

The Effect of War on the Level of Psychological Hardiness Among Students of the Department of Library and Information Science at the Faculty of Arts, Al Neelain University: A Study of the Impact of Crises on Academic Performance

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the level of psychological resilience in its three dimensions (commitment, control, and challenge) among students of the Library and Information Science Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Nileen, under the influence of war according to variables such as (social status and gender). The study followed a descriptive methodology. The study was conducted on a random sample consisting of 360 male and female students, and it adopted the Psychological Resilience Questionnaire by Emad Mukhaimer (2012). The results of the study revealed a high level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department in its three dimensions (commitment - control - challenge) under the influence of war. The study also found statistically significant differences at the level of (0.001) in the level of psychological resilience among students in light of their social status, in favor of married students, and statistically significant differences at the level of (0.001) in the level of psychological resilience in terms of gender, in favor of females.

Keywords: Psychological Hardiness, war, students.

The impact of conflicts and wars on all members of society is undeniable, as people are killed, injured, and disabled during wartime. These traumatic events manifest clearly in their personalities and the extent of their suffering. The painful and shocking experiences, such as witnessing the killing of loved ones, losing property, and other tragic events, constitute

severe trauma for them. Psychological reactions such as extreme anxiety and fear emerge, and some individuals show signs of depression and fear of death. Others try to cope with these conflicts and wars by attempting to adapt and maintain emotional balance to face and overcome their effects. This dynamic process creates a new state that allows individuals, in

general, to determine their levels of ability to withstand various pressures, which is psychological resilience.

Daily life, with its various complexities, gives rise to many psychological and social pressures, which can create an environment conducive to increasing disturbances. These disturbances often lead individuals to become easy prey to various levels of psychological and emotional turmoil. Such psychological shocks may harm their academic performance, cognitive development, and relationships with others.

Zaleski (1996) emphasizes that wars are among the most painful experiences that evoke anxiety in individuals. Soslowska (1985) also highlights that youth are the most vulnerable segment of society to anxiety during exceptional circumstances and changes that affect societies. The youth, especially in times of war and crises, are among the most affected, as they see their goals and ambitions vanish before them, living in a state of fear and anxiety about their future, which is slipping away from them.

Nahed Saud (2005) confirms that university students live in a state of fear and anxiety about their future due to their inability to achieve their life goals and ambitions, as well as their diminished problem-solving abilities. If stressful life events have direct effects on individuals and groups, their impact is even more intense under exceptional conditions such as wars and disasters. These events can result in loss of lives and homes, making people vulnerable to displacement and homelessness, while facing insecurity and direct threats to their lives. Their basic needs, such as food, drink, and shelter, may be lost or diminished, exacerbating their suffering and increasing their psychological and social problems.

Many entities point out that excessive information about a problem makes it difficult to determine its solution. Misinformation and rumors during wars can hinder an appropriate response, leading to psychological reactions such as extreme anxiety and fear. Some individuals show signs of depression and fear of

death, while others attempt to cope with these wars by maintaining emotional balance to face and overcome them. However, this state is not final; it fluctuates depending on the amount and type of stressful experiences that one interacts with. This dynamic process creates a new state that enables individuals to assess their capabilities to withstand different pressures, which is psychological resilience.

Psychological resilience is one of the personality traits that help individuals cope well with stress, maintain physical and mental health, and avoid disorders such as heart disease and circulatory issues. People with strong psychological resilience are characterized by optimism, emotional calm, and effective, direct coping with stress. They succeed in managing stress and turning stressful situations into less threatening ones.

Kobasa confirms that psychological resilience helps resist stress and psychological exhaustion by altering how individuals perceive events, making them less threatening. It provides individuals with a degree of flexibility, increasing their ability to handle various pressures and preventing psychological exhaustion (Abbas Madhet, 2010).

