



Psychosocial Adjustment and its Relationship to Psychological and Social Disorders Among Released Palestinian Detainees from Israeli Prisons: A Perspective of Released Palestinian Detainees in in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the level of psychological and social adjustment and its relationship with psychological and social disorders among Palestinian detainees released from Israeli prisons in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate. The study sought to explore these phenomena from the perspectives of the released detainees themselves and to identify the extent to which psychosocial adjustment is associated with post-release psychological and social difficulties.

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher employed a descriptive-correlational research design, which was deemed appropriate for investigating the relationships among the study variables. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire specifically developed for this purpose. The instrument was distributed both electronically and manually to a purposive sample consisting of 330 Palestinian detainees released from Israeli prisons and residing in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate.

The findings revealed that the overall level of psychological adjustment among the participants was high, with a mean score of 3.92, indicating a satisfactory degree of psychological stability and adaptation following release. The highest-rated item was related to self-satisfaction after release from prison, which obtained a mean score of 4.53, reflecting a strong sense of self-worth and personal fulfillment. In contrast, the lowest-rated item was associated with freedom from persistent anxiety and excessive stress, with a mean score of 3.48, suggesting that some participants continue to experience residual psychological distress.

The results further demonstrated that the level of social adjustment was also high, with an overall mean score of 3.73, indicating that the participants generally possessed a strong capacity for social reintegration and rebuilding interpersonal relationships following their release. Despite these positive indicators, the findings showed that the overall level of psychological and social disorders remained relatively high, with a mean score of 3.44. This finding suggests the continued presence of psychological difficulties and social challenges associated with the experience of imprisonment, particularly those related to future-oriented anxiety, concentration difficulties, and certain aspects of social adaptation.

Moreover, the study identified a statistically significant relationship between psychological and social adjustment and psychological and social disorders among Palestinian detainees released from Israeli prisons. The findings indicate that higher levels of psychological and social adjustment are associated with lower levels of psychological and social disorders, highlighting the protective role of successful psychosocial adaptation in mitigating the negative consequences of imprisonment and facilitating post-release recovery.

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations were proposed. First, sustainable psychological support programs should be established for Palestinian detainees released from Israeli prisons, including counseling services, psychological interventions, and training workshops aimed at reducing the long-term effects of imprisonment, such as chronic stress and persistent anxiety. Second, specialized programs should be developed to strengthen social communication skills, enhance interpersonal relationships, and encourage active participation in community activities and social events to facilitate successful social reintegration. Third, vocational rehabilitation and professional training opportunities should be provided to improve the ability of released detainees to adapt to contemporary labor market requirements, enhance their economic independence, and support their successful transition into post-release life.

Keywords: Psychological Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Psychological Disorders, Social Disorders, Palestinian Detainees Released from Israeli Prisons, Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate.

Chapter One: General Framework of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Psychological and social adjustment constitute fundamental determinants of individuals' emotional stability and social integration, particularly among populations exposed to severe traumatic experiences, such as former

Palestinian detainees released from Israeli occupation prisons. Psychological adjustment refers to an individual's capacity to cope effectively with psychological stressors and adapt to life changes, whereas social adjustment reflects the ability to establish positive interpersonal relationships and achieve effective integration within the surrounding social environment (Al-Sherbini, 2020).

However, former Palestinian detainees released from Israeli occupation prisons encounter complex and multidimensional challenges in this regard. Prolonged periods of detention, combined with exposure to harsh conditions such as solitary confinement, psychological and physical torture, and deprivation of fundamental human rights, significantly undermine their psychological well-being. These experiences are frequently associated with the emergence of a range of psychological disorders, most notably chronic anxiety, severe depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The impact of incarceration extends beyond psychological dimensions to encompass social consequences as well. Upon release, former detainees often face substantial difficulties in reintegrating into society due to prolonged separation from public life and the rapid transformation of their socioeconomic environment. This situation frequently results in feelings of alienation, social withdrawal, and reduced interpersonal trust. In some cases, individuals may also experience role conflicts within familial or occupational contexts, particularly when family structures and social roles have changed during the period of imprisonment (Abu Hatab, 2019).

Accordingly, this study seeks to examine the relationship between psychological and social adjustment and psychosocial disorders among former Palestinian detainees released from Israeli occupation prisons in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate, from their own perspective. The study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of post-release challenges, their impact on quality of life, and the extent to which individuals are able to rebuild social relationships and adapt to their post-release environment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The relationship between psychological and social adjustment and psychosocial disorders among former Palestinian detainees represents a critical issue in societies affected by prolonged political conflict. Former Palestinian detainees in Ramallah and Al-Bireh experience this phenomenon through a complex psychological and social lens shaped by prolonged detention and exposure to harsh interrogation practices.

Many former detainees suffer from a range of psychological disorders, including anxiety, depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), all of which negatively affect their daily functioning and social interaction. In addition, a considerable number of individual's experience weakened social communication patterns and a sense of disconnection from their surrounding community, which further complicates their reintegration into both social and professional life after release.

Accordingly, the present study addresses the following main research question:

What is the relationship between psychological and social adjustment and psychosocial disorders among former Palestinian detainees released from Israeli occupation prisons, from the perspective of the detainees themselves in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate?

