

EMOTIONAL ATTENTION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The Objectives of the present study. The present study aims to identify:

1. The degree of emotional attention among the students of the university of Wassit.

2. Statistical differences in emotional attention among university students according to gender and major.

The Methodology. The present study has adopted a descriptive approach.

Community and model. The community of the present study consists of students from the university of Wassit for the academic year (2016/2017), morning studies, males and females, scientific and humanities.

The tools. The researcher has used the following tool after confirming its validity for measurement through the calculation of its validity and stability using the appropriate methods and procedures:

Measuring emotional attention. The researcher has built a tool consisting of two main dimensions to measure emotional attention:

Attention to emotions: The scale includes (17) items.

Visual emotional attention: The scale is of two lists.

Statistical methods: The researcher has used the statistical program (Spss) in the analysis of the results of the present study. The researcher has adopted the statistical tests that fit with the objectives of the present study: descriptive statistics, the test of one sample, Kay square test, and analysis of binary contrast without.

The results: The results of statistical analysis using the statistical program (Spss) have resulted in the following results:

•Students of the university of Wassit have the ability to pay attention to their feelings significantly, while they have a low degree of visual emotional attention.

•There have been no statistically significant differences in the degree of attention to feelings that can be attributed to the gender variable, while the results indicate that there are statistically significant differences in the degree of emotional and visual attention due to the gender variable for female students.

CHAPTER ONE: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM.

In the past few years, studies have focused on emotions, their relation to the mental aspects, and their integration with the cognitive aspects, (Yusuf, 2009: 94). Contemporary developments in cognitive psychology emphasize the existence of fundamental transformations in studying emotional aspects. Theories call for studying the positive side of emotions, employing them in the treatment of many issues that concern the individual in

the family and society, and using them positively in dealing with problems in the field of school, education, and work, (Khadr, 2009: 94). The problem of the present study is determined by contemporary theoretical trends that highlight the variables of processing emotional information due to the lack of studies that reveal the nature of these variables and the relationship with them. Among these trends is the study of the wide relations among these variables and within the framework of comprehensive treatment. The present study seeks to study the emotional variables that operate

within the framework of various cognitive processes. The researcher tries, through addressing the problem of the present study, to identify emotional attention among the university students.

The value of the present study.

Emotions influence the ability of individuals to think, move toward their goals, and determine the level of their abilities to use their energy. By determining the individual's level of energy, he/she determines which method he/she can adopt in his/her life, and that enthusiasm drives him/her forward to achieve goals. People who can control their emotions and postpone their wishes can be more superior and more efficient than others as they can express their ideas well, think logically, and focus on what they plan and perform. So, it can be said that the role of emotional attention or emotional intelligence is great in the possibility of using minds, weakly or strongly, (Golman, 2000: 119-123). Thus, personal emotional aspects play a central role in the development of cognitive aspects and contribute to determining the factors that lead to the success or failure of a person, (Weiner, 1985: 54). Azard (2011) emphasizes the role of emotional cognitive processes through cultural variation in emotional responses among individuals within one society or among different communities. Emotional responses are due to logical rules and personal beliefs. The degree of integration depends in this overlap on the differences in the individuals personal social, economic levels, and cultural status in their communities, (Izard, 2011: 265)

The aims of the present study.

The present study aims at:

1. Identifying the degree of emotional attention among the students of the university of Wassit.
2. Identifying the statistically significant differences in the emotional attention of university students depending on gender and major.

The limits of the present study.

The present study is limited to the students of the morning study in the faculties of the university of

Wassit for (Humanities) for the academic year (2016-2017).

Terminology:

1. Emotional attention is defined by

Salovy et al. (1995): as the tendency of the individual to observe, think about his/her feelings, evaluate, and test his/her emotional states (Salovey et al., 1995:183).

Emotional attention is defined by Zadeh et al. (2007) as the conscious individuals focus on their feelings observed in different life situations. In this process, the individual focuses on a particular emotional entrance and ignores others in accordance with the requirements of the situation, (Zadeh et al., 2007: 123).

