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Research Article

The Lived Experience of Students in Facing the Educational-Moral Challenges of Depression and Suicide

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ABSTRACT

Aim: Challenges in the field of education show their deconstructive presence and have a dramatic and sometimes negative impact on students' psyche, ethics and behavior. With the impact of methods, practices, and changes, the education system faces many challenges in various fields such as educational-ethical challenges. The present study examines students' experiences of facing the educational-ethical challenges of depression and suicide.

Methods: The research method is qualitative and has been done using the phenomenological method. The statistical population of this study includes all female high school students in Ahvaz. After identifying the educational-ethical challenges, 20 students were purposefully selected for the interview according to the available samples in the field of depression challenges and suicide (suicide attempt). In the field of saturation, depression is challenged after 12 people and suicide is challenged (suicide attempt) after 13 people saturation. Identification of educational-ethical challenges is in accordance with the reports sent by Ahvaz District 2 school counselors to the counseling core of that district. The three-step recur method was used to analyze the interview data. The steps include raw reading or simple comprehension, structural analysis, and total interpretation.

Results: Includes 5 main themes of causes of depression, methods of dealing with depression, main causes of suicide, pretending to attempt suicide, students' feelings about suicide, and 14 sub-themes.

Conclusion: Students face many educational-moral challenges. Challenges that are not rooted in their unconscious thoughts, but rooted in their untested assumptions and false beliefs. Analyzing the students' lived experiences provides a clear and explicit picture of their perceptions and mentalities regarding each of the educational-moral challenges without any judgment about the correctness or incorrectness of their perceptions. The discovery and interpretation of the speech of the interviewees show that every living experience has depth and breadth, and through every experience, one can reach the depth and hidden aspects of the world.



1. Background

The transformations of the new age have faced students with challenges such as the breaking of boundaries and structures such as prohibited and permitted (Bagheri, 2020). Challenges that show their destructive presence in the field of education and have a tremendous and sometimes negative effect on the psyche, moral,s and behavior of students. The impact of methods, functions, and transformations, the education system faces many challenges in different fields such as educational-moral challenges.

It is necessary to identify these types of challenges, especially in relation to the adolescent period, which is the most important period of human development. Educational-ethical challenges are a term for a broad description of obstacles and issues whose origin is an educational and moral issue that every person faces in different periods of development. These challenges include a wide range of issues related to various personal and social issues such as academic performance, cheating in exams, truancy from school, academic evaluations, disciplinary issues, difficulty in making life decisions and the resulting anxiety, value issues, the meaning of life, self-expression and identity and interpersonal relationships (Puhan et al., 2014).

Failure to pay attention to these challenges in recent years has exposed all the agents of home and school educational institutions to significant crises and gaps. Because the research findings emphasize that the focus of educational professionals has been to solve the challenges of students such as entrance exam numbers and unnecessary training. On the other hand, families and educational staff of schools also point to these challenges by acknowledging the inadequacy of their skills and abilities (Fathi-Azer et al., 2016).

Depression is one of the most important and common educational-moral challenges. Depression is a debilitating factor in youth and adolescents, which is referred to as a mental cold (Madmali et al., 2017). Many factors cause depression. The failures that people face during their lives are the causes of depression. Atkinson, Atkinson, and Hilgard (2016) believe that the way each person responds to failed situations to a large extent shows whether his adaptation to life is right or not.

Sexual harassment also includes a wide range of unwanted behaviors such as visual, verbal, behavioral, and physical. Numerous studies on the negative effects and consequences of sexual harassment show that sexual harassment negatively affects people's mental health, such as depression and anxiety (Shannon et al., 2006). Also, the quality of life can cause mental disorders such as depression. People's understanding of their position in life in terms of culture, the value system in which they live, their goals, expectations, standards, and priorities. Quality of life is individual and not visible to others and is based on people's understanding of different aspects of their lives (Bonomi et al., 2010).

