Emotional Deprivation and Its Relation to Psychological Compatibility among Jerusalemite Palestinian Ex-Detainees Who Were in Israeli Prisons

Suheir S. Sabbah, Nura Barqan, and Fadwa Halabiyah

ABSTRACT

The harsh conditions to which Palestinian prisoners are exposed are a human experience that carries deep psychological meanings, thereby exposing them to multiple types of traumas, whether physical, material, moral and political violence. This in itself negatively affects their emotions and their compatibility in the future when they are freed from captivity, which consequently affects their psychological compatibility. From this viewpoint, the study aimed to identify the emotional deprivation and its relationship to psychological compatibility among Palestinian ex-detainees in the city of Jerusalem. The study population consisted of 3,613 freed prisoners in Jerusalem. The study sample comprised from 103 released prisoners who were chosen by the accessibility sampling method due to the difficulty of accessing the prisoners. The study used the descriptive correlational approach such that the following two tools were used: emotional deprivation and psychological compatibility, and the validity and reliability of the study tools were verified. The results showed that the level of emotional deprivation and psychological compatibility of the released prisoners in Jerusalem was moderate, with a mean of 2.59 and 3.42, respectively. There was an inverse relationship between emotional deprivation and psychological compatibility among the Palestinian ex-detainees in Jerusalem.

Keywords: Emotional Deprivation, Psychological Compatibility, Liberated Captives, Jerusalem, Palestine.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since Israel occupied Palestinian lands in 1967, the international community has considered it an occupied country, and that the Israeli occupation is a belligerent occupation force. International organizations have worked to draw up an agreement to protect the Palestinians in all areas of the Palestinian territories from the West Bank, to Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. The international community approved the implementation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which called on Israel to provide full protection for Palestinian civilians. However, the Israeli government denied that agreement and did not apply it to the Palestinian territories. It did not recognize the legal and humanitarian rights and duties of the government detaining the captives; and that the purpose of captivity is to prevent the prisoner from continuing the battle, and therefore the purpose is not to punish him (Palestinian Center for Human Rights, 1996; Al-Sarsawy, 2013).

Palestinian prisoners are subjected to many violations and arbitrary and inhumane practices in the prisons of the Israeli occupation, which came as part of a systematic policy. Palestinian prisoners in the prisons of the Israeli occupation are exposed to the worst types of psychological and physical torture, making them feel deprived, which is considered one of the most basic rights that a person needs, represented by attention, tenderness and love. All of which prisoners lack in prisons far from their families and relatives. The deprivation experienced by the Palestinian prisoner is reflected in all the details of his social and psychological life and in his relationship with others. This calls for recognition of the importance of the social and political context in which psychological trauma develops. It also shows how adopting human rights can advance demands for social justice and protect Palestinians from suffering (Helbich & Jabr, 2022).

Emotional deprivation is one of the worst types of deprivation that has negative effects on a person’s psyche, which is reflected in his compatibility with those around him, and on his external environment. Emotional deprivation is the painful and harmful condition that hinders the liberated captive from satisfying his innate needs, which raises a lot of emotional signals resulting in a state of discomfort and anxiety accompanying the person. Therefore, Bowlby stresses that neglect and deprivation do not help the individual to live securely, and to establish healthy different social relationships. This leads to the absence...
of interaction and a lack of feeling of security and reassurance, which leads to the occurrence of problems that have a negative impact on the person first, and also on those around him and on the society in which he lives (‘Asal, 2018). Consequently, this may affect his psychological compatibility.

Psychological compatibility is the primary goal of many studies that seek to understand individual behavior. This is done by studying aspects of the personality, including mental health, one of the most important dimensions of which, is the individual’s attempt to satisfy his psychological needs, given that psychological compatibility is a guide to the individual’s enjoyment of good mental health due to his connection to human behavior on the one hand, and the psychological aspect on the other (Mohamed, 2019).

By closely looking at the issue of Palestinian ex-detainees, whether it be the prisoners of Palestine in general or the Jerusalemite prisoners in particular, one becomes well aware of the emotional deprivation and the extent of the great suffering that they experienced and are still experiencing. This is the main motivation for conducting this study in addition to delving more into the study of psychological aspects. The importance of this study comes as it is concerned with the category of prisoners, which is considered one of the most important categories of the Palestinian people that have suffered from the oppression of the occupation. It sheds some light globally and locally on their psychological conditions and raises awareness among the Palestinian people of what they suffer from after their release from captivity.

