

Shyness and its Relation with Self-esteem in Light of Some Variables

Y. N. Al Sabi^{1,*}, S. A. Jaradat², M. N. Ayasrah³, M. A. S. Khasawneh⁴ and F. A. S. Al Taqatqa⁵

¹CCC-SLP Speech-Language and Hearing Sciences Program, Hekma School of Health, Behavioral Sciences and Education, Dar Al Hekma University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

²Department of Educational Studies, University Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

³Department of Science of Education, Irbid University, College. Postal code 1293, Irbid, Jordan

⁴Department of Special Education, King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia

⁵Department of Special Education, Education Faculty, University of Jeddah, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract: This study aimed at addressing shyness for learning disabilities students in the province of Irbid in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The descriptive-correlative approach was used. The sample consisted of (250) male and female learning disabilities students of grades two and four at public school in the province of Irbid. To achieve study objectives, shyness scale was developed, and the validity and reliability of its indicators we verified.

Findings revealed that the level of shyness for learning disabilities students in the province of Irbid was moderate. They, also, revealed that the presence of statistical differences in the level of shyness for learning disabilities students attributable to the variable of gender. These differences came in favor of females. Furthermore, findings revealed the absence of statistical differences attributable to grade.

In light of the findings, the researcher recommends raising the self-esteem level for students through co-operation between school administrations, teachers and guardians. It is also recommended that other researchers to conduct other developmental studies and compare the shyness levels for students in multiple age groups and environments.

Keywords: Learning disabilities, primary level, Self Esteem, shyness.

1 Introduction

Shyness is considered an aspect of the emotional life for children. It is a common phenomenon for children that can continue in teenage hood if specialists do not interfere. Shyness, like other psychological disorders, can be treated and eliminated if it is well-managed and monitored.

Shyness represents a significant problem for children with negative impact on their lives, careers, social performance and academic achievement. Shyness leads to failure in school, work and in family life. To illustrate, at work, shy people cannot achieve prominence and obtain the positions they deserve due to shyness. Furthermore, such people can miss opportunities in showing their talents in school [1].

Shyness indicates emotional and behavioral struggle for children in social interaction situations. Shyness is most common when children move to new environments or when they interact with society members away from family and siblings [2].

Shyness appears and is identified by others through behavioral symptoms that appear on shy children. The most

significant symptoms are tendency to solitude, silence, lack of speech, inability to express their opinions and thoughts and defend their rights positively and difficulty in establishing friendships with others [3].

Shy children, also, show some bodily physiological and health-related symptoms. These include high heartbeat, sweating, trembling, dry mouth, dizziness, nausea and fear of losing control [4].

Shyness in this way should be addressed before it develops and affects the individual's psychological makeup, different social situations and then affects individual's personality in the society and his self-esteem. Self-esteem involves what an individual expects from themselves like success, failure and their capacity to give their best. These are acquired by the individual through their social experiences with others and in social contexts [5].

Chang and Wang [6] illustrated the effects if shyness on children who have low self-esteem and perceive themselves as unconfident in social situations and who think that other perceive them negatively. Therefore, this fear affects their communication with the local society.

*Corresponding author e-mail: ysabi@dah.edu.sa

Multiple previous studies have shown the presence of a correlation of influence between the shyness of an individual and their self-esteem. For instance, previous studies [7] and [8] have revealed the influence that occurs between shyness and psychological variables related to the personality of the individual. Moreover, shyness affects the individual's self-esteem in the early stages of childhood and other age stages.

Problem Statement

The aim of the current study was revealing the level of shyness and its correlation with the level of self-esteem for learning disabilities students in Irbid province.

Research Questions

- 1- What is the level of shyness for learning disabilities students in Irbid Province?
- 2- Does the level of shyness for learning disabilities students vary by gender and grade?

Significance of the Study:

This study is significant because it investigates the influence of the shyness variable on the formation of the individual's personality in the main age group that they go through (the primary level), especially grades three, four, five and six. The significance of the study, also, is in the significance of shyness and its effects on the aspects of emotional and social growth. This was addressed in the findings of previous studies [6] and [9], which revealed the level of shyness for students from multiple age groups and its influence on the aspects of human growth. Finally, the significance of the current study is in enriching the theoretical literature available in the educational psychological library regarding the relationship between shyness and self-esteem. The theoretical literature that this study provides benefits specialists, students and people interested in educational psychology.

