Aggressive Behavior in Primary School Pupils

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**Abstract:** The research aims to identify *Alexithymia's* relationship with aggressive behavior in primary school pupils. The research sample reached (68) male and female pupils of primary school in the three class (first, second and third). Two tools have been used: the *Alexithymia* questionnaire prepared by (Rieffe *et al.*, 2006), and the scale of aggressive behavior prepared by (Al-Ruwaili, 2014), which consists of (30) items distributed over three dimensions. That deal with three dimensions: physical aggression, verbal aggression and psychological aggression, after obtaining Validity and Reliability and for them. The statistical means of the Pearson correlation coefficient were used.

The results indicated a positive correlation and a statistically significant function between *Alexithymia* and aggressive behavior (0.82).

In light of these findings, the researcher made a number of recommendations and suggestions.

**Keywords:** E Alexithymia, Aggressive Behavior, Secrecy.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Problem of the Research

The death of one of the parents and the feelings of threat that resulted from these unstable events in Iraq caused by the security threat of the terrorist organization Daesh and the terrifying scenes in the hearts of many children who were traumatized in some Iraqi provinces, led to a lot of psychological trauma, all these traumas have led to It leads to many psychological problems and disorders such as feelings of fear, anxiety, depression, speech, sleep and eating disorders (Abu Tahina, 2008).

*Alexithymia* is at the forefront of the disorders experienced by children who have been exposed to precarious social situations. Its symptoms are the inability to perceive emotions and distinguish them from physical sensations or express them through language, the inability to recognize and describe subjective feelings, the poverty of imaginary experiences, the poverty of dream life, outward-oriented behavior and operational thinking (Karim & Ramadan, 2001).

Children suffering from these disorders may emit multiple behaviors, most of which are abnormal and move away from both, and we have identified in this research aggressive behavior to identify its relationship to this disorder whether negative or positive, as well as to determine the value of this relationship. We note that there are shortcomings in the studies that looked at Alexithymia disorder, so this

research came as an attempt to find out its relationship with aggressive behavior in primary school students as an attempt to fill the shortage of psychological predicament for research has tried to uncover this relationship between the two variables.

### Importance of the Research

Mental health is the most important necessity of life in general and school in particular, as normal relations between pupils and their teachers lead to sound psychological development from an educational and scientific point of view. If we provide a healthy and happy childhood for children, they become normal adults free of knots and turmoil, since childhood is the basic stage in which the roots of personality are formed (Qureshi & Zaatout, 2001).

Studies have shown that if such children are left untreated, they are more likely to have negative feelings and low self-worth, and their academic level is poor, so it is necessary to detect early cases of both to make children live healthy lives in a healthy way.

Children in Iraq have been exposed to unstable security conditions in previous years that have had an effective impact on the occurrence of many psychological disorders that may be related to other disorders such as Alexithymia, so this research came as an attempt to reveal the relationship of Alexithymia to aggressive behavior in children in the primary stage as an attempt to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables and provide the library with a scientific study based on accurate

statistical methods that may benefit psychotherapists and workers in the field Psychiatric and educational counselors in diagnosis and treatment .

### Research Objective

The current research aims to identify the relationship between Alexithymia and aggressive behavior in primary school pupils.

### Limits of the Research

The current research is determined by the pupils of the primary stage in the Directorate of Education of Rusafa /2 in Baghdad Governorate for the academic year 2019-2020 and of both gender and for the first, second and third grades / ages (6-9) years.

### Definition of Search Terms

#### Alexithymia

Defined by:

- (Nemiah *et al.*, 1976): "It is a semi-clinical phenomenon that involves loss of perception of feelings or specifically difficulty in diagnosing and describing feelings and distinguishing feelings from physical sensations".
- Sherbini (2001): "It is the inability or difficulty of describing emotions and emotions or lack of awareness of internal feelings".
- Satoru (2016): "It is the state in which the individual feels the tyranny of emotions such as anger and others that he cannot express".
- Procedural Definition: It is the total score obtained by the pupil from his answer to the scale of Alexithymia used in this research.

