

Existential Vacuum and its Relationship with Family-based Support among Battered Women

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Abstract

This aim of this study was to determine the relationship between existential vacuum and family-based support among battered women who visit Ministry of Social Development protection centers. The correlational approach was used to achieve the study's goals. The study was conducted on a sample consisted of (127) battered women in Palestine. The current study's findings revealed a moderate level of existential vacuum and family-based support; as well as an inverse relationship between existential vacuum and family-based support among battered women. Furthermore, there were no differences in the level of existential vacuum among battered women due to the academic qualification, whereas there were differences attributed to the number of children in favor of more than 3 children. The findings also revealed differences in the level of the family-based support among battered women due to the academic qualification in favor of higher than Tawjihi, as well as differences attributed to children variable in favor of (1-3 children). Based on our findings, we recommend that family-based institutions have to provide battered women with all forms of family-based support, as this has a significant impact on their feelings of being prevented from being present, particularly for women with limited access to education.

Key words: Existential Vacuum, Family-based support, Bettered Women.

Introduction:

The concept of the meaning of life is one of the advanced concepts in existential psychology, especially studies related to modern positive psychology, which asserts that the meaning of life is found in satisfaction, happiness, and achievement of goals (Wu, et al., 2015). The existential vacuum is at the root of many psychological and social problems, including frustration, despair, anger, a value crisis, anxiety about the future, and variety of psychological conflicts (Rimawi & Ibrahim, 2020), (Abul-

Nur & Abdel-Wahab, 2009). According to Frankl (2011), the concept of existential vacuum does not constitute a neurosis in and itself, but rather creates a fertile ground for the emergence of neurosis. Because the meaning of life contributes to the maintenance positive mental and physical health, those who have meaning in their life enjoy high levels of quietness, happiness, appropriate social relationships and self-acceptance (Al-Zayyat, 2018). When necessary, a person can change himself for

the better, and this change occurs in the presence of a prerequisite, which is a responsibility towards life (Steger & Kashdan, 2013).

Violence against women is a global phenomenon that is not limited to a single society or social class (Pico-Alfonso, 2005). Emotional disorders, a lack the meaning of life, loss of psychological security, disruption of social interaction, optimism, and satisfaction with life are some of the most common problems that battered women face. We call all of these the meaning of life (Abdul-Khaleq, Al-Nayal, 2007). A battered woman requires assistance and support to feel the meaning of life, especially after the traumas and painful experiences she has endured as a result of violence from her husband or a family member. Family-based support is an essential component of social support (Al-Ta'i, 2011). Family-based support reflects the protection that women receive from family members and those around them, as well as a source of improving their life quality (Chunkai, et al., 2019). Women make up half of society, and they play an important and influential role in terms of their contribution to the workforce and in the establishment of families. Women are affected positively and negatively by societal progress and regress (Al-Rubaie, 2013). Previous studies on existential vacuum found an inverse relationship between family-based support and the existential vacuum (Hassan, 2020; Salem, 2020). An inverse relationship between psychological resilience and existential vacuum was discovered by study of Al-Keshki, Khusaifan, and Al-Sheikh (2020), whereas the study of Asaliya and Abu Kwaik (2018) revealed an increase in the scores of the appreciation of existential anxiety and loss of enjoyment in life. Alandete (2015) found a positive relationship between the meaning of life and

psychological well-being. The findings of previous family-based support studies, such as the study of Ali and his colleagues (2020), revealed no statistically significant differences in the dimensions of anger management skills between people rarely or always seek for social support, while Al-Sheikh's study (2020) found that there were no differences in the level of family-based level due to the academic qualification. According to Anou's (2020) study, there was a positive correlation between higher scores on spousal violence and lower scores on life satisfaction.

Problem of the study

The current study's problem stems from the nature of battered women's difficult circumstances, which affect many of their psychological aspects. The current study is investigating the nature of the relationship between family-based support and its relationship to existential vacuum among battered women, which highlights the domestic violence against women within their families.

Method and Procedures:

Methodology of the study:

To achieve the goals of the study, the researcher used the correlational approach, which is defined as the approach that studies an existing phenomenon, event or issue from which we can obtain information that answers the research questions and hypotheses.

Population of the study and its sample:

The study population included all battered women who visited Ministry of Social Development protection centers and Directorates of the Ministry of Social Development. The study population was about 450 battered women during the year 2021-2022. The study's sample consisted of (127) battered women, which were chosen

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in an affordable method from the study's population because it was difficult to access to all participants, as well as because some of them refused to participate and cooperate.

Table (1) shows the distribution of the participants who were analyzed based on their demographic variables.

Table 1. Distribution of the participants based on the study variables.

<i>Field</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Academic qualification	Tawjihi or below	95	74.8
	Higher than tawjihi	32	25.2
Number of children	Non	26	20.5
	1-3	54	42.5
	More than 3	47	37.0

Instrumentation:

The existential vacuum measurement was used, as it was in Abdul Majid and Kani's study (2012). The measurement consisted of (25) items. In addition to the family-based support measurement which was also used in the Al-Sheikh' study (2020); it was consisted of (18) items. The participants were asked to estimate their responses using five-point Likert scale (LIKERT), the items were valued from 1 to 5.