Delimitations of the Study

- A sample of primary level learning disabilities students in Irbid province in the grades three and four at primary schools in the first semester of the scholastic year 2021-2022.
- Research instruments and the verification of their psychometric properties.
- The findings of this study can be generalized through the verification of the psychometric properties of measurement and objectivity instruments, impartiality in implantation and the validity of the sample responses on both instruments of the study.

Definition of Operational Terms

- Shyness: "feelings of discomfort and anxiety when in different social situations, especially when they try to initiate social interaction with others" [10]. Shyness is

measured according to the degree a student obtains on the shyness scale of five prepared for this study.

Students with learning disabilities: those who have disorders in one or more of the basic psychological processes, which include understanding of written or spoken language and their use [11].

2 Literature Review

Shyness appears in specific periods under special circumstances in human life. It is known that social growth is characterized by a period of shyness, especially when interacting with strangers. The danger is the continuity of shyness as means to escaping essential interaction with others. Then, shyness becomes a habit before it become a phenomenon of mental illness [12]. Adult teachers and guardian do a significant role in the support and formation of shyness for students and consider it an indication of good and appropriate upbringing which they desire for them. They perceive passive and calm children who avoid their peers and do not play with them as angels. Thus, they cheer and praise them in front of others which motivates them to abide by this behavior [13].

Zeytinoglu, et al [14] define shyness as: "a complicated emotional state that entitles a negative feeling towards oneself or a feeling of inferiority and shame that causes discomfort and discontentment which pushes the child to isolate themselves and not integrate in life. Henceforth, they do learn from its experiences and do not have friendships or relationships with other children. Thus, their experiences are limited, and they may become a burden on themselves and the society due to avoiding others and solitude".

"Shyness is an internal force that prevents the individual from creating social relationships with others and continuing them. Shy people have difficulty in being assertive and expressive. They are, also, dispatched from themselves and others due to fear from criticism and rejecting their thoughts and performance and negative evaluation from others [3].

Tang et al [15] determined a set of psychological and behavioral symptoms and aspects that indicate general characteristics that appear on shy children. These aspects and characteristics include:

- Behavioral symptoms: characterized by isolation, especially in relationships with members of the other gender, lack of speech, inability to express opinions and thoughts, lack of tendency to lead others or defend their rights positively, difficulty in meeting strangers or unknown people and making friendships with them.
- Knowledge-based symptoms: characterized by excessive self-awareness, low self-esteem and self-confidence, the presence of negative speech about the self and wrong thoughts and beliefs related to social situations and other people. They lack the ability to pay

attention, care about others and feel their feelings which causes social isolation.

Shy children lack social skills, do not show concerns about others, struggle in direct contact with others, do not show pity or respect for others and do not obtain new experiences. Thus, rarely do they receive social acclaim, peers do not look for them and parties are considered tough situations for shy children [16].

Shy children have low self-esteem and lack self-confidence. They, also, refuse being parts in mutual relationships if sufficient guarantees for acceptance are not provided. A shy individual is characterized by social withdrawal, and they exaggerate in requesting love, care and acceptance. Furthermore, they have low self-esteem and are unable to respond to social situations attractively. They speak in a hesitant and reserved manner and cannot keep eye contact with others while interacting with them [17].

Poole and Schmidt [18] pointed out some reasons that can cause shyness for children and the formation of behavioral emotional problem. These reasons were limited to the raising of the family, parental deprivation as well as reasons related to their studies such as academic underachievement, as the child feels unconfident, so they seek isolation from others to avoid shyness. Not all shy students have academic underachievement; there may be excellent students. This means that each case has its causes and reasons. Also, other significant reasons include strict schools' system, strict teachers and fruitless methods used by teachers with students.

Previous Studies

Bin Ruqiyah [19] investigated some psychological properties for students with academic disabilities. It aimed at reaching results that could reduce this phenomenon by assisting teachers as well as students in improving the outcomes of the educational process and raising the interaction of students.