The study aimed to identify the level of emotional deprivation and psychological compatibility and the relationship between them among the Palestinian ex-detainees, which is an urgent need to ensure the prisoners the secret of survival and the endurance of captivity for long periods.

A. Study Questions
1. What is the level of emotional deprivation, and psychological compatibility among the Palestinian ex-detainees in the city of Jerusalem?
2. What is the relationship between emotional deprivation and psychological compatibility among the Palestinian ex-detainees in the city of Jerusalem?

B. Study Terminology

**Emotional deprivation**: According to Maslow, “It is the failure to satisfy the basic psychological needs of the individual through his separation and deprivation of the family, the loss of security, love and belonging to a group that protects and nurtures him, which makes him an anxious, unbalanced person suffering from psychological disorders” (Maslow, 1970: p36).

**Procedurally**: The degree to which members of the study sample receive the scale developed for the purposes of this study.

**Psychological compatibility**: It is “a continuous dynamic process that deals with behavior and the natural and social environment with change and modification until a balance occurs between the individual and his environment, and this balance includes satisfying the individual’s needs and fulfilling the requirements of the environment. It also includes happiness with the self and satisfaction with it and the satisfaction of the motives of primary, organic, physiological, secondary and acquired needs, as well as compatibility with the demands of growth in its successive stages” (Zahran, 1997: 27).

**Procedurally**: The degree to which members of the study sample receive the scale developed for the purposes of this study.

**The released prisoner**: He is the person who has been forced to spend a period of time in a confined place, losing control over his behavior and in himself because of his resistance to the measures of the Israeli occupation. The common elements in this definition are the transformation of the prisoner into a number and quantity, and not a thought and emotion, but rather the prisoner constitutes will, steadfastness, defiance and patience (Al-Rawashdah, 2011).

Definition of the procedurally-released prisoner: He is the Palestinian resistance who spent his life in the prisons of the occupation for a period of time and was released due to the end of his sentence or through prisoner exchanges (Abu Qaoud, 2008).

II. BACKGROUND

The exposure of individuals to captivity, imprisonment, or the trauma they face, such as physical, material and moral violence, in itself negatively affects their compatibility in the future when they are liberated from captivity, and robs them of the natural needs that they need such as love, attention and care. Therefore, it requires specialists and workers in this field to rehabilitate them again, so that they can compatibly and harmoniously be incorporated within the social context to which they belong (Farawneh, 2009). Among the Israeli violations against Palestinian prisoners: neglect and poor health care. Medical negligence in Israeli prisons is one of the weapons used by the occupation authorities to slowly kill prisoners and leave them an easy prey for chronic and deadly diseases (Abu Odeh, 2013). This is in order to complete the systematic policy in various ways to kill the value of the struggle and destroy one’s will based on
defiance and confrontation, and to make the individual regretful and frustrated with his struggle. The most difficult of all is the psychological pressure to which the Palestinian prisoner is exposed in Israeli prisons. There are examples of the forms and methods of physical and psychological torture that prisoners have expressed through many documents, reports, articles, books and prisoner literature, and through Palestinian and international human rights institutions and centers (Qaraqe’ & Al-Motawer, 1999).

Bowlby stated that the loss of psychological connection and the lack of feelings of love and mutual affection lead to poor emotional and social communication, loss of empathy with others, poor emotional maturity and difficulty in social adjustment. There are three states of a person's response to emergency changes: a state of protest, a state of despair, and a state of separation (Bowlby, 1952). This was also shown by Caravaca-Sánchez et al. (2019). The experiences of childhood and family neglect of prisoners may lead to emotional deprivation, which develops in adulthood. It also leads to an inability to relate to others, feelings of inferiority, inadequacy, uncertainty and insecurity, lower levels of social support and higher levels of depression, anxiety and stress (Bbras, 2017).