Sub-questions:

1. What is the level of social adjustment among former Palestinian detainees released from Israeli occupation prisons in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate?
2. What is the level of psychological adjustment among former Palestinian detainees released from Israeli occupation prisons in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate?
3. What is the level of psychosocial disorders among former Palestinian detainees released from Israeli occupation prisons in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate?
4. Is there a statistically significant relationship at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between psychological and social adjustment and psychosocial disorders among the study sample?
5. Are there statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the respondents' perceptions attributable to demographic variables (gender, age, educational qualification, years of imprisonment, and place of residence)?

1.3 Significance of the Study

1.3.1 Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to the existing body of psychological and social literature by examining the relationship between psychosocial adjustment and disorders resulting from imprisonment-related trauma. It highlights a critical area within social psychology concerning the long-term psychological consequences of incarceration under conflict conditions. Furthermore, it provides a conceptual framework that may serve as a foundation for future research addressing trauma, adaptation, and social reintegration in similar contexts.

1.3.2 Practical Significance

Practically, the study provides evidence-based insights that may assist psychological, social, and human rights institutions in designing effective rehabilitation and support programs for former Palestinian detainees. It also offers guidance for policymakers and civil society organizations in developing integrated reintegration strategies aimed at enhancing quality of life, improving social functioning, and strengthening community participation.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

- Identify the level of social adjustment among former Palestinian detainees released from Israeli occupation prisons in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate.
- Identify the level of psychological adjustment among former Palestinian detainees released from Israeli occupation prisons in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate.
- Determine the level of psychosocial disorders among former Palestinian detainees in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate.
- Examine the relationship between psychological/social adjustment and psychosocial disorders among the study sample.
- Identify statistically significant differences in responses attributable to demographic variables (gender, age, educational qualification, years of imprisonment, and place of residence).

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

To address the research questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

1. There are no statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in respondents' perceptions of psychological and social adjustment and its relationship with psychosocial disorders attributable to gender.
2. There are no statistically significant differences attributable to age.
3. There are no statistically significant differences attributable to educational qualification.
4. There are no statistically significant differences attributable to years of imprisonment.
5. There are no statistically significant differences attributable to place of residence.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

- **Spatial limitation:** Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate.
- **Temporal limitation:** Second semester of the academic year 2025–2026.
- **Human limitation:** Former Palestinian detainees released from Israeli occupation prisons residing in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate.

1.7 Definition of Terms

1. Psychological Adjustment

Conceptual Definition: A continuous dynamic process involving behavioral and environmental modification to achieve equilibrium between the individual and their environment (Kabaja, 2011).

Operational Definition: The level of internal psychological balance and self-acceptance experienced by former detainees, measured by their total score on the Psychological Adjustment Scale used in this study.

2. Social Adjustment

Conceptual Definition: A set of behavioral responses based on an individual's sense of social security, reflected in interpersonal relationships, social skills, and integration within family and community systems (Al-Hattab, 2015).

Operational Definition: The behavioral and attitudinal adjustments made by former detainees to achieve social integration, measured by the Social Adjustment Scale in this study.

3. Psychosocial Disorders

Conceptual Definition: A set of psychological and behavioral disturbances resulting from imprisonment experiences in conflict contexts, including anxiety, depression, PTSD, social withdrawal, anger, and difficulties in interpersonal trust and social functioning (Al-Arja, 2017).

Operational Definition: The level of psychological and social distress measured by participants' scores on the Psychosocial Disorders Scale (1–5 Likert scale).

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

2.1 Concept of Adjustment

The concept of adjustment is considered one of the most widely discussed constructs in psychology, as psychology itself is fundamentally concerned with human behavior and the individual's capacity to adapt to environmental demands. Accordingly, psychological inquiry does not focus solely on behavior as an isolated phenomenon, but rather examines the processes through which individuals achieve adjustment or experience maladjustment, and the mechanisms underlying these processes (Al-Hattab, 2015).

In this context, mental health is often conceptualized as a state of harmonious adjustment between the individual and the environment, where the person is able to satisfy their needs while simultaneously responding appropriately to external demands. Family adjustment, in particular, represents a central dimension of social adjustment, as the family constitutes the primary environment in which psychological development occurs. The nature of intra-family

relationships plays a critical role in shaping the individual's psychological adjustment, which subsequently extends to their broader social functioning (Abdel-Maati, 2005).

Given that the individual is an integral component of the family system, and the family represents the basic unit of society, the well-being of the child is directly linked to the well-being of both family and society. The child's personality is significantly shaped by environmental influences that affect cognition, emotions, interests, and value systems (Mohamed & Bilal, 2016). Educational and psychological literature consistently emphasizes the pivotal role of the family in personality formation during childhood, which represents a foundational stage in the development of personality structure under both normal and pathological conditions (Al-Khader, 2010, p. 54).

2.2 Psychological Adjustment

Psychological adjustment constitutes the core dimension of adjustment, operating at the internal level of the individual. It reflects how individuals perceive themselves and their surrounding reality, and includes feelings of self-satisfaction, emotional stability, and the fulfillment of basic biological, psychological, and social needs.

