

METHODS OF SOLVING SOCIAL PROBLEMS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IRBID PROVINCE, JORDAN: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Abstract: *The process of teaching methods of solving social problems is considered one of the most effective steps in teaching and training. This is because it helps the students to find solutions by themselves through research and experiments. It also helps them analyze and organize their ideas in unconventional situations and enables them to make decisions take responsibility for learning. This is what many of the theoretical trends which explained how to solve social problems indicated upon, being that the inability of students to solve social problems leads them to become uncertain, confused and hesitant. Therefore, this study seeks to present a theory on the most important methods of solving social problems among a sample of students in Irbid Province and identify their level of problem-solving. The findings of this study were achieved using a descriptive approach to identify the most important methods of solving social problems and identify the students' level of solving social problems. The study recommends that there is a need to conduct research on problem-solving methods for other age groups. Hence, this study seeks to teach and train students on the use of theoretical methods that would enable them to overcome their social problems.*

Keywords: *Problem, Solving Social Problems, Secondary School Students*

Introduction

Individuals, including students, face a lot of problems in their everyday life. Some of these problems are associated with the relationship of individuals with each other or perceptions. Related issues include feelings toward each other, some of which concern the acquisition and practice of skills and other social ethics. It could be assured that the solution of these problems

needs scientific methods either directly or indirectly. It needs abilities and skills in the use of information to reach the desired solution. It also provides learners with the ability to assume many responsibilities and develop cooperation among them in order to achieve the goals and help them to increase self-confidence and ability to cope with difficulties, courage and self-reliance (Kharraz, 2014).

Emphasis on solving problems emerged at the beginning of the 20th century by many psychologists like Koehler and Thorndike. Therefore, this topic is of interest because it is an essential aspect of the school tasks facing students. Developing their problem-solving skills became one of the schools' top priorities (Kharraz, 2014).

Therefore, the concept of problem solving is a widely used concept. Al-Sa'idi (2015) defines the problem as an obstacle to the individual and prevents him from achieving his goals and the existence of such a barrier leads to creating a state of tension which leads him to search for a solution. He also defined method of problem solving as an activity and thinking and a set of processes by the individual using the information he acquires to overcome a position and reach a particular decision.

Problem Statement

Students face many problems in their lives. It is necessary to focus on learning what is new to multiply their mental strength in dealing with problems in different aspects of life. Therefore, the student needs to reach the methods of solving problems with the increasing problems he faces which he doesn't get anyone to help him out of it. Sometimes, the student needs to make decisions that are critical and necessary, and no one can decide for another. The method of solving the problem is characterized as what makes the student play a new role in which he is active and organized for his experiences (Al-Atawi, 2011).

There are social problems facing students, including social stability, physical condition, and the scientific and cultural level of the family (Rashid, 2015). The disturbance of family relations and the tension and failure caused by many differences and quarrels among family members make the student feels deprived and unstable. Likewise, the inability of the family to meet the requirements and needs of the school and the needs of the student in general leads to low level of his academic achievement, as confirmed by the studies of Mohammed (2015), and Al-Azzam (2008).

The lack of physical and social stability of the family negatively affects student motivation, attitudes towards school and education, and weak affiliation with the educational institution (Al-Momani, 2011). Failure to meet the basic needs associated with food, housing and personal expenses contributes greatly to the student's preoccupation with work at the expense of the study, as confirmed by the studies of Falloh (2014) and Al-Astal (2010).

However, the secondary stage is considered the distinctive stages in the lives of students, both on the personal level or the school, where they face many social problems affecting their ability to learn at this stage. So, students resort to using some methods in facing some of their problems and dealing with them. Among such methods is violence (Husban, 2016), such as assaulting colleagues, or the destruction of property and the left side effects on them in the psychological, and social aspects, such as frustration and isolation (Botoura, 2017). This is confirmed by the study of Poipoi& Erik (2011), which results showed that violence is considered a challenge that must be addressed in Secondary Schools. Moreover, there are family factors that contribute to

increased violence among students, such as the non-interrelated relationship between parents and their children which contributes to increased violence.

Students at this stage also suffer from social problems such as anger, tension, lack of social interaction, relationships with others, rebellion against power, customs and traditions. This is due to the lack of strategies for students at this stage through which they can solve the problems they face (Al-Amour, 2015).