Resilience can only be described when tested under pressure and hardship. If an individual shows resistance and composure, they are described as resilient. In the psychological field, resilience is associated with the pressures and adversities an individual faces. Kobasa (1982) and Smith (1982) pointed out that exposure to stress is inevitable; life is full of obstacles, failures, setbacks, and unfavorable circumstances. Individuals cannot avoid failure, frustration, or loss, nor can they escape the demands of personal growth at any stage of life. Where there is life, there is stress.

Konstantinova views resilience as actions taken by individuals to assess and cope with stressful events that may affect their health. The components of resilience prepare individuals to evaluate stressful events by making them less threatening, allowing them to see themselves as

more competent in facing them. They rely on strategies that focus on problem-solving and seeking support while relying less on emotion-focused strategies and avoidance (Abbas, 2001).

Emad Mohammed (2002) explains that Kobasa identified a set of psychological characteristics that constitute the trait of resilience, representing three essential dimensions:

- **Commitment:** A psychological contract that an individual makes with themselves, their goals, values, and others around them.
- **Control:** Refers to the belief that individuals can have control over the events they encounter, take personal responsibility for what happens to them, make decisions, change events, and effectively cope with stress.
- **Challenge:** Refers to the belief that changes in life are exciting and necessary rather than threatening, helping individuals initiate and explore their environment and identify psychological and social resources that aid in coping with stress effectively.

These characteristics help individuals maintain sound psychological performance despite exposure to stressful negative events.

A study by Amal Ali Khalil (2011) confirmed the positive correlation of psychological resilience among swimmers, showing a positive relationship in the dimensions of control and emotion among male swimmers and a negative correlation among female swimmers. Another study by Jadda Ahmed (2015) on football referees found a negative correlation between psychological resilience and psychological stress using the Mukhaimer Resilience Scale (2006).

Mohamed Arafat Jokhrab (2018) conducted a study aiming to identify the level of resilience in its three dimensions—commitment, control, and challenge—among final-year students. The study adopted Mukhaimer's Resilience Scale and found that the sample had a high level of psychological resilience.

The researchers define resilience as "the ability to positively cope with pressures, solve

them, prevent future difficulties, effectively face stressful life events, and achieve success and excellence."

In recent years, studies have gone beyond simply examining the relationship between perception of stressful events and psychological suffering to focus on factors that support individuals' ability to cope effectively, known as resistance factors—psychological or environmental variables linked to continued psychological well-being even when faced with stressful conditions.

Research Problem: War is one of the most widespread and well-known forms of violence in international conflicts. Despite differing definitions of war due to its complex nature, some of the most notable definitions include:

- **Quincy Wright's definition:** Focuses on the legal aspect of war, describing it as "a legal basis that allows two or more hostile groups to resolve their conflict through armed forces."
- **Clausewitz's definition:** States that "war is an act of violence aimed at compelling the enemy to fulfill our will." War is a natural state that arises from conflicting interests between individuals, societies, and nations.

Academic performance is an important aspect of students' lives as it measures their knowledge, skills, and abilities across various subjects. It not only reflects their progress in educational institutions but also plays a significant role in shaping their future prospects. Thus, the research problem centers around understanding the level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Nileen, under the influence of war.

Importance of the Study:

War has a significant impact on the mental health of individuals in general, and students in particular. Studying the level of psychological resilience among students can contribute to understanding their ability to cope with the pressures and effects of conflicts. The importance of this study lies in providing

information about the level of psychological resilience in its three dimensions (commitment, control, and challenge) among students of the Library and Information Science Department under the influence of war.

Objectives of the Study:

This study aims to:

- Identify the level of psychological resilience in its three dimensions (commitment, control, and challenge) among students of the Library and Information Science Department under the influence of war.
- Determine the differences in the level of psychological resilience according to social status among students under the influence of war.
- Determine the differences in the level of psychological resilience according to gender among students under the influence of war.

Research Questions:

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department?
2. Are there statistically significant differences in the level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department based on social status?
3. Are there statistically significant differences in the level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department based on gender?