The researcher defines it procedurally as the total degree obtained by the student through his/her responses to the parameters of attention to emotional and visual feelings.

CHAPTER TWO :THE NATURE OF THE CONCEPT OF EMOTIONAL ATTENTION

The concept of emotional attention is one of the ambiguous concepts whose overlapping roots between cognitive processes, mechanisms of the nervous system, and cerebral cortex. It is the product of the relationship between the efficiency of cognitive processes and the emotional state of the individual. It is a state of preparation for awareness, understanding, and distinction of the emotional stimuli to the right perception of him/herself and what is around. Thus, this concept represents the amount of the various processes which the individual does to get to the first level of consciousness, (Russell & Barchard, 2002: 111). (Birokol and Ackstremaria (2008) define emotional attention as a tendency of the individual for reflecting, observing, and thinking about his/her emotions, evaluating, testing his/her emotional status, and strengthening focus on the emotional experience. Individuals who are emotionally attentive are continuously testing their emotional states and assessing the development of these cases in order to better understand their emotional states, as it is not useful for these emotionally attentive individuals not to follow the attention which reveals a potential that enables them distinguish and identify reasons, motives, and consequences of that attention, (Berrocal, & Extrema, 2000: 37).

The researcher notices that there are various definitions of emotional attention by using different but meaningful words. Wagner (2016) for example, defines emotional attention as the degree of individuals' attention to their feelings, (Wagner, 2016: 8). Yanmen (2015) defines it as the individual's ability to observe and think about his/her feelings, (Eunmann, 2015:14). EradiliaEtal (2014) indicate that emotional attention represents the individual's ability to understand his/her temperament and his/her mental alertness towards the emotions he/she feels. Individuals may feel sad, happy, or angry. The effectiveness of the attention of individuals beyond their temperament shows their willingness to think about their mood And not being controlled by their misunderstanding of these events and emotions, (Aradilla, et al, 2014: 956).

Mitchell and Blair (2009) define emotional attention as an increase in the emotional representation during the temporal cortex through nerve signals coming from the amygdala. It is a bias in the processing of attention-based information (Blair & Mitchel, 2009: 543). Kamelossi (2014) indicates that emotional attention is an advanced sensory processing of emotional stimuli. This process occurs at least when there are two functional properties of brain activity, respectively:

- 1.The abundance of neurotransmitters of emotional stimuli is continuously increasing in several regions during sensory pathways, including specific and non- specific areas: sensory cortex).
- 2.The period of time that emotion affects (Komlósi, 2014, 22).

Therefore, emotional attention is considered by many researchers as a variable that predicts many indicators, functions, and characteristics. Munzini et al. (2015) consider it as an important predictor of trust in leadership and management of individuals (Monzani et al., 2015: 9). Emotional attention is a predictive indicator of tension and that there is a relationship between emotional attention and anxiety of students, especially during testing of achievements, (Losada and Pena, 2017: 1). Johnson (2009) shows that individuals who have weak control over their emotional attention may suffer many difficulties in the transition from an emotional state and return back to the previous stable neutral emotional state, (Johnson, 2009, 682).

The relationship between attention and emotion.

Attention and emotion processes are key functions of the human brain. The process of attention allows individuals to focus on the elements which are relevant to their environment. Thus, they provide a control mechanism for the allocation of any limited sources of treatment. On the other hand, emotions play an important role in helping individuals to assess what is around them, their environment, emotional energy, motivate them to respond suitably and appropriately to emotional stimuli, (Barriga, 2012: 61). Thus, attention can be defined as aselective activity that characterizes the daily mental life as it is limited to the mind in one element etc. It is a state of sensory adaptation that results from extreme levels of concentration, or as a result of a kind of adaptation in the nervous system of the organism, making it easy for it to respond to a stimulant or a special stimulant or to a particular situation. Attention can be measured through the span capacity (Awad, 2011, 184).

