

Psychological Adjustment And Its Relationship With Some Variables Among Married Minors In The Southern Region In Jordan

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Abstract

The study aimed to know the level of psychological adjustment of a sample of married underage girls, and the study also sought to reveal the impact of some variables such as age at marriage, and the age difference between spouses on the level of psychological adjustment. The study sample consisted of (81) girls. To achieve the objectives of the study, the psychological adjustment scale was developed, which consists of (30) items that measure four basic areas: self conscious ,emotional balance, social maturity, and family stability. The study's findings show that the level of psychological adjustment was at a low degree among the study sample members, and the results also revealed the absence of a statistically significant relationship in psychological adjustment due to the variable of age and age difference between spouses. The study ended with a set of recommendations, such as the necessity of educating minors to better understand the nature of married life And the factors affecting them and the new variables and their reflection on their psychological compatibility and the need to realize sufficient knowledge about their future roles and challenges and how to overcome these challenges with high efficiency.

keywords: psychological adjustment, age at marriage, age difference between spouses, underage married girls.

Introduction

Marriage is considered as an important factor in individual's life, considering it as a solid basis upon which family stability is constructed and marriage is the main basis and frame through which social, psychological and emotional needs are satisfied in an atmosphere of

common interest, intimacy, love and acceptance (Elfeky etal .,2022).

The successful marital relationship promotes psychological health among spouses due to its role in satisfying social, emotional, psychological and biological needs among them. The results of several studies confirmed the importance of marriage in the psychological development of spouses, in that (unal & ozger, 2022) suggested that getting to marital happiness has a significant impact on social and psychological adjustment and marital adjustment.

The concept of early marriage is defined as a marriage in which one or both parties are under the age of eighteen years. Early marriage is affected by several factors, including: the rate of physical, psychological, sexual or emotional growth. (conseil of Europe, 2017). The early marriage gains more interest over time due to its healthy, economic, psychological and social effects, where the spouses often lack the importance, responsibilities and duties of this marital relationship (Kaya, etal., 2022).

Customs and traditions are considered as factors that have a direct impact on the marriage of minor girls. The beliefs relating to early marriage prevail in the communities that depend on the social heritage of forcing girls to get married at an early age as a part of the agreed-upon traditions. These beliefs are mainly related to the stereotyped ideas relating to the sexual life of women and girls and their role in the society which is mainly related to house and family. This finding was also confirmed by (Tewahido, etal., 2022). which showed that the dominance of cultural beliefs and Social norms represented the most important causes for the prevalence of early marriage. The economic circumstances also represent basic and important reasons concerning the marriage of minor girls that are more common in the poor areas or conflict areas (Fonseka, 2022).

Primary school dropout, which is known as not attending school at all or leaving it at an early age, is considered as a major reason for forcing early marriage among minor girls, where it is viewed as a way for ensuring economic

sufficiency and getting rid of their expenses and burdens (Roy and Chouhan, 2022).

(Javed and Mughal 2020) suggested that safe and satisfactory sexual relationships between spouses are considered as major stability factors in the marital life which contribute to achieve harmony and adjustment between spouses; it implies the complete growth of reproductive organs of spouses. Puberty phase is considered as the beginning to sexual maturity, even though actual sexual maturity takes place several years later. therefore, marriage before the phase of complete sexual maturity could be accompanied with too much suffering and pains. Furthermore, pregnancy is accompanied by healthy risks that affect minor girls, and thus they are more exposed to abortion and missing fetus.

The negative consequences of minor girls' marriage include early pregnancy, with its healthy risks, including the increased cases of abortions due to the weak body composition. Those girls could also be exposed to other diseases,. The health of the newborn could be adversely affected by these negative effects. (Ahinkorah et al., 2022).

(Psaki, 2016) suggested that marriage at an early age deprives the minor girl from her rights as approved by the human rights convention and the convention of eliminating all types of discrimination against women, in that early marriage deprives minor girls from their right to have protection, care, education, security and development as well as her right to choose her partner based on own decision and future vision of her life.