There are also different methods to deal with depression, for example, problem-solving skill training is a therapeutic method that teaches a person to use his set of effective cognitive skills to cope with problematic interpersonal successes. The problem-solving approach can be a tool to face many situational problems and solve them. Also, in the problem-solving training strategy, there is a belief that under the influence of this training, the level of expectation of self-efficacy and personal sufficiency of individuals will increase (Hepner, Whitey, and Dixon, 2006). Fisher (2018) believes that there is no better method than to see if a person can use what he has learned in problem-solving. Because this method pays attention to the way a person deals with problems. Also,

humans have the ability to make decisions freely in their activities. Making a decision means choosing one way from among different ways to solve a problem. He always has the freedom of choice to make a decision in any situation (Howard, 2018).

Suicide is one of the most important and common educational-moral challenges. Suicide as a preventable problem means a deliberate attempt to kill oneself and end one's life. Suicide is a conscious attempt to end one's life by oneself. This effort may turn into action or remain only in the form of a feeling (Kilgus & Maxmen, 2019).

Committing suicide is a conscious and deliberate action that is usually done to attract the attention of others, and the person's goal in this action is definitely not to end life. While in suicide, a person intentionally commits an action that may lead to his death (Dostmohammadi and Rezaian, 2019). Currently, suicide is not only considered as a social harm, but because of its spread among students as a high-risk behavior, it has become an educational-moral challenge. Various factors play a role in committing suicide, for example, lack of understanding and differences in the family are common, but sometimes these differences lead to severe conflicts, which lead to the lack of proper and healthy functioning of the family as the oldest social institution. An institution whose main task is to create a healthy spirit and personality becomes a factor in emotional, behavioral, and personality differences (Enayat et al., 2011). Also, studies have shown that social media can increase the suicide rate among teenagers, and about 13% of suicides among 15-24-year-old teenagers fall into this category. The Internet can provide young people with information on how to successfully commit suicide and may even encourage them to commit suicide (Simber et al., 2016).

Economic inequality and income gaps also motivate people with low incomes to think of committing suicide (Mehregan and Daliri, 2010). Sometimes committing suicide is a meaningful act and a choice to overcome environmental conditions and internal factors. Sometimes people don't really intend to end their life and consider suicide as a temporary measure. In such a situation, they look at suicide as a tool to remove existing and perceived obstacles to achieving their desires (Ghadirzadeh & Piri, 2014). Goffman considers suicide as a demonstration and presentation of oneself in everyday life which maximizes benefits and minimizes harm to the individual (Shilling, 1991).

2. Objectives

The purpose of this research was to investigate students' experiences of facing the educational-ethical challenges of depression and suicide.

3. Methods

3.1. Sample and procedure

The present study is a qualitative study that has been done by Ricoeur interpretive phenomenology. Interpretive phenomenology is another approach to phenomenology that not only describes the biological experience of phenomena but also examines experiences within the context of everyday life. Because it is an interpretive process in which the researcher interprets the meanings of one's lived experiences. The living experience is the phenomenon that has come out in the form of text and writing to finally clarify the meanings hidden in the phenomenon and provide rich data and deep insight into the living experience of participants (Iman, 2015).

What happens in the process of interpretation according to Ricoeur is that the researcher first reviews the text as a whole in order to become familiar with its understanding in order to understand the general meaning in his mind (simple understanding). The next step is to analyze the structure to identify patterns of meaning and relationships in that text (structural analysis). Finally, the whole interpretation, which includes reflection and commentary on the initial reading and reading of the interpretation, is done (the whole interpretation). In order to ensure the findings, the hermeneutic cycle in the interpretation process should be done well (validation) (Iman, 2015). In the interview data analysis method section, these steps were discussed in detail.