#### Aggression Behavior

Defined by:

- Maher" :(1999) It is behavior that leads to personal harm to others, and the harm may be psychological such as insult and contempt, and may be physical " )Maher, 1999.(
- Adler: "Every act characterized by hostility towards the subject or the self, aimed at destruction", Chaplin sees aggression as an attack or counter-act directed at a person or something, implies a desire to superiority over others, and manifests itself either in abuse, disparagement or ridicule for the purpose of punishing the other" (Sherbini, 2005, 55).
- Procedural Definition: It is the total score obtained by the pupil from his answer to the measure of aggressive behavior used in this research.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### Alexithymia

The first to describe Alexithymia was (Resch) in 1948, but it has received real attention only in the

past two decades, as (Frenzi) pointed out that there is a pattern of people who are characterized in particular by the weakness of imagination and analysis in life, as the events they are going through do not leave a trace on them (www.acofps). Com/vblsh)

### The Psychological Concept of Alexithymia

Includes multiple cognitive and emotional characteristics:

- Their inability to recognize and describe subjective emotions.
- Difficulty distinguishing between physical sensations and emotions.
- The poverty of their imaginary experiences, the poverty of dream life and operational thinking (Qureshi & Zatot, 2006).

### Theories That Explained Alexithymia

#### The Cognitive Neurology Model

Mclean (1949) hypothesized that Alexithymia is a deficit in emotional processing deficit, that is, it is a functional brain deficit in the delivery of information from the olfactory brain to language centers in the cerebral cortex, which was confirmed by the school (Sifneos Neniah).

This interpretation has been called the vertical model. Researchers have found the prevalence of the phenomenon of Alexithymia in people with the phenomenon of "split brain", where the right half of the brain is unable to recognize the emotional perception and communicate information to the left brain responsible for language and expression (Karim & Ramadan, 2013).

#### The Dynamic Model:

The association of Alexithymia with certain disorders such as addiction leads us to associate it with dynamic mechanisms and psychological processes, as cosmism as seen by analyticians is a trait that reveals factual thinking or operational thinking due to a failure to encode conflicts, the impossibility of forming a body image, a lack of self-concept and suppression of aggression and emotions in general, leading to depression, and an increase in the possibility of the patient developing psychosomatic diseases. As for Alexithymia, it is caused by fear of serious organic diseases or because of sad factors, and the diagnosis of Alexithymia here is a defense mechanism focused on rejection and denial to avoid painful emotional experience in situations of weakness (Karim & Ramadan, 2013).

### Aggressive Behavior

Aggression is a negative reaction carried out by the individual resulting from disappointment, deprivation and frustration that he faces during the different stages of his life, and can be described as the

failure of the individual to generate compatibility and success in his life, leading him to worry and fear of failure and resort to aggression in self-defense.

Aggression may be learned or acquired from the surrounding environment of kindness to. The aggressive child is characterized by indifference, hyperactivity, assault on children by beating, cursing and vandalizing property as a result. Aggression increases in children deprived of parental care or who lack a parent, if the child shows signs of external aggression towards objects in the surrounding environment, and also towards other children, where we find the aggressive child constantly quarreling and conflict with his marriage because of and without reason (J Ni, 2001).

**Manifestations of Aggressive Behavior**

Aggressive behavior abounds among school pupils, that is, it is frequent among adolescents and this behavior is represented in the appearance of many including screaming and disrespecting teachers, stubbornness, defiance, vandalism of school and classroom furniture, classrooms, writing on the walls of classrooms and toilets, Deliberate neglect of the teacher's advice and instructions, and therefore of the school curriculum, lack of respect for school regulations and laws, irregularity in study, interruption of the teacher during explanation, use of profanity and disturbing sounds in the classroom).

