

Abstracts

Mental well-being and significant stressful life events and their impact on self-identity among religious-Zionist and secular young adults

Helen Kakounda Muallem and Shir Golan

This study examined the relationship between mental well-being, exposure to significant stressful life events, and their impact on self-identity clarity among religious-Zionist and secular young adults. The sample included religious-Zionist and secular young adults living in non-mixed cities, moshavim, and kibbutzim. The aim of the study was to explore the relationships between significant stressful events, level of religiosity, and their influence on the mental well-being and self-identity perception of young adults. By focusing on the group of young adults, it is also possible to draw conclusions about adolescents, since, similar to the processes that take place during emerging adulthood, adolescents undergo a process of self-identity formation. The general assumption of the study was that greater exposure to stressful events among young adults would negatively affect their mental well-being. The findings indicate that higher levels of self-identity clarity are associated with higher levels of mental well-being. In addition, the study found support for the hypothesis that young adults who adopt a more collectivist identity report higher levels of mental well-being. Data analysis revealed that adopting a collectivist identity predicts higher mental well-being. Moreover, greater exposure to stressful events predicts lower levels of mental well-being. Exposure to stressful events was also found to be negatively associated with collectivist identity, religious identification, observance of tradition, and positive self-concept. Regarding religious identity, both religious identification and observance of tradition were negatively associated with the three negative subscales of mental well-being: emotional distress, antisocial behavior, and anger. The findings highlight the importance of emphasizing self-identity formation in relation to mental well-being and exposure to stressful events. Based on these results, educational conclusions and group intervention programs are suggested, which may support the development of self-identity already during the school years.

Keywords: well-being; stressful events; self-identity; religious identity; emerging adulthood.

Adolescent attitudes toward modesty, religious identity, body image and mental well-being among religious adolescents

Ruti Charan-Kramarski and Shraga Fisherman

Teaching modesty greatly preoccupies religious society and its educators. Many young women think that religious education overemphasizes the limits of dress and leisure time activities, in a way that harms the degree of religious commitment and the sense of their well-being (Fisherman, 2016). One's body image is the way a person conceives of his/her body and its external appearance (Ben Besht & Greenberg, 2009). Body image is the product of the way in which a person appraises his/her external appearance and of the way he/she thinks others appraise his/her body (Tiano, 2010). Emotional well-being -- composed of good life quality, happiness and satisfaction from life (Henig, 2015) -- is one of the basic goals of education generally, and of educational counseling in particular (Zimmerman, 2010). Body image is found to be associated with religious identity (Klein et al., 2007) and with emotional well-being (Stiger and Frazer, 2005). The purpose of this study was to examine the connection between attitudes toward modesty, religious identity (faith identity and religious behavior), body image and emotional well-being among female religious adolescents. 63 religious adolescents from grades 7-9 and from grades 10-12 completed questionnaires that dealt with body image (Gray, 1977; Palgi, 1995), faith identity (Fisherman, 2011), religious behavior (Fisherman, 2004), attitudes toward modesty (Fisherman, 2016), and emotional well-being (Diner, 1985). Attitudes toward dress predicted body image, religious identity and emotional well-being. Differing patterns of prediction were found among the two research groups. Among the younger female adolescents, body image predicted emotional well-being, while the predictors of well-being among the older girls were faith identity, two of the attitude factors toward modesty, and body image. It was also found that for the younger girls, the regression predicted about 14% of the variance of well-being, and among the older girls the regression predicted nearly 60% of the variance. These findings are discussed in connection with the centrality of these variables for the lives of the religious girls in the two age groups. The research findings have implications for the education of these young adolescent girls, and considerable relevance for the role of educational counselors.

Keywords: modesty; religious identity; body image; emotional well-being.

Pink future: Sexual identity, relationships with parents, and vocational development among young adults

Shira Marshall and Rachel Gali Cinamon

This research explored family support among sexual minority young adults and its connection to their career development processes. The study aimed to expand the limited empirical knowledge on the intersection of family support, career development processes, and sexual identity formation. A qualitative approach was used, with semi-structured interviews conducted with ten young adults aged 27–34 ($M=30.4$, $SD=2.07$). Content analysis of the interviews revealed unique perceptions of relationships with parents and their role in vocational development across the lifespan. The interviews also uncovered family support types related to sexual identity and the role of sexual identity formation in vocational development. Implications and recommendations are discussed.

Keywords: sexual identity; relationship with parents; vocational development.

