

# Impact of Early Marriage on Psychosocial Health in Al-Diwaniyah City

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## Abstract

**Background:** Early marriage is a global issue that affects teenage girls and has a variety of negative social and health effects. Early marriage, which is a global issue and ubiquitous detrimental trend, has a severe influence on many females. According to the United Nations Population Fund, roughly one in three women continue to marry as teens in many developing nations. Nations and geographical regions have different rates of early marriage. With 44% and 39% of girls being married before reaching 18 years old. **Objectives:** Identify the relationship between early marriage and psychosocial, assess the influence of early marriage on mental health, and determine the association between demographic data and mental health. **Materials and Methods:** A descriptive-analytical study design was used during the period from September 15, 2022 to July 32023. This study was conducted in primary healthcare centers, hospitals, and schools. The study aims to analyze the cases of underage marriage in the city of Diwaniyah/Al-Budair district, modify the questionnaire, and analyze electronically using SPSS 26 and Microsoft Excel (2016). **Results:** the outcomes showed there were highly important statistical differences between psychosocial health with their monthly income, marriage type, had abuse from the partner, and people supportive in the married life. The outcomes also showed there were important statistical differences among psychosocial health through their residence, educational level, occupation, and husband forced to leave.

**Keywords:** Early marriage, health, psychosocial

## INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a step toward independence that brings with it a ton of obligations, decision-making, and major commitments. Early marriages are caused by a number of factors, including male dominance, parents' ignorance and lack of awareness, pressure from family and the community, the perception that girls are a burden and that marriage will protect their daughters as well as raise the socioeconomic status of the family early married girls are at higher risk of psychological disorders as these girls will be denied the right to freely express their views and the right to be defended against devastating traditional practices that in turn will increase risk of lifetime and recurrent psychiatric disorders.<sup>[1]</sup> For girls, families, and the community as a whole, youthful marriage had negative health, social, monetary, and radical effects. It places women in early marriage at a higher risk of experiencing domestic violence because it places women under the legal custody of their husbands and places significant restrictions on their individuality and

liberty. These ladies also receive less education and have less control over domestic decisions affecting their health and choices; its demographic effects were clear on the population and its direct impact on women and children. The toll of violence against women is a major cause of high divorce rates and one of the reasons for dropping out of school and the failure to continue studying, as well as the deterioration of health, premature births, and frequent miscarriages of married women minors.<sup>[2]</sup> Data from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) from 2012 show that early marriage is more common in low-income and lower middle-income countries.<sup>[3]</sup> Early marriage, defined as being married to someone while they are underage or both,

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continues to be a serious problem in almost two-thirds of the nation's worldwide. Although it is permitted, early marriage is often viewed as a human rights violation, particularly when it affects young girls. Early marriage has persisted in communities because of a lack of social resources, access to education and legal protections, as well as diverse cultural beliefs. UNICEF (2005) reported that 650 million women worldwide married young in 2005.<sup>[4]</sup> Child marriage, which can be legal or unlawful, is a breach of human rights that can have a number of negative consequences, including a lack of access to education, worsened reproductive and mental health, and an increased risk of intimate partner violence.<sup>[5]</sup> Poverty, unintended pregnancies, peer pressure, parental pressure, and developmental stage are among the factors that are frequently cited as causes of early marriage of female children. More specifically, it has a detrimental tendency on girls, who experience emotional and mental pain, intolerance, school abandonment, the disease vesical vaginal fistula, early widowhood, frustration, and a male-hatred.<sup>[6]</sup> Early marriage is not exclusively a result of sociocultural factors. Early marriage is a societal issue that has many contributing variables, many of which are interconnected and reinforce one another, particularly those that are related to health issues, one of which is religion or religious beliefs. Religious or philosophical convictions frequently influence or reinforce early marital decisions.<sup>[7]</sup>

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive-analytical study was conducted throughout in order to examine the effect of early marriage on women's mental health. The research was conducted between September 15, 2022 and July 32023. An appropriate sample (nonprobability) was selected from 200 sample in the south of Al-Diwaniyah Governorate during the period (2010–2022). All of the following analyzes were performed using IBM SPSS 20.0 and Microsoft Excel (2010). Data were collected using a questionnaire and interviews with the participants. The questionnaire consists of six parts; the first part was the demographic characteristics of the wives. The second part is the demographics of the spouse. The third part includes an assessment of the impact of early marriage on posttraumatic stress disorder. Part four: Evaluation of the effect of early marriage on depression, anxiety, and stress. Part five is an assessment of the impact of early marriage on intimate partner violence. The

final part includes an assessment of the impact of early marriage on academic performance.

The questionnaire was validated through the exposure of the tool to 16 panels of experts, from different fields, with no less than 10 years of experience in investigating the specificity, validity, and adequacy of the questionnaire to assess the concept of interest, all of its recommendations have been taken into account. A preliminary print of the questionnaire was developed and sent to those 16 experts. These 16 experts from different specialties related to the field of the study.