Several researches and studies have confirmed the relationship between emotions and attention. These studies have indicated the effect of the emotional state on the selection of stimuli and the degree of concentration of attention of individuals. They have showed that emotional stimuli are always the fastest responses and treatments in individuals and attract their attention more and faster than those stimuli which are neutral; non-emotional. The Clear Effects of Emotions on Behavioral Responses motivated researchers in the field of emotional attention, who study the relationship between emotional attentiveness in general, to suggest that there is a neural network in the human nervous system Responsible for the fact that emotions overlap with attention, (Dickert, &Slovic, 2008, 298).

Characteristics of Emotional Attention.

- 1.Emotional attention is an early cognitive process because it falls between the feelings of raw or primary stimuli and the status of cognition that is interested in giving these stimuli different interpretations and meanings.
- 2.Listening is one of the characteristics of emotional attention because it is the first step in the process of organizing and arranging information.

3.Selectivity; Individuals cannot be aware of all variant stimuli at once but they select from these stimuli as appropriate and compatible with their needs and mental and psychological state.

4.Concentrating; It is the general direction of the individual's attention to the signals or certain sensory stimuli and neglect of other signals. It is always purposeful and Focal. It may be focused on one of the types of stimuli that are located in the field across everything happening around.

5.Tracking; It refers to the continuous attention which is uninterrupted for a particular stimuli, the focus on the sequence of ideas over a period of time, and it is a complex level where there is an ability to think of one or more ideas or two or more types of stimulants simultaneously and sequentially without Confusion or loss of one of them, (Nobre, 2014, 23-24?).

CHAPTER THREE :THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

The present study has adopted the descriptive approach which is based on monitoring what exists and analyzing it. It is the most appropriate approach for the nature of the present study and its objectives. It is based on describing the relationships and influences that exist among phenomena, analyzing them, and interpreting them. It also helps to provide a future image in light of the Current indicators, (van Dalin, 1985: 312).

The research community.

The community of the present study consists of students from the University of Wassit for the academic year (2016/2017), morning studies, males and females, scientific and humanities; (13686) students distributed among (15) faculties, (7) of which are colleges with scientific disciplines with total number of (3318) students making 24% of the research community; 1516 male students and 1801 female students. The other (8) are faculties with humanitarian disciplines with total number of (10,368 students) making (76%) of the research community; (5216) male students and (5152)female students.

The sample of the present study.

The sample of the present study has been selected in a stratified random sampling method, which is used in a non-homogeneous manner and can be divided into separate strata according to the variables of the study. Each unit is considered as one unit on the basis of major (human or scientific). The sample of the present study has consisted of (400) male and female students distributed among the faculties of the university of Wassit, morning studies, for the academic year (2016 2017). The classification of gender and major variables according to their percentages in the original community of the present study is 200 male students and 200 female students; , (300) students from the humanitarian disciplines and (100) students from scientific disciplines.

The tools of the present study.

The purpose of the tool is to determine the characteristic to be measured (Anastasi, 1976: 15). In order to achieve the objectives of the present study, the researcher has built the emotional attention scale and prepared it according to the following steps:

Measuring emotional attention. The researcher has surveyed the literature and theoretical frameworks that dealt with the concept of emotional attention to determine the characteristics of this concept, which may help in the formulation of the items of the scale to be identical with foreign and Arab standards which are close to the concept. Due to the modernity of the concept and the scarcity of direct studies, the Available scales are few; some of which; Attention to Emotions. It is one of the sub-metrics in the meta-mood scale, which was prepared by Salovi et al. (1995).

Emotion stroop task.

This mission is based on the same cognitive mission that emerged in 1935, but the mechanism in the emotional Stroop task is to measure attention to the emotional content of emotion-related words compared to neutral words.

Selective emotional task.

This was prepared by Knight et al. In 2007 (Knight, et al., 2007: 705 – 714).

Modified Eriksen Flanker Task (1974).

