

Inner Child, Self-Esteem, and Mental Health in Jordanian University Students

Nusaiba A. Almousa^{1,*}, Asma N Jaloudi², Bahjat A. Abu Suleiman², Hussein M. Tarawneh² and Suhaila M. Banat²

¹Department of Curriculum and Instructions, College of Education and Psychology, Amman Arab University, Amman, Jordan

²Department of Psychological and Educational Counseling, College of Educational and Psychological Sciences, Amman Arab University, Amman, Jordan

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Abstract: The study investigated the influence of the inner child on the mental health of Jordanian university students, considering the mediating role of self-esteem. Using a descriptive analytical survey method, a simple random sample of 625 Jordanian university students was utilized. The study employed three scales: the inner child scale (18 items), the mental health scale (15 items), and the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (10 items). Findings revealed that Jordanian university students demonstrated a high level of awareness of their inner child, mental health, and self-esteem. Statistical analysis indicated no significant differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the impact of inner child awareness on the mental health of Jordanian university students, considering the mediating role of self-esteem, based on variables such as sex, college, and educational level. Moreover, the study identified a positive correlation between inner child awareness and mental health, as well as a positive association between self-esteem and mental health. Consequently, the study recommends several actions, including conducting a longitudinal study to explore the impact of the inner child across various life stages (childhood, adolescence, youth, and old age).

Keywords: Inner Child, Mental Health, Self-Esteem.

1 Introduction

The concept of the inner child does not indicate that a small child is living inside us or that there is an area of our brain that has been set aside for childhood memories, the general idea of the inner child; is that we all hide a childish side in our subconscious, and this child may wake up in us whenever we are exposed to a problematic or beautiful situation. So, the childhood stage is considered one of the critical stages in the life of any human being because of its contribution to the formation of personality traits in the subsequent stages of growth, as the growth process is not limited to the physiological aspect only, emotional and emotional development of childhood is an essential aspect of human development.

Sigmund Freud, the pioneer of the psychoanalytic school, noted; That there is a significant link between the early experiences and events that the individual went through; and between the features that make up his personality and behavior [13]. Carl Jung, the psychologist and one of Freud's students, is considered the first to formulate the concept of the inner child, which includes childhood feelings, the extent of its reflection and impact on mental health, and the importance of the individual communicating with the inner child or the childish side of his personality if he tries to understand certain feelings or behavior he has that are beyond his control, Young believes that communicating with childhood feelings, thoughts, and emotions helps to enhance a person's understanding of himself. He started applying the idea of the inner child to himself so that he could discover the effect of retrieving childhood memories on feelings and momentary behavior [17,6].

Young states: "The first half of a person's life is devoted to the formation of a healthy ego, while the second half is directed inwards and is abandoned when we seek self-realization, and once we have reconciled with our healthy ego by making friends with the child within us, it is time to allow the enlightening qualities of that child to teach us to let go of what we have held, and through conscious connection and compassionate self-education with ourselves; We allow this inner child to shine out with all his curiosity, awe, and potential" [5].

Many psychologists view the inner child as a part that is not independent of feeling (consciousness), in which the emotional experiences, thoughts, and memories that have been stored in the unconscious (unconscious) come together from the embryonic stage until adulthood. These childhood experiences affect the behavior of the individual at puberty and his view of himself and the world around him [12,6]. Psychiatrist Stephen Diamond states that the inner child expresses a metaphorical meaning for the stock of memories and experiences that the individual went through during

