

Psychological security of the single mother from the
point of view of the psychologist

(A field study in some Algerian Wilayas)

الأمن النفسي لدى الأم العازبة من وجهة نظر الأخصائي النفسي
(دراسة ميدانية ببعض الولايات الجزائرية)

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Abstract:

This study aimed to identify the level of psychological security among single mothers from the psychologist's point of view, focusing on the following dimensions: life satisfaction, psychological comfort, social stability, social appreciation, using a descriptive approach. To achieve the objectives of the study, a questionnaire composed of (56) statements was administered to a randomly selected sample of (30) psychologists. The data were processed using the statistical software package for the social sciences (spss). After the analysis of the data at hand, the researchers found out that the levels of psychological security of single mothers, their level of life satisfaction, psychological comfort, social stability, and appreciation are average.

Keywords: psychological security; single mothers; psychologist.

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ملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة مستوى الأمن النفسي لدى الأمهات العازبات من وجهة نظر الأخصائي النفسي ككل، وعلى كل بعد من أبعاده (الرضا عن الحياة، الطمأنينة النفسية، الاستقرار الاجتماعي، التقدير الاجتماعي) بالاعتماد على المنهج الوصفي، ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة تم تطبيق استبيان مكون من (56) عبارة على عينة قوامها (30) أخصائياً نفسانيا تم اختيارهم بطريقة عشوائية، تم معالجة البيانات باستخدام برنامج الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (spss). توصلت الدراسة إلى أن مستوى الأمن النفسي، الرضا عن الحياة، الطمأنينة النفسية، الاستقرار الاجتماعي وكذا التقدير الاجتماعي متوسط لدى الأمهات العازبات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأمن النفسي – الأمهات العازبات – الأخصائي النفسي.

Introduction

The single mother is a taboo phenomenon which belongs to the unspoken in a society that rejects sexual relations outside marriage on the basis of local values and culture. Such sexual relations are considered as socially unacceptable for the girl and her family. Although society rejects these practices, whether by virtue of divine sanctuary or the rule of positive law, this phenomenon has increased in recent years and has become a real concern that threatens a large part of society. According to the Algerian government's statistics, 2,878 children were registered outside the institution of marriage during 2007 (Milouh, 2012,p. 364), and illegal births in Algeria have increased in recent decades, estimated at about 5,000 five thousand births out of about 700,000 births in 2014 (El-Khorayef, 2017, p. 87). According to the Algerian Ministry of Social Solidarity, there are about 3,000 single mothers added each year to the total number of single mothers (Barik & Rushd, 2017, p. 88). Social and organizational change has contributed directly or indirectly to the exacerbation of this phenomenon, which requires collective efforts to diagnose and analyze it in order to put in place mechanisms to reduce and control it.

Background

The Algerian society has undergone many changes that were slow at first, but then accelerated, as happened with the changes that the world as a whole witnessed at all levels. Then it began to evolve into a modern social style. Many factors have contributed to this change including: technical, technological, political and economic factors. This has directly or indirectly affected cultural structures, attributes and social characteristics.

Importantly, this effect was accompanied by many social phenomena, even if they existed previously, but they differed in their causes, factors and circumstances of appearance. The phenomenon of single mothers has been one of the problems that has invaded society and worsened over time. As it is a phenomenon that belongs to the unsaid because it is linked to honor and chastity in Arab and Islamic societies, it often leads to the phenomenon of concealment. This concealment leads, on the one hand, to many societal tragedies, and on the other hand, it leads the single mother to endure difficult living conditions, often attributing full responsibility to her, as in the values of society. Any intimate relationship between a man and a woman is a sin outside the framework of a recognized or agreed-upon marriage. This inferior view of a single mother without the hassle of looking at and examining the causes and circumstances that push this segment of society aside on the one hand, and its rejection by society on the other hand, has many negative aspects and generates many characteristics specific to her that are reflected in their psychological and social compatibility.

