
The Eurasia Proceedings of Educational & Social Sciences (EPESS), 2016

Volume 5, Pages 47-53

ICRES 2016: International Conference on Research in Education and Science

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF UNMARRIED WOMEN IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR 'A FIELD STUDY ON A SAMPLE OF UNMARRIED WOMEN'

Laid Fekih

Psychology, University of Tlemcen –Algeria

Mohamed Meziane

University of Oran2, Algeria.

Abstract: The present research was designed to determine the psychological stress as experienced by unmarried women in the education sector, and how to help them to discover the meaning of their presence in the framework, innovation and achievement, art, science, comprehension, love and adaptation in life. This research aims to identify the various problems and mental disorders that unmarried women suffering from, and to determine the differences between unmarried women in terms of the psychological problems resulting from 'unmarried' in: ages, kind and professional status. The method used in this research is purely descriptive following the collected data from the sample of 200 unmarried women. The tools that were used in this research as follow: Self-Confidence Scale, Psychological Stress Scale, 'List of Information Collection for unmarried women'; we proceeded with some statistical techniques, which provided the percentages, and the correlation coefficient, and the t-test. The findings of this research were: - Emotional problems are the most common problems experienced by unmarried women. The present study indicate the presence of depressive symptoms in 17%, which can evolve toward psychotic depression as dysthymia (loss of interest in daily activities, hopelessness, low self-esteem, self-criticism, trouble concentrating and trouble making decisions, effectiveness and productivity, avoidance of social activities, feelings of guilt and worries over the past, insomnia...)- The impact of unmarried on late stages have more negative impact, and psychological effect on them was more severe and the greatest harm. - Significant differences were found between unmarried women in terms of stress in favor of voluntary group. - There was statistical significant difference (0.01) between the unmarried women in terms of stress from the level of confidence in favor of the unmarried women who are employed. The advancement of women in the age without marriage or "unmarried women" is origin of psychological stress and low self-confidence.

Keywords : Mental health, unmarried women, psychological stress, self-confidence

Introduction

Statistical studies show that the rate of unmarried women's in Arab and Western societies is steadily rising. Particularly (John Fetto., 2012) confirms, "Experian Simmons found that the share of adult women in USA who are not married rose to nearly half. In 2011, 48% of adult women were not married, up from 45% in 2005".

In Arab culture unmarried women is a source of psychological distress for her compared with men who are not seen as a negative outlook community when delayed his marriage. usually girl's fears started when she realize that age of marriage is exceeded, then obsessions ideas of spinsterhood are increasing, and the concern of social isolation is growing, spinsterhood becomes a source of threat to each girl's future dreams of emotional stability, childbearing, motherhood, and sufficiently relational with partner. At the present time the young generation in Algeria fears about marriage, It's considered a distant early as a result of what became imposed from many physical demands, financial expenses, and restriction of freedom, all contributed in one way or another the delay in marriage among young people. In contrast, Reynolds confirms the high rate of single people in Western society when he said: "The increase in numbers of single people has been described as one of the greatest social phenomena of western society. Most women will spend periods of their lives alone, without a committed partner

- This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

- Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the conference

*Corresponding author: Laid Fekih- E-Mail: icresoffice@gmail.com

relationship. Yet there is still a degree of social stigma attached to this status. Single women are a crucial group for study in relation to perceived changes in family life and relationships” (Reynolds, 2008).

Recent research on Marriage and mental health among young adults (Jeremy, 2012), notes, “that married young adults exhibit similar levels of psychological distress as young adults who are in any kind of romantic relationship. Married and engaged young adults report lower rates of drunkenness than others. Married young adults—especially those who first married at age 22–26—report higher life satisfaction than those in other types of relationships or no relationship at all, as well as those who married at younger ages”. Many previous studies confirm that marriage contribute effectively to save general health of individual, through the promotion of income especially if the partner works, and improves access to health care and reducing stress and tension. Marriage plays an important role in regulating health behavior, as a good daily diet, regular physical exercises, reducing smoking and excessive alcohol, develop emotional feelings, strengthens the intimate relationship between partners, and meets the need for social contact; all these characteristics have a positive impact on physical, psychological and mental health (House JS & al, 1988: 313). Studies of marriage and mental health tend to focus on marriage is typically thought to increase psychological, social, and economic resources, and to help individuals avoid the stress of relationship dissolution (Williams and Umberson 2004, Liu, Elliot and Umberson 2010, Simon and Barrett 2010, Liu et al 2010).