*Corresponding author e-mail: nusaiba@aau.edu.jo

childhood, and became deeply affected by his behavior when he grew up, and the idea of “suffering the inner child from any wounds” [15], it refers to the psychological trauma or harsh experiences that he faced and was exposed to in his childhood and carried with him into adulthood. Diamond says: “A lot of mental disorders and self-defeating behavior patterns are largely related to the unconscious daring of ourselves, the memories of that child still lived in him; But most people forget that when they grow up, or convince others that they have grown up and left the world of childhood, by suppressing feelings, memories, and childish traits, this suppression makes them lose their conscious connection with their inner child, on whom many miserable feelings, behavioral difficulties, and emotional breakdowns are projected, from which they find no way to get rid of” [2]. In this, psychologists differentiate between puberty in its physiological sense and puberty in its psychological sense or psychological maturity [12]. Young believes that discovering the inner child or the ability to communicate with him, understand his feelings, arrange his memories, work to heal his wounds, and deal with him with appreciation, containment, and respect, it is what actually leads to true adulthood, psychological maturity, and inner peace, and thus strengthens self-knowledge and the ability to control emotions and behavior [5]. Mahdavi [10] indicate that the physical response processes to thoughts and feelings are called fight or flight; thus, recalling these memories continuously and in a way that carries with it feelings of guilt, shame, sorrow, and other negative thoughts; There is a dim view of the self, and in the long run, it generates mental health disorders, such as panic, intense fear, or anxiety and depression that has no clear cause, this was confirmed by many studies, such as the study of Chen et al. [2], which showed that the continuous way of thinking about the Past and focusing on it; It is primarily related to the level of mental health of the individual, the level of his self-esteem, and the extent of his satisfaction with life in the current and long term, and Zheng et al. [22] states that this connection seems logical, because thinking about the past haunts any person, but how thinking about this Past is what varies from one person to another. Lagdon et al [8] follow that self-esteem expresses the individual's concept of himself, the degree of his possession of positive feelings about his traits and abilities, the level of his bright outlook on life, the extent of his feeling of containment towards his old self, good and bad, accepting it whatever it is, and seeking Permanent self-development with deep awareness towards accepting the Past and striving for what is to come. Mental health, as indicated by Meng et al [11] is closely related to our concept of ourselves and the level of our appreciation for it, and this appreciation derives its roots from the depths of the soul; it is not possible to feel comfort, peace, and tranquility if there is not, in fact, a great reconciliation with our inner child. Cotter [4] mentions that no matter how much the individual tries to look good in front of himself and others, and there is no reconciliation with himself and appreciation for himself, he will still feel the conflict between him and himself, which affects his mental health and causes him some disorders, when the inner child is broken, this will prevent the proper development of the self.

In this, Yingying, [18] points out that when we feel disappointed in the outside world, we rely on our internal resources to cope. Sometimes, the pain is hidden even from those who bear it; on the other hand, the novelist Thomas Hardy points out that the inner child's pain may carry horizons for the soul to lead it to more creativity and great contemplation so that the person later becomes more mature in the psychological aspect of his peers. “I am so grateful to my domineering father, an immature human being in old age,” Hardy recalls, “he made me more aware of myself and the world” [6] Roberto Assagioli - the first to establish the term psychology - (1888-1974) concluded that the healing of childhood traumas is necessary for the healthy development of the ego through which self-esteem can only be achieved [1]. Assagioli's concept of self-esteem later became famous by placing it at the top of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's theory showed that once humans have satisfied their basic needs for food, water, and shelter, they can begin to fulfill themselves [4].

A study conducted by Chen [2] investigated the long association between early family life and its relationship to depression and mental health in middle adulthood and adulthood by examining the protective effect of positive childhood relationships with mothers and fathers and the contribution of parental support against depression among males and females in their life stages. The sample included (12,606) adults, of whom (7,319 females; 5,287 males) were represented at the American national level. They were selected using the longitudinal sampling method, including 7 scales of depression. The study showed how positive parent-child relationships provide mental health for both sexes in adulthood, and risk factors affecting psychosocial factors such as childhood depression, traumatic life events, stressful life events, and social support in adulthood were modified. The results showed that there is an association between positive childhood relationships with mothers, fathers, or both parents and that supporting the mother lowers the risk of developing depression from midlife into old age, even if they have experienced trauma and stressful life events, the loss of a parent, or little social support, Females benefited psychologically more than males from positive mother-daughter relationships and good relationships with both parents, however, when compared to the mother-child relationship; Positive parent-child relationships protect men psychologically and socially better than females.