(Jackson, 2016) finds that underage girls who are married are more vulnerable to domestic violence and victims of emotional manipulation, and they do not have sufficient experience to understand the nature of married life or the true essence of the concept of marriage, and their older partner exercises coercive control over their educational, professional, medical and social decisions, which affects the their advancement in society, limiting their achievement and wasting a lot of job opportunities available to them.

Marital choice is considered as one of the most important topics relating to marriage system due to its correlation

with the family atmosphere and the social structure as a whole. Therefore, choosing the suitable partner, getting ready to marital life, continuity of mutual love, sexual satisfaction and marital stability between spouses contribute to achieving marital commitment, which in turn helps the spouses to save their marriage. (Pirmoradi et al., 2022).

The right choice of the partner leads to a successful marital relationship; however, we noticed that many parents overestimate in using their right in selecting the spouses of their daughters, and that could result in bad choices and problematic marital life, as in the case of marriage between minor girls and older people as a result of duress or intense social or family pressure, thus increasing the risk of abuse within marriage and health risks arising from early pregnancy (Martin, 2018)

Underage marriage in Jordan falls within the framework of linking social norms, legislative reform, constitutional provisions and international human rights standards. It is within specific requirements, as the judge must take into consideration the best interests of the minor as a priority, and this includes considering a number of pivotal issues such as social, economic, medical and psychological issues. The judge may authorize the marriage of a minor who is at least 15 years old and in accordance with a number of legal conditions and a number of basic criteria, including evaluating a man's ability to provide for his wife and children in the future, and the consent of both parties to the marriage with their complete freedom, and to ensure the judge that the age difference between spouses is not very large, and therefore the marriage of minors in Jordan falls within the framework of linking the family law has been linked with the principles of Sharia and social norms established in society (Prettitore, 2015)

Psychological Adjustment:

The topic of psychological adjustment was addressed by many researches and studies due to its importance in the individual's life, considering it as a basic element in understanding the individual's personality and determining his/her needs. Since such an adjustment indicates the individual's psychological health, it is related to its domains and dimensions represented by the human

behavior, including the psychological domain which includes feeling of freedom, belonging to society and enjoying positive relationships inside the family. Psychologists addressed the concept of psychological adjustment in terms of the individual's adjustment with himself and the surrounding community, where they are closely interrelated with each other; the self-adjusted individual is socially-adjusted. Psychologists also suggested that self-adjustment is the individual's ability to adjust between his motives and the social roles conflicting with those motives (Abu Dalo, 2009).

(Maash .,2013) suggested that there are indicators of adjustment, including firstly, the realistic view of life, where individuals are characterized by their optimistic look at life and realism in dealing with others. Secondly, the level of individual's ambition, where the adjusted individual has real ambitions that he aims to achieve. Thirdly, the feelings related to satisfying his psychological needs; in order to have an adjustment with himself and with others, the individual should satisfying his psychological needs in a legal way, and fourthly, the adjusted individual is characterized by his abilities to control his emotions, adjust his self-concept with reality as well as by his resilience, scientific thinking and the ability to feel of responsibility towards his community, traditions and concepts.

The Study Problem And Questions

The marriage of minor girls is considered as a phenomenon that has historical and social foundations that are closely related to the values, customs and traditions of a certain community; however, it was addressed as a phenomenon in the latest periods. This phenomenon was highlighted due to the accompanying social, psychological and healthy problems that affected the family cohesion. The official statistics in the Jordanian community revealed that there are more divorce cases, which indicates that there is a defect in the nature of marital relationships and that resulted in negative effects, such as family and societal disintegration as well as the emergence of some serious psychological diseases among spouses. Therefore, the issue is not limited to physical domains, where the effect extends to include personal

and psychological adjustment as well as social relationships

Several studies addressed the relationship concerning the marriage of minor girls using multiple variables; however, there is a paucity in the studies that addressed the relationship between the level of psychological adjustment and some variables among a sample of minor girls. Therefore, the current study addressed this relationship by determining the level of psychological adjustment among the minor girls and investigating the nature of the relationship between the marriage of minor girls and their level of psychological adjustment according to the variables of age at marriage and the age difference between spouses.

