

The effect of psychological support on psychological security, marital compatibility and hardiness of the newly married women (an experimental study in Algiers)

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Abstract: The present study aims to examine the effect of the psychological support on the psychological security, marital compatibility and hardiness of newly married women. In order to conduct this research, a repeated measures (pre-post) design was used. The study sample consisted of (15) newly married wives. And to gather data, three different instruments were used (Psychological Security, the Marital Compatibility, and Hardiness scales). The study results revealed that there was significant mean differences in the study variables.

Finally, results revealed that the participants rated themselves significantly higher on overall scales in the post-test compared to pre-test.

Keywords: psychological support; psychological security ; marital compatibility . hardiness ; newly married women .

1- Introduction

Marriage is a common social event that is regarded as a legal means by which man's natural urges and needs, both physical and emotional, are controlled and satisfied at the same time. Marriage is defined as a lawful union of a man and woman based on mutual consent. It is a sort of contract that results in the man and woman living with each other and supporting each other within the limits of what has been laid down for them in terms of rights and obligations. It putatively lasts until death, but in practice.

Marriage in Islam is defined as a purposeful contract to acquire and possess enjoyment. Both the groom and the bride are to consent to the marriage of their own free wills.

Marriages typically occur between two individuals (male and female), each of whom grew up in different circumstances and came from a different background.

Despite the difference observed, if they feel they need to get married, and share this mutual desire and have the ability to establish a legal and permanent union, then they can proceed to establish a successful and family life provided that the contract that unifies them must be based on legal and sound basis (Haqqi Zainab, and Abu Sakina Nadia, 2009).

Despite the multiple benefits of the marital life, no relationship is free of challenges. Couples may encounter a wide range of problems which often cut short the supposedly ever lasting union by separation or divorce.

Previous research suggests that depressive symptoms are relatively common among newly married women and manifest in feelings of sadness, disappointment, hopelessness, loneliness, and despair (Stafford & Scott, 2016).

Most successful marriages are characterized by the so called Marital Compatibility. This compatibility comes about when both partners share common beliefs and values. This factor is crucial for a healthy and fulfilling relationship.

The marital compatibility refers to the ability of two legally unified partners (a man and woman) to coexist harmoniously while respecting each other's differences.

The aspects of marital compatibility are variant and include :

(1) financial management behavior. Compared to other types of marital misunderstandings, conflicts related to finances are more complex for couples. This factor is one of the common predictors of negative conflict tactics (Dew & Dakin, 2011), (2) cultural compatibility, which refers to the convergence of the cultural and social level of the spouses, (3) psychological compatibility, whether in terms of emotional maturity or in terms of emotional balance, in addition to (3) sexual compatibility, which refers to two legal partners share or have similar sexual needs.

A study conducted by Al-Hinaiyeh (2013) revealed that a list of factors may contribute to the poor marital compatibility, as perceived by reconciliation committees, and it includes personal, sexual, organisational, and emotional factors (Buish, 2020, 12).

For a positive marital relationship to be established a great deal of effort needs to be made. Happiness, giving, tolerance and good faith, in addition to cooperation, respect and understanding, all these values must be present to preserve a lasting union and guarantee the family well being.

The marital relationship plays an important role in creating positive and healthy family environment. As the meaning of mental health goes beyond the absence of mental disorders, to encompass a wide range of qualities that include enabling the couples to cope with life stressors, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their own families. Couples' mental health conditions are more likely to experience

lower levels of mental well-being, have fewer instances of depression and anxiety, and suffer less from loneliness and feelings of solitude.

The mental health of married couples can be achieved through complete readiness to give, and exerting efforts for compatibility and problem-solving, giving priority to love and the perspective of lasting happiness over self-conflict, and showing a more concern for the well-being of both of them.

Based on our daily observation and interviews of the newly married couples and through the analysis of the growing number of complaints we receive that reflect the lack of marital compatibility and psychological security, and hardness. This failure is reflected in their poor abilities to cope with the various problems, whether on the social, psychological, material or sexual level. Additionally, some newly married declared that they were unable to go on with their marital life due the challenges they were facing. Noting this situation we planned a counseling program to support the newly married wives to build confident relationships with their husbands. It has become necessary then to look over this issue and examine the role of the experts' psychological support towards the newly married wives by training them on the necessary skills to overcome potential problems and live in harmony. Noting these challenges, this research was undertaken to examine the following questions regarding the effect of psychological support of newly married women.

Research Questions :

- Will there be a mean difference in psychological security for newly married women between the pre and post measurements?
- Will there be a mean difference in the marital compatibility for newly married women between the pre and post measurements?
- Will there be a mean difference in the psychological hardness for newly married women between the pre and post measurements?