In the study by Yingying [18] explaining the relationship between child abuse and mental health problems, and the mediating role of coping strategies and social support, the study examines whether coping strategies and social support mediate and influence the relationship between child maltreatment and mental health problems. The study sample was from Canadian society, about (342) people, who were reached using the survey method and conducting structured

interviews. The results show that both coping strategies and social support mediated closely between child abuse. The study results showed that coping skills and social support, directly and indirectly, affect mental health problems and that social support enhances mental health. Chen [2] also conducted a study aimed at identifying the effect of childhood emotional abuse on the level of aggression and studying resilience and self-esteem as a mediating variable; the data was obtained from a sample of (809) male and female students from three Chinese universities (aged between 17 and 23). The study's results showed that emotional abuse in childhood was positively associated, while it was negatively associated with resilience and self-esteem.

Regarding mediating processes, resilience and self-esteem partially mediated the relationship between childhood emotional abuse and aggression; these results emphasize the importance of enhancing levels of resilience and self-esteem in interventions designed to reduce the level of aggression in university students subjected to emotional abuse in childhood. In a longitudinal study conducted by Christiane [4] on mental health from childhood to adulthood, the study was designed by following up the sample of (11) years of age in BELLA, Germany, young people between the ages of (7) and (31) years old participated in the study. Individual growth modeling, linear regression, and descriptive analyses were performed. Mental health was better in younger participants (versus older ones) and in male participants (versus females), the study predicted the presence of more mental health problems in childhood and adolescence, which were measured at the age of (6) years and (11) years of follow-up. The research conducted by Wolf and Elklit [21] explored the connections between various forms of childhood maltreatment and the development of eating disorders in adulthood among a substantial sample of young Danish men. Participants were required to undergo a structured interview that covered a range of areas, including socio-demographic, psychological, and physical domain. Questions regarding CM symptoms, DE, PTSD, and self-esteem were analyzed using chi-square tests, ANOVAs, hierarchical regression, and multiple mediation analyses. Participants with a history of CM experienced higher levels of DE than those without abuse. The results show that PTSD symptoms and self-esteem are differentially mediated in the relationship between CM and DE. The relationship between emotional and sexual abuse with DE has a more substantial effect on self-esteem, strongly influencing PTSD symptoms.

The study of Sjoblom [17] also sought to investigate learning valuable lessons from childhood experiences for psychological wellbeing. This study sheds light on the name of the inner child, to gain more knowledge about its impact on mental health when a person grows up. The study used the qualitative method based on interviews. (20) adults, (10) men and (10) women between the ages of (22) and (68) years, were interviewed. The results showed that the participants' experiences during childhood were between good and harmful for mental health after adulthood and that the inner child remembers childhood events that affect human adaptation throughout life. The results suggest that the participants learned helpful life lessons, suggesting that experiences during childhood can help us adapt across life and generations.

In a study conducted by Mahdavi [10] that looked at the relationship between mental health and self-esteem among medical sciences students at Ardabil University, the study showed that mental health and self-esteem are essential for university students because it helps them to learn better. The general health scale (GHQ28) and the Rosenberg self-esteem scale were used, after which the data were analyzed statistically by the SPSS program after being entered into the computer. The results indicated that the distribution of mental health scales and the self-esteem scale have a positive deviation. The results concluded a positive correlation between mental health and self-esteem and that the level of mental health and self-esteem among medical sciences students at Ardabil University came to a medium degree.

1.1 The Study Problem

In light of counseling psychology and the conscious perception of the researchers, they were applauded for the concept presented by the psychologist Eric Byrne in his study of the impact of childhood on the human being. It is: that children come to this world blessed and remain so until their parents turn them into fragile and weak images of (princes into frogs), where the word prince refers to the child who is still on instinct, and the word frog; To the child who has begun to carry the sediment of childhood, that is, the experiences of the early stage of the child's life affect the pattern of his behavior in the present, as parents play a vital role in the child's life at that stage. Byrne also believed that each individual should be fully responsible for decisions related to his personal life, and this theory showed that man by nature can be positive, as the actions of his parents do not govern him, and he can overcome complex challenges and he also believes; That an individual who suffers from emotional problems will become an intelligent person if he finds someone to help him get rid of his suffering [19].

In this regard, Researchers wonder about the role that the level of self-esteem of individuals can play in overcoming childhood trauma and what is its relationship to mental health in general; if the inner child has a role in influencing our behaviors and personalities, then to what extent can we benefit from childhood experiences to refine personality and self-development, in order to reach a good level of mental health then.

