Belief in Personal Control and Its Relationship to some Variables among Secondary School Students

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Abstract

The research aims to identify the belief in personal control among secondary school students and its relationship to some variables. The descriptive, correlational approach was adopted, and to achieve the objectives of the research, the scale (Berrenberg, 1987) was adopted. The measure of the belief in personal control consisted of (45) items, with (19) items for the dimension General external control, (17) items for the exaggerated control dimension, and (9) items for the divine mediation dimension. On a five-point scale (strongly agree, agree, I have no opinion, reject, strongly reject), and after verifying the standard properties of the scale in terms of validity and reliability, the scale was applied to the research sample of (400) male and female students, with (204) male and (196) male students. A female student, from the specialization (scientific, literary), and they were selected by random stratified methods. After statistical analysis of the data obtained from the sample using a one-sample t-test, the results concluded that the members of the sample, middle school students, enjoy a good level of belief in personal control, and based on the results that were reached To this end, the two researchers proposed a set of recommendations and proposals.

Keywords: *Personal Control, Secondary School Students*

INTRODUCTION

First: The Research Problem

Differences in personal control beliefs serve as a central theoretical explanation for social class differences in cognition, emotion, and behavior. However, previous empirical research has not conclusively proven that personal control beliefs differ between social classes (John, Boileau & Bless, 2023:1.

However, social class differences go beyond social, economic, and structural differences, as differences in subjective social rank and in "absolute" material resources (including education and income) are linked to different social class contexts (for example, job insecurity, and neighborhood safety). Because of these differences, upper-class individuals are more vulnerable to threat, uncertainty, and restrictions. This, in turn, leads to social class differences in a basic personality trait: personal control beliefs, while lower class individuals are more likely to have lower or weaker beliefs in their personal control (Kraus, et al,. 2009: 992.

According to Kraus, et al, 2012), social class differences in personal control beliefs in turn give rise to different cognitive, emotional, and behavioral tendencies, which are described in the social-cognitive model of social class: Higher class individuals are characterized by selfishness in that they think, feel, and act in a more selfish way. Independence and self-direction, while members of the lower class, in turn, are characterized by contextualism, meaning that they think, feel, and act in a way that is more dependent on and connected to the social environment (Kraus, et al, 2012: 546).

Social class differences in personal control beliefs have far-reaching consequences for other psychological outcomes. For example, lower-class individuals attribute causes of social conditions (e.g., inequality of rank) more to the external context and less to internal dispositions (e.g. example, inheritance, and the economic structure of society versus hard work, and ability) due to their reduced beliefs regarding personal control (Kraus, et al,. 2009: 993)

Since the general character of Arab and Iraqi culture in particular is in which the center of control is linked to what is known with certainty in what can be called "divine mediation," as represented by the person's awareness

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that "God" mediates between him and his control over himself and his achievement of his goals, and the variable center of control does not include in its structure the dimension of " divine mediation which requires the existence of a broader and more comprehensive theoretical structure than the center of control to express the cultural nature that bears a fatalistic character. Accordingly, it may be better if the variable Belief Personal Control was relied upon ,Berrenberg (1987) within the framework of a theoretical model as a theoretical orientation that gives broader conceptual connotations than the contents of the locus of control, because it is considered a multi-dimensional psychological construct that includes three main dimensions that are not contained in the construct of the "locus of control" variable. These dimensions are as follows:

 -General External Control

- Exaggerated internal control

 -God – Mediated Control

(Al-Dawash and Abu Halawa, 2019: 54)

Here the role of the belief in personal control appears greatly. The individual must be more capable of self-control. Individuals who are highly aware of their behavior are more consistent during the situations they go through than individuals who are not self-aware. The individual is exposed to psychological conflicts as a result of his drive towards a certain ambition on the one hand and difficulties. Life on the other hand, which leads to his imbalance, psychological and social stability, difficulty in making decisive decisions, failure to control his behavior and organize his thoughts, which leads him to a low level of self-control and weak beliefs in his personal control (Nusrat, 2014: 5)

Based on the above, the current research (the belief in personal control and its relationship to some variables among middle school students) comes as a purposeful scientific attempt to reveal the nature of this relationship through the questions raised by this research:

1. Are middle school students characterized by a personal judgment that enables them to perform tasks successfully?

2. Is the individual aware of the source of his self-control to a good degree that enables him to control himself to a high degree?

3. Does middle school students' conscious awareness of the nature of their life and academic tasks that they perform contribute to determining the belief of personal control that helps them perform their life and academic tasks successfully and correctly?

Importance of Research:

 Basic needs can be expanded to include some psychosocial variables, such as self-esteem, status-seeking, and excitement. Given that the belief in personal control is one of the basic social needs of humans, it has great potential to moderate the relationship between social class, by enhancing or attenuating it (Chen et al. , 2020: 3.(

The study ((Chen et al, 2020) showed that the belief in personal control and self-esteem among adolescents represent key mechanisms that determine how social class is related to subjective well-being (Chen et al, 2020: 2)). The study (Langer & Rodin, 1976) found that more freedom to make choices had a positive effect on the level of belief in personal control. A higher level of belief in perceived personal control was associated with greater positive affect and life satisfaction (Baumeister, 2005)

On the other hand, a lack of belief in personal control can be quite aversive, and has been found to be related to the severity of anxiety and mood disturbance (Rosenbaum, et al,). The results of the study (Lachman & Weaver, 1998) showed that participants in the low-income group had a low sense and belief in personal control, and reported that they were less satisfied than those who belonged to the high-income group, while participants in the low-income group who enjoyed with a high belief in personal control they reported levels of life satisfaction similar to those in the high income group (Lachmann & Weaver, 1998: 769).

However, even if the objective social class of two people is similar, their feelings and belief in their personal control over their social class may be different, as subjective social class focuses on the perceived rank of individuals compared to others in society, and depends largely on the perceived relative possession of material and social resources in comparison with others (Krausetal, 2009:558).

In contrast to a person's belief that his or her life outcomes are governed by external forces, belief in personal control is associated with lower levels of hardship or merit and ability (Benassi, Sweeney, & Dufour, 1988; 358).

The belief in personal control, as embodied in a person's belief in his ability to control his life, is the most influential factor on the level of happiness and psychological contentment in life, whether on the level of himself or on the level of his relationships with society (Mirowsky & Ross, 1989: 95).

The belief in personal control refers to behavior in situations in which the individual must control his own actions in some way in the absence of any external support or restrictions in the current situation. The term control implies that there is some kind of direct incentive calling for behavior in one way, but the individual is in control. on himself and acts in an alternative manner that does not provide immediate gratification (Smith al at, 1987, p. 255).