Target population and sampling method: The statistical population of this study includes female high school students in Ahvaz. The sampling method is purposeful. To select the sample, first, the educational-moral challenges including the challenges of identity confusion, communication issues (boy-girl relationships), and existential anxiety, were identified. The identification of these challenges has been done in accordance with the reports sent by the school counselors of Ahvaz District 2 to the counseling center of that district and the documents that were available in this field in the 99-98 academic year. After identifying the educational-moral challenges purposefully and according to the available samples in the field of depression challenges and 20 students (suicide attempt), 15 students from girls' high schools in Ahvaz District 2 were selected for interview.

3.2. Research Tools

The tool of the present study was a semi-structured interview. Before each interview, the level of readiness and willingness of each participant was assessed. The researcher first mentioned the objectives, assuring the confidentiality of the information and obtaining permission from the participants, and then proceeded to conduct the interview. During the interview, the content of the meeting was recorded, with the permission of each participant, and then recorded on paper. For some interviewees who were not willing to have their conversations recorded, the interview was conducted in writing.

Although theoretical data saturation occurred before the interviews were completed, all participants were interviewed in order to increase the validity of the research and provide more confidence. In the field of saturation depression is challenged after 12 people and in suicide is challenged (suicide attempt) after 13 people saturation. The time of each interview was between 35 and 60 minutes, depending on the development of the topic by the participants and their desire to continue the interview.

Validation of the research, in this research, in order to determine the validity of the results, the following was tried to be considered: 1) The three-stage model of analysis inspired by Ricoeur's view is carefully observed. Thus, if the initial simplicity is challenged during structural analysis and part of the initial simplicity does not fit the structural analysis, the hermeneutic cycle is observed. That is, it returns to the written text of the interviews and a new reading is done and another simple reading is attempted. 2) After analyzing the data, the ambiguities were discussed with the participants, and whenever it was necessary to add an explanation or it did not match their statements, it was removed or corrected. 3) Use the guidance and supervision of the tutor and consultants and apply changes to achieve more accuracy in presenting the content. 4) In order to comply with the principle of data verifiability, an attempt was made to avoid any bias in the interview process and the extraction of results.

3.3. Ethical consideration

To observe ethical considerations for the study participants, the purpose of the research, research method, research benefits, and voluntary participation in the research was explained and after providing the necessary information about the research, the participants' willingness and consent for the interview was obtained. In addition, research participants were assured that the information obtained from them would be kept confidential and that the research results would be published without mentioning their names. To comply with this issue, the names of the participants were changed to numbers, and during the analysis of the data and the expression of the results, only numbers were mentioned.

3.4. Data analysis

The interview data analysis method was used to analyze the interview data using the three-step Ricoeur method. The steps include raw reading or simple comprehension, structural analysis, and total interpretation.

4. Results

After analyzing the students' experiences in relation to the challenges they faced, the main and sub-themes were extracted for each of the challenges, which are discussed below:

4.1. Educational-ethical challenge: *Depression*

Depression is the most common disease of the century, which in addition to genetic aspects is associated with psychological and social factors. Depression is a widespread decline in mood that is associated with feelings of inefficiency, negative mood, negative self-esteem, nausea and interpersonal problems and causes academic failure, and physical and social problems and has a devastating effect on the future of adolescents. In the analysis of verbal evidence, two main themes of the causes of depression and Dealing with depression were extracted, which were identified in [Table 1](#) of these themes.

Table 1. The main and sub-themes of the Depression challenge

Main theme	Sub-them	Main theme	Sub-them
Dealing with depression	Teaching problem-solving skills	Causes of depression	Personal failure
	Freedom to make decisions		Sexual harassment Quality of life

4.1.1. Main theme 1: *Causes of depression*

The first theme that emerged from the students' experiences was the causes of depression. This theme includes 3 sub-themes of personal failure, sexual harassment, and quality of life.

4.1.1.1. Sub-theme 1: *Personal failure*

The analysis of the interviewees' statements indicates that sometimes the students' failure to achieve their goals and aspirations causes them to develop a sense of failure. Interviewee 12: "I have no purpose and I can do nothing right. I'm a failure and I have nothing to look forward to. I hate myself. I do not have the patience of anyone, I do not

even have the patience of myself. I have no interest in people anymore. "I do not care at all what is said about me."