Psychological distress, self-efficacy, and burnout among parents of children with disabilities and parents of typically developing children in Arab society in Israel during the Iron Swords War

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Parents of children with disabilities in Arab society in Israel may be at increased risk for psychological distress and burnout during times of war. The literature reveals a significant gap in knowledge regarding the experiences of this population during wartime. The aim of the study was to examine psychological distress, parental self-efficacy, and parental burnout among parents of children with disabilities in Arab society in Israel during the Iron Swords War, in comparison with parents of typically developing children. In addition, the mediating role of parental self-efficacy in the association between psychological distress and parental burnout was examined. The study included 134 Arab parents (15.7% fathers, 84.3% mothers), of whom 41.8% were parents of children with special needs. Psychological distress (DASS-21), parental self-efficacy (PSOC), and parental burnout (PBA) were assessed using self-report questionnaires. Findings indicated that parents of children with disabilities reported lower levels of parental self-efficacy and higher levels of parental burnout. In addition, parental self-efficacy mediated the relationship between psychological distress and parental burnout among parents of typically developing children. The study's conclusions highlight the need to raise awareness of the unique needs of parents of children with disabilities in Arab society during emergencies, to allocate appropriate resources, and to develop culturally sensitive interventions.

Keywords: psychological distress; parental self-efficacy; parental burnout; Arab society; disability; war.

Experiences of Arab educational counselors coping with disclosure of child sexual abuse in their professional role

Dafna Zinn, Efrat Lusky-Weisros, Laura Sigad and Dafna Tener

Educational counselors play a central role in identifying and responding to cases of child sexual abuse (CSA) and in promoting students' well-being and sense of safety in schools. This study examines the experiences of Arab educational counselors coping with disclosures of child sexual abuse in the course of their professional work. Fourteen Arab counselors working in elementary schools and with substantial experience in addressing CSA cases participated in in-depth interviews. Thematic content analysis identified three main themes: (1) encounters with socio-cultural attitudes that minimize or silence sexual abuse; (2) the development of personal and professional coping strategies in relation to 'ayb (social shame); and (3) counselors' roles as agents of change in challenging taboos and prejudice within the school and community. The findings highlight the counselors' unique position at the intersection of cultural and professional worlds, enabling them to adopt a broad perspective and to initiate meaningful change in school responses to child sexual abuse. The study concludes with recommendations for culturally sensitive counselor training to strengthen professional practice in this field.

Keywords: educational counseling; child sexual abuse (CSA); socio-cultural context.

Coping with social rejection among children and youth: Insights from educational counselors in Israel

Shahar Gindi, Tali Ben Yehuda, Moran Klein and Shelly Aharoni Ben Simon

The article deals with the phenomenon of social rejection in schools in Israel and the way in which educational counselors perceive and deal with this phenomenon. First, the article discusses the definition of the phenomenon, examining its sources, ways of dealing with it, and a review of the circular from the Director General of the Ministry of Education on the subject. The following describes findings from interviews with educational counselors from all age groups and from a variety of educational streams in Israel (N=21). Then, central themes extracted from the interviews are presented, which reveal a lack of uniformity in the ways counselors cope with social rejection, with it evident that the choice of intervention on the subject is influenced by each counselor's personal view of the sources of rejection – in the rejected child himself or in systemic and social circumstances. In addition, the counselors raise an argument regarding the triviality of the use of the term "boycott" and claim that the phenomenon is more common in popular discourse than in their daily practice. In conclusion, questions are raised regarding the sources of the differences in the counselors' approach to the phenomenon of social rejection, and several explanations are offered regarding the difficulties in finding appropriate interventions on the subject in the Israeli education system, despite the Ministry of Education's guidelines on the subject.

Keywords: social rejection; educational counselors; the education system in Israel; social boycott; intervention methods.

The developmental relationship between retrospective memory and prospective memory in elementary school children

Oshrat On

This study examines prospective memory in elementary school children. Previous research has suggested that retrospective memory supports prospective memory functioning, such that difficulties in recalling past information may impair the execution of future intentions. However, whereas retrospective memory has been shown to improve consistently with increasing age, findings regarding the development of prospective memory remain inconsistent. To address this issue, 39 children from second and sixth grades ($n = 20$ and $n = 19$, respectively) completed a series of retrospective memory tasks and prospective memory tasks, including both time-based and event-based paradigms. The results revealed significant age-group differences in performance across both types of tasks, with sixth-grade students demonstrating higher levels of performance. Nevertheless, no significant association was found between retrospective memory performance and prospective memory performance. These findings indicate that although both memory systems improve with age, they develop relatively independently during the elementary school years. The results contribute to a more nuanced understanding of memory development and may inform educational professionals in designing targeted intervention programs aimed at strengthening each memory system separately.

