

## Emotional Disturbances and Psychological Well-Being in Divorced Women

Kashaf Fatima<sup>1\*</sup>**Abstract**

The current study was conducted to identify the emotional disturbances and psychological well-being in divorced women. It is cross sectional Study. The subjects of study were 80 between May 2022 to November 2023, Govt. Shahbaz Sharif DHQ Hospital Multan and also Snowball sampling techniques was used. Divorced women presented with emotional disturbances and psychological well-being. The study participants also completed the Mental Health Inventory (MHI) for evaluating the Mental Health Issue. Out of 80 (100%) divorced women, majority were 40 (50%) from 18-28 years of age, 30 (37.5%) were uneducated, 50 (62.5%) were unemployed and 65(52%) were belongs to rural area and majority were 45 (56.3%) were divorced at the age of 18-28 years ( $M = 30.38$ ,  $SD = 9.03$ ). Higher score 65 (81.3%) were on Psychological Distress and lower score 15 (18.8%) were on Psychological Well-Being. Statistical Analysis suggest majority of the patients experience Distress, ( $M = 0.81$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ ) and as distress increased, psychological well-being decreased. There is a negative correlation between Psychological Distress and Psychological well-being among divorced women. I concluded that divorce has significant impact on women's emotional disturbances and psychological well-Being and divorced women experience more loneliness, stress, anger, anxiety and depression.

**Keywords:** Divorced Women, Emotional Disturbance, Psychological Well-being

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**Introduction**

Divorce is the process of terminating a marriage or marital union. Divorce is the act by which a valid marriage is dissolved. Divorce is the one of the serious problems of society, which retains the attention of the World public opinion. Many researchers concluded that marital life is strongly affected by a variety of socio-economic and political factors which create uncertainty conditions for their functioning. Negative effects of divorce hurt women more than men because usually the custody of child becomes women responsibility; they face financial hardships and face more problems in their lives (Gilman et al., 2005).

Islam views marriage as a sacred union between two people, the success or failure

of which is determined by three simple words. Three words to tie this particular agreement into a knot, and three words to untie it. Some people celebrate a lifetime union to their couples, and on the other hand, some issues that turns happy marriages into painfully pointless affairs According to divorce sociology theory, divorce is the collapse of the original family. Divorce is a disaster that results from disagreement, conflict, and discord (Waseem et al., 2020).

The incapacity to establish or preserve fulfilling interpersonal relationships with family members or peers is known as emotional disturbance. It's frequently defined as an all-encompassing, generalized state of happiness or depression. Under normal circumstances, people with emotional disorders display inappropriate behavior or feelings. It's frequently defined as an all-encompassing, generalized state of depression or unhappiness. Under normal circumstances, people with emotional disorders display

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inappropriate behavior or feelings (Barzoki et al., 2015).

Psychological Well-Being is an individual's emotional health and overall functioning is called psychological well-being. Health and Well-being describes that "Combination of feeling good and functioning effectively". Divorce negatively effects on woman in the form of feeling of guilt, depression, stress, low self-esteem and euphoria (Auersperg et al., 2019). In 2002, the World Health Organization reported that 55% of women filed for divorce annually. The current study set out to evaluate the psychological well-being and emotional issues such as stress, depression, and anxiety among women who had recently divorced (Zafar & Rukhsana, 2014).

Women's emotional and mental well-being is very important for complete and healthy development of the child. Children of emotionally maladapted women are at increased risk of developing emotional problems in the future than children living with intact families. A woman often experiences financial distress after divorce, because her husband's salary lost for her. The twentieth century has witnessed changes in family structures, family processes and interpersonal relationships among family members globally, which has significant influence on individuals (Al-Shahrani et al., 2023).