Psychological adjustment is also defined as a relatively stable internal state characterized by the absence of excessive psychological tension and internal conflict, enabling the individual to interact effectively with reality and the environment (Al-Tarawneh, 2018, p. 7). Self-adjustment falls within this domain, where congruence between self-perception and actual self-characteristics leads to psychological stability. Conversely, distorted self-concept—whether inflated or diminished—may lead to maladjustment, including narcissism, inferiority feelings, or social withdrawal (Kabaja, 2011).

From a broader perspective, psychological adjustment refers to the individual's capacity to adapt to internal and external demands in a continuous and dynamic manner. It is not merely a static state, but an ongoing process of balancing internal psychological needs with environmental expectations.

2.3 Social Adjustment

Social adjustment refers to the individual's ability to establish satisfying and effective social relationships characterized by cooperation, tolerance, and prosocial behavior. It involves adherence to social norms, ethical standards, and the ability to engage constructively with others without hostility, suspicion, or social withdrawal.

Social adjustment also includes emotional satisfaction derived from interpersonal relationships, commitment to societal values, acceptance of social change, and active participation in collective welfare. It reflects the quality of integration within the social structure and the individual's ability to function effectively within society (Mohamed & Bilal, 2016).

The researcher views social adjustment as the individual's capacity to maintain warm, respectful, and functional relationships that fulfill social needs while ensuring compatibility between personal desires and societal expectations. Human beings, by nature, are social entities; thus, adherence to social norms and behavioral regulation is essential for achieving balanced social functioning.

2.4 Psychological and Social Adjustment of Former Detainees

Psychological and social adjustment is considered a fundamental determinant of former detainees' ability to restore their personal and social equilibrium after release from prison. It reflects the individual's capacity to adapt positively to self and others, achieving internal satisfaction and effective reintegration into society.

In the Palestinian context, former detainees released from Israeli occupation prisons face compounded psychological and social challenges due to harsh detention conditions, including psychological and physical torture, solitary confinement, and deprivation of social interaction. These conditions have profound psychological consequences, significantly affecting post-release adjustment (Abu Hatab, 2019).

Empirical studies indicate that former detainees frequently experience anxiety disorders, depressive symptoms, and emotional distress, which collectively weaken psychological adjustment and reduce feelings of internal stability and safety, particularly in the absence of adequate psychological support systems (Al-Shalabi, 2015). Socially, many former detainees encounter difficulties in rebuilding relationships and reintegrating into society, often experiencing alienation, loss of belonging, and perceived social devaluation due to changes that occurred during their imprisonment period (Al-Aila, 2020).

Accordingly, psychological and social adjustment is essential for enabling former detainees to resume their social and familial roles, re-enter the labor market, and achieve functional reintegration into society. This requires structured psychosocial support programs including counseling, community support, and post-release rehabilitation (Siyam, 2017).

2.5 Dimensions of Psychological and Social Adjustment

Psychological and social adjustment is a multidimensional construct encompassing several interrelated domains:

1. **Personal Adjustment:** Refers to the individual's ability to satisfy psychological needs, achieve self-awareness, self-confidence, and responsibility, as well as problem-solving and decision-making capabilities (Edheim, 2015).

2. **Emotional Adjustment:** Involves emotional regulation, psychological stability, and the ability to manage stress and negative emotions effectively (Al-Sakni, 2013).
3. **Health Adjustment:** Reflects physical and mental well-being, acceptance of one's body image, and sustained energy for daily functioning (Bin Sati, 2013).
4. **Vocational Adjustment:** Relates to job satisfaction, productivity, and alignment between personal abilities and occupational demands (Zahran, 2005).
5. **Social Adjustment:** Represents effective interpersonal relationships and adherence to social norms and collective values (Al-Sakni, 2013).
6. **Family Adjustment:** Includes emotional stability within the family, fulfillment of responsibilities, and maintenance of supportive and safe family relationships (Al-Sharif, 2022).

2.6 Theoretical Framework of Psychological and Social Adjustment among Former Detainees

Psychological and social adjustment is explained through several theoretical perspectives. Carl Rogers' humanistic theory emphasizes congruence between self-concept and lived experience as a prerequisite for psychological adjustment (Rogers, 1951). Accordingly, adjustment is achieved when individuals develop a coherent and realistic self-perception that aligns with their actual experiences.

For former detainees, adjustment is a complex dynamic process due to traumatic imprisonment experiences such as torture, isolation, and loss of autonomy. These experiences disrupt self-concept and necessitate psychological restructuring after release. As Abu Hatab (2019) argues, adjustment depends on insight, coping capacity, and effective defense mechanisms that enable individuals to regain psychological balance.

Additionally, Lazarus and Folkman's Stress and Coping Theory (1984) provides a key explanatory framework, suggesting that individuals evaluate stressful events and apply cognitive and behavioral coping strategies. In the case of former detainees, positive cognitive reappraisal, reliance on social support, and ideological or religious beliefs function as major coping mechanisms that facilitate psychological and social adaptation.

2.7 Psychological and Social Disorders

Psychological and social disorders refer to a heterogeneous group of disturbances affecting behavior, emotions, and social functioning. These disorders often arise from multiple interacting causes and may require specialized therapeutic intervention.