Al-Ma'aqbah and Orainat [20] determined the effectiveness of a play-based guidance program in reducing the level of shyness for a sample of learning disabilities students in resource rooms. Results revealed the presence statistically significant differences among the responses of the study sample which indicates the effectiveness of such a program. The researcher, consequently, recommended such a program.

Shrit et al [21] study aimed at identifying the effectiveness of a counseling program based on problem-solving techniques in reducing the feelings of social shame among mothers of children with down syndrome. The sample consisted of ten individuals, and the quasi-experimental approach was used. Results found that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of post and pre measurements and that there are no differences between the mean score post and follow-up measurements which indicates the effectiveness of such a program.

Mursy et al [22] conducted a study that aimed at improving the executive skills of autistic children to decrease their shyness. Results found that there are statistically significant in averages of sample members' degrees in the post and pretests. They, also, showed the absence of statistically significant differences in the means of sample members' ranks on the post and follow-up scales.

Alatawy and Musa [23] prepared a study that investigated shyness and its relation with self-concept for second grade students in the region of Janrouz. The study found differences in the level of shyness attributed to gender, as females are generally shyer than males. Also, it found that males have more self-concept than their male counter parts.

Allala and Alzubairi [24] study sought to investigate social shyness among mothers of children with disabilities based on (Disability type, mother's academic qualification, and family's economic level) in Riyadh. Results revealed that the general mean of social shyness level among the mothers of children with disabilities was low. Also, it has been shown that the level of shyness due to the economic level was statistically significant at the level of (00.05), where the mothers of medium and low income had effect more than those of the high income. The type of disability was statistically significant at the level of (00.05), where the most effective disability is autism, oral disability, then mental disability. On the other hand, academic qualification did not reveal any statistical significance

Olfaz [25] investigated the relationship between foreign language anxiety, shyness, language learning strategies, speaking scores and academic achievement of university preparatory students learning German. Results indicate the presence of a moderate negative relationship between foreign language learning anxiety and academic achievement as well as a negative relationship language anxiety and speaking scores. Furthermore, a positive relationship was found between the learning strategies of students and their academic achievement.

3 Methodologies

The current study aimed at describing the levels of shyness and self-esteem for learning disabilities students. Such objective requires the descriptive method. The study, also, aims at investigating the correlation between shyness and self-esteem which requires the co-relation method. In light of this, the used approach is the analytical-descriptive one.

Population and Sample

The study community involves (2000) male and female learning disabilities students in Irbid province.

Study sample

A random sample was selected from primary schools in Irbid province. The researcher selected (0.13%) from them from grades three and four. The final sample consisted of (250)

male and female learning disabilities students at primary schools in Irbid province.

Research Instrument

To achieve the objectives of the current study, shyness level scale was developed according to the following:

Shyness scale:

Shyness scale was developed using theoretical literature, educational literature and psychological scales available in previous studies. These include [26, 6, 20]. The shyness scale was developed according to what is appropriate for the objective of the current study and its sample of learning disabilities students. The questionnaire contains (40) articles distributed into three fields:

- The first dimension: the psychological dimension: a complex emotional state that entitles negative feelings that puts individuals to psychological and emotional isolation and psychological isolation love. Its articles are (1-9).
- The second dimension: the social dimension: the emotional state that make an individual feel their inability and deficiency which drives them away from social occasions and makes them lose their social communication skills with others. Its skills articles are (10-20).
- The third dimension: the physiological dimension: the emotional state whose symptoms do not appear on the senses of an individuals and their motions during social situation such a sweating, stutter, etc. Its articles are (21-30).

Validity of the scale

Validity of the content.

To the achieve the validity of the content for the shyness scale, it was shown to (10) arbitrators of specialists from the teaching staff. The communication was submitted to the Arbitral tribunal, and a percentage of 80% adopted an agreement percentage on the deleting or keeping any clause. In light of what the arbitrators have indicated. The researchers did some changes. Consequently, the shyness scale consisted of (40) articles in its final version.