According to a study of (Donna and Rita, 1981: 108) there is a correlation between mental health and ability to social interaction, and that the reality of mental health and social conditions among married better than non-married couples. "Sandra" in his study (Sandra.T, 1992: 69) tried to identify psychic experiences for a range of cases inequalities gender who has never married, As a result, the comparative analysis classified 13 categories reflect loneliness, This feeling has emerged in the form of multi-faceted experience and meanings have to develop more and more feelings of depression. The Study of (Johnson et al, 2002: 211) has indicated that marriage positively affect on mental health in terms of reducing depression symptoms for each spouse, and this research has documented that the rise of depression after divorce is strong and its symptoms long and high and the prevalence rate is high after years of disintegration of married life. As for the study of (Kim et al, 2002: 885) concluded that married people are less prone to depression than unmarried even as they grow older.

(Manzoli et al, 2007: 77) Confirms that married couples live longer and health physically better than unmarried; and men benefit more from healthy marriage than women (Williams et al, 2004: 81). Especially that result provide evidence that the higher stress levels of the divorced primarily reflect the effect of social role with selection and crisis effects making small contributions only (Johnson, 2002). Relatedly, (Bierman and all, 2006) find that even though the consistently married generally fare better than all the other groups, the reasons for this advantage not only varied by category of marital status but also, for any specific group, these reasons are sometimes varied depending on the aspect of mental health being examined. A study, try to compare general health by measuring risk factors among a sample of 493 women living a quiet life with their spouses and varying degrees of level-sufficiency from high level to low, and other unmarried women, single mothers, divorcees and widows, risk factors were measured at more than 5 times over 13 years. The data were analyzed using multilevel modeling method. This study concluded that “women in relationships with high satisfaction had lower levels of biological, lifestyle, and psychosocial risk factors than other groups. In some cases, women in satisfying marriages also showed a lower risk trajectory on risk factors relative to other women. Hence, marriage appears to confer health benefits for women, but only when marital satisfaction is high” (Gallo. L, 2003: 453).

Carlson study resulted that majority of sample did not agree about the appropriate age for marriage, whether early or late, in both cases it will reflect negatively on the mental health of married couples, and the majority tend to delay marriage or preference permanent celibacy and see that good mental health is in individual survival without marriage. There are several factors that affect the differences in mental health among adults married and unmarried, despite increase in standard deviation of unmarried, but was recording a clear lack of their mental health (Carlson, 2012).

Studies carried out by (Ryff and Keves 1995, Bierman, Fazio and Milkie 2006, Williams 2003) have amassed a considerable amount of evidence showing that mental health at unmarried women is comprised of both positive affect and the absence of distress, they shows that differences in the effect of marriage on mental health, as men tend to externalize and women tend to internalize their mental health problems. Another study of (Rahman, 1993) found “that divorced and never-married adults (aged 15-44 years) had significantly higher mortality than their currently married peers with differences in disability status accounting for some of this excess risk”. It is already mentioned that the impact of unmarried women is directly linked to ability of women to stress, lifestyle, previous experiences and the ways in which trained them in order to endure similar traumatic events.

Problematic of the Study

From the above is clear to us that unmarried women are more likely psychological stress, weak self-confidence and feelings of despair increases more advanced in age. So the questions are:
 What is the rate of psychological distress experienced by women as a result of unmarried? What is the effect of mental health problems for unmarried women on family cohesion?
 Is psychological counseling by meaning effective in reducing psychological stress and improve self-confidence level to unmarried women?

Method

Sample

To achieve the purpose of this research was chosen a wide sample of unmarried women in order to detect their level of the psychological stress, the quality of their families communication, has also been experimenting with a counseling program proposal to improve the self-confidence among unmarried women who suffer from mental health problems. The sample is estimated at 200 unmarried women in the west of Algeria.

Search Tools

order to achieve the objectives of research and access to objective results, the researcher use:

- Self-Confidence Scale was measured through self-confidence scale of (Sidney Shrauger).
- Psychological Stress Scale was measured through (Laid fekih, 2013), 4 items developed by the researcher were used, Cronbach Alfa that shows reliability was 85 percent that is very good.
- Questionnaire to gather information about the characteristics and factors of unmarried women.