So, the study problem can be posed with the following question:

What is the effect of the inner child on the mental health of Jordanian university students in light of the mediating role of the level of self-esteem?

1.2 The Study Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the inner child's awareness level among Jordanian university students?
2. What is the level of mental health among Jordanian university students?
3. What is the level of self-esteem among Jordanian university students?
4. Are there statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the estimates of the study sample of the effect of the inner child's awareness on the mental health of Jordanian university students - the mediating role of the level of self-esteem due to the variables: (sex, college, and educational level)?
5. What is the impact of the inner child's awareness on the mental health of Jordanian university students - the mediating role of the level of self-esteem?

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study sought to achieve the following objectives:

Identifying the child's inner awareness level, mental health, and self-esteem through the study sample. The current study also aimed to reveal the effect of the level of self-esteem on the level of inner child awareness and to reveal the effect of the level of self-esteem on the mental health of Jordanian university students.

1.4 The Study Importance

The importance of this study on the theoretical and practical levels is: defining the concept of the inner child, which there was a great scarcity in the studies that dealt with it, and providing a theoretical framework about it that could benefit researchers in this field, this study also intended to link the concept of the inner child with important variables in counseling psychology, namely: mental health and self-esteem. The study sought to clarify the relationship between these two variables and the variable of the inner child. The researchers also expect the study results to provide a cognitive framework that will serve as an essential reference in drawing attention to the importance of childhood within the concept of the inner child and its positive or negative impact on the level of mental health and self-esteem of individuals.

1.5 The limits of the study

The study included the following limits:

Objective limits: The objective limits of the study were limited to (the impact of the inner child on the mental health of Jordanian university students - the mediating role of the level of self-esteem).

Human limits: The study population included all Jordanian university students at Amman Arab University, Yarmouk University, and the University of Jordan, as a sample of (632) male and female students was drawn from them.

Spatial limits: The spatial boundaries of the study were limited to Amman Arab University, Yarmouk University, and the University of Jordan in Jordan.

Temporal limits: This study was applied in the year (2022-2023).

The study is determined by the results of the study, the method of sample selection, the study tools, their psychometric properties (Inner child scale, Self-esteem scale, and Mental health scale), and the research methodology used.

2 Methodologies

Study Approach

The descriptive approach was used to achieve the study's objectives and answer its questions.

The study population and its sample

The study population consisted of all Jordanian university students at Amman Arab University, Yarmouk University, and the University of Jordan, with an estimated number of (33,000) (Ministry of Education Statistics, 2022).

The study sample was chosen by the simple random method, which consisted of (625) male and female students. Table (1) displays how the study sample is distributed based on the variables under investigation.

Table 1: Distribution of the study sample according to the study variables

	Categories	Frequency	Ratio
Gender	Male	422	67%
	Female	203	23%
College	Humanities	392	62%
	scientific	233	38%
Educational level	BSC	412	66%
	Postgraduate	213	34%
Total		625	100

The Study Tool

The researchers noticed that there is no fixed scale for the subject of the inner child, so a scale was built that is commensurate in its items with the goal that the current study seeks to achieve, consisting of (18) items by referring to theoretical literature and previous studies, concerning the mental health scale; The researchers relied on the scale developed by Hussein Al-Tarawneh (2022) for the International Scale of Mental Health (SCL-90-R), which consists of (15) items. As for the self-esteem scale, the two researchers relied on the Rosenberg scale due to its popularity in the field of psychological counseling and psychology, in addition to its use in many studies, which gave it objectivity and high validity; it consists of (10) items, and items (1-6) are positive items, and items (7-10) are negative items. The study tools consisted of two parts, which are as follows:

The first section: general information about the respondents among Jordanian university students and related to the demographic variables of the respondents.

The second section: The study tools consisted of the inner child scale (18) items, the mental health scale (15) items, and the self-esteem scale (10) items.

The validity and reliability of the study tools

First: Validity of the arbitration agreement: In order to estimate this kind of honesty, the questionnaire was presented to a group of arbitrators with specialization and experience, who hold PhDs and master’s degrees in the field of counseling psychology, and their number is (13) arbitrators, where the items of the questionnaire were judged in terms of measuring their suitability to measure what they were developed for, the accuracy of the wording and the soundness of the language, and suggesting appropriate amendments, in addition, deletion or transfer from its items.