Research Questions

1. What are the methods of solving social problems among secondary school students in Irbid Province?
2. What are the levels of solving social problems among secondary school students in Irbid Province?

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the methods of solving social problems among secondary school students in Irbid Province.
2. To explore the level of solving social problems among secondary school students in the province of Irbid.

Method

The research was based on a quantitative descriptive approach which is based on studying, analyzing and interpreting the phenomenon by defining its characteristics and dimensions and describing the relations between them in order to reach an integrated scientific description and interpretation.

Study Population

The study population consists of all students in the eleventh grade at private secondary schools in Irbid, amounting to 400 male and female students during the second semester of 2017/2018 session. This is based on the statistics provided by the Irbid Directorate of Education.

Study Sample

The study sample consists of 196 male and female students from the eleventh grade at private secondary schools in Irbid. The sample was randomly selected, constituting 45.06% of the study population.

Problem

The concept of problem refers to the existence of a vague situation that impairs the individual's process of understanding. This makes the individual to receive sensory data through sensory registers in order to form meaning that leads to understanding. Also, the individual's understanding becomes in the form of knowledge structures stored in Long-term memory. These structures constitute experiences that contribute to helping the individual to solve the problems which he or she faces. This is because the individual has already been exposed to the problems, and therefore such experience serves as a form of knowledge structure (Nofal, 2007).

Solving Social Problems

The concept of solving social problems has received wide attention by researchers in clinical psychology and mental health. That is because it is considered one of the most important indicators of social efficiency that reflects the individual's effectiveness in dealing with life problems and overcoming the difficulties he faces. In addition to that, it is considered an

important preventive factor which prevents the emergence of indicators of psychological and social incompatibility (Al-Garib, 2011).

Problem solving is considered an integral part of individual interactions. It is also considered an important dimension in determining relationships between individuals. The relationship is not limited to the number of problems facing individuals, but rather the way people face and deal with these problems. The term; solving social problems refers to the process of problem solving, as it also occurs in the natural environment or the real world, or it is self-controlled cognitive processes and behavior, identified by the individual in describing the problems he encounters in his daily life, or in the search for effective solutions to adapt himself to them. It should be noted that the word social does not mean that you have a specific problem, since it is used to refer to the problem solving that affects the adaptive function of the individual in his / her social environment. Therefore, the concept of solving the social problem is broad and includes all forms of problems that affect functional performance, including: impersonal problems such as theft, and inadequate financial resources. Interpersonal / social problems such as marital conflicts, friendship, family disputes, as well as more general societal problems such as crime and racial discrimination. Thus, solving social problems is a complex behavioral, emotional and cognitive process, used by the student corresponding to the problem they face in everyday lifestyles (Falloh, 2014).

There were many models dealing with the issue of solving social problems (Dzurilla, 1986,1988; Dzurilla&Nezu 1982), which means a harmonious solution to the problems of life. Dzurilla& Fried, referred to in: Al-Garib (2011), identify social problems as a behavioral process that helps the individual to come up with multiple responses and alternatives while dealing with the problem they face, and to choose the best alternatives to solve the problem. While (Dzurilla&Nezu) referred to in: Falloh and Abu Ghazal (2013), describe social problems as a complex cognitive, behavioral, and emotional process used by the individual to solve the problems he faces in his daily life.

The cognitive component of the previous definition refers to the ability of the individual to feel the problem, the feeling and the attention to the problem and its identification, while the behavioral component refers to the orientation towards the problem and proposing solutions to work on to solve it. The emotional component refers to the individual's reaction and trends towards the problem (Al-Adl, 2001).

Dzurilla and Goldfield were considered the first to present a model for solving social problems. This model may include a set of concepts: problem, problem-orientation, problem solving, and then modified by Dzurilla &Nezu&Madydeu-oliver, (2002). Two components of the ability to solve social problems in general are identified: the problem orientation includes the positive orientation and the negative orientation towards the problem. The second component is the skill of solving the problem, including the method of solving the rational problem, the method of solving the problems of the impulse, and the method of solving the problems of avoidance.

Secondary School Students

This is the last stage of school education. The stage is preceded by basic education. It is a two-year compulsory education. It consists of two classes: class one of the secondary schools and class two of the secondary school with arts and science branches. It is followed by the university education, in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (www.moe.gov.jo).

Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

The skill of solving social problems constitutes the life skills that every individual must learn due to their importance in all aspects of life. It is a key to solving the obstacles facing individuals, and it helps them to overcome various difficulties they face through learning strategies, methods and steps. The interest in problem solving emerged at the beginning of the 20th century by many psychologists such as Kohler and Thorndike. Therefore, problem solving is of interest because it is an essential aspect of the tasks that students face in schools. Developing problem-solving skills amongst students is one of the school's top priorities (Kharraz, 2014).

Methods of Solving Social Problems

Orientation towards the problem: It is called the general motivation component. It focuses on the cognitive and emotional response and depends on the individual's previous experiences while dealing with daily life problems that affect the individual's performance during his act of solving the problem (Al-Adel, 2001).

Dzurila, Nezu, and Maydeu-Oliver define a problem-oriented component as an important motivation in the process of solving social problems. These include the activation of relatively consistent cognitive and emotional schemes that reflect the individual's own ideas, beliefs and evaluations, as well as his reactions to the problem faced, and ability to solve problems and deal with them. The orientation towards the problem includes:

Positive orientation towards the problem: The individual who has this approach is characterized by a problem-solving capacity, has a foundation of knowledge structure, and divides the complex and challenging problems. The individual believes that the problems are solvable and that solving problems successfully requires some time and effort. He also believes that working towards solving them is better than avoiding them (Dzurila, Nezu, & Maydeu-Oliver, 2002).

Negative orientation towards the problem: It is a non-functional orientation that threatens the individual's sense of happiness and psychological and social well-being, which makes him doubt his ability to cope with the problem and solve it successfully. He also suffers from anxiety and tension in the event of being faced with a problem and easy to frustrate in case of facing a problem.

Problem solving skills: Refers to the cognitive and behavioral activities in which the individual tries to understand the problem, know it, identify it clearly, and generate multiple solutions and alternatives for an effective solution to deal with them. It includes:

The solution of the rational problem: The individual is able to solve the problem constructively using problem solving skills by identifying the problem and collecting information and then generating alternatives, choosing the best solutions and evaluating the solution. He tries achieving solutions to the problems, no matter how impossible the alternatives are, and whatever difficulties and obstacles it faces, and chooses the best solutions that help him in solving the problem.

The method of solving the impulsive problem: The individual is characterized with having few attempts to solve the problem that he faces and has a few alternatives and solutions that help him to solve the problem. He is impulsive and calves, taking the first solution that comes to his mind and applies the solution irregularly and randomly.

The method of solving the avoidance problem: The individual is characterized by submission, lethargy and laziness in finding solutions to the problem, and depends on others to solve the problem, expects others to solve the problem and does not try to solve it, and may avoid it rather than facing it and working towards solving it.

Methods of Solving Social Problems - Theory and Practice

It is possible to teach the methods of solving social problems, starting from the family as the first social entity to interact with the student. That is through the interaction of the student with his parents, brothers and relatives, and he gets an idea of the appropriate behavior acceptable by the family and the undesirable behavior, which is punished. The student could be punished by the family as well, and then establish the relationship with the community and the student can participate with peers in their games and activities. Then he grows and grow to expand his social relations and their interests and can either succeed in his life and be a useful person for his society or fail to achieve himself, or be negative and hostile to society, and this in turn is due to the socialization received by the student earlier in his reign, whether in the family, or school, or community, which contributed to the formation of his character and his capabilities (Al-Khatib, 2006).

Social problem-solving strategies refer to a set of methods used by the student to understand a problem, collect information related to it, which is based upon building and implementing solution plans. In order to solve the problem, certain strategies must be used to solve them. There is no single strategy to solve all problems, each type of problem has its own strategy, but there are common features of strategies to solve social problems, although different problems can be faced by students. However, this strategy could be taught because it helps students to find effective solutions to the problems they face (Al-Aasar, 2007).

The most prominent strategies used to solve social problems as referred to by Falloh (2014), are as follows:

1. General strategy: It is a comprehensive plan that is specific to solve the problem, including: trial and error, the organized list, simplification, and work from the end to the beginning.
2. Specific strategy: These intermediate steps are used in the search for problem solving within the framework of the use of the general plan, as a help or assistant in reaching the solution.
3. Strategy of means analysis - Goals: This strategy is to analyze the determinants of the problem in its image and the target goals and is based on the use of means and employing them to reach the goals and to obtain the appropriateness of each available means, and goals that help in reaching or achieving it.
4. The strategy of combining forward and backward: It is based on enabling the individual to solve the problem from moving or moving forward from either the data to the goal, or from the beginning to the end to reach the result, or the back direction; i.e. from the goal towards the data to build the conclusions of the solution. This strategy is to leap into the conclusion, analyze the information given or presented, and survey the specifics of the situation and its data.
5. Problem fragmentation strategy: It is used in the case of complex problems which could not be solved through the use of direct solution, and through the fragmentation of the final goal to a set of partial goals, so that achieving these goals leads to the final solution to the problem.