Furthermore, the prisoners’ need for special care is not only limited to food, drink, clothing and accommodation, but it reaches far beyond that. He has a need for affirmation, a need for politeness, a need for monitoring and control, a need for comfort, and a need for love and tenderness. Prisoners have a need for attachment and dependence, and a need for the balance that they achieve with their surrounding environment (Al-Qaimi, 2004), in order to reach complete harmony with their environment and be able to obtain it to satisfy all their needs (‘Asal, 2018), and to achieve the ability to meet all their social, psychological and physical requirements (Depping, 2010).

The need for social support is also an important factor in helping prisoners by promoting adaptation and success in multiple areas of life. However, there are four important types of social support that have been identified in the literature: emotional, instrumental, informational and companionship support (Kjellstrand et al., 2022).

Abu Awad (2008) reported that the dimensions of psychological compatibility include Psychological-Emotional Compatibility, which is represented by self-satisfaction, a sense of duties and unselfishness, a sense of tranquility and self-confidence, the ability to self-control, and harmony in one’s opinions and character. Familial-Social Compatibility includes a good relationship with others, a sense of belonging to the family or to the community, a commitment to moral and religious values, and respect and appreciation for the thoughts and feelings of others.

Among the Palestinian studies that examined the psychological aspects of prisoners is the study of Abu Taa’a (2018) which showed a negative relationship between the overall degree of psychological and social effects, the dimension of social effects, and self-esteem among minors detained in house arrest in the city of Jerusalem. Dawabseh (2017) reported that the psychological pressures, and strategies to confront them, among the families of the martyrs whose bodies are being held by the Israeli occupation authorities, was very high. The study of Al-Daya (2016) concluded with a set of results: the level of psychological and social problems was medium, whereas the issue of anxiety ranked first, followed by shyness and selfishness, and finally, the issue of aggression. As for the level of emotional deprivation, it was high (70.56%). In the study, the educational dimension ranked first, then came the social, followed by the psychological. Additionally, the results demonstrated a direct relationship between psychological and social issues and emotional deprivation. This outcome was similar to the study of Zaquot et al. (2010), which showed a positive relationship between physical and psychological torture and the following variables (physical symptoms, anxiety), and a positive relationship between exposure to physical and psychological torture and the long-term effects as a result among liberated Palestinian female prisoners. Al-Hamouz (2013) showed that the degree of psychological hardness among the released prisoners was high, and that the most prevalent dimensions of psychological hardness coming in the forefront was “commitment”, followed by “challenge”, then “control”. The study also showed that the degree of exposure to torture among Palestinian prisoners in the Hebron Governorate was considerably large, such that the dimension of physical torture came first, followed by psychological torture.

In the field of psychological compatibility, one of the most important studies is that of Al-Sharif (2013), which showed that psychological compatibility affects and is affected by marital compatibility and vice versa. The study of Dukhan (2020) found that there was no relationship between liberation shock and methods of adjustment, and that there were differences in psychological adjustment methods due to the variable age at arrest favoring those who were 18 years and younger. As for the Al-Azza study (2017), it showed that the degree of psychological and social compatibility and the degree of self-esteem of liberated female prisoners was medium. In their study, Al-Muhtaseb and Bin Al-Azmiya (2014) reported that there was an inverse correlation between psychological stress and quality of life among Palestinian prisoners released from Israeli prisons. Finally, Al-Talla’a (2010) showed that there was a relationship between psychological compatibility and national belonging among female prisoners.
The current study is distinguished from previous studies in that it examines emotional deprivation and its relationship to psychological compatibility among Palestinian ex-detainees in the city of Jerusalem, which is considered one of the topics that has not yet been discussed at the local level, to the knowledge of the researchers.

III. Method

The descriptive correlative approach was used to achieve the objectives of the study. The study population consisted of all the released prisoners in the city of Jerusalem (3,613 prisoners) as per the official records of the Commission for the Affairs of the Released Prisoners.

A. The Study Sample

The study sample consisted of 185 Palestinian ex-detainees, who were selected by the accessibility sampling method. The questionnaire was distributed electronically and via the ex-detainee's personal phone. Of the 185 distributed questionnaires, a total of 103 questionnaires were retrieved for the lack of cooperation of several Palestinian ex-detainees. The study sample members were selected according to their current age group, such that 45.6% were from 20-29 years old, 20.4% were 30-40 years old, and 34% were 41 years and older. The “length of detention” variable showed that 67% of the prisoners were detained for less than 10 years, 11.7% were detained for 10-15 years, and 21.3% were detained for more than 16 years. The “period out of captivity” variable showed that 17.5% of prisoners were released for less than a year, 39.8% of whom had been released for 1-3 years, and 42.7% had been released for 4 years or more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Age</td>
<td>20-29 years old</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-40 years old</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41 years and older</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Detention</td>
<td>Less than 10 years</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-15 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 years or more</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period out of captivity</td>
<td>Less than a year</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 years or more</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Criteria for Selecting the Sample

To be male captives from the city of Jerusalem, due to the lack of cooperation of female prisoners with the researchers.