Second: The reliability of the tool: using two methods to verify the stability of the study tool by calculating the stability coefficient of internal consistency through the Cronbach alpha coefficient, and test-retest that showed in table (2):

Table 2: Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient and repetition stability for domains and total score

Domain	Test-retest reliability	Internal consistency
Inner child	0.83	0.76
Psychological health	0.86	0.81
Self-esteem	0.85	0.85

These values were considered appropriate for this study.

Study Variables

The study's main variables are the inner child, mental health, and self-esteem

3 Results

The Results of the first question: What is the inner child's awareness level among Jordanian university students?

In order to address this inquiry, we calculated the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for the level of inner child awareness among university students in Jordan. The table 3 below illustrates these findings.

Table 3: Means and standard deviations of the level of awareness of the inner child among Jordanian university students, according to the arithmetic means

N.	Rank	Items	Mean	STD	Level
1	5	I always find it easy to ask for what I want from others.	3.86	0.393	High

2	6	Have you ever wondered if you were mistreated, ignored, or abused as a child?	3.85	0.385	High
3	3	I feel that everything inside me is fine	3.84	0.381	High
3	4	I do not find it difficult to say no when I do not want something in particular	3.84	0.376	High
5	2	I grew up in a stable family	3.83	0.39	High
6	7	I enjoy visiting my parents and never find it challenging to spend time with them	3.82	0.394	High
6	16	I do not remember being traumatized as a child	3.82	0.385	High
8	18	I describe myself as coming to life and satisfied with my destiny	3.81	0.422	High
9	17	I feel and empathize with others	3.8	0.425	High
10	15	I try to be perfect most of the time	3.78	0.439	High
11	1	I find my childhood happy	3.77	0.422	High
12	8	I feel confident, worthy, and respected	3.76	0.428	High
12	10	I have a great sense of responsibility	3.76	0.437	High
14	11	I easily give up the things that bother me	3.72	0.472	High
15	9	I feel satisfied with my personal life	3.71	0.466	High
15	12	I welcome new experiences and love the openness.	3.71	0.468	High
17	14	I feel confident in some people	3.69	0.474	High
18	13	I am calm and rarely angry	3.65	0.5	Moderate
The overall score of the scale			3.78	0.43	High

Table (3) shows that the arithmetic mean ranged between (3.65-3.86), where item (5), which states "I find it difficult to ask for what I want from others," ranked first, with an arithmetic mean of (3.86), item (14), which reads: "I am calm and rarely angry," ranked last, with a mean of (3.65). The arithmetic mean of the inner child awareness scale was (3.76), at a high level.

Results of the second question: What is the level of mental health among Jordanian university students?

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the level of mental health among Jordanian university students were extracted, and the table (4) below shows that.

Table 4: Means and standard deviations for the level of mental health among Jordanian university students, according to the arithmetic means

N.	Rank	Items	Mean	STD	Level
1	1	I generally feel safe and secure.	3.82	0.427	High
2	4	I have an excellent ability to socialize with others.	3.79	0.51	High
3	6	I welcome change in society with its various institutions and extend a helping hand to those who aspire to change.	3.78	0.501	High
4	13	I care about people's comfort, but I consider my comfort a priority.	3.77	0.489	High
5	14	I can solve my problems in a good way often.	3.76	0.457	High
5	7	I constantly bring myself back for an integrated personality.	3.75	0.47	High
7	12	I often feel optimistic, satisfied, and happy.	3.75	0.453	High
8	2	I am balanced in making my decisions.	3.73	0.461	High
9	8	I feel a sense of belonging and harmony with the community in which I live.	3.72	0.442	High
10	3	It is easy for me to adapt to the demands of real life.	3.71	0.437	High
11	5	I can control my emotions and my sensitivity in general.	3.7	0.446	High
12	10	I often trust the community and the people I deal with.	3.7	0.443	High
12	11	I am very tolerant.	3.68	0.419	High
14	15	I hate violence in my dealings with those around me.	3.67	0.405	Moderate
15	9	I describe myself as balanced and calm.	3.65	0.385	Moderate
The overall score of the scale			3.73	0.45	High

Table (4) shows that the arithmetic mean ranged between (3.65-3.82), where item (1), which states "I feel safe and secure in general," ranked first, with an arithmetic mean of (3.82), item (9), which reads: "I describe myself as balanced and calm," ranked last, with a mean of (3.65), and the mean of the mental health scale as a whole was (3.73), at a high level.