Therefore, this effect will be mitigated when the person's need to believe in personal control is to satisfy the feeling of control (Chen et al, 2020: 4). A study (Moradi, & Hasan, 2004) found that people who have a high belief in control over life are more likely to develop higher self-esteem. A study (Kraus et al.) found that when lower-class individuals were given an experimental test to make them feel that their belief in personal control had decreased, they were more easily influenced by the surrounding context, while this tendency was attenuated when they experienced a belief in personal control. Thus, the belief in personal control increased It is a protective factor to reduce the potential risks of low social class on low self-esteem (Chen et al, 2020: 22).

Perlin & Schooler (1978) pointed out that the belief in personal control reflects a person's perception and certainty that life's opportunities are under his control and not in any way subject to chance or fateful rules.

The belief in personal control is one of the important personal variables that contributes to transforming a person from a negative being controlled by internal tendencies and external stimuli into a positive, active being who controls his behavior and emotions, achieves more psychological and social adaptation, and makes real efforts to control himself, to modify his habits, to personally control his desires and desires, and to achieve achievements. Positive personality, including for the benefit of himself and others, as the most important basic features of successful psychological adjustment is the person's feeling that he has the ability to control his behavior, thoughts, and feelings and become more capable of dealing with life's pressures, and the individual's view of himself is one of the important factors that influence his behavior and actions towards others across life situations. Wright's study (1990) indicated that a person who values himself is a self-confident person, and the more self-confident a person is, the more able he is to control his actions, as he has the ability to make his own decisions and formulate his goals which he desires (Wright, 1990: 144).

Belief in personal control is usually a product of one's view of oneself and the environment rather than simply a personality trait, although some evidence suggests that perceived control peaks in middle age and then declines into older adulthood. The general pattern of control beliefs appears to decline with age, indicating that older adults feel more vulnerable in terms of their ability to personally control outcomes related to their health. This pattern may be expected to decline due to the increased losses and decreased gains associated with aging, and that these changes are often uncontrollable. In fact, the level of perceived control becomes more important with age, as it tends to be the strongest predictor of outcomes related to successful aging, including health (Lachman et al. 2011).

The preparatory stage is distinguished by its specificity, represented by its students who are in the stage of adolescence and on the threshold of youth, and youth are the hope of society and the pillar of its renaissance, in addition to its importance lies in the fact that the features of the personality begin to crystallize and their intellectual and social tendencies begin to emerge and mature (Ibrahim, 1990: 437).

Students go through major stages of change after moving to secondary education, on the social, intellectual, cultural or psychological level, and students are vulnerable to committing many mistakes and failures if they are not dealt with as required. The secondary stage is often more complex and intense in terms of academic subjects and social relationships (Gall, et.al, 1990: 16-20). It aims to prepare the student's personality to face the reality of practical life and push him towards innovation and innovation through his possession of many intellectual skills (Mukhtar and Othman, 2019: 538).

Based on the above, the importance of satisfying psychological needs becomes clear in adolescence in particular, as needs not only make the teenager look at reality wrongly, but also lead to not seeing the truth (Gurard, 1988: 96).

Therefore, the importance of the current research can be summarized as follows:

The current research addresses one of the problems of scientific research, which is the belief in personal control among middle school students and its relationship to some variables and their role in increasing their effectiveness in their academic life and increasing their integration into the academic atmosphere.

The importance of the research lies in the importance of the target sample, which is middle school students.

The research attempts to determine the extent to which students realize their belief in personal control over academic situations as an important factor that enables students to succeed in life and be able to face challenges.

Practical Importance

1. Providing a tool (belief in personal control) that can contribute to diagnosing this variable among adolescents in general in order to benefit from it from educational counselors, middle school administrations, educational supervisors, and educational decision-makers in the Ministry of Education to include curricula that help students develop the correct psychological structure and get rid of feelings of helplessness and dependence.

Research Aims

The current research aims to identify

1. The level of belief in personal control among middle school students according to the variables of gender and grade.

Research Limits

The current research is limited to middle school students enrolled in middle and high schools affiliated with the Ministry of Education in the fourth and fifth grades in morning study and of both sexes (males, females) within the six education directorates (Al-Karkh and Rusafa) for the year 2023-2024.

Defining terms

First: Belief Personal Control

-Berrenberg's definition (Berrenberg, 1987):

-The belief in personal control is the individual's awareness of the source of his self-control, the extent to which he exaggerates this control, and the degree of divine mediation in his self-control".

The researchers adopted the definition of (Berrenberg, 1987) above to adopt its scale to measure the belief in personal control in the current research.

The belief of personal control, according to Berrenberg (1987), includes three basic dimensions, which are as follows:

☐ General External Control: This means "the extent to which a person believes that his personal achievements are self-produced versus produced by luck, fate, or the power of others".

☐ Exaggerated Internal Control: This means "an extreme and unrealistic belief in personal control. It relates to the extent of internal extremism in the appreciation of control, and is linked to some degree to obsession".

☐ God - Mediated control: It means the person's awareness of the power of God that is sufficient to help him achieve achievement, and this dimension allows an important distinction between individuals who believe that they have no control over their lives versus those who control their lives indirectly through God" (Berrenberg, 1987).

Operational definition:

The scores obtained by the respondent by answering the items of each of the three dimensions of the personal control belief scale adopted in the current research.

Second: The preparatory stage:

The two researchers adopted the definition of Ministry of Education in defining the preparatory stage: (an educational institution to which students move after passing the ministerial examinations in middle schools, and the mission of these institutions is to enable students to achieve a higher level of knowledge and skill while diversifying some intellectual and applied fields and qualifying them to enter the university (Ministry of Education, 2008: 40)

Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

Belief Of Personal Control

Personal control refers to the behavior of an individual monitoring his own actions in various situations in the absence of any external restrictions or specific pressure. The term personal control indicates that it is a direct incentive that calls for behavior in a logical manner, as the individual behaves in a way that does not provide immediate gratification, meaning that he (controls same) (Libert & Spigler, 1970: 10).

The term belief in personal control refers to the process of individuals' self-control and autonomy over their actions when they direct and organize their actions towards their goals. The focus here is on how individuals activate themselves by modifying their behavior in specific contexts (Paris & Paris, 2001: 89).

Among the skills that individuals with personal control can practice are:

1. Setting goals in the form of challenges.

2. Thinking about the positive outcomes of control.

3. Using self-reinforcement as a result of success in the belief of personal control, and self-criticism as a result of failure in this (Al-Anani, 2001: 137-138).

 Mahone and Therson (1974) point out that in order to implement the belief of personal control, the individual must be aware of what factors affect his actions and how he can change these factors in order to bring about the changes he wants to achieve, and that this awareness requires that he become The individual is in fact the bearer of the nature of the personal world and begins, through his awareness of those around him, his personal observation, and general analysis, to change certain things, such as patterns of logical thinking or the natural environment (Mahone & Theerson, 1974: 9).