Hypotheses of the Study:

1. The level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Nileen, is high.
2. There are statistically significant differences in the level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department based on social status.
3. There are statistically significant differences in the level of psychological

resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department based on gender.

Study Variables:

- Psychological resilience: It is the individual's ability to cope with the psychological pressures they face through their interaction with their community. It is measured by the score a student receives based on their responses to the items on the psychological resilience scale.
- Wars: The use of organized armed violence between human groups. It is the most coercive means for a state to achieve its goals, and it is an ancient process as old as humanity. In ancient societies, war was a familiar phenomenon to satisfy various needs.

Study Boundaries:

- Geographical boundaries: This study is limited to students of the Library and Information Science Department.
- Temporal boundaries: This study is limited to the time frame in which it was conducted, which is the second semester of the academic year 2024.

Research Methodology:

The study employed the descriptive-analytical method, which is the most commonly used approach in educational and psychological studies. This method focuses on describing the existing reality of the phenomenon under study. It involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data about the phenomenon, analyzing and interpreting it, and drawing conclusions to understand its nature, characteristics, and the relationships between its elements and other phenomena, leading to generalizations (Mohammed Dawodi and Mohammed Boufatih, 2007, p. 81).

Study Population:

The original population of the study consisted of students from the Library and Information Science Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Nileen.

Study Sample:

The study sample consisted of a group of students from the Library and Information Science Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Nileen, totaling 360 female students.

Research Tools:

The researchers used Emad Mukhaimer's (2012) Psychological Resilience Questionnaire, which is considered one of the most reliable scales for measuring the level of psychological resilience. It has been used by a large number of researchers.

The scale is reliable as it assesses the level of capabilities, participation, and achievement in institutions, companies, and organizations. It consists of 47 items measuring three dimensions, with the items distributed as follows:

- Commitment: Items (1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 37, 40, 43, 46).
- Control: Items (2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 35, 38, 41, 44).
- Challenge: Items (3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36, 39, 42, 45, 47).

Responses were scored as follows: Always (3), Sometimes (2), Never (1), and for reverse-scored items: Always (1), Sometimes (2), Never (3). This means that individuals respond to the items according to their usual daily behavior in situations described by the items. The decisions made based on the measurement results depend on the accuracy of the participant's responses.

Statistical Procedures for the Questionnaire:

1. Face Validity of the Psychological Resilience Scale:

To ensure the face validity of the psychological resilience scale, the researchers presented the scale to a group of specialists in psychology, methodologies, and teaching methods. The experts agreed that the items of the scale were appropriate for the study sample. All reviewers indicated the need to write the items in the standard declarative format. Based on the logical feedback gathered at this stage, the wording of the items was revised to conform to the declarative format, and the response options were modified from a three-point scale to a five-point Likert scale (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never).

Table 1 shows the distribution of items across the three dimensions:

Dimension	Number of Items
Commitment	16
Control	15
Challenge	16

2. Internal Consistency Validity of the Psychological Resilience Scale:

The scale was applied to a pilot sample consisting of 50 female students from the Faculty of Arts to test its validity. These students were randomly selected from the study population. The researchers calculated Pearson's correlation coefficient between each item and the total score of the psychological resilience scale. The results are shown in the following table:

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Each Item and the Overall Psychological Hardiness Scale

Dimension	Item Number	Correlation Coefficient	Item Number	Correlation Coefficient	Item Number	Correlation Coefficient
Commitment	1	0.465**	19	0.496**	37	0.592**
	4	0.378**	22	0.663**	40	0.770**
	7	0.688**	25	0.702**	43	0.080**
	10	0.612**	28	0.659**	46	0.064**
	13	0.614**	31	0.616**		
	16	0.049**	34	0.059**		
Control	2	0.571**	17	0.591**	32	0.549**
	5	0.430**	20	0.616**	35	0.528**

	8	0.598**	23	0.497**	38	0.746**
	11	0.589**	26	0.703**	41	0.074**
	14	0.679**	29	0.471**	44	0.079**
Challenge	3	0.671**	21	0.516**	39	0.616**
	6	0.700**	24	0.547**	42	0.645**
	9	0.830**	27	0.493**	45	0.693**
	12	0.451**	30	0.571**	47	0.571**
	15	0.479**	33	0.616**		
	18	0.651**	36	0.727**		

The table above shows that all correlation coefficients between each item and the total score of the scale were positive and statistically significant at the 0.001 level, indicating that all the items of the scale were valid.

