Migration Letters

Volume: 20, No: S8(2023), pp. 155-163

ISSN: 1741-8984 (Print) ISSN: 1741-8992 (Online)
www.migrationletters.com

Perception of Risks and its Relationship to Thinking Discordant with Ideal Self among Preparatory School Students

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Abstract

The preparatory stage represents an important stage in the educational ladder. This stage is considered transitional, whether for an individual or a society. This is because of its effects that remain attached to the individual or society for a period of time and undoubtedly affect his personality and behaviour. The researchers prepared a scale for risk perception based on (So, 2013: 72-83). The scale included (40) items, and the scale of Thinking Discordant with Ideal Self (Szkodny & Newman, 2019) consists of (11) items. Then, they verified its translation's veracity, stability, and suitability to the Iraqi environment. The researchers relied on the descriptive, correlational approach in the current research. The study aimed to identify the perception of risks among preparatory school students. The statistical significance of the difference in risk perception and thinking contrary to the (ideal self) according to the gender variable (males, females) and the correlation between the two variables. The researchers used the Statistical Portfolio for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Keywords: *Perception of risks, Thinking Discordant with Ideal self, preparatory school students.*

Introduction

The perception of risk arises from several causes. These causes are psychological pressures from work, study, personal problems, psychological trauma, natural disasters, and exposure to violence and persecution (Al-Atrani, Al-Daraji, 2015: 163). The perception of risks affects the individual's and society's psychological health and can cause psychological harm and psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, and psychological stress. Students are exposed to challenges and pressures, such as their expectation of exam failure. This poses a threat to their self-confidence (Gerven et al., 2008: 88). In the experimental study conducted by (Braier, 1982), he expected that the exam would have important consequences for individuals (Braier, 1982, pp. 51-62).

The researchers adopted the model (So, 2013), and this revised model includes a more comprehensive perspective on risk perception as a construct that includes two important aspects: (cognitive and emotional aspects). This model also integrated several processes such as cognitive appraisal, threat appraisal, and confrontation appraisal processes (Rogers, 1975, 1983), parts of the acquired fear motivation model (Janis, 1967), and was taken from the explanatory framework of the parallel process model (Leventhal, 1970, pp. 119-186).) and the self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987). Higgins (1987, 1996) defined the ideal self as everything you want to become and what you feel you should

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become as desired future self-states. When an individual can see the difference between their actual self and their future selves, they can also see what needs to be done to reduce the discrepancy, motivating them to learn and regulate motivated behaviour (Mackay, 2016:48).

Thinking Discordant with Ideal Self is represented by thoughts that conflict with personal standards (Szkodny & Neman, 2019). Knowing oneself is challenging because there is an inherent conflict between different aspects of oneself. Suppose there is a conflict between thinking about the ideal self and the real self. In that case, any educational strategy will be far from the ideal level, and thus, a conflict will occur that affects the academic level (Jack et al., 2023).

(Dickson et al., 2019) found in their study that self-discrepancies between reality and ideal are independently associated with symptoms of depression and anxiety, respectively. (For example, succeeding in achieving a good grade in the exam versus failing to obtain a good grade in the exam) Moreover, it is accompanied by feelings ranging from joy to depression. Thus, the absence or failure to achieve a positive outcome is thought to give rise to emotions such as depression, sadness, and disappointment. A negative result is thought to trigger feelings such as fear and anxiety (Dickson et al., 2019).

Method

The researchers did not find a suitable tool to measure risk perception among the current research sample. They found it appropriate to prepare a scale. The researchers prepared a scale to measure risk perception by reviewing previous studies, theoretical literature, and foreign standards. Because risk perception is a complex construct affected by many factors, and its measurements can confirm the different components, the two researchers decided to prepare a risk perception scale compatible with the study's objectives, the research sample, and the Iraqi environment. This is due to the different cultural and social environments and circumstances that students live in (Jaafar, 2023). They relied on the expanded parallel and extended processes model to prepare the scale. (The Extended Parallel Process Model, 2013) The Extended Parallel Process Model identified four risk perception components: Severity, perceived susceptibility, Anxiety, and Fear (So, 2013: 72- 83). The items of the risk perception scale were prepared according to the four areas. Each field has (10) paragraphs. Thus, the total number of items on the scale was (40). According to five alternatives (always applies to me, often applies to me, sometimes applies to me, rarely applies to me, never applies to me) and in a gradual manner (5-4-3-2-1). The researchers adopted the measure for Thinking Discordant with Ideal Self, which was the items (11). The researchers derived their measure from the (Szkodny& Neman, 2019) Perseverative Perception Scale, composed of a set of subscales. The scale consists of six subscales, which are as follows, and all items are corrected with the same correction (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The scale of Thinking Discordant with Ideal Self: This field includes (11) items, and each item has six alternatives, and they are given weights (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Therefore, the highest score that a respondent can obtain is (55) degrees, and the lowest score he can obtain is (0) degrees; thus, the theoretical average is (27.5) degrees (Athir & Jassim, 2022, p. 1)