 People with high levels of belief in personal control are more active than others because they analyze tasks, set appropriate goals, and develop appropriate strategies to achieve those goals. Moreover, they successfully use their motivation and will to control their behavior so that they can continue to deal with the task despite the obstacles and difficulties they may encounter. Therefore, self-management of various activities and control over dealing with motivational and emotional factors are among the most important components of personal control (Butler, 1996: 2).

Those who believe in high personal control are characterized by the ability to notice mistakes and benefit from failures in modifying behavior directed toward their goals by relying on feedback (Glaser, 1996: 6).

Theories Explaining the Belief in Personal Control

First: Julian Rotter's theory of social learning

Based on Rotter's social learning theory (Rotter, 1966), research has produced strong evidence of the crucial role that personal control beliefs play in the course of development over the lifespan, for example, cognition, social relationships, well-being, health, and life expectancy, as personal control beliefs then represent expectations that an event or result will occur in the near or distant future as a result of an individual's behavior or mental state. Here, future events relate to internal or external results that may be viewed as desirable or undesirable. In contrast to this, it is viewed as an attribution belief, as attribution and control beliefs are closely related, but reflect different belief systems (Frieder & Alexander, 2015:2).

The belief in personal control, in its distinction from the point of control, and in its connection with what is known idiomatically in the field's literature, "the belief in competence and personal mastery," reflects the person's beliefs regarding the extent of his ability to control the outcomes of his own events, facts, and life experiences, as the person's belief in his ability to control It also appears in his desire to control the rhythm of life around him, that is, the desire for behavioral events to occur or personal control is a basic characteristic of humans (Haidt & Rodin, 1995).

Despite the overlap between the meanings of the concepts of "point of control" and "belief of personal control," as the variable of belief of personal control represents an advanced conceptual formulation of other psychological concepts whose significance refers to the belief in the extent of his ability or inability to control the course, direction, and content of his personal life, yet these concepts Most of them focused on manifestations of helplessness, feelings of inadequacy, unworthiness, or loss of personal power (Seeman, 1959: 784).

The connotations of the term "belief in personal control" are consistent with the personal control component of Julian Rotter's locus of control scale, which includes items such as "When I make plans, I can implement them and stick to them" or "I have only minimal influence on what happens." For me in my life" (Al-Dawash and Abu Halawa, 2019: 56).

Based on Rotter's theory of locus of control or center of control, the individual realizes the existence of a causal relationship between action and result, and that positive and negative events and outcomes are a logical result of his own actions and belief in his personal control, and thus a belief in the internal locus of control is created in him. In contrast, the one who does not realize the existence of this causal relationship between action and result, meaning that positive and negative events are not linked to his behavioral patterns, and therefore are not due to the belief of his personal control, but rather he realizes it either by luck or chance or the control of others, or that life Its events are so complex that it is impossible to predict them, and he develops a belief in an external control center (Externa). Locus of Control (Al-Dawash and Abu Halawa, 2019: 57)

Internal and external reinforcement control:

One of the important concepts in Rotter's theory is internal and external control of reinforcement, as an individual's expectations regarding what results from his behavior affects his behavior. Rutter believes that these expectations can be generalized to a greater degree of freedom of movement and to a greater variation of reinforcements. So, the individual may believe, based on his past experiences, that the reinforcements he obtained depend on his own behaviors, or, conversely, he may believe that the reinforcements are controlled or controlled by external forces.

Thus, this theory is based on dividing people in their belief in personal control and their perception of negative and positive events into two types:

Those with internal control: They are people who believe that they are in control and responsible for what happens to them

Those with external control: They are people who believe that events are controlled from the outside and that there is no control or influence over events because of their connection to fate or luck (Al-Shamsi, 2011: 53).

This theory presented the concept of locus of control, whereby individuals attribute their success or failure to reasons for which they bear responsibility, and these are the ones whose locus of control is internal. Those who attribute the reasons for their success or failure to external causes have an external locus of control (Salman, 2007: 67).

Previous studies have examined the belief in personal control"

Study (Al-Dawash and Abu Halawa, 2019).

Hope and its relationship to the components of personal control belief and immediate intentional awareness among university students

The study aimed to identify the correlation between the hope trait and the components of the personal control belief and immediate intentional awareness, as well as investigating the differences in the components of the personal control belief and the immediate intentional awareness skills between high and low hope trait university students. The sample consisted of (150) students, and it was applied to them. Personal Control Belief Scale, and the Kentucky Inventory of Real-Time Intentional Awareness Skills. The study found a statistically significant (positive and negative) correlation between the trait of hope and the components of the personal control belief. There are statistically significant correlations between the trait of hope and the skills of immediate intentional awareness (Al-Dawash and Abu Halawa, 2019: 21). Berrenberg (1987) study:

Personal control belief scale:

The study aimed to verify the validity of a self-report measure based on a proposed multidimensional model. The Belief in Personal Control measure was applied to four subject samples in this group, selected from general psychology classes at the University of Colorado in Denver, a large university, numbering (445), (282) female students and (163) male students, with an average age of (24) years. Factor analysis revealed three interpretable components of the control structure: the general external control factor, the exaggerated internal control factor, and the factor of control through God. The results indicated preliminary support. Multidimensional perceived control with reliable and valid subscales, and consistent with the proposed control model, the three factors were associated differently with different measures of psychological adjustment, and what is particularly interesting is the positive relationship between the internal control factor (Berrenberg, 1987: 1).

Research Methodology and Procedures

The current research relied on the descriptive approach, due to its suitability to the nature of the study, as it is the most appropriate method for studying the correlational relationships between variables and revealing the differences between them in order to describe and analyze the phenomenon studied (Obaidat et al., 2000: 28) in (Mukhtar and Al-Saadawi, 2014: 152). This approach is known as it is every investigation that focuses on an educational or psychological phenomenon as it exists in the present and intends to diagnose it, reveal its aspects, and determine the relationships between its elements or between it and other educational, psychological, or social phenomena. This approach does not stop at the limits of describing the phenomenon that is the subject of research, but rather goes beyond It analyses, interprets and compares in order to arrive at meaningful generalizations, in addition to being a scientific diagnosis of a phenomenon to the extent that objective tools are available, and then expressing this diagnosis with precise linguistic and mathematical symbols according to a precise organization (Al-Zubaie and Al-Ghannam, 1981: 51-52). It is characterized by being It does not stop at describing the phenomenon, but goes further, analysing, interpreting and comparing in order to reach meaningful generalizations that increase our knowledge about the phenomenon studied (Obeidat et al., 1990: 22), and below is a review of the research procedures.

