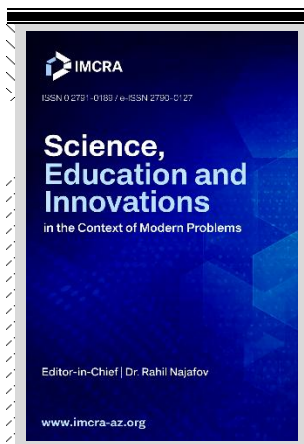



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| | <p>RESEARCH ARTICLE </p> |
| | <h2 style="text-align: center;">Avoidant Personality Disorder and Its Relationship with Mindfulness among Schooled Adolescents</h2> |
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| <p>Keywords</p> | <p>Avoidant Personality Disorder, mindfulness, schooled adolescent.</p> |
| <p>Abstract This study aimed to investigate the relationship between Avoidant Personality Disorder and mindfulness among schooled adolescents. In this study, mindfulness was conceptualized as a set of skills, namely: observation, description, participation, one-mindfulness, non-judgment, and effectiveness. The descriptive method was adopted, as it was considered appropriate for achieving the study's objectives, utilizing two instruments: a Mindfulness Scale and an Avoidant Personality Disorder Scale. Both tools were developed by the researchers to suit the targeted population of schooled adolescents. The study sample comprised 400 male and female students enrolled in school, specifically third- and fourth-year middle school students selected from two middle schools in the province of Tipaza. The findings indicated a statistically significant relationship between the scores obtained on the Avoidant Personality Disorder Scale and the scores on the Mindfulness Scale across five of its six dimensions. However, the observation dimension did not demonstrate a significant association with Avoidant Personality Disorder according to the results.</p> | |
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Introduction:

An individual is raised within the family environment, which assumes responsibility, whether consciously or unconsciously, for upbringing and the development of social skills. Like all children, the individual transitions through successive developmental stages, leaving behind the characteristics of childhood while encountering new experiences at

every step. With the onset of puberty, the child enters adolescence, a phase marked by various challenges encountered across multiple domains, particularly in academic life.

Since the school constitutes part of the broader social system, which incorporates both normative and maladaptive patterns, it inevitably includes individuals who exhibit behavioral disorders or symptoms indicative of such disturbances in one form or another. These patterns may be identified in schooled adolescents. The present study focuses specifically on Avoidant Personality Disorder within this population, or at least on individuals exhibiting its symptoms, especially considering that the characteristics of Avoidant Personality Disorder are frequently first observed during early adolescence.

In view of the presence of such symptoms in educational settings, and taking into account the commonly observed traits among affected students, such as pronounced sensitivity in group contexts, a tendency to form negative self-evaluations, and reluctance to engage in academic activities involving peers, this study was undertaken to explore the relationship between this disorder and mindfulness, a construct that encompasses several sub-skills which appear to be lacking among these adolescents.

1- Research Problem:

An individual's personality consists of an interaction between multiple elements, cognitive, physiological, behavioral, and emotional, arising from the combined influence of heredity and environment (Marc, 2003, p.1). Consequently, personality represents the totality of behaviors, beliefs, and emotions that differentiate one person from another, while also allowing for similarities with certain individuals. Based on this premise, the boundaries that define personality also shape the ways in which individuals interact with the world, through their sensitivities, fears, pursuit of affection, and even their cognitive and creative inclinations.

The same applies to Avoidant Personality Disorder, which reflects a specific manner of engaging with the external environment, characterized by a consistent tendency to avoid attention and evaluation by others. As a disorder representing a disruption in interpersonal dynamics, this personality pattern is marked by avoidance of social contact to such a degree that it may lead to the development of atypical behaviors and attitudes that hinder social integration (Margot, 2014, p.3).

In light of this, emphasis is placed on the necessity of addressing this particular group, specifically adolescents, who are navigating a sensitive transitional stage in the journey toward adulthood. Given that many adolescents undergo this phase while immersed in academic life, particular attention was directed toward schooled adolescents, as they may face difficulties related to social integration due to a range of contributing factors. It is clear that school counselors will frequently encounter such individuals during the course of their professional responsibilities, particularly since avoidant behaviors are often readily identifiable within the surrounding environment, sometimes as early as the initial days of schooling. Millon (1987) pointed out that such individuals tend to seize the first available opportunity to withdraw from the group (Fawzi & Qaoud, 2004).

The risk inherent in this pattern lies in the individual's withdrawal from collective academic activities, whether within the classroom or beyond, often under pretexts that lack substantial basis, such as citing fatigue or disinterest in the subject matter that involves interaction with others. It is particularly notable that these individuals frequently display an insufficiency in social skills that would otherwise enable them to avoid harsh self-evaluations and negative perceptions of others, engage effectively in group tasks, articulate and explain ideas confidently before peers, focus on the constructive aspects of past experiences, and utilize them in the future.

These skills, as outlined, trace their origins to the work of American psychologist Marsha Linehan, beginning in the 1970s (Bourque et al., 2013, p.338). She integrated them into her Dialectical Behavior Therapy, which is classified within the third wave of cognitive-behavioral approaches (Rollet, 2013, p.173). These competencies were unified under a broader conceptual framework that she termed "mindfulness," a construct informed by extensive clinical observations throughout her work with individuals diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. Over time, the application of these skills extended beyond clinical contexts and into broader non-clinical populations.