Results of the third question: What is the level of self-esteem among Jordanian university students? To answer this

question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the level of self-esteem of Jordanian university students were extracted, and the table (5) below shows that.

Table 5: The arithmetic means, and standard deviations of the level of self-esteem among Jordanian university students for the positive items according to the arithmetic means

Rank	N	Items	Mean	STD	Level
1	1	In general, I am satisfied with myself	3.78	0.501	High
2	4	I can do the things others do	3.77	0.489	High
3	10	I have a positive attitude towards myself	3.76	0.457	High
4	2	Sometimes I feel useless	3.75	0.47	High
5	3	I think I possess many good qualities	3.7	0.58	High
6	7	I feel that I am a person of value, at least on an equal basis with others	3.68	0.453	High
The total score for the positive items			3.74	0.49	High

Table (5) shows that the arithmetic averages ranged between (3.68-3.78), whereas item (1), which states “In general, I am satisfied with myself,” ranked first with an arithmetic mean of (3.78), item (7), which states: “I feel that I am a person of value, at least, on an equal basis with others,” ranked last, with a mean of (3.68), and the mean of the positive self-esteem items as a whole was (3.74), at a high level.

Table 6: The arithmetic means, and standard deviations of the level of self-esteem among Jordanian university students for the negative items according to the arithmetic means

Rank	N	items	Mean	STD	Level
7	8	I wish I had more respect for myself	1.94	0.682	Low
8	6	Sure, I feel useless sometimes	1.91	0.673	Low
9	5	I feel like there is nothing that makes me proud of myself	1.91	0.611	Low
10	9	In general, I tend to feel like a failure	1.83	0.657	Low
The total score for the negative items			1.90	0.66	Low

• *The scale was reversed in the negative items*

Table (6) shows that the arithmetic averages ranged between (1.83-1.94), whereas item (8), which states, "In general, I am satisfied with myself," ranked first, with an arithmetic mean of (1.94). In contrast, item (7), which states, "In general, I tend to feel that I am a failure," ranked last with a mean of (1.83). The arithmetic mean of the negative self-esteem items as a whole was (1.90) at a low level, which means that the self-esteem on the negative items of the scale is high.

The results of the fourth question: "Are there statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the estimates of the study sample of the effect of the inner child's awareness on the mental health of Jordanian university students - the mediating role of the level of self-esteem due to the variables: (sex college, educational level)?"

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted for the impact of the inner child's awareness on the mental health of Jordanian university students - the mediating role of the level of self-esteem according to the variables of gender, college, educational level, and the table 7 below shows that.

Table 7: Arithmetic means and standard deviations of the impact of the inner child's awareness on the mental health of Jordanian university students - the mediating role of the level of self-esteem according to the variables of sex, college, educational level

Variable	Level	Mean	STD	N
Gender	Male	3.84	.67	422
	Female	3.72	.54	203
College	Humanities	3.85	.66	392
	Scientific	3.71	.54	233
Educational level	BSC	3.83	.63	412
	Postgraduate	3.96	.52.	213

Table (7) shows an apparent variation in the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the impact of the inner child's awareness on the mental health of Jordanian university students - the mediating role of the level of self-esteem according to the variables of gender, college, educational level, to show the significance of the statistical differences between the arithmetic means, the triple analysis of variance was used as showed in Table 8:

Table 8: Triple variance analysis of the effect of sex, college, and educational level on the impact of the inner child's awareness on the mental health of Jordanian university students - the mediating role of the level of self-esteem

Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F value	Sig
Gender	.008	1	.008	.022	.883
College	.217	1	.217	.607	.437
Educational level	.390	1	.390	1.090	.297
ERROR	105.860	322	.358		
Total	107.633	322			

Table (8) shows the following:

- No statistically significant distinctions ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) were observed as a result of gender.
- No statistically significant differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) attributed to the effect of college.
- There were no statistically significant differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) due to the effect of the educational level.