The task is to display a set of images showing a variety of emotions. The present study could not obtain the task, but it has been found in Samanez et al. (2009: 519-529). Having examined the Measures that the researcher could see wholly or partly, the researcher has concluded the following:

- There is no agreement on the tasks of emotional attention, but attempts to measure the concept, which cannot cover the concept fully. While, it is acknowledged that there is a scarcity in the attempts due to the modernity of the concept of emotional attention in psychological studies.

- Some practitioners of emotional measures have attempted to mimic the tasks of measuring cognitive attention, although the emotional nature differs from the cognitive nature of the attention process, such as the strobe task, the selective emotional attention task, and the modified side function.

- Some attempts have focused on one dimension of emotional attention, such as the sub-metric of the mood-measuring scale of attention-taking, and the exclusion of dimensions such as selective and auditory attention.

Therefore, the researcher has sought to build a tool for the present study, taking advantage from previous attempts in measuring emotional attention. The present study agrees with Badawi, (2011). Although the researcher is familiar with the study of Badawi, he could not obtain a copy of the scale despite the efforts. Therefore, the researcher has built the tools according to the following steps: :

Determining the concept of emotional attention. The researcher has tried to define a specific theoretical framework for the concept of emotional attention, but he could not find a theoretical framework related to a particular view or model theory as writings and contributions are within the framework of emotions and cognitive processes, including attention. The researcher

has adopted a theoretical definition of the concept of emotional attention; The individual is conscious of his/her feelings and observations in different life situations. In this process, the individual tries to select certain emotional inputs and ignore other stimuli according to the demands of everyday situations in life, "(Zadeh et al., 2007).

- Determining dimensions of the scale of emotional attention.

Having studied the previous studies, the researcher has identified two particular main dimensions: attention to emotions and emotional visual attention. The researcher has developed a definition of each component as follows:

- 1.The first component: attention to emotions: It includes awareness and control of the individual's feelings, experiences, internal feelings in different emotional situations such as happiness, anger, anxiety, arousal, and ability to determine feelings to improve mood, evaluate, test special emotional cases, and focus on emotional experience to reach a better understanding of feelings and emotions.

- 2.The second component: emotional visual attention: It refers to the ability of the individual to recognize emotions and read through attention to words with emotional significance or emotions on the faces such as joy, surprise, narrowness, and recognition of nonverbal expressions in face; movement of head, eye, limbs, body, and the intensity of emotional arousal For stimulants.

- Formulating Scale Items:

Having defined emotional attention theoretically, having defined the dimensions of the scale, and having determined general definitions which have been adopted in the collection and preparation of the items of each of these dimensions to be consistent with the definition of the dimension taking into account the nature And the characteristics of the community to which the standard will be applied, and having reviewed the literature and theoretical frameworks of the concept of emotional attention, the researcher has formulated the items according to the following dimensions:

1.The first dimension: Attention to feelings: (17) items have been formulated in the form of statements that reflect the individual's awareness and control of his/her feelings.

2.The second dimension: the emotional visual attention: The researcher has prepared the items of this dimension according to the pattern of pairing or matching, as the list (A) represents description of emotions, while the list (B) (contains pictures of individuals in the case of different emotions. The interviewed person is asked to pair the picture of the individual with the word that fits the emotion. The researcher has deliberately increased the number of the items in list (a); (14) to reduce the impact of the list Guessing.

Alternatives of Response: The researcher has adopted five answer alternatives in the first scale before each item: (applies to me always, applies to me often, applies to me sometimes, applies rarely, never applies to me), and these alternatives were given grades (5, (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) for the negative items, while the response in the second scale was given one degree if the answer is correct and 0 if the answer is wrong.

▪The logical analysis of the scales of emotional attention scale: The researcher seeks to verify the analysis of the items logically. To ascertain the extent of the apparent representation of the characteristic of the measured property, the scale has been presented to a group of arbitrators who are specialized in educational and psychological sciences (Appendix 1). They have been asked to express their views concerning the validity of the items to measure what they are intended to measure, the validity of alternatives, and the distribution of items on the scale areas. The arbitrators have supported the validity of the items and alternatives adopted for the sample of the present study. The wording of some items in the first scale has been modified to be more suitable for expressing the emotion.

