

The Nature of Psychological Resilience Among Persons With Disabilities in Jordan

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Abstract

The current study aimed to understand the nature of psychological resilience of persons with disabilities in Jordan. The study sample included 11 persons. The study used the qualitative phenomenological research method to achieve the study objective. The results indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the psychological resilience of persons with disabilities, especially the cognitive, emotional, social and behavioral aspect. The study recommended the necessity of providing specialized psychological services for persons with disabilities to develop psychological resilience for them.

Key words: Psychological resilience; Persons with disabilities; Jordan

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INTRODUCTION

Studies conducted on psychological resilience indicate that the majority of the research was targeting children and adolescents exposed to problems such as family abuse or substance abuse, and the studies aimed to provide a model that can be used as a model for risk and protection factors. The protection variable included factors that could reduce risks by enabling a person to deal with negative influences. As for the environmental factors and individual personal factors, they focused on the variables

that would enhance the person's self-protection and thus face the negative effects of exposure to risks and deal with them. Some also pointed out that the importance of factors such as negative moods, which may prevent a person from adapting to his disability. Resilience is defined as a person's ability to maintain positive psychological, social and physical performance when adapting to the effects of disability and the consequent difficulties in facing those effects and methods of dealing with them (Craig, 2012).

Social construction theories explain resilience in terms of a network of resources including material resources, relationships, identity, bodies and minds, power, control, community participation, community cohesion, and social justice. Resilience is a positive trait that a person possesses. This ability allows them to develop and grow, even when facing negative situations or events. Resilience requires access to a set of resources that allow a person to describe themselves as living well. This also entails awareness of the sources of risks in non-standard ways as part of understanding resilience. Resilience is influenced by a person's traits, abilities, and capabilities, as well as community factors and other resources (Runswick-Cole, and Goodley, 2013).

Teferra (2005) emphasized the importance of family care and support in promoting self-esteem, self-efficacy and resilience, and contextualizing coping strategies used at the personal and social level, and explained that developing positive self-esteem and resilience of persons with disabilities can be achieved through caring and supportive relationships that create mutual understanding, and trust within the family as well as outside the family. However, positive self-esteem and self-efficacy play a crucial role in the effective functioning of persons with disabilities in various aspects of life. Furthermore, the study pointed out the importance of motivation factors, tolerance, hard work and continuous investigations are essential elements to reveal and enhance resilience. On the other hand, the study emphasized the importance of

exploring possible options that are commensurate with the individual's ability and interests, and support factors from family members, friends and others, all of which are essential variables to build and expand the individual's strength to successfully deal with life's challenges. To achieve this, it is necessary to develop short and long-term intervention strategies at the national level (Teferra, 2005).

With different categories of disability, the results of the resilience studies also differ. The study of Hariharan, Karimi, and Kishore (2014) showed that the performance and participation of persons with physical disabilities is limited due to various external and internal factors. Although the circumstances are similar for everyone, some persons are resilient enough to overcome challenges and excel in life. Furthermore, there are some internal factors that play a major role. An individual's emotional resources and assessment of circumstances are considered to be some of the important factors. The results confirmed that positive perceptions and emotional resources help persons with physical disabilities despite disability and environmental barriers. Butler, Katayama, Schindling, and Dials (2018) also explored resilience to see if it could contribute to explaining the academic success of students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or low vision. The results indicated that resilience was positively associated with academic success.

Scheffers, van Vugt and Moonen (2020) studied resilience in persons with intellectual disabilities, their results indicated that independence, self-acceptance, and physical health as internal sources of resilience. External sources of resilience include social networks and daily activities. On the other hand, based on resilience data from undergraduate students with disabilities, Ganguly and Perera (2019) revealed three distinct traits of resilience ("weak," "spiritually dominant," and "committed flexible"). The results also revealed that females had a higher spirituality-dominant profile than the weak one. In addition, the results showed that job optimism, academic satisfaction, and well-being were higher in the resilience profile than the other profiles. Also, Vaccaro, Moore, Kimball, Troiano and Newman (2019) study the importance of practicing individual-centered student affairs such as strengths and making use of past successes to develop successful coping patterns and resilience in learning environments. On the other hand, Sefotho (2021) concluded that informal occupations can help them develop their skills to be employable.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

The impact of the Corona virus (COVID-19) has lasted for more than two years. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to restrictions in social interactions and communication with others and a decrease in income. Most of the world's

persons have been affected by these restrictions. Persons with disabilities, like others, are also affected by this. Which led to negative consequences on psychological and social life. As their level of activities decreased and their psychological state was affected, they became more affected than persons without disabilities. El-Zraigat and Al-Shammari (2020) study indicated that the COVID-19 led to anxiety, fear, lack of social relations, and so forth. Another study also conducted by El-Zraigat and Al-Shammari (2020b) confirmed that persons with disabilities need psychological, social and educational services in order to obtain better adapt to the developments of the results of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the current study came to explore and understand the nature of psychological resilience of persons with disabilities in Jordan.

This study sought to answer the following main question: What is the nature of psychological resilience of persons with disabilities in the COVID-19 pandemic?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The current study aimed to understand the nature of psychological resilience of persons with disabilities in Jordan.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is a qualitative study, as it used the phenomenological approach to achieve the goal of the study represented by studying the nature of psychological resilience among persons with disabilities in Jordan. The study used semi-structured interviews. The following questions were used in interviewing persons with disabilities in order to understand the nature of their psychological resilience:

- How do you see yourself in light of the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How do you deal with life events in the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How do you deal with the problems you face in the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What are your interests during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How do you deal with sources of life stress in the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How do you develop your skills and capabilities in the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How do you interact with others in the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How do you feel under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Describe your personal satisfaction with your accomplishments?