Validity of the scale

To ensure the validity of the scale, a random sample – other than the study sample- of (35) male and female learning disabilities students was selected in Irbid province. An application was conducted on the expletory sample twice with a time lag of two weeks. Validity was measured through two ways:

- (test-retest) method by calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient between the first and second applications. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to calculate the response stability coefficient

between the two applications. The overall correlation coefficient using this method was (0.92) which is high.

- Internal integration method using the Cronbach Alpha method to find the stability of the internal integration of fields in the levels of the first application. The overall coefficient of stability using this method was (0.90) which is high.

4 Findings Discussion

This section provides the findings obtained from the present study. These findings are presented based on the research questions that guide the present research.

The results of the first question: what is the level of shyness for learning disabilities students in Irbid province?

To answer this question, means, and deviations of the learning disabilities students' shyness in Irbid were extracted. Table (1) illustrates that.

Table 1: the means and deviations of learning disabilities students' shyness level in descending order according to means.

Sequence	Number	Dimensions	Aspect means	Aspect deviation	Level
1	1	Psychological	2.64	.64	Moderate
2	2	Social	2.63	0.55	Moderate
3	3	Physiology	2.53	0.99	Moderate
Total degree			2.61	0.65	Moderate

Table (1) illustrates that shyness level for learning disabilities students in grade three and four in Irbid province came to a moderate degree, as the overall mean of shyness was (2.61). Means for shyness scale dimension varied between (2.53 – 2.64). The psychological dimension came first with the highest mean (2.64). Social shyness ranked second with a means of (2.63). On the other hand, physiological shyness ranked last with a means of (2.53).

Means and deviations were calculated according to the estimation of the study sample members regarding each article. They were like the following:

First Dimension: The psychological dimension:

Means and deviations for the psychological dimension for learning disabilities students in Irbid province were extracted. Table (2) illustrates that.

Table 2: means and deviations for the psychological dimension in descending order according to means.

Sequence	Number	Articles	Article mean	Article deviation	Degree
1	6	I hesitate before asking the teacher.	3.31	1.08	Moderate
2	8	I fear oral exams.	2.93	1.06	Moderate
3	5	I feel awkward when my friends make remark on me.	2.87	1.09	Moderate
4	9	I feel anxious when I am asked a question.	2.83	1.27	Moderate
5	1	I prefer being alone.	2.81	1.31	Moderate
6	7	I trust others.	2.77	1.01	Moderate
7	2	I chose back seats in the classroom.	2.76	1.19	Moderate
8	4	I like expressing my opinions.	2.61	1.04	Moderate
9	3	I do not feel confident when I converse with others.	2.53	1.20	Moderate
		Total degree for the psychological dimension	2.64	.64	Moderate

Table (2) illustrates that means and deviations varied between (1.46-3.30). Article (6), which states “I hesitate before asking the teacher” ranked first with a mean of (3.31). On the other hand, article (3) “I feel unconfident I converse with others” ranked last with a mean (1.47), and the overall mean was (2.64).

The social dimension:

Means and deviations for the social dimension for learning disabilities students in Irbid province were extracted. Table(3) illustrates that.

Table 3: means and deviations for the social dimension in descending order according to means.

Sequence	Number	Articles	Article mean	Article deviation	Degree
10	10	I look for excuses that prevent me from attending social occasions.	10	1.09	High
11	11	I forget answers whenever I stand in front of my classmates in the classroom.	11	1.15	Moderate
12	12	I like leading my classmates.	12	1.26	Moderate
13	13	I hesitate whenever I do a talk in front of students in the classroom.	13	1.23	Moderate
14	14	I do not like meeting strange students at home.	14	1.16	Moderate
15	15	I avoid talking to strangers.	15	1.14	Moderate
16	16	I find difficulties asking others for help.	16	1.17	Moderate
17	17	I hesitate when I ask others for help.	17	1.07	Moderate
18	18	I feel happy when I interact with people.	18	1.08	Moderate
19	19	I lack courtesy when I talk to people.	19	1.29	Moderate
20	20	I avoid eating food in public.	20	1.21	Moderate
		Total degree	10	.55	Moderate

