

Psychological Stress and its Relationship with Marital Adjustment Among Working Women in Jordan

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Abstract

Objectives: The study aimed to identify Psychological Stress and its Relationship with Marital Adjustment Among Working Women in Jordan.

Methods: A (40) items scale measuring stress and (53) scale measuring marital adjustment were developed by the researchers and applied on (255) working women in Amman selected in the available method in September 2020 during the Covid-19 Pandemic period.

Results: As a result of the survey, it was found that working women have a high level of marital Adjustment. On the other hand, the degree of psychological pressure is moderate, and the adjustment based on the number of children is favorable for those with three or fewer children, and there is a difference in psychological pressure among those who worked eight hours or more. The results showed that there is an inverse correlation between marital adjustment and psychological stress.

Conclusions: It was found that the level of psychological pressure is moderate and level of marital adjustment among working women is high. Whereas An inverse correlation between marital adjustment and psychological stress was found, which lead us to recommend improving the condition of work and decreasing the number of hours. Moreover conducting training programs for working women in how to deal with stress.

Keywords: *psychological stress, marital adjustment, working.*

Introduction

There are several factors that affect marriage, but perhaps the main factor is adaptation to stressful stimuli. Adapting to different situations in a rapidly changing and evolving society is not an easy task. Studies indicate that marital maladjustment is a risk factor for of psychological diseases. Aggressive relationships also affect the mental and physical health of couples (Deshpande & Sarda, 2014). Marital adjustment is defined as coordination and empathy to achieve common goals in the life of a couple, resulting in mutual satisfaction. Coordination between husbands and wives allows conflicts to be

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avoided or resolved intelligently to the mutual satisfaction of both parties (Driver and Gottman, 2004).

Working women take on many roles and burdens in government, work in public institutions and carry the challenges and burdens of their jobs, including the problems and obstacles that burden them. Therefore, working women often suffer from anxiety, stress, irritability and other emotional disturbances, stress, fatigue and various health problems. All of these negative work-related consequences are carried into the home by women, with clear implications for spouses and children (Waite et al., 2009).

Psychological stress appears as physical and psychological fatigue that affects a person and is the result of various life events that limit a person's ability to overcome obstacles and difficulties (Roberts et al., 2014). Hayes and Watson (2013) define psychological stress as a wide range of difficulties and challenges that people face, including internal, emotional, psychological, environmental and cultural.

Many studies indicate the negative impact of psychological stress on women in general (Singh, M., Singlh, 2006; Roberts et al., 2014).

- Poor quality of care provided by mothers to their children.
- External emotional relationships with family
- Inability to reconcile the different roles they play.
- Guilt and fatigue.
- Low level of physical and psychological immunity.
- Inability to fulfill expected life roles.

Bhattacharjee and Tripathi (2012) found that a woman's personality can be a factor in increasing her level of psychological stress, and many factors such as mental and physical health level, the birth of a new child, divorce or marriage, etc. explained that it affects the personality of Separation, spouse or child illness, lack of control, multiple roles (Krishnan, 2014), family issues, lack of support from other partners, attachment to children, limited Motherhood, lack of experience, knowledge, parenting skills and social isolation (Weissman, 2001).

Several of cross-cultural studies, researches and fieldworks which explored the impact of working conditions on the mental health of working women and the role of social support and family considerations in prolonging stress and health problems for both working and non-working women have been implemented. Social support plays a key role in improving the mental health of working and non-working women across cultures, helping them feel better about social security and prosperity. Many studies have shown that people suffer from stress, anxiety and depression to a great extent and the main causes of ill health among working women are stress, tension, and depression. According to cross-cultural studies and global statistics from 1990 to 2017, depression affects more than 50% of people, and 620 million people suffer from depression in 2013. (Abbas et al., 2019).

The results showed that working women play different roles, both at work and at home. They face an unhealthy work environment that can lead to stress, anxiety, and mental health issues. Working and married women experience more stress, anxiety, and depression when juggling their duties at work and at home, with unhealthy consequences for their mental health (Hammond et al., 2017). As a result, working women are burdened with responsibilities at home and at work. Thus, some women are unable to fulfill their family responsibilities, leading to anxiety, stress, and depression (Hashemi et al., 2007).

Women are one of the most vulnerable groups in society to psychological pressure due to the diverse roles . played by them in Arab society. In many cases, the pressures of women's roles may exceed their abilities and status. Which leads to inadaptation to pressure. This pressure deprives women of strength and effort to achieve psychological

and family stability. Butzer & Konstantareas (2003) found that women suffer from high levels of life stress that affect their physical and psychological health and can increase their anxiety about their future and their children.. This makes them feel unstable and insecure in the family and encourages them to find a secure future for themselves and their families.