The notion of mindfulness has since undergone considerable development across the disciplines of psychology, education, and medicine. A substantial body of research has demonstrated the efficacy of mindfulness training in alleviating a range of psychological difficulties, including stress and anxiety, while promoting improved mental health (Al-Khatatneh, 2019). This body of evidence led the researchers to inquire whether a relationship might exist between mindfulness and Avoidant Personality Disorder among schooled adolescents. The principal aim is to offer readers a clearly defined conceptual framework concerning this phenomenon, which has been widely studied in relation to mindfulness skills and their associations with various psychological constructs, ranging from indicators of psychological well-being to diverse psychological disorders.

Accordingly, the following research questions were proposed:

- Is there a relationship between Avoidant Personality Disorder and mindfulness among schooled adolescents?
- Is there a relationship between the total score on the Avoidant Personality Disorder Scale and the dimensions of the Mindfulness Scale among schooled adolescents?

2- Research Hypotheses:

- There is a relationship between Avoidant Personality Disorder and mindfulness among schooled adolescents.
- There is a relationship between the total score on the Avoidant Personality Disorder Scale and the dimensions of the Mindfulness Scale among schooled adolescents.

3- Study Objectives:

The objectives of the study can be summarized as follows:

- To identify the relationship between Avoidant Personality Disorder and mindfulness.
- To examine the relationship between the total score of the Avoidant Personality Disorder Scale and the dimensions of mindfulness.

4- Study Significance:

The significance of the present study arises from the relevance of its subject matter. Although some may question the justification for examining the relationship between these two variables, empirical reality repeatedly reveals connections that are not always immediately discernible. In the school environment, Avoidant Personality Disorder may, at times, be perceived by non-specialists as merely a benign behavioral expression, interpreted as compliance or rule adherence. As a result, it does not receive the same degree of attention as behaviors such as hyperactivity or aggression, despite the presence of genuine psychological distress that warrants intervention.

Mindfulness, as a skill, holds equivalent importance for many individuals in daily functioning, as it fosters greater psychological flexibility in managing everyday experiences. It constitutes a pivotal variable with the capacity to positively reshape behavioral tendencies while mitigating maladaptive patterns. Additionally, the significance of the current study lies in its potential to facilitate the design of guidance programs that may aid school counselors in addressing symptoms associated with this disorder by enhancing mindfulness among affected adolescents. Identifying moderating variables that influence specific psychological phenomena represents a core element of the scientific process and supports both diagnostic accuracy and effective therapeutic intervention.

5- Conceptual Definitions:

5-1 Avoidant Personality Disorder:

A- Theoretical definition:

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (2013) defines Avoidant Personality Disorder as “a disorder characterized by social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and negative self-evaluation, accompanied by persistent avoidance of interpersonal interactions due to fears of ridicule, disinterest, criticism, or rejection. The individual experiences a pervasive sense of inferiority and refrains from engaging in social or occupational activities for fear of embarrassment” (Ghaleb, Hadi Qadouri, 2016).

B- Operational definition:

It refers to the score obtained by the group of schooled adolescents on the Avoidant Personality Scale developed by the researcher, whose theoretical foundation is derived from (DSM5, 2013). The scale comprises seven dimensions, each represented by a specific set of items, totaling 33 items distributed as follows: fear of criticism (items 1 to 5); seeking reassurance of others' affection (items 6 to 9); fear of embarrassment or appearing foolish (items 10 to 14); fear of blame (items 15 to 19); feelings of failing to meet required standards (items 20 to 24); feelings of inferiority in comparison with others (items 25 to 28); and fear of being a burden to others (items 29 to 33).

5-2 Mindfulness:

A- Theoretical definition:

It refers to a state of awareness in which the individual directs full attention and consciousness to the present moment, refraining from judging thoughts, perceptions, and behaviors, while accepting reality as it is (Linehan, 2015).

B- Operational definition:

It refers to the score obtained by schooled adolescents on the Mindfulness Scale developed by the researchers, grounded in the theoretical framework of Dialectical Behavior Therapy proposed by Marsha Linehan. The scale encompasses six skills, each representing a distinct dimension, and each dimension includes a specific set of items: observation (items 1 to 6); description (items 7 to 12); participation (items 13 to 17); one-mindfulness (items 18 to 22); non-judgment (items 23 to 27); and effectiveness (items 28 to 31). The total number of items is 31.

5-3 Schooled Adolescent:

This term refers to students aged between 14 and 17 years who are included in the present study and enrolled in the third and fourth years of middle school.

6- Previous Studies:

6-1 Studies Addressing Avoidant Personality Disorder Among Schooled Individuals:

- **Study by Mohamed Fawzi and Mohamed Qaoud (2004):**

This study aimed to examine the relationship between Avoidant Personality Disorder and personal space among a sample of university students. The initial sample consisted of (240) university students who were administered the Avoidant Personality Scale and the Personal Space Scale. The findings revealed a correlational relationship between the two variables.

- **Study by Ghaleb and Hadi Qadouri (2016):**

This study explored the level of Avoidant Personality Disorder among preparatory stage students and sought to determine the prevalence of the disorder within this population. The researchers developed a scale to measure Avoidant Personality Disorder and administered it to a sample of 100 male and female students, in addition to applying a specific Avoidant Personality Scale designed for preparatory stage students. The results indicated that (80%) of the participants' responses reflected the presence of symptoms associated with Avoidant Personality Disorder.