4.1.1.2. Sub-theme 2: *Sexual harassment*

The analysis of the interviewees's statements indicates that any verbal, physical and sexual behavior that has a sexual burden can cause sexual harassment and depression. Interviewer 14: "I am a miserable girl and I have a great sadness in my heart that I do not have a big secret and I do not dare to tell it. It was the sixth grade that I was afraid of my brother's looks. At first I was afraid of his gaze. But little by little, it bothered me and threatened me that if you said something to our parents, I would ruin your reputation in another way. "That's why I don't want to talk to anyone."

Interviewee 8: "I just want to feel comfortable saying this to you. "Honestly, I'm afraid of my father's bad looks at home."

4.1.1.3. Sub-theme 3: *Quality of life*

Quality of life means that people understand their position in life in terms of culture, the value system in which they live, their goals, expectations, standards and priorities. From the analysis of the interviewees' speech, we also obtained the theme of quality of life. Interviewee 11: "What good is it if you do not have happiness and peace in life, and do not go out with others and your family?" My father says that distance and friendship are better. My mother says that a girl who is constantly in her room and talking on the phone with her friends will definitely cause problems for her family. I do not know how I should spend my hours and days. "This is the end of my life."

Interviewee 2: "My mother goes to people's houses every day to work. My father is also a simple worker. I think both of them are very bullying. "Because they keep repeating every day that in order for you not to end up like us, you have to study and you have no right to go and come with your friends."

4.1.2. Main theme 2: *Dealing with depression*

This theme includes two sub-themes of problem solving skills training and the desire for freedom in decision making.

4.1.2.1. Sub-theme 1: *Problem solving skills training*

Analyzing the statements of the interviewees indicates that students feel unable to solve their problems. Interviewee 7: "I'm always upset and tired, and no matter what I do, I can not get rid of it. I can not do anything at all. "I do not think there is a good future for me, and I am getting worse every day and the situation is getting worse."

4.1.2.2. Sub-theme 2: *freedom in decision making*

The analysis of the interviewees' statements indicates that they tend to be able to actively comment in the discussions and to make decisions personally in the face of problems and not to rely on others. Interviewee 3: "I have no right to do anything; I have to do whatever my parents say. I have no freedom at all. I am tired of all this force and coercion. "I also want to decide for myself."

4.2. Educational-Ethical Challenge: *Suicide*

Suicide is an interdisciplinary scientific phenomenon. Disciplines such as sociology,

anthropology, and psychology provide explanations for this. Durkheim considers suicide to be a social phenomenon that individual actions cannot justify and explain, and therefore suicide is the result of a combination of various factors (family, social, religious, and social realities) resulting from the disintegration of forms and the disintegration of the social system and the rupture of relationships. Knows in society and the feeling of loneliness and rejection of the individual (Mohseni, 1987). While most psychological perspectives consider individual forces and neuropsychological factors such as depression, disorders and stress and mood as the main causes of suicide and social factors such as poverty, frustration, lack of hope for the future, social pressures, etc. accelerate it. In the field of suicide challenge, 2 main themes and 7 sub-themes were extracted, which were identified in Table 2.

Table 2. The main and sub-themes of the suicide challenge

Main theme	Sub-them	Main theme	Sub-them
The main causes of suicide	Family disputes	Pretending to commit suicide	Improving family relationships
	Modeling social media		Emotional blackmail
	The difference between generations		Evasion of reality
	Economic inequality		

4.2.1. The first main theme: *Suicide factors*

The first theme that was extracted from students' experiences was suicide factors. This theme includes four sub-themes: family disputes, social media modeling, generational differences, and economic inequality.