Instrument Validity:

The validity of the two study instruments was verified by calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient for their items with the total score of the instrument. It was clear that all the items of the two questionnaires had statistical significance, indicating that there was internal consistency between items.

Instrument reliability:

The reliability of the total score of the reliability coefficient of the study domains was calculated using the Cronbach's Alpha reliability equation to verify the instrument reliability. The total score of the battered women's existential vacuum level was (0.95), and for the family-based support was (0.93), indicating that this tool has reliability that meets the study's goals.

Data Analysis:

The means and standard deviations were extracted for each item of the scale after verifying the validity and reliability of the study's instrument and ensuring its validity for statistical analysis using Cronbach Alpha, t-test, One Way ANOVA, the statistical packages (SPSS).

Results:**Table 2. Statistical analysis of the participants' responses to the existential vacuum level among battered women based on academic qualification and number of children.**

<i>Field</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Academic qualification	Tawjihi and below	95	3.55	0.77	T (1.79)	0.07
	Higher than tawjihi	32	3.25	0.92		
Number of children	Non	26	3.57	0.81	F (6.88)	0.00
	1-3	54	3.18	0.83		
	More than 3	47	3.75	0.70		

Table (2) shows that the value of "T" for the total score was (1.79), and the significance level was (0.07), that is, there were no differences attributed to the academic qualification variable, and that the value of

"F" for the total score was (6.88) and the significance level was (0.00), indicating that there were statistically significant differences in the level of existential vacuum due to the number of children variable in favor of (more than 3).

Table 3. Results of statistical analysis of the participants' responses to the level of family support among battered women based on educational qualification, and number of children.

<i>Field</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Academic qualification	Tawjihi and below	95	2.56	0.78	T (2.25)	0.02
	Higher than Tawjihi	32	2.94	0.88		
Number of children	Non	26	2.58	0.81	F (4.02)	0.02
	1-3	54	2.89	0.81		
	More than 3	47	2.44	0.79		

Table (3) shows that the value of "T" for the total score was (2.25), with a level of significance of (0.02), indicating that there were differences in the level of family-based support in favor of higher than Tawjihi, and the value of "F" for the total score was

(4.02) with a level of significance of (0.02), indicating that there were statistically significant differences in the level of family-based support due to the number of children variable in favor of (1-3) children.

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Table 4. Pearson's correlation coefficient and statistical significance of the relationship between existential vacuum and family-based support among battered women

Variables		R	Sig.
Existential vacuum	Family-based support	-0.610**	0.00

** $p (\alpha \geq 0.01)$

Table (4) shows that value of Pearson's correlation coefficient "R" for the total score was (-0.61) and the significance level was "0.00), indicating that there was an inverse relationship between existential vacuum and family-based support among battered women.

Discussion:

The findings of the current study showed that there were no differences between the means of the participants' responses to the level of existential vacuum of the battered women due to the academic qualification level variable. This result explains how the battered woman's existential vacuum is caused by her conflicts and feelings of worthlessness. The sense that she has lost purpose in life, as well as the constant sense of existential vacuum, affects her emotional balance and motivation to achieve her goals, making her more vulnerable to mental disorders, regardless of her level of academic qualification. .

The findings were consistent with those of Asaliya and Abu Kwaik (2018) and Al-Obaidi's study (2015). The findings revealed that there were differences in the level of the existential vacuum among battered women due to the number of children variable in favor of (more than 3) children. This result explains why battered women experience an existential vacuum. Women who do not have children as a result of social pressures, particularly in many societies that treat

women do not having children negatively, rejecting them and blaming them for their inability to have children, so they reject the reality and feel shocked, affecting their psychological state and causing a feeling of anxiety, tension, and a sense of inferiority, as well as a loss of hope and a lack of need for her presence in life. The findings also revealed that there were differences in the level of family-based support for battered women due to the academic qualification level variable in favor of higher than Tawjihi. This result explains why that family-based support is one of the most important sources of positive support that all family members require to overcome and deal with life's various pressures. It also works to meet people's needs for a sense of security and stability, which improves their ability to make decisions and solve their problems. A well-educated woman possesses many traits that set her apart from other women who have not completed their education. She learns from her mistakes and experiences, which boosts her increase her self-confidence.

The findings also revealed that there were differences in the level of family-based support for battered women due to the number of children variable in favor of (1-3) children. This is a logical result, especially given the poor living conditions in our Palestinian societies. Because of the small or medium number of children makes, the

family can intervene and provide women and their children with support, whether financial or emotional, etc.

Finally, the findings revealed an inverse negative relationship between the existential vacuum and family-based support for battered women. This result is broadly consistent with reality, as the family-based support that woman receive is regarded as one of the most important factors in achieving psychological balance, as well as filling her existential vacuum by making her feel important in her family's life and their acceptance of her, which increases her self-confidence and ability to determine the meaning and purpose of her life.

Conclusions:

The current study's findings show that the existential vacuum has a noticeable effect on battered women, particularly those with low academic qualifications or who raise their children alone, and that social support is biased towards those with higher academic qualifications, indicating that they are somewhat independent, as they may be employees and receive a monthly salary. As a result, families are more likely to support them more than non-employee women. This means that battered women must be educated about the role of government institutions in providing them with assistance, as well as psychological support and health care in collaboration with the competent institutions.

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