- **Study by Nassar et al. (2020):**

This study aimed to determine the nature of the relationship between Avoidant Personality Disorder and self-compassion among secondary school students, as well as to explore gender differences in the occurrence of Avoidant Personality Disorder. The research sample consisted of 100 male and female students from the first and second years of secondary school. The researchers employed the Self-Compassion Scale and the Avoidant Personality Disorder Scale. The results indicated a negative correlational relationship between self-compassion and Avoidant Personality Disorder. In terms of gender differences, statistically significant differences were found between male and female participants regarding Avoidant Personality Disorder, with higher levels observed among female students.

6-2 Studies Addressing Mindfulness and Its Relationship with Avoidant Personality:

The researchers highlight the limited number of existing studies on this subject, based on their review of relevant literature. Abdel Karim Al-Mulla, in his study on the relationship between Avoidant Personality Disorder and mindfulness among a sample of divorced women, referenced several relevant studies, which are presented below:

- **Study by Kim, M. et al. (2013):**

This study sought to investigate mindfulness and its relationship with difficulties in emotional regulation among women diagnosed with Avoidant Personality Disorder. The results revealed a correlational relationship between mindfulness and emotional regulation difficulties in this population.

- **Study by Elices et al. (2016):**

This research aimed to assess the effectiveness of mindfulness training in reducing symptoms of Avoidant Personality Disorder and in enhancing mindfulness-related capacities. The sample comprised 64 participants. The findings confirmed that mindfulness training was effective in mitigating the symptoms of Avoidant Personality Disorder.

- **Study by Abdel Karim Al-Mulla (2019):**

This study examined the effectiveness of mindfulness training, framed within a dialectical behavioral approach, in improving life orientation and reducing symptoms of Avoidant Personality Disorder among a sample of divorced women. The sample included women displaying characteristics of avoidant personality traits. The study concluded that mindfulness training was effective in decreasing the symptoms of Avoidant Personality Disorder among the participants.

Fieldwork Component of the Study:

1- Methodology:

The descriptive correlational method was adopted for the purposes of this study. This method is intended to describe and analyze phenomena and was deemed appropriate for the current research, which aims to characterize the identified phenomenon and assess the relationship between the two variables under investigation. The descriptive correlational method is among the most commonly employed approaches in social science research, particularly in psychological and educational fields. It facilitates a systematic presentation and analysis of data, ultimately supporting interpretations that can be generalized and applied in practice, including in decision-making contexts.

2- Study Population:

The study population consisted of schooled adolescents aged between 14 and 17 years residing in the municipality of Sidi Rached, located in the province of Tipaza.

3- Study Sample:

Data were gathered from a sample of 400 male and female schooled adolescents aged between 14 and 17 years, all of whom were enrolled in the third and fourth years of middle school. Participants were selected from Douaissi Abdelkader Middle School and Lahoul Abdelkader Middle School, both situated in Tipaza.

4- Study Boundaries:

• **Temporal Scope:**

The timeframe for this study corresponded to the 2020/2021 academic year, specifically during the second term (February) of the school year.

• **Spatial Scope:**

The study was conducted at Douaïssi Abdelkader Middle School and Lahoul Abdelkader Middle School in the province of Tipaza.

5- Study Instruments:

In conducting their study, the researchers employed the following instruments:

5-1 Avoidant Personality Disorder Scale:

Due to the lack of an existing tool suitable for measuring Avoidant Personality Disorder among the study population, the researchers developed a specific scale tailored for schooled adolescents. The construction of this scale was based on the DSM-5 definition and includes 33 items distributed across seven dimensions as follows:

- Feelings of fear of criticism or rejection in social situations – items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5).
- Excessive need for reassurance of love and affection – items (6, 7, 8, 9).
- Feelings of embarrassment when acting in front of others – items (10, 11, 12, 13).
- Feelings of anxiety and apprehension due to fear of blame, criticism, or rejection in social contexts – items (14, 15, 16, 17, 18).
- Avoidance of new interpersonal relationships due to feelings of inferiority – items (19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25).
- Feelings of helplessness and lack of self-confidence in comparison with others – items (26, 27, 28, 29).
- Avoidance of responsibility and reluctance to take initiative due to fear of being a burden or nuisance to others – items (30, 31, 32, 33).

• **Scoring Procedure:**

Participants were asked to read each item and mark the degree to which it applied to them by placing a (x) in the corresponding box for one of the following three response options:

Always = 3 points

Sometimes = 2 points

Rarely = 1 point

Accordingly, total scores on the scale range from 33 to 99 points.

• **Verification of the Psychometric Properties of the Scale:**

A- Validity:

Validity refers to the extent to which a data collection instrument accurately measures the intended construct (Ashoui, 2022).

• **Content Validity:**

Content validity relates to the operational definition formulated by the researcher, ensuring that the instrument’s content effectively reflects the construct it aims to measure (Ashoui, 2022). To ensure content validity, the scale was submitted to a panel of six expert judges holding doctoral degrees in psychological counseling, mental health, and educational sciences, as documented in the appendix. Based on the experts’ feedback, necessary modifications were made to the items, after which the scale was revised, finalized, and printed in its final form. The validated versions of both scales were then administered to a sample of 400 male and female schooled adolescents in the third and fourth years of middle school.