C. Study Tools

The following study tools were used to achieve the objectives of the study:

- The Emotional Deprivation Scale: It was developed by Al-Ghanya (2019), and it consists of 21 items in its final form. The paragraphs were built in the positive and negative sense according to the five-point Likert scale, and the weights were given as follows (strongly agree: 5 points, agree: 4, neutral: 3, disagree: 2, strongly disagree: 1). This scale was applied to all paragraphs, except for paragraphs (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 17), which were corrected in reverse as positive paragraphs.

- The Psychological Compatibility Scale: It was built and developed by Al-Rawashdah (2011), and the scale consists of 35 items. The tool included negative and positive items according to the five-degree Likert scale, such that (strongly agree: 5 points, agree: 4, neutral: 3, disagree: 2, strongly disagree: 1). This scale was applied to paragraphs (12, 13, 15, 16), and the rest of the paragraphs were reverse-corrected as they were negative paragraphs.

D. Ethical Considerations:

- Obtaining the consent of the respondents to participate in the study after clarifying the objectives of the study, the time of the interview, and the confidentiality of the information.

- It was made clear to the respondents that participation in the study is completely voluntary, and at any time they feel that they want to withdraw and no longer have the desire to participate, they can do so, and if they feel uncomfortable answering any question they shall not answer as this is their right.

- Adhering to the standard of privacy and confidentiality in dealing with all information obtained from the respondents.

- The ethical and confidentiality procedures in dealing with the information were clarified and that it would only be used for study purposes.

- No topic outside the research objectives was addressed.
IV. RESULTS

In order to determine the degree of the response averages of the study sample members, the following degrees were adopted: a low degree of the mean range of the paragraphs (2.33 and less), an average range of the mean (2.34-3.67), and finally a high range (3.68 and above).

A. The Level of Emotional Deprivation and Psychological Compatibility among the Palestinian Ex-Detainees in the City of Jerusalem

In order to answer this question, the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the responses of the study sample members were calculated on the items of the questionnaire that express the level of emotional deprivation of the released prisoners in the city of Jerusalem.

TABLE II: ARITHMETIC AVERAGES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE RESPONSES OF THE STUDY SAMPLE MEMBERS TO THE LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL DEPRIVATION AMONG THE RELEASED PRISONERS IN THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraphs</th>
<th>Arithmetic Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Emotional Deprivation</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Psychological Compatibility</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is noted from Table II that the arithmetic mean of the total score was 2.59 and the standard deviation was 0.63. This indicates that the level of emotional deprivation among the released prisoners in the city of Jerusalem was moderate, with a percentage of 51.9%.

It is also noted from the previous table, which expresses the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the responses of the study sample members on the level of psychological compatibility among the Palestinian ex-detainees in the city of Jerusalem, that the arithmetic mean of the total degree was 3.42 and the standard deviation was 0.71. This indicates that the level of psychological compatibility among the Palestinian ex-detainees in Jerusalem was of a moderate degree, with a percentage of 68.5%.

B. The Relationship Between the Level of Emotional Deprivation and Psychological Compatibility among the Released Prisoners in the City of Jerusalem

The Pearson correlation coefficient and statistical significance between the level of emotional deprivation and psychological compatibility among the released prisoners in the city of Jerusalem were calculated, as shown in Table III.

TABLE III: PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENT AND STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL DEPRIVATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPATIBILITY AMONG THE RELEASED PRISONERS IN THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Pearson Coefficient</th>
<th>Statistical Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Deprivation</td>
<td>-0.776</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Compatibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistical significance at α ≥ 0.05
**Statistical significance at α ≥ 0.01

Table III shows that the value of the Pearson correlation coefficient for the total score was -0.776, and the significance level was 0.000, that is, there is an inverse, statistically significant negative relationship at the significance level (α ≥ 0.05) between the level of emotional deprivation and psychological compatibility among the released prisoners in the city of Jerusalem. That is, the higher the level of emotional deprivation, the lower the level of psychological compatibility among the Palestinian ex-detainees in the city of Jerusalem, and vice versa.