Common disorders include anxiety disorders, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, psychosis, paranoia, and behavioral aggression (Butrus, 2008). Psychological disorder is defined as a persistent deviation in emotions and behavior that negatively affects both the individual and their social relationships (Ghanem, 2009, p. 662).

Such disorders are characterized by chronicity rather than temporary fluctuations, and while severe, they do not necessarily reach the level of psychotic breakdown or personality disintegration.

2.8 Psychological Disorders among Former Detainees

Psychological disorders represent one of the most significant outcomes of imprisonment experiences, particularly among children and young detainees exposed to traumatic conditions.

Common manifestations include generalized anxiety, characterized by persistent fear and physiological arousal; depression, associated with deep and prolonged sadness; obsessive-compulsive behaviors involving repetitive thoughts and rituals; phobic reactions toward specific environments; somatization disorders involving unexplained physical symptoms; and psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations and distorted thinking (Al-Buhairi, 2005).

These disorders are closely linked to exposure to detention-related trauma and may persist long after release.

2.9 Symptoms of Psychological Disorders

Psychological disorders manifest through a range of physical, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive symptoms. Physical symptoms include chronic headaches and fatigue. Emotional symptoms involve persistent sadness, fear, and excessive anxiety. Behavioral symptoms may include withdrawal, difficulty performing routine tasks, and substance misuse as a coping mechanism. Cognitive symptoms may include hallucinations or perceptual distortions (Fayed, 2001).

2.10 Factors Contributing to Psychological Disorders among Former Detainees

Imprisonment represents one of the most psychologically stressful human experiences. Several interrelated factors contribute to the development of psychological disorders among former detainees.

Prolonged deprivation of freedom generates chronic psychological distress and helplessness (Menninger, 1963). Exposure to torture, humiliation, sleep deprivation, and solitary confinement further exacerbates psychological instability (Bowlby, 1980). Uncertainty regarding legal outcomes and family conditions intensifies anxiety and emotional distress. Additionally, poor prison conditions such as overcrowding and inadequate healthcare contribute to cumulative psychological stress (Abu Aisha, 2007).

2.11 Psychological and Social Disorders among Former Detainees

Former detainees experience severe psychological and social consequences due to imprisonment conditions. Psychologically, they often suffer from PTSD, anxiety, and depression, accompanied by insomnia, anger, and fear. These symptoms may persist long after release and interfere with normal functioning (Fayez, 2001).

Socially, former detainees face difficulties in rebuilding family relationships and reintegrating into society. Social isolation, stigma, and reduced social support are common challenges. Changes in social structures during imprisonment further complicate reintegration processes (Al-Wawi, 2002). Additionally, reintegration is often influenced by broader political and security conditions, particularly in conflict-affected regions, which increases psychological pressure (Zreik, 2005).

2.12 Theoretical Explanation of Psychological Disorders

The cognitive-behavioral theory is one of the most influential frameworks for explaining psychological disorders. It posits that psychological disturbances result from maladaptive interactions between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Individuals with psychological disorders often develop distorted beliefs about themselves and their environment, which reinforce negative emotional states such as anxiety and depression.

Beck (1967) emphasized that identifying and modifying cognitive distortions is central to treating psychological disorders. For example, individuals with depression often maintain negative self-schemata, which can be restructured through cognitive therapy to improve emotional functioning and behavioral adaptation.

2.13 Previous Studies

2.13.1 Arab Studies

Ahmed (2023) examined the social, psychological, and economic problems experienced by Palestinian former detainees released from Israeli prisons and their perspectives on internationalizing the detainee issue. The study found high levels of psychological distress, particularly sadness related to memories of torture, and emphasized the importance of political and social advocacy.

Mohamed (2023) investigated the relationship between psychological alienation, social support, and psychological adjustment among former detainees in Hebron. The results revealed a negative correlation between alienation and both social support and psychological adjustment, and a positive correlation between social support and adjustment.

Shahada and Jawabreh (2022) explored psychological and social adjustment among former detainees working in the Palestinian Preventive Security Service in Jenin. The study highlighted the importance of psychological support programs in facilitating reintegration.

Al-Hussein (2022) studied counseling needs, psychological reassurance, and psychosocial adjustment among former detainees in northern West Bank. The findings indicated moderate levels across all variables and significant differences based on imprisonment-related factors.

Al-Bu Hadidi (2022) examined the role of family in supporting psychological and social adjustment of political prisoners, emphasizing the importance of familial support in reintegration.

Al-Tala (2010) found a positive relationship between psychological adjustment and national belonging among female former detainees, highlighting the role of identity in adjustment processes.

Abu Hein (2006) identified coping strategies among former detainees, with cognitive reappraisal and problem-solving being the most frequently used mechanisms.

2.13.2 Foreign Studies

Aldaya (2024) investigated rehabilitation programs and their impact on psychosocial adjustment among released prisoners in Palestine. The study found that rehabilitation programs significantly influenced adjustment outcomes.

Sinha (2010) found significant relationships between psychological problems and adjustment difficulties among prisoners, particularly in social and emotional domains.