• **Internal Consistency Validity:**

Internal consistency validity was assessed by calculating the correlation between the sub-dimensions and the overall score of the scale. Additionally, correlations were computed between each individual item and the corresponding dimension, as well as between each item and the total score. All dimensions demonstrated statistically significant correlations with the total scale score (see Appendix No. 01).

B- Reliability Estimation:

The reliability of the scale was evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. The findings are presented in Table No. (01):

| Scale | Number of Items | Sample Size | Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| Avoidant Personality Disorder Scale | 33 | 400 | 0.76 |

As shown in the table, the reliability level was estimated at 0.76, which is considered acceptable for research purposes.

5-2 Mindfulness Scale:

Given the lack of a measurement instrument appropriate for assessing mindfulness in schooled adolescents (as only adult-oriented mindfulness scales were available), the researchers developed a mindfulness scale specifically designed for this

age group. The scale was based on the adult Mindfulness Scale created at the University of Kentucky, United States, which evaluates mindfulness skills according to the principles of Dialectical Behavioral Theory.

The scale includes 31 items distributed across six dimensions as follows:

- Observation – items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
- Description – items (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)
- Participation – items (13, 14, 15, 16, 17)
- One-mindfulness – items (18, 19, 20, 21, 22)
- Non-judgment – items (23, 24, 25, 26, 27)
- Effectiveness – items (28, 29, 30, 31)

• **Scoring Procedure:**

Participants were instructed to read each item carefully and determine the extent to which it applied to them by marking (×) in the appropriate box corresponding to one of five response options:

Strongly agree = 5 points

Agree = 4 points

Uncertain = 3 points

Somewhat disagree = 2 points

Strongly disagree = 1 point

Accordingly, total scores range from 31 to 155 points. A higher score on the scale indicates a higher level of mindfulness in the student’s daily academic life.

• **Psychometric Properties of the Scale:**

A- Validity:

The researchers ensured the validity of the scale through the following methods:

• *Content Validity:*

To establish content validity, the scale was submitted to a panel of six expert judges, all of whom hold doctoral degrees in psychological counseling, mental health, and educational sciences, as indicated in the list of appendices. Based on the evaluators’ observations, the scale was revised by modifying the items that required adjustment. It was then rewritten and printed in its finalized form.

Following this, the finalized version of the scale was administered to a sample of 400 male and female schooled adolescents enrolled in the third and fourth years of middle school at Douaissi Abdelkader Middle School and Lahoul Abdelkader Middle School. The researchers assessed scale validity using internal consistency procedures through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

• *Internal Consistency Validity:*

Internal consistency validity was verified by calculating the correlations between the sub-dimensions and the total score of the scale. Additional calculations were made to assess the correlations between each item and its corresponding dimension, as well as between each item and the overall scale score. All sub-dimensions were found to be significantly correlated with the total score (see Appendices).

B- Estimation of Scale Reliability:

The reliability of the scale was estimated using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. The results are shown in Table No. (02):

| Scale | Number of Items | Sample Size | Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| Mindfulness Scale | 31 | 400 | 0.71 |

As indicated in the table, the reliability coefficient was 0.71, which represents a high level of internal consistency and affirms the scale’s suitability for the purposes of this study.

6- Presentation and Interpretation of the Study Results:

6-1 Presentation and Interpretation of the Results of the First Hypothesis:

Avoidant Personality Disorder and mindfulness among schooled adolescents. To test this hypothesis, Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used. The results are presented in the table below:

Table No. (03): Relationship Between the Scores of Avoidant Personality Disorder and Mindfulness According to Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient

| Scale | Sample Size | Pearson Correlation Coefficient |
|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Avoidant Personality Disorder | 400 | -0.339** |
| Mindfulness | 400 | -0.339** |

The results confirm the existence of a statistically significant negative correlation at the 0.01 significance level between the scores of Avoidant Personality Disorder and mindfulness among schooled adolescents. The correlation coefficient was estimated at -0.33 for the total sample of 400 male and female students.

The first hypothesis, which proposed a correlational relationship between Avoidant Personality Disorder and mindfulness skills among the sample of 400 schooled adolescents, was supported by the findings. A negative relationship was identified between Avoidant Personality Disorder and mindfulness.

These results provide a substantive basis for recommending the design of a counseling program aimed at enhancing mindfulness skills to reduce symptoms associated with Avoidant Personality Disorder among schooled adolescents. The statistically significant relationship between the two variables suggests the feasibility of developing a guidance program centered around mindfulness as a dialectical behavioral skill, with the potential to foster improved psychological flexibility and more adaptive engagement in academic and social contexts.

Furthermore, establishing this correlation strengthens the proposition that mindfulness, as a behavioral construct, is positively linked with variables associated with psychological well-being, while exhibiting inverse relationships with various psychological disorders. As such, the findings of the present study contribute to expanding the conceptual understanding of mindfulness by linking it to a new category of variables and a distinct target population, schooled adolescents.