The idea of the single mother is not recognized in society, as part of a process (cultural, value, religious and even positive law), but more than that, the community believes in the idea of religious or worldly punishment. The latter is not reduced to material punishment only, but going beyond that to ostracism, contempt and social punishment. Thus, the single mother lives in a state of exclusion and marginalization justified by values, customs and law, but not justified from a humanitarian point of view because every action has its causes. The practice of this act can only be associated with a set of social, economic and value factors that have coincided with the acceleration

of social change. The individual will undoubtedly respond to the stimuli in his or her environment, whether material or social, which often define and justify our behavior, values and thoughts. Through this act, the single mother has deviated from the norms of the community.

She lives under the influence of stigmatization and disappears for fear of scandal, and leads a life of fear, anxiety and threat in a state of psychological and social instability and the aspects of tension that accompany it. It is therefore a matter of finding solutions and deciphering the factors involved in the practice of this behavior, rather than expressing reproach for it.

Therefore, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

-The main research question

What is the level of psychological security of single mothers?

The main research question is subdivided into the following questions:

- What is the level of psychological security of single mothers?
- How satisfied are single mothers with their lives?
- What is the level of psychological comfort of single mothers?
- What is the level of social stability of single mothers?
- What is the level of social appreciation of single mothers?

Hypotheses:

The main research hypothesis

The level of psychological security of single mothers is average.

The main hypothesis is subdivided into the following hypotheses:

The level of life satisfaction of single mothers is average.

The level of psychological comfort of single mothers is average.

The level of social stability of single mothers is average.

The average level of social appreciation of single mothers is average.

The objective of the study:

The objective of this study is to identify the level of psychological security of single mothers with different variables: life satisfaction, psychological comfort, social stability, and social appreciation.

Study concepts:

1- **Psychological security:** Security is a feeling that is not based on arithmetic and mathematical questions, but on psychological reactions

to risks and methods of defense (Schneier, 2008, p. 50). The concept of psychological security emerges from the hierarchy of needs theory, where Maslow (1943) argued that when security need (categorized as lower-order need) was not met; individual may develop feeling of harm or threat ,feel anxious and tense, become less satisfied with life, and may not strongly desire higher level needs. Psychological security is a state in which a person perceives that his/her environment is safe and free from harm and threat, (yooluwa & Anthony, 2017,p. 249).

According to Olga, psychological safety is a situation in which an individual can satisfy his or her basic needs for self-preservation and awareness of psychological considerations in his or her social environment (Olga, & Karapetyan, 2018,p. 103).

2-Single Mothers: A single mother is a woman who conceives without marriage, with or without desire, and sponsors her newborn child alone (Ben Zayyan, 2011-2012, p. 18).

There is also an other definition as follows: She is the woman who conceives from a man other than her husband, i.e. without a legal marriage contract, and her child is classified as an illegal child, and she is a virgin girl who has never been married (Milouh,2002, p. 366).

3- A psychologist: is a person who studies human behaviour and mental processes and works to apply what he or she has learned in the assessment and treatment of psychological and mental illnesses (Al-Otaibi, 2011, p. 1)

Literature reviews:

The study of Roussou entitled: Mental health among single mothers in Cyprus: a cross-sectional descriptive correlational study. This study aimed to assess the level of mental distress experienced by single mothers as measured by the GHQ-28, and how it is influenced by socioeconomic factors, as well as the level of perceived social support. Mental distress was assessed with the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28) and perceived social support with the Social Provision Scale (SPS). All scales were completed anonymously and voluntarily by 316 single mothers. The literature revealed that single mothers face increased levels of chronic stress, mainly due to economic hardship and low levels of social support. This ultimately leads to psychological distress and, in general, mental health disorders are common among single mothers compared to their married

counterparts, but the magnitude of the problem may be greater as diagnostic tools can mask significant levels of moderate stress. (Roussou et al, 2019, pp. 1-3).

The study entitled “the self-concept and psycho-social adjustment with the single mother” was conducted by Belkadi Fouad aimed to detect the level of self-concept and psycho-social adjustment among single mother, where was the question: What is the single mother’s self-concept and psycho-social adjustment level ? And has been testing the following assumptions: the single mother’s self-concept and psycho-social adjustment levels are low, there is correlation relationship between self-concept and psycho-social adjustment among single mother , there are differences in the levels of self-concept, psycho-social adjustment among mothers of single samples depending on: the study level ,social level , the situation family level variables .