Hypotheses :

- "There will be a mean difference in psychological security for newly married women between the pre-and post-measurement".
- "There will be a mean difference in marital compatibility for newly married women between the pre-and post-measurement".
- "There will be a mean difference in hardness for newly married women between the pre-and post-measurement".

1.1. The significance of the research:

After reviewing the cumulated theoretical research as well as previous studies, it can be expected that the significance of this study lies in its being one of the first studies that shed light on the concept of psychological support, in addition to conducting it on a sample that had not been previously dealt with in the research.

This study is considered as a continuation of the previous studies on marital compatibility by treating it with psychological support, especially among newly married wives.

1.2. Research objectives:

This study aimed to explore the effect of psychological support on new variables (marital compatibility, psychological security, and hardness).

1.3. Definition of variables:

1.3.1. psychological support:

Psychological support is defined as obtaining a conscious, constructive and planned process, which always aims to help and encourage the individual to understand and gain

insight into himself, reveal his latent abilities and direct them towards learning and teaching appropriate experiences, through which they seek to achieve health and psychological security, as well as achieving happiness (Baiba,: 08).

The psychological support is operationally defined as the counseling sessions conducted by researchers in favor of the newly married women.

1.3.2. Psychological security:

As a decisive factor of mental health, psychological security has been widely concerned. Maslow defined psychological security as “a feeling of confidence, safety and freedom that separates from fear and anxiety, and especially the feeling of satisfying one's needs now (and in the future).”(Wang.et.al,2019,2).

Maslow (1942) psychological security is the presentiment that may arise from dangers or risks in the physiology or the psychology of the individual,as well as the sense of powerfulness and powerlessness of the individual in dealing with dangers or risks, mainly related to the sense of certainty and controllability (Cong and An,2004).

psychological security was operationally defined as the score obtained by the study sample in the measure of psychological security used in this study.

1.3.3. Marital Compatibility:

Geddo defines marital compatibility as a lack of agreement between the spouses on the vital issues related to their common life, and the lack of participation of each other in business, various activities, and the lack of exchange of emotions, and thus the marriage fails to achieve its psychological and social goals, which leads to Not satisfying psychological and social needs (Geddo, 2018, 09).

Al-Kholi suggests that marital compatibility is determined by the couple's ability to generally agree on the main issues affecting their lives together, to share interests and activities, and to express mutual love.

Marital compatibility is operationally defined as the score obtained by the participant in marital compatibility scale.

1.3.4. Psychological Hardiness:

Hardiness is a combination of attitudes and beliefs that motivate an individual to do hard and strategic work in the face of stressful and difficult situations (Maddi,2007).

Kobasa defined hardiness as a multidimensional personality trait consisting of three components or the 3 C's: commitment, control, and challenge (Kobasa, 1979).

Commitment is defined as a "tendency to involve one self in (rather than experience alienation from) whatever one is doing or encounters" (Kobasa,Maddi,&Kahn,1982,169). Individuals with strong commitment find it interesting and meaningful to get deeply involved in social activities and events rather than preferring loneliness under stress.

Control is described as a "tendency to feel and act as if one is influential (rather than helpless) in the face of the varied contingencies of life" (Kobasa et al., 1982,169). Those strong in control believe that they are able to influence the outcome of their own lives.

Challenge is described as a "belief that change rather than stability is normal in life and that the anticipation of changes are interesting incentives to growth rather than threats to security"(Kobasa et al., 1982,169). People strong in challenge do not believe that they are entitled to easy comfort and security. Rather, they feel a tendency to continually learn from both positive and negative experiences and embrace change .

Hardiness is a personality trait that can help individuals cope with stressful situations. It was first proposed by Kobasa in 1979 based on the existence theory, which is conceptualized as one of the main personality structures for understanding motivation, excitement, and behavior (Kobasa,1979).

Hardiness involves a set of attitudes or beliefs, including a high sense of commitment (vs. alienation), the capacity to feel deeply involved or engaged in life activities, confidence in one's ability to control (vs. powerlessness) events and influence outcomes, and greater openness to challenge (vs. threat) in life perceiving variety and change as a chance to learn and grow (Kelly et al., 2014).

Persons high in hardiness are more likely to be more resilient when exposed to a range of environmental stressors and tend to remain healthy and perform well despite high stress levels (Kelly et al., 2014).

Hardiness develops early in life and is reasonably stable over time, though it is amenable to change and is probably trainable under certain conditions (Kobasa, 1979; Maddi & Kobasa, 1984).