This inverse relationship between mindfulness and psychological disorders has been documented in previous research, such as the study conducted by Kim, M. et al. (2013), which examined the association between mindfulness and emotional regulation difficulties among women diagnosed with Avoidant Personality Disorder. The findings of that study revealed a significant negative correlation between the two variables.

Conversely, the study conducted by Al-Shalawi (2018) demonstrated a positive relationship between mindfulness and self-efficacy among a sample of students from the College of Education in Dawadmi, at a significance level of (0.01). Numerous other studies have also examined mindfulness and its association with a range of psychological constructs. However, deeper reflection suggests that it is insufficient to merely identify the direction of such relationships. When mindfulness is positioned on one side of the scale and another variable on the opposite side, the conclusion, previously noted, emerges that the nature of the relationship may be either positive or negative, depending on the characteristics of the variable in question and its alignment with either psychological well-being or psychological dysfunction.

This inference is supported by findings from studies that employed therapeutic or counseling programs designed to elevate levels of mindfulness. For instance, the study by Abu Zeid (2018), published in the *Journal of Psychological Counseling* by the Arab East College for Graduate Studies, aimed to assess the effectiveness of mindfulness training as a dialectical behavioral approach for reducing difficulties in emotional regulation among female students diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder. Adopting a quasi-experimental design, the study was conducted on a sample of 15 female students aged between 25 and 35 years. The findings confirmed the effectiveness of mindfulness training in mitigating emotional regulation difficulties.

By logical extension, and even in the absence of an explicitly stated direction of association in Abu Zeid's study, the conclusion becomes apparent: a negative relationship exists between mindfulness and emotional regulation difficulties, such that lower mindfulness is associated with greater difficulty in emotional regulation.

In a similar context, the study conducted by Himelstein et al. (2011), cited by Abu Zeid in the *Journal of Psychological Counseling*, investigated the impact of a therapeutic program employing mindfulness strategies to enhance emotional regulation and reduce stress among a sample of incarcerated youth (sample size not specified). The intervention consisted of 10 group sessions held once per week, with each session lasting one hour. The outcomes indicated a reduction in stress levels. It may therefore be reasoned that, had there been no negative correlation between mindfulness and psychological stress, the findings of Himelstein et al. (2011) would not have reflected such results.

It is important to highlight that efforts to examine the negative association between mindfulness and variables linked to psychological disorders or health regressions have expanded considerably, as illustrated by the present study. Simultaneously, research has also explored the positive association of mindfulness with variables pertaining to psychological well-being, including mental health, self-efficacy, professional competence, creativity, and other dimensions of positive psychology.

For example, the study by Mohamed El-Sayed (2018) investigated the relationship between mindfulness and life satisfaction among a group of adolescents and found a statistically significant positive association between the two variables. Similarly, the study by Elices et al. (2016) sought to determine the effectiveness of mindfulness training in reducing symptoms of Avoidant Personality Disorder and enhancing mindfulness-related capacities in a sample of 64 participants. Other research has incorporated mindfulness as a counseling or therapeutic technique for clients, particularly after identifying correlations between mindfulness and symptoms of Avoidant Personality Disorder.

One particularly striking observation lies in the phrase emphasized by Linehan when defining mindfulness as the “wise mind.” From the perspective of the researchers, this concise definition implies that mindfulness is inherent in every constructive behavior and absent in every maladaptive one. Therefore, mindfulness is intrinsically tied to patterns of personality, whether in a positive or negative direction.

6-2 Presentation and Interpretation of the Results of the Second Hypothesis:

The second hypothesis proposed that there is a statistically significant negative relationship between the total score of Avoidant Personality Disorder and the dimensions of mindfulness among schooled adolescents. To assess this hypothesis, Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used. The results are presented in the table below:

Table No. (04): Correlation Between the Total Score of Avoidant Personality Disorder and the Dimensions of Mindfulness Among Schooled Adolescents

| Dimensions of Mindfulness | Observation | Description | Participation | One-Mindfulness | Non-Judgment | Effectiveness |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient | -0.069 | -0.214** | -0.321** | -0.259** | -0.155** | -0.214** |

The results of the second hypothesis, which predicted a negative relationship between the dimensions of mindfulness and the total score of Avoidant Personality Disorder, show statistically significant correlations at the 0.01 level for all dimensions except the observation dimension.

These findings may be interpreted in light of Linehan’s explanation of mindfulness skills (Linehan, 2015, p.40). She identified observation as the foundational skill, referring to the ability to maintain comprehensive awareness of the situation. Notably, observation was the only dimension that did not correlate significantly with the total score of Avoidant Personality Disorder. This suggests that a student exhibiting symptoms of avoidant personality may not necessarily display deficiencies in the ability to observe. Such a student may perceive their surroundings as fully and accurately as their non-avoidant peers. However, they experience pronounced fear when it comes to engaging in group or collective settings, not a lack of situational awareness.

This stands in contrast to disorders such as Schizoid Personality Disorder, in which individuals avoid social contact even before it occurs. In contrast, individuals with avoidant personality traits are more often characterized by excessive fear, low self-confidence, and persistent self-doubt. They tend to closely monitor the behaviors and reactions of others, employing heightened observation as a strategy to grasp the nuances of their social environment. In doing so, they may reinforce internalized negative self-perceptions when comparing themselves to others.

