



## The psychological Health of a Couple Planning for Divorce

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** One of the social phenomena that has come to be seen as a primary problem in the society is divorce, which has had a devastating impact not only on the institution of the family but also on society as a whole.

**Objectives:** To assess the Psychological Impact of Planning for Divorce and to find-out the association between the psychological health and their socio- demographic data for married couples planning a divorce.

**Methodology:** Descriptive-Analytic study design was used to describe the variables and the relationships that occur among them in this study. This design was carried out in order to achieve the aims of the present study to identify the psychological impact on spouses planning divorce in Karbala Federal Court of Appeal / Presidency of the Karbala Criminal Court, the second body during the period from 12th December 2021 to 15th February 2022. Purposive sampling (nonprobability) of (70) spouses planning divorce in Karbala. The questionnaire it has 3 subscales (depression, anxiety, and stress). The data collection started by using questionnaire format and fill out sampling was obtained by spouses planning divorce in Karbala city. The process of collecting data for the researcher through the interview questionnaire to spouses planning divorce in Karbala Federal Court of Appeal, took time to fill the questionnaire time of 10-15 minutes and participants were asked to read the questionnaire. The correlation between psychological state and demographic characteristics has been examined using Chi-square tests.

**Results:** This table shows that there is high significant and significant relationship between Depression with (Age at marriage, Age difference between spouses, do you want to return to a single life, does divorce negatively affect children, what do you think is the main reason for divorce in our society, Number of divorces) at p value < 0.05.

**Conclusion:** The majority of samples were had Psychological Impact of couples. There is a significant relationship between impact psychological health of planning for divorce with socio-demographic characteristics.

**Keywords:** Psychological Health, Couple Planning, Divorce.

### INTRODUCTION

The single worst thing that can happen to a person and lead to them experiencing an emotional about-face is for their relationship to end. The

markers of mental health that are affected by divorce include depression, sorrow, anger, aggression, and low self-esteem. Anxiety is another one of these

signs. People have a tendency to place the blame entirely on themselves when anything goes wrong. Despite the desire to find solace from a troubled marriage through its termination, adjusting to divorce may undoubtedly be a taxing and difficult process. Choosing to stay in a marriage relationship that is emotionally abusive and unsatisfying rather than ending the marriage amicably or going via the legal system has been shown to have a more significant impact on the mental health of both partners and children (1).

Despite the fact that both the husband and wife suffer from the unsettling results of a divorce, past research has shown that women are far more susceptible than males are. After a breakup (2).

Studies have shown that divorced women are more susceptible to mental, emotional, physical, and social impairments than married women are. These impairments include things like anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and heart problems (3).

Divorce may have a wide range of negative effects on women's lives. Divorce can reduce a woman's earning potential, which has been linked to increased psychological suffering. Women's mental health suffers after a divorce. Negatively, in addition to being overburdened with work (4).

It is commonly understood to signify the conclusion of a marriage. When it comes to emotional setbacks, a breakup in a romantic relationship is without a doubt the worst possible scenario. Depression, rage, low self-esteem, and anxiety are some of the mental health markers that can be

impacted by a divorce. The affected individual could hold themselves responsible for the incident. Women's poor mental and physical health was linked to divorce in a sample of 416 rural moms in Iowa. According to the findings, unmarried women are more likely to develop chronic illnesses than their married counterparts over time. After the divorce, these women's mental health was proven to have been negatively impacted by another stressful life event (2).

The findings showed that divorced women, in comparison to married women, are more likely to develop and suffer from chronic illnesses over time (3).

#### **AIMS OF THE STUDY**

1. To assess the Socio- demographic characteristics of the married couples.
2. To assess the Information relevant to characterize divorce planners.
3. To assess the Psychological Impact of Planning for Divorce
4. To find-out the Association between Psychological Impact of Planning for Divorce with Socio-demographic Characteristics.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

- **Design of the study:** Descriptive-Analytic study design was used to describe the variables and the relationships that occur among them in this study. This design was carried out in order to achieve the aims of the present study to identify the psychological impact on spouses planning divorce in Karbala Federal Court of Appeal / Presidency of the Karbala Criminal Court, the second body during the period from 12th December 2021 to 15th February 2022.
- **Population and Sampling plan:** Simple Purposive sampling (nonprobability) of (70) spouses planning divorce in Karbala Federal Court of Appeal / Presidency of the Karbala Criminal Court.