10	10	I look for excuses that prevent me from attending social occasions.	10	1.09	High
11	11	I forget answers whenever I stand in front of my classmates in the classroom.	11	1.15	Moderate
12	12	I like leading my classmates.	12	1.26	Moderate
13	13	I hesitate whenever I do a talk in front of students in the classroom.	13	1.23	Moderate
14	14	I do not like meeting strange students at home.	14	1.16	Moderate
15	15	I avoid talking to strangers.	15	1.14	Moderate
16	16	I find difficulties asking others for help.	16	1.17	Moderate
17	17	I hesitate when I ask others for help.	17	1.07	Moderate
18	18	I feel happy when I interact with people.	18	1.08	Moderate
19	19	I lack courtesy when I talk to people.	19	1.29	Moderate
20	20	I avoid eating food in public.	20	1.21	Moderate
		Total degree	10	.55	Moderate

Table (3) illustrates that means varied between (1.76-3.73). Article (11) which states “I look for excuses that prevent me from attending social occasions” ranked first with a mean of (3.73). On the contrary, article (16) “I avoid eating food in public” ranked last with a mean of (2.52). The Overall mean for the social dimension was (2.63).

The physiological dimension

Means and deviations for the physiological dimension for learning disabilities students in Irbid province were extracted. Table (4) illustrates that.

Table 4: means and deviations for the physiological dimension in descending order according to means.

Sequence	Number	Articles	Article mean	Article deviation	Degree
21	29	I sweat when I am asked to speak in front of a group	2.30	1.32	Moderate
22	24	I turn red when I am praised by the teacher	2.69	1.22	Moderate
21	26	I tremble when the teacher asks me something	2.66	1.32	Moderate
23	22	I look away from the person I am speaking to	2.62	1.17	Moderate
24	30	I stutter when I am asked a question	2.61	1.22	Moderate
25	21	I mess with my hair when I am asked a question	2.54	1.21	Moderate
26	23	I gulp whenever I am asked a question	2.48	1.21	Moderate
27	25	I rub my fingers when I talk to others	2.47	1.27	Moderate
28	26	My heartbeat increases when I do work with my mates	2.47	1.25	Moderate
29	27	I itch when I am with my mates	2.41	1.25	Moderate
30	28	I feel stomachache when I go out with my mates	2.39	1.30	Moderate
		Total degree for the psychological dimension	2.53	1.00	Moderate

Table (4) illustrates that means varied between (230-2.30). The article stating "I sweat if I am requested to speak in front of a group" ranked first with a mean of (302). However, the articles that states "I feel stomachache when I go out with my classmates" ranked last with a mean of (2.39). The total mean for the physiological dimension was (2.53).

Second question findings: do shyness levels for grade three and four learning disabilities students in the province of Irbid vary across gender and grade?

To answer this question, the means and deviations for learning disabilities students' shyness levels were extracted according to the variables of academic achievement, gender and grade. Table 5 illustrates that.

Table 5: means and deviations for Irbid learning disabilities students' shyness level according to the variables of gender, achievement and grade.

Variable	Group		Psychological	Social	Physiological	Overall shyness
Gender	Male	M	2.50	2.49	2.38	2.46
		D	.581	.469	.94	.580
	Female	M	2.73	2.71	2.6	2.70
		D	.657	.574	1.00	.663
Grade	Five	M	2.60	2.53	2.40	2.51
		D	.585	.472	1.00	.604
		M	2.65	2.70	2.64	2.67
		D	.674	.584	0.97	.659

M= mean, D = deviation

Table 5 illustrates an apparent variance in the means and deviations of the shyness level of grade three and four learning disabilities students in Irbid attributed to the variables of achievement, gender and grade.

To show the significance of statistical differences among means, the three-way ANOVA and three-way ANOVA of the instrument were used.

Table 6: the three-way ANOVA for the influence of achievement, gender and class on the dimensions of shyness level for grade three and four learning disabilities students in the province of Irbid.

