

An analysis of family climate and methods of coping with psychological stress among female students

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the relationship between family climate and methods of coping with psychological stress among female students at Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan, and their relationship to the variable of specialisation. The study was conducted on a sample consisting of 300 female university students at Al-Balqa Applied University. They were randomly selected, and the study used a survey method for data collection. After statistically analysing the collected data, it was observed that there is a positive statistically significant correlation between family climate and the methods of coping with psychological stress in addition to having statistically significant differences in the mean scores of methods of coping with psychological stress among female students in the study sample according to specialisation (scientific or humanistic), in favour of scientific specialisation. Accordingly, the study recommended working to spread the concept of a healthy family climate among parents within the family.

Keywords: Family climate, psychological pressures, stress, women;

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1. Introduction

The family has a profound influence on the behaviour of the children, their attitudes and the maturity of their emotions. The children's personalities are formed through the experiences they live and through the family environment, which arises from family interactions. The family is the nucleus of society and it is the first environment that fosters the child in which he grows up and acquires his first experiences in life, and when this family has a proper upbringing, this will of course be reflected in the normal psychological development of the individual. Family members consist of father, mother, brothers and sisters, and the educational impact of the family on its members varies according to the social and economic statuses of the family, the cultural level of the head of the family, the mother and the different roles and responsibilities that family members play. Whenever family relations and family matching between family members are great, this leads to the formation of sound relationships, ties and social controls among its members in their dealings within the family and the larger society (Essien & Adelekan, 2021; Soponaru, 2020).

The family climate has an influential role in the upbringing of children and leaves traces in their psychological, mental and social development and these effects are either negative or positive, according to the family upbringing. The girl, from the parents, has a close relationship with her personality, behaviour, values and psychological and social compatibility (AL-Momani & Jawarneh, 2022; Nishanbayeva et al., 2021). In light of the modern contemporary life full of variables, individuals – including university students – face many psychological pressures that are academic, economic, family and social (AL-Momani, 2022a, 2022b; Khalil, 2019).

Because we live in an era full of conflicts, contradictions and problems in which life demands an increase, and while the pressures of life are linked to a wide range of psychological and physical disorders, the sources of confrontation are compensatory factors that help us maintain mental and physical health together, provided that the individual is aware of how to work and what is satisfactory. Appropriate strategies are used to address a situation, as some of them view these processes as stabilising factors that help the individual maintain psychological and social compatibility. Individuals have positive feelings about themselves and their relationships, in addition to having balanced social skills through which they achieve a natural rise and a smooth transformation during their developmental stages (Rababa & AL-Momani, 2022; Shatat, 2018).

The social support that the girl receives from those around her, whether from family or friends, has a great impact on facing psychological pressure, and the girl takes measures to solve these crises she faces according to a psychological strategy that fits her personality affected by the family climate prevailing in the family. This study reveals the family climate and its relationship to methods of coping with psychological stress among female university students of Al-Balqa Applied University in Jordan (AL-Momani & Rababa, 2022; Khalil, 2016).

1.1. Conceptual background

The university student is affected by what he learns from his family and controls his behaviour, as well as his choices, in the situations he is exposed to. So, the family develops his skills and gains from them his experiences. Therefore, the family is the first environmental factor – undisputedly – affecting the individual. The family climate plays an important role in developing the individual's capabilities and shaping his behaviour (AL-Momani, 2022a, 2022b; AL-Momani & Purnawan, 2022; Uzunboylu & Oz, 2019; Khalil, 2016). We are in an era in which technological, cultural and value changes are accelerating, which results in university students being exposed to severe stressful situations. Stresses trying to deal with them and mitigate their effects, using cognitive, emotional and behavioural

strategies and methods, influenced by the prevailing family climate in the family (Alrabadi & AL-Momani, 2022; Hussein, 2016).

The family climate is one of the important factors in determining the nature of the individual's daily interactions with those around him in all areas of life. The family climate has been defined below.

Khalil (2016) defines family climate as the educational method adopted by parents in raising their children, which may encourage children to be independent in thinking; follow the method of understanding and dialogue between the same family; notify children of security and confidence and freedom of choice; and cultivate confidence and develop curiosity, with the ability to innovate, and may work on freedoms distrust, authoritarianism and coercion.

El-Sayed (2017) refers to family climate as a set of normal and abnormal family interactions and what can result from them, whether or not the children. The levels of this interaction in terms of the degree of proximity or distance from the same include several dimensions, such as dehumanisation, artificial love for the child, integrated family and an unhealthy emotional climate in the family.

In light of the above, the family climate is known procedurally as the general character of family life, which acts as an important force in influencing the behaviour of individuals through the prevailing relationships between family members, clarity of roles, defining responsibilities, forms of control and the system of life and all aspects of family life of parental treatment methods and the development of moral and parental motives. A general family is a happy family, an anxious family and a close-knit family. It is measured by the degree that each female student obtains from the sample as a sum of all family climate scale axes.