6. Logical reasoning strategy: This strategy is used in problems that include conditional statements and problems that include causal rules.

Deletion strategy: Through this strategy diagnosing the problem is achieved, excluding one of its components aside for a certain period, to form a clear picture of the data associated with the problem, which contributes to better understanding and realizing of the problem.

Previous Studies on Methods of Solving Social Problems

There are many studies on methods of solving social problems among students. Wang (2007) conducted a study to determine the relationship between sexual orientation and solving social problems amongst a sample of 181 students (129 females and 52 males) at a state university in Northeastern United States. The study found a statistically significant positive relationship between masculinity and solving rational problems.

A study conducted by Fields, Andrew and Baldi (2007) aimed to identify the strategies used by older and younger adults to solve interpersonal problems. The study sample consisted of 100 adults (50 older adults and 50 younger adults). The study showed that older adults focus on the problem and use more avoidance strategies than younger adults in their problem-solving methods. In general, older adults were more effective than younger adults in solving problems, especially personal problems.

Another study conducted by Dzurilla& Bell (2009) aimed to reveal the role of solving social problems as a mediator between daily stressful and adaptive events in the United States of America. The study sample consisted of 220 students from North American University. To achieve the research objectives, the researchers used measure of solving social problems. The study showed that there were statistically significant differences between the males and females on the variable of solving social problems. The findings also showed that the negative trend towards the problem of females has the greatest impact in the relationship between pressure and adaptation.

Findings

In this research paper, using the study tools, the most important methods of solving social problems used by secondary school students in Irbid province in solving the social problems facing them were identified. They are:(Positive attitude towards the problem, negative attitude towards the problem, the method of solving the problem of avoidance, the method of solving the problem of impulse, and the method of solving the rational problem). Likewise, the level of these students in solving social problems were identified. Whereby the method of solving the rational problem was ranked first, followed by a positive approach to the problem. Then method of solving the problem of impulse, and the method of negative orientation towards the problem, and finally came the method of solving the problem of avoidance. This confirms what Gardner referred to on the definition of intelligence as the ability to solve problems, and that the ability of the sample to choose methods of solving problems due to the age stage is the stage of abstract thinking where the ability to solve problems is greater, and the individual has the ability to find multiple alternatives to explain a phenomenon, and finding innovative solutions and diversity in the ways, means and strategies used to solve the problem.

This result is also attributed to Piaget who indicated that students at this stage, the stage of adolescence, move from the stage of physical operations to the stage of formational or abstract processes where the student shows the process of abstract and symbolic inference through

which he can develop and test hypotheses and can deal with all problems which he faces through the development of appropriate strategies and solutions.

This means that as the student progresses, his or her ability to solve problems in a rational and contemplative manner increases. This is due to the changes in cognitive development witnessed in this stage, they were able to carry out more complex thinking processes. According to Piaget's theory, students are now more capable of thinking and testing the hypotheses, leading to students exceeding the limits of the present to the extent of possibility. In addition, the students of this stage are characterized by the concept of reasoning. when faced with a problem, they begin to solve it by forming an overview of all the possibilities responsible for the problem, and then deduce hypotheses about the causes of the problem. He then makes assumptions about the causes of the problem, and then test them in a systematic manner to see which of these hypotheses are true in actually explaining the problem. He does not test only a new prospect, but the rank of isolating effects on other variables. It is therefore possible to say that this type of thinking intensifies and strengthens at this stage, which reflects positively on his ability to use rational problem solving.

Conclusion

This study revealed that students who have the ability to choose the appropriate social problem-solving method are more likely to master information and formulate and solve problems. They are also more likely to take care of different aspects of social and academic lives, show the desire to face challenges and acquire knowledge. These kinds of students use strategies that are more profound and capable of moving them to advanced levels of understanding, and finally to a better level of ability to solve various problems they face.

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