Thafer (2015), in a doctoral dissertation referencing the American Psychological Association (APA, 2000), noted that individuals with Avoidant Personality Disorder are distinguished by hypersensitivity to negative evaluation (Thafer, 2015, p.78). This is in contrast to those with Schizoid Personality Disorder, who prefer solitude and demonstrate minimal emotional interest in others. Their underlying belief system could be summarized as: “I have no interest in forming relationships; emotional connections are overwhelming and unmanageable, and social interaction yields only harm” (Abu Adi, 2020).

From the researcher’s perspective, this may be interpreted as follows: “The appropriate explanation for the absence of a correlation between Avoidant Personality Disorder and the skill of observation lies in the fact that individuals with avoidant tendencies do not necessarily lose their observational ability; rather, they participate in social contexts with a preference for remaining observers, rather than becoming the object of others’ observation.”

Further elaboration reveals that the statistically significant negative correlations between Avoidant Personality Disorder and the dimensions of description and participation are coherent when examined through the framework presented by Linehan (2015) in the DBT Skills Training Manual. She described the skill of description as the process of translating thoughts into verbal expressions regarding a specific experience (Linehan, 2015, p.154). In this context, individuals with avoidant personality traits may find it particularly difficult to verbalize their thoughts in front of others. A similar difficulty arises with the skill of participation, which involves active involvement in shared activities, an area where these individuals commonly struggle.

Regarding the dimension of non-judgment, which Linehan characterizes as the tendency to shift abruptly from positive to negative judgments, a representative example can be found in a student who makes a minor verbal error during a classroom presentation. Rather than focusing on the overall strengths of their performance, the student fixates on this single mistake and concludes internally that their presentation was inadequate. This perception may lead them to avoid speaking in future similar settings.

This skill is closely associated with the dimensions of effectiveness and one-mindfulness, both of which are adversely impacted when an individual fails to focus on the positive elements of a situation and instead fixates solely on its negative aspects. This pattern inevitably reduces effectiveness. In addition, the individual becomes incapable of sustaining one-mindfulness, that is, remaining fully immersed in the present activity in a calm and integrated manner. Rather than

engaging naturally, the individual repeatedly detaches from the task at hand due to persistent negative self-evaluation, internally reiterating the thought, “I must act correctly,” instead of considering, “What is the most appropriate behavior for this specific situation?” (Linehan, 2015, p.155).

Conclusion:

This study aimed to explore the relationship between Avoidant Personality Disorder and mindfulness in a sample of 400 schooled adolescents. The most important outcome of the research lies in the confirmation of a negative relationship between these two variables. This relationship reflects the cognitive and skill-based deficits commonly observed in individuals diagnosed with Avoidant Personality Disorder, or those who begin to display avoidant tendencies during early adolescence. Simultaneously, the findings emphasize the value of mindfulness not only for individuals in general but particularly for adolescents enrolled in school. It may be asserted that the absence of mindfulness skills significantly hinders personality development, leading to a lack of cognitive flexibility, which is often supplanted by rigidity and inflexible thought patterns.

The second hypothesis aimed to examine the relationship between the specific dimensions of mindfulness and Avoidant Personality Disorder among schooled adolescents. The results indicated a negative association between Avoidant Personality Disorder and the mindfulness dimensions of description, participation, one-mindfulness, non-judgment, and effectiveness.

This relationship may be interpreted through in-depth analysis and understanding of these mindfulness skills, which appear to be diminished in individuals with Avoidant Personality Disorder, particularly the abilities related to participation, description, non-judgment, and effectiveness. According to Marsha Linehan, these dimensions constitute a unified construct, mindfulness, which plays a vital role in fostering flexibility, balance, and sound judgment in individuals, whether they are psychologically well-adjusted or not.

Moreover, the findings suggest that further research in this area has become increasingly necessary in response to the evolving challenges of contemporary life. The creation of therapeutic interventions rooted in mindfulness as a dialectical skill should be preceded by empirical validation of the existence of such associations. This underscores the adaptive and evolving nature of counseling and psychotherapy research, which must remain responsive to changing psychological and societal conditions.

In light of the present results, it becomes feasible to propose counseling programs designed to enhance mindfulness levels as a strategic approach to alleviating symptoms of specific psychological disorders, including Avoidant Personality Disorder.

In conclusion, the descriptive method, due to its effectiveness in uncovering correlations or differences between phenomena, has demonstrated considerable value in enabling researchers to establish associations that may otherwise remain unexplored. In the context of this study, it has allowed for the identification and clarification of the relationship between Avoidant Personality Disorder and mindfulness.

Author Contributions

Dr. Yahia Mansouri conceptualized the study, designed the research framework, and supervised the overall implementation of the research. He also contributed to data analysis and the preparation of the manuscript. Dr. Hacene Bairi participated in the development of the research instruments, data collection, statistical processing, and interpretation of the results. Both authors contributed equally to writing, reviewing, and approving the final version of the manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical standards for research involving human participants. Prior approval to conduct the research was obtained from the relevant educational authorities and school administrations in the province of Tipaza. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from students and their legal guardians. The anonymity and confidentiality of participants' information were strictly maintained, and the data were used exclusively for scientific research purposes. The study complied with international research ethics principles, including respect for participants' rights and protection from any potential psychological or social harm.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this study. The research was conducted independently, and no financial or personal relationships influenced the study design, data analysis, or interpretation of the findings.