Data were collected from 20 early-married women. The reliability coefficient was used to calculate the agreement between the items of the questionnaire using the reliability test as a statistical analysis tool. Cronbach  $\alpha$  and the result of an internal consistency method) posttraumatic stress disorder items = 0.81, depression, anxiety, and stress items = 0.91, partner violence items = 0.92, academic performance items = 0.70).

## Ethical approval

All experience procedures have received approval from the University of Babylon's College of Nursing. All tests were conducted in Iraq in accordance with established protocols.

## RESULTS

## DISCUSSION

The influence of early marriage on posttraumatic stress disorder levels showed that the impact of early marriage on posttraumatic stress disorder was moderate, with a rate of 44.5 [Table 1]. While the lowest effect of early marriage on PTSD was 44.0, the remaining was 11.5, which represents the highest effect of early marriage on PTSD. The outcomes of our study are consistent with the study conducted on early marriage, rape, child prostitution, and related factors.<sup>[8]</sup> The influence of early marriage on depression, anxiety, and stress levels showed that the consequence of early marriage on the levels of depression, anxiety, and tension was moderate, with a rate of 51.5 [Table 2]. While early marriage had the least effect on levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, 30.5, the remaining percentage was 18.0, which represents the highest effect of early marriage on levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. Where the

**Table 1: Influence of early marriage on posttraumatic stress disorder levels**

	Range	f.	%	Mean	SD
Low	9–15	88	44.0		
Moderate	16–21	89	44.5		
High	22–27	23	11.5		
Total	9–27	200	100.0	16.21	4.179

Distribution of the impact of early marriage on posttraumatic stress disorder levels at most 44.5% was moderate with a mean of 16.21 (Min–Max: 9–27)

results of our current study agree with the results of the study conducted at the University of Lagos, the impact of teenage pregnancy and early marriage on the psychological and community well-being of pregnant teenage girls: the social effects, where the ratio was 48.39. At the same time, the outcomes of our existing study do not decide with the results of a study conducted in Iran.<sup>[9,10]</sup> Influence of early marriage on partner violence levels. The influence of early marriage on the levels of partner violence was low, with a rate of 62.0 [Table 3]. While the average effect of early marriage on levels of partner violence was 28.5, the remaining percentage was 9.5, which represents the highest effect of early marriage on levels of partner violence. The outcomes of our existing study do not agree with the study directed.<sup>[11]</sup> The influence of early marriage on academic performance levels showed that the effect of early marriage on problems in academic performance levels was low, with a rate of 44.5 [Table 4]. While the average effect of early marriage on problems in academic performance levels was

36.5, the remaining percentage was 19.5, which represents the highest effect of early marriage on problems in academic performance levels. The impact of early marriage on the psychosocial health level showed that the effect of early marriage on problems in the levels of psychological and common health was moderate, with a percentage of 52.5 [Table 5]. While the effect of early marriage on problems in the levels of psychological and community health was low (36.5), the remaining percentage was 11.5, which represents the highest percentage of the effect of early marriage on problems in the levels of psychological and social health. Assessment of the influence of early marriage on psychosocial health was moderate, with an average of 1.78, whereas the results of posttraumatic stress disorder were 1.80; depression, anxiety, and stress were 1.94; partner violence were 1.55; academic performance were 1.83 [Table 6]. The results also showed that early marriage has an impact on underage women, which causes disturbances for underage girls because they are unable

**Table 2: Influence of early marriage on depression, anxiety, and stress levels**

	Range	f.	%	Mean	SD
Low	21–35	61	30.5		
Moderate	36–49	103	51.5		
High	50–63	36	18.0		
Total	21–63	200	100.0	40.68	9.528

Distribution of the impacts of early marriage on depression, anxiety, and stress levels at most 51.5% was moderate with a mean of 40.68 (Min–Max: 21–63)

**Table 3: Influence of early marriage on partner violence levels**

	Range	f.	%	Mean	SD
Low	10–16	124	62.0		
Moderate	17–23	57	28.5		
High	24–30	19	9.5		
Total	10–30	124	62.0	15.50	5.437

The impacts of early marriage on the partner violence levels at most 62% was low with a mean of 15.50 (Min–Max: 10–30)

**Table 4: Influence of early marriage on academic performance levels**

	Range	f.	%	Mean	SD
Low	6–10	89	44.5		
Moderate	11–14	72	36.0		
High	15–18	39	19.5		
Total	6–18	200	100.0	10.97	3.640

Distribution of the impacts of early marriage on the problems in the academic performance levels at most 44.5% was low with a mean of 10.97 (Min–Max: 6–18)

**Table 5: Influence of early marriage on the psychosocial health level**

	Range	f.	%	Mean	SD
Low	46–76	73	36.5		
Moderate	77–107	104	52.0		
High	108–138	23	11.5		
Overall	46–138	200	100.0	83.35	18.525