The fifth question: What is the impact of the inner child's awareness on the mental health of Jordanian university students - the mediating role of the level of self-esteem?

To answer this question, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was used for the effect of the child's inner awareness and self-esteem on explaining mental health among Jordanian university students, as shown in table 9.

Table 9: Staircase multiple regression analysis of the impact of the child's inner awareness and self-esteem on the interpretation of mental health among Jordanian university students"

Dependent variable	Predictors	B coefficient	multiple correlation coefficient (R)	Explained variance R2	R2	F value	Sig
Mental health scale	Inner child	.320	.126	.120	.130	28.107	.000(a)
	Self-esteem	.086	.184	.134	.016	16.341	.000(b)

It is clear from the above table that the impact of the child's inner awareness and self-esteem has a statistical significance, which showed about 13.4% of the variation in mental health, the awareness of the inner child explained 13% of the variance, and thus it contributed in a statistically significant way ($\alpha > 0.001$) in predicting mental health, and self-esteem added 1.6% of the variance. Thus, it contributed statistically significantly ($\alpha > 0.001$) in predicting mental health.

4 Discussions

The results of the first question of the study showed; the level of awareness of the inner child among Jordanian university students was high, and this can be explained by the fact that the inner child of Jordanian university students enjoys good psychological health, according to what was indicated by the results of the items, which were all high, in this regard, Assagioli [1] believes that the individual's awareness of his inner child helps to reprogram the conscious mind to be more adapted to life. Whereas DeLong [5] pointed out that if the inner child is suffering from neglect, trauma, or any other emotional pain; He may appear weak and emaciated and in need of protection. Perhaps he is burying deep within himself a pain that he is afraid to reveal, but hiding the pain does not heal him; instead, in an individual's adult life, weakness in social relationships, difficulty with self-esteem, or various personality disorders, such as shyness, anger, or attachment, appear. This result partially agreed with the result of the study of Chen [2], which aimed to identify the effect of childhood emotional abuse on the level of aggression and study resilience and self-esteem as a mediating variable, and the study of Sjoblom [17] that investigated learning beneficial lessons from childhood experiences for psychological wellbeing.

The results of the second question of the study also indicated that the level of mental health among Jordanian university students was also high, and the safety of their inner child can explain this, and this is confirmed by what was mentioned by the UNICEF Office of Research [20], in that mental health includes a person's emotional, psychological and social wellbeing, including childhood, as these dimensions affect the way of thinking, perceiving things and acting towards them. They also help in how to deal with stress and anxiety, communicating with others, and the mechanism of decision-making as mental health is a fundamental concept across all stages of life, from childhood to old age. Cotter [4] indicated that several factors influence mental health, such as biological factors related to genes or brain chemistry. And life factors, such as painful experiences or abuse or joyful experiences. Piechowski states that painful experiences affect a person's psychological state much more than joyful experiences. However, at the same time, they are credited with building a strong personality, which he called positive disintegration [14].

As for the level of self-esteem, as indicated by the third question of the study, it came at a high level. This can be

attributed to the fact that the self-esteem scale includes several positive items (1-6), all of which are high, and negative items (7-10), all of which are low, this explains that the level of self-esteem is high if we reflect the negative items, and in that self-esteem varies between Weak and strong /heathy and unhealthy/high and low, as for low self-esteem, it results is resulted when the individual's impression of himself is negative, and he does not value his opinions or ideas. Healthy self-esteem results when an individual has a balanced view of his abilities and feels competent about them [18].

Wolf & Elklit [21] indicated that self-esteem tends to be at its lowest level during childhood and to increase in adolescence until it reaches a semi-stable and continuous level after adulthood; this indicates that self-esteem and self-esteem are very similar personality traits over time, which is gradually settling down. The results of the fourth question also indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in the estimates of the study sample of the effect of the child's inner awareness on mental health - the mediating role of the level of self-esteem due to the variables: (sex, college, and educational level), this can be explained by the fact that mental health and self-fulfillment is a requirement that people seek regardless of their gender, type of education, or level. As defined by Maslow, it is that once humans meet their basic needs of food, water, and shelter, they can begin to realize themselves [4].