Statistical methods used in the study

Descriptive and experimental approaches are appropriate in the current study; to analyze data the researcher used "content analysis", a range of statistical methods as the medium, standard deviations, percentages, *t* test for independent-samples, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results

Results related to the characteristics of unmarried women in terms of their level of education, professional, and their situation and mental disorders.

Table 1. Shows the percentages of educational level, their professional status, various attitudes and ideas about marriage according to the sample studied

Educational level of unmarried women	F	N	%
Without level	8	200	4
Primary	27	200	13.5
Average	59	200	29.5
Secondary	43	200	21.5
Academic	63	200	31.5
professional status	F	N	%
Officially employed	80	200	40
Without formal work	120	200	60
Kind			
Voluntary unmarried women	23	200	11.5
Involuntarily unmarried women	177	200	88.5
Attitudes and ideas	F	N	%
Lifting the roof of demands and standards that must be available in husband.	108	200	54
Desire for individuality and personal autonomy and marriage is restriction of freedom.	115	200	57.5
Emotional inclination towards the same sex and aversion from opposite sex.	5	200	2.5

The belief that they don't have the features required How to please a man (beauty, fitness ...).	98	200	49
Separation anxiety from family	68	200	34
Misconceptions about men	60	200	30
Negative feelings toward man (competition, conflict...)	15	200	7.5
Girl social isolation	78	200	39

These findings show that most of unmarried women are located between average and academic level, so the problem of unmarried spread between women with different levels of education. Most of unmarried women are not officially employed, and their unmarried is involuntary. Also unmarried women caused by the desire for uniqueness, personal independence and look at marriage as a restriction of their freedom, and lifting the roof of demands, standards that must be available in husband.

Table 2. Shows the percentages of psychological status of unmarried women in light of results of psychological stress scale

psychological status of unmarried women	F	N	%
Mental fatigue and physical exhaustion	66	200	33
Psychosomatic repercussions	40	200	20
insufficiency	63	200	31.5
Emotional problems (anxiety and frustration)	75	200	37.5
Presence of depressive symptoms	34	200	17

The findings above indicated that Emotional problems are the most common problems experienced by unmarried women; it was followed by mental fatigue, physical exhaustion and insufficiency.

3.2. Results related to the correlation coefficient between psychological stress and self-confidence among unmarried women, and the difference between age groups.

Table 3. Shows means, standard deviations and the results of the correlation coefficient between psychological stress and self-confidence among unmarried women

	N	Mean \bar{X}	Std. Deviat S	Pearson Correlation	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Psychological Stress	200	50.33	14.87	-,766(**)	198	,000
Self-Confidence	200	20.77	6.40			
Valid N (listwise)	200					

The findings above indicated that unmarried women scores on psychological stress correlated negatively with self-confidence test scores. It appeared that general psychological stress could affect the quality of self-confidence. Thus, the mental health level of unmarried women is low clearly, so they lack a lot of positive aspects that reflect the level of mental health.

Table 4. Shows the results of t test for independent-samples to calculate the differences between age groups of unmarried women in terms of psychological stress and self-confidence

age groups	35-45 years old N = 133		46-55 years old N = 67		t	Sig. (2-tailed) Df= 198	Level of sign
	\bar{X}	S	\bar{X}	S			
Psychological Stress	46.5	14.33	54.17	15.41	3.46	0.01	Sign
Self-Confidence	22.23	6.58	19.22	6.23	3.09	0.01	Sign
Kind of unmarried	Voluntary N =23		involuntary N =177		t	Sig.	Level
Psychological Stress	57.35	12.25	48	13.85	3.06	0.01	Sign
professional status	Officially employed N =80		Without formal work N =120		t	Sig.	Level
Psychological Stress	52.22	11.45	45.25	12.89	3.89	0.01	Sign

The findings above indicated that:

- There was statistical significant difference ($P < 0.01$) between the two age groups in terms of psychological stress and self-confidence in favor of unmarried women aged between 46-55 years old.
- Significant differences ($P < 0.01$) were found between unmarried women in terms of psychological stress in favor of voluntary group.
- There was statistical significant difference ($P < 0.01$) between the unmarried women in terms of stress from the level of confidence in favor of the unmarried women who are employed.