4.2.1.1. Sub-theme 1: *Family disputes*

The analysis of the interviewees' statements indicates that the students are very upset about the quarrels and fights between their family members. *Interviewee 6: "My parents love me very much. But what good is it if they are always arguing over cheap things? There is not a day that my father does not say to my mother that I did not marry you out of love at all. My mother also says that I married you under family pressure. In general, these sentences are repeated every day in our house. "I am a teenager and I could not stand it anymore and I said the best way is to commit suicide and get rid of myself."*

4.2.1.2. Sub-theme 2: *Modeling social media*

The analysis of the interviewees's statements indicates that students are under the influence of the media in many individual and social issues. So that even in terms of familiarity with the ways of suicide, they follow the example of these media. *Interviewee 5: "I found an easy way to commit suicide on the Internet. "Kelly teaches good manners."*

4.2.1.3. Sub-theme 3: *Generational differences*

The analysis of the interviewees's statements indicates that the students are frustrated with their lives due to the age gap between them and their parents and the parents' lack of understanding of their needs and the insistence of some parents to impose their opinions on them. They see death as a way to get rid of family pressures, as *interviewee 10: "In our house, it's my father's word. Whatever he says, whatever he likes, we must do. Everything my father says is true. I just have to pretend that we accept his words and we are satisfied. "Dying is the only way to live this miserable life."*

4.2.1.4. Sub-theme 4: *Economic inequality*

The analysis of the interviewees's statements indicates that sometimes students become frustrated due to financial poverty and economic problems in their home and family, and commit acts such as suicide. *Interviewee 13: "I always wonder why we, the poor and needy, have to suffer. My father goes out early in the morning to get a piece of bread and finally returns empty-handed. Good luck to the rich. They have everything and we miserable people are always empty-handed and hungry. "This is life, I better kill myself so that my father does not grieve for us."*

4.2.2. Main theme 2: *pretending to commit suicide*

The second theme that emerged from the students' experiences was pretending to commit suicide. This theme includes three sub-themes of improving family relationships, emotional blackmail, and avoiding reality.

4.2.2.1. Sub-theme 1: *Improving family relationships*

Analysis of the interviewees' statements shows that parental quarrels and disagreements have an adverse effect on their children's psychological characteristics and endanger their safety and comfort. Its severity and persistence also pave the way for many wrongdoings, such as child suicide. *Interviewee 1: I was born into a normal family. My parents love me very much because I am their only daughter. But I committed suicide because of how they treated themselves. They are all fighting and arguing. When my dad comes home from work (of course, my dad is a simple worker) my mom starts to complain, and this causes the arguments between my parents to increase and last for several hours. These problems between them led me to commit suicide. "I love them and I do not want them to differ."*

4.2.2.2. Sub-theme 2: *Emotional blackmail*

When parents do not teach their children logical ways to achieve their desires and wishes, children see their parents' feelings and emotions as a way to achieve their desires, and by verbal actions, if you do not pay attention to my desires, I will try to harm myself. They have emotional ransom. Emotional blackmail was evident in the analysis of students' speech evidence. *Interviewee 4: "By committing suicide, my parents pay more attention to me and do whatever I want."*

Interviewer 9: "I have committed many suicides so far, but they were all drunkards. I just wanted to gain the love of my family and scare them. "I want them to love me and love me."

4.2.2.3. Sub-theme 3: *Avoidance of reality*

Avoidance of reality depends on people's view of the reality of things and phenomena. The tendency to avoid reality is considered common among students. Analysis of verbal evidence supports this claim. *Interviewee 15: "I do not accept the fact that life has ups and downs. If this is so, then why do rich people always fly high up there and we, the poor people, always have to walk in misery? If this is the case, there is no justice. "So life in this world should be for rich people."*

5. Discussion

Today we are witnessing challenges in various areas of human life (family, society and

most importantly education). However, these challenges have greatly affected the way students live and study. However, teachers, as those who have the most contact with students, are unaware of these challenges and only pursue pre-determined curriculum goals, and expect students to follow the curriculum as it is. Remember. In such a situation, the educational process places more emphasis on memory cultivation, and there is no opportunity to address the questions, thoughts, concepts, values, and essential issues of students' lives and the challenges they face. In the process of raising their children, families do not address the potential challenges they face, and in some cases even contribute to these challenges because of their behaviors and attitudes. For this reason, students do not have the necessary efficiency in dealing with personal problems and everyday problems and face many educational and moral challenges such as depression, suicide and so on.

