

# Psychological Pain among Divorced women in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate

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## Abstract

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**Purpose of the study:** This study aimed to assess the psychological pain level among divorced women in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate based on various variables.

**Methodology:** The researchers used a descriptive approach to achieve the study goals. The study's sample consisted of (67) divorced women as the researchers used the affordable method to choose using the participants. They also used the Person correlation coefficient with the total score of the instrument to test the instrument's validity. The results showed that all of the questionnaire's items had statistical significance.

**Findings:** The current study's findings revealed a moderate psychological pain level among divorced women in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate, with a ratio of (70.2%). The results showed no statistically significant differences and differences in the means of the participants' responses due to the study's variables (age, academic level, duration of marriage, occupational status, and post-divorce Period).

**Applications of this study:** The researchers expected to apply the research in centers, institutions, and societies focusing on issues for divorced women for psychological and social rehabilitation programs through activities aimed at enhancing their self-confidence.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** As a result, divorce is a threatening, frightening, and troubling factor for women that causes stress and frustration, particularly in the early post-divorce years.

## INTRODUCTION

Divorce is one of the most critical social and psychological issues threatening the family and society. Most divorcees feel that they will solve their difficulties after divorce; this idea is incorrect. Divorce leads to many social, psychological, and emotional problems, including feelings of loneliness, isolation, anxiety, sadness, profound psychological pain, depression, and a poor capacity to adjust to new circumstances. The choice to divorce also hurts the family, causing the family to split apart (Baweh, 2017), and the difficulties of sadness and psychological pain do not diminish with time; instead, they rise and expand, hurting (15% to 25%) of those who may lose. Deep sadness appears alongside depression with a ratio of (20%-45%), and post-traumatic stress disorder with (35%-50%) (Shear et al., 2005). There are many symptoms associated with intense sadness that may last longer. Many international studies have emphasized the psychological repercussion of divorce. Dykstra and Fokkema (2007) and Ben-Zur (2012) demonstrated that divorce causes psychological incontinence, as most divorced women suffer anxiety and depression. Van Tilburg and his colleagues (2015) discovered an increase in self-centeredness among divorced women. Divorced women suffer from extreme introversion, which leads to an increasing feeling of psychological loneliness over time. Psychological loneliness is the starting point for many of the problems and psychological disorders that divorced women suffer from (Zahar&Kausar,2014; Knöpfli et al.,2016).

### Research aims

This study aimed to identify the differences in psychological pain means among divorced women in Ramallah and Al-Bireh governorates based on the study variables

### Research question

As a result, this study needs to answer the following question:

- Are there differences in the arithmetic averages in the psychological pain of divorced women in Ramallah and Al-Bireh governorates?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous studies by Al-Badayna and Al-qotitat (2018) in Palestine and neighboring Arab countries found that divorced women face stigma, have low self-esteem, and are less adaptable than married women. Anxiety about children's

future was ranked first, followed by suffering from social, economic, and psychological problems came in second place (Abu Darwish et al., 2016). According to the findings of Abdullah (2018), divorce was the first source of mental health imbalance among divorced women. The results also revealed statistically significant differences in the mental health level of divorced women based on age, the residence of children after divorce, the standard of living, and academic qualifications of divorced women.

According to Alawneh (2019), the majority of divorced women in Palestine were young women under 30 years old, with a ratio of 68%, but 59% of divorced women had no children or only one, with low academic qualifications represented by less than an intermediate diploma, and the majority of them were unemployed. Al-Ali and his colleagues (2021) discovered statistically significant differences in the psychological resilience level of divorced women owing to the age group differences in favor of those under 30 years and the difference in academic level in favor of a university degree and above.

According to Nasser and Rimawi (2022), there are no differences in the existential vacuum among battered married women based on academic qualifications. Divorce reflects one of the social problems that threaten divorced people's lives, families, and societies. It is also one of the problems that have psychological ramifications for the divorced woman, primarily because of the increase in divorce percentage in Palestine as it reaches 19.4% according to the (BCPS) in the year 2020.

This study is significant because it addresses the psychological pain of divorced women due to unstable economic, social, and political conditions that cast a shadow on the lives of individuals, families, and societies, affecting them negatively in general and on families and divorced women in particular. This fact necessitates the conduct of such investigations as soon as possible.