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Appendices:

Appendix No. 1: Final Version of the Avoidant Personality Disorder Scale

Instructions:

Please read each of the following statements carefully and select the option that best reflects your personal opinion about what is generally true for you. There are no right or wrong answers; each response simply expresses a personal viewpoint and will be used strictly for scientific purposes.

Gender: Male: Female: **Age:**

| Final Version | Judges’ Opinion | Item | No. |
|---------------|-----------------|------|-----|
|---------------|-----------------|------|-----|

| | | | |
|---|----------|---|----|
| I withdraw from participating in group activities because of my fear of criticism. | Approved | I withdraw from participating in group activities because of my fear of criticism. | 1 |
| I leave a group of classmates as soon as I feel rejected by them. | Approved | I leave a group of classmates as soon as I feel rejected by them. | 2 |
| I distance myself from classmates who criticize me. | Approved | I distance myself from classmates who criticize me. | 3 |
| I avoid answering during class out of fear that the teacher will criticize my response. | Approved | I avoid answering during class out of fear that the teacher will criticize my response. | 4 |
| I speak easily with classmates who criticize me. | Approved | I speak easily with classmates who criticize me. | 5 |
| I withdraw from a group of classmates if I doubt their intentions. | Approved | I withdraw from a group of classmates if I doubt their intentions. | 6 |
| I make sure that a classmate likes me before becoming friends with them. | Approved | I make sure that a classmate likes me before becoming friends with them. | 7 |
| I find it difficult to talk with a classmate who shows no interest in me. | Approved | I find it difficult to talk with a classmate who shows no interest in me. | 8 |
| I accept the friendship of any classmate on the condition that I am liked by them. | Approved | I accept the friendship of any classmate on the condition that I am liked by them. | 9 |
| I limit myself to a few relationships within the school because of my shyness. | Approved | I limit myself to a few relationships within the school because of my shyness. | 10 |
| I speak shyly with students I do not know. | Modified | I speak shyly with students I do not know. | 11 |
| I find it easy to confront classmates in a loud voice. | Approved | I find it easy to confront classmates in a loud voice. | 12 |
| I speak little in front of classmates for fear of making a fool of myself. | Approved | I speak little in front of classmates for fear of making a fool of myself. | 13 |
| I can easily build friendships with new classmates. | Approved | I can easily build friendships with new classmates. | 14 |
| I feel that I am not wanted by my classmates. | Approved | I feel that I am not wanted by my classmates. | 15 |
| I feel deeply hurt when teachers or classmates blame me. | Approved | I feel deeply hurt when teachers or classmates blame me. | 16 |

| | | | |
|--|----------|--|----|
| I hesitate to participate in sports activities within the school because of fear of criticism. | Modified | I hesitate to participate in sports activities within the school because of fear of criticism. | 17 |
| I refrain from expressing my opinion among classmates for fear that it will be rejected. | Approved | I refrain from expressing my opinion among classmates for fear that it will be rejected. | 18 |
| I remain silent in any gathering to avoid criticism or rejection. | Modified | I remain silent in any gathering to avoid criticism or rejection. | 19 |
| I believe that I am not capable of building new relationships at school. | Modified | I believe that I am not capable of building new relationships at school. | 20 |
| I see myself as less valuable than my classmates; therefore, I stay away from them. | Approved | I see myself as less valuable than my classmates; therefore, I stay away from them. | 21 |
| I am able to build a new relationship because I am capable of doing so. | Approved | I am able to build a new relationship because I am capable of doing so. | 22 |
| I believe that I cannot handle the responsibilities assigned to me by my classmates. | Approved | I believe that I cannot handle the responsibilities assigned to me by my classmates. | 23 |
| I believe that I am not at the required level to build a new relationship. | Modified | I believe that I am not at the required level to build a new relationship. | 24 |
| I am unable to face my classmates when the teacher asks me to explain a topic. | Approved | I am unable to face my classmates when the teacher asks me to explain a topic. | 25 |
| I feel that I am unable to gain everyone's attention at school. | Approved | I feel that I am unable to gain everyone's attention at school. | 26 |
| I often feel inferior and incompetent compared to my classmates. | Modified | I often feel inferior and incompetent compared to my classmates. | 27 |
| I believe that my abilities do not allow me to participate in sports activities. | Approved | I believe that my abilities do not allow me to participate in sports activities. | 28 |
| I feel that I do not deserve to be admired when I participate in an activity. | Approved | I feel that I do not deserve to be admired when I participate in an activity. | 29 |
| I avoid proposing my opinion to classmates for fear that they may not like it. | Approved | I avoid proposing my opinion to classmates for fear that they may not like it. | 30 |
| I avoid participating in any group activity so as not to disturb anyone. | Modified | I avoid participating in any group activity so as not to disturb anyone. | 31 |
| I withdraw from group activities when I feel that I am disturbing others. | Approved | I withdraw from group activities when I feel that I am disturbing others. | 32 |

| | | | |
|---|----------|---|----|
| I make sure not to disturb classmates when participating with them in new activities. | Approved | I make sure not to disturb classmates when participating with them in new activities. | 33 |
|---|----------|---|----|

Appendix No. 02: Final Version of the Mindfulness Scale

Instructions:

Please read each of the following statements carefully and select the response that best reflects your personal opinion regarding what is generally true for you. There are no right or wrong answers; each response simply represents a personal viewpoint and is used strictly for scientific purposes.