1.1.1. Methods of coping with psychological stress

Scholars differ in finding a specific definition of the methods of coping with pressure. According to Al-Sabban (2013), the methods of coping with psychological stress are the efforts made by the individual in dealing with events, whether these efforts are directed towards an emotion or a problem. Judah (2014) defines it as a set of cognitive and behavioural methods that individuals use in managing stress.

In light of the foregoing, the methods of coping with psychological pressures are defined as those ways and means that the individual resorts to in confronting stressful situations and events to deal with them, mitigate their effects or avoid or reduce their negative effects, to maintain as much as possible his emotional balance. It is measured by the degree obtained by the students on the scale of coping methods used in the study.

In light of the foregoing, the problem of the study can be identified by the following main question:

- What is the relationship between family climate and methods of coping with psychological stress among a sample of female university students at Al-Balqa Applied University in Jordan?

The following sub-questions are derived from the main question:

- What are the most commonly used methods of coping with psychological stress among the study sample?

- Are there differences between the mean scores of the methods of coping with psychological stress in its dimensions in the study sample according to the variable specialisation (scientific or humanistic)?

1.2. Related studies

Abu Azzam (2019) aimed to get to know the psychosocial climate and its relationship to emotional tranquillity and ego strength among female students of the Islamic University of Gaza, where a random sample of 376 fourth-year female students registered at the university was applied, and the psychosocial climate scale and the two psychological measures of ego strength were applied, resulting in a relationship with social and emotional calm among the students of the Islamic University of Gaza.

Al-Rasheed's (2019) study aimed to recognise the strategies used by outstanding students to deal with and face pressures. The study sample consisted of 220 outstanding students in the final stage of general secondary school, males and females, enrolled in the preparatory programme for admission to the university in the same programme. In addition, the outstanding students were similar to their non-achieving peers in the way they deal with academic stress, as they use positive reframing, avoidance and the search for social–emotional support. On the other hand, the superior students showed a difference from their normal peers in their ability to deal with anger, fun and problem-solving style.

The purpose of Bouqeri's (2018) study was to examine physical abuse, parental neglect, psychological tranquillity and depression among middle school students, where the study sample consisted of 472 female students. Regarding reassurance among the students, there are significant differences in the average degrees of depression between the students who were abused and the students who were not abused, in favour of abused students, and there were also differences in the average degrees of psychological reassurance, in favour of students who were not abused.

Hussein and Zeud (2017) aimed to find out the methods of coping with stress among students, both positive and negative, and rank them on the scale of coping methods. It also aimed to identify the differences in the average scores of the methods of coping with stress between students in the intermediate and secondary stages, and also to identify the differences in the average score of students on the scale of confronting stress, gender and stress. The study sample consisted of 547 students: 259 students from middle education and 288 students from secondary education, ranging in age from 13 to 18 years. One of the most important results of the study was that the most used methods in coping with psychological pressures are self-control, self-blame, isolation, relaxation and mental separation, compared to 14 non-significant methods of confronting sexual stress and mental stress.

El-Sayed (2017) aimed to identify the conditions that the students of the College of Medicine are going through, the sources of stress and the coping methods that the students use to overcome those stressful situations. Of the males and 176 females, their ages ranged between 17 and 29 years. The results also showed that students in the Faculty of Medicine in general use the method of active confrontation, while the common strategies have been positive, re-supportive, social, emotional and distraction-forming. At the end of the list of methods used by students of the Faculty of Medicine is the method of using drugs or sedatives.

Abu Habib (2015) aimed at identifying the most important problems prevalent among secondary school students in Libyan society and find out the extent of the difference between the problems faced by female students and the family climate to which the female students belong. This was done using the family climate scale and the study relied on a set of tools represented in the family climate scale of Dr. Alaa El-Din Kafafi and the list of adolescent problems prepared by the researcher. The results revealed that female students from families with an abnormal climate have more problems than those from families with a normal climate. The most common problems were emotional, family-oriented, social and academic problems.

Judah (2014) aimed to search for strategies for coping with psychological stress for a sample of primary school teachers, by using a questionnaire prepared by the researcher and applied to a random sample of 110 teachers. The results of the study were that the most common strategies are responsive, active, recourse to God and executive. The results of the study also showed that there were statistically significant differences due to the age variable, in favour of the older age group. From Omar (35–50), the use of positive methods in the face of pressure, which is to resort to God, positive reformulation and the use of negative methods for the age group less than 20–34 years, is a method of emotional venting.