The scale was translated from English to Arabic. The scale was re-translated from Arabic to English. The two texts were displayed in English, one representing the original text of the scale and the other representing the text translated from Arabic to English for comparison between them to verify the accuracy of the translation. The text translated into Arabic was presented to an Arabic language specialist to verify its linguistic integrity (Arnout, Abdel Rahman, Elprince, Abada, & Jasim, 2020)

Participants

The size of the total research sample was (400) male and female students in middle and secondary schools in Baghdad Governorate of both sexes, with a ratio of (209) for females and (191) for males. The representation percentage for males was 48%, while the representation percentage for girls was 52%. The ages of the participants were between (18-20) year's old sixth-grade students.

Measurements

The two scales were presented in their initial form to several arbitrators in the educational and psychological sciences to evaluate and judge the validity of the items. To verify the conformity of the items to the characteristics they were prepared to measure and their suitability to the Iraqi environment, the researchers presented the scale of Thinking Discordant with Ideal Self to a group of (14) arbitrators, specialists in educational and psychological sciences. Based on their opinions, the standard and its instructions were accepted, with some linguistic modifications to some paragraphs to suit and adapt them to the Iraqi environment. The scale received 100% unanimous approval, with all items maintained (Eyal, Jassim, 2019: 293). In order to identify the validity of the scale items and their suitability to the Iraqi environment, the researchers presented the risk perception scale and measured its apparent validity. The researchers presented the risk perception scale in its initial form, consisting of (52) items, to (14) arbitrators of specialists with experience in the field of educational and psychological sciences, measurement and evaluation to express their opinions and observations about the scale in judging the suitability of the scale for the purpose for which it was developed, so that it becomes the applied scale. The statistical analysis sample consists of (40) items (Alwan & Jasim, 2022). The reliability of the risk perception scale was extracted using the test-retest method. The scale was re-applied to the stability sample, which consisted of (40) male and female students, with a time interval of (14) days from the first application. The Pearson correlation coefficient was (0.91) for the scale, and the alpha coefficient was (0.89) using the Cronbach equation. It has a good stability factor. Consistency values are a measure of Thinking Discordant with Ideal Self. After applying the Cronbach equation to the responses of the statistical analysis sample, which amounted to (400) responses, the reliability values were (0.86). This value is a good indicator of the stability of individuals' answers on the scale over time. The correlation coefficient between the first and second applications was (0.88) or more. The statistical indicators for the scale of thinking contrary to one's ideal self were the arithmetic mean (31.67), median (32.5), mode (29), standard deviation (11.54), variance (133.21), skewness (-0.369), flatness (-0.369), lowest score (0), highest score (55). Range (55) (Arnout, Jasim, & Mahmood, 2019).