Gender: Male: Female: **Age:**

| Final Version | Judges' Opinion | Item | No. |
|---|-----------------|--|-----|
| I pay attention to the examples provided by the teacher and classmates. | Modified | I make an effort to notice the examples provided by the teacher and classmates. | 1 |
| I pay attention to changes in my emotional or physical state while at school. | Approved | I pay attention to changes in my emotional or physical state while at school. | 2 |
| I notice emotional changes in my classmates at school. | Approved | I notice emotional changes in my classmates at school. | 3 |
| I can easily recognize differences between scientific and literary subjects. | Approved | I easily observe the differences between scientific and literary subjects. | 4 |
| I find it difficult to notice the details in a lesson. | Approved | I find it difficult to notice the details in a lesson. | 5 |
| I know exactly when it is the right time to begin reviewing for an exam. | Approved | I know exactly when it is the right time to begin reviewing for an exam. | 6 |
| I can easily explain the lesson or part of it to my classmates. | Approved | I can easily explain the lesson or part of it to my classmates. | 7 |
| I have difficulty choosing the right words to express my answers during tests. | Approved | I have difficulty choosing the right words to express my answers during tests. | 8 |
| I select appropriate words to express my thoughts and desires. | Approved | I select appropriate words to express my thoughts and desires. | 9 |
| I find it difficult to describe things when speaking with my classmates or teacher. | Approved | I find it difficult to describe things when speaking with classmates or the teacher. | 10 |
| I express my academic abilities and qualifications with ease. | Approved | I express my academic abilities and qualifications with ease. | 11 |

| | | | |
|---|----------|---|----|
| I easily find the words to describe my feelings and thoughts. | Approved | I easily find the words to describe my feelings and thoughts. | 12 |
| I take the initiative to help classmates solve their problems. | Approved | I take the initiative to help classmates solve their problems. | 13 |
| I find it difficult to participate during lessons. | Approved | I find it difficult to participate during lessons. | 14 |
| I engage enthusiastically in school sports. | Modified | I participate enthusiastically in team sports. | 15 |
| I answer questions during class when I know the answer. | Approved | I answer questions during class when I know the answer. | 16 |
| I avoid participating in group work assigned by the teacher. | Modified | I avoid participating in group work assigned by the teacher. | 17 |
| I prefer to complete one task at a time rather than start several tasks without finishing them. | Approved | I prefer to complete one task at a time rather than start several tasks without finishing them. | 18 |
| I focus entirely on the task I am doing without thinking about anything else. | Approved | I focus entirely on the task I am doing without thinking about anything else. | 19 |
| I stay attentive during the teacher's explanation of the lesson. | Approved | I stay attentive during the teacher's explanation of the lesson. | 20 |
| I quickly lose focus during classroom activities. | Approved | I quickly lose focus during classroom activities. | 21 |
| My mind drifts to other topics when I review my lessons. | Approved | My mind drifts to other topics when I review my lessons. | 22 |
| I refrain from judging or blaming others. | Modified | I refrain from evaluating others or placing blame on them. | 23 |
| I excessively blame myself for the way I think. | Approved | I excessively blame myself for the way I think. | 24 |
| I avoid evaluating my classmates at school so that I do not judge them unfairly. | Approved | I avoid evaluating my classmates at school so that I do not judge them unfairly. | 25 |
| I blame my teachers or my family when I fail academically. | Approved | I blame my teachers or my family when I fail academically. | 26 |

| | | total1 | total2 |
|--------|---------------------|---------|---------|
| total1 | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -,339** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | ,000 |
| | N | 400 | 400 |
| total2 | Pearson Correlation | -,339** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | ,000 | |
| | N | 400 | 400 |

** . Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

| | | | |
|---|----------|---|----|
| I find studying difficult and complicated. | Approved | I find studying difficult and complicated. | 27 |
| I find it difficult to complete homework on time. | Approved | I find it difficult to complete homework on time. | 28 |
| I make full use of the time allocated for answering during exams. | Approved | I make full use of the time allocated for answering during exams. | 29 |
| I remind my classmates of the importance of continuing their studies and moving to higher levels. | Approved | I remind my classmates of the importance of continuing their studies and advancing. | 30 |
| I avoid making the same mistakes in school that my classmates do. | Approved | I avoid making the same mistakes in school that my classmates do. | 31 |

Appendix No. 03: Reliability of the Avoidant Personality Disorder Scale
Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 0.764 | 33 |

Appendix No. 04: Reliability of the Mindfulness Scale
Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 0.710 | 31 |

Appendix No. 05: Correlation Between the Total Score of the Mindfulness Scale and the Total Score of the Avoidant Personality Disorder Scale

Appendix No. 06: Correlation Between the Total Score of Avoidant Personality Disorder and the Dimensions of Mindfulness Among Schooled Adolescents

| Dimensions of Mindfulness | Observation | Description | Participation | One-Mindfulness | Non-Judgment | Effectiveness |
|--|-------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Correlation with Avoidant Personality Disorder | -0.069 | -0.214** | -0.321** | -0.259** | -0.155** | -0.214** |

Note: All coefficients marked with "*" are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). **