Psychological Resilience Among Al-Quds University Students in Light of Certain Variables

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the level of psychological resilience among students at Al-Quds University and investigate differences in resilience based on gender, age, place of residence, and educational qualification. The study adopted a descriptive methodology, utilizing a sample of 180 students from various majors, selected through a convenience sampling method. The Wagnild & Young (1993) Resilience Scale was translated, adapted, and used to measure psychological resilience.

The findings revealed that the overall level of psychological resilience among Al-Quds University students was moderate. No statistically significant differences in resilience were found based on gender. However, significant differences were observed based on age, with older students demonstrating higher levels of resilience. Furthermore, significant differences were noted concerning place of residence, as students living in urban areas exhibited higher resilience levels compared to those residing in rural areas or refugee camps. Lastly, students with postgraduate qualifications reported higher resilience levels compared to undergraduate students.

Keywords: Psychological resilience, university students, Al-Quds University.

Introduction:

University life represents a critical phase in an individual's journey, during which they strive to achieve their goals and ambitions, shaping their future trajectories. Success during this phase requires students to demonstrate diligence and perseverance while navigating various academic and social demands. However, this period is not without its pressures and frustrations, which often

stem from the developmental challenges and academic expectations, potentially impacting students' mental health. Therefore, it becomes essential for students to develop the ability to adapt to these challenges and pressures to continue pursuing their goals and proving their capabilities.

Students can address these challenges by cultivating psychological resilience, which facilitates positive outcomes despite numerous factors that may threaten their adaptation and growth. Psychological resilience reflects individual differences in how people respond to challenges; while some manage adverse circumstances positively, others may be negatively impacted by the same conditions (Mastan, 2001).

The university environment serves as fertile ground for learning, communication, and self-development, shaping students' intellectual and behavioral orientations. However, this environment also presents challenges, including setting goals, discovering purpose, and taking on personal and academic responsibilities. These changes may lead to anxiety and psychological stress, particularly for students studying away from their hometowns. Increased social interaction may also evoke negative emotions, such as anger and resentment, due to inappropriate behaviors or decisions (Thompson, 2005).

Psychological resilience has emerged as a prominent concept with the development of positive psychology, which emphasizes cultivating personal strengths and positive traits. Psychological resilience refers to an individual's ability to maintain emotional balance and effectively adapt to stressful or traumatic situations (Abu Halawa, 2010). The concept was first introduced in the 1970s by Werner and Smith (1982), who observed that some children from impoverished and hostile environments demonstrated exceptional success despite the challenges they faced.

According to Richardson (2002), psychological resilience consists of three primary components: psychological immunity, which enables individuals to face stressful events positively; recovery from crises; and psychological growth and development after exposure to trauma. These components are vital for achieving mental health and overall well-being.

As a result, psychological resilience has become a central focus of research as a fundamental trait that helps individuals cope with daily challenges, particularly in the face of increasing environmental and psychological pressures on youth. Developing this skill promotes sustainable mental health and highlights the urgent need for a supportive educational environment that enhances students' lives and strengthens their capacity for success (Ghareeb et al., 2017).

Previous studies have explored psychological resilience in various contexts. For instance, Al-Sabawi et al. (2022) found that Mosul University students exhibited high levels of resilience, with a negative relationship between resilience and emotional suppression. Similarly, Al-Wafi and Hamad (2022) reported that resilience contributed to a 21% improvement in subjective well-being. Abdel Rahim & Bediwi (2023) highlighted a positive relationship between resilience and vitality among university students, while Al-Ataywi and Al-Qudah (2023) demonstrated a positive correlation between resilience and happiness. In contrast, Jumaa (2024) found statistically significant differences in resilience levels among university students, and Al-Askar (2024) emphasized both the direct and indirect effects of resilience on self-efficacy through mindfulness. Other studies have examined the impact of insufficient resilience on mental health. For example, Issa (2023) identified a negative relationship between nomophobia, resilience, and mindfulness, with gender differences favoring females in nomophobia and males in resilience. Similarly, Al-dhaidan (2023) found a positive relationship between mindfulness, resilience, and psychological flourishing, though their findings were not statistically significant.

International research supports these conclusions. Arslan, et al. (2024) reported that resilience and self-compassion enhance quality of life and reduce emotional distress. İme, & Ümmet (2024) demonstrated the effectiveness of online peer support interventions in reducing stress and anxiety while increasing resilience. Russo, et al. (2024) highlighted the role of career adaptability as a mediator between resilience and well-being. Additionally, Ong, et al. (2024) found that a lack of resilience is strongly associated with deteriorating mental health.

The Study Problem

University students encounter numerous psychological challenges and pressures during their academic journey, such as transitioning to a new educational and cultural environment and coping with demanding academic and social requirements. These pressures can occasionally result in adverse psychological effects that influence their personality, academic performance, and social interactions. Psychological resilience is a crucial trait that enables students to confront these challenges, reflecting their ability to adapt to pressures and traumatic events, thereby allowing them to achieve their academic and personal goals. However, studies exploring the prevalence of this trait among university students and its relationship to adapting to the university environment

remain limited. This underscores the need for research focusing on the role of psychological resilience in addressing academic and social challenges.