Discussion of Results

The present study concluded to several characteristics distinguish unmarried women, they are located between average and academic level, so the problem of unmarried spread between women with different levels of education, most of unmarried women are not officially employed, and their unmarried is involuntary. Voluntary unmarried occur as a result of conscious desire not to marry, with passage of time take root at girls the idea that marriage is bad for her or "she is not suitable for marriage"; while involuntary unmarried occur for women despite the availability of desire to marry and vigorous in its attempts to find a partner, but they are not able to do, so the required period of marriage undergoing without finding the right partner. Also unmarried women caused by the desire for uniqueness, personal independence and look at marriage as a restriction of their freedom, and lifting the roof of demands, standards that must be available in husband.

In general, the findings indicated that unmarried women scores on psychological stress correlated negatively with self-confidence test scores. It appeared that general psychological stress could affect the quality of self-confidence. Thus, the mental health level of unmarried women is clearly low. Several key conclusions can be reached from these analyses in terms of emotional problems, mental fatigue, physical exhaustion and insufficiency. The emergence of these problems in this way, not only because of unmarried shock, but is primarily due to accumulation of attitudes frustrating years ago, the accumulation of these disturbing events in addition to the resulting consequences of it, leading after a period of time to establish psychosomatic problems. On this basis, these problems grow gradually, without calling attention to it at the beginning of unmarried women, and after a period of time appear in the form of an explicit disorder which is difficult to treat. Unmarried women that have been previously shocking incidents, be more vulnerable to emotional and psychosomatic disorders at the same time.

The emergence of these problems in this way, not only because of unmarried shock, but is primarily due to accumulation of attitudes frustrating years ago, the accumulation of these disturbing events in addition to the resulting consequences of it, leading after a period of time to establish psychosomatic problems. On this basis, these problems grow gradually, without calling attention to it at the beginning of unmarried women, and after a period of time appear in the form of an explicit disorder which is difficult to treat. Unmarried women that have been previously shocking incidents, be more vulnerable to emotional and psychosomatic disorders at the same time, in this regard marriage improved sense of self, gives human value and sovereignty, the person who is married feels that his life has a meaning and purpose (Bierman et al 2006). The present study showed that there was statistical significant difference ($P < 0.01$) between the two age groups in terms of psychological stress and self-confidence in favor of unmarried women aged between 46-55 years old. This means that older unmarried women more vulnerable to psychological stress compared to least older, and can be explained by the fact that unmarried women more sensitive to threaten life when she advance in age, and the repercussions of unmarried more damaging when highlighting other problems, Where her family feel guilty, directly or indirectly for failing to Life. This result is interpreted that concerns of unmarried woman lie in the fear of death without a lead role in life through procreation and accompanying feelings of guilt, and a sense of not achieving the ambitions of many of the worldly gains despite the potential and capabilities possessed by, and its inability to assume its responsibilities, thus the feeling of alienation, emptiness and frustration that makes women lose their self-confidence. These findings are consistent with Reynolds findings that ways of their self-represented reflects the extreme contrasts of a denigrated or an empowered identity (Reynolds, 2008).

The present study showed there were statistical significant differences ($P < 0.01$) between unmarried women in terms of psychological stress in favor of voluntary group and unmarried women who are employed. For these women, the stress level rises because of occupational stress and guilt complex that will accompany where she have the opportunity to marriage and did not take it, this situation make them feel unstable and disruption on the identity level, their psychic experiences are mix of anxiety, tension and fear of the future. In Arab culture unmarried women is a traumatic experience in life, and create a fundamental change in women life, the psychological pain increases when they lose hope completely in marriage and motherhood, thus that means loss of appreciation, respect and social status. By contrast (Simon and Barrett 2010) considers, that young people may access to social value and self-esteem which defines their identity through social integration and emotional relationships outside of marriage. In this regard, (Marques, 1996) wondering, that it is not clear whether married young adults reap these benefits in the same way as other married adults. On this basis, unmarried women are required more adjustment and adaptation with the various demands life, so psychological equilibrium to them is determined by success of psychological defense mechanisms to reduce felling tension, especially compensation and sublimation mechanisms. Unmarried women especially those suffering from stress and feelings of hopelessness are required to deepen their relationship with family, expand the network of social relations, occupy themselves with more works, and engage in associations, charity work, and playing sports.