Research Community

The concept of the research community is defined as all the components of the phenomenon under study, and thus the study community is all the individuals included in the subject of the research problem and whose results will be generalized to them (Odeh and Makkawi, 1992: 106).

It means determining the extent of the individuals included in the research (Abu Allam, 2006: 157), or it is all the things or individuals that are the focus of the research problem (Al-Dardir, 2006: 21). Based on the problem of the current research and its objectives, the target population is determined by school students. The number of secondary schools in Baghdad Governorate for the academic year (2023-2024) is (251,482), distributed according to the gender variable (males, females), with (128,335) males and (123,147) females in the preparatory stage, as Table (1) shows.

Table (1) The research population is distributed according to directorates and gender (males, females) for the middle school stage in Baghdad Governorate

Directorate	Gender		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
Al-Rusafa/1	**20976**	**21704**	**42680**	**%16,9**
Al-Rusafa/ 2	**32503**	**31431**	**63934**	**%25**
Al-Rusafa/3	**19187**	**18585**	**27772**	**%15**
Al-Karkh /1	**14805**	**8780**	**23585**	**%9,4**
Al-Karkh /2	**25326**	**26726**	**52052**	**%20,8**
Al-Karkh /3	**15538**	**15921**	**31459**	**%12,5**
Total	**128335**	**123147**	**251482**	**%100**

The above data was obtained from the Ministry of Education - General Directorate of Educational Planning - Statistics Department, in its book numbered (92049) dated (11/2/2023), for Rusafa Second Education, and book numbered (38-3-4-1640 B) On (10/29/2023) for the Second Baghdad Al-Karkh Education School, the researcher was provided with data based on the task facilitation letter from the University of Baghdad, College of Education - Ibn Rushd, number (4317) on the date (10/25/2023).

The Research Sample

The sample is a part of the research vocabulary that is selected from the population under study, such that this part fully represents the research population (Ghobari et al., 2010: 96), so what is meant by the sample is the group of vocabulary that is drawn from the population that is to be researched (Al-Assadi and Fares, 2015: 117). They are selected according to special rules in order to correctly represent society (Abu Saleh, 2007: 17) in (Mukhtar and Abdel Karim, 2017: 209)

The research sample consisted of (400) male and female students from secondary schools in Baghdad Governorate and from the Karkh and Rusafa sides, distributed by (204) male and (196) female students from the Rusafa side, and the same from the Karkh side, which represents a percentage of approximately (0.037%) for the original community. . The sample was chosen by random stratified method, as (16) schools were randomly selected, with (8) schools on the Karkh side, and the same on the Rusafa side. (3) schools for males and the same for females were randomly selected from each side, and Table (2) shows this.

Table (2) The basic research sample was distributed according to gender and schools on the Karkh and Rusafa sides

Serial	Male schools /Rusafa/2	No.	Serial	Females' schools	No.
1	Ibn Rushd Secondary school for males	34	1	Al-Zahraa Secondary school for girls	33
2	Mustansiriya secondary school for males	36	2	Al-Markaziya	43
3	Al-Nidhal Secondary Schools for males	32	3	Al-Huda Secondary school for females	32
	Total	102		Total	98
	Males schools / al-Karkh 2			Females schools / al-Karkh/2	
1	Imam Ali Secondary for males	34	1	Thatt alAyun secondary for females	43
2	Al-Khayr secondary school for males	34	2	Al-Izdihar secondary school for females	33
3	Al-Farabi Secondary school	34	3	Al-Mustafa secondary	32
	Total	102		Total	98

Research Tool

In order to achieve the objectives of the current research, a tool was required to measure the belief in personal control, and for this purpose the scale (Berrenberg, 1987) was adopted, as shown.

The scale consists of (45) statements on a five-point rating continuum that ranges from strong agreement to strong disagreement, with the midpoint being neutral. The scale consists of three main dimensions that do not have a total score, in which the statements are organized around the following dimensions:

 General External Control Dimension: This dimension measures the extent to which individuals realize that the outcomes and results of their lives are achieved internally or externally, and includes (20) phrases formulated in a positive way.

 Exaggerated control dimension: This dimension measures the exaggerated and unrealistic belief in personal control and includes (17) statements formulated in a negative way.

 The God - Mediated dimension: This dimension measures the extent to which individuals realize God as a mediator who intervenes to accomplish events. It distinguishes between individuals who see themselves as controlling their lives and abilities and those who do not realize this, and it includes (8) positive statements.

Veracity of the translation: The researchers followed several procedures to verify the veracity of the translation of the research tool, as follows:

The scale was translated from English to Arabic (). The scale was re-translated from Arabic to English (). Two texts are displayed in English, one of which represents the original text of the scale, and the other represents the text translated from Arabic to English for comparison between them to verify the accuracy. Translation ( ). Present the translated text into Arabic to an Arabic language specialist to verify its linguistic integrity.( )

Logical analysis of the items of the Personal Control Belief Scale

For the purpose of achieving the apparent validity of the scale items, amounting to (45) statements, it was presented to (12) experts who specialize in the educational and psychological sciences, Appendix (2) to ensure the availability of appropriate characteristics for these statements and their alternatives in terms of form and apparent content, and to analyze the opinions of the experts in the items of the scale. Using a square test (Q2) for one sample. Each statement is considered valid when the calculated chi-square value is significant at the level of (0.05), which is equivalent to (80%) of the number of experts. All items of the scale are considered logically valid to measure what it was designed to measure. .

Exploratory application (experimenting with clarity of instructions and paragraphs:(

 For the purpose of ensuring the clarity of the scale's instructions and the clarity of its items and alternatives, and revealing the difficulties facing the respondent in order to avoid them, and the time it takes to answer the scale, the scale was applied to a sample of (30) male and female students who were randomly selected from Al-Nidal Preparatory School for Boys and Al-Huda Preparatory School for Girls, and after conducting this application and reviewing The responses showed that the scale items and instructions were clear to the students, and that the time taken to answer the scale items ranged between (15-20) minutes.

Scale Correction

It means assigning a score to the subject's response to each statement of the scale, and then summing these scores to find the total score for the Personal Control Belief Scale. Five response alternatives are placed in front of each statement, corresponding to a scale of scores ranging from (5, 4, 3, 2, 1), the highest score being Theoretically for each field, respectively (95, 85, 45) and the lowest score (19, 17, 9), while the hypothetical average is respectively (57, 51, 27.(

Statistical analysis of the items of the Personal Control Belief Scale.