The Study Questions:

1-What is the degree of psychological adjustment among married underage girls in the southern region of Jordan?

2-Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the degree of psychological adjustment among married underage girls in the Southern Region in Jordan due to the variable age at marriage (15 years, 16 years, 17 years).

3-Are there statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the degree of psychological adjustment among married underage girls in the Southern Region in Jordan due to the variable age difference between spouses (less than (5) years, (5-10) years, more than (10) years)?

The Study Importance

The current study derives its theoretical importance from addressing the importance of the role played by psychological adjustment in turning or not turning to early marriage. The study also allows us to investigate the relationship of the psychological domains of personality and its impact on determining the age of marriage. The study importance also lies from the age category addressed, which is the adolescence period that represents a turning point in the individual's life.

The Study Terminology: The marriage of minor girls: it is the marriage of girls that was performed based on an

official contract and was officially registered in the court under an exception in the Jordanian law, which states that the age of 18 years old is the legal age of marriage except for some cases where those whose age ranges between 15-17 years old are allowed to get married under certain conditions restricted by law.

Psychological adjustment: it is a state of internal stability, where the individual is satisfied by himself and accepts it, with a relative freedom from the stressors and conflicts that are related to negative feelings and the self; the individual experiences a state of internal harmony that could be accompanied by positive dealing with reality and environment (Abu Sakran, 2009).

The Study Limits: The study is limited to the married minor girls In The Southern Region In Jordan whose age ranged between 15-17 years old during the year 2022. The study results are also limited to the measurement instrument used in the study, which is the scale of psychological adjustment as well as the procedures of validity and reliability and the statistical methods used to answer the study questions.

The Previous Studies:

Maloney, et al., (2022) conducted a study aimed at evaluating the role of fathers' and mothers exposure, emotional security and mental health in predicting psychological adjustment among Palestinian adolescents. The study sample consisted of 68 family units. The results proved a strong relationship between the performance of the family system (fathers and mothers) and the results of modifying adolescents' behaviors, where safety in the family is associated with fewer difficulties in adapting adolescents to their surroundings negative.

To examine the relationship between parental upbringing (Giunta, et al. 2022) a study and the self-efficacy of adolescents in regulating their self-feeling came out, and the number of participants was 103 in Italy. The results indicated that the mother's refusal style was associated with a decrease in self-repentance in adolescents and the appearance of symptoms of depression, and the parental rejection style was associated with more aggressive behaviors and low self-esteem among adolescents, and the problems of aggressive adolescents and their

psychological instability were associated with their self-efficacy.

As in the study (Malak et al., 2021) aimed at evaluating symptoms of depression and anxiety among married adolescent girls. The study included the participation of 205 girls, their average age is 16 years. The results showed that more than a third of the participants showed high levels of symptoms of depression and psychological anxiety.

The study Tamm et al., (2018) examined the relationship between the psychological adjustment and behavior of adolescents in school, the study was conducted on 463 adolescents. The results showed that the association between the psychological adjustment of adolescents and their behavior was not specific to gender. And poor psychological adjustment may appear not only in the problematic behavior that is observed but also in the self-centered competitive behavior.

(Montazeri et al., 2016) conducted a study aimed at exploring the early determinants of marriage from the perspective of married adolescent girls in Iran. The study sample consisted of 15 participants. The study showed that girls are more prone to mood disorders and more prone to depression and psychological anxiety, and the results revealed that one of the most social needs that prompted them to marry early is the need for respect and independence, and one of the psychological needs is their search for the fulfillment of the need for love.

Methods and procedures

study population: The study population consisted of all married minor girls in the southern region of Jordan, whose number is 288, according to the statistics of the Department of the Judge of Justice for the year 2022.