The Importance

The significance of this study lies in its emphasis on psychological resilience among university students, a topic that has not received sufficient attention from researchers, particularly in the Palestinian context. The study seeks to highlight the concept of psychological resilience in light of the current challenges faced by Palestinian university students. It aims to bridge the research gap in this field and provides insights that can help enhance the academic and social adaptation of university students.

Objectives

1. To determine the level of psychological resilience among students at Al-Quds University.
2. To examine differences in the mean scores of psychological resilience based on gender among Al-Quds University students.
3. To analyze differences in the mean scores of psychological resilience based on age among Al-Quds University students.
4. To investigate differences in the mean scores of psychological resilience based on place of residence among Al-Quds University students.
5. To assess differences in the mean scores of psychological resilience based on educational qualification among Al-Quds University students.

Questions

1. What is the level of psychological resilience among students at Al-Quds University?
2. Are there differences in the mean scores of psychological resilience among Al-Quds University students based on gender?
3. Are there differences in the mean scores of psychological resilience among Al-Quds University students based on age?
4. Are there differences in the mean scores of psychological resilience among Al-Quds University students based on place of residence?
5. Are there differences in the mean scores of psychological resilience among Al-Quds University students based on educational qualification?

Hypotheses

1. **First Hypothesis**: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in psychological resilience among Al-Quds University students based on gender.

2. **Second Hypothesis**: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in psychological resilience among Al-Quds University students based on academic year.

3. **Third Hypothesis**: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in psychological resilience among Al-Quds University students based on academic major.

4. **Fourth Hypothesis**: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in psychological resilience among Al-Quds University students based on place of residence.

Methodology

To achieve the study's objectives, the researchers employed the descriptive method, which is defined as a research approach that examines a phenomenon, event, or issue currently existing and allows for the collection of information to answer research questions without intervention. This approach aims to describe the phenomenon under investigation comprehensively.

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all students at Al-Quds University, totaling 11,000 students, according to the university's Registration and Admission Department. The study sample included 180 students, selected using a convenience sampling method that was suitable for the characteristics of the study population. Table (1) presents the demographic distribution of the study sample.

Instruments

The study instrument was a questionnaire comprising two sections:

1. The first section collected demographic data related to the study sample.

2. The second section measured psychological resilience using the **Wagnild & Young (1993)** scale, later utilized by **Wagnild (2009)**. The scale was translated and modified to suit the nature of the study and consisted of 10 items.

Validity and Reliability of the Study

The validity of the instrument was confirmed by calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient for each questionnaire item with the overall instrument score, revealing statistically significant correlations for all items, indicating strong internal consistency. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding an overall score of **0.87** for psychological resilience, signifying an acceptable level of reliability for the study purposes.

Statistical Analysis

Following the collection and validation of the questionnaires, the data was coded and prepared for statistical analysis using **SPSS**.

Analysis:

Table 1: Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	78	43.3
	Female	102	56.7
Age	17–22	72	40.0
	23–30	46	25.6
	31+	62	34.4
Place of Residence	Village	46	25.6
	City	115	63.9
	Camp	19	10.6
Qualification	Bachelor's	108	60.0
	Master's	54	30.0
	Doctorate	18	10.0

The data presented in Table 1 illustrates the distribution of the study sample across various demographic variables. Regarding gender, females constitute a larger portion of the sample at **56.7%**, compared to males, who represent **43.3%**. In terms of age, the majority of participants fall within the 17–22 age group, accounting for **40.0%**, followed by those aged 31 years and above at **34.4%**, while the 23–30 age group represents the smallest proportion at **25.6%**.

Concerning place of residence, the majority of participants reside in urban areas, comprising **63.9%**, compared to **25.6%** from villages and **10.6%** from refugee camps. Regarding educational qualification, the majority of participants hold a bachelor's degree, accounting for **60.0%**, followed by **30.0%** with a master's degree, and **10.0%** with a doctorate. These findings underscore the demographic diversity of the sample, contributing to the comprehensiveness of the study.

Table 2: T-Test Analysis of Differences in Psychological Resilience Based on Gender

Variable	Gender	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	Significance Level
Gender	Male	78	3.49	0.498	0.782	0.435
	Female	102	3.43	0.490	0.780	0.437

The results presented in Table (2) highlight the analysis of differences in psychological resilience levels between males and females using the t-test. The mean psychological resilience score for males was **3.49** with a standard deviation of **0.498**, while the mean score for females was **3.43** with a standard deviation of **0.490**. The calculated t-value (**0.782**) and the significance level (**0.435**) indicate no statistically significant differences in psychological resilience levels between males and females, as the significance level exceeds **0.05**.

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA Analysis of Differences in Psychological Resilience Based on Age

Variable	Age Group	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-Value	Significance Level
Age	17–22	72	3.32	0.513	8.568	0.000
	23–30	46	3.40	0.491		
	31+	62	3.65	0.407		

The results presented in Table (3) illustrate the analysis of differences in psychological resilience levels across different age groups using one-way ANOVA. The findings indicate statistically significant differences in psychological resilience levels among the age groups, with an F-value of **8.568** and a significance level of **0.000**, which is below **0.05**, confirming the presence of significant differences between the means.