- **Study instrument:** A questionnaire consisting of two items and (21) questions was used to answer the study question related to the psychological impact of spouses planning divorce in Karbala Federal Court of Appeal / Presidency of the Karbala Criminal Court. The questionnaire it has 3 subscales (depression, anxiety, and stress).

- which was adopted and modified from the study done by Lovibond, S.H. & Lovibond, P.F. (1995). Manual for the Depression Anxiety & Stress Scales. (2nd Ed.) Sydney: Psychology Foundation.

This scale is interview self-reported instrument. The instrument is evaluated on a 4-point scale. This investigation utilizes socio-demographic information and the psychological effect of divorce on couples' relationships as independent variables.

• Effect levels of these domains were measured as follow:

➤ Depression, Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS 21) The following 21 questions are part of a questionnaire. Levels of status of mental health were assessed by using the "Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21)" and the score were calculated using the stander scale and divided into:

• Depression subscale: it consists (7) items (3,5,10,13,16,17,21) using four levels Likert rating scale (almost always, often, sometimes, never) they have been rated and scored as (0) for never, (1) for some time, (2) for often, (3) for almost always, the total degree of score 21 and this divides the levels of depression into.

No.	Score	Severity
1.	(0-4)	Normal
2.	(5-6)	Mild depression
3.	(7-10)	Moderate depression
4.	(11-13)	Severe depression

Table (1-3) depression levels scores

• B. Anxiety subscale: it consists (7) items 2, 4, 7, 9, 15, 19, and 20 using four levels Likert rating scale (almost always, often, sometimes, never) they have been rated and scored as (0) for never, (1) for some

time, (2) for often (3) for almost always, the total degree of score 21 and this divides the levels of anxiety into.

No.	Score	Severity
1.	(0-3)	Normal
2.	(4-5)	Mild anxiety
3.	(6-7)	Moderate anxiety
4.	(8-9)	Severe anxiety

Table (2-3) anxiety levels scores.

• C. Stress subscale: it consists 7 items 1, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, and 18 using four levels Likert rating scale (almost always, often, sometimes, never) they have been rated and scored as (0) for never, (1) for some time, (2) for often (3) for almost always, the total degree of score 21 and this divides the levels of stress into:

No.	Score	Severity
1.	(0-7)	Normal
2.	(8-9)	Mild stress
3.	(10-12)	Moderate stress
4.	(13-16)	Severe stress

### Part 1. Socio-demographic data:

(Gender, age, residential, Do You Have Children, How many children, Educational level, Age of marriage, Age difference between spouses, Job or profession, Monthly Income, Do you have a desire for a reason for a single life?, Do you support the idea of divorce as a basic solution to the family problem?, Does divorce negatively affect children?, What do you think is the main reason for the frequent divorce in society?, Was the marriage compulsory or voluntary?, The number of divorce, Do you have a complete desire to complete the divorce procedures?, Is the partner previously married? Have you been abused by your partner? Type of Violence.

### Procedure:

The data collection started by using questionnaire format and fill out sampling was obtained by spouses planning divorce in Karbala city from 12 th December 2021 to 15th February 2022. The process of collecting data for the researcher

through the interview questionnaire to spouses planning divorce in Karbala Federal Court of Appeal, took time to fill the questionnaire time of 10-15 minutes and participants were asked to read the questionnaire and ask the researcher if they had the questions were collected through the personal interview to the spouses planning divorce in Karbala city. The purpose of the study was explained to all participants and were asked for voluntary participation.

#### **Statistical Data Analysis Approach:**

The findings of the study were analyzed and evaluated using a number of statistical measures calculated with the help of SPSS version 26 and Microsoft excel (2016). During the Federal Court of Appeal proceedings, the sample characteristics and the extent to which spouses' psychological state influences their decision to divorce. The correlation between psychological state and demographic characteristics has been examined using Chi-square tests.