The study sample:

consisted of 81 married underage girls in the southern region of Jordan, which represents 28.2 % of the study population . Table (1) represents a description of the study sample, which are as follows:

Table 1: Description of the study sample

age at marriage	The age difference between the spouses			
	Less than(5) years	(5-10) years	More than (10) years	
15 year	11	6	5	22
16 year	6	6	9	21
17 year	12	14	12	38
Total	29	26	26	81

The study instruments:

the scale of psychological adjustment consisted of (30) paragraphs that represented the psychological adjustment of married underage girls, and they are divided into four dimensions, and these dimensions are:

First: Self conscious, which is the individual's ability to realize himself, evaluate himself objectively, realize his emotions, align his behavior with his values, and focus on knowing his strengths and weaknesses.

Second: Emotional balance is freedom from negative feelings, fears and anxious experiences, the ability to express feelings in a positive and mature way, and building social relationships based on love and respect

Third: Family stability is the individual's ability to efficiently achieve family demands and solve family problems in an effective and constructive manner.

Fourth, social maturity is the set of social interactions that regulate the relationship of the individual with his society, and is represented by commitment to the ethics of society and compliance with the rules of social control.

The response scale for each item in all the tools was according to the five-point Likert Scale.

Validity and stability of the tool

content validity: it was presented to a group of (10) arbitrators from members The teaching staff in Jordanian public and private universities, who are specialists in the fields of education, were asked to express their opinion on the appropriateness of the paragraphs and their consistency with the areas involved, and the extent of the clarity of these paragraphs in terms of the accuracy of their linguistic formulation, and the accuracy of their measurement of what they were developed for. 80% of the arbitrators on the paragraphs of the tool, as the arbitrators made a number of observations according to which the work was done, as the number of paragraphs of the questionnaire after modification reached 30 paragraphs distributed over four dimensions, and this procedure is an indication of the validity of the tool.

Stability: the table 2 shows the value of the stability coefficient for this tool.

Table 2: Stability coefficient For areas of the tool as a whole

The dimension	Cronbach's alpha stability coefficient
self-conscious	0.764
emotional balance	0.833
family stability	0.817
social maturity	0.741
Total marks	0.797

The reliability coefficient indicates that the tool has an acceptable degree of reliability, objectivity and internal consistency. The reliability coefficients for all domains ranged within the range 0.741 - 0.833, which are acceptable stability values for the purposes of this study, and this is an indication of the tools' stability.

3.Study results and discussion

Results related to the first question: What is the degree of psychological adjustment among married underage girls in the southern region of Jordan? To answer this question, the arithmetic averages, standard deviations, percentage, and degree of psychological adjustment were calculated for each of its fields, through the responses of the study sample, and Table (3) shows.

Shows3: the arithmetic averages, standard deviations and percentage The degree of psychological adjustment

The dimension	SMA	standard deviation	Rank	the level
conscious Self	2.47	0.52	1	Medium
social maturity	2.25	0.48	2	Low
family stability	2.11	0.51	3	Low
emotional balance	2.04	0.51	4	Low
Total marks	2.22	0.38		Low

Table (3) shows that the general arithmetic mean of all paragraphs of the tool that was applied amounted to approximately (2.22) and within the low degree ,and the conscious with an highest dimension As in Table(3), Self arithmetic average (2.47) within the middle degree, and it was in the second place dimension social maturity with an arithmetic average 2.25 within the low degree, And it was ranked third in terms family stability with an arithmetic average (2.11) within the low degree, and it came in the last rank dimension emotional balance with an arithmetic average (2.04) within the low grade.

The results showed that the level of psychological adjustment among the members of the study sample came to a low degree, and the reason for this is due to the specificity and nature of the age stage that minor girls go through, which is the stage of adolescence, and what is characterized by this stage of radical and rapid changes that occur in the manifestations of physical, mental, emotional, and social growth These physiological changes are accompanied by changes in the adolescent's feelings, tendencies, tendencies, emotional responses, social and moral behavior. These physiological changes are

accompanied by changes in the behavior of adolescent girls and their outlook on the life they live, as they seek at this stage to reach a level of well-being and see themselves as better than others, but when daydreams contradict the reality in which they live, frustration appears, and thus a feeling of psychological incompatibility. While when the requirements of this stage are satisfied in adolescents, they have psychological compatibility and thus their ability to give and achieve better. Huebner (2004) indicates that life satisfaction and psychological adjustment among adolescents is related to various characteristics of the family, including the parents' treatment of the adolescent, the style of family upbringing followed with him, and the parents' relationship with him. They always have a low level of psychological compatibility with them. This result is consistent with (Malak, etal 2021) & (Montazeri ,etal 2016) ,& Giunta, etal. 2022 study.