Asma (2015) stated that there is a negative relationship between the pressures women face at work and marital compatibility. A study by Al-Omari (2005) research found that the negative effects of women's work increase their demands on their husbands and children, increasing the burden and causing more stress ,anxiety and others. Because it has a negative psychological effect. Yüksel & Dağ (2015) conclude that women express their psychological state in a distorted way as they begin to complain about health problems, fatigue, and absenteeism from work.

A study by Jameh (2010) shows that a woman's dual life between work and home leads to a life of self-doubt, which forces her to fulfill her responsibilities towards her husband, family, children and nature.

This study provides important information for many social institutions involved in family caregiving, especially women, and it will be useful for scholars in the field in terms of the aspects and variables that directly relate to and influence families in Jordan. It can be considered as a reference for them

Previous studies

The researchers have gone through the available related literature, which are relevant to the present study and have been presented in coherent and systematic manner.

Sain (2022) aimed to determine the level of mental health and family adjustment among married, working and non-working women. The results showed that working and non-working women had higher mental health and family adjustment. There were no statistically significant differences in mental health or family adjustment between employed and unemployed married women.

Gilbert & Vézina (2020) is the first to assess the effects of simultaneous exposure to psychosocial stressors and significant family responsibilities at work on women's psychological distress. The results show that the presence of high family responsibilities does not increase the prevalence of mental disorders in women. However, exposure to job stress or an effort-reward imbalance was associated with higher prevalence of psychological distress at 3- and 5-year follow-up (PR ratio 1.25 to 1.62). Simultaneous exposure to psychosocial stressors at work and high family responsibilities increased the prevalence of psychological distress (PR 1.44 to 1.87), but the interaction between stressors and responsibilities was not observed.

A study by AL-Zyoud (2020) aimed to explore the relationship between psychological stress in working mothers and family adjustment in Jordanian society, and its effects on parenting. The sample included working mothers (72) and the results showed that: There was no relationship between psychological stress and marital compatibility. Effects of working mothers' adaptation to marriage and working mothers' psychological pressure on child rearing.

Banat et al. (2020) surveyed 568 working women aged 22 to 60 years from a socioeconomic group to compare perceived occupational stressors and well-being among working women in Jordan, The results showed that the levels of occupational stress and well-being among working women were average, and that there was a statistically significant difference in the levels of occupational stress and well-being among working women in Jordan based on age, marital status, education level and qualifications. It was shown that there was no difference in years of experience, perceptions of occupational

stress in favor of women (ages 22-30) and the experience that there is a significant positive correlation between occupational stressors and well-being, excluding age variation with respect to work environment.

Oraon & Kumari (2019) conducted a study to identify to investigate stress in working and non-working women. The most important finding of the study is that working women are more exposed to psychological stress than non-working women. The relationship between working and non-working women was significant at her 0.01 level. Similarly, non-tribal women experience more stress than tribal women.

Kumar and Varma (2019) found statistically significant differences between working and non-working married women regarding marital adjustment, social support, depression, and suicidal ideation. indicates that. The results also showed associations between all variables measured between employed and non-working married women.

Ibn Khaira and Ibn Zahi's (2017) study the difference between both working and non-working women in marital adjustment on a sample of (145) wives, (76) workers in the city of Ouargla,, and (66) non-working women. The results showed that both working and non-working women achieve marital adjustment, and there are no significant differences between working and non-working women.

Parameswari (2016) study investigated the impact of emotional intelligence on family adjustment the sample consisted of 100 working and 100 non-working women selected from the Salem area. This study revealed that emotional intelligence has a significant effect on marital compatibility among married women and that there is no statistically significant difference in marital compatibility between working and non-working married women. Women between the ages of 36 and 45 were found to be more compatible. Emotional intelligence was higher in married women and married non-working women in the age group of 25 to 35 years..

As showed from the previous studies most of them addressed marital adjustment, or psychological stressors separated or linked to other variables on different populations, while this study aimed to find the relationship between marital adjustment and psychological stressors among working women in Jordan.

The problem of the study

Although there is a lot of researches studying women's issues, they rarely deal with variables related to working women, who are the subject of the current study. Working women have great responsibilities inside and outside the home and worth studying. They are exposed to extreme stressors resulting from the nature of their work, which requires accuracy, diligence, and endurance, in addition to the woman's role as a wife and mother who cares for raising and caring for children (Al-Qura'an, 2015). This prompted the researcher to pay attention to study this category. As in this research . Moreover this research add another variable which has great importance ,marital adjustment.The importance of the current study comes from its topic, which is psychological stressors and their relationship to marital adjustment for working women in Jordan, which adds a new knowledge dimension and enriches knowledge at this field. The practical importance of this study is also represented by revealing the level of psychological stress and its relationship to marital harmony among working women, as well as in providing two tools, which are the Psychometric stress scale and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), which researchers and specialists can benefit from.