The present study sample is formed from 48, was use the tenessi self-concept scale and psycho-social adjustment scale, it has been confirmed by psychometric methods, the study found the following results: the level of self-concept and psycho-social adjustment among single mother are low, there is correlation between the level of self-concept and psycho-social adjustment among single mother, there is no difference in the levels of self-concept, depending on the variable study level, there are differences in the psycho-social adjustment level depending on the variable study level, there are differences in the level of self-concept, psycho-social adjustment depending on: the variable social level (Belkadi, 2015-2016,pp. 3-134).

The study of Nidhi Kotwal and Bharti Prabhakar (2009),aimed to recognize the social, emotional and economic problems of single mothers. A sample of 50 single mothers was selected using the snowball sampling method. The results of the study revealed that financial problems were the main stress for the majority of single mothers. A single mother's emotional life is also affected by her individual condition. In addition to their feelings of loneliness, helplessness, despair, lack of identity and lack of confidence in social spheres, the majority of them have been pushed to avoid social occasions and gatherings, and have changed the way they dress because of their depression, in addition to a change in their eating habits. Single mothers complained of loneliness, shock, depression, and difficulty assuming responsibility for childcare. (Kotwal & Prabhakar, 2009, p. 197).

Method:**Study population and design**

The main data collection tool in this research was a questionnaire which was administered to a randomly selected group of (30) Algerian psychologists and specialists in September 2019. Importantly, the descriptive approach was adopted in the current study.

Instrument

Description of the questionnaire: A measure of psychological security, and its status, prepared by each of the researchers, Wafaa Hassan Ali Khwaiter and researcher Dr. Jamil Hassan Al-Tahrawi. The questionnaire consists of 55 statements (see Table 1) with triple weighting (fully applicable, to some extent, not applicable at all).

Table N° : 01 The distribution of statements in the questionnaire's sections

questionnaire	Number of questionnaire ف items
Psychological Safety	1-56
Life Satisfaction	1-14
Psychological comfort	15-29
Social stability	30-45
Social estimate	46-56

Table N° : 01

Source : the authors

The alternatives were given a score of 1, 2, 3 (fully applicable, to some extent they do not apply at all) respectively, and by calculating the range of alternatives $(3-1) / 3$ we find 0,66, the scores are classified as follows:

1.66-1low.

2.33-1.67 medium.

3-2.34 is high.

Psychometric characteristics of the measuring instrument**Validity of the questionnaire**

In order to know the effectiveness of the tool in measuring the intended characteristic (psychological safety), the questionnaire was presented by researcher Wafaa Hassan Ali Khwaiter to a group of 7 referees.

Psychometric characteristics of the measuring instrument**Validity related to self-stability**

This was done by calculating the self-validity of the scale which is equal to the square root of the coefficient of constancy, and it reached

(0.87), so the scale can be considered reliable in relation to what it measures.

The root of stability is equal to $0.87 =$ and the result indicates that the questionnaire has high self-validity.

The constancy of the questionnaire:

Alfa cronbach method: After applying the questionnaire to an external sample to the study sample of (10) specialists, data relating to the responses of individuals were collected, then the researcher emptied the data into the program (social statistics package (spss)) to find out the degree of the Alpha Cronbach coefficient.

A table showing the alpha-Cronbach value of the psychological security questionnaire

Table N° : 02 The alpha-Cronbach value of the psychological security of the questionnaire

questennaire	Number of items	Alfa cronbach coefficient
Psychological security	10	0.75

Table N° : 02

Source : the authors

Based on the results in the table, it is clear that Alpha Cronbach's reliability coefficient is equal to (0.75), which is an acceptable degree and indicates that the measuring instrument has a high degree of stability.

Statistical methods used in data processing

The statistical package for the social sciences (spss) was used, and among the methods used: mathematical means, standard deviations and alpha Cronbach.