3. Reliability of the Scale:

To measure the reliability of the scale, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the pilot sample. The values ranged between (0.784 – 0.861), which indicates that the scale is reliable. This means that the scale would yield the same results with the same probability if reapplied to the same sample.

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha for Each Dimension of the Scale

Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Commitment	16	0.829
Control	15	0.861
Challenge	16	0.784
Overall	47	0.824

The table above shows that all the Cronbach's alpha values were good, with the total reliability coefficient of the scale being 0.824, indicating that the scale is highly reliable and valid for use with the study sample.

Results and Interpretation:

Hypothesis 1: The level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Nileen, is high.

The study reached the following results: The level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science

Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Nileen, was high in its three dimensions (commitment, control, and challenge) under the influence of war. To test this hypothesis, the means and standard deviations for the total score and the dimensions of the psychological resilience scale were calculated. The following table shows the results:

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations of Psychological Hardiness Dimensions

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation
Commitment	3.67	1.30
Control	3.33	1.24
Challenge	3.61	1.32
Overall	3.53	0.04

The table above shows that the mean total score was high, reaching (3.53) with a standard deviation of (0.04). Regarding the dimensions of the scale, "commitment" ranked first, with a mean of (3.67) and a standard deviation of (1.30), followed by "challenge" in second place, with a mean of (3.61) and a standard deviation of (1.32), and "control" in third place, with a mean of (3.33) and a standard deviation of (1.24). All scores were higher than the hypothesized mean value (1.68-2.33), indicating that the level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Nileen, was high. This is due to the fact that psychological resilience is the overarching construct that encompasses these three dimensions.

It can be interpreted that the students showed greater resistance and challenge to the various pressures they faced as a result of the war. They demonstrated leadership, activity, a desire for

life, and the ability to make decisions, choose, and effectively cope with challenges. Their resilience stems from their desire for life and their lack of fear when confronting problems.

The results of this study align with the findings of a study by Suleiman and Abdel-Wahab (2005), which indicated that individuals who experience external stress are more driven to resilience. The global community, especially the student community, has faced pressure due to wars. Gerson (2006) also emphasized in his study on psychological stress and its relationship to resilience among students that students possess a high level of psychological resilience, enabling them to cope with psychological and life pressures. Jadda Ahmed (2015) similarly concluded that psychological resilience is negatively correlated with psychological stress among football referees.

Furthermore, the results align with the study by Huda Yousfi (2011), which found a high level of resilience among university students. The sample consisted of 75 female students from Batna University, and they demonstrated a high level of resilience. Similarly, Kamal Dukhan and Bashir Al-Hajjar (2007) conducted a study on the psychological resilience of Islamic University students, with a sample of 541 students, and concluded that their high level of resilience was attributed to their strong religious commitment.

Siegle D. & Patricia A. S. (2000) and Renzulli J. & Reis S. (2003) also emphasized that strong motivation, stemming from a strong need for self-fulfillment, interest, enthusiasm, persistence, and hard work in a specific field, along with self-confidence, and the ability to identify important problems in a particular area of study, setting high standards for one's work, openness to new experiences and ideas, curiosity, determination to take risks, and sensitivity to aesthetic qualities, all contribute to raising the level of psychological resilience in individuals.