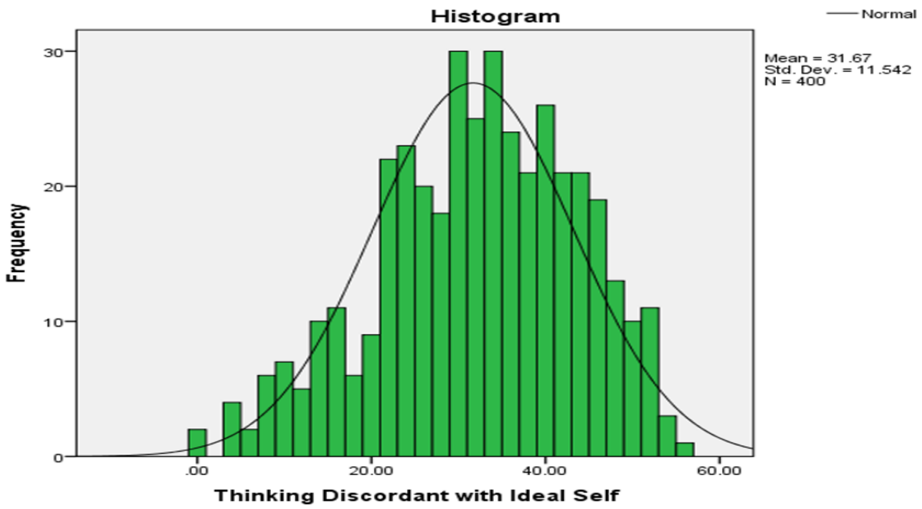

Fig (1) the extent to which the test items are saturated with the general factor based

After correcting the scale consisting of (40) items for all study sample members, which numbered (400) male and female students, and subjecting the risk perception scale to exploratory factor analysis using the Principle Component method, the direct analysis after rotation produced one factor. After rotating the factor along perpendicular axes using Kaiser's Varimax method, a single factor with a latent root whose value was (19,181) was obtained. The meaning is explained within (47.951%) of the total variance. After obtaining the correlation coefficients between the items using factor analysis, the saturation coefficients of the items are examined using the general factor. (Arnout, Abdel Rahman, Elprince, Abada, & Jasim, 2020) If all items are saturated on the first factor, the scale measures one trait. It is clear from Table (1) the extent to which the test items are saturated with the general factor based on the test saturation percentage (0.30) and above according to the Guilford criterion (Guilfor Athir, & Jassim2022: 2627).

Table (1) the extent to which the test items are saturated with the general factor based

saturated factor	items	saturated factor	items
0,668	21	0,722	1
0,719	22	0,620	2
0,678	23	0,598	3
0,678	24	0,662	4
0,772	25	0,613	5
0,731	26	0,601	6
0,734	27	0,703	7
0,746	28	0,725	8
0,798	29	0,686	9
0,731	30	0,650	10
0,570	31	0,673	11
0,724	32	0,559	12
0,748	33	0,700	13
0,718	34	0,761	14
0,740	35	0,750	15
0,570	36	0,754	16
0,719	37	0,630	17
0,743	38	0,764	18
0,719	39	0,569	19
0,627	40	0,709	20

It is clear from Figure (1) that there is a clear regression in the graphical representation of latent root values that exceed one in the test. This indicates that the scale measures one characteristic: risk perception (Arnout et al., 2019).