Recommendation

Counseling with meaning to reduce distress and improve the level of self-confidence among unmarried women who suffer from mental health problems (distress and low self-confidence). The researcher did an experiment about the effectiveness of the counseling program improve the mental health's level of unmarried women, where results showed the importance of the program in helping women to discover the authentic meanings involved in her life, and to realize that her destiny is in her hand, she had to face her life through her free choices, she is responsible about what she has reached in life whether success or failure, and have the ability to re-develop its relationship with world again when she discover her well being. The use of this program for unmarried women has increase their self-confidence selecting a new meaning to their life, creating a new vision to their existence that's why they became more and more committed to their different responsibilities, catharsis in spontaneous manner, correcting a lot of misconceptions by refuting them with correct and more rational ideas, forming a positive concept of self, with the ability to adapt and compatibility with personal, environmental and social demands. Then she discovered that the problem is not in his presence, but also in how to confront it, and that there is an unavoidable suffering, which need patience and worship. Researcher also reported that some of these cases need to long-term individual therapeutic intervention, especially those cases that suffer from separation anxiety and phobia from contact with men. As researcher halted during the extension hearings on a lot of interesting things, and a set of ideas, misconceptions and beliefs about men as a result of negative and threatened experiences or attitudes that unmarried women experienced in the past, found herself rejects the idea of attachment to men by the pretext that he is a source of risk, using generalization, projection and justification as psychological defense mechanisms that make security situation and psychological stability available, and formed unmarried women's wrong style of life. The researcher discovered that unmarried women who suffer from low self-esteem, live in a state of hopelessness, inefficiency and increased feelings of disability, they often determine goals and direction in life based upon what others might want or need. A woman's never married or "unmarried women" is origin of psychological stress and low self-confidence.

References

- Bierman, A., Fazio, E.M., Milkie, M.A. (2006). Multifaceted approach to the mental health advantage of the married: Assessing how explanations vary by outcome measure and unmarried group. *Journal of Family Issues*, 2006;27:554–582.
- Carlson, D.L. (2012). Deviations from desired age at marriage: mental health differences across marital status." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74,4 (August 2012): 743-758.
- Donna, A., Rita, B. (1981). The mental health of the never-married. *Alternative Lifestyles Journal*, Vol. 4 (1): 108 124
- Gallo, L.C., Troxel, W.M., Matthews, K.A., Kuller, L.H. (2003). Marital status and quality in middle-aged women: Associations with levels and trajectories of cardiovascular risk factors. *Health Psychology*, Vol 22(5): 453-463
- House J.S., Umberson, D., et Landis. (1988). Structures and Processes of Social Support. *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 14: 293-318.
- Jeremy, E., Uecker. (2012). Marriage and mental health among young adults. *Journal of health Sociology Behavior*, vol. 53 (1): 67-83
- John, F. all the single ladies: Unmarried women comprise an increasing share of the population, Mar 23 2012, www.experian.com/.../all-the-single-ladies-unmarried
- Johnson, D.R., Jian, W. (2002). An empirical test of crisis, social selection, and role explanations of the relationship between marital disruption and psychological distress: A pooled time-series analysis of four-wave panel data. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 64: 211-224.
- Kim, H.K., Patrick, M. (2002). The relationship between marriage and psychological well-being. *Journal of Family Issues*, vol. 23 (8): 885-911
- Liu, H., Elliott, S., Umberson, D.J., Grant, J.E., Potenza, M.N. (2010). Young adult mental health. Marriage in Young Adulthood. New York: *Oxford University Press*; 169–180.
- Manzoli, L., Paolo, V., Giovanni, M.P., and Antonio, B. (2007). Marital status and mortality in the elderly: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Social Science & Medicine*, vol. 64: 77-94.
- Rahman, O. (1993). Excess mortality for the unmarried in rural Bangladesh. *Int J Epidemiol*. 1993 Jun, 22(3): 445-56.
- Reynolds, J. (2008). The single woman: a discursive investigation. (Women and Psychology). *Psychology Press*, London, Rout ledge.
- Ryff, C.D., Keyes, C.L.M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 69: 719–727.
- Sandra, T. (1992). Lived experience of never-married women. Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. *Mental Health Nursing Journal*, Vol. 13, N^o. 2: 69-80

- Simon, R.W., Barrett, A.E. (2010). Nonmarital romantic relationships and mental health in early adulthood: Does the association differ for women and men? *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. Vol 51: 168–182.
- Williams, K. (2003). Has the future of marriage arrived? a contemporary examination of gender, marriage, and psychological well-being. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, vol 44: 470–487.
- Williams, K., Umberson, D. (2004). Marital status, marital transitions, and health: a gendered life course perspective. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, vol. 45: 81-98.