**Causes of Aggressive Behavior**

The causes of this problem are diagnosed in the following (Imad, 2007):

- Environmental causes: namely:
  - Some parents encourage the child to act aggressively. The bullying or threat suffered by pupils from school or home.
  - Not counting the treatment of the pupil with his brothers at home.
  - The failure of the pupil in family life.
- School reasons: namely
  - Unequal treatment of the pupil at school.
  - Inaccuracies in the distribution of students to classes according to individual differences and according to their behaviors, more than one feisty student may meet in one class.
- The repeated failures of the pupil in his or her school life:
  - Failure to provide counseling services to solve the student's problems. - Failure to absorb aggressive behavior in an acceptable way through psychological and pedagogical counseling.

- The personality of some teachers may be weak.
- The pupil is reassured that he will not be punished by anyone in the school.
- Psychological reasons: They are:
  - The pupil may suffer from psychological conflict and repression. .
  - Feeling of social disappointment such as school delays and failure to love parents and teachers. .
  - Tension of the home atmosphere and the reflection of this on the psyche of the pupil. .
  - Instability of authority leading to the mixing of values in the eyes of the pupil.
- Social reasons: such as:
  - The presence of family problems.
  - Low cultural level of the family.
  - Not satisfying the pupil's basic needs.
  - Role reincarnations that are shown on television.
  - The impact of the community surrounding the school.
- Personal reasons: such as:
  - The disciple's love for domination and domination over others;
  - The weakness of the student's religious consciousness.
  - The psychological and emotional states experienced by the pupil. The pupil's sense of psychological or academic deficiency compared to others. Or the presence of a physical impairment that makes the child turn to aggression because he finds in him compensation to receive a male in his group and paralysis, even if it is sabotage.

**RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

**The Research Community and its Sample**

The research community included primary school pupils in the Directorate of Education of Rusafa /2, and schools in the areas / Almashtal, Baghdad al Jadeda and Albaladiat were selected and a sample of eight schools was determined. After asking the teachers to identify the pupils who have symptoms of Alexithymia, they also diagnosed them with the items of the questionnaire presented to them by the researcher to rely on them in the diagnosis. And then make sure by the courtyard that these symptoms are present in the pupils after meeting them in private and talking to them. The pupils diagnosed by the teachers (68) pupils from the first three classes of the primary stage (the first, second and third) with the reality of (44) pupils and (24) pupils, who are distributed as in Table (1).

**Table 1.** Research Sample Sorted by Class

Sample Type	First Class		Second Class		Third Class		Total
	Males	Female	Males	Female	Males	Female	

The Sum	12	22	7	14	5	8	68
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## RESEARCH TOOLS

### Alexithymia Questionnaire

The prepared Alexithymia questionnaire was used by Rieffe *et al.* (2006), which consists of (20) items in front of each item three alternatives: (always apply to me, apply to me sometimes, and do not apply to me).

The questionnaire of Alexithymia was prepared in several languages (French, English, German, Italian and Persian) The researcher here used the questionnaire prepared in English after translating it before into Arabic, and presented the translation to six arbitrators specialized in English. He was asked to translate it into Arabic and then retranslate it by two of them into English and then offer the Arabic translation to two other experts to reconcile the two translations and with this procedure the authenticity of the translation was extracted for the resolution. It was then presented to (5) arbitrators specializing in psychology and psychometrics.

### Scale of Aggressive Behavior in Primary School Students

It was based on the scale of aggressive behavior prepared by (Al-Ruwaili, 2014), which consists of (30) items distributed over three dimensions that deal with three dimensions: physical aggression, verbal aggression and psychological aggression.

The measurement is corrected by asking the teacher to answer the scale in an individual way, and the teacher chooses one of five options. The scale's scores range from 40 to 200, and the scale is handled by the range when divided into three sections, namely:

Range = Largest Value – Lowest Value/Number of Categories. Range =  $5 - 1/3$ . Range = 1.33.

(1-2.33): Between these two scores indicates a low level of student possession of aggressive behavior.

(2.34-3.66): Between these two scores indicates an average level of student possession of aggressive behavior.

(2.67-5): Between these two scores indicates a high level of student possession of aggressive behavior.