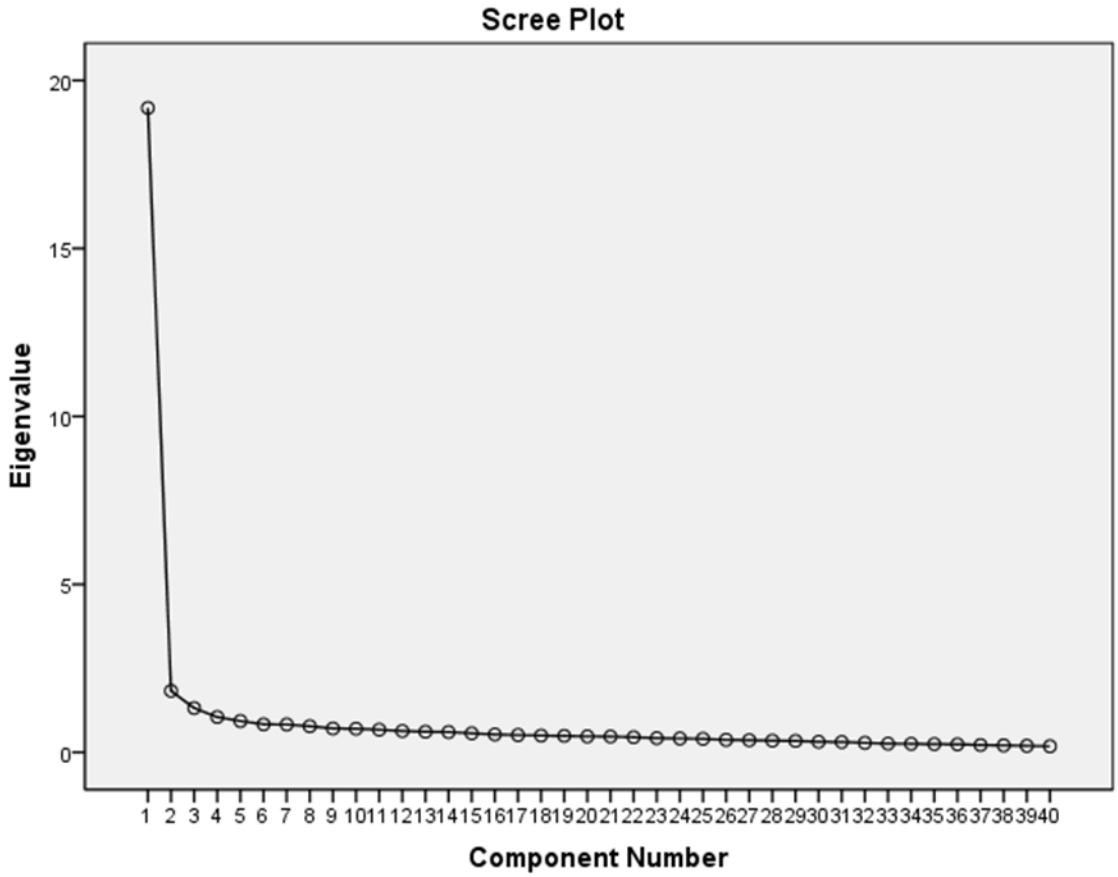

Figure (2) clear regression in the graphical representation of latent root values

Table (2) Discrimination power of perception risk items

significance level 0,05	the tabulated T-value	Lower group		Upper group		No.
		Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	items
significant	11.328	1.266	2.852	0.802	4.463	1
significant	7.364	1.181	1.731	1.499	3.065	2
significant	8.804	1.357	1.861	1.582	3.602	3
significant	10.158	1.370	1.954	1.361	3.815	4
significant	8.117	1.351	2.120	1.485	3.667	5
significant	5.202	0.947	1.398	1.554	2.296	6
significant	12.274	1.371	2.500	0.940	4.435	7
significant	12.715	1.414	2.667	0.798	4.593	8
significant	14.148	1.460	2.130	1.013	4.398	9
significant	8.713	1.457	2.491	1.261	4.083	10
significant	9.618	1.332	2.602	1.112	4.185	11
significant	5.458	1.508	2.370	1.699	3.546	12
significant	12.948	1.406	2.148	1.001	4.269	13

significant	17.828	1.068	1.667	1.107	4.269	14
significant	19.995	1.133	1.926	0.790	4.546	15
significant	17.678	0.939	1.657	1.071	4.046	16
significant	10.054	1.278	1.648	1.638	3.630	17
significant	16.603	1.180	1.907	1.008	4.352	18
significant	7.570	1.533	2.380	1.322	3.833	19
significant	12.842	1.179	1.648	1.322	3.806	20
significant	11.205	1.428	2.185	1.251	4.204	21
significant	14.220	1.394	2.602	0.665	4.685	22
significant	12.742	1.488	2.694	0.706	4.685	23
significant	12.178	1.449	2.296	1.074	4.380	24
significant	19.702	1.177	1.870	0.883	4.620	25
significant	14.732	1.305	1.870	1.073	4.231	26
significant	13.973	1.336	2.472	0.905	4.611	27
significant	14.898	1.311	2.000	1.066	4.389	28
significant	21.392	1.010	1.630	0.950	4.444	29
significant	13.233	1.195	1.741	1.336	3.991	30
significant	5.033	1.190	1.796	1.676	2.778	31
significant	15.044	1.215	2.000	1.094	4.333	32
significant	17.256	1.238	1.981	0.942	4.528	33
significant	15.568	1.241	1.972	1.047	4.370	34
significant	15.708	1.239	1.870	1.104	4.343	35
significant	3.953	1.229	1.759	1.609	2.519	36
significant	17.026	1.097	1.778	1.092	4.278	37
significant	16.225	1.318	2.398	0.724	4.713	38
significant	13.503	1.424	2.639	0.708	4.676	39
significant	7.313	1.462	2.778	1.185	4.083	40