Second question

Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level $\alpha \leq 0.05$ in the degree of psychological adjustment among married underage girls in the Southern Region in Jordan due to the variable age at marriage 15 years, 16 years, 17 years? the results were as they are in Table4, as follows

Table (4):

The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the degree of psychological compatibility according to the variable age at marriage

Source of variance	sum of squares	degrees of freedom	mean squares	(F)	Indication level
between groups	.024	2	.012	.083	.920
within groups	11.463	78	.147		
Total	11.487	80			

It can be seen from Table (4) that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), in the degree of psychological adjustment among married underage girls due to the variable age at marriage (15 years, 16 years, 17 years). (.920), which is greater than (.05), and we can attribute the emergence of this result to the fact that the age at marriage of (15-17) years all fall within one age stage, which is the stage of adolescence. Therefore, the developmental demands and stages of psychological and social growth for this stage They fall within the levels of these ages, and therefore there are no clear differences in terms of physical, psychological, emotional and mental changes that play an important role in the lives of adolescent girls.

Third question :Are there statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the degree of psychological adjustment among married underage girls in the Southern Region in Jordan due to the variable age difference between spouses? To answer this question, the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the significance of differences in the degree of psychological compatibility among married underage girls due to the variable age difference at marriage, and the results were as shown in Table5

Table 5: The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the degree of psychological adjustment according to the variable age difference at marriage

Source of variance	Sum of square	degrees of freedom	mean squares	(F)	Indication level
between groups	.320	2	.160	1.117	.332
and within groups	11.167	78	.143		
Total	11.487	80			

Table (5) shows that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), in the degree of psychological adjustment among married underage girls due to the variable age difference between spouses, the significance level was (.332) which is greater than (.05), and this result is attributed to the fact that psychological compatibility is the outcome of previous life experiences and events resulting from the interaction of the girl with influential environments in her life such as family, school and friends and the social environment, for example, the family environment is an important factor in the adaptation of the individual, and it is the basic foundation upon which the society is based. Direct in the individual's view of himself and the world around him. Thus, this affects the level of psychological compatibility. Suldo & Huebner (2004) also indicated in their that social support by parents leads adolescents to achieve higher levels of psychological adjustment.

The family climate also plays an important role in developing the capabilities of the individual, as the appropriate climate achieves the most important demands of psychological and social development; Because the individual in this climate learns social interaction and learns to participate in daily life (Proctor, Linley & Maltby, 2008). The school also greatly influences the formation of the adolescent's concept of himself, who he is and who he will be, by providing opportunities for the teenager to test his powers, discover his abilities, and his weaknesses and shortcomings. The results of school work are reflected on the entire life of the adolescent, making him feel psychologically compatible or not. From here, we conclude that the roots of psychological adjustment since childhood are not the result of a moment or the result of a current stage, but rather the result of an accumulation of previous experiences that left their impact on the personality of the girl and her psychological adjustment, as between Suldo & Huebner (2006) that psychological compatibility and adolescents' satisfaction with their lives is linked to the method of upbringing. The family since childhood, and how parents

treat the adolescent. This is confirmed by the study of Maloney, etal (2022).

Recommendations

Giving lectures and holding intensive seminars, paying more attention to understanding the dimensions of psychological adjustment, educating the minor girls to understand the nature of marital life and the factors affecting it as well as the new changes and their implications on psychological adjustment among them.

Educating the married and those intending to get married about the factors affecting marital adjustment, in addition to informing them about the importance of emotional and marital skills in the marital life, in a manner that contribute to understanding the needs of the partner in order to have a clear image about the marital relationship and its bases. Making advantage of the study instruments in schools and counseling centers.

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