### Extracting Validity and Reliability for the Two Research Tools

#### Validity

The apparent validity of the two tools was extracted by presenting them to a group of arbitrators in psychology and psychometrics and experts have indicated that all the items of the two tools are valid and (100%) The researcher relied on the percentage in extracting the apparent validity and promised the approval of (80%) or more of the experts to the item as a criterion for its acceptance.

The researcher also asked the experts to determine the validity of the alternatives to the determination of the Alexithymia questionnaire and the grades set for them, and the arbitrators considered the alternatives to (apply to me, always, apply to me rarely, do not apply to me) and give the grades (2, 1, zero) respectively.

#### Reliability

The reliability of the two scales was extracted by the method of half-segmentation by applying them to a sample of pupils consisting of (60) pupils and pupils, and then calculating the correlation coefficient between the two parts of each scale by dividing the scale into two halves, the first half of which represents the individual paragraphs, while the second half represents the even vertebrae and using the Pearson correlation coefficient the value of the stability of the determination of Alexithymia (0.80) another measure of aggressive behavior (0, (77) These are two acceptable values for stability, as previous studies rely on a value of (0.70) or more as a value to consider the measure acceptable in terms of reliability.

Thus, the two tools are valid for use after confirming their truthfulness and reliability.

#### Final Application

The two tools were applied together to the sample of (68) pupils distributed by (44) pupils and (24) pupils.

#### Statistical Methods

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to extract honesty and consistency for the two research tools. It was also used to find out the relationship of Alexithymia to aggressive behavior.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Results of the Research

Research Objective: To identify the relationship between Alexithymia and aggressive behavior in primary school pupils:

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to find out a positive correlation and a statistically significant relationship between the pupils' scores on the determination of Alexithymia and aggressive behavior, and the value of the correlation coefficient was (0.82), which is a high correlation coefficient value. This is an indication that the more Alexithymia there is, the more aggressive behavior the pupils have, and vice versa.

This result can be explained by the fact that the student's inability to express his feelings and himself, prove his existence and communicate his thoughts, has

reflected negatively on his psyche and does not find a way to empty his emotions and express them except through aggressive behavior.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Alexithymia may be a reaction in the child to the rejection of family or school treatment, as he tries to stay away from the traumatic stress he has been subjected to and avoids thoughts, feelings and people so he resorts to it as a method to forget the environment that raised him.
- Disasters and events are painful events for all human beings, whether and with all the atrocities, and may be less severe for adults because they are mature, but the child cannot face this and is born with disorders related to other disorders, so the issue is like an endless chain.
- The neglect of the child by the parents and leaving him alone to suffer with his sorrows increases the psychological problems suffered by the child and is a cause of other problems and disorders.

## Recommendations

In light of the findings of the research, the researcher recommends the following:

- Directing the work by the directorates of education to take care of pupils suffering from mental disorders, take special care of them, provide psychological guidance to them, and use methods of emotional discharge or the psychology of playing with them, especially representative play for their hunger, more able to express themselves and their feelings and communicate with others.
- School administrations and psychological counselors in schools should go to the family and educate parents about the need to contain and realize the child who suffers from a psychological disorder, and allow him to cry to get rid of the pain for himself. Try to get him to speak and avoid talking to him using questions with closed answers (yes or no) to give him a greater chance of speaking.
- Listen to the child stories and tales that tell him stories about shy animals that gradually regain their self-confidence and begin to talk and express their actions.

## Suggestions

The researcher suggests the following:

- Conducting research similar to the current research on students of higher stages of study such as middle school, middle school or university to stimulate the relationship of communication disorders to aggressive behavior.
- Conducting research to investigate the relationship of Alexithymia to other psychological and behavioral disorders such as depression, withdrawal behavior, school delay, and parental treatment.

- Conducting therapeutic counseling programs for pupils suffering from Alexithymia in primary schools.
- Conducting therapeutic guidance programs for students who suffer from aggressive behavior in primary schools.

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