Source of variance	Dimensions	Sums of squares	Degrees	Means of squares	P value	Statistical significance
Gender	Psychological	5.214	1	5.213	14.024	.000
	Social	3.709	1	3.708	14.554	.000
	Physiological	6.718	1	6.717	7.590	.006
Grade	Psychological	.009	1	.008	.020	.885
	Social	.924	1	.923	3.623	.058
	Physiological	2.044	1	2.043	2.308	.130
Achievement	Psychological	5.612	2	2.805	7.546	.001
	Social	5.908	2	2.955	11.595	.000
	Physiological	17.261	2	8.630	9.753	.000
Error	Psychological	90.331	242	.372		
	Social	61.913	241	.255		

	Physiological	215.002	241	.885		
Total	Psychological	99.117	246			
	Social	72.195	246			
	Physiological	239.917	246			

Tables 6 shows the following:

- The presence of statistically significance differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) attributed to the influence of gender in all dimensions. Differences came in favor of females.
- The absence of statistically significance differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) attributed to the influence of grade in all dimensions.

5 Discussion

The discussion of first question findings: What are the shyness levels for learning disabilities students for grades three and four in the province of Irbid?

The findings of the first question showed that shyness level for grade three and four learning disabilities students in the province of Irbid were moderate. Psychological dimension ranked first with the highest mean. This was followed by the social dimensions. Physiological dimension ranked last.

The moderate result of shyness for learning disabilities students may be attributed to nature of the study sample age group. They were (8-12) years old. Children start to lose shyness feeling due to multiple factors like knowledge and social maturity, and interaction with their social environment. Thus, results were moderate rather than high or low.

Perhaps the reason for the average result of shyness is attributed to the democratic family upbringing pattern, and the prevailing positive family atmosphere that supports students in the environment of the province of Irbid, which is the hometown of the researcher, where the pattern of family upbringing contributes to the formation of feelings of shyness among children.

The dimension of psychological shyness ranked first with the highest arithmetic average, followed by the social shyness ranking second, while physiological shyness came in the last rank, and this result may agree with the result of the total score, since the level of shyness among students does not constitute a pathological phenomenon, but rather is natural. Shyness is given degrees, as psychological shyness is one of the simplest types of shyness, while physiological shyness is one of the most severe types of shyness. Later, physiological shyness came last, while psychological shyness came first.

The discussion of second question findings: do shyness levels for grade three and four learning disabilities students in the province of Irbid vary across gender and grade?

The results of this question revealed that there were statistically significant differences in the level of shyness among students with learning difficulties in Irbid province due to the effect of gender, and the differences came in favor of females. The results also revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the level of shyness

among students with learning difficulties in Irbid governorate due to the effect of grade.

The first result in this question indicates that there are statistically significant differences in the level of shyness among students with learning difficulties in Irbid province due to the effect of gender, and the differences came in favor of females. In my experience in the Arab society, this result resembles a true illustration of the reality of the Arab society, females are usually shy than males.

Perhaps the reason for the presence of shyness in the case of females more than in males is due to the state of shyness and how it is affected by the social factors surrounding the individual, and their effective communication with the members of the community around them. Usually, males have the most contact with society, and their experiences are wider than females, it is natural for females to be shy than males.

The second result in this question indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of shyness among students with learning difficulties in Irbid province due to the effect of grade, and perhaps the reason for this is due to the students' agreement in the same age stage. All of them are in the third and fourth grades, which this leads to their agreement on the quality of the experiences they receive from society and their quantity, and affect the level of their psychological, social and physiological shyness, as many references indicated that shyness is related to the age stage of the individual, in addition to other social and psychological factors.

6 Recommendation

The researcher recommends the following in light of previous results:

- Directing the attention of parents, teachers and counselors to some of the disorders that may occur to students as a result of many personal and social factors, the most important of which is the problem of shyness among students.
- Directing the attention of school principals, teachers and counselors to prepare educational and social programs and activities that integrate students with cooperative and social work to address the problems of shyness that may affect some students, in addition to raising individuals' self-esteem.
- Conducting descriptive studies to diagnose the causes of shyness, and factors of students' self-esteem, and to benefit from this study in modifying students' behavior and guiding them educationally.

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Conflict of interest:

The authors declare that there is no conflict regarding the publication of this paper.

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