In terms of mean scores, the age group "31 years and above" recorded the highest mean psychological resilience score (**3.65**) with a standard deviation of **0.407**, followed by the age group "23–30 years" with a mean of **3.40** and a standard deviation of **0.491**. The age group "17–22 years" ranked last, with a mean score of **3.32** and a standard deviation of **0.513**.

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA Analysis of Differences in Psychological Resilience Based on Place of Residence

Variable	Place of Residence	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-Value	Significance Level
Place of Residence	Village	46	3.29	0.573	3.479	0.033
	City	115	3.52	0.444		
	Camp	19	3.45	0.503		

The results presented in Table (4) analyze the differences in psychological resilience levels based on the place of residence using one-way ANOVA. The findings reveal statistically significant differences in psychological resilience levels among the groups, with an F-value of **3.479** and a significance level of **0.033**, which is below **0.05**, indicating significant differences.

Examining the mean scores, participants residing in urban areas exhibited the highest level of psychological resilience, with a mean of **3.52** and a standard deviation of **0.444**. They were followed by participants living in refugee camps, who scored a mean of **3.45** with a standard deviation of **0.503**. Participants residing in villages demonstrated the lowest level of psychological resilience, with a mean of **3.29** and a standard deviation of **0.573**.

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA Analysis of Differences in Psychological Resilience Based on Educational Qualification

Variable	Educational Qualification	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-Value	Significance Level
Educational Qualification	Bachelor's	108	3.37	0.500	3.845	0.023
	Master's	54	3.56	0.498		
	Doctorate	18	3.61	0.323		

The results presented in Table (5) analyze the differences in psychological resilience levels based on educational qualification using one-way ANOVA. The findings indicate statistically significant differences in psychological resilience levels among the groups, with an F-value of **3.845** and a significance level of **0.023**, which is below **0.05**, confirming the presence of significant differences. Examining the mean scores, participants holding a doctoral degree exhibited the highest level of psychological resilience, with a mean of **3.61** and a standard deviation of **0.323**. They were followed by participants with a master's degree, who scored a mean of **3.56** with a standard deviation of **0.498**. Participants holding a bachelor's degree demonstrated the lowest level of psychological resilience, with a mean of **3.37** and a standard deviation of **0.500**.

Discussion:

The findings indicate no statistically significant differences in psychological resilience levels between males and females. This similarity reflects a comparable capacity among both genders to adapt to challenges and pressures in the university environment, suggesting that gender is not a primary factor influencing psychological resilience. This outcome may be explained by the fact that students, regardless of gender, are exposed to similar academic and life experiences within the university setting, making environmental and social factors more influential than gender-related differences. Accordingly, the focus should be on designing comprehensive development programs aimed at enhancing psychological resilience for all students, irrespective of gender, by equipping them with the necessary skills to manage academic and life pressures. This result aligns with the findings of Al-Sabawi et al. (2022), Al-Wafi and Hamad (2022), and Al-Askar (2024).

The results also reveal statistically significant differences in psychological resilience levels among different age groups, highlighting the influence of age on the development of resilience. The findings show that older age groups exhibit higher levels of psychological resilience compared to

younger groups, indicating that life experiences gained with age contribute to enhanced adaptability to pressures and challenges. This can be interpreted as older individuals having accumulated diverse life experiences and skills from facing challenges, which foster positive thinking and resilience in difficult situations. In contrast, younger age groups may lack such experiences, making them more susceptible to academic and social pressures. These findings underscore the importance of targeting younger age groups with guidance and training programs focusing on developing adaptation and resilience skills to help them effectively face challenges.

The analysis of differences based on the place of residence reveals statistically significant variations in psychological resilience levels among students, reflecting the impact of the residential environment on individuals' adaptability to challenges and pressures. The results indicate that students residing in urban areas exhibit higher levels of resilience compared to those living in refugee camps and villages. This may be attributed to the greater access to educational, social, and psychological support resources typically available in urban areas, which enhance students' capacity to manage life pressures. Conversely, residents of villages may face challenges related to limited services or distance from urban centers, negatively affecting their resilience. As for those living in refugee camps, their relatively higher resilience levels compared to village residents may reflect their enhanced adaptability resulting from the continuous challenges and hardships they encounter in daily life.

Finally, the analysis indicates statistically significant differences in psychological resilience levels based on educational qualification, reflecting the impact of educational level on individuals' ability to adapt to challenges and pressures. The results show that resilience increases with higher educational levels, with doctoral degree holders exhibiting the highest levels of resilience, followed by master's degree holders, while bachelor's degree holders reported the lowest levels. This may be explained by higher education levels equipping individuals with more cognitive and social skills that enable them to handle difficult situations more effectively. Additionally, accumulated academic experiences contribute to increased self-confidence, positive thinking, and problem-solving capabilities. In contrast, bachelor's degree students may face greater challenges due to limited academic experience and fewer life experiences compared to advanced educational levels.

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