Distribution of the impacts of early marriage on the problems in the psychosocial health levels at most 52% was moderate with a mean of 83.35 (Min–Max: 46–138)

**Table 6: Assessment of the influence of early marriage on psychosocial health**

	Mean	SD	Eva.
Posttraumatic stress disorder	1.80	0.464	M
Depression, anxiety, and stress	1.94	0.454	M
Partner violence	1.55	0.544	L
Academic performance	1.83	0.607	M
Overall psychosocial health	1.78	0.405	M

The assessment of the impacts of early marriage on psychosocial health was moderate with a mean of 1.78 (Min–Max: 1–3)

**Table 7: The association between demographic data of the participants and psychosocial health**

Wife information	Subgroup	M	SD	F	P. value
Age	11–17 Years	1.80	0.407	Cc = -0.001–	0.990
	18–24 Years	1.79	0.426		
	25–31 Years	1.75	0.372		
	Total	1.78	0.405		
Age at marriage	11–14 Years	1.84	0.414	t = 1.208	0.228
	15–18 Years	1.76	0.402		
	Total	1.78	0.405		
Residence	Rural	1.88	0.418	t = 2.396	0.018
	Urban	1.73	0.392		
	Total	1.78	0.405		
Housing	With the husband only	1.75	0.372	t = -0.600–	0.549
	With the husband's family	1.79	0.419		
	Total	1.78	0.405		
	Educational level	1.83	0.429		
Secondary	1.73	0.376			
Institute	1.79	.			
College	1.54	0.213			
Total	1.78	0.405			
Monthly Income	Sufficient	1.67	0.377	9.643	0.000
	Barely	1.78	0.334		
	Sufficient	1.98	0.478		
	Total	1.78	0.405		
Occupation	Housewife	1.86	0.431	4.740	0.010
	Student	1.69	0.366		
	Employer	1.67	0.321		
	Total	1.78	0.405		
Do you have children	Yes	1.78	0.400	t = 0.391	0.696
	No	1.76	0.423		
	Total	1.78	0.405		
Marriage type	Compulsory	2.08	0.374	t = 7.321	0.000
	Optional	1.66	0.355		
	Total	1.78	0.405		
Husband previously married	Yes	1.71	0.323	t = -0.751–	0.454
	No	1.79	0.413		
	Total	1.78	0.405		

**Table 7: Continued**

Wife information	Subgroup	M	SD	F	P. value
Have you been abused by your partner	Yes	2.04	0.339	t = 9.300	0.000
	No	1.59	0.340		
	Total	1.78	0.405		
Do you suffer from health problems	Menstrual irregularities	1.90	0.390	1.387	0.231
	Uterine disorder	1.68	0.367		
	Anemia	1.73	0.405		
	Blood Pressure	1.82	0.440		
	Osteoporosis	1.81	0.445		
	Difficulty giving birth	1.76	0.385		
Are the people around you supportive of you in everything you do in your married life?	Yes	1.62	0.351	t = -6.733–	0.000
	No	1.98	0.385		
	Total	1.78	0.405		
Did your husband force you to leave	The study	1.86	0.431	t = 2.847	0.005
	Free business	1.70	0.360		
	Total	1.78	0.405		
Do you smoke	Yes	1.76	0.638	t = -0.061–	0.951
	No	1.78	0.403		
	Total	1.78	0.405		

There were highly significant statistical differences among psychosocial health with their monthly income, marriage type, had abuse from the partner, and people supportive in the married life at  $P < 0.01$ . The outcomes also showed there were significant statistical differences among psychosocial health with their residence, educational level, occupation, and husband force you to leave at  $P < 0.05$

to manage household matters and family responsibilities. It also affects her psychological state because of the great effort, thinking, and ill-treatment, which causes her anxiety and depression. The influence of early marriage on the psychosocial health level was moderate, with a percentage of 52.5. While the impact of early marriage on

problems in the levels of psychological and social health was low (36.5), the remaining percentage was 11.5, which represents the highest percentage of the impact of early marriage on problems in the levels of psychological and social health. The Association between demographic data of the participants and psychosocial health, with regard to the relationship between the demographic data of the participants and psychological and social health, the outcomes revealed that around were highly statistically significant difference among psychological and social health in their monthly income was 0.000, type of marriage was 0.000, partner abuse was 0.000, and supportive persons in marital life was 0.000, at  $P < 0.01$  [Table 7]. The outcomes also showed that there were statistically significant differences among mental and social health in terms of residence (0.018), educational level (0.048), occupation (0.010), and forcing your husband to leave (0.005), at  $P < 0.05$ .

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings revealed that there are statistically significant variations among psychological and social health and that the appraisal of the effect of early marriage on psychological and social health was moderate.

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Nil.

## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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