Family does not provide only peaceful living circumstances but also the foremost source of social and personal comfort for the individual. The basis for any family is marriage, a legal and religious promise that brings liabilities for both partners. Marriage and divorce are direct social issues as well as private concerns of individuals and families (Strizzi et al. 2022). However, due to various socio-cultural and economic reasons, these relationships move towards the separation of partners oftentimes. In spite, divorce is an increasingly common phenomenon in the present world, but in developing countries like Pakistan it has serious impacts and become one of the

major life stressors for the husband and the wife. It has significant negative consequences for the physical and cognitive health of all family members, especially women (Zafeer et al., 2022).

A woman's life changes as a result of a divorce, including her physical and mental health declining, her living situation changing, depression linked to social media use, discomfort in the family, financial hardships, loneliness, and social mobility, among many other things (Her et al., 2023). In addition to having terrible effects on the divorcing couples, divorce also has terrible effects on children, man- and woman-made families, all related relatives, and socioeconomic circumstances (Tahira et al., 2023). Divorce has detrimental and long-lasting effects on women, including social stigma, increased psychological problems, lower personal achievements, a lack of social adaptability, and problems with money and adjustment, among other things (Zahl-Olsen et al., 2022).

Another challenge for a divorced woman's adjustment is characterized by changes in family and demographic aspects. Most of the time divorced women try to adjust within their parental home or with their brothers who have their own families and their obligations (Huynh et al., 2022). As previously mentioned, divorce is one of the biggest stresses in a woman's life and has a significant impact on her life and future adjustments. Thus, conducting research of this kind is crucial to comprehending the intricacies of divorce and the ways in which women respond to, manage, and move through it in their lives (Rasheed et al., 2021).

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

The study was a Cross Sectional Study.

### **Participants**

A sample size of 80 divorced women was selected from DHQ Hospital Multan and also through snow ball sampling technique.

### **Inclusion Criteria**

The inclusion criteria for recruitment were divorced women, age 18 year or above,

literate, and could communicate and demonstrate willingness to participate in study.

### Exclusion Criteria

In exclusion criteria, living separated without divorced, psychotic such as Schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, alcoholism or drug abuse, organic brain syndromes or any other psychiatric morbidity, unwilling and who were not fulfilling the criteria of the study.

### Measure

A data collection form was developed and all demographics data was collected on it. The Socio-demographic information including age, education, employment, locality and age at divorce, were collected. The study participants also completed the Mental Health Inventory (MHI).

### Mental Health Inventory (MHI)

Mental Health Inventory (MHI) was developed as part of the National Health Insurance Study (Veit & Ware, 1983) and has been studied extensively in a variety of populations. A 38-item scale, except two, is scored on a six-point scale (range 1-6), item 9 and 28 are the exception, and each scored on a five-point rating scale (range 1-5). The MHI has Two Global Scales-Psychological Distress and Psychological Well-being, aggregated into 6 Subscales-Anxiety, Depression, Loss of Behavioral / emotional

### Results

#### Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N=80)*

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Age (Year)</b>		
18-28	40	50%
28-38	20	25%
38-48	20	25%
<b>Education</b>		
Uneducated	30	37.5%
Matric or less	20	25%
Bachelors	15	18.8%
Masters or above	15	18.8%
<b>Employment</b>		
Employed	30	37.5%
Unemployed	50	62.5%

control, General positive affect, Emotional ties and life satisfaction. The MHI is easy to administer and provides a quick assessment of both positive and negative facets of mental health, not just psychopathology.

### Procedure

The study was conducted between the May 2022 to November 2023. The study was carried out in the Govt. Shahbaz Sharif DHQ Hospital Multan.

### Ethical Considerations

After approval from the Institutional Review Board, Govt. Shahbaz Sharif DHQ Hospital Multan, data was collected. Written and verbal Informed consent was obtained from all study participants and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participant's response were maintained throughout research.

### Statistical Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 was used to analyze the data in the term of frequencies and percentages. Tables were used to show the results. For statistical analysis, descriptive statistic was used to compute percentages, mean and standard deviation. Additionally, Correlation and regression analysis of Emotional Disturbances and Psychological Well-Being were also done.