By analyzing the statements of female students about the challenge of depression, we found that students are one of the causes of depression and personal failures, ie failure to achieve their goals and aspirations. To the extent that he is able to cope with problems, he sometimes encounters situations in which he fails. Failure occurs when the path to a desired goal is blocked or delayed. Another cause of depression is sexual harassment, which causes mental problems of depression and anxiety in a person. This theme is in line with the research of Shannon et al. (2006), who believes that sexual harassment causes negative effects on a person's mental health. Another cause of depression is the quality of life. This theme is in line with the research of Bonomi et al. (2010), who believe that the quality of life of each person and their understanding of their situation, goals, expectations, standards and priorities in life causes disorders such as depression. By analyzing students' statements, one of the methods that can be used to deal with depression is problem solving. This is in line with the findings of Heppner et al. (2006) and Fisher (2018) who believe that problem solving can be used to deal with many problems and this method can increase self-efficacy and individual competencies. The analysis of the interviewees' statements also indicates that they tend to be able to make free and active decisions in the face of their problems and to have the independence to make decisions. This theme is consistent with Howard (2018) research. Also We found that one of the factors of suicide is family disputes, which is in line with the research of Enayat et al. (2011). Social media is another factor in increasing suicide, which is confirmed by Simber et al. research (2017).

Economic inequality, which causes livelihood problems and which the students mentioned in their statements, is another factor that makes some people in the lower income deciles think of committing suicide, which is related to Mehrgan and Deliri's research (2010). is aligned According to the statements of the students, sometimes committing suicide is a tool that people use to achieve their goals. In other words, it becomes a means of emotional blackmail, which is in line with the research of Ghadirzadeh & Piri (2014).

6. Limitation and Recommendation

The limitations of the researchers in this research include the spread of Corona, the closure of face-to-face educational centers, and virtual school education. In this situation, it was difficult to select subjects and interview them. Since many educational-moral challenges of students are rooted in lack of awareness and cognitive ambiguities,

therefore it is suggested to identify them by using philosophical methods and philosophical counseling and by creating philosophical attitudes (such as: critical thinking, deepening thoughts and breadth perspective towards their personal problem) created cognitive coherence in students. This makes them achieve intellectual growth and a more meaningful life and experience a better mental state. In this regard, trainers and counselors are the first competent people to use philosophical counseling in the matter of education and cultivation of philosophical thinking and mind, and they will play a fundamental role in this field. Therefore, it is necessary for the educational staff of the educational system to pave the way for the realization of philosophical counseling with in-service training and holding educational workshops.

7. Conclusion

Students face many educational-moral challenges. Challenges that are not rooted in their unconscious thoughts, but rooted in their untested assumptions and false beliefs. By analyzing the students' lived experience, it provides a clear and explicit picture of their perceptions and mentalities regarding each of the educational-moral challenges without any judgment about the correctness or incorrectness of their perceptions. The discovery and interpretation of the speech of the interviewees shows that every living experience has depth and breadth, and through every experience one can reach the depth and hidden aspects of the word.

8. Author Contributions

Author 1, general framework planning, content editing and analyzing, submission and correction. Author 2, collaboration in general framework planning, selection of approaches; final review. Author 3 and 4, comparison of approaches, conclusions. All authors discussed the results, reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

9. Ethical moral code

The present study has been registered with the code of ethics EE/99.3.02.70498/scu.ac.ir in Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz.

10. Acknowledgment

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11. Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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