Psychological hardiness is operationally defined as the score obtained by the sample member in the psychological hardiness scale used in this study.

The newly married woman:

Newly married woman, in our research, are women with a marital life experience of less than one year.

2- Method and Tools:

2.1. Procedure:

The researchers used the experimental method to examine the effect of the IV upon the DV. All other variables in an experiment should be controlled so that they don't vary in any of the experimental conditions or between participants. They should remain constant for all testing groups. The experimental method involves the manipulation of variables to determine causality (cause and effect relationships). To see the effect of the IV which is represented by the psychological support on the DVs represented by three variables (psychological security, marital compatibility, and hardiness). To carry the investigation the repeated measures design was used where the participants were examined under two conditions:

- Each participant first experienced condition A (tested before attending psychological support sessions).
- Each participant was tested again in condition B (after attending the psychological support sessions)

Following this, the two sets of data from both conditions were compared to see if there was a difference.

2.2. Participants:

The (15) participants for this research represent a convenience sample. It consisted of women who had been married for one year or less, and who participated in psychological support sessions.

2.3. Instruments

Dependent variables

2. 3. 1. Psychological Security Scale : It was developed by Zainab Choucair (2005) and aimed to elicit information on the psychological security level of the sample members. The scale consisted of 54 items in which participants were asked to rate the sense of security. The sense of security score is computed based upon responses to the 54 items written along a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 4 (totally agree). Responses to each item are summed to generate a total score. The scale includes four subscales: 1-the psychological security regarding the individual formation and his view to the future (14 items), 2- the psychological security regarding the individual's general and work life (18 items), 3- the psychological security regarding the

individual's mood (10 items), 4- the psychological security regarding the individual's social relationships (12 items).

The instrument's psychometrics properties were assessed and determined.

2. 3. 2. Marital Compatibility Scale:

The Marital Compatibility Scale was designed by Safaa Saeed Ignaid in 2020 to assess the couples' satisfaction of relationships quality. This measure consists of (27) items. It consists of 24 items, assessed along a 5-point continuum from (1) totally disagree to (5) totally agree. The scale includes six subscales: 1- the self dimension (06) items, 2- the emotional dimension (04) items, 3- the economic dimension (04) items, 4- the social cultural dimension (04) items, 5- partner selection (04) items, 6- the religious dimension (05) items. The instrument has a high overall reliability ($\alpha = .97$). Reliabilities for the subscales range between .81 and .92.

For the current study the instrument's psychometrics properties were assessed and determined.

2. 3. 3. Hardiness Scale:

The psychological hardiness is a 48-item self-report scale was developed by Imad Mukhaimer (2002) to assess the level of the individual's psychological hardiness. It consisted of three subscales: 1- commitment (16) items. The high score denotes the individual's high commitment towards himself, his objectives, and the others, 2- control (15) items. The high score indicates that the individual has a high belief in the ability to control events, 3- challenge (12) items, as the higher the score the harder the challenge is. The responses are assessed along a 3-point continuum from (1) never to (3) always. The psychometric properties of the instrument were assessed by the researchers.

For the current study the instrument's psychometrics properties were assessed and determined.

Independent variable

2. 3. 4. Psychological support sessions:

After studying each case separately, we were able to list the most common problems they were coping with, and are presented below:

Budget management, self-image, emotional relationships, carelessness (lack of discussions), visiting parents' house. Noting these family issues, a series of eight psychological support sessions were planned and organised as follows:

The first session aimed to introduce the members of the group to each other and explain the sessions procedures. Finally, three self-report instruments were handed to the participants: psychological security, marital compatibility, and hardiness.

The second session aimed to discover one's abilities and use them to boost the one's self-confidence, efficacy, resilience, sense of self respect, and to exert control on one's life.

The third session aimed to train the wife on how to meet her husband when he comes home.

The fourth session aimed to train the wife the techniques of dialogue, how to manage it, and raise issues with her husband, especially those that fall within his area of interest.

The fifth session aimed to train the wife the basics of the bedroom and how to meet her husband's needs.

The sixth session aimed to train the wife on the budget management, how to set priorities, and how to thrift, in addition to develop her professional skills to contribute to household expenses.

In the seventh session we trained participants to be aware of their husbands' different needs, personality, moods, and interests, as well as how and when to make requests.

In the final session the participants were asked to rate the psychological support they received and respond again to the three self-report scales (psychological security, marital compatibility, and hardiness).

3- Results and Discussion

3.1. Results:

3.1.1 The first hypothesis states: "there will be a mean difference in psychological security for newly married women between the pre-and post-measurement".

Statistical analysis for the psychological security variable for newly married women before and after receiving psychological support, is presented in [Table 1](#).