Table (3) Discrimination power of Thinking Discordant with Ideal self

significance level (0,05)	the tabulated T-value	Lower group		Upper group		ت
		Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	items
significant	10.929	1.850	2.224	1.043	4.426	1
significant	17.687	1.309	0.731	1.345	3.880	2
significant	10.903	1.606	1.713	1.259	3.824	3
significant	17.669	1.395	0.917	1.031	3.824	4
significant	15.810	1.602	1.421	1.031	4.278	5

significant	12.517	1.761	2.000	1.032	4.425	6
significant	16.595	1.382	0.843	1.396	3.935	7
significant	9.798	1.872	2.028	1.196	4.093	8
significant	16.222	1.597	1.472	1.032	4.398	9
significant	13.969	1.551	1.620	1.192	4.213	10
significant	10.591	1.812	1.926	1.202	4.111	11

Results

Risk perception among sixth-grade preparatory school students: To achieve this goal, the researchers applied the risk perception scale consisting of (40) items to the research sample consisting of (400) male and female students. The research results showed that the arithmetic mean of the scores of this sample on the scale reached (126,322) degrees, with a standard deviation of (32,096) degrees. When knowing the significance of the difference between the arithmetic mean and the hypothetical mean, which reached (120) degrees, it became clear that the difference is statistically significant at the significance level (0.05), as the calculated T-value reached (3.940), which is greater than the tabulated T-value of (1.96). And with a degree of freedom (399). This means that the research sample has a degree of perception that the calculated T-value reached (3,940), which is statistically at a significance level of (0.05) and a degree of freedom (399). The second calculated value is greater than the tabular T value of (1.96). This indicates that students have a statistically significant risk perception on the risk perception scale.

Statistically significant differences in the perception of risks among sixth-grade preparatory school students according to the gender variable (males, females). For the purpose of verifying this goal, the researchers took the responses of the research sample of (400) male and female students on the risk perception scale. After processing the data statistically, the researcher extracted the average scores of the sample members on the scale according to gender (males and females). It was found that the average score for males was (122,361), with a standard deviation of (32,136), and the average score for females was (129,943), with a standard deviation of (31,705). The result indicates that there are statistically significant differences between males and females in risk perception and in favor of females, as the calculated T-value (2.373) is greater than the tabulated T-value of (1.96) at a significance level of (0.05) and degree of freedom (398).

Identifying Thinking Discordant with Ideal Self: A scale of Thinking Discordant with Ideal Self was applied to achieve this goal. The arithmetic mean was (31,672), the standard deviation was (11,542), the hypothesized mean was (27.5), the calculated T-value was (7,230), and the tabulated T-value was (1.96).) at a significance level of (0.05), which is statistically significant.

The research indicated that there are no statistically significant differences between males and females in Thinking Discordant with Ideal Self, as the calculated T-value (0.532) is smaller than the tabulated T-value of (1.96) at a significance level of (0.05) and degree of freedom (398).

The correlation between risk perception and Thinking Discordant with Ideal Self among middle school students was calculated. According to the value of the correlation coefficient between risk perception and Thinking Discordant with Ideal Self, it reached (0.445), and the calculated T-value reached (9.889), which is greater than the tabular value of (1.96) at a significance level of (0.05) and a degree of freedom (398).

Conclusions

Individuals' perceptions of their risks lie through the perception of the threat portrayed as serious and possible. It is assumed that this perception arouses fear and anxiety, activating the coping appraisal process. This result can be explained by the fact that preparatory school students' perception of risks increases as a result of psychological pressures and conflicts that may be due to their personal experiences or that they form these perceptions through the students who preceded them or through the opinions created by the family atmosphere, led by the father and mother, where we see the atmosphere of homes dominated by fear, anxiety, and hidden threats. The ambition may be higher than the student's abilities, which makes him more anxious. The student may be highly ambitious, but the exam's dread, anxiety, and perceived severity cause him to perceive danger.

The expectations and hopes of parents and students regarding what will be achieved from the results of ministerial examinations generate a contradiction between their realistic and ideal selves, which turns them into negative perceptions that generate cognitive pressures. The study found that the relationship between the two variables is a direct, statistically significant relationship. The higher the individual's thinking is contrary to his ideal self, the higher his risk perception.

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