▪Clarification of instructions and understanding of items: To verify the extent to which the target sample understand the standard instructions, the clarity of its vertebrates, and the calculation of the time required to answer the scale, the researcher has applied the scale to the same sample on which the emotional creativity scale

(40) was applied. The sample have told the researcher that the instructions and the items of the scale are clear, the answer method is easy, according to the time required for the answer, which ranges between 5-15 minutes with an average capacity of 17 minutes.

▪Statistical analysis of the items of emotional attention scale: To obtain the appropriate items with good psychometric characteristics, the researcher has applied measuring the statistical analysis of the sample which consists of 400 students. The distinctive force and internal consistency of the emotional attention scale have been calculated as follows:

1.The distinctive force of the items of the first scale (attention to emotions): The researcher has used the T-test for two independent samples to calculate the difference between the upper and lower groups of each of the first scale items. All T values calculated for the scale items have been greater than the T-) At a degree of freedom of (214), at a level of significance (0,05) and Table (7.(

2.The distinctive force and the difficulty factor of the second scale (visual emotional attention): Since the value of the alternatives of answering the items of the second scale is (0, 1) the researcher has used the equation of the coefficient of distinctiveness using the difference in the number of correct answers between the lower and upper groups, (0,40). The difficulty equation has been used. The difficulty coefficients have been greater than 0.20 and less than (0.8). Thus, the visual emotional attention scale items have been distinctive and acceptable according to the Ebel standard (Eble, 1972: 2)

▪Ratification of the emotional attention scale items: The researcher has calculated the relation of the degree of the item to the total degree of the first and second scales as follows:

The researcher has used Pearson's correlation coefficient to calculate the correlation between the score of the first scale and the total score of the first scale. The researcher has used the critical value of the Pearson's correlation coefficient which has shown that all correlation coefficients are statistically significant at the level of significance (0. , 05).

3. The relationship between the score of the first scale with the total degree of the scale of emotional visual attention: The researcher has used the Point Biserial's correlation coefficient to calculate the correlation between the degree of each item of the scale and the total score of the second scale. The researcher has used the critical value of the Point Biserial's correlation coefficient which has shown that all correlation coefficients are statistically significant at the level of significance (0,05).

The Psychometric Characteristics of the Scale of Emotional Attention: The researcher has investigated the two most important characteristics that must be met in the psychological criteria: honesty and persistence.

1. Verifying the Scale: The researcher has achieved two kinds of honesty:

1. Validity: The validity of the emotional attention scale has been confirmed by presenting it to a group of arbitrators who are specialized in educational and psychological sciences. The committee have supported the validity of the items in measuring what is intended to be measured. There have been modifications in light of the observations of the committee.

2. Construction Validation: The researcher has verified the validity of building the emotional attention scale through the following procedures:

- The distinctive force of the sub-scales using the T-test in the attention-to-emotion scale. The researcher has used the equation of distinction with the items of the emotional-visual attention scale

- Calculating the internal consistency of the two scales using the Pearson correlation coefficient to find the relation between the score of each item in the overall degree of the emotion-sensitivity scale. The relationship has been calculated using the Point Biserial correlation coefficient in the visual-emotional attention scale.

Scale Reliability: The researcher has checked the stability of the scale in two ways for each scale:

-1 The first scale (attention to feelings):

- Method: The researcher has used the Pearson correlation coefficient to calculate the correlation between the sample scores in the first and second applications with a time interval of 14 days and the value of this method has been 0.84.

- Alpha Kronbach: The researcher has also used the equation Alpha Kronbach. The researcher has reached the coefficient of stability in this way (0.79).