Khamaysa (2014) reported significant differences in psychological and psychosocial adjustment based on income, marital status, and duration of detention among former detainees.

Heitzman and Ratkowski (1995) found high prevalence rates of PTSD, anxiety, and depression among former political prisoners in Poland, highlighting long-term psychological consequences of torture.

2.14 Discussion of Previous Studies

The reviewed studies collectively indicate that former detainees suffer from significant psychological and social challenges, including anxiety, depression, PTSD, and social reintegration difficulties. While some studies focused on psychological disorders, others addressed psychosocial adjustment, coping strategies, and social support systems. Arab studies consistently highlight the importance of social support and coping mechanisms in enhancing adjustment, whereas foreign studies emphasize the long-term psychological impact of imprisonment and torture. Despite contextual differences, there is a shared consensus that imprisonment has enduring psychological consequences requiring structured rehabilitation interventions.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Procedures

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework adopted in the current study. It is directly aligned with the theoretical foundation and literature reviewed in Chapters One and Two. The chapter outlines the research design, population and sample, study instrument, validity and reliability procedures, study variables, data collection procedures, and statistical methods used for data analysis.

The methodological choices are guided by the nature of the research problem, which seeks to examine the relationship between psychological and social adjustment and psychosocial disorders among former Palestinian detainees released from Israeli occupation prisons in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate.

3.2 Research Design

The study employs a descriptive-correlational design, which is widely used in social and psychological research to examine relationships among variables without manipulating the study environment.

This design is appropriate for identifying the nature and strength of the relationship between psychological and social adjustment and psychosocial disorders among former detainees.

The study design is implemented through two integrated phases:

3.2.1 Conceptual Phase

This phase involved defining and operationalizing the main constructs of the study, namely psychological adjustment, social adjustment, and psychosocial disorders. It was grounded in an extensive review of theoretical literature and previous empirical studies, as presented in Chapters One and Two.

3.2.2 Empirical Phase

In this phase, primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to a purposive sample of former Palestinian detainees. The aim was to empirically test the study hypotheses and examine relationships among the study variables.

3.3 Population and Sample of the Study

3.3.1 Population of the Study

The study population consists of all former Palestinian detainees released from Israeli occupation prisons residing in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate, estimated at (N = 2,350) according to official statistics issued by the Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs (2025–2026).

3.3.2 Sample of the Study

A purposive sample of (n = 330) former detainees was selected due to the specific and hard-to-reach nature of the population. Data were collected using both electronic and paper-based questionnaires.

Table 3.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample (n = 330)

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	277	83.9
	Female	53	16.1
Age	Less than 19 years	63	19.1
	20–35 years	163	49.4
	36–45 years	66	20.0
	45 years and above	38	11.5
Educational Level	High school or less	106	32.1
	Diploma	95	28.8
	Bachelor's degree	104	31.5
	Master's degree and above	25	7.6
Years of Detention	Less than 3 years	169	51.2
	3–7 years	130	39.4
	8 years and above	31	9.4
Total		330	100

3.4 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire, developed based on validated instruments from previous studies and adapted to the context of former Palestinian detainees (see Appendix B: Final Questionnaire).

The questionnaire consisted of two main sections:

- Section I: Socio-demographic and background information
- Section II: Items measuring psychological adjustment, social adjustment, and psychosocial disorders

All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale:

- Strongly Agree = 5
- Agree = 4
- Neutral = 3
- Disagree = 2
- Strongly Disagree = 1

Scale Interpretation

Mean Range	Level
< 2.60	Low
2.60 – < 3.40	Moderate
3.40 – 5.00	High

3.5 Validity of the Instrument

Content validity was ensured through expert evaluation. The questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of academic specialists in psychology and research methodology at Al-Quds Open University.

Based on their feedback, necessary modifications were made, including:

- Rewording ambiguous items
- Deleting irrelevant statements
- Adding missing items to improve construct coverage

These revisions ensured conceptual clarity, linguistic accuracy, and alignment with the study objectives.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which is widely accepted in social sciences, with values above 0.70 indicating satisfactory reliability.

Table 3.2: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Psychological Adjustment Scale	9	0.835
Social Adjustment Scale	11	0.924
Psychological Disorders Scale	10	0.909
Social Disorders Scale	10	0.901
Overall Instrument	40	0.890

The results demonstrate strong internal consistency across all subscales. The overall reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.890$) confirms that the instrument is highly reliable and suitable for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing.

3.7 Study Procedures

The study was conducted through a systematic and sequential process:

1. Comprehensive review of relevant theoretical and empirical literature to refine the research problem and variables.
2. Development of the research instrument based on validated scales and adaptation to the study context.
3. Validation of the instrument through expert review and revision accordingly.
4. Distribution of 330 questionnaires using both electronic and paper formats to the purposive sample.
5. Collection, coding, and preparation of data for statistical analysis using SPSS.
6. Data cleaning and verification to ensure accuracy and completeness.
7. Statistical analysis and interpretation of results in relation to the research questions and hypotheses.
8. Formulation of conclusions and evidence-based recommendations.