Questions of the study:

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of psychological stressors among working women in Jordan?
2. What is the level of marital adjustment among working women in Jordan?

3. Does the level of psychological stressors of working women in Jordan differ according to the variables of the number of children and the number of working hours?
4. Does the level of marital adjustment differ for working women in Jordan, according to the variables of the number of children and the number of working hours?
5. Is there a correlation between psychological stressors and marital adjustment for the working woman?

Method and procedures

Methodology of the study: The descriptive approach was applied for its relevance for the study.

Study population: The study members consist of (250) married women who have children and work in public or private sectors in the capital Amman, Jordan, during September of 2020 during Corona pandemic.

Study tool:

First: Psychological stressors scale

The researcher developed Psychological stressors Scale by referring to (Al-Quraan, 2015; Abu Al-Hosn, 2010; Alomran, 2008). The scale consists of 30 items distributed in the following dimensions: Professional stressors from 1-7. Marital stressors from 8-15. Stressors are related to children from 16-23. Social stressors from 24-30

The construct validity indicators were extracted, and the correlation coefficients were calculated between the item and the field, where the coefficients ranged between (0.45 - 0.91), the correlation coefficient between the item and the total degree where they ranged, and between (0.39 - 0.85) the fields.

The stability of the scale was extracted by calculating the internal consistency and the Cronbach Alpha equation, where the stability value was (87%) for the scale.

The scale was corrected by giving the answers: always, often, sometimes, little, and never, scores 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 are given, respectively. Thus, the score on the scale ranges from 30 to 150.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)

The marital adjustment was developed after Based on the literature on the subject (Bin Khaira and Bin Zahir, 2017; Brahimi, 2015; Khader, 2010)

The scale consists of (35) items distributed over the following dimensions: Economic adjustment dimension, items (1-7). Mental adjustment dimension, items(8-15). Social adjustment dimension (16-27). Psycho-emotional adjustment dimension items

Construct validity was extracted, and the correlation coefficients were calculated between the item and the field, where the coefficients ranged between (0.24 - 0.92). The correlation coefficient between the item and the total degree ranged (0.38 - 0.87), and between the fields.

The stability of the scale was extracted by calculating the internal consistency and the Cronbach Alpha equation, where the stability value was (85%) for the scale. Finally, the scale was corrected by giving the answers: always, often, sometimes, little, and never; scores 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 are given respectively, and the score on the scale ranges from 35-175.

Procedures of the study

- Preparing the tools in the final forms after making sure of their validity and stability.

- Selecting a study sample from wives who have children and working in public or private sectors in the capital, Amman, Jordan.
- Applying scales to the study sample to collect the required data through an electronic link using WhatsApp application during September in the Covid-19 Pandemic period 2020
- Conducting statistical analyzes and extracting the results.
- Discussing the results and coming up with recommendations

Results

The following are the results of the study that were obtained by answering its questions as follows:

The first question: What is the level of psychological stress among working women in Jordan?

To answer this question, means and standard deviations of the level of psychological stress among working women in Jordan were extracted, and the Table below illustrates that.

Table 1. Averages and Standard Deviations of the level of Psychological Stress among Working Women in Jordan arranged in descending order according to the arithmetic means

Rank	No.	Domain	Means	Standard deviations	Level
1	1	Occupational stress	2.96	.720	Average
2	3	Children related stress	2.66	.966	Low
3	2	Marital stress	2.62	.906	Low
4	4	Social stress	2.62	.917	Low
		Psychometric stress scale	2.71	.765	Average

Table 1.shows that the averages ranged between (2.62-2.96), occupational stress came in first order with the highest average of (2.96), and stress-related to children came in second order with an average of (2.66), while both marital and social stressors came in the last order, with a mean of (2.62), and the arithmetic mean of the Psychometric stress scale was (2.71).

The second question: What is the level of marital adjustment among working women in Jordan?

To answer this question, averages and standard deviations of the level of marital adjustment among working women in Jordan were extracted, and the Table below illustrates that.