The T-test ($T = 9.11$, $p < .001$) indicated that the newly married wives rated themselves significantly higher on overall psychological security in the post-test compared to pre- test.

Table No. (01) T- test to assess differences in psychological security in the post-test compared to pre- test

Measures	N	T_test	Sig
Pre	15	9.11	0.01
Post	15		

Psychological security scale between pre and post measurement

3.1.2 The second hypothesis:

The second hypothesis states: "there will be a mean difference in marital compatibility for newly married women between the pre-and post-measurement"

Statistical analysis for the marital compatibility variable for newly married women before and after receiving psychological support, is presented in [Table 2](#). The T-test ($T = 8.36$, $p < .001$) indicated the newly married wives rated themselves significantly higher on overall marital compatibility in the post-test than pre- test.

Table No. (02) T- test to assess differences in marital compatibility in the post-test compared to pre- test.

Measures	N	T_test	Sig
Pre	15	8.36	0.01
Post	15		

3.1.3 The third hypothesis:

The third hypothesis states: "The second hypothesis states: "there will be a mean difference in hardiness for newly married women between the pre-and post-measurement" Statistical analysis for the hardiness variable for newly married women before and after receiving psychological support, is presented in [Table 3](#). The T-test ($T = 11.22$, $p < .001$) indicated that the newly married wives rated themselves significantly higher on overall hardiness in the post-test than pre- test.

Table No. (03) T- test to assess differences in hardiness in the post-test compared to pre- test.

Measures	N	T_test	Sig
Pre	15	11.22	0.01
Post	15		

3. 2. General discussion:

The findings of this study extend our understanding of the positive effect of the psychological support variable on feeling of psychological security, marital compatibility, and hardiness among newly married women.

This positive effect provides evidence for the importance of the psychological support provided to newly married women to increase the probability of leading a successful marital life. The psychological support during the planned sessions provided them with the necessary knowledge that made them fully aware of their abilities and duties as wives and the way to avoid problems and to cope with them. Consistent with expectations, newly married wives reported higher psychological security, marital compatibility, and hardiness in post-test (after attending sessions) compared to pre-test.

Additionally, For example, the fourth session aimed to develop the wife's ability to communicate with her husband. In line with previous research (Kurdik, 1991) concluded that unhappy couples see that communication problems as one of the most important factors that contributed to the breakdown of their relationships, and then the problems became worse due to wrongly communicating, such as expressing feelings in an unfair way failing to convey clear messages that can be fully understood (Aida Shukri Hassan, 2001: 51). Many other studies that focused on couples, the family and divorce concluded that right marital communication is the safety valve that guarantees the internal cohesion of the family structure, which is reflected in psychological security and compatibility and hence ensures a lasting marital life.

Finding supported Bornstein and Bornstein (1986) assumption that the failure to communicate well between the two partners is considered one of the most fundamental reasons that create acute problems that neither of them is unable to solve. And Leveson and Gottman noted that the nature of interaction and emotional communication between couples is considered a critical factor in overcoming marital problems, so that the researchers explained in this research that the persistence of marital conflict and disagreement over time is not due to the degree of ability to solve problems and the methods of solving problems as much as it is - fundamentally - due to the nature of the emotional interaction within which most couples could not solve their permanent problems (Ghasiri Yamina, 2013: 156)

Limitations :

As with any research study, the current investigation possessed certain limitations that must be acknowledged. First, because the surveys were administered at point in time immediately after the end of the sessions, it is possible that the participants' temporary feelings of support at the moment of surveys administration may have affected their responses.

Second, participation in the study was convenient, sampling bias may have contributed to the outcomes, thus the sample that completed the surveys may not be representative of the overall population, and consequently the results can only be generalized to newly married living in Algiers.

Third, as with any self-report measure, answers may be influenced by a social desirability bias, thus the results must be carefully dealt with.

Fourth, the absence of information about the newly married women's background may limit the interpretability of the findings.

Finally, despite these limitations, the present research affords important advances in our understanding of causal conclusions can be drawn from the current study and the newly

married women's experience of marital life.

4- Conclusion

The main objective of conducting this research is to examine the impact of the psychological support on developing psychological security, marital compatibility and hardiness of newly married women. To see if differences could be found between pre and post tests, the experimental method was conducted using repeated measures design.

As a result of the rapid social changes and civilizational development that led to a change in the role of the family and its growing complexity it has become more necessary to follow counseling sessions organised by subject matter experts on how to face challenges, cope with problems, have control over the components of the marital life. Additionally, those sessions proved to have an eminent effect on the wives' sense security, hardiness, and marital compatibility.

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