Findings:

1- Results related to the first hypothesis of the study:

“the level of psychological security of single mothers is average.”

Table No. (03): The arithmetic mean of the respondents' answers to each statements of the questionnaire.

	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	level
Psychological security	1.84	0.21	average

Table N° : 03

Source : the authors

Based on the results in Table N° (03), the psychologists estimate that the level of psychological security of single mothers is at an average level, where the arithmetic mean was estimated at (1.84) with a standard deviation of (0.21), and thus the hypothesis is confirmed.

2- Results related to the second hypothesis of the study:

“the Level of satisfaction with single mothers is average.”

Table No. (4): The arithmetic mean of the respondents' answers to each statements of the questionnaire.

	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	level
Satisfaction	1.85	0.23	average

Table N° : 04

Source : the authors

Based on the results in Table N° (04), the psychologists estimate that the level of satisfaction of single mothers is at an average level, where the arithmetic mean was estimated at (1.85) with a standard deviation of (0.23), and thus the hypothesis is confirmed.

3- Results related to the third hypothesis of the study:

“The level of psychological comfort of single mothers is average.”

Table No. (05): The arithmetic mean of the respondents' answers to each sentence of the questionnaire.

	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	level
psychological comfort	1.88	0.26	average

Table N° : 05

Source : the authors

Based on the results in Table N° (05), the psychologists estimate that the level of psychological comfort of single mothers is at an average level, where the arithmetic mean was estimated at (1.88) with a standard deviation of (0.26), and thus the hypothesis is confirmed.

4- Results related to the fourth hypothesis of the study:

“The level of social stability of single mothers is average.”

Table No. (06): The arithmetic mean of the respondents' answers to each statements of the questionnaire.

	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	level
Social stability	1.83	0.20	average

Table N° : 06

Source : the authors

Based on the results in Table N° (06), the psychologists estimate that the level of psychological comfort of single mothers is at an average level, where the arithmetic mean was estimated at (1.83) with a standard deviation of (0.20), and thus the hypothesis is confirmed.

5- Results related to the fifth hypothesis of the study:

“The level of social estimation of single mothers is average.”

Table No. (07): The arithmetic mean of the respondents' answers to each statements of the questionnaire.

	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	level
social estimation	1.80	0.32	average

Table N° : 07

Source : the authors

Based on the results in Table N° (07), the psychologists estimate that the level of social estimation of single mothers is at an average level, where the arithmetic mean was estimated at (1.80) with a standard deviation of (0.32), and thus the hypothesis is confirmed.

Discussions

First: The results of the study showed that the level of psychological security of single mothers is average. The culture of society and the religious values that reject any sexual relationship between a man and a woman outside the legal framework has a stigmatizing effect on the girl and her family, and it is natural that those who have committed this act feel psychological anxiety, future anxiety and fear of a contemptuous view of society. In this regard, some specialists have stated that there are cases which have developed suicidal ideas as a result of having lost the meaning of life because of the material and moral ostracism to which they are exposed by their families on the one hand and by society on the other hand. The results of this study are in conformity with those of Roussou's study (2015-2016).

Second: The results of the study showed that the level of life satisfaction among single mothers is average. Satisfaction with life is governed by a range of factors, whether social, material or emotional. Thus, to achieve satisfaction, there must be a positive interaction between these factors. Therefore, any defect that occurs in these interacting factors leads to a defect in the human personality, the single mother has engaged in a behaviour which is rejected by society and which does not go hand in hand with the values of Islam . This undeniably made her lose the respect and esteem of society and led her to be a subject of stigmatization. This result was also highlighted by Kotwal and Prabhakar (2009).

Third: The study showed that the level of psychological comfort of single mothers is average, as single mothers do not feel safe due to alienation and loss of meaning of life. The absence of any kind of family support in the first place and of society in the second place prevents the single mother from being comforted psychologically. The process of abandonment and rejection that a single mother undergoes

the change in her social status and the distance from her loved ones makes her feel that she is in danger because of the alienation and meaningless life in which she is living. One needs community support, which is difficult to achieve in light of committing a prohibited act in the context of the local culture.