<b>Locality</b>		
Rural	52	65%
Urban	28	35%

Table 1 shows the Demographic details. Out of 80 (100%) divorced women, majority were 40 (50%) from 18-28 years

of age, 30 (37.5%) were uneducated, 50 (62.5%) were unemployed and 65(52%) were belongs to rural area.

**Table 2**

*Age at Divorce (N=80)*

<b>Age Groups</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
			30.37	9.03
18-28	45	56.3%		
28-38	15	18.8%		
38 or above	20	25%		

Table 2 shows the Age of Divorce. Out of 80 (100%) divorced women, majority were

45 (56.3%) were divorced at the age of 18-28 years.

**Table 3**

*Correlations among Mental Health Inventory (N=80)*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Psychological Well-Being	0.18	0.39	-	-0.97*
Psychological Distress	0.81	0.04		-

Note. \* $p < .01$

Table 3 shows the Pearson Correlation of Mental Health Inventory. Out of 80 (100%) divorced women, higher score 65(81.3%) were on Psychological Distress and lower score 15(18.8%) were on Psychological Well-Being. Statistical Analysis suggest majority of the patients experience Distress, ( $M = 0.81$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ ) and as distress increased, psychological well-being decreased. There is a negative correlation between Psychological Distress and

Psychological well-being among divorced women. Results indicate that Psychological Well-Being ( $M = 0.18$ ,  $SD=0.39$ ) is negatively correlated with Psychological Distress ( $M=0.81$ ,  $SD=0.04$ ). The correlation coefficient R value between psychological well-being and psychological Distress is -0.97 which shows a negative association between both variables.

**Table 4**  
*Regression Analysis (N=80)*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	B	SE	Beta		
(Constant)	0.62	.02		-2.53	.001
1 Psychological Distress	0.75	2.09	-0.97	11.13	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Well-Being  
 R-square = .03, Adjusted R-square = .02

Table 4 shows the coefficient results. As indicated that the beta value is -0.97, furthermore, the beta value is negative which indicates the negative relationship between Psychological Distress and Psychological Well-Being or in other

words we can say that when Psychological Distress increases by one unit the Psychological Well-Being will decrease by -.97 units.  $p < 0.001$ .

### Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to assess emotional disturbances and psychological well-being in divorced women. Marriage and divorce are a social issue. However, these relationships frequently end in the partners' separation for a variety of sociocultural and economic reasons. Divorce rates have significantly increased over the past few decades everywhere in the world, but especially in developing and impoverished nations like Pakistan (Tahira et al., 2023).

In this study, analysis was conducted on 80 (100%) women, majority were 40 (50%) from 18-28 years of age, 30 (37.5%) were uneducated, 50 (62.5%) were unemployed and 65(52%) were belongs to rural area. In my study, in Age of Divorce, majority were 45 (56.3%) were divorced at the age of 18-28 years ( $M = 30.38$ ,  $SD = 9.03$ ). In Pakistan, mostly families prefer cousin marriages and in early age especially in rural areas, e.g., 16 years of girl and 18 years of boy. Parents promote engaged in childhood, and sometime that such engagements with considerations of girl of boy present age. Then family planned early marriages to prevent impressionable youth from engaging in inappropriate emotional and sexual relationships outside and it

impacts on couple emotionally, psychologically, physically and medically. Due to immaturity, lack of knowledge, stopping education, forced marriages, couple face difficulty in adjustment and conflicts started in family that lead to major disputes and resulted divorce in early age (Waseem et al., 2020).

The present study also revealed, higher score 65 (81.3%) were on Psychological Distress and lower score 15 (18.8%) were on Psychological Well-Being on Mental Health Inventory (MIH). Statistical Analysis suggest majority of the patients experience Distress, ( $M = 0.81$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ ) and as distress increased, psychological well-being decreased. There is a negative correlation between Psychological Distress and Psychological well-being among divorced women. Results indicate that Psychological Well-Being ( $M = 0.18$ ,  $SD=0.39$ ) is negatively correlated with Psychological Distress ( $M=0.81$ ,  $SD=0.04$ ). The correlation coefficient R value between Psychological well-being and Psychological Distress is -0.97 which shows a negative association between both variables. The *p* value is  $<.001$  which means that relationship is statistically significant. Another study by Abbas et al. (2019), arguments between spouses have