 The process of statistical analysis of the scale's items is one of the basic steps in its construction, and adopting items that are characterized by good psychometric properties makes the scale more valid and stable (Anastasi, 1988: 192). The statistical analysis of the items usually aims to calculate their discriminatory power and calculate

their validity coefficients because they are the two most important indicators of the accuracy of the items and their measurement of what It was prepared to measure it (Al-Kubaisi, 2001: 32), so the statistical analysis of the items is more important than the logical analysis, because it verifies the content of the item in measuring what it was prepared to measure, by verifying some of the standard indicators of the item, such as its ability to distinguish between respondents, and its validity coefficient. (Al-Kubaisi, 1995: 5) This is because the logical analysis of the items may sometimes not reveal their validity or validity accurately, while the statistical analysis of the experimental scores reveals the accuracy of the items in measuring what they were designed to measure (Ebel, 1972: 406). Therefore, the researchers conducted the statistical analysis as follows:

a. Discrimination Power of Items:

What is meant by the discriminatory power of the items is their ability to distinguish between respondents who have a greater amount of knowledge and respondents who have less in a particular field (Melhem, 2000: 236) in (Mukhtar and Abdel Karim, 2018: 169.(

Calculating the discriminatory power of an item is considered one of its most important standard characteristics in standard-referenced psychological scales because it indicates the ability of the scale items to reveal individual differences between individuals in the trait or characteristic on which psychological measurement is based (Ebel, 1972: 399)

Through this method, we can choose the items that give the greatest amount of information about the differences in individuals' answers and delete the non-distinctive items, and this will in turn contribute to increasing the stability of the test (Moussa, 2006: 582).

 The scale was applied to the sample members, who numbered (400) male and female students, and the answer forms were corrected to extract the discriminating power of the scale's items. The scores of the sample members were arranged in descending order from the highest total score to the lowest total score, and the two extreme groups were identified by the total score, with a percentage of (27%), and the number reached The total number is (216) male and female students, with (108) individuals in the upper group and (108) individuals in the lower group. The t-test was used for two independent samples to extract the difference between the upper and lower groups, as can be seen from Tables (3)(4)(5), All items of the scale are distinctive because the calculated T-values are greater than the tabulated T-value of (1.96) at a degree of freedom (214) and a significance level of (0.05).

Table 3) Discrimination coefficients for items after general external control

Serial	High Group		Low Group		T- value	Significance level	
2	4,962	1,174	3,296	1,299	4,962	Significant	
3	7,214	1,507	2,157	1,298	7,214	Significant	
6	10,641	1,016	2,407	1,571	10,641	Significant	
11	8,664	0,515	3,824	0,874	8,664	Significant	
12	9,006	0,653	3,213	1,804	9,006	Significant	
15	9,659	0,714	2,407	0,865	9,659	Significant	
16	7,314	0,639	3,556	1,017	7,314	Significant	
19	10,596	0,881	3,065	1,210	10,596	Significant	
21	9,758	0,667	2,907	1,711	9,758	Significant	
25	7,527	1,357	2,556	1,671	7,527	Significant	
26	10,518	0,514	3,250	1,589	10,518	Significant	
30	11,725	1,162	1,815	1,060	11,725	Significant	
32	8,949	1,353	1,528	0,880	8,949	Significant	
33	5,798	0,942	1,917	0,365	5,798	Significant	
37	10,479	1,184	1,852	0,905	10,479	Significant	
38	12,197	1,036	2,556	1,292	12,197	Significant	
40	12,340	0,774	2,731	1,204	12,340	Significant	
43	10,200	1,475	1,583	1,095	10,200	Significant	
45	11,142	1,207	1,907	1,055	11,142	Significant	

Item	Arithmetic average	Deviation standard	Arithmetic average	Deviation standard	Calculated T value	0.05

Table 4) Discrimination coefficients for paragraphs after exaggerated control

0,05 Significance	T value	المجموعة الدنيا		المجموعة العليا		Serial Item
		Standard deviation	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	Arithmetic average	
Significant	11,548	1,066	2,389	0,654	3,759	1
Significant	10,205	0,555	1,528	1,176	2,787	4
Significant	9,260	0,641	1,667	1,029	2,731	7
Significant	6,840	1,512	2,648	1,370	3,972	8
Significant	13,682	0,910	2,065	1,090	3,907	10
Significant	12,352	0,943	2,269	1,075	3,944	13
Significant	12,864	1,278	1,741	1,350	4,009	17
Significant	8,833	1,422	2,343	1,391	4,009	20
Significant	15,893	0,741	2,259	0,980	4,111	23
Significant	11,243	0,827	1,630	1,447	3,407	24
Significant	10,694	1,062	2,778	0,529	3,981	27
Significant	11,543	1,128	1,750	1,532	3,833	28
Significant	10,956	0,738	2,583	0,736	3,667	29
Significant	15,692	1,028	1,630	0,940	3,704	34
Significant	12,485	1,701	2,759	0,531	4,870	35
Significant	13,527	0,720	1,620	1,029	3,231	41
Significant	6,525	1,807	2,926	1,330	4,315	42

Table 5) Discrimination coefficients for paragraphs after divine mediation

Discrimination coefficients for paragraphs after exaggerated control

Significance 0,05	T value	المجموعة الدنيا		المجموعة العليا		Serial Item
		Standard deviation	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	Arithmetic average	
دالة	10,379	1,039	3,120	0,869	4,454	5
دالة	9,484	0,859	3,861	0,445	4,731	9
دالة	9,803	0,931	2,046	1,461	3,657	14
دالة	13,873	1,177	1,657	1,151	3,824	18
دالة	12,026	0,548	2,130	1,406	3,852	22
دالة	12,345	1,535	2,417	0,989	4,556	31
دالة	9,938		3,250	0,506	4,880	36

Nested grid (item 36):

0,476	5	0,517	1	0,261	2
0,505	9	0,507	4	0,374	3
0,486	14	0,502	7	0,512	6
0,511	18	0,380	8	0,495	11
0,505	22	0,564	10	0,420	12
0,515	31	0,535	13	0,543	15
0,538	36	0,542	17	0,347	16
0,558	39	0,393	20	0,461	19
0,622	44	0,634	23	0,481	21
		0,500	24	0,388	25
		0,534	27	0,565	26
		0,525	28	0,543	30
		0,496	29	0,420	32
		0,598	34	0,354	33
		0,539	35	0,534	37
		0,606	41	0,535	38
		0,359	42	0,493	40

						0,454	43				
						0,522	45				
				1,653							
دالة	12,628			0,538				1,194	1,449	3,046	39
دالة	15,621			1,024				2,287	1,035	4,444	44

Internal Consistency Method

Empirical validity through the item's correlation with the total score is more accurate than its face validity; Because it reveals that the item measures the same concept that the total score measures, meaning that the items are homogeneous in measuring what they were prepared to measure. (Kroll, 1960: 426), that is, each paragraph aims to measure the same function that the other paragraphs measure. (Ahmed, 1981: 293). The Pearson correlation coefficient was adopted, noting that the sample of the validity of the items consists of (400) male and female students in the current research, as Anastasia indicated that the correlation of the item with an internal or external criterion is an indicator of the validity of the scale and its items, and when a suitable external criterion is not available, the total score For the respondent, it represents the best internal criterion for calculating this relationship. (Anastasia, 1976: 206), and this is what the researcher adopted in the procedures for finding the correlation coefficient between the score of each item and the total score of the subscale with statistical significance, and considered it an indicator of the validity of the scale. It turns out that all correlation coefficients are statistically significant at the significance level (0.05), as the values Its correlation coefficients with the total score are greater than the tabular value of (0.098) with a degree of freedom (398) and a significance level of (0.05), and Table (6) shows this.