#### **Ethical approval**

All experience procedures have received approval from the University of Babylon's College of Nursing (Karbala Federal Court of Appeal \ Presidency of the Karbala Criminal Court, the second body) (3839)-12\12\2021. All tests were conducted in Iraq in accordance with established protocols (Supreme Judicial Council \ Karbala Criminal Court) (59)-10\1\2022.

## **RESULTS**

#### **(Table 1): Socio- demographic characterizes of the sample**

The results show that more than half of the sample (51.4%) were males (48.6%). Also, the table shows that the mostly sample age was ranged (15-25) years which represents (38.6%). As for residential, the vast majority of residents were from the urban (72.9%) and the rest were from the rural (27.1%). As regard to children, the sample showed that study sample of (75.7%) have children and the

rest do not have (27.3%). The table also shows that the numerical category of children ranges between (1-3), and it constitutes (55.7%) of the sample. As regard to the level of education, the sample showed that (31.4 %) read and write.

The results showed that the age group at marriage ranged between (13-23) years, and it constituted (55.7%) of the sample. It was also found that the age difference between spouses ranges from (1-8) years, which constitutes (64.3%). With regard to the occupation, the percentage of (41.4%) free business. The results show, as for their monthly income, it is moderate, and the percentage in it ranges between (54.3%) of the sample.

#### **(Table 2): Information relevant to characterizes divorce planners**

The results show, regarding the return to single life, it was found that a percentage of (61.4%) have the desire to do so. Regarding that divorce is the major solution to family problems, the above table showed that (51.4%) agreed with that. As for whether divorce negatively affects children, it was also found that the majority (90.0%) agreed with that.

According to the given questionnaire, it was found that the main reason for divorce in our society is the failure to choose the right partner, and he obtained )30 %( of the sample. With regard to whether marriage was compulsory or voluntary, it was found that (78.6%) was voluntary. Regarding the number of divorces, it was found that (61.4%) were divorced once. It was found that a percentage of (72.9%) have a complete desire to complete the divorce procedures. As for whether the partner was previously married, it was found that the percentage (41.5%) is not married. It was found that a percentage of (52.9%) had been subjected to violence by the partner. It was found that (27.2%) were subjected to physical violence.

#### **Table 3: Impact Psychological health of Planning for Divorce**

The table shows level of psychological health the study shows that highest percentage (25.7%)

were mild Depression level, (34.3%) were moderate anxiety level, (38.6%) were sever Stress level.

**Table 4: Association between Impact Psychological health of Planning for Divorce with Socio- demographic Characteristics**

This table shows that there is high significant and significant relationship between Depression with (Age at marriage, Age difference between spouses, do you want to return to a single life, does divorce negatively affect children, what do you think is the main reason for divorce in our society, Number of divorces) at p value < 0.05 and significant relationship between Anxiety with (Age (year), Do You Have Children, Age at marriage, Age difference between spouses, do you want to return to a single life, does divorce negatively affect children, what do you think is the main reason for divorce in our society, what do you think is the main reason for divorce in our society, do you have a complete desire to complete the divorce proceedings, have you been abused by your partner?) at p value < 0.05.

It also shows that there is high significant and significant relationship between stress with (Age (year), Do You Have Children, Age at marriage, Age difference between spouses, Do you want to return to a single life, Does divorce negatively affect children, What do you think is the main reason for divorce in our society, What do you think is the main reason for divorce in our society,) at p value < 0.05.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Impact Psychological health of Planning for Divorce (Table 2)**

The finding of the study shows that highest percentage (25.7%) were mild Depression level, (34.3%) were moderate anxiety level, (38.6%) were sever Stress level, This is because divorce destroys the bond between the spouses, which leads to a loss of security, safety and internal stability for the individual and the society's wrong view of the divorced person, in addition to feeling loneliness and this result supported by Kareem R. Sajit and Qahtan

Q. Mohammed , 2015 who findings indicate that more than half of divorced women experiencing moderate to high level of psychological distress (54%) <sup>(5)</sup>.

**Association between Domains of ) Psychological health Level) with Socio- demographic Characteristics & Information relevant to divorce planners of Couples (Table 3,4)**

This table shows that there is high significant and significant relationship between Psychological State with (Have Children) at p value < 0.05 Where the study found that a children have an effect on the incidence of Stress among spouses planning divorce Because the presence of children causes stress, because of thinking about their future and what might happen to them when separated which is non-accepted by Kareem R. Sajit and Qahtan Q. Mohammed, 2015 <sup>(5)</sup>.