Fourth: As the study showed the level of social stability of single mothers is average. The process of social stability cannot be regarded as a process independent of the values and habits of society and its general law, it is closely associated with it, therefore stability will only come if the individual's behaviour coincides with what is expected of him socially, therefore, it is difficult to ensure the stability of a single mother in a society that does not accept sex outside marriage. Denial, rejection and stigmatization of the mother create social imbalance and difficulties in adapting to the new situation after having practiced an illegal sexual act, and hinder her ability to achieve her goals, aspirations and personal needs.

Fifth: The results of the study showed that the level of social evaluation of single mothers is average. It cannot be denied that social values, religious values, customs, traditions and beliefs are essential elements of the culture of any society. As a result, their adherence and respect bring an appreciation of society and vice versa, as straying from group values, or all that is sacred is often seen as suicide, this is how a single mother feels when she commits this sin, because it is accompanied by a permanent feeling of inferiority and lack of respect within society, which has broken one of its most important rules.

Conclusion

It can be said that it is difficult for a single mother to achieve psychological security in the light of a society that absolutely rejects the idea of a sexual relationship between a man and a woman outside of marriage. Values, customs, traditions, beliefs and even positive law are factors that prevent single mothers from adapting socially to their new situation, although some parties, such as feminist and human rights groups, call for this category to be ensured, reality often proves that they have been subjected to all kinds of punishment and social rejection.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1.

After Greetings:

The researcher is conducting a field study entitled: "Psychological security among single mothers from the point of view of the psychologist (A field study in some Algerian wilaya)."

To do so, you are invited to respond to this list, which consists of a group of paragraphs. Please respond to questions and requests for information in a precise and objective manner, placing an (X) in the appropriate box.

I wish to inform you that the information obtained is used solely for scientific research purposes.

The researcher can only thank you most sincerely for your cooperation and for giving her some of your valuable time.

the statements	Totally conform	somewhat conform	never conform
Expecting goodness from those around her			
She's successful in her daily life			
She's confident in her ability to protect herself			
Her self-confidence is not good			
She lacks emotional feelings and psychological warmth			
She feels safe in her life			
She needs the protection of parents and relatives to live safely			
She feels good and satisfied with her life			
She feels her life is better now than it was in the past			
Her religious values and worship give her a sense of security			
Accepting criticism from others			
She feels that her life is full of joy and pleasure			
Sad most of the time			
She despises and blames herself most of the time			
Loved and respected by people			
She feels her spirits are high			
She sees that life is going from bad to worse			
Her family holds her responsible for everything			
She lacks support from her family			
She has difficulty living with her family and siblings			

her parents' control over her decisions bothers her			
She often has the feeling of crying			
She feels uncomfortable and not calm most of the time			
She feels fear from time to time			
Anxiety about the future threatens her life and prevents her from enjoying security and stability			
She sleeps peacefully			
She suffers from a lot of insomnia, which reduces her sense of comfort and calm			
..She suffers a lot from insomnia, which reduces her feeling of comfort and calm			
She feels her life is in danger			
Feelings of pessimism and despair			
She has a sense of security in her ability to face her problems and try to solve them			
.She sees her life getting closer to idealism Enjoy a happy social life			
It's hard for her family to understand her new situation			
she participates with others in social events			
Her entourage often reminds her that her situation has changed and that she must adhere to social behavior			
Give others a sense of humour			
Treat others well			
She shares the good times and the bad times with her relatives.			
Enjoy a happy social life			
Her family won't allow her to leave the house alone			
She is exposed to many comments in her social life			
She has the ability to deal with reality, even if it's hard			
She's confident			
Feel angry			
Her appreciation and self-esteem make her feel safe			
Her success in her work makes her stable and secure			
Feel the confidence of others in its capabilities			
People respect and appreciate her			
She feels safe and stable in her social life			
She can make decisions and bear the results			
Her thoughts and opinions gain appreciation and respect for others			
Avoid leaving the house to avoid criticism of others			
She feels she has a great value in life			
She is keen to exchange visits with her friends			
Adapts easily and feels happy in any social situation			