Table 2. Averages and Standard Deviations of the level of Marital Adjustment among Working Women in Jordan arranged in descending order according to the arithmetic means

Rank	No.	Dimension	Means	Standard deviations	Level
1	4	Psycho-emotional adjustment	3.84	.891	High
2	3	Social adjustment	3.76	.733	High
3	1	Economic adjustment	3.69	.783	High

4	2	Intellectual adjustment	3.62	.880	Average
		Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)	3.73	.751	High

Table 2. shows that the averages ranged between (3.62-3.84). The psycho-emotional adjustment came first with the highest average of (3.84), and the Social adjustment dimension came secondly with an average of (3.76). The economic adjustment came thirdly with an average of (3.69), while intellectual adjustment came in the last order with an average of (3.62), and the average of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) as a whole was (3.73).

The third question: Does the level of psychological stress among working women in Jordan differ according to the variables of the number of children and the number of working hours?

To answer this question, averages and standard deviations of the level of psychological stress among working women in Jordan were extracted according to the variables of the number of children and the number of working hours. The table below shows that.

Table 3. Averages and Standard Deviations of the level of Psychological stressors among working women in Jordan, according to the variables of the number of children and the number of working hours

		Means	Standard deviations	No.
No. of children	3 or less	2.71	.789	152
	More than 3	2.71	.733	104
No. of working hours	Less than 6 hours	2.54	.803	79
	6-8	2.66	.615	124
	More than 8	3.07	.911	53

Table 3. shows an apparent variation in the averages and standard deviations of the level of psychological stress among working women in Jordan due to the different categories of the variables of the number of children and the number of working hours. To demonstrate the significance of the statistical differences between the means, The Two-way analysis of variance was used in Table (4).

Table 4. The Two-way analysis of variance of the effect of the number of children and the number of working hours on the level of psychological stress among working women in Jordan

Source of variation	Sum of squares	Degree of Freedom (DF)	Squares' average	F-value	Statistical significance
No. of children	.0001	1	.0001	.000	.992
No. of working hours.	9.358	2	4.679	8.425	.000
Error	139.943	252	.555		
Total	149.302	255			

The following appears from Table 4 :

- There were no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the effect of the number of children, as the value of F was 0.000, with a statistical significance of 0.992.
- There were statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the effect of the number of working hours, as the value of F was 8.425, with a statistical significance of

0.000. And to show the statistically significant marital differences between the arithmetic means, dimensional comparisons were used in the Scheffe' method. The results showed statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) between (more than 8) on the one hand and each of (less than 6 hours, and from 6-8), the differences came in favor of (more than 8).

The fourth question: Does the level of marital adjustment differ among working women in Jordan, according to the variables of the number of children and the number of working hours?

To answer this question, averages and standard deviations of the level of marital adjustment among working women in Jordan were extracted according to the variables of the number of children and the number of working hours. The Table below shows that.

Table 5. Averages and Standard Deviations of the level of Marital Adjustment among Working Women in Jordan, according to the variables of the number of children and the number of working hours

		Means	Standard deviations	No.
No. of children	3 or less	3.81	.691	152
	More than 3	3.61	.819	104
No. of working hours	Less than 6 hours	3.74	.700	79
	6-8	3.78	.769	124
	More than 8	3.61	.782	53

Table 5. shows an apparent variation in the averages and standard deviations of the level of marital adjustment among working women in Jordan due to the different categories of the variables of the number of children and the number of working hours. To demonstrate the significance of the statistical differences between the arithmetic means, the two-way analysis of variance was used.

Table 6. The two-way Analysis of Variance of the effect of the number of children and the number of working hours on the level of Marital Adjustment among Working Women in Jordan

Source of variation	Sum of squares	Degree of Freedom (DF)	Squares' average	F-value	Statistical significance
No. of children	2.772	1	2.772	4.991	.026
No. of working hours	1.229	2	.615	1.107	.332
Error	139.952	252	.555		
Total	143.789	255			

The following can be seen from Table 6:

- The existence of statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the effect of the number of children, as the value of F was 4.991 with a statistical significance of 0.026, and the differences came in favor of (3 or less).
- There were no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the effect of the number of working hours, as the value of F was 1.107, with a statistical significance of 0.332.

The fifth question: Is there a correlation between psychological stressors and marital adjustment among working women?

To answer this question, the Pearson correlation coefficient between psychological stress and marital adjustment among working women was extracted, and Table (7) illustrates this.