Keywords: retrospective memory; event-based prospective memory; time-based prospective memory; cognitive development; elementary school children; executive functions; working memory.

Advancing the assessment of educators' social-emotional skills

Ronen Kasperski and Merav Esther Hemi

Educators' social-emotional skills (SEL) are foundational to the creation of learning environments that are emotionally supportive and pedagogically effective. This article reports on a series of studies aimed at upgrading the EduSEL questionnaire in order to provide a richer and more accurate assessment of educators' SEL competencies. The first study examined convergent validity by comparing EduSEL results with those of an independently validated instrument. The second study sought to widen the range of competencies assessed by introducing additional items. In the third study, an EFA revealed a four-factor structure comprising self-management, ethical problem-solving, self- and social-awareness, and interpersonal relationship skills. The fourth study evaluated a 20-item short form, constructed from the five strongest items in each domain, through CFA. This reduced version demonstrated strong model fit, high reliability ($\alpha = .92$), and evidence of convergent validity. Overall, the revised EduSEL reflects tighter alignment with the CASEL framework and enables the assessment of a broader set of SEL skills, contributing to more comprehensive evaluation in the field.

Keywords: social-emotional learning; assessment; psychometrics.

The role of the educational counselor in the era of decentralization: A comparative study of network-affiliated and non-network-affiliated schools in Israel's state and state-religious education sectors

Avraham Bentolila and Joseph Klein

This study examined the functioning of educational networks in Israel—developed as part of the Ministry of Education's decentralization policy—in shaping the school environment and promoting student well-being, while distinguishing between state and state-religious institutions. A mixed-methods approach was employed: the quantitative component was based on data analysis from approximately 1,850 schools across 137 local authorities between 2015 and 2019. It compared schools operating within educational networks to those not affiliated with any network, using institutional indicators, educational climate measures, and matriculation eligibility rates. The qualitative component involved in-depth interviews with 16 school principals, focusing on managerial autonomy and organizational relations. Findings indicate a partial advantage for network-affiliated schools in academic achievement and social indicators, along with higher levels of managerial autonomy. However, it was found that budgetary supplements are not consistently utilized to enhance core educational outcomes. The study provides practical insights for the educational counseling community regarding institutional and systemic factors affecting student well-being, emphasizing the need for context-sensitive interventions tailored to various sectoral and structural settings.

Keywords: educational networks; decentralization; managerial autonomy; educational counseling.

Using team-based simulations to cultivate resilience among teachers: The work of the school counselor

Julia Shein and Orly Shapira-Lishchinsky

This article presents a unique study conducted using a school-based action research methodology, aimed at fostering teachers' professional resilience through team-based simulations. The study involved 20 teachers. The primary data collection tools included simulation scenarios, participants' reflections (n=20), and group discussions. Data were analyzed using a thematic–categorical approach (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), with triangulation across multiple data sources (Paulus et al., 2017). The findings revealed critical incidents occurring in teachers' professional practice, highlighting challenges arising from interactions with parents, students, and colleagues, alongside the workload associated with pedagogical and organizational tasks. The simulations were found to contribute particularly to the development of 12 resilience-related skills among teachers, categorized into four core dimensions: emotional, social, motivational, and professional (Mansfield et al., 2012). In addition, the learning processes strengthened an organizational culture that promotes professional resilience. This study underscores the potential of team-based simulations for resilience development, positioning teachers as designers and agents of learning, and emphasizing the essential role of educational counselors in advancing resilience-building processes among teachers.

Keywords: teacher resilience; team-based simulation; educational counseling; action research.

Transitioning between worlds: Military veterans in the educational system and the need for tailored counseling support

Osnat Zorde and Shirli Shoyer

The transition from military to teaching careers requires a fundamental shift in professional role perception. This qualitative-phenomenological study examined 40 retired military officers (aged 40–60) from the "Best for Education" program, analyzing reflective writing assignments completed during their training year. Four assignments were collected at different training points through purposive sampling.

Findings revealed four developmental stages in the perceptual transition: Shifting from organizational to interpersonal perspective, developing educational language, building empathetic authority, and formulating educational action anchors. This complex process emphasizes the need for professional support frameworks tailored to veterans' unique challenges. The study contributes to understanding interprofessional transitions in education, highlighting the importance of professional and personal guidance during transition. Findings particularly emphasize the potential role of educational counselors as key factors in promoting optimal integration of military veterans into educational systems..

Keywords: teacher role perception; teacher training; career transition; professional support.