been connected to feeling very sad, having panic attacks, feeling very worried, and feeling a bit sad. People who have gotten divorced are more likely to feel very sad, not be very happy with their life, and have problems with their mental health. The findings highlighted a positive correlation between depression, anxiety, loneliness, and divorce, offering compelling evidence of divorce's adverse effects on women's mental health. Existing studies indicate that divorced women grapple with significant stress, leading to poor mental well-being, albeit younger women seem to experience comparatively less emotional strain than their older counterparts. A study by Goldfarb & Trudel (2019) revealed a positive connection between emotional divorce, feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression. Mental health challenges were found to predict 61% of the changes in emotional divorce. Moreover, Saudi Arabian married women's level of emotional disconnection was affected by their experiences of sadness, anxiety, and loneliness, and vice versa. This study strongly demonstrates the harmful impact of emotional divorce on the mental well-being of married women.

The study by Al-Shahrani & Hammad (2023) looks at how women feel and think after a divorce and how it affects their health and feelings. Women in Asian nations, particularly those in Pakistan, encounter numerous challenges when embarking on a new life, and social norms do not facilitate this process. Divorced women have to deal with a lot of unsuitable employment offers, hurtful gossip, and challenges entering into new relationships. Women who have divorced experience a great deal of discrimination at work. Fewer possibilities for training are also provided to them. Additionally, they face a great deal of difficulty and stress as they reintegrate into society. Women experience inferiority complexes, rejection, remorse, resentment, and embarrassment for both themselves and their families following a divorce.

In countries like the US, when women get divorced, they might join a group or talk to a therapist who can help them. They share what happened in their marriage. Even if they don't like therapy, they talk to a friend who gets it. In America, women tend to get over the divorce quicker than men. Most women, about 73%, don't feel bad about getting divorced. But only 61% of men feel the same way about their divorce (Taylor & Andrews, 2009).

In Pakistan, a robust support system comprising friends, family, or therapy can serve as a vital emotional buffer for divorced women. Some women may leverage this transition to reassess career aspirations, pursue further education, or even opt for remarriage. However, aging presents additional challenges, including financial and social strains, compounded by potential health issues. The absence of a partner during health concerns can amplify the difficulties faced by older divorced women. Limited support networks and housing uncertainties contribute to feelings of loneliness and isolation among this demographic (Rubab et al., 2023).

### **Conclusion**

It is concluded that divorce has significant impact on women's emotional disturbances and psychological well-being and divorced women experience more loneliness, stress, anger, anxiety and depression. Women who have recently divorced should be aware of their legal rights so they can protect themselves and reintegrate into society.

### **Implications**

Study on the emotional disturbances and psychological well-being of divorced women provide valuable insights with several implications. Insights from such studies can inform the development of tailored interventions aimed at addressing the unique emotional challenges faced by divorced women. Policymakers can use research findings to advocate for policies that support divorced women in maintaining their emotional well-being. Early intervention strategies, such as divorce counseling or post-divorce support

groups, could be promoted to enhance coping mechanisms, resilience, and community support.

### Limitations and Recommendations

The study has some limitations and suggestions as the sample size was 80 women only from Southern Punjab, Pakistan. It cannot give results of all population. Researcher did not address other psychosocial stressors that they are facing in community and any intervention. It is suggested that future study should be on large scale to help in generalizing the results. It is suggested that more areas and more cities should be included in the study and also use other techniques also to get better results. And also address other psychosocial stressors, they are facing in community and provide interventions. And it should be longitudinal study for deeper understanding.

### Contribution of Author

Kashaf Fatima: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft, Writing - Reviewing & Editing

### Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest declared by the author.

### Source of Funding

The author declared no source of funding.

### Data Availability Statement

The datasets of the current study are not available publicly due to ethical reasons but are available from the corresponding author [K.F.] upon the reasonable request.

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