Table 7. Pearson Correlation Coefficient for the Relationship between Psychological Stress and Marital Adjustment among Working Women

Dimension		Occupational stress	Marital stress	Children related stress	Social stress	Psychometric stress scale
Economic adjustment	Correlation coefficient	-.081	-.145*	-.185(**)	-.102	-.154*
	Statistical significance	.199	.020	.003	.103	.014
	No.	256	256	256	256	256
Intellectual adjustment	Correlation coefficient	-.092	-.154*	-.187(**)	-.051	-.146*
	Statistical significance	.143	.014	.003	.420	.020
	No.	256	256	256	256	256
Social adjustment	Correlation coefficient	-.146*	-.199(**)	-.238(**)	-.161(**)	-.220(**)
	Statistical significance	.019	.001	.000	.010	.000
	No.	256	256	256	256	256
Psycho-emotional adjustment	Correlation coefficient	-.106	-.241(**)	-.202(**)	-.150*	-.210(**)
	Statistical significance	.090	.000	.001	.016	.001
	No.	256	256	256	256	256
Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)	Correlation coefficient	-.119	-.204(**)	-.223(**)	-.130*	-.202(**)
	Statistical significance	.057	.001	.000	.038	.001
	No.	256	256	256	256	256

* Statistical significance at the significance level (0.05).

** Statistical significance at the significance level (0.01).

The following can be seen from Table 7

- There is a negative statistically significant relationship between psychological stress and the marital adjustment dimension.

Findings and recommendations

The first question: What is psychological stress among working women in Jordan?

The psychological stressors of working women in Jordan were moderate; this can be attributed to the fact that the working women in the current study are married, mothers, and workers, which means that they have marital responsibilities, raising children and managing household matters in addition to the practice of her work. All of this may contribute to their suffering from psychological stressors. Thus, the results of this study agree partly with Alzyoud's (2020) result that there is a level of psychological stress and marital adjustment among working mothers in Jordanian society.

The second question: What is the level of marital adjustment among working women in Jordan?

The results showed that the level of marital adjustment among working women was high. The researchers attribute it to the fact that the study sample are married, mothers and workers, and they have high degrees of education and scientific qualifications. They also have knowledge and experience as a result of practicing different jobs and occupying multiple positions. They also possess skills in managing their time and managing their family life affairs, which resulted in having a high degree of adjustment. Moreover the existence of cooperating understanding husbands could be counted as a referring reason.

In addition to the possibility of the working woman to obtain information and benefit easily due to her mastery of using the computer and conducting searches for solutions to some of the problems that she may face. This can also be attributed to the fact that the working wife has the opportunity to establish social relations and communicate with female colleagues at work, and this makes her benefit from their experiences. Moreover the working wife is financially independent of her husband, and this allows her to meet her needs and the needs of her children. This was confirmed by Suleiman (2005), which reduces marital disputes over family expenses. The results of this study are consistent with the results of a study by Ibn Khaira and Ibn Zahi (2017), which indicated that a working woman has a marital adjustment.

The third question: Does the level of psychological stressors of working women in Jordan differ according to the variables of the number of children and the number of working hours?

The results showed that psychological stressors were higher among female workers whose working hours exceeded eight hours, and this is because women, especially married women and those who have children, spend a long time at work, which causes them to return to their home exhausted to face other stressors at home related to caring for children and meeting the needs of the husband and Housekeeping.

The fourth question: Does the level of marital adjustment differ between working women in Jordan, according to the variables of the number of children and the number of working hours?

The results showed that the level of marital adjustment was higher among working wives who have three children or less than those with more than three children. This is confirmed by Suleiman (2005) that the number of children affects the degree of adjustment with the increase in the number of children in the family, as the spouses' preoccupation with them increases, leading to a decrease in the degree of marital adjustment. The researcher justifies this result that the small number of children does not constitute a great burden on the working mother compared to the more significant numbers of children, as her ability to meet the needs of one or two children is greater than the care and follow-up of four or five children. In addition to the tasks and other roles she does as a wife and a worker in her life.

The results of the fifth question: Is there a correlation between psychological stressors and marital adjustment among working women?

The results indicated an inverse relationship between marital adjustment and psychological stressors. This can be attributed to the high stressors and burdens assigned to working women and the intersection of the roles they perform in and outside the home which may affect the marital relationship and lead to a decrease in marital adjustment. The preoccupation with work, managing the house, and following up the children decrease the time allocated to marital life, which contributes to the lack of adjustment. This findings agree with (and Al-Ibrahimi, 2015; Hadeel 2011) whose results, were the more psychological stressors increases, the less marital adjustment.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the researcher recommends the following.

- Improving the condition of work and decreasing the number of hours.
- Conducting training programs for working women in how to deal with stress
- Conducting more Correlational, experimental, and qualitative studies that address both psychological stress and marital adjustment in other societies and linking them to other variables.
- The need to train working women to use strategies to deal with psychological stressors

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