Table (6) Evaluate the correlation coefficients between the score of each item and the total dimension score of the Personal Control Belief Scale

General external control		Exaggeration Control		Divine Mediation	
Paragraph number	value of the correlation coefficient	Paragraph number	value of the correlation coefficient	Paragraph number	value of the correlation coefficient

Standard (psychometric) properties of the scale:

Among the most important standard characteristics of the scale confirmed by specialists in psychological measurement are the characteristics of validity and reliability, as the accuracy of the data or scores that we obtain from psychological scales depends on them (Abdul Rahman, 1998: 227)

These properties have been verified as follows:

First: Validity of the Scale:

Honesty means that the scale measures what it was designed for, that is, the honest measure measures the function that it claims to measure and does not measure anything else instead of it or in addition to it (Abdel Hafeez and Mustafa, 2000: 173), and through it is possible to verify the extent of the measure's ability to achieve the purpose. For which it was prepared (Odeh, 1998: 333-335) in (Mukhtar and Abdul Hussein, 2019: 785). Therefore, validity is the most fundamental consideration in developing and evaluating tests (Allam, 2012: 251) in (Mukhtar and Al-Arbawi, 2019: 56)

For the current scale, two indicators of validity were extracted: face validity and construct validity. The following is an explanation of how to verify each indicator:

a. Virtual validity:

This type of honesty is based on the extent to which the scale represents the different fields or branches of the ability or trait that it measures, as well as on the balance between them such that it becomes logical for the content of the scale to be honest provided that it represents all of the ability or trait that is to be measured (Abdul Rahman, 1998: 150). Anderson points out that the basic aspect of this validity is that it be representative and appropriate for the range of behavior to be measured (Anderson, 1981: 136). This was achieved when

specialized experts with experience in the field of educational and psychological sciences agreed on the validity of the items in measuring Belief in personal control.

Construct Validity

Construct validity is described as the type of honesty that most represents the concept of honesty, which is sometimes called concept validity or hypothetical construct validity. It means the extent to which the psychological scale measures the formation of a particular hypothesis or psychological concept (Rabie, 1994: 98). Construct validity means the degree to which the scale measures a theoretical construct or a specific characteristic (Anastasi, 1976: 151). Cronbach & Mehl point out that there are some indications and indicators of the validity of the construct, perhaps the most important of which are the differences between groups and individuals, as it is logical to assume that individuals differ in the extent to which they have the measured characteristic, and this The assumption should be reflected in their performance on the scale (Faraj, 1980: 315). In (Ahmed, 2018: 169) .

The validity of the construct was verified through two indicators:

 Discrimination by finding differences between the two extreme groups

 The relationship of the item score to the total score for each sub-dimension.

Second: Scales Reliability:

Reliability means the accuracy or consistency of the scale. If an individual obtains the same score (or a score close to it) on the same scale or sets of equivalent or identical questions when applied more than once, then we describe the scale in this case as having a high degree of stability (Abu Allam, 2011: 481), the goal of calculating reliability is to estimate the errors of the scale and suggest ways to reduce these errors (Murphy, 1998: 63.(

Reliability was calculated using the test-retest, Cronbach and Calati methods:

A- Test-retest method:

(Firkson) emphasizes that extracting the reliability coefficient in this way is by re-applying the scale twice, in two different time periods, to the same group of individuals (Melhem, 2002: 257), and (Ebel, 1972) believes that the correlation coefficient between the scores of the first application of the test and the second application is The stability coefficient of the test and the stability coefficient in this case is called the stability coefficient over time (Ebel, 1972: 132).

For the purpose of extracting reliability in this way, the scale was re-applied to the reliability sample, which consisted of (40) male and female students, with a time interval of (14) days from the first application, as Adams indicated that re-applying the scale for the purpose of identifying its reliability must not exceed two weeks from The first application, then the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between the scores of the first and second application, and the reliability values appeared as shown in Table (7).

Table 7)Reliability coefficient using Cronbach's alpha method and retest for the dimensions of the personal control belief scale

Sub-dimension	Reliability coefficient
General external control	0,93
Excessive control	0,90
Divine mediation	0,91

It is clear from the table above that the reliability coefficient ranged (0.93, 0.90, 0.91), respectively. This value is a good indicator of the stability of individuals' answers to the scale over time, as (Al-Issawi) indicated that if the correlation coefficient between The first and second applications (0.70) or more, as this is a good indicator of the stability of tests in the educational and psychological sciences (Al-Issawi, 1985: 58).

Cronbach's Alpha equation

The goal of finding the reliability coefficient in this way is to ensure the consistency of the individual's performance on the scale across the board from one item to another. If it indicates the overall homogeneity of the items of the scale and the stability of the individuals' responses, then the more homogeneous the content of the scale is, the higher the internal consistency will be (Al-Zamili et al., 2009). : 276), given that the item is a measure in itself, as the discrepancies are calculated between the reliability sample scores on all items of the scale, where the scale is divided into a number of individuals equal to the number of its items (Odeh, and Al-Khalili, 1988: 254), and it was extracted The reliability of the scores of the questionnaires of the basic sample of (400) using this method, and using the Cronbach equation, the reliability values were as shown in Table (8).

Table 8) Cronbach's alpha stability coefficients for the dimensions of the personal control belief scale

Sub-dimension	Reliability coefficient
General external control	0,90
Excessive control	0,87
Divine mediation	0,89

It is clear from Table (8) that the stability coefficient values ranged from (0.90, 0.87, 0.89), respectively, which is a good and acceptable stability coefficient.

☐ Description of the scale in its final form:

The measure of personal control belief in its final form consisted of (45) items, with (19) items for the general external control dimension, (17) items for the exaggerated control dimension, and (9) items for the divine mediation dimension. On a five-point scale (strongly agree, agree, I have no opinion, reject, strongly disagree) and giving them weights (5, 4, 3, 2, 1), the highest theoretical score for each area, respectively, is (95, 85, 45) and the lowest score is (19, 17, 9) and the hypothetical average, respectively (57, 51, 27).