Al-Sabban (2013) aimed to identify emotional family climate and sibling relationship and their impact on psychological stress by investigated the compatibility of male and female students at the age of 14–17 years with psychological stress that was conducted on a sample of 150 male and female students. Determining the characteristics of the family in (emotional expression, student exposure to conflict, parental agreement in education), where the study showed that the warm relationship between the student and his siblings, emotional expression and parental agreement in education contributed significantly to the students' dealing with the psychological pressure they are exposed to.

The current study is distinguished by the fact that it combines two variables that were not combined by the previous studies that were reviewed – to the knowledge of the researcher – where it examines the family climate and its relationship to methods of coping with psychological stress among female university students. In terms of its objectives, this study also agrees with the study of Al-Sabban (2013). There is a difference in the objectives of previous studies from the goal of the current study, as its goal is to reveal the relationship between family climate and methods of coping with psychological stress.

1.3. Purpose of the study

The current study aims to identify the most commonly used methods for coping with psychological stress among the study sample, family climate and its relationship to methods of coping with psychological stress among female university students of Al-Balqa Applied University, and the differences between the mean scores of the methods of coping with psychological stress in its dimensions in the study sample according to the variable specialisation (scientific or humanistic).

2. Materials and methods

The descriptive method was used because it is suitable for this type of study.

2.1. Participants

The study population consists of all undergraduate students. The study sample consisted of 300 female students from Al-Balqa Applied University, who were randomly selected from various colleges and were university majors, whether scientific or humanistic; 150 students were scientific majors and 150 students were humanities majors.

2.2. Data collection tools

The scale was developed by looking at some of the scales used in the field of psychological stress. Setting the initial picture of the scale was by defining the four dimensions of the scale: family, emotional, school and future. Then, the scale was codified by testing it in its initial form on a sample of students consisting of 30 male and female students to calculate the validity and stability of the scale. After that, the scale was prepared in its final form, after deleting the phrases that the arbitrators agreed that do not belong to the dimensions that were set for its establishment.

2.3. Data analysis

The reliability and validity of the scale were calculated in several ways.

(a) Content validity: This type of honesty aims to identify the extent to which the scale represents the field it measures.

(b) Apparent honesty (the sincerity of the arbitrators): To achieve apparent honesty, the researcher relied on the opinion of six arbitrators from faculty members in the Department of Educational Sciences at Ajloun University College of Al-Balqa Applied University, and they agreed that the scale's statements are related to the dimensions it measures. The initial experiment was carried out on a sample of 30 female students.

(c) Internal consistency: The validity of the scale depends directly on the validity of its vocabulary because any increase in the validity of the vocabulary leads to an increase in the validity of the scale.

3. Results

Table 1 shows the internal consistency of the psychological stress scale for female students.

Table 1. Internal consistency of the psychological stress scale

Indication level	Correlation coefficient	Single number	The dimension	Indication level	Correlation coefficient	Single number	The dimension
05 and	30 and	1		05 and	32 and	1	
05 and	30 and	2		05 and	30 and	2	
01 and	63 and	3		01 and	63 and	3	
05 and	31 and	4		05 and	30 and	4	
01 and	36 and	5		01 and	71 and	5	The first dimension is family pressures
01 and	38 and	6	The	01 and	58 and	6	
01 and	52 and	7	second	01 and	64 and	7	
01 and	46 and	8	dimension	05 and	34 and	8	
01 and	50 and	9	is	01 and	49 and	9	
01 and	47 and	10	emotional	05 and	38 and	10	
01 and	44 and	11	stress	05 and	32 and	11	
01 and	54 and	12		01 and	57 and	12	
05 and	30 and	13		01 and	41 and	1	
05 and	30 and	14		01 and	39 and	2	
01 and	63 and	15		05 and	36 and	3	
01 and	36 and	16		05 and	29 and	4	
01 and	47 and	1		05 and	31 and	5	
01 and	37 and	2		05 and	33 and	6	
05 and	30 and	3		01 and	47 and	7	
01 and	41 and	4	The	01 and	48 and	8	
01 and	57 and	5	fourth	01 and	41 and	9	
01 and	31 and	6	dimension	01 and	37 and	10	
01 and	48 and	7	is future	05 and	28 and	11	
01 and	47 and	8	pressures	01 and	42 and	12	
01 and	50 and	9		05 and	29 and	13	
01 and	43 and	10		05 and	29 and	14	
01 and	47 and	11		05 and	33 and	15	
				01 and	47 and	16	
				05 and	36 and	17	

It is clear from Table 1 that some of the vocabularies function at level 05 and others function at level 01 and.

3.1. Scale stability

The stability coefficient of the scale was calculated using the re-test method with an interval of 2 weeks. Table 2 shows the stability coefficients of the psychological stress scale among female students.