2. The second scale: (emotional visual attention):

- The correlation coefficient of the stability of the sample has been calculated for the individual and marital scores. It has reached (0.64). Having corrected the correlation coefficient using the Spearman Brown equation, the researcher has found out that the stability factor (0.78) is the acceptable stability factor.

- Coder-Richardson 20: This equation is used with the tests and measurements in which the answer is zero (1), and the **stability** coefficient value is 0.81, which is an acceptable stability coefficient (Esawi, 1111: 11).

CHAPTER FOUR.

Results of the first objective: To identify the degree of emotional attention of the students of the University of Wassit and to achieve the first objective, the researcher has applied the parameters of emotional attention in its final form to the members of the research sample of (400) students at the University of Wassit. The arithmetic average in the first scale; attention to feelings has been calculated. its theoretical value is (63.84) with a standard regression of (5.080) and with a theoretical average of (51). To ascertain the significance of the differences between the two averages For the sample and the theoretical averages of the first and second scales, the researcher has used the T-test for one sample. The calculated T value is respectively: (50,537), (14,618). As compared to the table T value of (1.96 399), it is clear that the two calculated values are higher than the tabular T values.

The results show that the students of the University of Wassit have the ability to pay attention to their feelings to a large extent. The researcher finds this result logical and consistent with the theoretical framework. The

researcher believes that the effectiveness of senses and central nervous system of students affect the capacity and effectiveness of the process of emotional attention. University students are at the age of young people and they possess an acceptable level of sensory and nervous maturity. The theoretical framework indicates that the level of students' intelligence, cognitive structure, and the efficiency of their information processing system affect their emotional attention, ability, and effectiveness due to their high level of mental alertness. (Macaluso, 2012: 5). The results reveal a low degree of visual emotional attention. This may be due to the nature of the measurement of this variable, which is based on two alternatives in correcting the answer (zero, one) and the adoption of the pairing formula, which includes a large number of words, images, and types of items that students are not familiar with or the students' weakness in reading faces.

The second objective is to identify the differences of statistical significance in the emotional attention of university students according to gender and major.

To achieve this objective, the computational computations and the standard regressions of the first scale scores have been calculated: attention to emotions and the significance of differences in the degrees of conscientiousness according to the gender variable and major. The two way analysis of variance:

1.The major variable: The value of the calculated percentage of the major variable in the first and second indices are respectively: (10,897), (9,067), both of which are greater than the value of the periodic table rate of (3.84) 396) and the level of significance (0,05), which indicates the existence of differences of statistical significance in the degrees of emotional attention scales according to the variable of major and for the benefit of students of scientific disciplines in the first and second scales. The researcher attributes this result to the nature of their specialties that encourage them for careful which makes them more attentive to emotional stimuli and attitudes. Students of Scientific disciplines may also be more stable in emotional situations because of dealing with scientific facts on a continuous basis, which makes them quieter in emotional situations and

therefore more attentive to feelings and emotional expressions on faces.

2.Interaction between gender and major: The value of the calculated numerical ratio of the interaction between gender and major variables in the first and second emotional attention scales are respectively: (3,088), (11,492). comparing it with the numerical value of the scale of (3.84) (0.05) indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in the first scale; Attention to feelings can be due to the interaction between the gender and major variables. The results indicate that there are statistically significant differences. The degree of emotional and visual attention is due to the interaction between gender and major variables. To identify the differences between groups, The researcher has used Sheviah test for future comparisons.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In light of the results, the researcher presents the following suggestions:

1.It is necessary to pay attention to the emotional aspects of students, whether in curricula or activities, or in training or educational programs.

2.Utilizing the scale of emotional attention in conducting research, studies, classification, or acceptance in tasks that require emotional attention.

SUGGESTIONS:

In light of the results, the researcher presents the following suggestions:

1.Conducting a study that deals with the relationship between emotional attention and some emotional variables such as: emotional efficiency, emotional thinking, and emotional regulation.

2.Conducting a study that deals with the relationship between emotional attention and some cognitive variables such as: knowledge, active memory, and verbal fluency.

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