Statistical indicators for the personal control belief scale:

The two researchers used the statistical package for social sciences

(SPSS) (Statistical Package for Social Science) in extracting these statistical indicators, as shown in Table (9).

Table 9) .Values of statistical indicators for the Personal Control Belief Scale

Divine Mediation	Exaggerated Control	General External Control	Statistic Means	
29,70	50,63	62,29	**Mean**	Arithmetic Average
30,00	51,00	63	**Median**	Median
32	44	66	**Mode**	Mode
6,24	11,38	11,03	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Deviation**
38,95	129,71	121,72	**Variance**	**Variance**
-0,024	-0,071	-0,265	**Sleekness**	**Sleekness**
-0,518	-0,602	0,064	**Kurtosis**	**Kurtosis**
12	22	25	**Minimum**	**Minimum**
45	80	91	**Maximum**	**Maximum**
33	58	66	**Range**	**Range**

When observing the values of the aforementioned statistical indicators for the domains of the Personal Control Belief Scale, it appears from Table (9) above that the scores of the domains of the Personal Control Belief Scale are close to the shape of their frequency distribution to a moderate distribution, because the degrees of the

mean, median, and mode are close, and the skewness and kurtosis coefficients are close to zero, as Whenever the skewness coefficient and kurtosis coefficient are close to zero, whether positive or negative, this indicates that the form of the frequency distribution of scores is close to the form of the normal distribution. Accordingly, the scale is accurate in measuring the psychological concept and the sample is representative of the population, which allows the results of applying this scale to be generalized. (Odeh, 1998: 86)

Fifthly, the final application

After verifying the psychometric properties of the Personal Control Belief Scale, it was applied in its final form to the research sample of (400) male and female students, including (204) male and (196) female students, from middle school students within the education directorates. The two researchers began applying it after writing important facilitation books. For each of the six Baghdad districts that were included in the current study's sample.

The application continued from (11/12/2023) to (11/30/2023)

-Statistical methods:

Most of the statistical methods used in the current research were calculated using the computer program (SPSS) and are:

1. One-sample t-test: to identify the level of variables in the sample.

2. T-Test for two independent samples to calculate the discriminatory power of the items of the Personal Control Belief Scale.

3. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to find the following-:

4. Cronbach's alpha equation for internal consistency, used to extract reliability using the alpha method for internal consistency of the research tool.

Presentation and interpretation of results:

Identifying the level of personal control beliefs among middle school students according to the variables of gender and grade.

To achieve this goal, the two researchers applied the Personal Control Belief Scale, which consists of (45) items, to the research sample consisting of (400) male and female students.

After processing the data statistically, the research results showed that the arithmetic mean of the scores of this sample on the scale reached (62,295) degrees for the external control dimension, with a standard deviation of (11,033), and (50,630) degrees for the (reported control) dimension, with a standard deviation of (11,389). The arithmetic mean reached (29,707) degrees for the dimension of divine mediation, with a standard deviation of (6,242) degrees. To know the significance of the difference between the arithmetic mean and the hypothesized mean of (57, 51, 27) degrees for each dimension, respectively, a one-sample t-test was used, and it turned out that the difference Statistically significant at the level of significance (0.05) and in favor of the arithmetic mean, as the calculated T-value was (9.599), for the external control dimension, which is greater than the tabulated T-value of (1.96), and insignificant for the exaggerated control dimension, as the calculated T-value was (0.650), which is smaller than the tabulated T-value, which reached (1.96), while the calculated T-value reached (8,675) for the dimension (divine mediation), which is larger than the tabular T-value, which amounted to (1.96) which indicates that middle school students have a good level of personal control belief. This result indicates that the level of personal control belief among sample members is good. This result is attributed to the middle school students having a degree of belief and the effective influence it represents in creating a situation , reliance, trust, and making great efforts during the learning process to achieve success and accomplish the duties assigned to them.

This result is consistent with Rotter's theoretical framework, in which research has produced strong evidence of the decisive role played by personal control beliefs in the course of development over the lifespan, as personal

control beliefs then represent expectations of the occurrence of an event or result in the near or distant future as a result of the individual's behavior or mental state, here. Future events relate to internal or external outcomes that may be perceived as desirable or undesirable. In contrast to this, it is viewed as an attribution belief, as attribution and control beliefs are closely related, but reflect different belief systems (Frieder & Alexander, 2015:2.(

This result agreed with the study of Berrenberg (1987), in which factor analysis revealed three interpretable components of the control structure: the general external control factor, the exaggerated internal control factor, and the factor of control through God. It differed with the study of John et al. et al, 2023)

To determine the significance of the difference between the arithmetic means and the hypothesized mean for each dimension, the researcher used the t-test for one sample, and the results were as shown in Table (10) and Figure (1).

Table 10) Means, standard deviations, and t-values for the Personal Control Belief Scale

Significance	T- value		Hypothesis Mean	Standard Deviation	Arithmetic Mean	Sample	Dimensions of personal control belief
	Tabled	Accounted					
Significance	1,96	9,599	57	11,033	62,295	400	General External control
Insignificant	1,96	0,650	51	11,389	50,630	400	Exaggerated Control
Significant	1,96	8,675	27	6,242	29,707	400	Divine Mediator
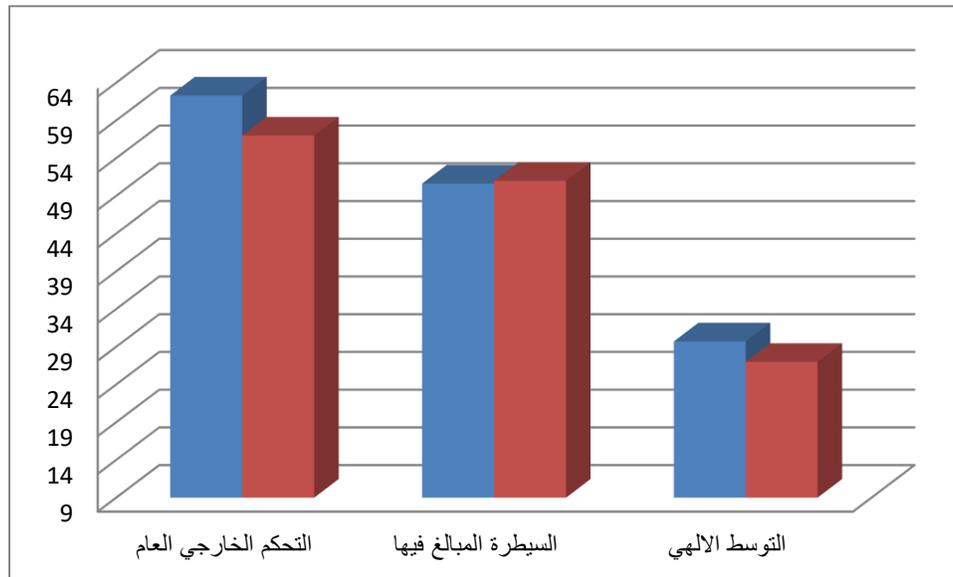
The arithmetic and hypothetical average of the dimensions of the personal control belief scale