The researchers believe that psychological resilience is present among students of the Library and Information Science Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Nileen, due to their academic achievement and their determination to achieve the results they seek. This commitment generates a great challenge for them to face psychological pressures and take on the responsibilities placed on them. The high educational level of the sample also explains the elevated level of psychological resilience.

Hypothesis 2: There are statistically significant differences in the level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Nileen, based on social status, in favor of married students.

Table 5: T-Test Results for Psychological Hardiness Based on Social Status

Social Status	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance
Married	3.61	1.15	1.24	5355	0.01
Unmarried	3.53	1.31			

The table above shows statistically significant differences at the level of (0.001) in the level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Nileen, based on social status, in favor of married students.

The researchers interpret that married students have family responsibilities in addition to their academic responsibilities, which may lead to multiple obligations placed on them.

Marriage enhances psychological resilience as a spouse provides emotional and social support. Healthy marital relationships are often associated with a greater sense of stability and security, making married students more capable of handling pressures compared to unmarried students, who may struggle more with psychological stress due to the absence of continuous emotional support.

In summary, it can be said that students who have strong social networks and family support

tend to be more resilient in facing psychological challenges. Social relationships provide emotional resources, helping to mitigate the negative effects of stress. This result is consistent with the findings of (Al-Shirawi, 2012), which indicated that the support of spouses increases resilience. The study by Holahan & Moos (1985) and Ganellen & Blaney (1984) also found that social support strengthens psychological

resilience and increases feelings of value, importance, and the ability to challenge and cope with stress (Al-Shawaf, 2010, p. 110).

Hypothesis 3: There are statistically significant differences in the level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Nileen, based on gender, in favor of females.

Table 6: T-Test Results for Psychological Hardiness Based on Gender

Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance
Males	3.50	1.34	0.74	5667	0.01
Females	3.53	1.27			

The table above shows statistically significant differences at the level of (0.001) in the level of psychological resilience among students of the Library and Information Science Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Nileen, based on gender, in favor of females.

The researchers attribute this result to the fact that females may exhibit higher levels of psychological resilience in dealing with pressures, such as emotional crises or social problems, due to their ability to express emotions. In major crises such as wars, females are aware of taking personal responsibility and believe that they can influence events. They perceive changes in their lives as exciting and necessary rather than threatening, especially when adapting to difficult realities and bearing psychological and social burdens. This result aligns with the study of Hiba Ismail (2020) and differs from Mukhaimer's (1997) study, which found that males are more resilient than females.

The researchers interpret that some of the characteristics associated with the sample studied in this research offer an acceptable explanation for this result. Gender plays an important role in psychological resilience, as Gonzalez emphasized the development of psychological resilience over the course of life and linked it to the achievement of desired goals, which leads to improved quality of life (Mahboob, 2012, p. 13). The researchers agree with the findings of Hegazy and his colleague

(2010) that as individuals grow older, they are expected to gain more experience and resilience in life. Life pressures and experiences provide individuals with greater skills to deal with current and future challenges more effectively, as past experiences grant them better coping mechanisms for handling stress.

Conclusion of the Study:

From the previous analysis, it is clear that psychological hardiness is the strength that individuals rely on to continue living normally and even to enjoy facing life's challenges and pressures. This is due to the psychological and cognitive components and characteristics that hardiness encompasses, such as commitment, control, and challenge. Through commitment, goals are set and achieved; through control, individuals do not become victims of external events. Even if they cannot control these external events, they can control themselves and interpret the events in line with their positive values and beliefs, taking responsibility for their actions, others, and their environment. Through challenge, individuals overcome distress, nurture happiness, and instill tranquility within themselves and others.

Study Recommendations:

In light of the current study's findings, within the framework of its limitations and methodology, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Develop counseling programs aimed at raising the level of psychological hardiness among students.

2. Ensure that educational curricula across all disciplines include experiences and skills that enhance and strengthen students' personality traits.

3. Provide programs that contribute to increasing students' psychological hardiness and their ability to cope with psychological pressures.

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