3.8 Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The following statistical techniques were employed:

- Frequencies and percentages to describe sample characteristics.
- Means and standard deviations to assess levels of study variables.
- Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate internal consistency reliability.
- Independent samples t-test to examine differences between two-group variables (e.g., gender).
- One-way ANOVA to examine differences across multiple categorical variables (e.g., age, education, years of detention).
- Pearson correlation coefficient to test relationships between psychological/social adjustment and psychosocial disorders.

Final Academic Consistency Statement

This methodological framework is fully aligned with the conceptual framework presented in Chapters One and Two, ensuring coherence between the research problem, theoretical background, and empirical procedures. The design, instruments, and statistical methods collectively support the investigation of the relationship between psychological and social adjustment and psychosocial disorders among former Palestinian detainees.

Chapter Four: Results of the Study

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the study conducted among Released Palestinian Detainees in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate. It aims to examine their perceptions regarding psychological and social adjustment and its relationship with psychological and social disorders following release from Israeli occupation prisons. The results are presented in accordance with the study research questions and hypotheses, using both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

4.2 Results of the Research Questions

4.2.1 Results of the First Question

What is the level of psychological adjustment among Released Palestinian Detainees in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate?

To address this question, means, standard deviations, and relative levels were computed for all items measuring psychological adjustment. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, and Levels of Psychological Adjustment

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Level
1	I feel satisfied with myself after my release from detention.	4.53	0.671	High
2	I feel a sense of belonging to my local community.	4.24	0.783	High
3	I am able to control my emotions in difficult situations.	3.92	0.836	High
4	I do not feel guilty about the past.	4.08	0.708	High
5	I have a positive outlook toward the future.	3.90	0.907	High
6	I do not face difficulty in making daily decisions.	3.74	0.867	High
7	I enjoy my daily activities.	3.77	0.756	High
8	I do not suffer from continuous anxiety or excessive stress.	3.48	0.971	High
9	I live my life with a sense of meaning and purpose.	3.65	0.851	High
Total		3.92	0.816	High

The findings in Table 3 indicate a high level of psychological adjustment among Released Palestinian Detainees ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.816$). This reflects a generally stable psychological state and a relatively strong capacity for post-release adaptation. The highest-rated item was self-satisfaction following release ($M = 4.53$), indicating strong self-acceptance and resilience. Conversely, the lowest-rated item concerned persistent anxiety and stress ($M = 3.48$), suggesting that residual psychological distress remains present among some participants.

4.2.2 Results of the Second Question

What is the level of social adjustment among Released Palestinian Detainees?

Means and standard deviations were computed for all items of the social adjustment scale (Table 4).

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations, and Levels of Social Adjustment

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Level
1	I deal with new situations with confidence and calmness.	3.82	0.666	High
2	I can easily build new social relationships after release.	3.73	0.793	High
3	I can cope with psychological pressures in daily life.	3.68	1.021	High
4	I participate in social events without hesitation.	3.77	0.990	High
5	I am respected and appreciated by others.	3.73	0.800	High
6	I avoid isolation or separation from people.	3.67	0.944	High
7	I express my thoughts and feelings clearly.	3.79	0.871	High
8	I adapt easily to work or study environments.	3.65	0.889	High
9	I cooperate with others in different situations.	3.82	0.904	High
10	I practice communication skills effectively.	3.76	0.843	High
11	I have supportive friends when needed.	3.69	0.923	High
Total		3.73	0.876	High

The results demonstrate a high level of social adjustment ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.876$), indicating that participants possess a relatively strong ability to reintegrate into society and re-establish social relationships. The highest scores were observed for confidence in new situations and cooperation with others. However, adaptation to work or study environments recorded the lowest mean, suggesting some challenges in occupational reintegration.

4.2.3 Results of the Third Question

What is the level of psychological disorders among Released Palestinian Detainees?

Table 5. Psychological Disorders

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Level
1	Sudden episodes of sadness or depression	3.40	1.063	Moderate
2	Difficulty sleeping regularly	3.36	0.913	Moderate
3	Disturbing memories related to detention	3.34	0.854	Moderate
4	Fear or panic without clear reason	3.31	1.001	Moderate
5	Lack of concentration	3.56	0.952	High
6	Constant anxiety about the future	3.61	0.894	High
7	Unjustified anger	3.45	0.935	High
8	Difficulty overcoming negative memories	3.45	0.832	High
9	Lack of motivation	3.48	0.901	High
10	Difficulty adapting to life changes	3.52	0.849	High
Total		3.44	0.919	High

The findings indicate a high level of psychological disorders ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.919$), suggesting the persistence of post-release psychological distress, particularly anxiety, cognitive impairment, and emotional instability.

4.2.4 Results of the Fourth Question

What is the level of social disorders among Released Palestinian Detainees?

Table 6. Social Disorders

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Level
1	Difficulty interacting with others	3.48	0.954	High
2	Avoidance of social events	3.31	0.916	Moderate
3	Feeling misunderstood by others	3.25	0.914	Moderate
4	Difficulty making new friends	3.13	0.885	Moderate
5	Social withdrawal	3.40	0.906	Moderate
6	Difficulty accepting criticism	3.40	0.983	Moderate
7	Avoidance of participation	3.28	0.968	Moderate
8	Family/social conflicts	3.15	0.997	Moderate
9	Ability to adapt socially	3.46	0.867	High
10	Avoidance of teamwork	3.25	1.011	Moderate
Total		3.31	0.940	Moderate

The results indicate a moderate level of social disorders, suggesting partial difficulties in social reintegration, particularly in forming new relationships and engaging in social contexts.