## METHODOLOGY

### The approach of the study

To fulfil the study's objectives, the researchers employed the descriptive approach, which is an approach that investigates a phenomenon, event, or issue from which we can gather the information that answers the research questions without the researcher's intervention.

### The population of the study and its sample:

The study's population included all divorced women in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate. The participants were chosen from the study's sample in an affordable method since it was difficult to access all participants. Some of them refused to participate and collaborate. Table 1 shows the distribution of the participants based on their demographic variables.

**Table 1:** Participants' distribution due to their demographic variables

Variable	Level	No.	Percentage
Age	under 25 years	18	26.9
	26-35 years	13	19.4
	36-45 years	13	19.4
	Above 45 years	23	34.3
Academic qualification	Below Tawjihi	29	43.3
	Tawjihi- B.A.	25	37.3
	Higher than B.A.	13	19.4
Marriage duration	Less than four years	22	32.8
	5-10 years	32	47.8
	More than 10 years	13	19.4
Occupational status	Employed	28	41.8
	Unemployed	39	58.2
Post-divorce period	1-5 years	27	40.3
	6-10 years	29	43.3
	More than ten years	11	16.4

### Instrumentation

After reviewing many previous research and instruments, and the educational studies related to the issue of the current study, the researchers used the scale of Al-Kubaisi et al. (2015), which consisted of 30 items. The researcher applied the instrument to the participants. After collecting the questionnaires from the participants and ensuring that the participants completed them accurately, the results discovered that only (67) questionnaires were valid to be statistically analyzed. The questionnaire items score on a 1-5 scale (from 1=Not at all to 5= Absolutely)

### Instrument validity

A group of specialized and experienced arbitrators confirmed the instrument's validity. The researchers calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient for the questionnaire items and the total instrument's score to verify the instrument's

validity. The results revealed a statistical significance in all the questionnaire items, indicating an internal consistency between them.

### Instrument reliability

The researchers verified the instrument reliability by calculating the reliability of the total score of the reliability coefficient of the study items using Cronbach's Alpha reliability equation. The total score for the psychological pain level was (0.95), indicating that this tool has the reliability that meets the study's purposes.

### Data Analysis

The researchers extracted the means and the standard deviations for each item of the scale after verifying the validity and reliability of the study's instrument and ensuring its validity for statistical analysis using Cronbach Alpha, t-test, One Way ANOVA, and the statistical packages (SPSS).

## FINDINGS / RESULTS

The results showed that the mean of the total score for psychological pain level among divorced women in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate was (3.51) and the standard deviation was (0.78), indicating a moderate level of psychological pain among divorced women in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate with a ratio of (70.2%). The item "I see that the law is exclusively against the simple person of the people" got the highest mean (4.01), followed by "I blame myself for the prior mistakes I committed" (4.00). The items "I feel sad and miserable" and "My appetite is not what it used to be" had the lowest mean of (2.90).

**Table 2:** Results of T-test analysis of variance for the differences due to the variable (occupational status)

Variable	Level	No.	Mean	S.D	T	Sig.
Occupational status	Employed	28	3.62	0.86	1.35	0.18
	Unemployed	39	3.36	0.64		

Table 2 shows that the values of "T" revealed no statistically significant differences between the total scores. The results also show differences in the participant's responses to the psychological pain level among divorced women in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate due to the variable (occupational status).

**Table 3:** Results of One Way Anova analysis of variance for the differences due to the variables (age, academic level, duration of marriage, and post-divorce period)

Variable	Level	No.	Mean	S.D	F	Sig.
Age	under 25 years	18	3.91	0.25	2.17	0.10
	26-35 years	13	3.57	0.62		
	36-45 years	13	3.35	0.77		
	Above 45 years	23	3.25	1.08		
Academic qualification	Below Tawjihi	29	3.36	0.49	0.28	0.75
	Tawjihi- B.A.	25	3.54	0.98		
	Above B.A	13	3.55	0.64		
Marriage duration	Less than four years	22	3.46	0.90	0.96	0.38
	5-10 years	32	3.43	0.74		
	More than ten years	13	3.78	0.61		
Post-divorce period	1-5 years	27	3.58	0.69	0.32	0.72
	6-10 years	29	3.55	0.60		
	More than ten years	11	3.41	0.93		

Table 3 shows that the values of "F" revealed no statistically significant differences between the total scores. The results also showed differences in the participant's responses on the psychological pain level among divorced women in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate due to the variables (age, academic qualification, duration of marriage, and post-divorce Period).

## DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

The findings revealed high divorced women's responses to the factor of psychological pain, especially in the age group under 25 years. This result is consistent with the requirements of the developmental-developmental stage. At this age, women tend to cling to life, considering the concept of happiness culturally is more closely related to women's correlation with the element of safety. Thus, marriage as a social institution that protects women from all forms of oppression and violence reinforces stability that embodies security. The psychological pain indicator reflects a core issue that responds to the loss of those needs stem from the divorce.

This result is consistent with [Al-Ali et al. \(2021\)](#). The same applies to women who responded to the psychological pain indicator for its relation to the academic qualification variable, where education is the main component of a sense of "self-efficacy" and social efficiency alike. The psychological immunity, where females have a level of education, is an

economic and financial immunity, which gives women a greater sense of economic security, especially in the absence or absence of the head of the family. This result is consistent with [Alawneh's \(2019\)](#) and [Al-Ali et al. \(2021\)](#).

The study's findings also show that divorced women who get married for more than ten years are more likely to experience psychological pain. This fact does not contradict human nature in general, particularly women because they belong to the family environment as a place of warmth, affection, and serenity. Therefore, the Period (10 years More than) is sufficient for the divorced woman so that she was able to cope and familiarize within a social institutional structure, that is the marriage. Once she is removed from this institution, whether for social or psychological reasons, she loses all her needs, which strongly justifies that feeling of psychological pain as a reaction that may continue for months or years after leaving the family as a social system.

Remarkably, 28 of the divorced women who took part in the study showed a high level of psychological pain as a result of their unemployment. Interpretatively, this result is a main focus in the context of the divorce and its impact on the psychological state of women, in that the divorced woman, in the prevailing culture, is exposed after being divorced to a form of "societal blame" even if she is correct, because she is a woman living in a male-style society, and thus a work place is a space in which a woman may be exposed to several questions that may be difficult to answer, such as why she got divorced. The societal blame placed on her by male and female coworkers in the workplace is an additional psychological burden that may make her to leave the job and become, in her opinion, a burden on a society that rejects her because she is divorced, This is consistent with the study of [Al-Badayna and Al-qotitat \(2018\)](#).

The variable "post- divorce period" from one to five years is also one of the striking variables in this study, as 27 of the participating divorced women showed high statistical rates on the psychological pain items, and this is because the first post-divorce Period is shocking for women in terms of reorganizing their cognitive structures on a new lifestyle completely different from the one they lived or adapted within. Some memories and feelings are still invading her cognitive scope that concerning marriage as a "protective and secure" social institution in the societal-cultural concept, especially since in the early post-divorce periods she struggles with a society that views her as incompetent in maintaining her family and home, This is consistent with the study of [Abu Darwish et al. \(2016\)](#).

## CONCLUSION

Regardless of the chronological age difference between the participants, psychological pain and its emotional symptoms are a core component for divorced women. Women's intensive emotional aspects and attachment to the marital relationship affected them more than men. The quality of the marriage before divorce also influences how the divorce news is received. Women who have been in a bad marriage are more open to the idea of divorce than those who had a good marriage life but separated for some reason, leaving them discontented with life after the divorce. As a result, divorce is a threatening, worrying, stressful, and frustrating factor for women, particularly in the first post-divorce years. Thus, we strongly recommend that divorced women participate in psychosocial rehabilitation programs through activities for reinforcing their self-esteem.

## LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

As the researchers confined this study to a specific geographic location, they suggested other segments of society and a much bigger sample size to generalize the study results.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

The authors declare that they have no conflicting interests.

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## AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

Brighieth Mohammed's contribution was as follows: concept, data acquisition, analysis, as well as interpretation.

Rimawi Omar's contribution was as follows: concept, analysis and interpretation.

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