Table 2. It shows the stability coefficients of the psychological stress scale by the re-application method

Indication level	Stability coefficient	Scale dimensions	M
01 and	86 and	Family pressures	1
01 and	58 and	Emotional stress	2
01 and	74	School pressures	3
01 and	70 and	Future pressures	4
	71 and		Total marks

It is clear from the previous Table 2 that the stability coefficients of the scale dimensions by re-application ranged between 58 and 86 and the stability coefficient of the total degree of the scale reached 71 and, all of which are a high value and indicate that the scale has a good degree of stability.

3.2. To answer the main study question, which states: ‘What is the relationship between family climate and methods of coping with psychological stress among a sample of female university students AL-Balqa Applied University in Jordan?’

To answer this question, the Pearson coefficient was calculated between the family climate and the methods of coping with psychological stress, and the results were as shown in the following Table 3:

Table 3. The Pearson correlation coefficient shows between the family climate and the methods of coping with psychological stress

Indication	Correlation coefficient	Variables
78	0.66	Family climate/psychological stress

It is clear from the review of the previous Table 3 that there is a correlation between the family climate and psychological stress among university students.

3.3. To answer the sub-question of the study, which states: ‘Are there differences between the mean scores of the methods of coping with psychological stress in its dimensions in the study sample according to the variable specialisation (scientific or humanistic)?’

To answer this question, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores of the study sample were calculated and then the *t*-test was used. The differences between averages were calculated and shown in Table 4:

Table 4. Values of *t*-test and the level of significance between the average scores of the students on the dimensions of the scale according to the variable of specialisation (scientific or humanistic)

Statistical significance	Calculated <i>t</i> -value	Standard deviation	Average calculation	Number	Sex
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Function at level	4.90	9.58	118.12	150	Scientific
01 and		7.01	129.76	150	Humanistic

It is clear that there are statistically significant differences at 01 and between the mean scores of the study sample on the psychological stress scale in the total degree of ‘psychological stress’, in favour of scientific disciplines.

4. Discussion

The current study reached many results, the most important of which are there is a positive statistically significant correlation at the level of significance of 0.01 between the family climate as a whole and the methods of coping with psychological stress, where the significance values were less than 0.01. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted that there is a statistically significant relationship between the students’ scores on their family climate scale and their scores on the family climate scale facing psychological stress.

There are statistically significant differences in the mean scores of methods of coping with psychological stress among a sample of female students according to specialisation (scientific or humanistic), in favour of female students’ scientific specialisation, and then the hypothesis is accepted that there are differences in the methods of coping with psychological stress in the study sample according to the variable of specialisation. This study agrees with the studies of Judah (2014) and El-Sayed (2017), where the studies were conducted on male and female university students and differed from the rest of the studies, where the sample of these studies comprised male and female high school students. The results of previous studies showed that female students with an abnormal family climate have more emotional problems than female students with a normal family climate, as stated in a study by Hussein (2017).

5. Conclusion

The importance of the current study stems from the study of the family climate and its relationship to methods of coping with psychological stress, given that the family has a great role in confronting the girl with psychological pressures and overcoming them or adapting to them with positive emotions. This aspect is of great importance in terms of both work and theory. Thus, the importance of the subject of the study can be highlighted as mentioned below.

The results of the study contribute to providing a theoretical understanding of the nature of the relationships between family climate and methods of coping with psychological stress among students at the Northern Border University. The importance of the study appears due to its connection with the age stage in which the study is conducted, during which the students are exposed to academic, family, psychological and social pressures. At this stage, the undergraduate students go through several research studies regarding the current topic. It may open the way for more future studies that cover the dimensions of this problem, which facilitates the development of a sound plan for methods of dealing with stress.

The results of the study may contribute to the benefit of the guidance and counselling centres in preparing counselling and treatment programmes and awareness programmes and conducting seminars and meetings that help students to develop their skills on how to deal with psychological pressures. It may benefit in improving the methods of socialisation, in general, and also in identifying the most important methods followed by the student to cope with psychological pressures, providing an opportunity for parents to work on activating and developing positive methods in their children.

Social affairs present the results of this study through courses that are held for those who are about to marry.

6. Recommendation

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Educating parents about creating a good family climate works on the equal growth of children and avoids psychological pressures that negatively affect family members.
- Working to spread the concept of a healthy family climate among parents within the family, to know the methods of coping with psychological pressures through seminars and lectures and broadcasting them through audio-visual media.
- An appeal to the government to establish family development centres in all parts of the Kingdom to increase the effectiveness of the role of guidance and counselling in raising community awareness.

Recommendations for future researchers include the following:

- Conducting a study on the family climate and its relationship to methods of coping with psychological stress in other samples and different regions.
- Carrying out similar research on the captive climate and its relationship to demographic variables that were not addressed in the current research.
- Conducting other studies concerned with the differences in methods of coping with psychological stress according to some personal variables.
- Conducting similar research concerned with the study of mental health and its relationship to methods of coping with psychological stress.
- Conducting forums and lectures to provide students with methods or strategies to confront their psychological pressures.

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