In order to know the level of each dimension of the belief in personal control among the research sample, a standard was set for that by collecting (hypothetical mean + standard deviation) and (hypothetical mean - standard deviation), and thus the standard became as shown in Table (11)

Table 11) The criterion for knowing the level of dimensions of personal control belief

High level	Medium level	Low level	Dimensions
more than 73,33	73,33 -51,26	less than 51,26	General external control

more than 61,75	61,75 -39,24	less than 39,24	Excessive control
more than 35,95	35,95 -23,46	less than 23,46	Divine mediation

Another procedure was to identify the dimensions of the belief in personal control according to the variables of gender and academic grade, as follows:

A- According to gender (males – females)

The responses of males and females to the dimensions of the Personal Control Belief Scale were taken separately, and for the purpose of identifying differences between the arithmetic averages and the hypothetical average for each dimension, the researcher used a one-sample t-test, and it turned out that the difference was statistically significant at the significance level (0.05) for the two dimensions (General external control and divine mediation) as the T-values calculated for them were greater than the tabulated T-value of (1.96), with a degree of freedom (203, 195) and not statistically significant with respect to the dimension (exaggerated control) as the T-value calculated for it was smaller From the tabular T value of (1.96), Table (12) and Figure (2) show this.

This explains why males do not differ from females in their enjoyment of beliefs in personal control over gender, meaning that they are characterized by the search for logic, thinking, and effective belief that is manifested through the consistency of ideas and beliefs that the student possesses in order to process the information he encounters in the study environment with cognitive harmony.

This result is consistent with Rotter's theoretical framework. According to this proposition, the point of control takes two basic dimensions. The first is "the point of external control," which is expressed as "a general and learned expectation in which the person believes that the outcomes of situations are determined by external environmental factors that he has no relation to and no ability to control, such as The power of other people, luck, ability, or chance. Whoever adopts this view believes that he is helpless and powerless and that he is at the mercy of the environment, circumstances, and fate. In contrast, the view of internal control represents the psychological opposite of the first view and embodies an educated and generalized expectation that outcomes are a function of one's choices, actions, abilities, and efforts. . The connotations of the term "belief in personal control" are consistent with the personal control component of the Julian Rotter Destination of Control Scale.

While Berenberg explains the variance for the dimension (exaggerated control), it relates to the extent of the internal extremism of the estimate of control, and this factor embodies a type of extreme and unjustified belief according to the person's abilities."

Means, standard deviations, and t-values for the Personal Control Belief Scale

Significance	T- value		Hypothesis Mean	Standard Deviation	Arithmetic Mean	Sample		Dimensions of personal control belief
	Tabled	Accounted						
Significance	1,96	7,036	57	11,051	62,446	204	Males	Dimensions of personal control belief
significant	1,96	6,520	57	11,040	62,138	196	Females	
Insignificant	1,96	0,240	51	11,381	50,809	204	Males	General external control
Insignificant	1,96	0,681	51	11,424	50,444	196	Females	
Significant	1,96	6,226	27	6,249	29,721	204	Males	Excessive control
Significant	1,96	6,040	27	6,250	29,694	196	Females	
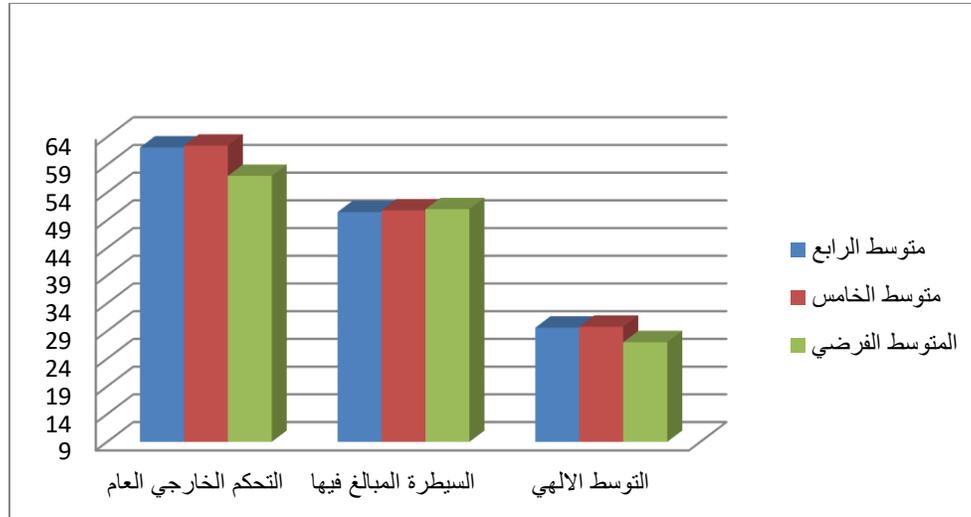
CONCLUSIONS

In light of the results of the current research, the following can be concluded

1. The presence of awareness and varying proportions of personal control beliefs among preparatory school students, as these proportions vary depending on the nature of the belief itself and the availability of the necessary requirements for it. In general, these beliefs in various proportions were acquired through some family or school environment or academic courses in some specializations or through effort or while completing academic duties and assignments.

2. The unified cultural and social environment that middle school students live in has contributed to reducing the differences in the two research variables and the relationship between them according to the variables of gender (males/females) and grade (fourth/fifth), and most of the students' variance is due to individual factors related to the psychological structure of the individual.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the current research, the researcher comes out with the following recommendations:

The need for educational institutions to constantly take into account the personal and psychological aspects of teaching methods, while paying attention to developing curricula and curricula so that they can keep pace with the scientific and cognitive progress that prevails in the world now.

Educational institutions, in particular, must play a major and effective role in instilling the principles of personal control beliefs in education and application, as they are starting centers towards excellence.

Working to develop beliefs in personal control in schools to keep pace with the challenges they face in the surrounding environment, as the success of any work necessarily depends on the skill of those responsible for it first.

Suggestions

To complement the results of the current research, the researcher conducted the following studies:

Conduct a similar study on other samples, such as primary school students or bilingual students.

Conduct a comparative study of personal control beliefs among different groups in society (rural and urban) (principals and teachers).

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