V. DISCUSSION:

Palestinian prisoners are subjected to many violations and arbitrary practices in the prisons of the Israeli occupation. They are subjected to various types of psychological and physical torture, causing them to feel deprived, which is considered one of the most basic rights that a person needs, represented by attention, tenderness and love, which prisoners tend to lack in prisons away from their families and relatives (Qaraqe’ & Al-Motawer, 1999; Al-Azza, 2017). The current study aimed to identify the emotional deprivation and its relationship to psychological compatibility among the Palestinian ex-detainees in the city of Jerusalem. Study results show that the released prisoners have a moderate degree of emotional deprivation, with a percentage of 51.9%, indicating that they have a state of uneasiness and accompanying anxiety.

Based on the analysis of the scale items, it was found that the prisoners had an acceptable degree of excessive sensitivity with regards to hurting the feelings of others, and asking for help or protection from others even if they need it, and that they feel that their families and others offer them some kind of love. This result can be attributed to the insufficiency in the basic care of the prisoner for reasons resulting from the arrest, causing a lack of satisfaction of the person’s psychological needs, which in turn leads to a feeling of fear and insecurity and is reflected in his behavior, in his daily and future life.
Emotional deprivation is one of the most common causes of psychological disorder, which affects the loss of a person's confidence in himself and in others as well.

It was also noted that the average responses of the study sample at the level of psychological compatibility were moderate, with a percentage of 68.5%. Through the analysis of the scale, it was found that the most expressive aspect of this fact is in one’s great respect for himself, and his ability to take responsibility for his mistakes, and that he feels satisfied with himself, does not feel distress, and does not feel that life is harsh. This result can be explained by the fact that the prisoner – despite going through severe periods of detention and physical and psychological exhaustion – which may affect his concept of himself and his view of others, such that this may affect him, but not to a great extent, which may hinder his psychological compatibility and his belief in the struggle and his national affiliation to his country.

This emerged clearly when examining the relationship between the level of emotional deprivation and psychological compatibility among the released prisoners, whereby a negative and inverse relationship is evident, meaning that the less emotional deprivation, the greater the psychological compatibility of the released prisoners in the city of Jerusalem, and vice versa. This result can be explained by the fact that life requires a lot from a person, as he needs a psychological and social balance in the environment in which a person lives, knowing that this balance will not be achieved except with the presence of a social family that provides the person with kindness, care and reassurance, and a prevailing stability. Any imbalance that occurs in that stability leads to an imbalance in its overall balance, which causes emotional deprivation, and leads to an imbalance in the psychological and social aspect of the individual, making it difficult for him to psychologically be compatible with himself first, and with those around him.

Despite the results shown by this study, it only included male captives from the city of Jerusalem, due to the lack of responses from female prisoners to the researchers. This may be due to the psychological and social conditions surrounding women and their suffering from captivity, resulting in a feeling of mistrust and refusal to cooperate with others, which affected their behavior and adaptation to society.

Limitations: This study was conducted on the released prisoners in the city of Jerusalem in 2022.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the results of the study, the authors came up with a number of recommendations:

1. Establishing centers and institutions that address the mental health of Palestinian ex-detainees upon their release from captivity to take care of the emotional aspect and increase their psychological compatibility.
2. Providing educational opportunities for Palestinian ex-detainees, as this has a significant impact on their psychological compatibility and their involvement in society.
3. The concerted serious work of human rights and civil society institutions to highlight the issue of prisoners at the international level and to expose the crimes of the occupation and the violations committed against the prisoners, which contradict the principles of human rights.
4. Working on integrating the prisoners into society after their liberation and supporting them financially and morally, as this would give them hope and motivation to live again outside the prison and away from the cruelty of their jailer.
5. Carrying out studies that deal with other variables in order to understand the problems and issues faced by the prisoners and work to solve them as best we can.
6. Conducting similar studies on Palestinian female prisoners.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.
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