Finally, the results of the fifth question showed that there is an effect of the child's inner awareness on mental health and that self-esteem affects the level of mental health. This can be explained by the fact that Jordanian university students know the importance of communicating with the inner child and its impact on mental health and self-esteem. Carl Jung mentioned that there are several steps to contacting the inner child:

First: Acknowledgment of the Inner Child: Yingying [18] pointed out that anyone can communicate with their inner child, and upon contact, there may be resistance to the exploration process at first, likes to be indifferent and try constantly.

Second: Listening to what the inner child has to say: After opening the subconscious window to communicate with the inner child, it is essential to listen to the feelings that emerge, Forrest [7] mention that these feelings often appear in situations that provoke psychological pain or feel old wounds. Here, it is possible to notice the emergence of a wave of anger at some of the behaviors of a parent or sibling; it is possible to notice the emergence of an attitude of rejection, oppression, bullying, or physical abuse or harassment, moments of fear and confusion can be recalled, a feeling of insecurity, and a sense of shame can be recalled [12], note that if opening up to your inner child is painful, try to think of that child as a self-discovery.

Third: Writing a message to the inner child: Carl Jung recommends writing a letter to the inner child from the point of view of the adult individual to open a dialogue and start the healing process, providing a logical view and a more rational explanation for the painful circumstances he went through that he would not have understood at the time, he states that this would help soothe his inner child and ease his pain [5].

Fourth: Practicing meditation: Meditation has many benefits for physical and psychological health, some of which are related to the inner child's feelings. Meditation enhances self-awareness of the self and increases mental alertness about reactions to feelings and life situations that remind of the inner child [17]. Eta [9] states that children find it difficult to express their unpleasant feelings, especially if they find it suppressed or discouraged. After puberty, the individual can express and interpret his feelings more maturely.

Fifth: Bringing Back Childhood Laughter: Fun laughter is an essential element for mental health, and it is good to remember positive situations in childhood, but if childhood lacks positive moments, making time for fun now can help heal your inner child's pain [5]. Playing soccer in the park, riding a bike, or eating ice cream are all good for reviving positive emotions. Lagdon [8] indicate that self-esteem expresses the level of self-esteem and the individual's sense of value, regardless of the circumstances, the level of self-esteem is usually determined by the degree of self-confidence, a sense of stability and security, the presence of identity, a sense of belonging and competence, self-esteem increases with age, as a result of increasing awareness and passing through experiences, in contrast to the childhood period in which self-esteem is at its lowest level, and the adolescence stage as well. The university period is the period of maturity, so this explains the high level of the scale items.

5 Conclusions

By presenting theoretical literature and previous studies, it was found that there is a need to have more studies that deal with the variable (the inner child). However, it attracted the attention of famous psychologists such as Carl Jung, Stephen Diamond, and Eric Berne, which significantly emphasizes the study. The current study has attempted, though; He mentioned some studies that dealt with the impact of childhood on life after puberty or adulthood, such as a study by Yingying et al. [18] and a study by Christiane [12]. Where all studies have shown that there is a strong effect of childhood on the mental health of a person when he grows up, and some other studies have indicated that this effect may contribute

significantly to building a strong personality for a person because he will benefit from past experiences and expertise, as indicated by Sjoblom [17]. Therefore, the study considers, through its results, that the issue of research in mental health is a multifaceted and thorny issue, which may have roots in the unconscious that affects and is affected by it; dealing with the issue of the inner child is considered one of the topics of great importance, in addition to dealing with the issue of mental health and self-esteem.

6 Recommendations

The results of the study; recommend the following recommendations:

1. Conduct more studies related to the inner child and its relationship to mental health on another sample of students and compare them with this study's results.
2. Conduct more studies on the inner child and link it to other variables, such as the level of self-efficacy or motivation to learn.
3. Conduct a longitudinal study on the influence of the inner child on the multiple stages of life (childhood, adolescence, youth, and old age).

Conflicts of Interest Statement

The authors certify that they have NO affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest (such as honoraria; educational grants; participation in speakers' bureaus; membership, employment, consultancies, stock ownership, or other equity interest; and expert testimony or patent-licensing arrangements), or non-financial interest (such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, knowledge or beliefs) in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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