This table shows that there is significant relationship between Psychological State with (Age at marriage) at p value < 0.05 Where the study found that age at marriage have an effect on the incidence of depression among spouses planning divorce as those who marry at a young age are more likely to divorce due to their insufficient knowledge of married life supported by Roizblatt Scherzer, A., et al., 2018 <sup>(6)</sup>.

This table shows that there is a significant relationship between psychological state with (Age difference between spouses) at p value < 0.05. This result is supported by Jalili, L., et al., 2017 whose findings indicate that the study showed the importance of time variables in increasing the severity of anxiety and depression among divorced women and the possibilities of coping with it. It was found that the early marriage of the girl, early divorce, the short period after the divorce, and the young age of the divorced woman are conducive factors to the emergence of psychological deterioration, and this is due to the immaturity of the divorced woman, her lack of experience, her sense of injustice and humiliation, and the feeling of failure while she is still young <sup>(7, 8)</sup>.

This table shows that there is a significant relationship between psychological state with (Do you want to return to a single life) at  $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ . The result can be explained that most divorced people suffer from Negative emotions such as anger, irritability, excessive stress, and a sense of powerlessness, Problems unwinding and focusing, low self-esteem, and other mental health issues Isolation, melancholy, Avoiding or isolating oneself from other people<sup>(9, 10)</sup>.

This table shows that there is a significant relationship between psychological state with (Does divorce negatively affect children?) at  $p$  value  $< 0.05$ . Some of the psychological and emotional repercussions of separation on children include: difficulties in regulating emotions and accepting the choice to split up Separation from parents may elicit a wide range of emotions in children, from sadness and loss to anger and resentment, depending on the child's developmental level. They are suffering from shame and grief since they are responsible for the breakup. The attitudes of older children vary; some may feel frightened or unhappy; others may even resent their family<sup>(11, 12)</sup>.

This table shows that there is a significant relationship between Psychological state with (The main reason for divorce in our society it is Not choosing the right partner) at  $p$  value  $< 0.05$ . The most prominent and most present reasons are that the divorce is the result of a poor choice by both spouses or one of them, at a time when there is no real, effective and wise educational role for the family and parents in making this or that decision<sup>(13, 14)</sup>.

### CONCLUSIONS:

Many of the planning divorcing spouses had young children. The most common age gap seen in divorcing couples was between one and eight years. The vast majority of couples planning a divorce were also divorced in the past. As regard to the wives, the great number were beaten by their partner. The majority of samples were had Psychological Impact of

couples. There is a significant relationship between impact psychological health of planning for divorce with socio- demographic characteristics.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Schools should incorporate age-appropriate lessons on families, their roles, responsibilities, and goals, particularly at the college level. Organizing groups to educate potential spouses on their rights and responsibilities and to offer assistance to couples experiencing difficulties are two goals of these groups. The Importance of a Solid Marriage Education Program Children of divorced parents need to be taught the importance of having a happy, healthy marriage. This will help them see divorce less as a possibility and more as something to be avoided.

### Financial Support and Sponsorship:

Nil.

### Conflicts of Interest:

There are no conflicts of interest.

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#### TABLES:

Table (1): Socio- demographic characterizes of the sample

No.	Variable	F.	%
1	<b>Gender</b>		
1	Male	34	<b>48.6</b>
2	Female	36	<b>51.4</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>
2	<b>Age (year)</b>		
1	15-25 Year	27	<b>38.6</b>
2	26-35 Year	24	<b>34.3</b>
3	36-45 Year	14	<b>20.0</b>
4	46-55 Year	5	<b>7.1</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>
3	<b>Residential</b>		
		F.	%