4.2.5 Results of the Fifth Question (Regression Analysis)

Table 7. Regression Analysis

Model	R	R ²	Beta	F	Sig.
Adjustment → Disorders	0.133	0.018	0.133	5.927	0.015

Adjustment → Disorders 0.133 0.018 0.133 5.927 0.015

The results indicate a weak but statistically significant positive relationship between psychological/social adjustment and psychosocial disorders ($R = 0.133$, $p = 0.015$). However, the explanatory power of the model is limited ($R^2 = 1.8\%$), indicating that other variables may better explain psychosocial disorders.

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

4.3.1 Gender Differences (t-test)

No statistically significant differences were found between males and females ($p > 0.05$).

4.3.2 Age Differences (ANOVA)

Statistically significant differences were found according to age ($p \leq 0.05$).

4.3.3 Educational Level Differences

Statistically significant differences were found according to educational level ($p \leq 0.05$).

4.3.4 Years of Detention

No statistically significant differences were found ($p > 0.05$).

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the empirical findings of the study using descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. The results revealed high levels of psychological and social adjustment among Released Palestinian Detainees, alongside moderate to high levels of psychosocial disorders. Additionally, a weak but statistically significant relationship was identified between adjustment and disorders. Finally, significant differences were observed in some demographic variables, while others showed no significant differences.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion and critical interpretation of the empirical findings presented in Chapter Four. The results are examined within the psychological, social, and contextual framework of liberated Palestinian detainees in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate. The discussion is systematically organized into two main sections: first, the interpretation of findings related to the study questions; and second, the analysis of findings related to the study hypotheses and demographic variables.

This interpretive approach aims to move beyond mere statistical description toward a deeper theoretical and contextual understanding of the psychosocial dynamics affecting Released Palestinian Detainees following their release from occupation prisons.

5.2 Discussion of Results Related to the Study Questions

5.2.1 Psychological Adjustment

The first research question examined:

What is the level of psychological adjustment among Released Palestinian Detainees from occupation prisons, from the perspective of Released Palestinian Detainees in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate?

The findings revealed that the overall level of psychological adjustment was **high** ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.816$), indicating a relatively strong degree of emotional stability, resilience, and post-release psychological adaptation among the participants.

The highest-rated item was Item (1), *"I feel satisfied with myself after being released from prison"* ($M = 4.53$), reflecting a profound sense of self-worth, identity reinforcement, and psychological liberation. In contrast, the lowest-rated item was Item (8), *"I do not suffer from continuous anxiety or excessive stress"* ($M = 3.48$), which still falls within the moderate range of psychological comfort.

Researcher's Interpretation:

The researcher attributes the high level of psychological adjustment to the symbolic and existential significance of liberation among Palestinian detainees. Release from imprisonment is not merely a personal event but a collective and political milestone that restores dignity, autonomy, and identity. This contributes significantly to elevated self-esteem and psychological resilience.

However, the persistence of moderate anxiety levels indicates that psychological recovery remains incomplete. Exposure to prolonged detention, uncertainty, and traumatic conditions results in enduring psychological residues such as chronic stress and latent anxiety. Therefore, high psychological adjustment scores should not be interpreted as the absence of psychological distress, but rather as the coexistence of resilience alongside unresolved trauma, highlighting the necessity of structured psychological intervention programs.

5.2.2 Social Adjustment

The second research question addressed:

What is the level of social adjustment among Released Palestinian Detainees from occupation prisons, from the perspective of Released Palestinian Detainees in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate?

The results indicated a **high level of social adjustment** ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.876$), suggesting that Released Palestinian Detainees generally possess strong capabilities for social reintegration and interpersonal functioning.

The highest mean scores were recorded for Item (1), *"I handle new situations with confidence and calmness"* ($M = 3.82$), and Item (9), *"I am keen on cooperating with others in various situations"* ($M = 3.82$). The lowest score was observed in Item (8), *"I adapt easily to new work or study environments"* ($M = 3.65$).

Researcher's Interpretation:

These findings reflect the presence of strong social cohesion and community solidarity within Palestinian society in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate, which plays a crucial role in facilitating reintegration processes for Released Palestinian Detainees.

The high levels of confidence and cooperation indicate that detainees possess strong interpersonal and prosocial skills that enable them to rebuild social relationships effectively. However, the relatively lower score regarding adaptation to work and educational environments reflects structural and institutional barriers rather than individual

deficiencies. These include limited employment opportunities, socio-political constraints, and disruptions caused by prolonged incarceration, all of which hinder full socio-economic reintegration.

5.2.3 Psychological Disorders

The third research question investigated:

What is the degree of psychological disorders among Released Palestinian Detainees from occupation prisons, from the perspective of Released Palestinian Detainees in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate?