VERIFICATION OF DATA

To verify the collected data, the researcher collected data from three sources: 5 persons with disabilities, 3 parents of persons with disabilities, and 3 teachers of persons with disabilities.

PARTICIPANTS

To achieve the aim of the study, data were collected by interviewing 5 persons with disabilities, 3 parents of persons with disabilities, and 3 teachers of persons with disabilities.

RESULTS

Person 1: I was affected by the Corona pandemic a lot, now I spend my time at home and no longer visit my friends, I feel frustrated, bored and stressed. I suffer from emptiness, so I complain a lot and often ask my family to help me. My thinking about daily activities is causing me problems and I sleep a lot and gain weight. I need my friends and go back to the past.

Person 2: I feel anxious and afraid. I am afraid of infection with the Corona virus, and this prevented me from going out to the community, shopping and going to friends. I suffer from many problems and I am frustrated with this situation. When will the pandemic end and go back to my previous life? I always ask for help and my family sees me as a person with a lot of complaining.

Person 3: I can no longer solve my problems. My brothers always help me and try to meet my needs. I need support and get back to the life I used to have. My daily life is boring and empty of activities. Despite I received the vaccination; however, I am afraid of infection with the virus and disease. In the past, I was satisfied about my achievement and I adapted to my life. The pandemic changed my life.

Person 4: My interests and activities have become few compared to the pre-pandemic time. I used to develop myself through courses and workshops and participate in activities, but now in the pandemic, no longer exist and the options are limited. The virus is still present and I am afraid of infection and disease. Usually, I turn to my friends by communicating them through the phone or through social media. This helps me a little. I suffer from a lack of activities and I feel the need for support and help.

Person 5: I became anxiously following the spread of the pandemic, and my thoughts became preoccupied with the possibility of infection with the virus if I went out into the community. So I feel anxious and depressed because of my lack of social interactions. My ability to solve my problems has been affected by the pandemic. In the past, I relied on my abilities and capabilities, but now my family and friends help me more.

Parent 1: In the Corona pandemic, my son became more dependent. In the past, he was more independent. Of course, the family and I understand his condition. For example, we notice that he has a lot of complaints and demands. I always listen to him and try to solve his problems. The family seeks to support him so that he remains in a good status.

Parent 2: I feel that my son is more restless, frustrated, and less active than before the pandemic. He always consult me what to do. Sometimes he talks to me nervously. So I understand his condition and the need to support him.

Parent 3: I feel that my son can adapt to the conditions of the pandemic, seek to solve his problems, and try to occupy himself with social activities within the limits of his ability and the current circumstances. We support him a lot, encourage him and try to provide activities for him.

Teacher 1: I feel that persons with disabilities are worried about infection with the virus and are always asking about the virus and the consequences of infection. They need support, especially in solving their problems and providing more services, especially the educational, social, and psychological aspect.

Teacher 2: I feel that persons with disabilities are worried about infection with the virus or recovering from it if infected. I see that some persons make the necessary effort and time to make them feel satisfied with their lives. They are persons who need our support and provide them with more services.

Teacher 3: I have heard of some persons with disabilities, some of whom have the ability and are striving to achieve as they were in the past, that is, before the pandemic. But sometimes they ask for help and I feel that they are affected more than others by the pandemic.

Based on these results, I can reach the following assumptions about the psychological resilience of persons with disabilities:

Hypothesis 1: The Corona pandemic negatively affected the psychological life of persons with disabilities.

Hypothesis 2: The ability to solve problems is negatively affected by the Corona pandemic.

Hypothesis 3: The Corona pandemic has caused anxiety, fear, stress and depression in some persons with disabilities.

Hypothesis 4: The psychological resilience of persons with disabilities in the Corona pandemic is affected by personal factors, family support and societal sources.

Hypothesis 5: Persons with disabilities can achieve psychological resilience if appropriate services are provided to them according to their circumstances and personal characteristics.

Hypothesis 6: Cognitive processing of persons with disabilities are affected by the Corona pandemic, and the nature of this effect depends on the extent of support and services provided to them.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the psychological resilience of persons with disabilities, and this effect has appeared through anxiety, fear and stress from the conditions caused by the outbreak. They indicated that their needs for assistance and requested to more services and support. These demands necessary to achieve optimal level of mental health and adjustment. Therefore, persons with disabilities needs support, encouragement, and specialized services so that we can strengthen them, empower them and develop their psychological abilities. Scheffers van Vugt and Moonen (2020) emphasize autonomy, self-acceptance, and physical health as internal sources of resilience. While external sources of resilience include social networks and daily activities. Also, Vaccaro, Moore, Kimball, Troianoand, Newman (2019) explained the importance of practicing individual-centered student affairs such as strengths and making use of past successes to develop successful coping patterns and flexibility in learning environments. On the other hand, Hariharan, Karimi, and Kishore (2014) discussed that the performance and participation of persons with physical disabilities is limited due to various external and internal factors and that the emotional resources of the individual and assessment of conditions are the important factors.

Based on the findings of the study, I recommend the following:

- Providing a system to support psychological resilience for persons with disabilities.
- Providing support and encouragement to improve psychological resilience for persons with disabilities.
- Providing networks of psychosocial support for persons with disabilities.

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