1	Urban	51	72.9
2	Rural	19	27.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Do You Have Children</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Yes	53	75.7
2	No	17	24.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>How many children</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Non	16	22.9
2	1-3	39	55.7
	4-6	15	21.4
<b>6</b>	<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Reads and writes	22	31.4
2	Elementary graduate	19	27.1
3	Middle school and Prep graduated	12	17.1
4	Bachelor's graduate	17	24.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Age at marriage</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	13-23 Years	39	55.7
2	24-33 Years	27	38.6
3	34-43 Years	4	5.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Age difference between spouses</b>		
1	1-8 Years	45	64.3
2	9-16 Years	15	21.4
3	17-24 Years	10	14.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Free Business	29	41.4
2	Employment	24	34.3
3	Student	17	24.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Monthly Income</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Low	17	24.3
2	Moderate	38	54.3
3	Very Good	15	21.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table (2): Information relevant to characterizes divorce planners

No.	Variable	F.	%
<b>1</b>	<b>Do you want to return to a single life?</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Yes	43	61.4
2	No	27	38.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Is divorce a major solution to the family problem?</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Yes	36	51.4
2	No	34	48.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Does divorce negatively affect children?</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Yes	63	90.0
2	No	7	10.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>What do you think is the main reason for divorce in our society?</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Not having children	12	17
2	Not choosing the right partner	21	30
3	Infidelity	15	22
4	Mental illness and physical illness	11	16
5	Sexual perversions	4	6
6	Drug abuse	6	9
	<b>Total</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>Was the marriage compulsory or voluntary?</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	<b>Compulsory</b>	15	21.4
2	<b>Voluntary</b>	55	78.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Number of divorces</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Not once	19	27.1
2	Once	43	61.4
3	Twice	8	11.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Do you have a complete desire to complete the divorce proceedings?</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Yes	51	72.9
2	No	19	27.1
3	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Is the partner previously married?</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Yes	20	28.5
2	No	50	71.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Have you been abused by your partner?</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Yes	37	52.9
2	No	33	47.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Type of Violence</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>%</b>
1	I didn't get violent	19	27.1
2	Physical Violence	19	27.1

3	Verbal Violence	14	20.0
4	Sexual Violence	4	5.7
5	Psychological Violence	14	20.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table (3): Impact Psychological health of Planning for Divorce

No.	Impact Psychological Health Levels	Depression		Anxiety		Stress	
		F.	%	F.	%	F.	%
1	Normal	23	32.9	14	20.0	9	12.8
2	Mild	18	25.7	20	28.6	21	30
3	Moderate	15	21.4	24	34.3	13	18.6
4	Sever	14	20.0	12	17.1	27	38.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

Table (4): Association between Impact Psychological health of Planning for Divorce with Socio- demographic Characteristics

Socio- Demographic Characteristics	No	df	Depression		Anxiety		Stress	
			X <sup>2</sup>	Sig.	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig.	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Gender	70	3	11.061	.978	11.407	.536	2.141	.544
Age (year)	9	2.588	.111	7.978	.011	10.225	.010	
Residential	3	2.589	.459	2.151	.542	1.963	.580	
Do You Have Children	3	.994	.094	5.792	.049	5.792	.022	
How many children	6	6.033	.420	2.009	.919	10.283	.113	
Level of Education	9	5.035	.831	10.573	.306	11.861	.221	
Age at marriage	6	4.069	.007	8.044	.005	1.654	.009	
Age difference between spouses	6	14.211	.027	25.884	.000	14.413	.025	
Occupation	6	5.523	.479	12.427	.053	7.898	.246	
Monthly Income	6	10.489	.105	7.397	.286	3.182	.786	
Do you want to return to a single life?	3	5.472	.041	.961	.015	8.793	.000	
Is divorce a major solution to the family problem?	3	.110	.991	2.433	.488	1.801	.615	
Does divorce negatively affect children?	3	2.290	.024	2.258	.001	8.463	.007	
What do you think is the main reason for divorce in our society?	21	13.450	.002	22.993	.014	22.207	.008	
Was the marriage compulsory or voluntary?	3	4.299	.231	3.884	.274	.313	.957	
Number of divorces	9	7.213	.025	10.455	.015	11.195	.003	
Do you have a complete desire to complete the divorce proceedings?	3	1.192	.755	9.449	.024	3.236	.357	
Have you been abused by your partner?	3	2.952	.399	9.261	.026	4.810	.186	
Type of Violence	12	14.749	.255	4.027	.259	6.414	.894	

**Based on Chi-square test: Highly Sig. At P>0.05**