The findings revealed that the overall level of psychological disorders was **high** ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.919$). The most prominent symptom was Item (6), *"I feel constant anxiety regarding my future"* ($M = 3.61$), followed by Item (5), *"I suffer from a clear deficit in focus and attention"* ($M = 3.56$). The lowest score was recorded for Item (4), *"I feel fear or panic without an obvious reason"* ($M = 3.31$), which falls within the moderate range.

Researcher's Interpretation: These results are consistent with trauma theory, particularly in contexts of prolonged political detention. The high levels of future-oriented anxiety reflect existential insecurity shaped by ongoing political instability and socio-economic uncertainty in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate.

Cognitive impairments such as reduced concentration and attention deficits further indicate the long-term psychological consequences of incarceration. While acute panic symptoms appear less prevalent, chronic stress and cognitive burden remain dominant, suggesting that psychological disorders in this population are primarily sustained and cumulative rather than episodic.

5.2.4 Social Disorders

The fourth research question examined:

What is the degree of social disorders among Released Palestinian Detainees from occupation prisons, from the perspective of Released Palestinian Detainees in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate?

The results showed a **moderate level of social disorders** ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.940$). The highest score was recorded for Item (1), *"I find difficulty interacting with others after my release from prison"* ($M = 3.48$), while the lowest score was observed for Item (4), *"I have difficulty forming new friendships"* ($M = 3.13$).

Researcher's Interpretation: The moderate level of social disorders reflects a transitional adjustment phase between institutional confinement and societal reintegration. The initial difficulty in interaction indicates the psychological impact of prolonged isolation and controlled environments.

At the same time, the relatively high score for social blending suggests a strong willingness to reintegrate. However, the preference for existing social networks over forming new relationships indicates a protective social strategy aimed at reducing emotional risk. This highlights the importance of structured reintegration programs that facilitate gradual social exposure and strengthen interpersonal confidence.

5.2.5 Predictive Relationship (Regression Analysis)

The fifth research question examined:

Is there a statistically significant relationship between psychological and social adjustment and psychological and social disorders among Released Palestinian Detainees in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate?

The regression analysis revealed a statistically significant but weak relationship between the variables ($R = 0.133$, $R^2 = 0.018$, $F = 5.927$, $\beta = 0.133$, $p = 0.015$). This indicates that only 1.8% of the variance in psychological and social disorders can be explained by psychological and social adjustment.

Researcher's Interpretation: This finding suggests that while psychological and social adjustment plays a statistically significant role, it is not the primary determinant of psychological and social disorders. Other structural, environmental, and political factors likely exert a stronger influence.

This weak predictive relationship underscores the complexity of post-release psychological outcomes, where adjustment mechanisms interact with broader socio-political constraints. Therefore, interventions should not focus solely on individual resilience but must also address systemic barriers affecting reintegration.

5.3 Discussion of Results Related to the Study Hypotheses

5.3.1 Gender Differences (H_1-1)

The findings indicated no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) based on gender ($p = 0.124$), leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Researcher's Interpretation: This result suggests that the experience of incarceration and post-release adjustment is fundamentally similar across genders. The shared political, psychological, and social context in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate overrides gender-based differences in coping patterns.

5.3.2 Age Differences (H_1-2)

Significant differences were found based on age ($p = 0.000$), favoring older detainees.

Researcher's Interpretation: Older individuals demonstrate greater psychological stability due to life experience, emotional maturity, and established social roles. Younger individuals face greater instability due to disrupted developmental and socio-economic trajectories.

5.3.3 Educational Level Differences (H_1-3)

Significant differences were observed ($p = 0.000$), favoring higher educational attainment.

Researcher's Interpretation: Higher education enhances cognitive coping mechanisms, problem-solving abilities, and socio-economic resilience, thereby facilitating better psychological adjustment.

5.3.4 Years of Imprisonment (H₁₋₄)

No significant differences were found ($p = 0.266$).

Researcher's Interpretation: The psychological impact of imprisonment is not strictly time-dependent. Even short-term incarceration produces substantial psychological and social consequences due to the intensity of the experience and its contextual implications.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study proposes the following recommendations:

- Establish long-term psychological intervention programs tailored to Released Palestinian Detainees.
- Develop structured social reintegration and communication enhancement programs.
- Provide vocational training and employment support mechanisms.
- Launch public awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and strengthen social acceptance.
- Establish peer-support groups for emotional sharing and psychological recovery.
- Promote institutional cooperation between governmental, civil, and humanitarian organizations to ensure comprehensive rehabilitation services.

Dedication

"To my family, who has consistently served as my ultimate pillar of support throughout every moment of this arduous journey. I extend to you my highest expressions of gratitude and appreciation. Your unwavering encouragement instilled in me the fortitude and perseverance necessary to achieve this milestone today."

Acknowledgements

"I would like to express my deepest gratitude and sincere appreciation to my esteemed supervisor, Professor Dr. Essam Al-Atrash, for his invaluable assistance, insightful guidance, and continuous supervision throughout this research. Your unwavering support and academic mentorship played a pivotal role in steering this thesis toward the right path. Your profound insights and constructive recommendations have been a constant source of inspiration during the preparation of this project. I am profoundly grateful, Dr. Essam, for your immense support, and I wish you continued success and excellence in your academic and professional endeavors."

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